

DEMOCRACY FOR ALL

THE MOVEMENT FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES

MANIFESTO AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

OCTOBER – NOVEMBER, 1988

DEMOCRACY FOR ALL
Documents of the Movement for Civil Liberties

Published in November 1988 as No. 1 in the series DOSSIER by The Documentation Centre for the Promotion of Independent Czechoslovak Literature (ČSDS), Scheinfeld-Schwarzenberg, Federal Republic Germany

Translated from Czech by A. G. Brain

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DEMOCRACY FOR ALL

Manifesto of the Movement for Civil Liberties

The time has come to get involved in politics.

Let us engage in an activity which people treat with universal suspicion because of the dictatorial and incompetent way it has been pursued over the past decades by those who have monopolised it.

Politics must be rehabilitated as a sphere of activity. It must once more become the focal point for the expression and advancement of society's authentic interests.

What the Czechoslovak state has to show for its seventy years' existence gives no cause for rejoicing. Our entire society is experiencing a period of grave moral decline. Undemocratic conditions prevail. Our national and state sovereignty are both curtailed. Our economy and the level of our technology are going from bad to worse. Because of manipulation from the centre, our society's creative potential is permanently stifled. Our natural environment is in an ever more appalling state. Generation after generation of our citizens have abandoned their homeland in disgust. Our country, which was once one of the most advanced in Europe, is sinking so rapidly that we will soon be numbered among the most backward.

The present regime is aware of this crisis and has declared its intention to institute certain piecemeal reforms. However, it is incapable of changing its nature and abandoning its totalitarian style of government, which is the root cause of the crisis.

That is why the time is ripe for society itself – in other words, all of us – to enter the political arena.

Taking this demand of the times as our starting point, and basing ourselves on Charter 77's years of effort to provide a truthful

picture of conditions in our country, as well as drawing encouragement from the work of other independent initiatives, both in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere in the Soviet bloc, we have decided to set up the MOVEMENT FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES. We intend it as a loose association of political groups and clubs which are being created freely and autonomously in different parts of our Republic as meeting points for people who are not indifferent to our country's future and are prepared to engage in open debate about political issues of every kind, while respecting the principle of pluralism and being ready to engage in direct political action. This could mean setting up discussion forums at their place of work or in their neighbourhood, advancing various demands, both general and local, putting up independent candidates in elections, or other initiatives. In this way, the MOVEMENT FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES should provide scope for citizens freely to express their political aspirations, and help crystallise various more specifically political or sectional endeavours.

We herewith submit to all our fellow-citizens – in other words, all potential supporters of the MOVEMENT FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES – some of the main ideas and goals we have so far agreed on, as a starting point for debate, as proposals requiring further attention, or as shared principles in the broadest sense.

1. OURS IS A TRADITION OF DEMOCRACY

After all the lamentable events of our most recent past, many Czechs and Slovaks have wondered whether it was wise to have dismembered the Austrian empire in order to set up an independent Czechoslovak state, which, as a small country in the middle of Europe, has been ill-equipped to resist the pressures of its more powerful neighbours. Such people forget that Masaryk and his supporters – both Czech and Slovak – envisaged the creation of our Republic as part of an epoch-making democratic revolution, and the movement towards a gradually created community of democratic states. Their conception was based on the demands of a modern world in which all sections of society aspired to equality of opportunity and in which boundaries between nations and countries would inevitably become less important. In other words, their plans were neither provincial nor chauvinistic. However painful the past decades of this century have been, the wisdom of Masaryk's long-term vi-

sion is now being confirmed. As evidence one can cite among other things the process of growing unification in diversity which has been going ahead in Western Europe for many years already. However, the direst perils confronting both Europe and the world, whether in terms of war and peace or ecological damage, will not be held off indefinitely if the ideal of democratic unity is only fulfilled in one part of our continent. That is why more and more people both West and East are coming to realise that the only way forward, for all of us, is to work for complete democracy throughout Europe, including, therefore, the part we inhabit. We are convinced that it is the only possible path for Czechoslovakia as well. So far we cannot tell how our country will go about achieving democracy, nor what form that democracy eventually will assume. A simple return to the past is out of the question. None the less we do believe that the ideals and values out of which our state was born, and the experiences – both good and bad – which it underwent during its first two decades, represent an enormous legacy and inspiration on which we can draw.

