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**CZECHOSLOVAKIA:
HEAT IN JANUARY 1989**

**Prečan: Democratic Revolution
Just a Few Sentences
Havel: Testing Ground**

**Chronicle of Events:
January – March 1989**

**Documents and Testimonies:
January – March 1989**

Compiled by Jan Vladislav



**Quarterly of the Documentation
Centre for the Promotion of Independent
Czechoslovak Literature**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: HEAT IN JANUARY 1989

Introduction	3
Vilém Prečan: Democratic revolution	6
Just a few sentences	16
Václav Havel: Testing ground	18

CHRONICLE OF EVENTS

January 1989	21
February 1989	39
March 1989	51

DOCUMENTS AND TESTIMONIES

(D1 – D85)	61
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SUPPLEMENTS AND EXPLANATORY NOTES

List of documents and testimonies	166
List of Czechoslovak citizens charged and convicted during the period 1st January to 30th March 1989	169
List of the Czechoslovak independent initiatives	177
List of Czechoslovak periodicals	178
Abbreviations	179

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA: HEAT IN JANUARY 1989

**Compiled by Jan Vladislav
in collaboration with Vilém Prečan**

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1989





INTRODUCTION

The reason for this special issue

The exceptional events that occurred in Czechoslovakia and particularly Prague at the beginning of 1989 made necessary the exceptional character and size of this special issue of ACTA which takes up the entire year's output. The chronicle of the events in January and afterwards, together with the relative documents and many dramatic testimonies to them also constitute in their way part of independent literature and journalism, as well as of contemporary historical documentation, i.e. the very areas covered by ACTA. And since these were texts which, at the time this present volume was being prepared, had no hope of being published either in Czechoslovakia, where there was the greatest interest in them, or elsewhere in the world, where they would also be worthy of attention, the editors thought it not only right but essential to provide a place for them in ACTA. In doing so we are fully aware that this represents a departure from the journal's established pattern. We regard this as an exception to the rule but one we would be prepared to resort to again in the future should the circumstances so require.

The fact is that the rehabilitation of historical truth does not solely concern the past, however recent. It is also, if not above all, a matter of the present. It is not just a sort of spontaneous development under the

pressure of events, it is also, if not above all, the outcome of a deliberate and constant effort to establish the historical truth without delay. In short, only by a systematic effort to portray real history and immediately to publish documents and testimonies about what is actually happening *here and now* can we counter the influence of all those Orwellian *ministries of Truth* created by the totalitarian systems and whose effectiveness we sometimes tend to underestimate. Czechoslovakia's version of that ministry has also displayed a rare talent for seeking out historical events where there are none, and rejecting, suppressing and persecuting them where they have actually occurred. That was the case, for instance, several years ago after the publication of Charter 77. It was the case during the restless year of 1988 and again this year, when this lengthy development one may rightly term the *democratic revolution* reached one of its peaks in the events around the 20th anniversary of Jan Palach's death.

The historical significance of those events, marked above all by the determination of the new generations and their first conscious public involvement in society was obvious even to a distant observer by the second half of January. Hence the idea arose back then to capture them *without delay* in as detailed and in-depth manner as possible through a

coherent series of documents, eyewitness accounts and other material such as was arriving in increasing quantities from Czechoslovakia and elsewhere.

That, quite simply, was the genesis and intention of the present volume. The original plan, in line with its immediate practical purpose, was to limit it solely to the events that occurred during January 1989. However, in the light of developments and their ramifications we were obliged to pursue at least some of the main stories to their conclusion – i.e. up to the trials of the protagonists in the second half of February and the appeal hearings at the end of March which confirmed those verdicts. That marks the end of our chronicle and documentation for the time being. What happened next will be, we hope, the subject of another publication.

As far as ACTA itself is concerned, it will continue its existing activity as indicated in the preliminary contents of the next issue, which can be found at the end of this volume.

How the material is arranged

This special issue has required far more work, space and, of course, time than the editors originally expected. Consequently it is only appearing now on the anniversary of the events in question. The issue opens with commentaries by Vítězslav Prečan and Václav Havel, which are among the first attempts at identifying the wider connotations and underlying significance of the events. There then follows the text of the statement *Just a Few Sentences* whose publication and widespread endorsement represented a further phase of the developments foreshadowed by the suppressed demonstrations in January 1989.

This introductory section is followed by a detailed, albeit far from exhaustive, *Chronicle of Events*,

which tries to give a day-by-day account of the events of the first quarter of 1989 and their repercussions at home and abroad. The most important section, however, is that entitled *Documents and testimonies* even though it too could not hope to be exhaustive in view of the amount of material. It is a selection which seeks to provide as revealing a picture as possible not only of the overall shape of the movement and its various stages, but also its characteristic features. It therefore includes not only the main documents of the various civic initiatives and some typical reactions in the official press, but also immediate individual testimonies given during the events and so far unpublished. In selecting both the *Documents and Testimonies* and the *Chronicle*, our choice was influenced to a certain extent by a concern for the level of knowledge and interest of the readership for which the English version of this issue is intended.

Editorial Notes

To help readers keep track of individual events, within the *Chronicle*, references are given to other places in that same section (marked C plus a date) or to the relevant parts of the section *Documents and Testimonies* (D plus a serial number). The documents and testimonies are printed in chronological order. They are marked with the initial D and numbered from 1 to 85, followed by the date and the place of issue, where this was not Prague. The date given is that of the original document; where the document was not dated – as in the case of testimonies – an estimated date is given in brackets. The date a document originated is not necessarily identical with the date it was made public.

The Charter 77 Documents and other major pronouncements by the Czechoslovak civic initiatives

are reprinted in full. In the case of testimonies, particularly those telephoned to Radio Free Europe, improvised statements were edited and abridged where necessary, so as to avoid repetition and confusion. Where texts from the official press have been shortened this is indicated in the conventional way; their characteristic style and orthography have been preserved as in the original (e.g. the printing of *charter* with a lower-case initial letter, etc.). Factual errors and deliberate disinformation have been left without comment; in most cases the other documents place them in proper perspective. Interested readers will be able to find full versions of these and other materials from the same sources we ourselves used, i.e. the documents, statements and reports that circulated in Czechoslovakia; unofficial journals and samizdat publications, and from Radio Free Europe broadcasts; and finally from the official Czechoslovak press.

As additional information we have included at the end of the volume a *List of Czechoslovak Citizens* charged and convicted during the first quarter of 1989 either directly in connection with the January events or as a result of civic activities during the previous year; a *List of the Civic Initiatives* and a *List of Periodicals* mentioned in the text; and finally, a

List and explanation of the abbreviations used and a *List of Documents and Testimonies*. In view of the amount of source material and the character of some of it, not to mention the limited time and opportunity available to work on this publication, one cannot exclude the possibility that certain inaccuracies or mistakes might have crept into the text. The editors will be happy to receive notification of any errors and will publish corrections where necessary.

Jan Vladislav

Postscript

The unexpected turn of events in November and December 1989 has meant that this collection is appearing in quite different circumstances from those in which it was prepared. This does not alter in any essential way, however, its importance as documentation, which was its main purpose from the outset. Even in the new situation it is a reminder of the events that played an important role in what we hope will enter European history as the Great Central European Revolution – the first revolution in which there will have been no violence or reign of terror on the part of the revolutionaries.

20th December 1989

Vilém Prečan

DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION

I.

A hundred and forty years on, Marx and Engels's well-known pronouncement about Europe being haunted by the spectre of communism requires some modification: communist Europe is now haunted by the "spectre" of democracy. One can hardly deny that "democracy" is not only the key concept in the political vocabulary of those trying to solve in practice the number one issue facing that part of the world: i.e. the irreversible transcendence of the Soviet-style totalitarian regime. It has become the most frequently used expression even of those who are trying to save the system.

In three countries of the external Soviet empire, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia – also known as eastern central Europe – democracy is quite clearly on the march, although at a different pace in each of them. In Poland, the April 1989 agreement – a milestone in the past forty years' history of that country – represents a major step towards renewing society's inner sovereignty vis-a-vis the communist state and paves the way to a parliamentary democracy there (even though some may undoubtedly regard it as a snare prepared by the present communist establish-

ment in order to trap the democratic opposition into sharing in the regime's own demise and discrediting itself through abetting unpopular economic measures).

In Hungary, where the regime does not have a recent history of military rule à la Jaruzelski or Czechoslovak-style normalisation, it looks from the outside as if part of the ruling party leadership was borrowing ideas from the democratic opposition and preparing itself for a political contest under conditions of free elections and a multiparty system. (Perhaps Hungary most aptly fits Zbigniew Brzezinski's analytical observation about the possibility of winning over the communist elite to a more permanent system of national values.)

But even in Czechoslovakia, which would seem to be a European leader in political inertia and where the ruling political establishment continues to resist any idea of dialogue with society and makes known in every possible way its opposition to any genuine shift or change, democracy's cards have been laid on the table. As a leading independent Czech commentator Milan Šimečka puts it: There is one thing we can be sure of. Things would be totally different here had our democratic political culture not been de-

stroyed. Our only hope, if we are not to hit rock bottom, is to create it anew; it is the only idea that can lend meaning or purpose to our future.

This idea was worked into a political programme in the "Democracy for All" manifesto brought out in autumn 1988 by the independent Movement for Civil Liberties. Václav Havel has called that manifesto the most important political card of 1988 as far as his country was concerned, in that the seemingly self-evident truths it contained were set out in a single document, publicly, and as a basis for political activity. For the fact is that the Manifesto is an appeal for society to step into the political arena, seeing that the present rulers – those who are to blame for the moral crisis, the lack of democracy, the limitations on our national and state sovereignty, and our economic and technological decline – are unwilling to abandon their totalitarian style of government. The manifesto explicitly challenges the legitimacy of the so-called leading role of the communist Party and asserts democratic pluralism as the fundamental political principle. This means, according to Havel who was one of the Manifesto's signatories, that everyone has an equal right to compete for political power.

*

Can this march of democracy come under the heading of "democratic revolution"? This expression which surprises a lot of people and is not very frequent in Europe, has an optimistic ring to it and inspires hope and great expectations. Maybe too great, in fact. Even so, it is a functional enough term – with the following provisos:

1. "Democratic revolution" is used to describe the underlying trend of the times towards democracy, a

system based on spiritual, political and economic pluralism and mutual tolerance.

2. The democratic revolution has grown out of the gestation of elements of civil society which have gradually established themselves inside the totalitarian system, but which exist relatively independent of the totalitarian power structures. The democratic revolution commences the moment when that civil society advances the demand for changes in the system on the basis of democracy and freedom and formulates a political programme for achieving them.

3. The democratic revolution, whose progress is one of the fundamental or even key phenomena of the present time in societies under communist rule, is one of the least violent revolutions in history. Cars are not set on fire in the name of democracy, nor bombs exploded. It is not a revolution that rallies the masses beneath banners with demagogic slogans. Its advocates are staunch opponents of violence and civil war. They are open to compromise and to ideas of national or social reconciliation that would break the existing chain of violence which is inherent in Communism.

But the era of democratic revolution is one full of violence and suffering, of course. The threat or actual use of violence varies from country to country and comes from those currently in power – the party of guardians of the status quo and its police, its crack units, and in certain cases, such as in Czechoslovakia, its terrorists from the ranks of the secret police posing as incensed members of the public.

The democratic revolution of the nineteen eighties, which is our topic here, has its historical forerunners or portents. The Kronstadt Mutiny of 1921, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the Prague Spring of

1968, the Solidarity era of 1980-81 (and to a certain extent even the thaw under Khrushchev) all had something in common, in spite of their individual characteristics and particular historical contexts: they all expressed society's desire to attenuate, limit and finally eliminate the totalitarian nature of the communist system.

One distinguished antecedent, possibly the key initial step in the direction of the democratic revolution, was the "moral revolution" which served as the basis for the dissidence of the 1970s: the new concept of human rights emergent from the critique of communist totalitarianism, the cultivation of citizenship, the implementation of the principle of life in the truth, independent culture and samizdat. The achievements of the moral revolution, often ignored or even ridiculed by advocates of "realpolitik", are now becoming plain to see and are being re-assessed as civil society enters the arena as a self-assured and sovereign political partner or opponent of the existing political establishment.

The democratic revolution we are now witnessing differs from its predecessors in that it is taking place in the period of "the terminal crisis of communism" of the "progressive decay and the deepening agony both of its system and of its dogma", to quote Zbigniew Brzezinski. The crisis is of such magnitude that it cannot be solved by means of piecemeal remedies while leaving the system intact: the belief in the irreversibility of the communist system has been shaken to its foundations. The democratic revolution is a response to that crisis while being at the same time one of the factors of the further deepening of the crisis, above all because it points to a radical solution that goes to the heart of the matter.

The question is sometimes asked whether the reforms undertaken or planned by the present communist establishment are not in fact part of the democratic revolution. To my way of thinking, these are two phenomena which differ in many respects, particularly in terms of their aims, but cannot be entirely separated from each other.

The democratic revolution in the Soviet bloc in the eighties has its own authentic roots and sources of inspiration. It is not derived from any socialist ideology, nor from any discussion about socialism, whether true or false, unsullied or sullied. Nor is it an offshoot of Gorbachevism, even though its dynamism is – in different ways, depending on the country – indirectly influenced by it. The goal of the democratic revolution is not a further attempt to square the circle: i.e. to modernise the communist system and make it more efficient while retaining its essence. The aim is to do away with it once and for all. The democratic revolution seeks not "democratization" but democracy – free from any further misleading adjectives like "people's" or "socialist". It does not advocate "glasnost" but free speech. It counters the idea of socialist pluralism with a programme of freedom, spiritual, political and economic pluralism, and the emancipation of citizens and civil society from the state.

The democratic revolution's sources of inspiration are not primarily remembrance of a democratic past, even though efforts to draw inspiration from all the spiritual and political roots of democratic thought do play an important role in each of the countries. It derives its legitimacy from the universal applicability of human rights and it substantiates its arguments with an open analysis of the contemporary situation

in the individual countries of the Soviet bloc, an analysis devoid of any socialist phraseology.

The democratic revolution is therefore also a reaction to those societies' forty or more years' experience of communist totalitarianism – whether called "socialism", "existing socialism", "socialism with a human face" (or without) – and particularly in the last two decades, since the failure of the latest attempt at reform on the basis of so-called revisionism. Equally it is the outcome of the experience of prosperously functioning democratic systems in Europe and North America, not to mention the successful transition to democracy in Spain, Portugal and elsewhere. In this respect, the global context has seen a positive change. The democratic ideal, scorned and ridiculed in the inter-war years, and even as late as the fifties, is now more favourably placed than at any time this century.

*

We talk about a "general" or "overall" crisis of communism, but apart from its general features, it also displays very specific characteristics in individual countries. As far as Czechoslovakia is concerned, it is fair to say that no communist party in any other country of the Soviet bloc ever managed to lose moral prestige, confidence and legitimacy in the eyes of society to the same extent as the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Twenty years of "normalisation" used it up well and truly. Even its last remaining weapon of any power, the – until recently – much-vaunted "consumer and social guarantees of socialism", is losing in effectiveness in the face of reality. With a certain exaggeration, one might say that the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia has written itself off as a political force capable of generating an alternative to the present establishment.

Apart from a small circle of people who still entertain 1968-vintage reformist illusions, no one in Czechoslovakia believes that the Communist Party [of Czechoslovakia] is capable of any sort of "renewal" or that it embodies any sort of hope for the future. Distrusted and rejected by society, particularly the younger generation, and lacking any intellectual base, it is not capable of following even the Soviet, Polish or Hungarian examples.

And whereas people – not so long ago they were called the "silent majority" – are losing their fear, the establishment is beginning to feel threatened. They are now so isolated that they must instinctively know in themselves that their fate is sealed. Being unable to produce from their midst an alternative political elite – even as a stop-gap measure – capable of initiating a dialogue with society, they are merely treading water, and they regard each additional month they manage to survive as a success. Meanwhile they go on making one mistake after another and strengthening the solidarity and activity of the civil society.

In the course of 1988 we witnessed more social movement in Czechoslovakia than at any time during the previous twenty years; that trend has continued non-stop. People's determination to assert their civil rights is manifesting itself in every possible way: peaceful demonstrations and rallies that have taken place despite threats from the highest places and in spite of the danger of police terror and subsequent judicial persecution; the growth of independent citizens' initiatives, with petition after petition being launched since the beginning of this year. These have gained the signatures of thousands of people from the so-called "official structures", in other words, the cultural, artistic and academic establishment in sup-

port of people described by government leaders, in parliament and in the mass media as "provocateurs" and "enemies of socialism".

This eruption of social activity in the form of civil disobedience is by no means economically motivated – the result of a radical decline in the standard of living. It is above all people's reaction to twenty years of lies and humiliation, and their own conformity. It is a chain-reaction sparked off by a yearning for a healthy public life, for plain speaking and for the undistorted truth about what everyone can see with their own eyes.

The most actively involved are young people who find the official clichés and lies intolerable. There are no taboos as far as they are concerned. They are not burdened with ideology, nor does the past weigh on them. They have no sentimental attachment to socialism. They are often surprisingly well-informed, since modern communications media open their horizons to the entire world. And they feel that it is their future – literally their whole lives – that is now at stake.

In addition, the broad current of "civil disobedience" continues to attract the growing support of many members of what is now the older generation – those who backed a loser when they went along with the restored order and now look as if they want to burn their bridges after years of living a lie, years of conformity and dissimulation. And they will undoubtedly be joined even by certain time-servers who forged themselves cosy "collaborationist" careers at the beginning of "normalisation" and who now, as they feel the ship beginning to founder, will want to be on the "right" side again.

An important factor in the political destabilisation of the regime are developments in neighbouring

countries: Hungary, Poland – and the Soviet Union. These have done much to alter the political climate in the country by fostering the impression of an overall historical trend, boosting people's self-confidence, and strengthening society's awareness of the inevitability of change while acting as a catalyst in bringing it about.

The regime's stability is also being eroded – in a number of respects – as a result of the end of jamming of Radio Free Europe in mid-December 1988. Its prompt news reporting from within Czechoslovakia, which is heard throughout the country, combined with the growth of activity on the part of the independent solidarity committees and groups, including those of longer date and a whole number of new ones, has served to attenuate the fear of persecution as immediate retaliation for each and every expression of civic courage. People realise that persecution cannot be an anonymous matter any more and they are no longer isolated individuals at the mercy of the regime. Another encouraging factor, in this respect, is the growth of international solidarity combined with a general interest in Czechoslovakia.

*

In spite of all the optimism with which we may speak about the present "democratic revolution", despite the fact we can feel it in the air, and although historical analysis indicates that a democratic solution is the only logical outcome, we remain sceptical. Things could still go wrong. The democratic revolution need not achieve its ends and its victory might be postponed. There are numerous reasons for such doubts and they have all been analysed.

No one can know just how far the metropolis of the Soviet empire will be prepared to let democratic

developments in eastern central Europe go. There is no way of estimating the price it will be prepared to pay at any given moment, which priority will prevail, which loss will be considered the lesser of two evils. But there is an even more fundamental question: what are the chances of a democratic revolution in the Soviet Union itself? Or more to the point: among the Russians themselves? Caught in the throes of "perestroika's" insoluble dilemmas and their fevered pursuit of their own political identity, will the Russians have the time or the opportunity to understand the demand for sovereignty of the nations of the external empire?

The Soviet threat – obviously enough – is not, of course, the only barrier to a victorious democratic revolution in the eastern central European countries. The communist regimes in those countries may well have come into existence as satellites of the Soviet superpower, but they keep themselves alive by their own efforts, using their own resources, and in their own interest. In Czechoslovakia, since January 1989, the whole country, not just a narrow circle of dissidents, has been aware of the sort of brutality that can be expected from the so-called "forces of order". And the entire democratic world must have realised how powerless it was when confronted by a single isolated situation, when it was not yet even an immediate question of survival for the communist establishment. I refer to the political leadership's decision to imprison the country's greatest moral authority and one of the spiritual leaders of Czechoslovakia's democratic revolution: Václav Havel.

However – as Timothy Garton Ash has convincingly demonstrated – the system of power and the interests of the nomenklatura are not the only factors

inhibiting the transformation of the communist system into a liberal democracy with a mixed economy. There are also the interests, attitudes and fears of many of the ruled. In each of the countries in question, so many problems have accumulated, particularly in the economic sphere, that they appear virtually insurmountable. It is impossible to predict the role that might be played by the fears and uncertainties of the labour force who will bear the main burden of consequences for overcoming economic stagnation and backwardness. For the most part, the Czechoslovak workers remain silent; fear of their possible reaction is a further source of inertia within the communist leadership.

There are, of course, sources of hope, and these too have all been identified and analysed. On the one hand, the Soviet superpower is preoccupied with itself and on the other, the leading Western democracies now have a better grasp of the situation in eastern central Europe. The greatest source of hope is the progress made by civil society within the crisis-torn communist systems: the spiritual, political and professional/occupational emancipation of individuals and groups, new kinds of civic solidarity, the discovery of new forms of freedom of expression and organisation. More and more capable and willing people are emerging from anonymity, and therein lies the true hope of the process of the democratic revolution.

*

Czechoslovak optimists and pessimists alike are agreed on one thing: that the existing system is inexorably doomed. They only differ in their estimates of how long it will take. The optimists count in months, the pessimists in years. The optimists add: Our mo-

rale is excellent, the only worry we have is the thought of our friends in prison. Only because of them does the time factor matter. Otherwise there would be no need for haste. The regime's delaying tactics will turn against them in the end, because the longer they put off tackling the country's pressing problems, the more difficult it will be to use piecemeal or half-hearted solutions.

However, as yet neither the optimists nor the pessimists have any idea of when or how the stalemate situation in which the political leadership finds itself will end. It could well be that Czechoslovakia's path to democracy will substantially differ from the Polish or Hungarian versions.

May 1989

Final version of a text prepared for the *Democratic Revolution* Conference held in Washington D.C. on 1st and 2nd May 1989 by the National Endowment for Democracy.

II.

During 1989 the pace of the democratic revolution in the countries of eastern central Europe has substantially increased. The evolution from a totalitarian regime to a democratic system based on spiritual, political and economic pluralism has received repeated boosts. When we come to evaluate 1989 and we find a moment to reflect on the events with which it started we will discover just how much has become reality in eastern Central Europe – things inconceivable only a year ago.

Several factors have helped speed up the pace of developments. The democratic revolution is taking

place against the background of the general (and final) crisis of communism, one which cannot be solved by means of piecemeal modifications on the basis of the existing system. For the first time in forty years, the fateful mechanism of unsynchronised phases when systemic crises would occur isolatedly in one or other of the countries (e.g. in Czechoslovakia in 1968 or in Poland in 1980) no longer applies. For although the crisis of communism displays different features in different countries and the transition to democracy assumes different forms in each of them, fundamentally, it is the same historical trend occurring more or less simultaneously. Systemic changes are also taking place in the Soviet Union which, moreover, has actually endorsed the principle of non-interference and the right of each country in the bloc to adopt its own course. It is even conceivable that it will accept the eventuality of individual states opting out of the Warsaw Pact military alliance.

Poland and Hungary are presently in the forefront of this open-ended drama. In my view, developments in Poland, and specifically the Communist Party's abdication of its monopoly of power coupled with the transition to a democratic system have been determined by three events: the round-table agreements of April 1989; the Sejm elections in June and the creation of the coalition government headed by non-communists and including only a minority of communists.

Since May, Hungary has seen the symbolic funeral of Imre Nagy and his associates organised as a state ceremony of national reconciliation; the democratic changes in the constitution; the change in the country's official name; the foundation of the social-democratic party; the on-going changes in the lead-

ership of the ruling party that have even led to the creation of a new party with hopes of holding its own in free elections; the removal of fences on the Hungaro-Austrian borders; the overruling of bloc solidarity in the case of East German refugees; and the promise to hold free elections in the coming year.

There has been a quite unexpected and sudden turn of events in the German Democratic Republic. For the first time in 35 years we are seeing a public reckoning of the damage caused to society by the domination of the Communist Party. Developments over the past fortnight leave us in no doubt that things cannot be limited to a temporary opening of the valve of public criticism and self-criticism and consequent cosmetic changes. On the contrary, the German Democratic Republic has also been caught up in the whirlwind of the democratic revolution.

At a time of such developments in Central Europe, Czechoslovakia, seen from outside, looks like the last island of Brezhnevism in eastern Central Europe. Indeed, in a sense, Jakeš' Czechoslovakia does sit rather like a wedge between Poland and Hungary. Conditions in Czechoslovakia certainly constitute an enormous obstacle to the intensification of co-operation among the democratic forces of the entire region, as well as to solving common or similar problems and facing up to the task of widening co-operation with the democratic forces of the Eastern European nations: the Ukrainians, Baltic countries and the Russians. It is not hard to imagine the possibilities that would be opened up were a government of national confidence to take power in Prague in place of the present government of national disgrace.

