

**INTERNATIONAL
HELSINKI
FEDERATION FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS**

Summary of telephone conversation with Vaclav Havel in Prague,
November 14, 1988 ± 10.30 a.m.

Havel:

First of all I would like to thank all foreign participants who did reach Prague for their interest and their participation. And I would also like to thank those who intended to come to Prague, but did not get their visa. I would also like to apologize for the Czechoslovak state and its idiotic behaviour. The whole thing is really too embarrassing.

In spite of this, the symposium met in two places, or to be more exact in three places: it met in Vienna, in Prague in various flats in the form of improvised discussions, and above all at Ruzyne Prison where we were in the same cells and where we also improvised a symposium, talks and so on.

As regards to the ban I would like to say, that this was really senseless. It was banned in writing one day before the event by the local national committee in Prague I, and they justified this ban by saying that events for invited persons only such as a graduate's reunion need not be approved by that committee, which only needs to give its consent to public events. Our event was for invited guests only, it was not public, so the committee really had not business to interfere. Nevertheless, they wrote in their letter, that they were under the impression that the event in question would be public and that is why they were banning it. On the other hand they in no way substantiate their impression. So the whole thing is really senseless. Apart from that I have no idea why this was being banned precisely by the Prague I local national committee. What is more, we did not tell anyone in what part of Prague this was going to be held.

Now, as regards the security crack-down, I would like to thank all those who already have protested, in the first place the foreign participants who had reached Prague, because the more protest are being lodged, the more help it is for us. . . .

I am not quite certain but I am under the impression that all who have been detained have been released during the night.

Finally, I would like to wish the Vienna symposium every success. I heard that someone launched the proposal here in Prague that this symposium should be, so to speak, permanently on-going. I must say I like the idea. It would be good if the Vienna branch of this symposium were to consider it. Unfortunately, we in Prague have not been able to prepare a final communique or report of the symposium. . . ., but we believe, that the Vienna symposium will issue a statement or a communique about the two parallel symposia.

We hope, that the next part of the symposium in Prague will be under better circumstances.

B/Havel