Our principal concern, therefore, should be to achieve GENUINE DEMOCRACY, i.e. DEMOCRACY FOR ALL, by which we understand a system based on intellectual, political and economic pluralism and mutual tolerance.

Democracy will come about only through a complete moral renewal of society and a revival of its creative capacity, not on the basis of some bureaucratic decree. However, until democratic structures have been established, society's moral and creative energy cannot fully evolve and be put to good use. The one must go hand in hand with the other: the civic courage of individuals with the creation of new social conditions and structures.

2. POLITICAL PLURALISM

As proponents of intellectual freedom we want to make it impossible for the state to impose one particular outlook or doctrine to the detriment of all others. This situation must no longer be enshrined in the Constitution or other legislation as it is at present. The only instance in which the equality of ideas, or their expression should be restricted is in respect of those who demonstrably deny and restrict such equality themselves. As proponents of democracy we are opposed to any clause in the Constitution confirming the lead-

ing role of the Czechoslovak Communist Party or any other political party, or of any broader alliance of organisations which might arrogate the right to speak on behalf of everyone else. The country should be run by those who win the confidence of the people. If they lose that confidence let them hand over the reigns of government to those who acquire it. We are opposed on principle to the elevation of one social group above another. There must be no division of citizens into higher and lower categories. The system of privileges for Party members and career discrimination against others must be abolished. There must be no regulations making adherence to a particular political viewpoint a criterion for public office.

3. A NEW DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTION

These principles should form the basis for a new Czechoslovak Constitution which would positively guarantee citizens equality before the law and all basic civil rights, including the rights to freedom of thought, expression, assembly, association and fulfilment of political aspirations.

No clause of such a Constitution must call in question Czechoslovak state sovereignty.

Citizens must all be guaranteed the right to travel freely, including the right to leave their homeland and return to it. As a result, exile as a phenomenon would cease to exist. Any cases where it would be necessary to limit this right must be clearly laid down in the Constitution and any abuse of such limitations by means of any other law, decree or arbitrary interpretation must be expressly prohibited. No citizens may lose Czechoslovak citizenship without their own consent.

The Constitution should introduce the institution of referenda on certain matters of major concern to society as a whole. It should strengthen the authority of the state President and institute presidential elections by universal suffrage. It must establish an administrative judiciary. It is vital that a Constitutional Court be set up as the final arbiter on constitutionality.

While the future Constitution should be quite clear and unequivocal in its basic principles, it should also be concise and avoid any extraneous detail (such as in respect of the structure of the national administration) that might limit scope for subsequent evolution.

Specific legislation on elections and political organisations should be enacted in conjunction with the new Constitution. In the democratic spirit of the latter it would authorise free political activity and specify the ways in which various representative bodies of citizens may campaign for electoral support and participate in public administration.

Clubs and associations have always been a natural expression of a multifarious cultured society and the bedrock of its political life. A new law on clubs and associations must therefore be enacted in conjunction with the new Constitution so as to revive this sector which is stifled under present legislation.

We are fully aware, of course, that even the most perfect Constitution cannot of itself automatically guarantee genuine democracy. However, in the prevailing conditions, the implementation of a democratic Constitution would undoubtedly mean a great stride towards that goal.

4. OVERHAUL OF THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Judicial practices, knowledge of legal rights and judicial security are all declining in our country. As a first step towards remedying this situation, the entire legal system should be gradually overhauled. It must be made simpler and more accessible, and divested of all totalitarian features.

First and foremost, it is vital that our entire legal system should be brought unconditionally in line with the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which have been subsequently enshrined in the international human rights covenants and other international legal norms to which this country has formally subscribed; this must be done in such a way as to forestall any evasive manoeuvres.

The penal code must be revised, eliminating all politically abusive elements inconsistent with a democratic Constitution, and there must be a similar revision of civil, economic and administrative law in order to ensure a proper balance between the rights of the individual and society.