I hasten to point out, lest I be misunderstood, that I too believe that society in Czechoslovakia has woken up and is already beginning to lose patience. I have no wish in the least to demean the progress made by civil society in that country over the past year and a half along the road to liberation and self-emancipation. Czechoslovakia is also on the way to a democratic revolution. Let me try and sum up briefly:

1. In spring 1987 there were still only two permanently functioning civic initiatives in existence: Charter 77 and the Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS). By the end of 1988 a whole network of independent initiatives had been created with their own information system able to influence the public through their own samizdat-press (such as *Lidové noviny*) and with the help of foreign-based radio stations.

There has not just been an increase in the numbers involved in these civic initiatives, there has also been a marked politicization of their programmes, to the extent of demanding a share in political power. A whole number of policy statements by the civic initiatives or statements by their representatives have rejected the principle of the so-called "leading role" of the Communist Party as being incompatible with the principle of citizens' equality and the codes of civil and political rights. The Manifesto of the Movement for Civil Liberties entitled *Democracy for All* does not deal with socialism or its improvement but instead has put forward for debate the principle of a democratic system based on political and spiritual pluralism, a mixed economy and mutual tolerance.

2. Extremely visible evidence of society's awakening, was provided by the street demonstrations of

August and October 1988 and the Palach Week in January this year. In addition, since then there have been the demonstrations in August (which took place even though certain independent initiatives failed to adopt a categorical or unified stance towards them and some even counselled against them) and on 28th October. And they have all taken place in the face of threats and despite the consequences in terms of police harassment and brutality, arrest, detention, convictions and penalties in the form of fines or imprisonment.

3. An important sign of the growth in active citizenship and the fact that people are overcoming the fear that until recently paralysed almost the whole of society have been this year's large-scale petitions. The first of them – a sort of dress-rehearsal – was the petition by members of the arts world in January-February in protest against the police brutality during the attempts to commemorate Jan Palach and in favour of Václav Havel's release.

The second major petition in 1989 got under way at the end of June and is still in progress. In spite of a campaign against it in the official media and the persecution of many of its signatories, the statement entitled *Několik vět /Just a Few Sentences/* has been signed by 37,000 citizens up to now. This is exceptionally significant in not being an anonymous enterprise. Supporters all supply their names in the knowledge that they will be made public. This campaign has been spearheaded by people who so far have been most manipulated and whose livelihood is most at stake since they depend more than any others on official contracts, namely, actors and the entire world of stage and screen. The petition has been accompanied by major acts of individual courage

such as the statement by the Slovak actor Milan Kňažko who returned his "Distinguished Artist" award, or the statement by the conductor of the Czech Philharmonic, Václav Neumann, who was then joined by the entire orchestra – after a democratic ballot – refusing to co-operate with Czechoslovak Television and Radio in protest against the discrimination of artists for asserting their citizenship.

4. The aforementioned petitions extended to many areas of the so-called official structures. At the same time, things started to move within the writers' organisations; cultural and literary journals started writing more freely and openly about previously taboo subjects, and a debate was initiated about returning to the public those parts of Czech and Slovak literature which have so far been silenced or ignored. Over the past few months, moves in the direction towards a more active involvement in civic affairs have been seen in the foundation of the Club of Independent Intelligentsia and the latest protests against the detention of two editors of the independent news magazine *Lidové noviny* and in favour of the journal's legalisation: by 1st November a petition had already gained 200 signatures among journalists on official newspapers and journals and members of the editorial boards of publishing houses. Even in official organisations there have been overt signs of dissent from the previous policy of recognising "the leading role of the Party". This includes the Czechoslovak People's Party in which a "renewal wing" has been formed, and a process along similar lines can be observed within the Czechoslovak Socialist Party. More and more people in cultural institutions and the mass media are throwing off the shackles of self-censorship, and censorship is no longer entirely reliable.

I will give one typical example out of many. A few days ago, on 27th October, Prague's Realistic Theatre put on a dramatic compilation about the nineteen-sixties entitled *The way we experienced it* using texts by Václav Havel, Milan Kundera and other banned or long silenced authors. On 1st November, the Socialist daily *Svobodné slovo* published a half-page review which praised the production and did not omit a single author's name.

5. Another important factor in stimulating society's progress towards a renewal of spiritual and political plurality is the growth in influence of the Catholic Church in Slovak and Czech society. A petition calling for religious liberty and culminating in the demand for the separation of Church and State was signed in 1988 by 600,000 believers. The Catholic Church came out with a programme for a ten-year period of spiritual renewal aimed at turning the church back towards society and its needs. Hand in hand with this is the growing authority of Cardinal Tomášek who has twice this year spoken out in support of the citizenry and its rights and demands vis-à-vis the communist regime. The first occasion was in January when he protested to the Prime Minister against the police brutality during Palach Week. The second was on 4th August in an open letter to government leaders and Czechoslovak citizens in which he described the petition "Just a Few Sentences" as a means for citizens to assert their share of democratic responsibility and in which he offered to mediate in helping bring about an open dialogue between citizens and the government.

*

Spearheading the social movement whose individual components I have set out above has been an upsurge

in youth activity. Young people started to come into the fore in the setting up of many civic initiatives and they have been most prominent in demonstrations. It is above all young journalists who entered the mass media at the beginning of the eighties who have rebelled against newspeak in the press.

I realise, naturally, the limits of civic activity in Czechoslovakia. Everything I have mentioned as new gains of civil society over the past two years is still insufficient to change attitudes at the top of the political establishment where they are still determined to maintain their own monopoly of power, not to countenance any change, not to permit freedom of expression and assembly, but instead to continue to use the police and judiciary to persecute the more open expressions of civic courage and break up demonstrations with police truncheons. It falls outside the scope of these brief comments to attempt an analysis of the reasons why the social dynamic in Czechoslovakia has so far failed to make any greater headway with the workers or why other strata of the population remain sceptically on the sidelines. The reasons are many and most of them are typically Czechoslovak. To a great extent it is the outcome of the evolution that occurred after the failed attempt to change the system in 1968 – when society was literally on the verge of self-emancipation – after the great uprising that ended with the capitulation of the leaders, as well as millions of private capitulations.

Twenty years of normalisation has also left a fatal mark on the Czechoslovak Communist Party. Its leadership is entirely in the hands of people installed by Brezhnev. The Communist Party has lost political and moral prestige and in the eyes of the majority of the population it has written itself off as a political

force capable of generating an alternative to the present establishment, among other reasons, because it has lost any intellectual base.

The present political stalemate in the country is without doubt depressing for the majority of the domestic opposition; on the other hand, for many it represents a challenge to examine their own weaknesses and shortcomings. I would only recall a truism that applies to the entire history of mankind: mass upheavals that overthrow governments are not made to order and seldom do they occur at moments when they are most needed. They are seldom predictable. They are frequently the outcome of a momentary stimulus which need not even be particularly important. It is enough for it to occur at a moment when people's patience is exhausted, when they have ceased to be afraid and started to gain hope. Nobody knows how near such a moment is in Czechoslovakia. However, what is certain is that the moment

has come when everyone in that country is confronted by the question of what to do: not tomorrow but now, for themselves and for their own future of freedom.

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In these past days I was very encouraged by the news that one section of the demonstrators in East Berlin on 30th October decided to make their way to the Czechoslovak Embassy and protest against the brutality of the Czechoslovak police during the demonstrations in Prague on 28th October. And it was nice to hear that our East German friends from the New Forum remembered Prague in recent days when they declared that the Prague Spring will be followed by a Prague Summer. Of that I too am firmly convinced.

From a talk given on 3rd November 1989 at the opening of the international seminar on Central Europe in the Polish city of Wroclaw.

JUST A FEW SENTENCES

The first months of 1989 provided further clear evidence of the fact that although the present Czechoslovak leadership pays frequent lip-service to the words "perestroika" and "democratisation", in practice it is resisting in an almost desperate way everything that helps create democracy or is vaguely reminiscent of it. It dismisses the citizens' petitions and initiatives which have not been officially organised from above. It rejects them as "coercion". It condemns

alternative political views as "anti-socialist" or "hostile". It disperses peaceful rallies. It refuses to let the public have any say in the drafting of new legislation.

However, these same months have also shown that the citizenry is breaking free of its lethargy and increasing numbers are finding the courage to express their yearning for social changes.

Thus the movement within society is coming into increasing conflict with the inertia of the regime,

social tension is rising and the threat of open crisis looms large.

None of us wants such a crisis.

We therefore call on our country's leadership to realise that the time has come for genuine, thorough-going changes in the system, and that such changes will only be possible or viable if they are preceded by truly free and democratic discussion. However, the first step towards any meaningful change – whether it be a new constitution or economic reform – must therefore be a fundamental change in the social climate of this country, restoring to it the spirit of freedom, trust, tolerance and plurality.

In our view this requires:

1. The immediate release of all political prisoners;
2. The lifting of restrictions on freedom of assembly;
3. An end to the outlawing and persecution of various independent initiatives which should at last be recognised by the government as they have long been by the public, i.e. as a natural component of public life and a legitimate expression of its heterogeneity. At the same time, no restrictions should be placed on the creation of new civic movements, including independent trade unions, associations, and clubs.
4. An end to all forms of political manipulation of the mass media and cultural activity of all kinds, including the abolition of covert censorship, whether preliminary or subsequent, and their opening up to free debate; the legalisation of media autonomous of the official structures;
5. Respect for the just demands of the all religious believers;

6. That all impending and existing projects permanently altering our country's natural environment and thereby affecting the life of future generations, be submitted forthwith to experts and the general public for thorough discussion.

7. The initiation of a free discussion not only about the nineteen-fifties, but also about the Prague Spring, the invasion by the five Warsaw Pact states and the subsequent "normalisation". It is regrettable that whereas in certain countries whose armies intervened at that time in Czechoslovak developments real discussions are beginning to take place, in our country it is still a major taboo, solely in order to protect the positions of those people in the political and state leadership who are responsible for the twenty years' decline in all spheres of life in this country.

All those who agree with this statement may indicate their support by adding their signatures.

We call on the government not to treat this statement in the way it has been accustomed to treat uncongenial views in the past. Otherwise they will inflict a fatal blow to the hopes that motivate us: the hopes of a genuine social dialogue as the only possible way out of the blind alley in which Czechoslovakia now finds itself.

The statement *Just a Few Sentences* was made public simultaneously in Czechoslovakia and abroad on 29th June 1989. It was published with the following afterword: "This statement, which recently originated in Prague and is permanently open to further signatures by all Czechoslovak citizens irrespective of occupation, has been signed as of today (29.6.1989) by almost 1800 Czechoslovak citizens.

On 29th June this statement was submitted to the Czechoslovak News Agency (ČTK), as well as other agencies and the mass media.

Signatures can be handed or sent to existing signatories or to the following addresses:

Stanislav Devátý, Revoluční 312/1285, 760 01 Gottwaldov
Václav Havel, Engelsovo nábřeží 78, 120 00 Prague 2

Jiří Křížan, Navrátilova 16, 110 00 Prague 1

Saša Vondra, Trojanova 1, 120 00 Prague 2

Václav Havel

TESTING GROUND

Whereas in their various ways (and with all sorts of understandable difficulties) Poland, Hungary and the USSR are trying to transform a communist-style totalitarian system into something more democratic, the Czechoslovak leadership is resisting this trend tooth and nail. Admittedly it, too, vehemently professes "perestroika" and "democratisation". The fact is, however, that it is changing nothing, or countenancing only minor changes – forced on it, moreover, by pressure "from below". As a policy it quite understandable, to say the least. This leadership was installed by Brezhnev's tanks. Anti-reformism became its ideological justification and the buttressing of the totalitarian system its daily practice. Naturally they have no wish to change this all of a sudden for fear that they might see through the branch they are sitting on.

Though long decimated, silenced and fragmented, society is slowly beginning to lose patience. Aroused by what is happening in the neighbouring countries and disgusted at the government's inability to solve the mounting problems, it is beginning to arouse itself. People are showing increasing interest in pub-

lic affairs, seeking out truthful information and losing their fear of speaking their minds. As a result, even the "dissidents" – i.e. people involved in the independent initiatives (of which the oldest and best known is Charter 77) who are prepared to express themselves freely regardless of the personal consequences – are ceasing to be just some kind of isolated handful of suicidal maniacs who might enjoy the tacit admiration of the public but could not expect any visible help from it, as was for years the case. As fear of the state police has dwindled so has fear of dissidents.

The spontaneous independent demonstrations in August, October and December of 1988 and the subsequent January demonstrations in 1989 and everything that has ensued since provides clear evidence of this movement. When I heard huge crowds with my own ears shouting "Long live the Charter!" or "The Charter will win!", and when later, after my return from four months in prison, I saw a video of throngs of young people shouting "Release Havel!" I felt the most extraordinary mixture of emotions: alongside my deep emotion and astonishment I also felt a kind of satisfaction. I suddenly realised that the

years of onerous efforts by the "suicidal maniacs" in question, efforts which had cost them many dozens of years in prison, had not been in vain after all, and were at last beginning to pay off. It was not solely as a sign of respect for the Charter's years of efforts that the slogan "Long live the Charter!" pleased me. It was above all because it expressed an ever deeper yearning for freedom that uses the Charter as a symbol that makes a good slogan and one that leaves no one in any doubt about the attachment to freedom of those who shout it. Another big change is the fact that for the first time in twenty years thousands of well-known artists, performers and academics employed in the official structures and therefore having every reason to be cautious have found the courage to speak out publicly. Not only did they protest against the actions of the police in January, they actually signed their protests jointly with those feared "dissidents" who for years had been slandered by the state.

For the time being this social awakening has culminated in the statement entitled *Just a Few Sentences*. This is no longer a mere defence of society against a specific case of tyranny, but instead a positive political statement on the part of society. Its signatories warn the government that the only way out of the blind alley in which Czechoslovakia finds itself today – and indeed the pre-condition for any democratising changes in the system – is to effect a fundamental alteration of the social climate. In the words of the statement, it is necessary to restore to it "the spirit of freedom, trust, tolerance and plurality". The statement puts forward a number of simple demands that are easily fulfilled but which would foster such a climate. The statement bases itself on the entirely logical argument that if changes in the sys-

tem are not to be temporary, piece-meal, inconsequential or half-baked, they must first of all be discussed in a businesslike manner and conditions must be created to enable such a businesslike discussion to take place.

Just a Few Sentences has already been signed by thousands of people, from well-known actors to unknown workers, from representatives of independent initiatives to rank-and-file communists, from Catholics to former communist leaders. The collection of signatures is continuing throughout the republic in spite of an extremely speedy and violent rebuff on the part of the regime which, according to its twisted Stalinist logic, has dubbed this peaceable call to dialogue "an attempt at confrontation".

For the moment no one knows what will happen next. Perhaps this regime which has decided on confrontation will unleash a fresh wave of repression in an attempt to intimidate society once more (which, however, it will have increasing trouble in doing). Maybe it is just its initial terror-stricken emotive reaction and common sense will eventually prevail even within its ranks so that there will be hopes at last that Czechoslovakia also will take the path of a free nation-wide debate leading to reform. Anything is possible at this particular moment in time. Never in the past twenty years has the situation been as wide open as now.

I am not writing this as a juicy titbit about some small insignificant country, but as someone who is aware that – whether we like it or not – for many different reasons (including geo-political considerations) what happens in this country invariably involves more than just ourselves. We are a country where, from the earliest times, various European –

and most recently global – conflagrations have most frequently originated (but also ended!). Since time immemorial, we have been a crossroads for every spiritual and political current imaginable, where, in consequence, European history is both "ravelled" and "unravelled". We are a country where on more than one occasion the fate of many other countries was sealed or where their destiny was unwittingly foreshadowed.

Maybe the same still applies. Maybe Czechoslovakia – without any real wish to – will once more hold the key to and determine the fate of the enormous movement we are witnessing in the Soviet bloc and with it the whole of Europe's hopes for a better future. Maybe this small – and, to some eyes, unin-

teresting – country will once more become a "testing ground" where we shall find out what is really going on: whether the communist world sincerely wants to change its spots and give humanitarian values priority over questions of power and prestige, as Gorbachev promises – or whether, at this historical crossroads the aspiration for freedom and human dignity will have to give way at the last minute to the dubious ideal of a monolithic empire with its system of all-powerful satraps.

And it is not inconceivable that the fate of *Just a Few Sentences* will provide the first convincing clue as to how this test is proceeding.

Written 3rd July 1989 for *The Independent*



CHRONICLE OF EVENTS

JANUARY

Monday 2nd January

In Document No. 1/89, Charter 77 announced that its new trio of spokespersons would be Tomáš Hradflek, Dana Němcová and Saša Vondra, taking over from Stanislav Devátý, Miloš Hájek and Bohumír Janát.

Representatives of a number of independent initiatives: The Czech Children, the John Lennon Peace Club, the Independent Peace Association and the Community of Friends of the USA, informed the interior affairs department of the Prague 1 District National Committee that a brief ceremony of remembrance for Jan Palach was to be held at Wenceslas Square at 2 p.m. on 15th January 1989. (D 1) (A leaflet circulated in Prague from the beginning of January in which these initiatives urged people to take part in the ceremony of remembrance on 15th January and in a national pilgrimage to Palach's grave on 21st January. See also D 6)

Friday 6th January

The act of remembrance on Wenceslas Square was banned by order of the Interior Affairs Department of the Prague City Council. (See D 5)

Sunday 8th January

Charter 77 issued Document No. 2/89, "Horrible incident in Michalovce", drawing the attention of the Czechoslovak public and the relevant government authorities to the case of 37-year-old agricultural engineer Jozef Babjak who died suddenly on 23rd December 1988, the day after he was wrongfully arrested by the police and subjected to hours of savage beating. The autopsy found internal bleeding into the stomach, intestines and the right kidney and heart-failure as a result of ischemia.

Monday 9th January

Václav Havel issued a statement concerning an anonymous letter he had received that morning. Its author had informed him of his intention to immolate himself at Wenceslas Square on the eve of the anniversary of Jan Palach's death. Václav Havel's statement was broadcast by the foreign radio stations, Voice of America, Radio Free Europe and the BBC. (D 2; see also D 8)

A similar anonymous letter was received by Charter 77 spokeswoman Dana Němcová. Her statement was also broadcast by Radio Free Europe. (D 3)

Tuesday 10th January

The provisional co-ordinating committee of the Movement for Civil Liberties issued a statement entitled "Jan Palach's appeal". (D 4)

Wednesday 11th January

Representatives of five independent initiatives published their views on the negotiations with the head of the interior affairs department of the Prague 1 District National Committee, which had banned the holding of a ceremony in memory of Jan Palach. (D 5)

The appeal lodged by representatives of the independent initiatives was refused on a decision of the Interior Affairs Department of the Prague City Council signed by Dr M. Houska, thereby confirming the ban on the ceremony of remembrance. (See C 6th January)

Representatives of the independent initiatives issued an appeal for a national pilgrimage to Jan Palach's grave in Všetaty. (D 6)

The mother of Jan Zajíc, the student who burned himself to death on 25th February 1969, appealed to the author of the anonymous letter about the planned self-immolation to change his mind: "You have no idea what a terrible blow it is for those who gave birth to you, saw you grow up, taught you love for your neighbour, built all their hopes on you and then stood over the grave of all those dashed hopes with the words: I'll never, ever see you again." (See D 63)

Czechoslovak police raided the studio of sculptor Olbram Zoubek and took away Jan Palach's death mask. The sculptor was subjected to an hour-long interrogation, allegedly in connection with the intended self-immolation of the author of the anonymous letters to Václav Havel and Dana Němcová.

Charter 77 issued Document No.3/89, addressed to the Secretariat of the Federal Assembly and the office of the Czechoslovak Prime Minister in connection with the Boeing 747 disaster at Lockerbie, requesting the Czechoslovak government to take measures to prevent the use of Czechoslovak-made Semtex explosives for terrorist operations.

Thursday 12th January

In an article under the headline "It was sheer recklessness", the Communist Party daily *Rudé právo* presented the official line on the events of twenty years earlier and on Jan Palach's sacrifice. (D 7)

Václav Havel issued a second statement about the anonymous letter he received on 9th January; this statement was also broadcast by Radio Free Europe. (D 8)

The Prague City Prosecutor issued a warning to Václav Havel under Article 2, Sect. 3 of the Law on Prosecution. The warning stated that Havel had been found to be "one of the persons who, during the second half of 1988, took part in the organisation in Prague and elsewhere of an illegal movement whose aim is to destabilise the state power," and that this activity "constitutes a criminal offence under Article 1 of the Penal Code". (See D 23)

The Prague Masaryk Association issued a statement about the news of the intended self-immolation on the anniversary of Jan Palach's death. (D 9)

In a telegram, the leadership of the Latvian People's Front paid tribute to the memory of Jan Palach, whose death "left no one in Latvia indifferent" while also appealing to Czechoslovak youth "to abstain from any desperate actions" and warning against any moves that might lead to such actions: "1969 was a year of disillusion and despair. For our nations, 1989 is starting as a year of hope. On 15th January, our hearts and our thoughts will be with the people of Czechoslovakia."

Večerní Praha joined the press campaign against Charter 77 and the other independent initiatives with a diatribe entitled "Quo vadis, Charter!" (D 10)

Friday 13th January

Slovak writer Hana Ponická commented on the plan for self-immolation announced in the anonymous letters to Václav Havel and Dana Němcová. (D 11)

US senators Mark Hatfield and James McClure, accompanied by US Ambassador to Czechoslovakia, Julian M. Niemczyk, had a meeting with Charter 77 spokesperson, Saša Vondra, and Charter 77 signatories Jiří Dienstbier, Václav Malý and Martin Palouš. The ninety-minute conversation dealt chiefly with the question of human rights in Czechoslovakia, and cases of unjust imprisonment, specifically those of Ivan Jirous, Petr Cibulka, Eva Vidlařová and Independent Peace Association members Tomáš Dvořák and Hana Marvanová. Other topics discussed included the overall state of Czechoslovak society, the status of independent groups, the conclusions of the Vienna CSCE follow-up meeting, and the possibility of according Czechoslovakia most-favoured-nation status for a one-year trial period.



Saturday 14th January

Under the title "Their goals are immoral" the daily *Mladá fronta* printed an article reflecting the attitude adopted by the official Soviet press agency TASS to the planned ceremony of remembrance in honour of Jan Palach. (D 12)

Representatives of Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity Miroslaw Jasinski, J. Pinior, Petr Pospíchal and Anna Šabatová issued a protest against the large-scale operation organised by the GDR State Police in Leipzig over the period 12th-14th January 1989. In the course of the operation, activists of three independent citizens' initiatives – the "Life Initiative Group", "Justice Working Group" and "Sign of Conciliation" – were arrested, charged and held on remand. The apparent motive was the public rally being planned for the afternoon of 14th January in Leipzig by the GDR Civic Renewal Initiative to mark the seventieth anniversary of the assassination of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, and also to call attention to the violation of fundamental human rights in the GDR.

Sunday 15th January

Charter 77 drafted Document No.4/89 entitled "In memory of Jan Palach" (D 13) which was intended to be read out by the actress and Charter 77 signatory Vlasta Chramostová at 2 p.m. at Wenceslas Square. The police operation against the ceremony of remembrance prevented her from doing so. (See below)

According to eyewitnesses and foreign reporters, the police and members of the People's Militia started closing the access streets around Wenceslas Square during the previous night and morning, so that by 1.30 in the afternoon the square was entirely sealed off. But even though several representatives of the independent initiatives were arrested on their way to the square thereby preventing the peaceful ceremony of remembrance being held at the intended spot, a spontaneous demonstration took place at Wenceslas Square and in the surrounding streets, which was brutally dispersed by the police and People's Militia. (D 14; see also D 16-21 and following).

According to Arielle Thedrel, the correspondent of the Parisian daily *Le Figaro*, two thousand police were deployed in operations against the demonstrators. Prague gave the impression of a city under siege and was turned into an arena for a demonstration of police strength: truncheons, police dogs, water cannon, tear gas and even armoured personnel carriers.

Jan Palach's sacrifice was also commemorated in the Northern Bohemian town of Chomutov where a symbolic plaque bearing his name was fixed to the cemetery wall in the early hours of the morning. However, the chairman of the local council had banned any ceremony of remembrance. Throughout the day, a force of 20-30 plain clothes and uniformed policemen carried out identity checks on anyone approaching the cemetery. None the less, a few young people managed to lay flowers and light candles near the wall in question, but they were immediately arrested. The police then removed the plaque. In Chomutov itself at least fourteen persons were arrested but



were released that evening after questioning. A number of Charter 77 signatories were arrested in other parts of the region.

Monday 16th January

Rudé právo printed a ČTK report which constituted the official version of Sunday's events at Wenceslas Square and in the neighbouring streets. (D 15)

Two further eyewitnesses, M. Šašek and Jiří Hanzelka gave accounts of what had happened at Wenceslas Square the previous day. (D 16)

Vlasta Chramostová and Libuše Šilhánová issued a protest statement about Sunday's events, addressed to the Czechoslovak government and Communist Party. (D 17; see also C 21st February)

The Democratic Initiative group sent a letter to the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly, protesting at media comments about Jan Palach and at the savage police treatment of citizens trying to honour his memory. (D 18)

The Czechoslovak independent initiatives thanked the Latvian People's Front for its telegram on the 20th anniversary of Palach's death and paid tribute to its efforts to achieve democracy and the Latvian people's right to self-determination. They invited the Front to send representatives to Prague for direct talks. The letter was signed by representatives of Charter 77, the Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS), the Czechoslovak section of Czechoslovak-Polish Solidarity, the Community of Friends of the USA (SPUSA), the Czech Children, the Movement for Civil Liberties, the Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee and the John Lennon Peace Club.