The total independence of the judiciary must be reintroduced, with a guaranteed right to legal defence and public oversight of judicial practice. The legal profession should be administered autonomously and defence counsel should enjoy the same rights in

court as the prosecution. By establishing an administrative judiciary the role of the prosecutor can be limited to representing the state's case in criminal trials.

A new scheme for the prison system needs to be drawn up, reflecting the latest knowledge and experience, and transferring prisons to civilian administration. Prisons must be humanised. Convicted citizens must not suffer physical or mental humiliation in the guise of re-education, nor must their labour be exploited. Suspects should be held on remand only where this is shown to be absolutely necessary, and the principle of presumption of innocence should prevail.

There must be a revision of police legislation whereby all officers of the National Security Corps (SNB) would be trained to act as protectors of their fellow-citizens, instead of dominating them. The police should be subject to supervision by representative assemblies and the general public.

State Security, that immense, awe-inspiring, omnipresent and all-powerful instrument, used by the regime to manipulate citizens, whose actual field of operations far and away exceeds even its present jurisdiction, should be overhauled so as to perform only essential counter-espionage and anti-terrorist functions. As a result its ranks could be radically reduced in number.

The reform of the economic system will require a thorough transformation of economic law. The present incoherent tangle of laws, including constant amendments, decrees and regulations, needs replacing by the simplest, most accessible and stable legal code possible, which would enable enterprises and individuals to be reliably informed of the regulations governing the various kinds of economic activity.

Other areas that needs simplifying and humanising are social, housing and, above all, administrative legislation. Citizens must lose their fear of officialdom as some sort of latter-day gentry, and officials must be answerable to representative assemblies and the general public. It is inadmissible, for instance, that members of local National Committees should be no more than trappings or adornments of the administration. National Committees will make a mockery of their name if their members fail to act with greater authority than the old imperial district administration.

5. SAVING THE ENVIRONMENT

Our countryside and our health are gravely imperilled. The air is poisoned with industrial emissions, rivers and streams are polluted with effluent, our soil and food products are contaminated with chemical fertilisers. Our forests are on the losing side in the chemical war being waged against them, and they are being barbarously destroyed as an easy source of raw materials for the timber industry of countries which take steps to protect their own forests. More and more people are being obliged to live in dreary barrack-like housing-estates which are almost exclusively constructed using obsolete prefabricated-panel technology. Life on such high-rise housing-estates goes from bad to worse and creates new social problems. Our country is building gigantic power stations and in the process it is destroying extensive tracts of our territory along with their ecosystems, at a time when our backward industry is one of the worst squanderers of energy in Europe. While we welcome every purification plant, we realise that purification plants alone will not solve the problem. Our entire economy must overhaul its style of thinking and operation and finally realise that ecologically-harmful operations make the least economic sense in the long term. We cannot go on exploiting our own future and paying for short-term economic gains by leaving a wasteland for our grandchildren to live in. We are convinced that a pluralist economy – one capable of reacting flexibly to people's experience and scientific discoveries – will facilitate that change. It will not guarantee it, however. It will require courageous, organised pressure by all those who realise the harmfulness of current practices. Any projects that might disturb the natural environment should take into account the views of the local population and respect their opinions.

6. PATHS TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Experience has shown that there can be no economic pluralism without political pluralism. Likewise, without economic pluralism a country's economy stagnates and goes into decline. It will therefore require the sort of changes which we advocating in the political system if there is to be any hope of a truly radical economic reform freeing enterprises from the tyranny of the central bureaucracy. The enterprise sector can be effectively influenced by means of fi-

nancial instruments and conscious support for promising branches of the economy, but above all by restoring the principles of supply and demand, competition and monetary/market relations.

We believe that a natural component of a radical economic reform on these lines should be the pursuit of new forms of social ownership, including self-management. We are in favour of extensive support to the co-operative movement. We want to see a pluralism of different types of ownership and decision-making, and the creation of such conditions as enable the various economic sectors and industries to seek forms of organisation which are most appropriate to their particular needs and make optimal use of people's enterprise as the best way of achieving their prosperity.

There must be the complete revival of private enterprise in the field of self-employment, crafts, and small and medium-sized firms, as well as in one section of agriculture and in the field of culture. Scope should be created for farmers to run family farms or lease land on a long-term basis from co-operatives, on the grounds that the success of their personal endeavours is likely to benefit society as a whole. Without the contribution and initiative of the self-employed, small co-operatives and small independent firms it is impossible to provide the population with adequate services, ensure a wide range of consumer goods or encourage innovation. It is a sector that will require generous support in the shape of long-term credits and tax relief, as well as material assistance in the early stages of trading. This could also create new employment opportunities for those who will lose their jobs as a result of necessary staff cuts in the overgrown civil service and the suppression of unprofitable operations. Proper legislation must be enacted for the small business sector protecting those involved in it from being deprived of the fruits of their work.

Large industry will have to be reconstructed in order to ensure that considerations of economic profitability are not subordinated to political considerations, such as artificial employment or priorities geared to unnatural international economic relations. The Czechoslovak economy should naturally be integrated into the global economy on the basis of a generally advantageous international division of labour.

7. FREE INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITY

None of our country's problems will be solved without the freedom to speak and write about them publicly. There is a sense in which intellectual and cultural activity, as well as the mass media, act as society's brain or nervous system, in other words, as the means whereby society can become conscious of itself. They represent for society a source of knowledge and self-knowledge, and provide scope for it to reveal and define its own ethical consistency and identity. Hence the basic precondition for any change for the better is freedom of culture in the broadest sense of the world.

First and foremost, therefore, there must be the abolition of all overt and covert forms of censorship, as well as of every kind of central manipulation of this sphere. There must be freedom for independent communications media, publishing houses, literary agencies, theatres and other cultural facilities to be created and operate, irrespective of whether they are run as state enterprises or on a co-operative or private basis. No central authority or state-manipulated unions shall be allowed to restrict intellectual activity or evaluate its worth. The public must decide. The authorities should do no more than provide material and organisational conditions for cultural activity. The role of the unions in this sector should solely be to represent their members' occupational, professional or social interests. No unions should be allowed to enjoy monopoly status nor prevent the creation of others.

A thorough transformation of the education system is also vital, in view of its present alarming state of decline. Education means far more than just training young people for occupations required by the national economy, and it certainly does not mean ideological indoctrination of any kind or fashioning a submissive population incapable of independent thought. The aim should be to provide students with an all-round education while fostering intellectual freedom, opening young people's horizons and providing them with moral guidance. Education should be run according to the principle of pluralism of institutions and ideas. The inviolability of academic soil should be guaranteed and political considerations must no longer play a role in the selection of teachers, pupils and students, nor in the bestowal of academic titles. In all instances, the only criteria should be a candidate's talent, professional suitability and personal qualities.

Scope must also be created within the field of science for the setting up of independent workplaces, research institutes and development workshops funded either by the state or individual enterprises, coops, organisations or foundations. The free movement of people and ideas always used to be taken for granted within the academic world and universities. Unless it is restored we shall be the first to suffer.

8. FREEDOM OF BELIEF

Spiritual pluralism does not only mean equality and mutual respect among people with different beliefs, but also mutual respect for their right to express their beliefs within relevant institutions and in public. Therefore we fully support the demand for the separation of Church and State, as well as the demand that believers in our country should enjoy the same rights as in all civilised countries. Religious orders, both of men and women, must enjoy the guaranteed freedom to pursue their activity in accordance with their centuries-old traditions. Religious freedom is not merely the concern of individual communities but the concern of us all. So long as Christians are unable truly to live as Christians, then no other citizens either, including atheists, can live fully according to their beliefs. State supervision of churches is amoral because it creates inequality within society, with a given section of society subject to one more restriction than the rest of the population because of their faith, and it is a restriction enshrined in law. We believe the recent actions by catholics in support of the rights of believers and of civil liberties to be enormously significant in historical terms.