Protests against the brutal police treatment of demonstrators in Wenceslas Square were voiced by the entire world press, including the dailies of the Western Communist Parties – even the French *L'Humanité*.

A further spontaneous demonstration took place on Wenceslas Square during the afternoon, provoked by a brutal police assault not only on several representatives of independent initiatives who came to lay flowers at the St Wenceslas monument, but also on thousands of citizens who happened to be walking through the city centre at the time. (See D 20-21 and D 69) During and after the demonstration, the police arrested a number of citizens, particularly the representatives of the independent initiatives, including Václav Haavel. (See D 21 & 23)

Under the title: "Halt the troublemakers", the Prague evening paper *Večerní Praha* published an "open letter" reminiscent of the Stalinist campaigns of the fifties, in which "313 students, teachers and employees of the Pedagogical Faculty of Charles University" protested against alleged "activities of the troublemakers who are banking on unrest, schisms and systematic provocation". (D 19)



Tuesday 17th January

Rudé právo published an article headed "The aim is clear: to stir up unrest. Exploitation of J. Palach's tragic death". That article and the accompanying ČTK report were the official interpretation of the events at Wenceslas Square on 15th and 16th January. (D 20)

Charter 77 issued its Document No. 5/89 addressed to the governments of the states taking part in the Vienna CSCE meeting. The document reported and commented on the Prague events of the previous days, and concluded with a list of those representatives of the independent initiatives arrested. It was signed by Tomáš Hradílek, the only Charter spokesperson still at liberty. (D 21; see also D 39)

Charter 77 Document No. 6/89 announced that the group of Charter 77 spokespersons and other Charter 77 activists would hold a hunger strike on 22nd January "in protest against the continued unlawful imprisonment of a number of Czechoslovak citizens for political and religious reasons, as well as in protest against the detention of representatives of Charter 77 and other independent initiatives, and of individual citizens who wanted to pay a floral tribute to the memory of Jan Palach on 15th and 16th January".

Radio Free Europe broadcast further eyewitness accounts of events in Prague over the previous two days. (D 22)

The Executive Board of the Hungarian Democratic Forum expressed solidarity with the Czechoslovak independent initiatives and protested against the actions of the police during the Prague events. (So many similar protests and expressions of solidarity occurred around the world in the subsequent days that this *Chronicle* can only include a few representative examples.)

In Vienna, US Secretary of State George Shultz criticised certain East European states, specifically, Czechoslovakia, Romania and East Germany, for their human rights violations. In particular, he sharply condemned the police operations in Prague as violating the pledges which the Czechoslovak government had just ceremoniously made.

In an article headed "They are taking leave of their senses", *Večerní Praha* published – in violation of Czechoslovak law – the full names and addresses of the people arrested on 16th January. The piece also referred to the prosecutor's warnings issued to Václav Havel and Václav Benda on 12th January. (D 23)

Wednesday 18th January

In a manner reminiscent of the campaigns of the nineteen-fifties, *Rudé právo* featured an article entitled: "Essential measures to keep the peace", in which it published protests and petitions condemning, "acts of incitement" by alleged "anti-society groups". (D 24)



Fifteen former members of the Czechoslovak Communist Party signed an appeal to the government to halt the violence against citizens, release those arrested and start a meaningful dialogue with all sections of society. (D 25)

Richard Urx, son of the well-known Marxist journalist Eduard Urx who was executed by the Nazis for his part in resistance activities, protested in a letter to the Czechoslovak Prime Minister against the police operations at Wenceslas Square on 15th January, of which he had been both witness and victim. He also called for an immediate investigation into the events, punishment of those responsible for "this premeditated and deliberate pogrom" and the release of all citizens arrested and imprisoned on political grounds both in recent years and in connection with the events around 21st August and 28th October 1988 and the commemoration of Jan Palach's death in January 1989.

Three representatives of the Independent Peace Association called at the offices of the Czechoslovak Government for talks on the situation created in past days as a result of unwarranted interference by units of the Interior Ministry, the media defamation of the independent initiatives, and the arrest of 14 persons at Wenceslas Square on 16th January. (D 26)

The leadership of the Hungarian independent Academic Workers' Union condemned the brutal dispersal of the commemorative ceremony at Wenceslas Square and called for the release of all those arrested.

During the closing session of the Vienna CSCE meeting, the West German Foreign Minister condemned police treatment of demonstrators in Czechoslovakia and the GDR.

A spontaneous demonstration took place at Wenceslas Square between four and five in the afternoon, surprisingly without police interference. Various slogans were shouted, a number of improvised speeches were made and a general discussion ensued. Martin Palouš read out Charter 77's letter to the CSCE meeting in Vienna (see D 21). Radio Free Europe broadcast detailed coverage of the event. (D 27; see also C 8th February)

Thursday 19th January

In articles entitled: "A determined stand on acts of incitement" and: "Riotous behaviour continues", *Rudé právo* pursued its campaign against so-called "acts of incitement by anti-socialist forces" whose aim was "the destabilisation of our society" and "putting pressure on the socialist state" in conjunction with the closing session of the Helsinki follow-up meeting in Vienna. (D 28)

The European Parliament passed a resolution condemning the brutal treatment meted out by the Czechoslovak police to citizens wanting to pay tribute to the memory of Jan Palach on 15th and 16th January. The resolution stressed that this treatment was an infringement of Czechoslovakia's international commitments and above all it violated the conclusions of the recent Vienna talks. It also condemned the forced internment of Catholic activist Augustin Navrátil in a psychiatric clinic. In the course of the debate, MEP Jiří Pelikán supplied representatives

with a list of the names of citizens arrested at Wenceslas Square on 16th January, and demanded their immediate release.

The Association of Free Democrats of Hungary voiced solidarity with Charter 77 in its struggle for freedom and democracy, congratulating it on its part in the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of Jan Palach's death. It condemned "the regime's disgraceful treatment" of demonstrators. "Terror and filthy slanders will not mask the fact that the Stalinist dictatorship is in its death throes".

At the CSCE meeting in Vienna, Canadian Foreign Minister Joe Clark protested at the violation of human rights in Czechoslovakia and Romania.

During the afternoon, a further spontaneous demonstration took place at Wenceslas Square, involving five thousand people, according to Western reporters. Although it was a peaceful demonstration police units intervened with a degree of brutality exceeding anything seen during the previous days. (D 29) A list of those arrested and charged in connection with demonstrations throughout that week can be found in Charter 77 Document No. 9/89. (See D 39)

Friday 20th January

In an editorial, *Rudé právo* provided an ideological interpretation of the events that had occurred in Prague over the previous days. Its very title: "We won't let them subvert our Republic" echoed the slogan under which the first attacks on Charter 77 were launched at the beginning of 1977. (D 30)

Cardinal František Tomášek wrote to the Czechoslovak Prime Minister, Ladislav Adamec, welcoming Czechoslovakia's endorsement of the conclusions of the Helsinki follow-up meeting in Vienna. At the same time, however, he condemned the way the police had handled peaceful demonstrators in Prague and called on the government to take part in an immediate dialogue with the Church and all the country's citizens. (D 31)

In a letter to the Czechoslovak Prime Minister, former nurse Anna Dusová, who worked for several years in the treatment of alcoholics, protested against the actions of the police, and particularly the behaviour of first-year cadets: "Armed with truncheons, they indiscriminately beat up anyone they came across, with savagery and obvious relish. Their facial expressions and breath bore unmistakable witness to the fact that they were under the influence of *alcohol!*... How could such a thing happen?.. How did they come to be given alcohol? Was it meant to arouse their pugnacity? Or suppress their moral restraints?"

In an open letter to Olga Havlová, writer Eva Kantůrková offered personal testimony as a counterblast to the slanders spread by *Večerní Praha* in its article "Quo vadis, Charter!" about Václav Havel (then under arrest) and his family. (D 32; see also D 10, C 1st and 23rd February, and D 73)

Fifteen former members of the Czechoslovak Communist Party signed an appeal to the government to halt the violence against citizens, release those arrested and start a meaningful dialogue with all sections of society. (D 25)

Richard Urx, son of the well-known Marxist journalist Eduard Urx who was executed by the Nazis for his part in resistance activities, protested in a letter to the Czechoslovak Prime Minister against the police operations at Wenceslas Square on 15th January, of which he had been both witness and victim. He also called for an immediate investigation into the events, punishment of those responsible for "this premeditated and deliberate pogrom" and the release of all citizens arrested and imprisoned on political grounds both in recent years and in connection with the events around 21st August and 28th October 1988 and the commemoration of Jan Palach's death in January 1989.

Three representatives of the Independent Peace Association called at the offices of the Czechoslovak Government for talks on the situation created in past days as a result of unwarranted interference by units of the Interior Ministry, the media defamation of the independent initiatives, and the arrest of 14 persons at Wenceslas Square on 16th January. (D 26)

The leadership of the Hungarian independent Academic Workers' Union condemned the brutal dispersal of the commemorative ceremony at Wenceslas Square and called for the release of all those arrested.

During the closing session of the Vienna CSCE meeting, the West German Foreign Minister condemned police treatment of demonstrators in Czechoslovakia and the GDR.

A spontaneous demonstration took place at Wenceslas Square between four and five in the afternoon, surprisingly without police interference. Various slogans were shouted, a number of improvised speeches were made and a general discussion ensued. Martin Palouš read out Charter 77's letter to the CSCE meeting in Vienna (see D 21). Radio Free Europe broadcast detailed coverage of the event. (D 27; see also C 8th February)

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In a letter to the District Prosecutor for Prague I, the family of Dana Němcová protested against her unwarranted detention, and stressed her parlous state of health.

At a young artists' meeting of the Czech Artists' Union, 130 painters and sculptors signed a petition calling for the release of Josef Žáček and David Němec.

In Charter 77 Document No. 7/89, spokesperson Tomáš Hradílek thanked the International Human Rights Association branches in Zurich, Vienna and Frankfurt on Main for organising a chain hunger-strike in support of an amnesty for Czechoslovak political prisoners. This demonstrated the possibility of world-wide solidarity in the human rights field, the Document declared.

Slovak philosopher and Charter 77 signatory, Miroslav Kusý, wrote a piece for Radio Free Europe entitled "The Czechoslovak 'enemy image'", partly in response to the editorials in *Rudé právo* and the Bratislava *Pravda* entitled "We won't let them subvert our Republic" (D 33; see also D 30)

Saturday 21st January

Rudé právo reported on Friday's Presidium meeting of the Communist Party's Central Committee which had dealt with "a number of matters related to domestic policy, including the situation created in Prague in connection with attempts to hold anti-state demonstrations". Another article: "They threaten..." continued the defamatory campaign against the independent initiatives. (D 34)

The same issue included a piece under the title "The General Prosecutor's view" setting out the official "legal" interpretation of the Prague demonstrations, which were allegedly "inspired by a foreign ideo-subversive campaign and organised by internal illegal structures" and hence "the organisers and instigators of the unpermitted demonstrations and similar pressure tactics, provoked with the aim of destabilising state power, pursued out of hostility to socialism and manipulated with the intention of undermining and destroying the political foundations of the Republic" must expect "vigorous penal sanctions".

In a letter to the Czechoslovak Prime Minister, Cardinal Tomášek expressed his attitude to the events of the previous days, emphasising that the citizens' demonstrations had not been provoked by foreign radio stations but by the regime's shortcomings in preceding decades. (D 35; see also C 27th January)

In a letter from Leningrad, signed by Valery Tyerekhov, the north-western branch of the Democratic Union voiced its solidarity with the independent initiatives in Czechoslovakia and its support for the Palach commemorations at Wenceslas Square.

Large numbers, particularly of young people, joined in the national pilgrimage to Jan Palach's grave in Všetaty that had been called for by representatives of the independent initiatives. (See D 6) The event was the pretext

for further, and often brutal, intervention by the police and State Security who carried out identity checks on people as they arrived by road or rail, before subjecting them to body searches, interrogation and physical violence, and forcibly driving them off to various remote destinations. (D 36; see also D 42 and 46) However, former Charter 77 spokesperson Stanislav Devátý managed to slip through the police cordon and throw a wreath and a crown of thorns near to Palach's grave in Všetaty cemetery. (See D 42)

Sunday 22nd January

Charter 77 issued Document No.8/89: "Statement about the January events". (D 37)

The police detained Catholic priest and former Charter 77 spokesman Václav Malý for 48 hours and searched his home on the pretext of a criminal investigation into the alleged dissemination of alarmist information. During the house-search, the police confiscated not only a typewriter, pens, stamped envelopes, manuscript notes, religious literature, etc., but also a statue of the Virgin Mary.

Thirty-two members and supporters of the Peace and Human Rights Initiative of the GDR sent a letter to "Czech and Slovak friends" congratulating the Czechoslovak independent initiatives and welcoming the involvement of wider sections of the population. They also thanked the Czechoslovak-Polish Solidarity for supporting the Leipzig citizens arrested in January. "We share your hope that your friends will be shortly released and that our governments will at last start to respect the pledges they made as part of the CSCE process", the letter stated. This was the first time that part of the democratic opposition in the GDR had made reference to the Helsinki process.

Thirteen Swiss writers sent the Czechoslovak government and parliament a letter voicing misgivings about the repeated imprisonment of Václav Havel and calling for the immediate release of Havel and all other political prisoners. "Václav Havel is the last writer in Europe to have been deprived of his liberty."

Some fifty young people in Budapest tried to lay a wreath in front of the Czechoslovak Embassy to mark Jan Palach's death. When prevented from doing so by the police, they laid the wreath at Heroes' Square.

Under the headline "Three hundred arrested in Prague", Italian Communist Party daily *l'Unità* published an interview with Alexander Dubček who referred among other things to the harsh treatment of young people by the police. "The real reason for the present occurrences," he declared, "is to be found in this country, not in foreign interference. We have a fundamental crisis that affects young people above all. The youth are calling for dialogue, but no one heeds their call."

Monday 23th January

Under the headline "They went away disappointed", *Rudé právo* published the official version of Saturday's events at Všetaty. (D 38)

In its Document No. 9/89, Charter 77 issued a list of Czechoslovak political prisoners, including persons arrested and charged in connection with the January events. (D 39)

An unofficial press conference was held in Prague to launch Charter 77's "Statement about the January events" (See D 37), where Charter 77 signatories Ladislav Lis, Anna Šabatová, Libuše Šilhánová and Petr Uhl were joined by Independent Peace Association member Tomáš Tvaroch to answer questions from foreign journalists. Interest focused on the recent Prague demonstrations, police violence and harsh judicial treatment, as well as on the situation of the different independent groups. Present were representatives from Agence France Press, ANSA, Associated Press and Reuter, together with the Voice of America correspondent and one television team.

The US State Department criticised the Czechoslovak government over its suppression of the Prague demonstrations. State Department spokesman Charles Redman pressed for the immediate release of those arrested or detained in connection with the peaceful demonstrations of the previous week. He declared that the use of force against demonstrators violated the agreements reached at the CSCE meeting in Vienna and expressed regret that Czechoslovakia still failed to fulfil its international commitments.

Tuesday 24th January

Rudé právo carried an item about a meeting of the Committee for Party Work in the Czech Socialist Republic which had discussed a report of the Czech Minister of the Interior about the security situation "including the attempts to hold anti-state demonstrations" in Prague and "the legal measures" taken by the state authorities "to ensure calm and order". (D 40)

Ten workers at the Tesla factory at Petřvald, in the North Moravian industrial conurbation of Ostrava-Karviná, sent a letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party requesting fuller information not only about the recent events, but also about the entire history of Czechoslovakia in this century. (D 41)

Wednesday 25th January

Rudé právo launched a series headed "Readers' questions". These articles were a response to many – frequently very candid – questions from readers who wanted to know, among other things, why assemblies at Wenceslas Square were banned; why a rally had been permitted at Škroup Square in Prague 3 on 10th December 1988 while others had not; what was the Charter, about which no one knew anything, in spite of constant references to it in the press; whether it was true that "Chartists" and others like them were really in the pay of foreigners, etc. etc.

Further questions along these lines – and appropriately disinformational replies – were printed in *Rudé právo* of 26th and 27th January, 2nd February and subsequently.

The Prague 1 District Court upheld the appeal lodged by Dana Němcová, Saša Vondra, Jana Sternová, David Němec, Petr Placák and Stanislav Penc against the Prosecutor's decision to hold them on remand, and ordered their release. However, the court rejected a similar appeal by Jana Petrová and Ota Veverka and they remained in custody. Eight others were charged with riotous conduct, which they were alleged to have committed by seeking to lay flowers near to the St Wenceslas statue on 16th January, whereby they caused "a riot". (See D 23 & 42, and C 22nd February). Václav Havel, who was also arrested on 16th January, was not released.

Polish police prevented fifteen members of the non-legalised Polish Socialist Party from collecting signatures outside the Czechoslovak Embassy in Warsaw to a petition calling for the release of all Czechoslovak political prisoners and criticising the establishment of "neo-Stalinism" in Czechoslovakia.

American actors and writers launched a petition demanding the release of Václav Havel and other people arrested during the Prague demonstrations. Joseph Papp, director of the New York Shakespeare Festival Theatre, declared that the petition would be signed by several thousand performers. The petition would be handed in to the Czechoslovak mission to the United Nations. The "strongest protest" was also voiced by the American Pen Club on behalf of its 2,100 members, including Kurt Vonnegut, Susan Sontag and Norman Mailer.

Thursday 26th January

At an official press conference in Prague, government spokesman Miroslav Pavel presented details of the number of identity checks, arrests, fines and summonses during the week of Prague demonstrations, as well as of injuries suffered. A communique from the independent East European Information Agency (VIA) provided additional data. (D 42; see also D 46)

The Movement for Civil Liberties issued a statement condemning the "senseless war waged by the security services against peaceful citizens" and calling for negotiation and dialogue as the only meaningful and hopeful way of ending the wholesale crisis prevailing in Czechoslovak society. (D 43)

The independent movement known as the Initiative of those who work in the arts sent Czechoslovak Federal Premier Ladislav Adamec a declaration signed by 692 personalities in the field of official and unofficial culture. The declaration protested against the detention of Václav Havel and urged the initiation of a dialogue, a pre-condition of which was the release of Václav Havel and all other persons wrongfully arrested. (D 44) During the following days and weeks, hundreds more artists and academics in all fields endorsed the declaration, bringing the final total of signatures to several thousand. In addition, other similar initiatives were launched, particularly

the "Czechoslovak citizens' petition about the events of 15th-21st January 1989" (see D 53 and C 16th February), a letter from 670 scientific workers (see C 12th February), and others.

The Italian Socialist Party condemned "the brutal campaign of repression directed against the Czechoslovak people". Socialist deputy Margherita Boniver tabled a question in Parliament, asking whether the Italian government censured the flagrant violation of the agreement signed at the recent Vienna meeting of the CSCE. A spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs declared that the Italian government was strongly committed to the implementation of human rights.

Friday 27th January

Sixteen Czechoslovak citizens wrote to Academician Andrei Sakharov asking him to help counteract official Soviet media distortions and inform the Soviet public of what was really happening in Czechoslovakia, twenty-one years after the intervention from which the present Soviet leadership had yet to distance itself. (D 45)

A group of seventeen Czechoslovak citizens thanked Cardinal Tomášek for the stand he had taken on the events surrounding the 20th anniversary of Jan Palach's death, particularly in his communication to the Czechoslovak Prime Minister (see D 35). The letter from the seventeen was endorsed by many other Czechoslovak believers in subsequent days.

Replying to Cardinal Tomášek's letter (see D 35), Federal Premier Ladislav Adamec maintained that the Cardinal was clearly "misinformed" and accused him of supporting illegal activities and confrontation.

Sunday 29th January

VONS issued statement No. 897 on the suppression of demonstrations in January. (D 46)

Yelena Bonner, Larisa Bogoraz, Andrei Sakharov and Lev Timofeyev wrote to the heads of state of the countries involved in the Vienna CSCE meeting, protesting against the violation of human rights during the suppression of demonstrations in Czechoslovakia. (D 47)

American playwright Arthur Miller wrote an article for the independent Prague monthly *Lidové noviny* strongly protesting against the latest imprisonment of Václav Havel. The journal's editors made the piece available to the foreign media under the title "Where is the future?" (D 48)

Monday 30th January

In a letter to the Central Committee of the country's official youth organisation SSM, students at Prague's Academy of Creative Arts (AMU) expressed their views on the Wenceslas Square events of 15th to 20th January

and on the declaration of the SSM's Central Committee of 20th January. (D 49) After the letter's publication, there was a break-in at the AMU building, in the course of which original sheets of signatures of a petition by the students and a videocassette containing shots of the events of 15th-20th January were stolen.

In Warsaw, members of the banned Independent Students' Union held a protest against the suppression of the Prague demonstrations a fortnight earlier. A group of at least fifty students marched from their campus to the Czechoslovak Embassy, where they were halted by the police and dispersed peacefully. During the demonstration, which lasted about thirty minutes, marchers handed out leaflets about Jan Palach and carried banners demanding the release of those who were arrested in Prague during the month of January.

Tuesday 31st January

In an open letter, Olga Havlová and Ivan Havel thanked all those who had taken an interest in Václav Havel's fate and protested against his imprisonment. (D 50)

British Deputy Foreign Secretary William Waldegrave protested to the Czechoslovak Ambassador Jan Fiedler against the violation of human rights, and specifically, of the recent Vienna CSCE agreements, during police actions against Prague demonstrations to mark the 20th anniversary of Jan Palach's death.

FEBRUARY

Early February

Václav Havel sent a message from prison, thanking everyone, and particularly artists and academics in the official structures, for the solidarity they had shown with him. (D 51)

A group of ex-members of the Communist Party, including a number of former leaders, announced the formation of Obroda /Renewal/, the Club for Socialist Reconstruction. Its steering committee, chaired by Vojtěch Mencl, applied for registration to the Ministry of the Interior and sent out a statement of intent asserting the humane, moral and social values of the socialist organisation of society. This statement was also sent to various European communist and socialist parties. The Club's members include Čestmír Císař, Jiří Hájek, Miloš Hájek, Vladimír Kabrna, Vladimír Kadlec, Věnek Šilhán, and Libuše Šilhánová and its mouthpiece is the journal *Dialog*, issue No. 4/89 of which carried Obroda's draft 84-point programme.

A group of Danish members of parliament wrote to Communist Party General Secretary Miloš Jakeš demanding the immediate release of Václav Havel as a first step towards initiating the "essential dialogue" between the Communist Party leaders and the Czechoslovak public.

Wednesday 1st February

The Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee (CzHC) wrote to the Polish Helsinki Committee, thanking it for its expression of solidarity and stressing that the machinery established by the Vienna Concluding Document offered new scope for the protection of human rights. It also urged Helsinki committees to support the proposal to raise the matter of the Czechoslovak authorities' contempt for the Concluding Document at the next CSCE meeting in Paris. (D 52; see also D 45 and D 47)

The CzHC thanked Larisa Bogoraz, Yelena Bonner, Andrei Sakharov and Lev Timofeyev for their statement on recent events in Czechoslovakia (see D 47) and informed them of the letter sent to the Polish Helsinki Committee (see above).

The lawyer, Dr. Josef Danisz, representing Ivan and Václav Havel, filed a complaint against J. Lemák, the editor of *Večerní Praha*, and demanded publication of a correction to the article "Quo vadis, Charter!" (see D 10) in which it was stated that their family acted as a cover office for the Gestapo during the German occupation and had links with police informers.

Thursday 2nd February

The Czechoslovak Citizens' Petition Concerning the Events of 15th-21st January – a new independent initiative – informed the Federal Assembly, the President of the Republic, the Federal Prime Minister and others that by 31st January its text had been signed by over 2,100 persons (D 53; see also D 60)

The Community of Friends of the USA (SPUSA) sent a letter to the Federal Assembly, protesting against police brutality and the prosecution and imprisonment of innocent people, as well as against the slander campaign in the mass media, and the public support for such measures voiced by members of the Federal Assembly. (D 54)

The Czechoslovak Embassy in Washington refused to accept a petition signed by around one thousand American actors, writers and dancers expressing solidarity with Václav Havel.

Friday 3rd February

Members of the American House of Representatives Dennis DeConcini and Steny H. Hoyer nominated Václav Havel for the Nobel Peace Prize. In a letter to the Nobel Institute, they stressed Václav Havel's commitment to the implementation of fundamental human rights and democracy, and the persecution he has constantly suffered as a result. Noting that in other East European countries there had been a substantial move towards greater democracy, Czechoslovakia was suffering a wave of repression harsher than any since 1968-69. However, this had not shaken Havel's concern for peace and human rights, nor his critical stance towards the state of human rights in Czechoslovakia.

Sunday 5th February

The date given by Ludvík Vaculík to a piece entitled *Komunismus je bití* ("Communism is best-ial") in which he reacted to the brutal suppression of the January demonstrations. (D 55)

Monday 6th February

Charter 77 issued its Document No. 10/89 "Help Romania" in the form of a letter to independent initiatives and human rights activists in Eastern Europe, dealing with the dramatic situation in that country, and in particular the campaign of so-called "territorial systematisation" which threatens to destroy over half of Romania's villages.

The Paris-based International Committee for the Support of Charter 77, whose members include Saul Bellow, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Max Frisch, Günter Grass, Graham Greene, Arthur Miller, Yves Montand and Tom Stoppard, addressed a letter to the French President asking him to remind the Czechoslovak government of its international human rights commitments. (D 56) In another letter, addressed to the Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec, the Committee urged dialogue as the means of tackling Czechoslovakia's problems and

declared that the pre-condition for such a dialogue was the release of all those wrongly arrested, including Václav Havel, as well as truthful public information.

Representatives of Vienna's Burgtheater sent the Czechoslovak authorities a statement of solidarity with Václav Havel, demanding his release and a halt to prosecutions of participants in the January demonstrations in Prague.

The Dutch organisation "Stichting Informatie over Charta 77" organised an evening in support of arrested and persecuted human rights activists in Czechoslovakia. Taking part in the event, which was held in Amsterdam's Paradiso arts centre, were leading figures of the Dutch cultural scene, together with well-known underground bands having ties with Czech musicians. Poems by Ivan Jirous were read out in Czech and Dutch. Czech musicians abroad were represented by Vlastimil Třešňák and Jaroslav Hutka.

Wednesday 8th February

Charter 77 signatory Martin Palouš was notified that he had been charged with riotous conduct for having read out a Charter 77 document at Wenceslas Square during the afternoon of 18th January. He allegedly provoked a riot requiring an increased level of policing. In fact, the spontaneous demonstration of Wednesday 18th January was the only one to have passed off peacefully, as there was no police intervention. (See C 18th January and D 21 & D 27) (On 20th March the district prosecutor transferred Martin Palouš's case to the municipal council to be dealt with as a misdemeanour.)

Thursday 9th February

The French government called on the Czechoslovak authorities to release Václav Havel. A French Foreign Ministry spokesman declared that the French side had requested precise information about Havel's case and reminded the Czechoslovak government of its obligations under the Helsinki Final Act.

Friday 10th February

Charter 77 and the Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee issued a joint statement on the Concluding Document of the CSCE Vienna meeting, highlighting the discrepancy between the Czechoslovak government's formal assertion that its country was one of those which sought consistently to fulfil and advance the Helsinki process, and its actual practice over many years, and particularly in the recent period, which contradicted those assertions. (D 57)

Following completion of the preliminary hearing in the case of Václav Havel, the prosecutor submitted the indictment to the Prague 1 District Court, which immediately forwarded it to the District Court for Prague 3. The main trial proceedings were fixed for 21st February.

The main hearing in the case of Jana Petrová et al. was fixed for the same day and time at the Prague 2 District Court. Indicted with Jan Petrová were Ota Veverka, Dana Němcová, David Němec, Stanislav Penc, Petr Placák, Jana Sternová and Saša Vondra. (See C 22nd February) Václav Havel, Jana Petrová and Ota Veverka were still on remand, the others having been released pending trial proceedings. (See C 25th January)

The French PEN Club voiced its solidarity with Václav Havel and the Bulgarian poet P. Manolov, who was observing a hunger strike, and on behalf of its 550 members it sent protest letters to Prague and Sofia via the Czechoslovak and Bulgarian embassies in Paris.

Saturday 11th February

Under the headline "We are relying on all honest people", *Rudé právo* published a lengthy excerpt from a speech given by CPCz General Secretary Miloš Jakeš at a meeting with mass media administrators. The January events and the Party leadership's attitude to them was dealt with particularly in a passage published under the subheading "Who is seeking to undermine our perestroika? Why and how?". (D 58)

Forty-two students at the Comenius Evangelical Theological Faculty sent members of the Federal Assembly a letter in which they protested against the unrestrained assaults by para-military units in October 1988 and January 1989, and also against the way these events were reported in the media. (D 59) At the same time, a notice was put up in the faculty appealing for concern and care for prisoners, and mentioning by name Petr Cibulka, Ivan Jirous and Eva Vidlařová.

The daily newspaper of the Hungarian Patriotic National Front *Magyar Nemzet* published an article on "the political, economic and moral crisis" in the Eastern European countries. The article concluded that the only solution was a "division of power", citing the example of Poland and indirectly criticising not only the GDR but also Czechoslovakia, as a country "where a distinguished writer is persecuted and 'perestroika' is rejected out of hand".

Sunday 12th February

Six hundred and seventy specialists at seventy academic institutes, and in particular, branches of the Academy of Sciences in Prague, Brno and Bratislava, addressed a letter about the January events to the Czechoslovak Prime Minister, Ladislav Adamec, in which they spoke of the unwarranted intervention of police units against rallies in memory of Jan Palach and "the lack of scope to comment publicly on the leadership of our society and, if need be, criticise it", which is "one of the causes of the economic, social and political crisis in which our country finds itself". In response to this petition, the Prague and Bratislava secret police started to tour the different institutes in search of its authors and organisers.

In a letter to the Communist Party General Secretary, Catholic writer and theologian Dr Josef Zvěřina emphatically rejected that part of Miloš Jakeš's speech of 9th February, in which he had spoken of "illegal church structures" and "certain church leaders who exploit the religious feelings of the believers among our citizens in an anti-socialist direction" (See D 58). He requested the leaders of the Communist Party and State to "put an end to religious discrimination and insults" and thereby make it easier for believers to engage in "conscientious work for the benefit of our society".

Monday 13th February

British Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe told the Czechoslovak deputy Foreign Minister Jaromír Obzina that the Czechoslovak authorities' actions violated the agreements reached at the CSCE talks in Vienna. According to a ministry spokesman, the Foreign Secretary chiefly expressed concern about gaoled dissidents, and in particular, Václav Havel.

Tuesday 14th February

The Presidium of the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly adopted an edict "in the interest of protecting public order" which raises the custodial penalty stipulated in Article 156a of the Penal Code (obstructing a public official in the performance of his duty) from 6 months to one year. The same edict also considerably increases the penalties stipulated in Article 6 of the law on misdemeanours (No. 150/1969). In addition, a rider was adopted to that legislation whereby "anyone who drafts, or assists the drafting and dissemination of printed materials whose content harms the socialist state's concern for maintaining public order", commits a misdemeanour. This edict of the Presidium of the Federal Assembly, which came into force on the day of its promulgation, represents a further restriction on free speech and freedom of assembly. (See C 15th and 17th February and D 62 and D 83)

Wednesday 15th February

A plenary session of the Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee (CzHC) endorsed the proposals submitted by members of the US Congress (see C 3rd February), the Czechoslovak Democratic Initiative group (Demokratická iniciativa) and others, that the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize be awarded to Václav Havel. A special committee, comprising Eva Kantůrková, Emanuel Mandler, Dana Němcová and Vlasta Chramostová, was set up to act as a clearing-house for statements of Czechoslovak citizens in support of Havel's nomination. The CzHC also criticised the edict on public order adopted by the Presidium of the Federal Assembly on 14th February, on the grounds that it stepped up the repression of those who organise or take part in peaceful demonstrations. (See C 14th, 17th and 18th February and D 62) The CzHC urged members of the Federal Assembly to withhold ratification of the Presidium's edict and thereby annul it. (See also D 83)

The CzHC received from its Polish counterpart a copy of a letter to the Polish Prime Minister calling on him to request an explanation from the Czechoslovak government about the police interventions in Prague and Všetaty during the period 16th-21st January.

As reported in *Rudé právo* the Czechoslovak Prosecutor General, J. Krupauer, announced that 55 persons would be brought to court in connection with the January events in Prague on charges of "riotous conduct, opposition to state power and attacks on public officials". Preliminary hearings had now taken place in 46 of the cases, and 17 of them (including that of Václav Havel) would be the subject of criminal proceedings. "The procedures of the prosecution services", declared the Prosecutor General, "are entirely consistent with Czechoslovak judicature."

Thursday 16th February

The Czechoslovak citizens' petition about the events of 15th-21st January (see D 53) had gained a further 1266 signatures. A detailed report with a list of the latest signatories was sent to the Federal Assembly, the President, the Prime Minister and others. (D 60)

The Movement for Civil Liberties issued a statement entitled "Paths to democracy in the wake of the January events". (D 61)

The International Association for the Defence of Persecuted Artists (AIDA) called for the immediate release of Václav Havel. In a statement, it declared that in the light of the progress made in the human rights field in other Warsaw Pact countries, Czechoslovakia risked finding itself isolated as a result of the arbitrary imprisonment of defenders of civil liberties. AIDA's members include the writer Siegfried Lenz, the theatre directors Ariane Mnouchkine and Patrice Chereau, the actors Yves Montand and Michel Piccoli, and the film director Ingmar Bergman.

The Serbian PEN Club sent a letter to the Czechoslovak Writers' Union protesting against the arrest of Václav Havel and other Czechoslovak writers, artists and intellectuals, and expressing solidarity with the detainees.

Friday 17th February

The presidia of the Czech and Slovak National Councils approved and promulgated edicts concerning offences against measures to reinforce public order. The purpose of these riders to the edicts adopted by the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly on 14th February, was confirmed in a *Rudé právo* commentary on 18th February: "The need for these new legal provisions arose out of the recent operations of anti-socialist groups, which had stepped up their disruptions of public order and citizens' safety in the centre of Prague. The public response in the media

and at workplaces to those acts of incitement is incontestable evidence that the overwhelming majority of citizens disagrees with them and demands the adoption of the most effective measures to reinforce public order.”

A petition by 551 Czechoslovak citizens was published demanding the release of Eva Vidlařová, actress and stage manager with Brno's "Theatre on a String", held on remand since 19th December 1988 because of her activity as a member of the Committee for the Defence of Petr Cibulka, Dušan Skála a Jiří Štencel. Eva Vidlařová was originally charged with the offence of abetment, which she allegedly committed by organising protests in the form of hunger strikes and petitions, and "influencing witnesses". Her charge was subsequently altered to one of obstructing the enforcement of an official decision, an offence carrying a maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment. Her request for release from custody was refused on 1st February. (See C 9th March)

Saturday 18th February

Nine Czechoslovak independent initiatives sent a letter to governments of the Helsinki signatory states "and to friends at home and abroad", in which, inter alia, they drew attention to the repressive legal edicts adopted by the Presidium of the Federal Assembly. (D 62; see also C 14th, 15th and 17th February and D 83)

The Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee (CzHC) wrote to the Federal Assembly setting out its attitude to the legal measures to protect public order adopted by the Assembly's Presidium on 14th February. The CzHC expressed its belief that these measures were contrary to the spirit and letter of the Helsinki agreements; they served to step up repression instead of assisting a political solution to social problems.

Sunday 19th February

Charter 77 issued its document No. 15/89 headed "Reflections on Jan Zajíc's sacrifice" to mark the forthcoming 20th anniversary of Jan Zajíc's self-immolation. (D 63)

Monday 20th February

According to a report issued by the independent East European Information Agency (VIA) a standing inter-departmental commission had been created within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Headed by a deputy to the Minister, its purpose was to organise campaigns of disinformation against the independent initiatives. Although intended chiefly for foreign consumption, some of its material was also likely to be used in Czechoslovakia. The commission was to remain permanent session.

In a letter to Václav Havel, Slovak author Ivan Hoffmann, one of the publishers of the independent magazine *Fragment-K*, explained the lack of solidarity from the Slovak cultural community and sharply criticised the cultural situation in his country. (D 64)

Tuesday 21st February

Following a trial conducted by magistrate Helena Hlavatá, the Prague 3 District Court sentenced Václav Havel to nine months' unconditional imprisonment in the second (i.e. harsher) penal category. He was found guilty on the two counts on which he was charged, i.e. incitement, which he was alleged to have committed by inviting people via foreign radio stations to take part in the ceremony of remembrance in Wenceslas Square on 15th January, to mark the anniversary of Jan Palach's self-immolation; and obstruction of a public official in the performance of his duty, that he was supposed to have committed at Wenceslas Square on 16th January by failing to heed a police order to leave the area. Václav Havel immediately lodged an appeal against his conviction. The Prosecutor asked for leave to consider. Václav Havel made a concluding statement before the verdict was delivered. (D 66) The trial of Václav Havel was attended by three of his relations; the rest of the public (200-300 persons) were present in the court house or stood outside the building. (D 65) Also admitted to the court proceedings were press correspondents from TASS, Associated Press, Rudé právo and Czechoslovak Radio. However, the magistrate banned all note-taking.

The parallel trial of Jana Petrová et al., which opened the same day, was attended by the correspondents of Reuter and Voice of America. Other agencies, viz. Agence France Press, the Hungarian Press Agency and the New China News Agency were refused permission to attend the trial proceedings.

Apart from journalists, the two trials also attracted observers from a number of foreign and international organisations, including the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, the Fédération Internationale des Droits de l'Homme (FIDH), the Swedish PEN-Club, the Swedish Writers' Union, the British peace campaign END, and the British civil liberties organisation Charter 88. None of them was admitted to the courtroom. Only the FIDH representatives managed to gain entry, but they were ejected two hours later.

Legal proceedings were initiated against Charter 77 spokesman **Tomáš Hradílek** on charges of incitement and damaging state interests abroad. He was alleged to have committed the offences on 17th January when he sent Party and State authorities a statement condemning police operations against demonstrators in Prague, and on 1st February, when he sent an open letter to the Communist Party General Secretary reacting to an interview given by Miloš Jakeš to West German television. On 22nd February, Tomáš Hradílek was arrested and his home was searched in his absence. After questioning him for several hours, the interrogator made an application for him to be taken into custody. The application was turned down by the Prosecutor and Tomáš Hradílek was released, although charges against him were not dropped. This was the first occasion in the history of Charter 77 that all three spokespersons faced legal proceedings at one and the same time. (See also C 8th March)

Police interrogator Captain Špírk initiated legal proceedings against former Charter 77 spokesperson Libuše Šilhánová, and the actress Vlasta Chramostová, also a Charter signatory, on charges of approving of a criminal act and assaulting "a state official" and "the official of a public organisation". The alleged grounds for these

charges were that on 16th January, Šilhánová a Charamostová had written and dispatched to party and state authorities a letter "which expressed support for an officially-banned mass demonstration by illegal structures, organised at Wenceslas Square during the afternoon of 15th January", and "falsely accused state and party authorities of abusing their prerogative, and blatantly violating civil rights and citizens' freedoms". (See D 17) Both women were released pending trial. (See also C 20th March)

Catholic activist from Brno, Dr Radomír Malý, wrote to the Czechoslovak Prosecutor General protesting against Václav Havel's conviction and requesting him to annul the verdict. Failing this, he asked to be indicted also, as he was responsible for actions similar to those for which Václav Havel was prosecuted and convicted. (D 67)

A demonstration in protest against the trial of Václav Havel took place at 3 p.m. at the Main Square in Krakow, organised by the Confederation for an Independent Poland. The march was headed by the Czechoslovak state flag and demonstrators carried banners with the slogan "Release Václav Havel" as well as the names of the organisations involved and of the independent trade union Solidarity.

The Committee to Nominate Václav Havel for the Nobel Peace Prize made public a letter from a group of citizens – chiefly working people from the Klatovy area – who were among the first to support the nomination. (D 68; see also D 71)

Wednesday 22nd February

At the Prague 2 District Court, it was the second and final day in the trial of Jana Petrová, member of the Independent Peace Association, Ota Veverka, Charter 77 signatory and member of the John Lennon Peace Club and the Community of Friends of USA (SPUSA), Dana Němcová, Charter 77 spokesperson, David Němec, Charter 77 signatory, Jana Sternová, former Charter 77 spokesperson, Petr Placák, a representative of the Czech Children group, Stanislav Penc Jr., a member of the John Lennon Peace Club, and Dr Saša Vondra, Charter 77 spokesperson. All the defendants in the case were arrested on 16th January. Since then, Jana Petrová and Ota Veverka had been kept in custody, while the others were released on 24th January pending trial. At the opening of the trial, Dana Němcová was committed to a separate hearing, as she was still receiving in-patient hospital treatment for a back condition aggravated by the conditions of her arrest on 16th January. Unlike the trial of Václav Havel, normal judicial procedures at these hearings were continually infringed. The magistrate for Prague 2, Dr Antonín Těšík, misrecorded the proceedings and twisted witnesses' statements, directing that they be so recorded. He also led witnesses to make statements detrimental to the defendants. He repeatedly denied counsel permission to speak, refused to correct the record, ejected Ota Veverka's mother from the court merely for making an "unseemly" face, etc. Only one relative per defendant was allowed to attend the proceedings. The judge overruled a defence application to call Václav Havel as a witness.

The court found Jana Petrová, Ota Veverka, David Němec and Jana Sternová guilty of riotous conduct for having laid, or attempting to lay flowers by the St Wenceslas monument on 16th January, and thereby causing a riot. Jana Petrová and Ota Veverka were also found guilty of assaulting a public official by allegedly swearing at policemen. The following sentences were imposed: Jana Petrová: 9 months' unconditional imprisonment in the first corrective category; Ota Veverka: 12 months' unconditional imprisonment in the second corrective category (this being his second conviction); David Němec: 6 months' imprisonment, suspended for three years, and a fine of 4,000 Crowns; and Jana Sternová: 4 months' imprisonment, suspended for one year. (D 69)

The other three defendants – Saša Vondra, Petr Placák and Stanislav Penc – were found not guilty as charged, but instead guilty of a misdemeanour against public order and each sentenced accordingly to a two months' imprisonment suspended for two years, and a fine of 2,500 Crowns. Jana Petrová and the Prosecutor immediately lodged appeals. The other defendants applied for leave to consider. Ota Veverka's application for release from custody pending appeal was overruled by the trial magistrate. (At the appeal hearing on 4th April, the Prague Municipal Court upheld the verdicts. The cases were dealt with in a purely formal manner and the court ignored the objections of defendants and defence counsel. Presiding Judge Dr Jan Rojt apparently fell asleep during the hearing. On 19th June, Jana Petrová was conditionally released by the Chomutov Regional Court after serving half her sentence.)

A group of French intellectuals signed a petition describing the conviction of Václav Havel as a scandalous attack on democratic rights and demanding "his immediate release, the quashing of the verdict, and the cancelling of criminal proceedings against all those in Czechoslovakia facing prosecution for voicing their beliefs". The first fifty signatures were already available only hours after the verdict on Václav Havel and the collection of signatures continued throughout that night. Signatories included deputies to the National Assembly, writers, journalists, actors, lawyers, activists of the Human Rights League, members of the organisation "SOS Racisme", Socialist and Communist politicians, etc.

Thursday 23rd February

Rudé právo published a lengthy article under the headline "Who is Václav Havel?" whose very title and content directly recalled the slander campaign against Václav Havel and Charter 77 which was initiated in the press at the start of 1977 and revived on several occasions since – most recently in connection with the January demonstrations. (See D 10) Continuing in the same vein, this latest article in the Communist Party daily sought to discredit Václav Havel chiefly by means of insinuations about the activities of his family – particularly his father Václav and uncle Miloš (proprietor of Lucerna-film and the Barrandov Film Studios) – during the Nazi occupation. (See D 32 and D 73) Another article mentioned – for the first time in the Czechoslovak official press – the titles of a number of Václav Havel's writings, including *Anatomy of a Reticence*, *Politics and Conscience*, *Long-distance interrogation*, etc.

Charter 77 signatory František Stárek, a joint publisher of the independent magazine *Vokno*, was arrested in the Eastern Bohemian town of Česká Třebová, where he is employed as a boilerman. During a search of his home, police took away various items of equipment, including a typewriter, computer, duplicator, cameras, and tape recorder, as well as books, journals, photos, manuscripts, and the magazine's library and archive. In 1982, František Stárek was prosecuted for his activity in the field of non-conformist culture and sentenced to 32 months' imprisonment. On this occasion, he was first summonsed for a public order misdemeanour but this was then altered to a criminal charge of incitement. (On 3rd April, František Stárek's common-law wife Iva Vojtková was charged as an accessory to incitement. On 26th June, the Ústí nad Orlicí Regional Court sentenced František Stárek to 32 months' imprisonment in the 2nd corrective category. It also ordered the sequestration of the confiscated materials and imposed a two year period of protective surveillance following completion of sentence. Iva Vojtková was also found guilty as charged and sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment, suspended for two years.)

The Association of Slovak Writers and Artists Abroad issued a declaration condemning the verdict on Václav Havel and all convictions of citizens for exercising their rights since the demonstration of Bratislava catholics of 25th March 1988. (D 70)

The Committee to Nominate Václav Havel for the Nobel Peace Prize announced that it had received further expressions of support – from citizens in Benátky nad Jizerou, Kropáčova Vrutice and Prague. (D 71)

Friday 24th February

Among the many reactions to Václav Havel's conviction in the world press, the Viennese daily *Kurier* published an article by the President of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, Karl Johannes von Schwarzenberg, entitled "Not just a crime – an act of folly". (D 72)

Charter 77 issued its Document No. 17/89: "Statement on the case of British writer Salman Rushdie", condemning as an act of state terrorism the "death sentence" passed on the British author by Ayatollah Khomeini and other Iranian leaders.

In a letter to Mikhail Gorbachev, the Czechoslovak Democratic Initiative called on the Soviet leader to "act as the leading proponent of a democratic reform programme also in relations with Czechoslovakia, and speak out in defence of Václav Havel and other persons wrongfully imprisoned". The letter was signed by Bohumil Doležal, Martin Litomiský, Emanuel Mandler, Ilja Storoženko, M. Svoboda, Karel Štindl, Eva Štolbová and S. Trávníček.

Saturday 25th February

National Theatre player Josef Kemr sent a letter to *Rudé právo* responding to its article of 23rd February, "Who is Václav Havel?" in which he offered his personal reminiscence to offset the slanders about the writer's uncle Miloš Havel. (D 73)

Several hundred people demonstrated outside the Czechoslovak Embassy in Ottawa against the police violence during the January demonstrations in Prague and the prosecution of many of those who took part in them. Canadian MP D. Kirgol declared that the Prague regime was crudely violating the pledges it had made when it signed the Concluding Document of the CSCE follow-up meeting in Vienna.

The Polish section of the PEN Club sent a telegram to President Husák appealing for the release of Václav Havel and expressing grave disquiet over the fate of "an illustrious colleague".

The Warsaw theatre Teatr Powszechny gave a revived premiere of Václav Havel's one-act plays *Audience* and *Protest* attended by Polish Prime Minister Rakowski and Solidarity leaders Bronislaw Geremek and Adam Michnik. At the end of the performance, Adam Michnik addressed the audience.

Sunday 26th February

Charter 77 issued its Document No. 18/89, supporting the nomination of Václav Havel for the Nobel Peace Prize. Arguing that peace was not a matter solely for governments and politicians, but also for citizens, and that it was therefore inseparably linked with efforts to win respect for human rights, "the Nobel Prize ought to be awarded above all to those who – outside the bounds of their own profession, and often at great personal risk – contribute towards the goal of achieving greater justice and human dignity on the planet".

Monday 27th February

Charter 77 signatory and one-time spokesman Jiří Dienstbier sent a letter to representatives of independent initiatives in Europe and the USA proposing the nomination of Václav Havel for the Nobel Peace Prize. (D 74)

Tuesday 28th February

In its Document No. 19/89, Charter 77 thanked the organisers of a demonstration called for 2nd March in Budapest to protest against the imprisonment of Václav Havel and other Czechoslovak activists. Asking them to support Václav Havel's nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize, it recalled the names of some other political prisoners and stressed that solidarity with the unjustly convicted was important in practical as well as moral terms. (D 75) Olga Havlová also sent a message of thanks and greetings to the Budapest demonstration. (See C 2nd March)

Slovak writer Lubomír Feldek protested against the conviction of Václav Havel and requested that his statement be appended to the minutes of that day's Prague session of the Committee of the Czechoslovak Writers' Union. (D 76)

End February

The newly-founded Peace Activists Defence Committee sent a statement of its aims to the Czechoslovak state leadership, the Czechoslovak Peace Committee, Cardinal Tomášek and the media. (D 77)

MARCH

Wednesday 1st March

In its Document No.20/89, Charter 77 reported on a meeting between eight representatives of the unofficial initiatives and the Danish Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemann-Jensen who was on an official visit to Czechoslovakia. During lunch at the Embassy, the Minister informed his guests of the official protest tabled by the Danish Government against the actions of the Czechoslovak police in January and the subsequent trials. The Czechoslovak guests spoke about the overall situation in the country, the activity of the independent movement and individual cases of political imprisonment. The talks lasted two hours and were the first contact made with independent groups in Czechoslovakia by official representatives of the Kingdom of Denmark.