9. INDEPENDENT TRADE UNIONS

Workers must have the right to establish their own trade unions at grassroots level, as well as to organise within them in whatever way they judge acceptable and use them to defend their own authentic occupational and social interests. Experience clearly shows that the right to pluralism is as important in the trade-union movement as anywhere else. The state-run monopoly unions cannot be anything but another instrument of totalitarian power, however much they try to do their best. If the State is not to be the sole employer of all working people in this country, nor the one and only representative

of their interests, then it is inconceivable that it should be both at once. Trade unions must be independent of the State and the employers if they are to fulfil their proper function, if we are to have a sound economy, and if we are to halt the growth of latent social problems.

10. STOP THE MILITARISATION OF SOCIETY

For many different reasons, ranging from ethical and social considerations to international political and economic factors, we believe that the following demands are particularly relevant at the present time: a shortening of the period of national service and the institution of alternative service for the benefit of those citizens with a conscientious objection to the bearing of arms; a reduction of military budgets and their publication; the humanisation of military service; the disbanding of all paramilitary organisations and unlawful armed units, and the demilitarisation of children's education and of civilian life in general. The existing situation in this sphere is a relic of Stalinism. We also demand the opening of talks on the withdrawal of Soviet units from Czechoslovakia. We reject the argument that they have to be here in order to maintain a strategic balance, since it was these very units whose arrival destroyed the strategic balance and their presence here helps maintain the current asymmetry in conventional forces in Europe – which is even acknowledged by the Warsaw Pact.

11. NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

Czechoslovakia was created as the first ever joint state of two kindred nations, the Czechs and Slovaks – the first time in history they had combined in one independent state. frontiers. It was also a state with considerable national minorities. Twenty years ago it rightly became a federation. Our view is, however, that this federation will lose all relevance if it continues to be no more than an administrative expression of undemocratic centralised power. Totalitarian federalisation must be replaced by a democratic federation, as the unmanipulable expression of the desire of our two nations for a common state. It must allow them to evolve in a truly sovereign way, in accordance with their authentic aspirations. Ef-

forts in favour of democratic pluralism will have to go hand in hand with heightened understanding for the natural differences in social structures that will manifest themselves in the two national republics, and in the lives of the minorities.

A democratic relationship between the majority and the national minorities living in Czechoslovakia, i.e. Hungarians, Poles, Germans and Ruthenians should display a profounder respect for the rights being claimed by those minorities themselves, and the manner in which they themselves implement them. It is necessary to recognise the ethnic individuality of citizens with Jewish or Romanynationality and the rights that flow from it.

Our modern state already has quite a number of bitter experiences connected with lack of respect for national differences, whether on the part of our own state or neighbouring countries. For that reason alone it should have a great understanding for national issues than is in fact the case on account of the system which currently dominates it.

12. CZECHOSLOVAKIA AS PART OF EUROPE

We regard Czechoslovakia's path to democracy as part and parcel of the wider process currently under way in various forms in most countries of the Soviet bloc. Citizens are beginning to claim their freedoms while governments are beginning to realise that the totalitarian system is stuck in a blind alley.

However, for us this process does not imply any attempt to break the historical links that have been created between our countries. On the contrary, our hope is that these ties will also undergo a democratic transformation, so that they are based on equal rights and full respect for the wishes of all the countries involved. Our aim is therefore not to cause destabilisation, insecurity, and conflict, but instead to transcend the vestiges of Stalinist imperial policies. We are also concerned to break with the legacy of the Cold War and traditional policies of trying to balance superpower interests in Europe, as well as with the mistaken conviction that the only way to achieve peace is to maintain the status quo. True and lasting peace can only be based on the mutual confidence of sovereign nations and democratic states. Such confidence is not built, however, by diplomats in negotiating chambers. It is there that confidence can be transformed into practical measures, but first it

must come into existence and grow within the European community as a whole. And that can only happen when people begin to convince themselves every day in specific and practical ways that respect for the rights of citizens and nations is growing – above all in that half of Europe where this has so far been least the case so far. This crucial condition must be fulfilled if the democratic integration of Europe is to become a reality.

As can be seen, our efforts in favour of democracy are not aimed against any one state or nation. On the contrary we consider them as part of the lengthy struggle for genuine understanding, sincere trust and an ever more authentic co-operation among all. It is a struggle that should culminate in what T.G.Masaryk once called “humanity as an all-embracing community of friendship”.