On behalf of the Czechoslovak section of Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity, Petr Pospíchal and Anna Šabatová joined with Charter spokesman Saša Vondra in sending a message of solidarity to members of the Polish "Freedom and Peace" movement then holding a hunger-strike in Sopot to protest against discriminatory practices in the allocation of travel documents in Poland. In their letter they stressed that the Polish government was "duty-bound to respect the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, guaranteeing freedom to leave a country and return to it", and that this applied to "governments of all states that endorsed that Covenant, including the government of Czechoslovakia". Nonetheless, the authors declared, similar discriminatory practices also existed in Czechoslovakia.

The Czechoslovak Communist Party weekly *Tribuna* continued its campaign of defamation against Václav Havel in an article entitled, "What Václav Havel is 'fighting' for". After repeating the usual slanders about Václav Havel's family (see D 10, D 32, C 23rd February and D 73) the article concentrated on his social commitment, interpreting it in the spirit of the Stalinist notions of the nineteen-fifties whereby all critically-minded representatives of Czechoslovak culture – in this case Václav Černý, Bedřich Fučík, Václav Havel, etc. – are simply agents of foreign interests as part of an international anti-communist conspiracy.

Thursday 2nd March

In its Document No. 21/89, Charter 77 alerted the President of the Republic to the "grave circumstances damaging both relations within our society and the interests of our Republic abroad", namely, the regime's aggressive and provocative handling of January's peaceful ceremony in memory of Jan Palach at Wenceslas Square and the subsequent trials and convictions of Václav Havel and seven other citizens in February. (D 78)

In Budapest, some 1500 people took part in a demonstration in solidarity with Václav Havel and other Czechoslovak political prisoners. Four hundred demonstrators immediately signed a petition supporting the proposal for Václav Havel to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. (See C 28th February a D 75)

Saturday 4th March

At a congress of the European Women's Union (Unione Europea Femminile), organised in Rome from 1st to 4th March by the Italian Christian Democrats, the International Milada Horáková Committee was set up to assist women persecuted by the present Czechoslovak regime.

Sunday 5th March

Twenty Soviet and German writers and academics signed a declaration expressing grave concern about the imprisonment of Václav Havel. "We are firmly resolved to speak out loudly in defence of Václav Havel," the letter concludes, "because in doing so we also defend ourselves." (D 79)

Monday 6th March

A delegation of the International Helsinki Federation (IHF), headed by its President, Karl Johannes von Schwarzenberg, visited Czechoslovakia but was unable to have talks with Czechoslovak leaders. In a letter to Premier Ladislav Adamec, the IHF President expressed disappointment and protested against escalating human rights violations in Czechoslovakia. (D 80)

In its Document No. 1/1989, the Czechoslovak Social Defence Initiative condemned attempts by the Czech government's Secretariat for Church Affairs to manipulate candidates for theological studies. "The authorities are trying to create the impression that they do not interfere in any way in the process of selecting students for the theological faculty. In point of fact they exploit the admissions procedure in order to manipulate prospective clergy in an insidious and shameless fashion and make them comply to an alien political doctrine. Such compliance, however, must inevitably have damaging effects on their conscience."

Tuesday 7th March

The Paris-based Fédération internationale des droits de l'Homme (International Human Rights Federation – FIDH) which has consultative status with the UN and the European Council of UNESCO and whose members include the Czechoslovak Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS), published a special issue (No.291) of its weekly *Lettre* about the trial of Václav Havel. The report of the trial was compiled by Roland Kessous, former prosecutor general at the Paris appeal court, who was mandated by FIDH to attend the trial. However, the Czechoslovak authorities prevented him from accomplishing his mission.

According to a report in the Austrian daily *Die Presse*, the distinguished Austrian painter Max Weiler had cancelled all future exhibitions in Czechoslovakia. Following a successful exhibition in Brno, his pictures were due to go on display in Bratislava from 5th March and in Prague from 20th April. However, as soon as he learnt from the press about the gaoling of Václav Havel and the others, the artist sent a telegram from Mexico – where he was setting up an exhibition – calling off the further showings. [“It’s as if it happened to myself. They are our people and the only way they’ll know we stand by them is by the way we react.”]

Wednesday 8th March

Charter spokesperson Tomáš Hradílek, indicted on a charge of incitement and damaging the Republic’s interests abroad (See C 21st February) was informed of the outcome of the preliminary hearing. The hasty conclusion of the investigation was proof of the authorities’ determination to bring him to trial by the end of March or beginning of April. (At the main hearing on 4th and 5th April, the Přerov district court found Tomáš Hradílek guilty of attempted incitement and attempting to damage the Republic’s interests abroad, and sentenced him to 13 months imprisonment suspended for two years. In his final statement, the Charter 77 spokesperson denied the charge of hostility towards the Republic, which, he said, was levelled at anyone who criticised the Communist Party’s monopoly of power now that it had lost its intellectual and moral authority and was unable to act as the vanguard of society. Both defendant and prosecutor appealed against the verdict. Some one hundred of Tomáš Hradílek’s friends were present in the courthouse and the trial was also attended by representatives of the US and Canadian embassies. (At the appeal hearing on 19th May, the Ostrava Regional Court upheld the verdict.)

Thursday 9th March

The Jihlava district court found Martin Jirous and Jiří Tichý guilty of incitement, an offence they allegedly committed by drafting a petition holding the authorities responsible for the sudden death of 35-year-old political prisoner Pavel Wonka on 26th April 1988. Ivan Jirous was sentenced to sixteen months’ imprisonment in the 2nd (harsher) corrective category, Jiří Tichý to six months’ imprisonment in the 1st corrective category. Both defendants appealed against the verdicts. During the trial, which was openly political, the prosecution failed to

refute the petition's individual allegations. The defendants acknowledged their authorship and asserted their right to express their views on past and current events. Present at the trial were representatives of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights Jeri Laber, Gerald Nagler and Karl Johannes von Schwarzenberg, the official Committee of the Czechoslovak Public for Human Rights (Dr A. Klimeš), and Czechoslovak press and television. (On 24th April, the Brno Regional Court upheld the verdict.)

The trial of Jaromír Němec and Pavel Dudr, indicted in September 1986 on charges of sedition, ended in Kroměříž (Moravia) after three days of hearings. The grounds for the prosecution was that in the 1980-85 period the two defendants had assembled and duplicated literature allegedly hostile to the state and socialist system and made them available to a large number of people. The publications in question included the samizdat *Informace o Chartě 77* (Information on Charter 77) and *Informace o církvi* (Information on the Church) and the emigré journals *Listy* and *Svědectví*, as well as individual articles or books such as Karel Čapek's essay, *Why I'm Not a Communist*, Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *Not living a lie*, Václav Havel's essays and plays, Jaroslav Seifert's poetry, Bohumil Hrabal's fiction, and religious literature. The court found both defendants guilty as charged and sentenced Jaromír Němec to eighteen months' imprisonment suspended for three years, and Pavel Dudr to twelve months' imprisonment also suspended for three years. It was also ordered that both defendants should forfeit property confiscated from them, including typewriters, a duplicator, paper and other technical equipment. Friends of the accused were allowed to attend the trial without hindrance. (According to a Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS) report of 10th May, the sentence was confirmed when both the prosecutor and Pavel Dudr withdrew their appeals and Jaromír Němec failed to lodge an appeal in time.)

The Brno Regional Court ordered the release of Eva Vidlařová from custody after she had spent almost three months on remand. However, she continued to face charges of frustrating the implementation of an official decision, on the grounds that she had allegedly interfered with the investigation of Petr Cibulka's "illegal activity". (See C 17th February) (On 5th April, the Brno Municipal Court found Eva Vidlařová innocent of charges, due to lack of evidence. The verdict was confirmed by the Brno Regional Court on 2nd May.)

Sunday 12th March

Charter 77 issued its Document No. 22/89 in the form of a statement about the Danube hydraulic project addressed to the Czechoslovak Government, the Czech and Slovak ministries of the interior and the environment and the group of experts from Czechoslovakia and six neighbouring states then meeting in Prague. The document called for the entire project and progress on its construction to be re-evaluated in the light of the report submitted by the official ecological section of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences in January this year, "on the basis of negotiations within an international commission made up of supporters and opponents of the project assisted by experts from the three states concerned." In the Document's view, the relevant authorities should, in reaching

a decision, "feel a sense of responsibility for the environment and future generations, instead of the megalomaniacal, environmentally-harmful and destructive notions of yesteryear."

The Charter 77 spokespersons, together with a group of Charter signatories and supporters, marked the twelfth anniversary of the death of Jan Patočka, one of Charter 77's founders, by laying flowers and a commemorative ribbon on his grave. The ceremony was observed by officers of the State Security. An hour later, only the flowers remained on the grave, the ribbon with Charter 77's name on it having been removed.

Monday 13th March

Charter 77 issued its Document No.23/89 "Another game with marked cards", highlighting provocative operations whereby certain citizens had received anonymous letters urging them to send donations of money to so-called "Social initiatives of democratic activists (SIDA)", and fill in their names and addresses on the enclosed payment slip. The bank account involved was actually that of a fund administered by the Ministry of Health to assist the fight against AIDS (SIDA in French). "However, if donations to assist the fight against AIDS may be sent anonymously, as the press informs us, it is tantamount to self-denunciation to write one's name on the envelope supplied," the Document stated.

The Charter 77 spokespersons sent independent groups in Hungary a telegram on the occasion of celebrations to mark the restoration of the Hungarian National Holiday on 19th March. (See also C 19th March)

A worker at the TOS machine-tool factory in the Prague district of Hostivař was arrested at work for having drafted a petition protesting about the recent police violence. The petition, signed by 38 members of the official trade union was in response to a call for workers to sign an official petition condemning the actions of the independent groups. The author of the petition was released after being charged with incitement. Similar incidents occurred in other Prague factories. (In a letter to the Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS) dated 10th May, a group of 68 employees at the TOS plant in Hostivař, mostly manual workers, announced that they were collecting funds to assist the families of indicted activists, as an expression of their "solidarity with all those who are not indifferent to the fate of our nation".)

Wednesday 15th March

The Masaryk Association issued a statement to mark the 50th anniversary of the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia calling for the country to take the initiative in achieving a consistently humane solution to the remaining legacies of the Second World War: "The fiftieth anniversary of that fateful 15th March 1939 affords an opportunity to do so. And in view of the overall significance of Masaryk's work, including his attitude to the role of the German nation, we are duty-bound to do so."

Rudé právo published most of a speech by Michal Černík, Chairman of the Czech Writers' Union, to a meeting of the union's members, in which mention was made of the need to reintegrate certain "neglected" authors and works into official culture, according to the criteria of "Marxist-Leninist principles of socialist artistic creation".

A petition originating in the Ostrava region was sent to the Federal Prime Minister at the beginning of February. Signed by 78 blue-collar workers, it voiced support for the Initiative of those who work in the arts (see D 44) and called for the release of Václav Havel and other political prisoners, as well as for an authentic dialogue between government and society. Copies of the petition had been sent, among others, to the regional daily newspaper *Nová svoboda* which tried to pillory the petition's organisers by publishing their names and full addresses. In fact this enabled many other citizens, mostly manual workers, to lend their support to the action. Thus, even though several sheets of signatures were confiscated, by 15th March the petition had been signed by a total of 272 persons.

Thursday 16th March

In Strasbourg, the European Parliament unanimously adopted a resolution condemning the verdicts against Václav Havel and other Czechoslovak citizens as an action contravening the international agreements signed by the Czechoslovak government. The text of the resolution was tabled jointly by the Socialist, Christian Democrat, Liberal, Democratic Alliance and Communist parliamentary groups. (D 81)

In Bonn, the Bundestag unanimously passed a resolution condemning the persecution of Czechoslovak human rights activists in general, and in particular the sentences passed on Václav Havel, Jana Petrová and others. The resolution was tabled jointly by the Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, Free Democrats and the Greens. (D 82)

The State Security carried out a series of house searches as part of an investigation into an alleged case of sedition "committed by a person or persons unknown" who drafted and distributed a petition by activists of the Community of Friends of the USA (SPUSA). The petition, signed by 430 citizens, which called for the release of political prisoners, respect for fundamental freedoms and the democratisation of society, was sent to the Federal Assembly on 31st December 1988. The name of Stanislav Devátý was given as guarantor for the signatures' authenticity. The offending petition had been used as an excuse to harass various independent initiatives, above all SPUSA, but also the editorial team of the new independent journal *To* and the student magazine *Revue 88*, resulting in extensive house searches in the Moravian towns of Brno and Znojmo, during which the prototype issue of *Revue 88* was confiscated.

The police also searched the home of former Charter 77 spokesperson Stanislav Devátý, who was arrested and charged with sedition, partly for having organised the above-mentioned petition, partly for having co-authored the letter sent by SPUSA on 2nd February to the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly (see D 54). Following his arrest, Stanislav Devátý commenced a hunger strike. (After a thirty-day hunger strike, Stanislav Devátý was

released on the order the Brno regional prosecutor. However, he was subsequently arrested on suspicion of a public order misdemeanour during the May Day demonstration in Prague and detained on remand on 6th May and he again declared a hunger strike in protest. On 19th May, the Brno regional prosecutor upheld his appeal against the detention order and three days later he was transferred from the Thomayer Hospital in Prague to a hospital in Gottwaldov, although criminal charges against him were not dropped.)

Police in Brno also carried out a house-search at the home of Charter 77 signatory Petr Pospíchal, who is also a member of Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS) and Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity (PČSS). Petr Pospíchal was charged on 22nd January 1987 with subversion of the Republic because of his activity in PČSS and his involvement in the publication of *Informace o Chartě 77* (Information on Charter 77). In spite of the fact that no action had been taken in his case since his release from custody in April 1988, Petr Pospíchal was none the less informed after the house-search that criminal charges against him were still pending and he was liable to be detained on remand once again since he was continuing his "illegal activity" of stocking independent publications. The charges against Petr Pospíchal were potentially the most serious of all recent political prosecutions, since he could face a possible prison sentence of 3-10 years if convicted.

Friday 17th March

After a two-day trial before the Prague 1 District Court, Independent Peace Association activists Hana Marvanová and Tomáš Dvořák were found guilty of attempted incitement. The grounds for Hana Marvanová's prosecution were that she collected and copied out materials of an alleged anti-socialist nature. Tomáš Dvořák was charged with having gathered allegedly anti-socialist materials and distributing a leaflet advertising a demonstration on 28th October 1988, the day of the (re-instituted) National Holiday. Both defendants were sentenced to ten months' imprisonment suspended for two and a half years. The prosecutor lodged an appeal against the verdict; the defendants made no application. Some eighty friends of the accused crowded into the courthouse, but only a few of them were admitted to the courtroom. The trial was also attended by representatives of the Czechoslovak Peace Committee, the Committee of the Czechoslovak Public for Human Rights, and journalists of the Czechoslovak press. (At the appeal hearing on 3rd May, the Prague Municipal Court confirmed the sentences. At the end of the proceedings, the two defendants were released after over six months in custody.)

Sunday 19th March

A general meeting of the Hungarian Union of Free Democrats thanked the Charter 77 spokespersons for their greetings on the Hungarian National Holiday and expressed support for the proposal to award Václav Havel the Nobel Peace Prize. It also protested against the verdicts passed on him and other activists, including Hana Marvanová and Tomáš Dvořák, as well as against the forthcoming trial of Eva Vidlařová and the arrest of Stanislav Devátý.

Monday 20th March

Eight independent initiatives sent a letter to members of the Federal Assembly calling on them not to ratify the legal measures adopted by the Assembly's Presidium on 14th February, which would effectively cancel them. (D 83; see also C 14th, 15th, 17th and 18th February and D 62)

A group of 236 Czechoslovak citizens sent a letter to Communist Party General Secretary Miloš Jakeš, Federal Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec, police investigator Captain Špírk and the public prosecutor for Prague 1, expressing their "endorsement of citizens' participation in the banned ceremony of remembrance which the independent groups sought to organise at Wenceslas Square in the afternoon of 15th January 1989". According to the letter's signatories, in suppressing the event "the state authorities and party bodies abused their authority and flagrantly violated citizens' rights and civil liberties". The letter's signatories also voiced their solidarity with Libuše Šilhánová and Vlasta Chramostová. Since they had done the very same things for which those two activists had been indicted on a charge of "assaulting a state official" (see D 17 and C 21st February), they too should be charged with the offence in accordance with the constitutional principle of equality before the law; if not, charges against Libuše Šilhánová and Vlasta Chramostová should be dropped. (On 10th April, the Prague 2 District Court sentenced Libuše Šilhánová and Vlasta Chramostová to three months' imprisonment suspended for one year. Their concluding statements to the court were greeted with applause from the public in the courtroom. At the appeal hearing on 26th May, the Prague Municipal Court confirmed the sentences.)

Tuesday 21st March

During the 13th joint meeting of the two chambers of the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly, Parliamentary Deputy V. Štáfek intervened in the debate on the Foreign Minister's report, and in connection with the alleged "broad anti-Czechoslovak campaign" being waged by the West in the wake of the Vienna CSCE meeting Czechoslovak independent activists as traitors and Václav Havel as a provocateur and an enemy of socialism.

In the case of Václav Havel, a panel of judges at the Prague Municipal Court, Dr Novotný (Chairman), Dr Buriánková and Dr Korbař, considered the appeals lodged by the prosecutor, the defendant and the defendant's relations. The prosecutor Dr I. Salač demanded a higher prison sentence and the imposition of a substantial financial penalty, while Václav Havel and his relatives called for an acquittal. The Municipal Court overturned the verdict of the Prague 3 District Court (see C 21st February, D 65 and D 66). As at the earlier hearing Václav Havel was found guilty of incitement, but his presence at Wenceslas Square on 16th January was no longer found to constitute the offence of obstructing a public official in the performance of his duty, but instead a public order misdemeanour. In addition, the original sentence of nine months' imprisonment was reduced slightly to eight, and under a less severe penal regime. In his concluding statement, Václav Havel pointed out that he had been convicted solely for the views he held – and which he did not conceal – and he appealed to the judges to

demonstrate in a practical way their proclaimed independence. (D 84) The decision of the court was final. Apart from closest relatives, the hearing was attended by representatives of the Czechoslovak media, the TASS press agency, the Hungarian news agency MTI, the Italian ANSA and the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights. Several hundred citizens demonstrated their solidarity with Václav Havel by thronging the courthouse. (D 85) On the same day, several thousand citizens of different religious persuasions and none answered the call of the independent initiatives to express their solidarity with Václav Havel and other political prisoners by attending church services that evening. Some two hundred people observed a 24-hour hunger strike in protest against Václav Havel's conviction. (Pressure at home and abroad led to Václav Havel's conditional release from prison on 17th May on a decision of the Prague 4 District Court after he had served half of his sentence; the rest of his sentence was deferred for a probationary period of 18 months.)

Friday 24th March

The Vyškov District Court sentenced Dušan Skála (35), Charter 77 signatory, Community of Friends of USA member and publisher of the literary journal *Host*, to fifteen months' imprisonment suspended for four years after he was found guilty of conspiracy to commit incitement. Dušan Skála was held in custody from 27th October to 22nd December 1988, before being released pending trial, for attempting to duplicate the independent bulletin *Informace o Chartě 77* (Information on Charter 77) and keeping a collection of the independent Prague monthly *Lidové noviny*. (At an appeal hearing on 27th April, his sentence was reduced to one year's imprisonment suspended for two years).

Human rights activist Jaroslav Popelka (33) from Brno was arrested and charged with a public order misdemeanour for having distributed leaflets advertising a demonstration at which a debate would take place on the departure of the Communist Party leadership and the creation of a "green party". Jaroslav Popelka was convicted on several previous occasions for leaflet campaigns, most recently on 22nd December 1988. He had been released from prison on 24th January 1989. (On 4th April, he was sentenced by the Brno Municipal Court to four months' imprisonment in the first corrective category. At an appeal hearing on 27th April the sentence was confirmed.)

Sunday 27th March

Charter 77 issued its Document No.24/89 addressed to independent groups in Poland, thanking them for their expressions of solidarity with persecuted human rights activists in Czechoslovakia and voicing its opinion that "the activity of independent groups is becoming a substitute for control mechanisms, including the free expression of public opinion which are an essential component of every democratic political system," and that "in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, the Soviet Union, the GDR and elsewhere, these groups are playing a major role in democratising the public life of our countries".

Monday 28th March

Charter 77 issued its Document No. 25/89 dealing with the educational system. Recalling that it had already highlighted in previous documents the overall negative state of Czechoslovak education as well as various specific problems, it emphasised that the critical situation that now existed was the outcome of a series of half-baked reforms at a time of growing dehumanisation, ideologisation and bureaucratisation in education. At the same time, it argued, current concepts of education and schooling were undemocratic since they failed to respect not only "the natural structures of human society" but failed even to fulfil the basic conditions that would allow young people and all citizens to form their own picture of the world. Many practices were at total variance with different international agreements. It was therefore necessary to initiate a public debate about education and the educational system and an open and unprejudiced exchange of views, particularly in light of the fact that by signing the Concluding Document of the CSCE meeting in Vienna, Czechoslovakia had pledged among other things "to encourage in schools and other educational institutions consideration of the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms".

DOCUMENTS AND TESTIMONIES

D 1

2nd January 1989

From the representatives of independent citizens' initiatives to the interior affairs department of the District National Committee for Prague 1

On 16th January 1969 Jan Palach, a 21-year-old student at the arts faculty of Charles University, burned himself to death at Wenceslas Square in Prague. Palach's sacrifice was regarded then as a supremely stirring deed, as an attempt by that young man to halt our nation's renunciation of the ideals of freedom and democracy, and it is in that spirit that we recall it today. Jan Palach intended that his supreme sacrifice should kindle in us the determination to achieve a meaningful life of dignity.

At 2 p.m. on 15th January 1989, the eve of the anniversary of Palach's action, we intend to gather at the statue of St Wenceslas to lay flowers and hold a brief ceremony of remembrance in order to recall Palach's undying appeal which we are neither able nor willing to ignore. Being a ceremony of remembrance, this will not be an assembly within the meaning of law No 68/1951 and we are therefore not required to report it in accordance with decree 320/1951 of the Official Gazette.

Please take note of this information.

Petr Placák (Czech Children)

Tomáš Hradílek, Dana Němcová, Saša Vondra (Charter 77 spokespersons)

Heřman Chromý, Stanislav Penc Jr., Ota Veverka (John Lennon Peace Club)

Ondřej Černý, Jana Petrová, Miloš Zeman (Independent Peace Association)

Petr Bartoš, Pavel Jungmann, Bedřich Koutný (SPUSA)

D 2

9th January 1989

Václav Havel's statement on the anonymous letter about the planned suicide by self-immolation

This morning, 9th January, I received a letter that greatly perturbed me. It is written ostensibly as a statement of intent by a group of students, though I personally have the feeling that it is the work of a single individual. Since the letter struck me as entirely authentic, I am obliged to take it seriously.

The letter reads as follows:

"Mr Havel, we fully identify with the activity of Charter 77 which is a light in the gloom of this society and defends human rights, freedom of speech and the liberty of the church. We are a group of students determined to take decisive action in support of your worthy activity and try to win political rights for your efforts. As proof of these words, in the afternoon of 15th January 1989 a human torch will once more blaze alongside «the horse» [the equestrian statue of St Wenceslas, trans.] in Wenceslas Square. We firmly believe that this action will awaken the whole nation from its social and political lethargy and stir all citizens to public openness and public expressions of national identity, just as it did exactly twenty years ago. On behalf of the organising committee for mass suicides, Torch No. 1, once more."

Lacking any other means of addressing the anonymous sender of this message, I have turned to foreign radio stations for help. I use this medium to issue an urgent appeal to you, the friend who sent me that letter, not to go ahead with your plan. I fully understand that a sense of hopelessness and a feeling that there is no way out might

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lead someone even now to decide to arouse their fellow citizens through an extreme act. None the less I believe it to be the wrong course of action. It is an appalling tactic never to be repeated. After all, before his death, Palach himself appealed to his friends to try to understand his action as a plea for a life of dignity, and something not to be repeated. You appear from your letter to be an intelligent and courageous young man. It is precisely people like you that we need here among us, to strive in your daily work to improve life for all of us. Remember that the first major work of T. G. Masaryk, the founder of democratic Czechoslovakia, was a book about suicide, in which he sought to demonstrate that the abandonment of God and of higher moral ideals and their transcendental origins leads to loss of respect for human life, and hence to suicide. If we wish to act in accordance with the moral imperative that transcends us, we cannot abandon life, however lofty and noble our purpose, but must accept its burden and live to struggle for a better world. That was the ethical motivation for Charter 77, for which you declare your support. Charter 77 is an appeal for people to live: to live as self-respecting and dignified citizens; to live in truth. I beg you to look at it that way too, and not to take your planned course of action. Come with us on 15th January to pay your respects to Palach's memory, but don't bring any fuel with you. There are not many of your sort and we need you here with us. You're bound to have relations and friends. However much your death might serve as an appeal to society, you would be causing them a grief which that fact could not efface. Think of them as well.

I would also like to take this opportunity to issue an appeal to the authorities in Czechoslovakia: All of you who hold power in our country and decide its fate, pay heed to this letter and realise at long last that the situation is grave. If you don't want a young man to resort to this desperate act, start behaving sensibly at last. Don't spoil the brief ceremony of remembrance on 15th January at

Wenceslas Square through a show of police force. You won't dissuade this unknown person from his planned action that way. On the contrary, you will provoke him to it. We are more likely to discourage him than you will. Therefore do not prevent us from attending the ceremony at Wenceslas Square. If his life matters to you, then act sensibly. And not only that. Initiate at long last a sincere dialogue with society. The situation is graver than you think, so don't go on putting off dialogue until the worst comes to the worst and it will be too late. Realise that even though this society is capable of enduring lengthy humiliation, its patience isn't endless.

(Statement broadcast the same day by Voice of America, Radio Free Europe and the BBC. Ed.)

D 3

9th January 1989

Dana Němcová's statement on the anonymous letter about the planned suicide by self-immolation

Today, 9th January, I received a letter that differs in wording and handwriting from the one sent to Václav Havel. It is what the two letters have in common, however, that terrifies me. While commending Charter 77's activity and voicing support for us, the writer has opted for a course of action, which, as he acknowledges, is entirely inadmissible in our eyes. I am horrified at the thought that there might actually exist a group of young people ready to emulate Jan Palach's action. I believe that the present epoch demands an entirely different approach to reality: first and foremost, ongoing and consistent civic action for the victory of good. There is nothing good about suicide. It is the slaughter of one of the fundamental human rights, the right to life. Only while I am alive can I work for the good of others. Suicidal demonstrations as a way of putting pressure on the regime are inadmissible in my eyes. It would not achieve the ends assumed by the letter's author, namely, "to arouse the citizens of our country from

their social and political passivity and naivety". On the contrary, it would, in my view, set quite different wheels in motion. I believe that Charter 77, whose efforts, according to the letter, are worthy of support, would suffer a severe blow. The repercussions would seem to me such a trap for all those working with civic courage for non-violent remedies through dialogue, that it is hard to dismiss altogether the disturbing thought that it might be an act of provocation on the part of circles hostile to the Charter.

If, however, we are indeed dealing with one or more flesh-and-blood individuals I beseech them as a mother of grown-up children not do it. Don't destroy yourselves – or us. A life of daily work is a more worthy sacrifice than that which you contemplate. The sort of work I mean I will explain to you when you emerge from your menacing anonymity, you who describe yourself as "Torch No.1". So far you have succeeded in unsettling the wrong people, i.e. us Chartists. Did you really think we could stay silent? At least for the time being let me try and persuade you this way. I reject your suicide – as you yourself describe your proposed action – on principle and beg you yet again to give up all thought of it. More light we do need, autodafés never.

(Statement broadcast the same day by Voice of America, Radio Free Europe and the BBC. Ed.)

D 4

10th January 1989

Statement by the Movement for Civil Liberties: *Jan Palach's challenge*.

Twenty years ago, Jan Palach, a student, burnt himself to death at Wenceslas Square. It was not suicide but self-sacrifice. It was a last-minute bid to arouse his fellow-citizens and above all to take issue with the growing defeatism of the country's leaders, and protest against their betrayals. The message of Jan Palach's action was not "Go and immolate yourselves", but "Go and defend yourselves":

fight to defend your human dignity and freedom, despite the difficulties and even at the cost of retreat.

At the time, he won the minds of the Czechs and Slovaks and for a short while they were once again the determined community they had been in August 1968. The country's leadership, however, had no wish to understand Palach's sacrifice and consummated their betrayal just a few short months after his death. But even many of those who, at Palach's funeral, pledged themselves not to bend the knee again nor let lies hold sway over them, soon recanted those resolutions.

However, for all of us the action taken by Jan Palach, and after him Jan Zajíc, was both painful and tragic. Moreover, the feeling at the time was that the sacrifice of those two young men was in vain. However, now that our society is gradually reviving itself once more – unerring proof of which were last year's successive mass demonstrations – it is clear this was not the case. This reawakening would have been out of the question had many Czechs and Slovaks, both known and unknown, not remained true to their word and had they not gone on living and working for the past twenty years in the spirit of Jan Palach's freedom call.

Freedom exacts a price. Jan Palach and Jan Zajíc were not alone in paying with their lives: Jan Patočka and Pavel Wonka did likewise. The price is paid – in the form of imprisonment and discrimination – by all those who have worked publicly for moral and social renewal.

Jan Palach's appeal speaks to us across the years. It speaks to people from all walks of life, irrespective of age or social group. It speaks most directly, however, to the younger generation, young workers and students. Jan Palach's appeal continues to be a source of moral and social inspiration to young people studying – as he once did – in various parts of higher education.

We recall yet again that Palach's message was not "Go and die", but "Go and do what you yourself can towards moulding your own and the nation's life in the spirit of

truth, both perceived and experienced. Help restore meaningfulness to our common destiny once more through your courage to act. Go in renewed hope that the government of your affairs will return to your own hands. Go, for your moment is nigh.”

On behalf of the Provisional Co-ordinating Committee of the Movement for Civil Liberties

Rudolf Battěk, Václav Benda, Ján Čarnogurský, Tomáš Hradílek, Ladislav Lis, Jaroslav Šabata.

D 5

11th January 1989

The independent initiatives' attitude to the banning of the Jan Palach remembrance ceremony

Last week, as representatives of five independent initiatives, we informed the District National Committee (ONV) for Prague 1, that on 15th January at 2 p.m. we would meet for a brief ceremony in memory of Jan Palach by the statue of St Wenceslas at Wenceslas Square. Since it is a brief act of remembrance and not a demonstration or public assembly we are not bound to announce it by law. We reiterated this fact when we formally appealed against the unjustified ban issued by the Prague 1 ONV. In that appeal we stated that we stood by our original plan.

On 10th January our representatives had talks with Dr Martin Houska, head of the internal affairs department of the Prague National Committee, who pressed us to give up our idea of holding the ceremony. He also suggested that the meeting might take place elsewhere. Negotiations were due to continue today, 11th January, but Martin Houska told us by telephone that in view of the attitude of the authorities further talks were pointless, and that the authorities were maintaining their negative stance towards the meeting at Wenceslas Square. After careful consideration we have decided to hold the meeting at the place and

time originally agreed. Concerning the anonymous letters sent to Václav Havel and Dana Němcová by a man who allegedly intends to immolate himself on that spot, we do not rule out the possibility that this might be an act of provocation intended to discredit the independent movements in Czechoslovakia. If, however someone really does have suicidal intentions as announced in the letters, the cancelling of the ceremony of remembrance would only indicate to him that he was the focus of public attention and it could, on the contrary, encourage him to carry out his plan. We consider that what Dana Němcová and Václav Havel have said about those letters is a makes their position quite clear and should be sufficient to dissuade the writer from his deplorable purpose.

Petr Placák (Czech Children)

Tomáš Hradílek, Dana Němcová, Saša Vondra (Charter 77)

Heřman Chromý, Stanislav Penc ml., Ota Veverka (John Lennon Peace Club)

Ondřej Černý, Jana Petrová, Miloš Zeman (Independent Peace Association)

Petr Bartoš, Pavel Jungmann, Bedřich Koutný (Community of Friends of the USA)

D 6

11th January 1989

Independent initiatives' appeal for a national pilgrimage to Jan Palach's grave at Všetaty

In the coming days, in various ways and in different places, we shall be marking the twentieth anniversary of Jan Palach's self-immolation. We appeal to all our fellow-citizens who would like to pay tribute to Jan Palach's memory to join with us in a national pilgrimage to Všetaty – where Jan Palach was born and is buried – on Saturday 21st January 1989. At 2 p.m. on that day, representatives

of the independent initiatives intend to lay flowers on his grave. It is a whole-day pilgrimage, however, with no particular organisational framework, and citizens will take part as individuals on their own behalf. The pilgrimage is intended as the culmination of a number of ceremonies of remembrance being planned to mark the anniversary of Jan Palach's death. We hope that all those who cherish the memory of Palach's self-sacrifice will demonstrate their feelings by taking part in this pilgrimage.

Petr Placák (Czech Children)

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Heřman Chromý, Stanislav Penc Jr., Ota Veverka (John Lennon Peace Club)

Petr Bartoš, Pavel Jungmann, Bedřich Koutný (Community of Friends of the USA)

D 7

12th January 1989

Rudé právo: *The events twenty years ago. It was sheer recklessness*

Twenty years ago, in January 1969, our society was in the throes of a state of chaos in which the anti-socialist forces sought at all costs to reverse the inevitable course of events. Things were moving towards their conclusive defeat and departure from the public scene. No gamble was too great for them therefore. It was just the atmosphere in which to provoke an act that shocked society to

the core – the attention-seeking attempt by the student, Jan Palach, to commit suicide by self-immolation.

If we are to recall the circumstances of that event we need to go back at least to November 1968. At that time a meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia adopted a resolution indicating that the greatest threat to the Party and society came from the Right. That meeting enabled the Marxist forces to erect a barrier to any further anti-socialist moves and unite around a basic approach which society – exhausted by endless crises – welcomed by and large. This could be seen in activity, the return of social calm and public reaction. It was also confirmed by the meetings of Party branches that immediately followed the Central Committee session.

Such a situation did not please the leaders of the anti-socialist and counter-revolutionary forces. In their efforts to hold on to at least some positions, they therefore started to organise one action after another as a way of bringing pressure to bear. One of these was the struggle to get Josef Smrkovský elected Speaker of the Federal Assembly, in spite of regulations stating that one of our three main constitutional leaders had to be of Slovak nationality. Then there was the attempt to prevent the publication of *Tribuna* which, as a voice of the bureau for the administration of party work in the Czech lands, was intended to smash the right-wing monopoly in the media, and in fact fulfil the demand for social dialogue, about which the anti-socialist forces always had so much to say. Thirdly there were the strikes by students and school pupils aimed against the alleged renewal of censorship, in other words, the decision to use legal means to defend our constitutional functionaries and the functionaries of friendly states from personal slanderous attacks in the press; to prevent the propagation of racism, fascism and anti-communism and attacks on the socialist system.

Various illegal organisations were also set up, whose programme was closely modelled on that of the dissolved Club of Uncommitted Non-Party-members [sic], K-231,

etc., with the aim of re-constituting a counter-revolutionary platform. Those organisations also included the neo-Trotskyite "Revolutionary Youth Movement", so called, in which a range of different views was represented but whose members agreed on one thing – changing the political order. Around that period a student group was also formed, which would seem to have drawn the bulk of its membership from the Faculty of Arts of Charles University. Under the influence of appeals from various right-wing publications, members of those groups and other individuals tried to foment actions which – by the use of shock tactics even – would bring people on to the streets. In the end some of them, led on by irresponsible provocateurs, were even ready to sacrifice their most valuable possession – their lives.

In mid-January 1969, the students in higher education were preparing a general students' strike which the leadership of the Slovak Students' Union refused to support. Faced with the efforts of students, particularly from the Prague Arts Faculty, the leadership of the Union of Higher Education Students admittedly sought to avoid confrontation of any kind but endorsed the strike appeal none the less. The aim was supposedly "to defend the mass media".

In that atmosphere of tension the misled students decided on a senseless and tragic act – the attempted suicide by Jan Palach, a student at the Arts Faculty. Under the manifest influence of political provocateurs, in the afternoon of 16th January – actually in the final moments of the student strike – Palach soaked himself in a combustible liquid and set himself on fire. In a conversation with a friend he admitted that he had been "forced" into the action. He left on the spot a letter in which he declared himself to be one of a number of "volunteers" supposedly ready to act likewise.

That very day the presidium of the Union of Higher Education Students examined Palach's action and declared it to be "an expression of political protest without any ulterior motive". There was a danger, however, that

someone else from the ranks of the aforementioned "volunteers" would emulate Palach – just as senselessly. For that reason President Ludvík Svoboda went on television that evening and warned most persuasively against any further similar action. Even Jan Palach, whose life the best doctors were trying to save at that very moment, regretted his action before he died. It took place, none the less, and it proved a godsend for the forces of anti-socialism. But their efforts to exploit Palach's funeral in order to organise a mass anti-socialist demonstration came to nothing. Even so, his action led a further seventeen people, mostly of the younger generation, to attempt suicide in the course of the next ten days. Also pointlessly wasted was the life of eighteen-year-old Jan Zajíc. Seventeen-year-old, mentally unstable Blanka Nacházellová left behind a letter in which she mysteriously hinted at the existence of a group, which she said she had joined, and which had incited her – in common with Jan Palach – to commit suicide. That case also received considerable coverage in the media at the time, as did a number of others committed under the influence of alcohol, insane jealousy, family quarrels, etc. The ineffectual Party leadership of the time lacked the stamina to tackle those demonstrations head on. In all events, the resignation of A. Dubček from the post of First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia proved imperative.

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Twenty years on, those same forces, often represented by the selfsame names, are making a fresh attempt to stir up trouble. In mid-January they are intending to organise a memorial rally in memory of Jan Palach – as the Western broadcasting stations have been reporting for some time. These are the selfsame forces who brought our country to the brink of disaster twenty years ago and who were to blame for such personal tragedies as the tragedy of Jan Palach. It is hardly surprising that the relevant municipal authority turned down the application to hold a public rally. There are even people, particularly from the ranks

of the so-called “dissidents”, who are threatening to repeat the reckless stunts of twenty years ago. They seem not to realise the enormous responsibility they are taking on themselves.

Arnošt Bak, Marie Boudová, Jaroslav Kojzar

D 8

12th January 1989

Václav Havel’s second statement on the anonymous letter of 9th January

We clearly have no evidence to show that this letter is a red-herring or dirty trick or to prove, on the contrary, that it is authentic and was sent by somebody who really intends to commit this act. At first I was inclined to think it was genuine. I had several reasons for thinking so. I receive a lot of letters, some of which are blatant provocations, while others are from people sympathetic to Charter 77. The letter in question seemed to belong more to the latter category, which is why I considered it bona fide. Since then, however, the signs would increasingly suggest that the opposite is true. I have learnt, for instance, that at the beginning of January, before the letters appeared, the police indicated to a certain person in the course of an interrogation that there was a possibility somebody might follow Palach’s example and attempt to immolate themselves at Wenceslas Square. Furthermore, the whole matter has proved remarkably handy as pressure to prevent the ceremony of remembrance taking place. At that first interrogation, the police had expressed an interest in the matter itself. By the time of the subsequent interrogation, their main purpose was to force the cancellation of the ceremony of remembrance on the grounds that if it did not take place, the person in question would not have any opportunity to carry out their threat – which is patently

nonsense. There is some kind of campaign under way and this morning’s *Rudé Právo* carries an article which states that the dissidents are actually to blame for it, that they were actually to blame for Palach’s death and that things are starting again. There is something else that is rather typical: as soon as I got the letter I rang Czechoslovak Television and spoke to Macháček who is in charge of news broadcasts. I put him in the picture and asked him if there was any way of television putting out a news item appealing to the person not to do it. He expressed great interest and took my number so he could call me back. I’ve not heard anything from him since. However, they read out on television part of the article from today’s *Rudé Právo*. There are increasing signs, therefore, that the whole thing is a put up job. I repeat, none the less, that we have no proof either way, which is why we have to take the letter at face value and do whatever we can. If it is indeed a put up job, then it is an extremely irresponsible one. Not because it might discredit Charter 77 or the other independent initiatives – nobody with any sense is going to be duped by such naive propaganda these days – but for reasons of more pressing concern. It was obvious that we would react to such a letter and make the whole matter public in order to issue an appeal to the person. That, of course, meant that it might provoke some emotionally unstable individuals or psychopaths to try something of the kind even though it had never occurred to them before. If it really is a question of dirty tricks then it is playing with fire in a most irresponsible way. But for the moment we don’t know. The police were here this morning and I’m supposed to be ready at one o’clock for them to take me to the Public Prosecutor’s. I’ve no idea what they want with me, but it’s likely to have something to do with all this. So I might be slightly the wiser after my talk with him.

(Abridged version of a telephone message broadcast by Radio Free Europe. Ed.)

D 9

12th January

Statement by the Prague Masaryk Association

During the past few days Prague has been buzzing with the news that another student is ready to immolate himself on the 20th anniversary of Jan Palach's voluntary death, and that several other young people might be ready to do likewise.

The members of the steering committee of the Prague Masaryk Association are unable to confirm the truth of this news but nevertheless they consider it their duty to urge and beg them in the name of the spiritual and ethical legacy of T. G. Masaryk not to undertake these or similar steps. Desperate acts cannot serve as a precept for thousands of mothers, fathers and children. They may well rouse people from their apathy, but they do nothing to encourage hundreds of thousands of people to take action, which is what is needed so much. In fact, it very often weakens their resolve. Such deeds do not inspire action. On the contrary, they could well reinforce people's passivity.

Remember, dear young friends, the abuse heaped on Masaryk both during his lifetime and since his death, how critics on both the Left and the Right used to take him to task. But no one ever denied his extraordinary courage. Should you also wish to demonstrate your courage you could take to heart the form which his courage assumed. Masaryk stressed on many occasions that radical exploits are not the best option in the struggle for democracy and the ideals of freedom. (He sharply condemned, for instance, the creation of a legend out of the suicide of Colonel Švec of the Czechoslovak Legion). He used to emphasise that suicide tends to be the expression of an immediate mental crisis, not a solution to problems. On many occasions throughout his life he would reiterate that it is often easier to die for some ideal than to work with perseverance and patience and to assist other people suffering in a similar way. Masaryk certainly recognised that

there were causes for which people must even sacrifice their lives, but they must never provoke their own deaths.

You are well aware, friends, that an attempt was made in 1988 to restore Masaryk's position of honour in our national life. Taking that as our starting point, we call on all of you to engage in the unassuming task of reviving democracy in accordance with Masaryk's plain appeal: Don't fear and don't steal. The struggle for humanitarian ideals was an arduous one even during Masaryk's lifetime. It is an arduous one now and will continue to be an arduous one in the future. The Czech and Slovak nations have need of your courage, determination and effective commitment. They not only need high ideals, they also need you to get your hands dirty, as Masaryk used to say.

Jiří Doležal, Dr Josef Hanzal, František Kopecký, Dr Karel Kučera, Prof. Milan Machovec, Dr Anna Masaryková, Herberta Masaryková, Dalibor Plichta, Jana Seifertová, Dr Vladimír Šalda, Dr Vladimír Tvrz

D 10

12th January 1989

Večerní Praha: *Quo vadis, Charter!*

Over the recent period a handful of organisers of anti-state and anti-socialist campaigns in our country have been using the western media in order to stir up passions once again and disrupt the efforts of conscientious people to solve the day-to-day problems of our capital city. They don't even shrink from exploiting such a tragic and senseless action as Jan Palach's death twenty years ago. They go to such lengths in their cynicism that they are indirectly instigating a similar action, as can be seen from the widespread publicity given to the anonymous letter received by Mr Havel and which, in his concern, he entrusted to the "Free Europe" radio station. The editors of *Večerní Praha* have received a whole number of telephone calls and

letters, the overwhelming majority of which condemn this gamble which "Charter 77" and other illegal groupings of their ilk have resorted to. We therefore wish to acquaint you with the text of the anonymous writer's letter and with one of the letters received by the editors.

(Editorial note: This is followed by the text of the anonymous letter to Václav Havel, alongside a facsimile; a letter from a "reader", V. Janovec CSC; and the following comment:)

The cynical "invitation" by the Chartists and other "patriots" of their ilk through the intermediary of Mr Havel who combines the roles of persecuted "fool" and fighter for human rights, and about whose family it is well known that in the Lucerna, which they owned, they created a cover office for the Gestapo in which they mixed with informers, is all too transparent to be taken seriously by Prague citizens, young or old. The "invitation" to Wenceslas Square contains not a speck of humanity, it is moral blackmail. It is obvious to everyone who loves life and honest labour that such assemblies CANNOT BE PERMITTED OR COUNTENANCED as they are flagrantly at variance with the interests of honourable and honest people. We know that they are very well paid, organised and have outside support. There is one aim and one aim only – to disrupt and cast doubt upon reconstruction, democratisation and complicate the process of implementing new thinking in international relations. Every conscientious citizen of our socialist republic must utterly reject these transparent and unfeeling gimmicks.

D 11

14th January 1989

Slovak writer Hana Ponická to the author of the anonymous letter received by Václav Havel and Dana Němcová

My dear fellow-citizen, you who in recent days informed Václav Havel and another well-known personality of your

wishes and of precisely when and where you intend to spend this Sunday – you see, an odd reticence actually prevents me from saying what it is you intend. But as you yourself make clear, you are actually appealing to all of us with confidence – you are addressing us, as Dominik Tatarka would say. First and foremost your words are directed at the people in the forefront of the movement for human rights and dignity, and a better way of life in our country. Your action is also directed at the rest of us – those of us who support them. You have turned to us, and I for one believe that your motives in doing so are entirely normal. In your despair you want to speak to people you like, and understandably you are anxious to know what they – we – will tell you. What I want to tell you is that you probably don't know how things were twenty years ago and you don't fully appreciate what it is you want to repeat. It was dreadful, truly dreadful. At the same time, though, it was something really magnificent, and unrepeatable – something that never ever be repeated again. Above all, things were quite different from the way they are now. There were no hopeful signs anywhere on the horizon and the squares were still filled with the stench of tanks. Nowadays there are hopeful signs at least. The horizon is brightening. There is work for us to do, possibly strenuous work even, as we continue the efforts we have made so far. If you go, we who endured what happened twenty years ago, who had to endure it with the full awareness of adult people, will have to endure this as well, and will have to continue on our way without you. We won't reproach you for it. We shall reproach ourselves for having lacked the wisdom, courage, energy and concern to have kept you with us, to have persuaded you to have gone forward with us. But don't think, my dear, that your decision will serve to shift those who don't want to move. Nothing on earth will shift the cynical or the stupid. The only thing you will move are our hearts and souls, the hearts and souls of those to whom you now turn, whom you address. I don't know what else I can say to you.

D 12

14th January 1989

Mladá fronta: *TASS comments on rabble-rousing appeals in ČSSR. Their plans are immoral*

In a commentary yesterday, TASS press agency's political commentator Alexander Kondrashov reflected on the rabble-rousing appeals that have made their appearance in Czechoslovakia. "Two weeks have already passed", he writes, "since the melodical chimes of the astronomical clock on the Old Town Hall consigned 1988 to history. That »double eight« year, one full of round anniversaries in Czechoslovak history failed to confirm the forecasts of emigré circles and local sceptics who had been predicting dramatic events and upheavals for the country."

"No, last year went down in history as the year when restructuring in Czechoslovakia got under way, a year of major decisions for developing the socialist economy's potential and extending democracy in the life of society. But it would seem that the unfulfilled hopes of the devotees of drama and upheaval have proved too great a strain. They are less than happy with the failure of their plans to disrupt the normal life of the country during last year's anniversary days. They have dreamt up a new jubilee: the twentieth anniversary of the suicide by immolation of Prague student Jan Palach, which they would like to mark by a repetition of that tragedy."

"It is hard to know how seriously to take the plans made for 15th January and the envisaged suicidal immolation at Wenceslas Square intended as a political protest according to an anonymous letter circulating in Prague."

"The crux of the matter lies elsewhere, in the squalid attempts by the entirely non-anonymous instigators of such pernicious deeds to squeeze political capital out of them. However much the representatives of the anti-socialist group »Charter 77« deny their involvement in the immolation plans, their connection with it is more than obvious.

"The planned suicide attempt might well be no more than a false alarm, of course, a cunning manoeuvre aimed at attracting the attention of the public and the Western press once more. But whatever the truth of the matter, it is immoral, to say the least, to use a young life as a political football and stir up anxiety and confusion among people in order to further one's own political ambitions and objectives."

"It should also be recalled that Jan Palach's tragic suicide was not his own choice by any means. It is a well-known fact that Palach was promised that he would burn »with a cold flame«, like the sort fakirs use in their performances. The swindlers who conned him into suicide were only counting on an explosion of passion and emotion in the country. It would seem that the present handful of organisers of anti-socialist activities in Czechoslovakia have similar aims in mind. They could not care in the least that a barbaric act of this kind is fundamentally at odds with the human rights and freedoms that they love talking about so much."

D 13

15th January 1989

Charter 77 Document No. 4/89: *In memory of Jan Palach*

On this spot, twenty years ago, Jan Palach, a 21-year-old student at the arts faculty of Charles University, burned himself to death.

So died a young man about whom we still know so little since he was in no way exceptional apart from the fact that he took extremely seriously the vows that people in this country had made just a short while before. He offered his life as a sacrifice to remind us of what we had committed ourselves to.

He died in order that as many of us as possible should hear his message. He wanted us to grasp what was really happening to us, to see what we were really doing and hear

what we were really saying at that time of concessions that were described as “inevitable”, compromises that purported to be sensible, and manoeuvring that many liked to think was astute. The awareness was fading that there is something that must remain whatever the pressure, something fundamental that cannot be bartered and without which human life loses its inalienable dignity.

Jan Palach died, and for a moment we were all dumbfounded. People lined up in their hundreds of thousands in the streets of the Old Town in order to pay their respects before his coffin as it lay in state in the Carolinum. It was something fundamental that united us all – but it was not enough, as the past twenty years have shown. The foul tide of lies that Jan sought desperately to hold back with his body, has yet to recede.