* * *

We are neither utopian nor impatient. We are fully aware that Czechoslovakia will not be transformed into a prospering democratic state overnight. We all have still a lot of arduous work ahead of us. However it is work that cannot be delayed any more; we have to get on with the job without waiting for anything else. There are too many threatening clouds gathering above contemporary civilisation, and the crisis in which our country finds itself is too deep for us to permit ourselves such a luxury.

We appeal to all our fellow-citizens to take the path we suggest in the manner they see fit. They can do so not only by signing this Manifesto but also through practical activity in favour of democracy in our country.

Prague, Brno and Bratislava, 15th October 1988.

The undersigned endorse this Manifesto and support its aims:

František Adamík	Jozef Jablonický	Miloš Rejchrt
Milan Balabán	Bohumír Janát	Zdeněk Rotrekl
Pavel Barša	Drahoslava Janderová	Jan Ruml
Rudolf Battěk	Milan Jelínek	Jiří Ruml
Jarmila Bělíková	Miroslav Jodl	Jan Schneider
Tomáš Bělka	Jarmila Johnová	Anton Selecký
Antonín Bělohoubek	Milan Jungmann	Jiří Skalický
Václav Benda	Petr Kabeš	Dušan Slávik
Rudolf Bereza	Jiří Kantůrek	Karel Srp
Karel Biňovec	Eva Kantůrková	Andrej Stankovič
Irena Borůvková	Božena Komárková	Jan Šabata
Pavel Bratinka	Jan Kozlík	Jaroslav Šabata
Marcela Brunclíková	Daniel Kroupa	František Šamalík
Jana Bucharová	Jiří Křivský	Dolores Šavrdová
Ján Čarnogurský	Marie Rút Křížková	Jaroslav Šebesta
Jiřina Čechová	Bohumír Kuba	Jiřina Šiklová
Albert Černý	Marie Kubová	Milan Šimečka
Josef Danisz	Miroslav Kusý	Jan Šimsa
Ivan Dejmal	Ivan Lamper	Jan Štern
Stanislav Devátý	Ján Langoš	Olga Šulcová
Jiří Dienstbier	Aleš Lederer	Petruška Šustrová
Viktor Dobal	Ladislav Lis	Jáchym Topol
Blanka Dobešová	Jan Litomiský	Jan Trefulka
Jan Dobrovský	Sergej Machonin	Jakub Trojan
Martin Dohnal	Jiří Machovský	Vladimír Turek
Přemysl Fialka	Vladimír Maňák	Miroslav Tyl
Markéta Fialková	Anna Marvanová	Milan Uhde
Karel Freund	Jaroslav Mezník	Jitka Uhdeová
Eduard Geissler ml.	Vladimír Mlynář	Václav Umlauf
Jaromír Glac	Dana Mrtvá	Zdeněk Urbánek
Štefan Gürtler	Michal Mrtvý	Eduard Vacek
Vladimír Hajný	Pavel Nauman	Ludvík Vaculík
Václav Havel	Jaroslav Opat	Eva Vidlářová
Ladislav Hejránek	Martin Palouš	Tomáš Vlasák
Ivan Hoffman	Radim Palouš	Josef Vohryzek
Marie Holubcová	Jan Payne	Alexandr Vondra
Jiřina Hrábková	Lenka Payneová	Josef Vydrář
Ludvík Hradílek	Karel Pecka	Pavel Vydrář
Tomáš Hradílek	Petr Placák	Tomáš Zelenka
Jana Hradílková	Drahuše Proboštová	Rudolf Zeman
Simona Hradílková	Lenka Procházková	Vít Zukal
Lenka Hrachová	Tomáš Pšross	Kateřina Zukalová

The Movement for Civil Liberties can be contacted at the following addresses, to which reports of further signatures to the founding manifesto may also be sent:

Rudolf Battěk, Křižíkova 78, Praha 8, 186 00

Václav Benda, Karlovo nám. 18, Praha 2, 120 00

Ján Čarnogurský, Adlerova 10, Bratislava-Dúbravka, 841 02

Tomáš Hradílek, Zahradní 892, Lipník nad Bečvou, 751 31

Jiří Kantůrek, Xaveriova 13, Praha 5, 150 00

Jan Kozlík, Pionýrů 69, Praha 6, 169 00

Ladislav Lis, Šišková 1228, Praha 8, 182 00

Anna Marvanová, Jeronýmova 2, Praha 3, 13000

Jaroslav Šabata, Chorázova 3, Brno, 602 00

Jan Štern, Bělčická 2846, Praha 4, 141 00

Alexandr Vondra, Trojanova 1, Praha 2, 120 00

APPEAL TO EUROPEAN PUBLIC OPINION

After being suppressed for many years, 28th October was once again proclaimed a national holiday this year. Right up to the last minute, democratically-minded citizens in Czechoslovakia were hoping to hold a peaceful and dignified demonstration in the historic areas of Prague to mark the seventieth anniversary of the Republic's foundation, at which representatives of six citizen's initiatives would be allowed to make public speeches lawfully expressing the views of socially-committed citizens.

Now as we pen this appeal in hiding from the secret police, we know that it is not to be. The regime has plumbed new depths in its contempt and hatred for the non-communist majority of citizens in this country by fulfilling its threat to frustrate and suppress any expression of independent democratic thinking. It has mounted a mindless and provocative repressive operation. From the early hours of 27th October 1988 operational units of the State Security (secret) police started searching people's homes in almost every part of the country, often in the most brutal fashion, and they have arrested or detained dozens of citizens who for years now have been at odds with the totalitarian regime because of their demands for the implementation of human rights and civil liberties. The cynical and brazen behaviour of the present rulers knows no bounds. The way they have tried to feign support for the traditions and legacy of republican democracy and their desperate attempts to win the favour of a nation that no longer believes them only demonstrates the extent of their moral and spiritual bankruptcy. We watched on our television screens the

impassive faces of the regimented crowds at the official rally on 27th October, totally oblivious to the ideological somersaults being performed by the speakers. It was a painful and undignified spectacle. This was no celebration, but rather the picture of a fading era of totalitarian rule, with all its tragic-comic overtones. Anyone who knows the truth about the past seventy years of Czechoslovak history must have felt the same way. To speak about „the homeland“, „rights“ and „freedom“ at the very moment when hundreds of uniformed and plain-clothes police were harassing citizens for proclaiming the democratic ideals of an open society, and then, the following day, on 28th October, to send thousands more police to attack demonstrators in the most savage and ruthless manner, is not just an act of moral perversion, it is a sign of desperation.

The truly popular commemoration of our national holiday that took place today embodied the spirit of the nation-wide citizens' movement for political rights and freedoms.

The police raids in the early hours of 27th October were directed against signatories of the *Democracy for All* manifesto who have spoken up in support of the MOVEMENT FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES. It is conceivable that the regime will seek to indict them and put them on trial. This would be to throw down the gauntlet to European democratic opinion at a time when efforts to achieve a consensus about peaceful coexistence throughout Europe are at the heart of all current international political talks. By mounting this drastic operation against its own citizens, the regime is torpedoing those efforts in the most baffling way. Foreign governments, and not only those in Europe, will be obliged to consider very carefully to what extent they can trust the words and deeds of the present Czechoslovak government.

We appeal to European public opinion and the leaders of countries represented at the Vienna talks on European security and cooperation not to countenance any further terrorisation of democratically minded citizens in our country. We also ask them to voice their protests in order to prevent the prosecution and imprisonment of members of all citizens' initiatives here. We demand the immediate release of all those citizens arrested or detained. We believe in the justice of our cause and the objective need for our society to develop and fulfil the democratic humanitarian ideals and principles of the first President of the Czechoslovak Republic T. G. Masaryk, which also inspired the *Democracy for All* manifesto.

Rudolf Battěk

Ladislav Lis

Signatories of the Manifesto of the Movement for Civil Liberties

Prague, 28th October 1988

STATEMENT OF THE PROVISIONAL
COORDINATING COMMITTEE
OF THE MOVEMENT FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES

The Movement for Civil Liberties came into existence on 15th October 1988 with the publication of a manifesto entitled *Democracy for All*. The manifesto was signed by 120 citizens from Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia. Twelve of the signatories offered the use of their addresses so that other citizens who agree with the manifesto's aims and proposals may send in their signatures, suggestions and critical comments.