It is quite likely that a time of manoeuvring, compromise and concessions is again on the horizon. We are all aware that a consensus on what is of greatest importance for our people and society will not be achieved here overnight. We might then be tempted to think that nothing of the kind even exists. For that reason it is not untimely to recall Jan Palach’s total sacrifice.

Let us therefore try to imagine that moment when he summoned up his courage for what he was going to do, and the next moment when, close by the bronze statue of the patron saint of Bohemia, he reminded us in a terrifying way of those things that must bind us together if we are not to perish as a human community. Let us try and fix our eyes on that fire for a moment, let us make an effort to remind ourselves that there really does exist something that could not be bartered then, and cannot be bartered now or in the future: something that makes people people, precisely because it transcends them, something which, in a healthy society, unites them. One cannot stare long at such a flame. Its glare should make us lower our eyes and turn our gaze inwards.

Jan Palach’s sacrifice is not just a matter of history. It remains a vibrant appeal to all of us who realise the debt

we owe. Let us then start to repay that debt from this moment onwards.

In bowing before his memory let us brace ourselves and take courage.

Tomáš Hradflek Dana Němcová Saša Vondra
Charter 77 spokespersons

(This Document was intended to be read out on 15th January 1989 at 2 p.m. at Wenceslas Square in Prague. The police prevented it. Ed.)

D 14

(15th January 1989)

Several eyewitness accounts of the 15th January demonstration

An unnamed witness:

At about half past one a group of some twenty people were arrested in Mánes Street – essentially those who had organised the ceremony of remembrance. Some of the original thirteen people who signed [the announcement sent to the Prague 1 local authority] were absent, while some additional people were there instead – Rudolf Battěk, Eva Kantůrková and others. They had flowers and memorial bands and they were still carrying them when they were arrested and driven away. As Wenceslas Square was closed, the ceremony of remembrance took place in Čelakovský Gardens. Václav Havel, Vlasta Chramostová and Líbuše Šilhánová took part. They laid the only bunch of flowers they had and Vlasta Chramostová declared that since the organisers of the ceremony had been arrested, it could not go ahead. At that point the bystanders sang the National Anthem. It is hard to say how many there were because the police started to push them up to the top end of the gardens. Wenceslas Square remained closed.

Václav Havel:

Since yesterday, the whole of the Prague city-centre has been filled with members of the People’s Militia dressed in a kind of grey uniform. There were literally hundreds



of them, as well as plenty of uniformed policemen, of course. Overnight, access points had been blocked, or various kinds of railings had been placed ready to block them, so that by two o'clock the whole of Wenceslas Square was effectively closed. The representatives of the independent initiatives were due to meet at one-thirty before going with flowers to Wenceslas Square where the ceremony of remembrance was to take place. But they were all arrested in Vinohrady shortly after one-thirty and taken away – some twenty people in all. People started assembling in all the streets leading on to Wenceslas Square, but there is no way I could estimate how many there were. Vlasta Chramostová and I were supposed to meet up with the main body of representatives only after they had left Vinohrady for Wenceslas Square. When they failed to arrive and people came to tell us they had all been arrested, we went to Wenceslas Square and looked for the most convenient place in the vicinity of the Museum. But the ramp up to the Museum and all the surrounding area was entirely closed. Everywhere there were masses of cars, Black Marias and buses full of police. Even so, there were crowds of people, at least in those places we could see. But we haven't the faintest idea of what went on further down Wenceslas Square or in the neighbouring streets. It was impossible to find out anything, as all the arcades, subways, pavements and so on had been closed. Nevertheless at the place where we eventually stood – alongside the Federal Assembly – there must have been several hundred people, at least. There, just after two o'clock, when we had already learnt that the others had all been arrested, Vlasta Chramostová informed the cluster of people around us what had happened. Libuše Šilhánová laid her wreath on a small patch of lawn and people started of their own accord to sing the National Anthem, without being asked to. It had scarcely ended when a large bus arrived and a lot of police leaped off it and started pushing back the crowd as they did in other places too. At this present moment the Federal Assembly building is no

longer accessible and the same is more or less true of the Museum. They have similarly pushed the crowd back out of the street called "Victorious February" or "People's Militia", or some such. We are at present in Vlasta Chramostová's apartment near Čelakovský Gardens where we at least have a view of the gardens and part of the Museum. So far we have no idea of what happened elsewhere at Wenceslas Square, at least, not at this precise moment: namely, just after three o'clock.

Jiří Dienstbier:

I made my way to the Museum, or more precisely, the Parliament, because it was impossible to get into Wenceslas Square from Jindřišská Street. There were some five hundred people by the Parliament building according to my reckoning. But there was no way of getting into Wenceslas Square. So Libuše Šilhánová laid her bunch of flowers on a patch of grass by the Parliament and people sang the National Anthem, after which a bus-load of uniformed police arrived and started forcing us back from the Parliament in the direction of Vinohradská Avenue.

Jiřina Šiklová:

I saw Vlasta Chramostová starting to speak, but at that moment a bus-load of policemen arrived and started shouting, "Disperse, in the name of the law!" But people answered them, "In the name of what law?" That particular confrontation between them and the people was full of banter. Then they wanted to take away the bunch of flowers but no one felt like going to pick it up. The police didn't want to either, but there was someone in civvies in their bus, and so it was that "civilian" who picked it up in the end. All that now remained of it were a few yellow, fallen forsythia flowers.

Vlasta Chramostová:

There's nothing to add really. We were so absolutely outnumbered by the police and People's Militia – that's something new I think, the Militia in those grey-green



uniforms, hundreds and hundreds of them the whole length of the square and all around – that there was just nowhere I could have delivered the address that had been prepared. On top of that there was the din from the motorway, so we just stepped forward and I simply told the people that our friends – the representatives of the citizens' initiatives – had been arrested as they were on their way with their flowers. In situations like that, as everyone can appreciate, speeches are inappropriate. But we still had our "power of the powerless" and were each able to pay our own private tribute to Jan Palach's memory. People applauded and started to sing the National Anthem. By then someone had tipped off the police and a detachment of them arrived in a bus and started pushing back that whole crowd of people by the Parliament. A similar operation would seem to have been mounted in all other possible places, but at this particular moment it is impossible for us to say what happened or where. It's awfully depressing, but most of all it is a perfect illustration of the extent of their hypocrisy. At the very same moment they are doing something like that at Wenceslas Square – in a besieged city centre – they are signing some agreement or other elsewhere. They are just scraps of paper, no more than scraps of paper. It's a disgrace.

Petr Uhl:

The first I saw of it was at Můstek which was cordoned off with two sets of barriers and several rows of militiamen who were shoving people back into the neighbouring streets. Afterwards, in Štěpánská Street some youngster waved a wreath bearing a ribbon with the word "Nezapomeneme" (We shall not forget). People started to clap and sing the National Anthem, but at that moment they were attacked by white-helmeted riot police. This led to a number of incidents, not too serious at first but later extremely brutal. I myself helped a man to his feet. He was well over seventy and along with some others we argued with the policeman to let him go. Shortly afterwards, however, I saw that same policeman – a swarthy six-foot

hulk of a fellow – dragging him to a bus. I personally saw about nine arrested people in that bus. Further incidents and arrests took place in front of the Hotel Alcron. Then I managed to get to Vodičkova Street where a water-cannon was advancing on the crowd. Even though we were already leaving – I was leading away an elderly lady – they continued to advance on us and started spraying people, drenching many of them. I saw with my own eyes cases of blatant brutality. In Vodičkova Street an ambulance slowly passed by me at a point where there were two old ladies with head injuries.

Václav Benda:

Unfortunately it is too early yet for any exhaustive summary or even assessment of the events. There are two reasons for this. Firstly a whole number of friends have been arrested and others have had their phones cut off, and in view of the nature of the events, it is very hard to construct a complete mosaic from individual fragments. The second, and more important reason is that the events are still continuing. It is quite likely that they have far from finished yet and it is already about a quarter past six. An hour ago, a column of special units drove through Charles Square below the window of our apartment. It included about six water-cannon and several hundred members of the special crack force in buses and those enormous police Black Marias. They raced off somewhere in the direction of Vinohrady, their beacons flashing. In other words, the situation is still developing, but I'll try anyway to give you some kind of preliminary assessment. I'll start with the differences between the situation that arose on 28th October and today's events.

The differences are to be seen in the attitude of the authorities. A new development is the deployment of the so-called People's Militia which are an armed section or para-military organisation of the Communist Party and were used to reinforce the police units. In addition, according to reliable eyewitness reports, there was much greater use of various kinds of technological support, such as



armoured personnel carriers with water-cannon, and it is also likely that more of the special riot police units were deployed. There was also a difference in the tactics of the police. On the one hand they did what they could to prevent the formation of any larger groups of people, and as soon as any crowd formed, they immediately attacked and dispersed it. In several instances, they didn't even bother very much about issuing orders to disperse. Basically speaking they just attacked without warning. Another point that most of the witnesses agree on is that the police and, in general all the security units deployed, all acted with far greater brutality than on 28th October. Apart from the methods already used on that earlier occasion, what has been new this time, for instance, has been that police cars have been driving full pelt at crowds, even in the narrow streets of the Old Town, where it is extremely difficult to get out of the way. There have been cases of demonstrators being very savagely beaten. Furthermore, the special units have never attacked at walking pace, but always on the run, as a result of which accidents and injuries have been more likely to occur in the retreating crowd.

So far we have no specific information about casualties, but in view of the fact that ambulances have been frequently arriving at the scene of conflicts, it is likely that people have been injured. I have no news about our own ceremony of remembrance. What is certain is that the group of activists who were supposed to lay flowers and wreaths on the spot at Wenceslas Square where Jan Palach burnt himself to death twenty years ago, were arrested before they got there. Since then, a number of substitute events have taken place. I've learnt, for instance, that flowers were laid in front of the Faculty of Arts where Jan Palach was an undergraduate, in other words on the square that was supposed to be renamed after him, but continues to bear the name of Red Armymen Square.

(Abridged from reports telephoned to Radio Free Europe. Ed.)

D 15

16th January 1989

Rudé Právo: *ČTK report*

PRAGUE (ČTK, zr) – At Wenceslas Square in Prague on Sunday, several groups of anti-socialist elements attempted to commit an act of incitement which had been prepared over a lengthy period by Western subversive centres and some Western radio stations – particularly Free Europe and Voice of America – in co-operation chiefly with the leaders of so-called Charter 77. They sought to misuse the anniversary of the senseless suicide of the student J. Palach to stir up anti-socialist emotions and disrupt public order in the capital, even though the authorities had banned such an event.

Members of the public order units of the Public Security dealt forcefully with the trouble-makers and their planned stunts, whose holding they prevented. Ninety-one of the most active disturbers of the peace were brought in by the police.

Members of the People's Militia – called in at the request of labour collectives – helped maintain order and calm in the city centre.

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As reported by Czechoslovak Television calm reigned in the city streets by 5 o'clock.

D 16

(16th January 1989)

Further eyewitness accounts of the 15th January demonstration

M. Šašek:

I took part in Sunday's ceremony of remembrance for Jan Palach at Wenceslas Square. Brutal police intervention pushed our group of several hundred people into



Jindřišská Street with the help of dogs and truncheons. Several armoured personnel carriers, buses and cars belonging to the police were parked in the street making it difficult to get through. Extreme violence was used because the crowd was unable to move fast enough and people were virtually defenceless against the truncheon blows. People could be seen lying on the ground as soon as we entered Jindřišská. An elderly lady hobbling along by the railings had had her brooch knocked off by a policeman's truncheon. I retrieved it from beneath his feet and returned it to her, but she was in such a shocked state she was not even aware of her loss. To my left across the street, about twenty metres from the corner of Wenceslas Square, someone was lying beaten on the ground. The people nearby were shouting for an ambulance to be brought. I tried to edge my way through but it was impossible because of the denseness of the crowd and the truncheon blows raining down on us. Many of the falling, hobbling and jostled people had lost their shoes. What was particularly appalling was that the police deliberately battered old people. Ladies in their seventies collapsed under the blows of bully-boys young enough to be their grandsons. In short, it was cruel and disgraceful. What is one to make of it all? The Vienna accords, the "common European home", a "zone of trust", these are the banners under which people on Sunday lay beaten on the ground, punished for having gone to honour the memory of Jan Palach, a man – contrary to the secret wishes of the powerful – who has gone on living although he sacrificed his life for us twenty years ago. And that is something that the memory censors have not forgiven him – or us.

Those censors took their task very seriously. Like many other eyewitnesses I saw how several participants in the demonstration had the films taken from their cameras before they left Wenceslas Square. And seeing that I have decided to take this step I would like, in the light of yesterday's events, to put the following question to those who set in motion the present lunacy. Can a ceremony of

remembrance be a reason to hunt people down like wild beasts, for them to be beaten indiscriminately and then to be arrested after all that? Think it over, Gentlemen!

Jiří Hanzelka:

We still can't get over the shocking events that occurred on 15th January at Wenceslas Square and in its vicinity. What sort of a pretty pass have we come to now, for goodness sake? On the one hand there is the mass media with its repeated distortions, fabrications, and half truths which speak disrespectfully of human life and insult a fine human being who sacrificed himself so that the weak might revive their human dignity. On the other, there is shocking violence against those who did not ignore Palach's voice, even after twenty years' enforced silence. You know I'm afraid that we have got to a point in our society where it is no longer a question of an event, of one single event, or one skirmish. I regard 15th January at Wenceslas Square as a warning at the eleventh hour. When a society as traditionally moderate and patient as our own starts publicly demanding its natural right to competent and moral government, as well as to be shown a truthful picture of its past and present, and claims, above all its legal right to participate in decision-making about what will become of all of us, for the regime to respond with the help of water-cannon and dogs is not merely the action of bullies and fools, it is an expression of extreme desperation and displays a total lack of social responsibility. In our traditionally democratic society, violence won't last long as a substitute for convincing argument. Even so, 15th January proves to me that the time has come for us to start seeking positive remedies and solutions and before it is too late. Everyone now believes that the era of delays, pretence, buck-passing and fear of solutions is over.

(Abridged from reports telephoned to Radio Free Europe. For more testimonies on police brutality see the samizdat publication *Palachův týden* (The Palach Week) compiled by the Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee. Ed.)



D 17

16th January 1989

Statement by Vlasta Chramostová and Libuše Šilhánová on the events of 15th January 1989 addressed to the Czechoslovak government and Communist Party

We were at Wenceslas Square. We saw and heard what your use of armed force did to the independent initiatives' intended ceremony to commemorate Jan Palach's action. It need not have been anything but a simple wreath-laying and a brief address. But you had to go and antagonise, shock and incense thousands of citizens with your armed might, in a totally mindless fashion. You are all lying when you describe them as "groups of hostile elements", and when you choose to film only the most off-putting and unprepossessing individuals. The great majority were dedicated, critically-minded citizens of all ages and occupations, who also included parents with young children. They came there to bear personal witness to what happened twenty years ago. You could have allowed the commemoration to pass off calmly. Instead you attacked those people with water-cannon, tear-gas, armoured cars and men wielding truncheons. For several days previously, you had broadcast all sorts of lies, permitting only your yes-men to speak and concealing our real attitudes to Palach's action. And when we demonstrated our sincere concern to prevent an entirely anonymous individual carrying out his threat, you vilified us as usual. In fact you are lying at this very moment in Vienna as – all smiles and bonhomie – you sign with one hand what is undoubtedly an important human rights document, while with the other you are preparing to suppress every manifestation of free thought and free speech. If you continue in this way, and if the Czech and Slovak lands continue to be ruled by backward-looking bureaucrats, incapable of running our affairs, promoting our legitimate democratic demands and responding to acute social needs, then in this country, even a document as significant and promising as the one signed in Vienna won't be worth the paper it's printed on. But we

intend to do everything in our power to see that that doesn't happen, and trust that other citizens will support our efforts. We don't want to live under such a government or party. We want the chance to choose new and enlightened leaders and representatives who will genuinely recognise our fundamental freedoms – above all, freedom of expression, assembly and association – in the spirit of the Helsinki Accords and this latest agreement in Vienna.

We are sending this statement to the Prime Minister, Ladislav Adamec, and the General Secretary of the Communist Party's Central Committee, Miloš Jakeš, as well as to the mass media. Perhaps other citizens might also like to express their views on the events of 15th January.

Vlasta Chramostová, Libuše Šilhánová

D 18

16th January 1989

The Democratic Initiative writes to the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When the undergraduate Jan Palach sacrificed his life twenty years ago for the future of the Czech and Slovak nations, he was issuing an urgent appeal to his fellow citizens to work for freedom and democracy. His action continues to speak clearly to us today. It is the moral duty of each of us to make an effort truly to comprehend his legacy, and to act and live in his spirit. By treating Palach's action with extreme disrespect on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of his voluntary death, the official media in the country are thereby displaying an aversion to the freedom of their own nation. And the harsh treatment meted out by the police to those Czechoslovak citizens trying to pay public tribute to Palach's memory is yet again proof of the sorry fact that the authoritarian regime against whose creation Jan Palach's self-sacrifice was a protest, is still with us and continues to impede attempts at free



speech and freedom of action. Within a Europe which is on the way to a higher level of freedom, democracy and international co-operation the Czechoslovak state is thus a flagrant anachronism and an ever growing burden on its own citizens. It is absolutely vital that the Czechoslovak state and party authorities should at last take steps to initiate the fundamental democratisation of our state. We demand:

1. the retraction of the Communist Party Document "Lessons of the crisis developments in 1968" and the withdrawal of compromised individuals from the political life of the Republic,

2. an end to politically-based career privileges, with a view to implementing true equality of citizens before the law;

3. the institution of thoroughgoing democratic reforms in the political and economic spheres;

4. the release of all prisoners of conscience.

We present the above demands on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the death of Jan Palach.

D 19

16th January 1989

Večerní Praha: Halt the troublemakers

We request you to use the authority conferred on you in regular elections and all available means to halt the activities of the troublemakers who are gambling with unrest, schisms and systematic provocation. If they want to remain here, they have to unconditionally obey the laws – which are administered by legitimately elected representatives of the people. Indeed over the past few days it has been shown that these people will even stoop so low as to exploit young people's inexperience. Their appeals for "self-sacrifice" in Palach's traditions are grotesque and inhuman. However they are ready to do anything to frustrate and jeopardise the efforts of the people – industrial and agricultural workers, other employees, and ourselves,

teachers, students and other employees in higher education.

Excerpt from an open letter from 313 students, teachers and other employees of the Pedagogical Faculty of Charles University in Prague to the Lord Mayor of Prague.

D 20

17th January 1989

Rudé právo: The aim is clear: to stir up unrest. Exploitation of Jan Palach's tragic death

PRAGUE (From our own correspondents) – As we have reported already, several groups of anti-state elements attempted to stir up trouble at Wenceslas Square on Sunday 15th January by exploiting the senseless suicide of the student J. Palach. Monday saw a further similar attempt at incitement.

We wrote about the circumstance that led a student from the Faculty of Arts of Charles University to make that senseless gesture ending in his unnecessary death in our article "It was sheer recklessness" in *Rudé právo* of 12th January. We also reported that the same elements, even represented by the same names on many occasions, were preparing to hold "a remembrance rally in memory of the student Jan Palach" in the centre of Prague. The department for internal political matters of the Prague 1 district National Committee rejected the application signed by a few dissidents. Meanwhile public opinion was outraged by the letter to one of the "dissidents" that "on 15th January 1989 in the afternoon a human torch will once more flare up alongside 'the horse' in Wenceslas Square".

The authorities therefore took the necessary precautions. On Sunday, People's Militia from the Prague enterprises helped to ensure order in the city centre alongside officers of the National Security Corps (SNB). In spite of



this, however, the provocateurs tried to hold a demonstration in the vicinity of the statue of St Wenceslas according to a preconceived script – to provoke an atmosphere of unrest at all costs.

What happened on Sunday? Just before two in the afternoon a group of some 300 people formed in the central reservation of Wenceslas Square. When called on to clear the area they reacted with whistling and insults aimed at the officers of the Public Security (VB) and the People's Militia. The law enforcement units acted quickly and decisively to expel these knots of people into Vodičkova, Jindřišská and Opletalova Streets. They also intervened elsewhere in the city centre, including Red Armymen Square.

Frankly speaking, it was not a pretty sight. In an attempt to attract attention, at the first appeal for calm, a grown-up man threw himself on the ground and started thrashing about with his legs. A little girl about five years old on her father's shoulders was obviously intended to serve as a shield for his "self-defence". A group of youngsters clearly regarded their participation as great fun and when these hooligans took to their heels and disappeared down arcades and passage-ways they inconsiderately knocked over onlookers. That was how several elderly citizens came to be injured.

By early evening calm had been restored in the centre of Prague. Ninety-one citizens were brought to police stations. Some of them have been charged with offences. Many of those taking part in the unauthorised demonstration were no strangers to such anti-socialist behaviour.

*

On Monday 16th January several groups attempted to commit an act of provocation in the same place. They chose for their purpose the period before four o'clock in the afternoon, when Wenceslas Square was at its fullest. The disorderly behaviour created a great deal of inconvenience and unpleasantness for city travellers and shoppers

in the centre of Prague. Once more the forces of law and order were obliged to intervene.

So much, then, about the events in Prague. At the beginning of January, three men visited the unsuspecting tenant of the cottage in which Palach's family used to live at Všetaty in the district of Mělník. They came to request "permission" to place a plaque in memory of Jan Palach on the front of the house. The 75-year-old woman turned them away, referring them to the local authority. So the "delegation" sent to Všetaty by Prague dissidents knocked at the door of council chairman Josef Jindra and council clerk Milan Klačka. However the officials in question showed no sympathy for the uninvited visitors. The latter therefore resorted to threats: "You don't have to be elected next time", they declared in a blackmailing tone. After further discussion, the "delegation" – who didn't even know how to introduce themselves properly – left the Všetaty council offices empty-handed...

We interviewed the two officials several days later. "We don't know much about the Palach family any more. The mother died in 1980 after selling the house. The father died before his son committed his tragic act. There is no one from the family living in the neighbourhood any more. We have other, more operative concerns," declared municipal council clerk Milan Klačka.

Vlastimil Bradáč, Michal Podzimek, Karel Walter

*

ČTK issued the following report about the above-mentioned acts of incitement on Monday:

Several groups of anti-state elements sought to continue Sunday's trouble-making activities at Wenceslas Square under the pretext of the anniversary of Jan Palach's suicide. The provocateurs defied repeated appeals from Public Security officers and committed breaches of the peace by their aggressive behaviour. The entire blame for this lies with the ringleaders of the so-called independent structures, including Charter 77. In the interests of ensuring the order and security of Prague citizens and visitors



to Prague, Public Security officers were obliged to take vigorous action against those elements.

In accordance with Czechoslovak laws and on account of their flagrant and repeated violation and failure to comply with the appeals of state authorities, some of the organisers of the acts of incitement were arrested.

D 21

17th January 1989

Charter 77 Document No. 5/89: *To the governments of the countries involved in the process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You have just signed a document in which all the participants in the Helsinki process pledge to avoid "all actions inconsistent with the provisions of the Final Act and other documents of the CSCE" and "acknowledge that any such act would jeopardise their mutual relations and would be an obstacle to the development of co-operation among them."

In Prague, on Sunday 15th January, a massive deployment of police, using armoured personnel carriers, water cannon, tear-gas and dogs, broke up a peaceful demonstration by Czechoslovak citizens in honour of the memory of the student Jan Palach who burned himself to death at Wenceslas Square twenty years ago as a warning against the continuing demoralisation of society in the wake of the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops. A group of representatives of different independent initiatives who wanted to place flowers on the site of his act were arrested by the police. Special riot police units and the People's Militia continued throughout the city centre that evening, dispersing, beating up and using water can-

non to drench thousands of citizens wanting to take part in the ceremony of remembrance. The police injured many of them, seriously in some cases.

There was a repetition of these police tactics the following day, Monday 16th January. But whereas on the Sunday they had been able at least to pretend that Wenceslas Square had been closed to forestall the possibility of a new human torch being ignited at Wenceslas Square – as had been threatened in a (probably fake) anonymous letter – on the Monday they deliberately provoked their own intervention. When several representatives of different citizens' initiatives laid flowers near to the statue of St Wenceslas – without calling on other citizens to join them – the police arrested them on the spot. The police then closed off the city centre and again used water-cannon, tear-gas and armoured personnel carriers to disperse the thousands of citizens who happened to be passing through at the time. It was actually the police brutality that first caused many of them to voice loud protests. The savage treatment meted out to peaceful citizens and the arrest of fourteen representatives of independent initiatives and other members of the public was therefore a show of strength and a deliberate political act.

Although the Czechoslovak authorities were obliged by international developments to sign the Vienna document, in reality they are making every endeavour to prevent any evolution towards democracy, and blocking all efforts to develop a free and independent intellectual climate and civic initiatives. Over the past three months, they have stepped up their attacks on independent groups, with the arrest of young activists of the Independent Peace Association, two of whom, Tomáš Dvořák and Hana Marvanová, still remain in custody. Also on remand are Petr Cibulka who faces a possible ten-year prison sentence for distributing independent literature, Eva Vidlařová, who attempted to defend him, and Ivan Jirous, who faces five years in prison for a petition he organised accusing the authorities of responsibility for the death of



the political prisoner Pavel Wonka. Augustin Navrátil, the author of a petition, signed by over half a million people, calling for religious freedom and the separation of Church and State, is still the subject of a compulsory psychiatric order.