The manifesto describes the community in creation as a free association of people ready to take action in support of the proposals outlined which include the rehabilitation of political debate and political culture in our country. In the spirit of Masaryk's motto that „democracy is discussion“, the text of the manifesto is open to further suggestions and polemic on specific points, as the case may be. There is nothing in the document that suggests that people should engage in disorderly or unlawful activity.

In the early hours of 27th October 1988, almost all the manifesto's signatories were arrested by the State Security and held in custody for 96 hours. The secret police carried out searches at the homes of those signatories whose addresses were published, and at the homes of a number of others, and investigations were initiated against them on the suspicion of incitement. As the dozens of manifesto signatories at Ruzyně Prison and in other remand cells stood facing the wall with the hands behind their backs in regulation fashion, they had the opportunity to reflect on the possibility of dialogue with a brick wall. They included people whose work has won them international acclaim and of whom any rationally governed country would be proud. The boorishness of the entire operation can be judged, among other things, by the fact that 71-year-old writer and translator Zdeněk Urbánek was held in prison for four days and that even 85-year-old Professor Božena Komárková of Brno was not spared police harassment, and they are both such gentle and kindly people. Some 90 civil liberties activists were held in Ruzyně along with representatives of other independent campaigns and the total number of those held in different parts of the republic is estimated at 200-300 people.

In an article by Messrs Kojzar, Podzimek and Walter in *Rudé právo* on 31st October 1988, the manifesto is labelled a “counterrevolutionary pamphlet” and its proposals are totally misrepresented. For instance, the proposal that people who so wish should be allowed to set up a family farm (as is now common practice in the Soviet Union) is portrayed by *Rudé právo* as a call for the dismemberment of farming cooperatives. The proposal for the restoration of private enterprise in certain areas of manufacturing and the service sector (which substantially parallels what is planned

or even in practice in Hungary) is also counter-revolutionary according to them. As for the recommendation that citizens who agree with the manifesto's proposals should support it by adding their signatures or in some other suitable manner, this is interpreted by the authors of the article as incitement to terror and violence.

In other words, it is the same old tactics that have always been employed when arrests and political trials are in the offing. Instead of seeking to eliminate mistakes and the faults of the system this is yet another blatant attempt to eliminate and intimidate their critics. But it now makes even less sense than ever, now that a large section of the population, and in particular a large proportion of young people, are undergoing a revival of civic awareness. Their yearning for greater freedom is not going to respond to the traditional remedy of unbridled repression, trials and imprisonment. The only remedy for such yearning, is greater freedom. To call this section of the general public and citizenry "anti-social elements" – in other words, a rabble – as Czechoslovak television described the thousands who demonstrated on Wenceslas Square, is not just insulting it is political folly. The massive operation mounted against civil rights activists and against the demonstration in the centre of Prague has already seriously tarnished the reputation of our country's leaders and of Czechoslovakia itself in the eyes of democrats everywhere.

Any attempt to portray the signatories of the *Democracy for All* manifesto as criminals and put them on trial would be seen not only here, but elsewhere in Europe and the world as deliberate torpedoing of efforts to achieve international understanding. It would discredit once and for all the proposal for a "zone of trust". The manifesto is alleged to be "a call for a government take-over by counter-revolutionary forces" (again according to Rudé právo of 31st October 1988). This is totally untrue. The Movement for Civil Liberties does not seek to take power. What it wants is for Czechoslovakia to have an honest and truly democratic administration and government. The proposals contained in the *Democracy for All* manifesto are therefore not motivated by any hankering for power but by a desire to put the Czechoslovak house in order.

Finally, we would like to thank all those citizens who have spoken up for us in these difficult moments, and all those who have voiced sympathy for our cause. To date, a further 53 citizens have signed the manifesto.

On behalf of the Provisional Coordinating Committee of the
MOVEMENT FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES:

Rudolf Battěk
Václav Benda

Ján Čarnogurský
Tomáš Hradílek

Ladislav Lis
Jaroslav Šabata

Prague, Brno, Bratislava, 4th November 1988