Czechoslovakia is not alone in its open attacks on the Helsinki process. The authorities in the GDR are pursuing a deliberate policy of treating activists of independent citizens' initiatives as criminals and forcing them to emigrate, such as on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the murder of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. The independent groups stressed that "freedom always means freedom to dissent" and protested against the banning of Soviet films and journals. Just before the Vienna document was signed, about a hundred people were arrested in Leipzig, eight of whom are still in custody, charged with harming the State order, for which they could receive prison sentences of up to five years. During the week prior to the signing ceremony in Vienna, the Bulgarian authorities jailed seven activists of the independent Society for Human Rights, among other reasons because they gave interviews to Western radio stations. And the human rights situation in Romania is notorious.

These examples show that we are seeing the emergence of a de facto group of governments which oppose the positive changes in eastern Europe as well as rapprochement throughout Europe which is fostered most actively by the Helsinki process. If these positive developments are to continue then there can be no ignoring or even tolerating those governments which regard the documents they hypocritically sign as worthless scraps of paper.

Whether the signing by 35 states of a document whose clauses some of them neither observe nor have any obvious intention of doing so, will nevertheless help to stimulate an improvement in the human rights situation, only time will tell. Maybe the decision to sign a document at the end of the follow-up meeting in Vienna rather than have the talks collapse will turn out to have been justified. It will demand not just patience, but also determination.

When you assess the situation in Czechoslovakia, I beg you to bear in mind that the police units were deployed not against a frenzied mob but against people taking part in a ceremony of remembrance, and that Stanislav Penc jr., Jana Petrová, Saša Vondra, Jana Sternová, David Němec, Dana Němcová, Ota Veverka and Petr Placák are being held in custody along with Josef Žáček, Marek Ptáček, Václav Kratochvíl, Jitka Vavříková, Jiří Fiala and Václav Havel not for planting bombs, but for laying flowers.

Tomáš Hradílek – Charter 77 spokesperson

N.B. Charter 77 spokespersons Dana Němcová and Saša Vondra are currently held in custody.

D 22

(17th January 1989)

Further eyewitness accounts of the events of 15th and 16th January

Unnamed witness:

I managed to get out of the metro at the lower exit of Můstek station just after 2 p.m., the upper exit of Můstek station and the whole of the Museum station being already closed by then. We arrived in the thick of it. A police cordon of special VB units had just started to push back the people who had assembled at the pedestrian zone of Wenceslas Square. People shouted slogans. A screeching police loudspeaker was spewing forth incomprehensible commands, most likely declaring the assembly to be illegal and calling on people to disperse. At least half of the people present are under the impression that they are witnessing the making of a film about the end of the Austro-Hungarian empire. However, the water cannon tells them they are wrong. The police start spraying in every direction: at parents with children on their shoulders, at the drunks and old gaffers from the nearby refreshment rooms, at people just coming up out of the metro and having no idea of what's going on. A whole number of



people are thrown to the ground. White-helmeted riot police units with long sticks start running around. They lash out indiscriminately at people. The crowd flees in all directions into the neighbouring streets – Na příkopě, Na Můstku and 28. října. We stay put. The riot police units run past us. The People's Militia occupy the area cleared. A Czechoslovak Television cameraman under police protection deliberately selects a shot of a group of about three "punks", "running off" in our direction. They are the only punks I've seen here. Otherwise the majority are people in their thirties. A few are of the older generation. There are not many students. "What's the way to the metro?" an affable old gent asks us. We explain to him what's going on. He nods his head and says: "That's fine. I came from Brno specially."

We make our way out of the square and go down into Rytířská Street, but even there they are already lining up the water-cannon. We move on to Havelská. The streets are full of people. People shout slogans and sing. The Old Town Square is hermetically sealed. A police car starts to drive down Havelská at full pelt, its siren wailing, straight into the groups assembled there. There is little space to get out of the way. A water-cannon drives down Havelská systematically spraying in all directions. Those who can, flee into the subways. People open house-doors and let us in. As soon as the water-cannon is gone, from every entrance, passageway and subway such enormous numbers of people emerge that Havelská Street is filled once more, right down as far as the Coal Market. I look around me. I come across people I know and we start talking to strangers. An atmosphere of warmth and friendship prevails and so far there is a touch of good humour in it all. One truly seldom meets so many pleasant individuals on the street at once. There is an agreeable atmosphere of freedom over all. Every so often a group of people appears, fleeing from the truncheons. Utter confusion reigns.

We try to make our way through to the junction in front of the Máj department store. It is bursting with people.

Slogans and singing. The trams stop. Water-cannon and truncheon-wielding police are already at work. "Gestapo!" shout the people and start to flee. We press ourselves behind the columns in front of the Children's Bookshop and wait to be sprayed by the water-cannon. The lad at the controls, scarcely in his twenties, takes careful aim and then apparently decides that we are not worth the dose. The water-cannon are constantly breaking down. On the other hand, the violence of the riot police units is clearly escalating. On Národní Avenue we stop by a hot-dog stall. A column of police speeds by. Twenty armoured Avia lorries, four water-cannon, two armoured personnel carriers. Their sirens are unable to drown the blood-chilling whistling that greets their arrival wherever they go. We set off down Spálená in the direction of Charles Square. A crowd of about five thousand people emerges from Vodičkova Street shouting, "Czechs, come and join us!" Some old fellow shouts from a window: "I'd come and join you, but I can't walk any more. March in my place, lads!" Some people wave from their windows and applaud. The throng turns up towards Žitná Street but there is no way back to Wenceslas Square through Štěpánská Street. It therefore turns back along Ječná in the direction of Charles Square. The traffic is at a standstill. At the junction in front of the Engineering Faculty the National Anthem is sung. It's amusing to see how quickly people join in. But here come the water-cannon again. The special units start hurling tear-gas grenades. Most of them are tossed back. A Volga car covered in strange antennae starts to drive down the middle of the street leading an armoured Avia lorry with uniformed photo reporters. A grandma at least seventy years old has just got down from a tram. She takes a breath of the tear gas and starts to vomit. I lead her away.

A squad of of the strong-arm units runs past. They look as if they've just been let off the leash – roaring and beating anyone. After a while they return. I stop one of them and ask him if he is not ashamed. The youngster



looks riled and starts to breathe deeply. He looks elsewhere, he doesn't understand me. He is scarcely twenty years old. The water-cannon sends a jet of water into the metro exit. People get off the trams and are beaten to the ground with truncheon blows. I help a gentleman to his feet, obviously a pensioner. He is lacerated and has no idea what's going on. A group of evidently Russian tourists has been hit by a jet from the water-cannon. They are crawling on all fours looking for their fur hats. The women are crying and have smudged shadows round their eyes like mimes. I go over and treat them and think to myself what a good idea it was to have brought some bandages.

I return to Wenceslas Square. It looks as if the police have declared war on everything living and moving in the the town centre. I meet a middle-aged couple, both with nasty head wounds. I stick close to the wall and edge forward. We stop an ambulance which takes them away. The loudspeaker on Jungmann Square squawks something about "dispersing". But there is nowhere to go. Entrances to both lines at the Můstek metro station are closed and there is also no entry into the Museum station. The trams from Charles Square are not yet running. People are wandering about like sheep. They discuss the situation with a few normal policemen. The uniformed police curse the incompetence and aggressiveness of the special units even more than I do. The militiamen stand there in a daze. By now even they respond to people's questions without aggression. The centre of Prague is battle-swept.

I witnessed unheard-of brutality, unhoped-for solidarity, a steel-grey sky torn asunder and angels crying for shame. I saw the assailed, the battered, the uncomprehending. I saw violence breed violence. The government of this country has declared war on all its citizens without distinction.

The effort of lying has proved too much for it and – true to its nature – it has started to mete out the same treatment to all. Therein I suddenly saw enormous grounds for hope. The lie is played out and the cards are on the table. No

longer is every citizen of this state merely a potential enemy in the eyes of those in power, each of them is now a real enemy who can't be tamed solely by means of the press, a few consumer crumbs and the promiscuity of the personal file. Our citizens now need a taste of truncheons and tear-gas to assist their political consciousness.

It is not only in terms of their scale and the numbers of participants that the demonstrations of 15th and 16th January exceed such earlier events as 28th October. It is not only in terms of the unprecedented brutality which the Czechoslovak government appended as a bloody seal of its legitimacy and bona fides on the dead letter of human rights agreements. In spite of those thousands of militiamen one breathes more freely on the streets of Prague. I don't delude myself that after it the majority of the nation will suddenly shake itself out of the paralysis of the past twenty or forty years. It's just that what has happened cannot un-happen. Thousands of people have torn down the invisible barrier of fear which the totalitarian regime erected in order to keep them apart. Every human community – and its doesn't even have to pray together – represents a mortal threat for totalitarian rule whose aim is to sever all living communications, relations and discourse. So however insignificant they may look from the outside, the events of the last two days give us grounds for hope in my view.

(Abridged from a Radio Free Europe broadcast; Ed.)

D 23

17th January 1989

Večerní Praha: They are taking leave of their senses

Those to blame for yesterday's inconveniences to the capital's inhabitants * Continued troublemaking * Prosecutor's warning to the ringleaders was not enough * Prague citizens deplore actions of anti-social elements

Prague (vp). Following Sunday's acts of incitement by a group of anti-state elements, Prague inhabitants have cat-



egorically voiced their demand that the stirring up of destructive emotions and trouble-making should not happen in the capital. The provocateurs, however, refused to respect the views of the respectable citizens of our city or its existing legal code, and yesterday once more disturbed the peace with their aggressive behaviour.

Under the pretext of the anniversary of Jan Palach's suicide, groups of trouble-makers tried to stir up unrest in the centre of Prague and by their insubordinate behaviour they halted the traffic and disturbed the public order. Their behaviour contravenes the decree issued by the Prague City Council which extends the guidelines regarding the conservation of monuments in the capital, and directly disrupted city life and citizens' safety. Despite repeated police appeals to disperse, they went on with their acts of incitement. In the interest of ensuring the safety of Prague inhabitants and visitors to Prague, officers of the special units of the Public Security Corps were obliged to deal forcefully with those elements.

The entire blame for yesterday's troublemaking activities lies with the instigators of the so-called independent structures, including the so-called Charter 77. In accordance with Czechoslovak laws and on account of their flagrant and repeated violations and failure to heed the appeals of the authorities, the following were arrested:

Stanislav Penc, b. 28.2.1970, of Vycpálkova 972, Prague 4; Jana Petrová, b. 16.9.1966, of Dobruška, Rychnov 411; Alexandr Vondra, b. 17.8.1961, of U zámečnice 4, Prague 5; Jana Sternová, b. 5.3.1921, of Heřmanova 3, Prague 7; David Němec, b. 29.5.1961, of Ječná 7, Prague 2; Josef Žáček, b. 26.5.1951, of Janáčkovo nábřeží 51, Prague 5; Marek Ptáček, b. 19.6.1970, of Hradešinská 10/1956, Prague 10; Danuška Němcová, b. 14.1.1934, of Ječná 7, Prague 2; Václav Kratochvíl, b. 20.11.1946, of Pod Karlovem 7, Prague 2; Otakar Veverka, b. 27.8.1956, of Na hřebenech 2, Prague 4; Jitka Vavříková, b. 17.4.1951, of Bellušova 1826, Prague 5; Petr Placák, b. 8.1.1964, of Chelčického 6, Prague 3; Jiří

Fiala, b. 10.1.1937, of Kunčikova 4, Prague 4, and Václav Havel, b. 5.10.1936, of Nábřeží B. Engelse 78/2000, Prague 2. Those arrested are among those who are constantly trying to obstruct the peaceful development of our socialist society, and seek out every possible pretext for anti-state activities. However they cannot say they were not warned.

As early as 12th January this year, at 1.30 p.m., a prosecutor's warning was issued to Václav Havel under Article 2, section 3 of the law on prosecution as formulated in decree 20/1970 of the Collection of Laws. The warning states inter alia: "It has been ascertained that you are one of the persons who took part during the second half of 1988 in Prague and elsewhere in organising an illegal movement whose aim is to destabilise the state power and commit flagrant attacks on the fundamental attributes of society and the state system enshrined in the Constitution and Legal Code of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. This activity of yours constitutes a criminal offence under Article 1 of the Penal Code..." Further: "We warn you that any continuation of your anti-society behaviour which has been ascertained by the Public Security authorities and its substance communicated to you, will render you liable to prosecution."

A similar warning was served on Václav Benda.

The other instigators of the acts of incitement are also known. Although we know about them, know where they live and what their names are, not all of them are in employment any more, for instance (sic), and every right-thinking person must wonder what they are trying to achieve with their behaviour. Our society has adopted a programme of restructuring and democratisation with which all honest people are in agreement as they want a better life in our country. A life based on creative work and a socialist path of development.

Prague people have expressed their resolute attitude to these events in letters and telephone calls we have received at the editorial offices. Protest against the incidents



and incitement that have violated public order and overstepped the bounds of the law has also been voiced by employees at the ČKD Tatra factory in Smíchov in this (sic) petition which they sent yesterday to the Chairman of the Central Trade Union Council Miroslav Zavadil. The petition states that the behaviour of anti-society-oriented groups is in blatant contradiction with what our workers in the factories strive for every day – namely, to strengthen and fortify our economy through honest and conscientious work and thereby raise the standard of living and reinforce social certainties.

The workers and technical staff in our workplaces therefore demand that the strictest measures be taken against those who take part in these acts against public order – in the spirit of Gottwald's slogan: We won't let them subvert the Republic.

D 24

18th January 1989

Rudé právo: *Essential measures to keep the peace*

PRAGUE (ČTK, zr) – On Tuesday, 17th January, several groups of hooligans again tried to disrupt public order at Wenceslas Square. The public order units were again obliged to take the necessary measures to ensure the peace.

The acts of incitement have been condemned by the Czechoslovak public at large. Forthright protest has been expressed by the employees of the ČKD Tatra factory in Smíchov in a petition to the Central Council of Trade Unions. In it, they declare that "the behaviour of the anti-society-oriented groups is in blatant contradiction with what our workers in the factories strive for every day – namely, to strengthen and fortify our economy through honest and conscientious work and thereby raise the standard of living and reinforce social certainties". "The workers and technical staff in our workplaces", the petition continues, "therefore demand that the strictest measures be taken against those who take part in these acts against

public order – in the spirit of Gottwald's slogan: We won't let them subvert the Republic."

Protest has also been voiced by members of a workshop at the Svit factory in Gottwaldov under the leadership of Miloslav Vyoral. "We love our capital city and our work. In our view what we need above all is peace and calm, not disruption which anti-socialist elements have tried to cause in Prague on repeated occasions. We fundamentally disagree with them and support vigorous action to restore calm and order."

Condemnation of the acts of incitement has also come from members of the Socialist Labour Brigade of C shift at the bar rolling-mill in the Klement Gottwald New Steel Mills at Ostrava-Kunčice, as well as from students, teachers and other employees of the Pedagogical Faculty of Charles University in Prague, and members of various Socialist Labour Brigades, and other employees at the Tesla production sector at Holešovice in Prague, and many labour collectives in other places in the ČSSR.

D 25

18th January 1989

Letter to the government from former Communist Party members

This is the fourth day, twenty years after the death of Jan Palach, that brutal attacks by the authorities against citizens of different ages and outlooks have taken place at Wenceslas Square and in other parts of Prague. Many people have been injured or arrested. There are deep-seated reasons for these clashes. One thing is clear: people are unhappy with the way they are governed.

The situation is assuming a confrontational character. That is no way to solve our problems, however. As convinced socialists we appeal to the authorities to end their use of violence against citizens and immediately release all those arrested. Start a sincere and meaningful dialogue with society straight away.



Jiří Dienstbier, Jiří Hájek, Miloš Hájek, Marie Hromádková, Milan Hübl, Zdeněk Jičínský, Vladimír Kabrna, Vladimír Kadlec, Erika Kadlecová, Luboš Kohout, Vladimír Kolmistr, Rudolf Slánský, Václav Slavík, Věnek Šilhán, Václav Vrabec

Guarantor: Václav Slavík, U smaltovny 11, Prague 7.

D 26

18th January 1989

Report by the Independent Peace Association on talks with a cabinet representative

During the morning of 18th January 1989, three representatives of the Independent Peace Association (NMS): Pavel Jégl, Jiří Pavlíček and Tomáš Tvaroch visited the offices of the Czechoslovak Cabinet in order to negotiate with the Prime Minister, Ladislav Adamec, about the abnormal situation which has arisen in the centre of Prague as a result of the unwarranted and unjustified action by officers of the Ministry of the Interior, as well as about the defamation of the independent initiatives in the media, particularly *Večerní Praha*, and about the arrest of fourteen citizens at Wenceslas Square on Monday, 16th January and their likely commitment to prison.

The NMS representatives were referred to the special adviser to the Cabinet Secretariat Dr Javornický on the grounds that the Prime Minister was engaged. In the course of talks lasting some twenty minutes, the NMS representatives made the following statement: "We condemn the actions of the National Security Corps (SNB) and People's Militia at Wenceslas Square last Sunday. The ceremony in memory of Jan Palach would have passed off peacefully and not disturbed public order. However what dismays us even more is that the police have continued inexplicably to be deployed even now, on days for which no ceremony of remembrance has been planned, and when

the victims are innocent passers-by on their way home from work or people out shopping. What has been happening at Wenceslas Square over these past days has been provoked by the police themselves. Tension is running extremely high, which is why we have preferred to approach official representatives personally instead of sending a letter, and why we request an immediate end to attacks by the police on citizens crossing Wenceslas Square. If the situation continues to develop as at present then the lives and health of citizens will be at risk."

"At the same time, we wish to point out that a similarly tense situation is being created in Všetaty near Mělník, where Jan Palach is buried and where a nation-wide pilgrimage to his grave is to take place. It is our wish that Saturday's event in Všetaty should pass off peacefully and that citizens should not be unlawfully prevented from exercising their manifest right to lay flowers on the grave of someone they esteem and feel deeply about. Furthermore, we must also express our categorical disapproval of the indiscriminate attacks made in the media, particularly in *Večerní Praha*, on people active in the independent initiatives, without the latter having any opportunity to defend their point of view or attitudes in the media."

"We therefore request the opportunity to express our points of view. In this connection we are appalled by the publication of the names of activists arrested on 16th January, which would seem to suggest that official circles are trying to stir up people's anger against those activists, encouraging the public to express its hostility towards these activists. However, we believe that the publication of these activists' names has had the opposite effect. We deplore the arrest and probable committal to prison of our friends and demand their release."

"At a time when our country is supposed to be in the process of democratisation, we find it hard to credit what we have witnessed over the past few days."

The Special Adviser to the Secretariat of the Government Presidium, Dr Javornický, took careful note of what

he had been told by the Independent Peace Association representatives and promised that the views of the NMS, which had been formulated as an appeal to the Prime Minister, Ladislav Adamec, to take personal action to ease the exceptionally tense situation in Prague, would be passed on that very day.

D 27 (18th January 1989)

Eyewitness accounts of the demonstration of Wednesday 18th January

Unnamed witness:

Between four and five in the afternoon, the top half of Wenceslas Square was gradually filling with people. Surprisingly, the police didn't interfere. Individually patrolling police officers merely asked people politely to leave a lane clear for vehicles. The crowd of several thousand people shouted slogans like: "Freedom!", "Human rights!", "Free elections!", "Better brains!", "Who's the guilty party?", "Release Havel!", "Long live Havel!", "We want to live like people!", "Long live the Charter", "We aren't 'elements'!", "Everybody here!", "This is no spectacle", "Czechs, come and join us!" "We're only a handful!" "Show us the 'elements'" "Long live Dubček!" "Masaryk!" "Gorbachev!" "Keep cool!", "Same place tomorrow", "Bring flowers tomorrow!"

After six o'clock, a spontaneous, surprisingly conciliatory and, one might even say, businesslike, exchange of views between the demonstrators and plain clothes police officers (Cpt. Kouček of the Security police.) There was an entirely improvised and very fine speech delivered by a man who introduced himself to bystanders as Ivo Bosák, a believer, by occupation a stoker and a supporter of Charter 77. What he said was appealing and constructive and had a placatory effect. In essence what he said was:

"Basically speaking, our demands are as follows: we want to live a life of freedom and dignity in accordance

with our country's democratic traditions. We are not advocates of violence; I personally am a Christian. We make the following demand: let those people who have been running this country incompetently for the past twenty years and got it into its present sorry state depart from the scene and let their places be taken by new, more qualified people, capable of running our affairs and enjoying our confidence. Let the government respect human rights and civil liberties. Let an atmosphere of mutual understanding prevail, a readiness to listen to each other, a willingness for dialogue. The Czechoslovak Republic is the concern of all of us. Our unity is our strength. Let us behave in a dignified way; there could be provocateurs in our midst. We mustn't play into their hands. Let us not repay violence with violence. We must not imitate their behaviour. Let us stand unwaveringly by our just cause."

Martin Palouš then read out Charter 77 Document No. 5/89 (Charter 77's letter to the Helsinki follow-up meeting in Vienna recapitulating the events surrounding the Palach anniversary in Prague) before briefly addressing the assembly. The gathering then sang the National Anthem and started calmly to disperse.

Tomáš Tvaroch:

I have just got back from a magnificent demonstration at Wenceslas Square that took place between four and seven o'clock. After what happened on Sunday, when it was planned to commemorate Jan Palach's death and the police and People's Militia hermetically sealed off Wenceslas Square and special units hunted down bystanders; after what happened on Monday and Tuesday when the police for some unfathomable reason deliberately provoked clashes with citizens, most of whom had nothing to do with the ceremony of remembrance for Jan Palach and were just on their way home from work or were out shopping – after all that I assumed that something of the same kind would occur today too. And at three o'clock, things looked that way as well. The top half of Wenceslas Square was occupied by heavy contingents of uniformed

police and plain clothes officers, and about five minutes after sitting down on a public bench at the top of the square I had my papers checked by a uniformed officer. I came back to the square more or less by chance around five o'clock and couldn't believe my eyes. The top half of the square was thronged with knots of people – with police in attendance – shouting slogans and engaging in debate. There were shouts of "Long live the Charter", "The Charter speaks for us", "Long live Václav Havel", "Release Havel", "Release the political prisoners", "A plaque for Palach", "Where are your 'elements'?", "We aren't criminals", etc.

People were behaving with great courtesy and consideration, exchanging impressions and opinions. If someone started to speak and people at the back couldn't hear, those in front made an effort to convey the gist to them. About half an hour later the throng around the statue of St Wenceslas started to move off in the direction of Můstek, as a sort of march along Wenceslas Square. People sang the National Anthem and chanted the above-mentioned slogans. Some ten minutes later, however, I noticed the police in the top half of the square trying to divide up the column, so we made our way back to St Wenceslas. It was about then that Martin Palouš climbed up on the edge of a flower-urn and read out Charter Document No. 5 addressed to the participants of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting. He was followed by a man who introduced himself as Ivo Bosák, "a stoker, a Christian and a supporter of Charter 77". Ivo Bosák had previously protested that the demonstration was being filmed by an officer of the Interior Ministry, Koutecký. In the course of the discussion that developed both men, in the hearing of many witnesses, decided that the following day – Thursday – they would meet again in the Blaník bistro to continue the exchange of views.

Ivo Bosák then spoke for about a quarter of an hour off the cuff about our country's problems and universal issues such as freedom, and concluded with an appeal to his

listeners to disperse quietly and re-assemble at Wenceslas Square at five o'clock the following day. The discussion would then take place at eight o'clock in the Blaník bistro.

People listened to his speech in rapt silence, and in general the consideration and self-restraint displayed by the people at Wenceslas Square was truly remarkable and impressed me a great deal, since I regard it to be an extremely promising factor for the future. The same can also be said of the way the demonstration ended when there were just a few shouts of "We're going!" and people really did disperse in complete calm. A whole number of people came to shake Ivo Bosák by the hand and thank him. Some of them even offered him a room for the night so as to avoid any possible conflict with agents of the Interior Ministry. But he refused the offers, saying that he had done nothing for which he should hide, and should they actually prevent him from taking part in the discussion at eight o'clock, then others could no doubt stand in for him.

All in all, I found that early evening at Wenceslas Square extremely auspicious and encouraging and it helped counteract somewhat the disagreeable experiences of the previous days. I would really like to see things continue in this spirit and when people meet again at Wenceslas Square as they plan, I hope that everything will pass off as it did today, without police interference.

Martin Palouš:

The assembly all of sudden turned into something like a quick-fire debating circle – a kind of Hyde Park in Wenceslas Square. The speakers, that unknown fellow from Prague, and the police, all stood on a raised area while the rest listened. And that unknown person then started to deliver a very fine and constructive speech, albeit entirely of the top of his head. There was a certain pathos in his style, but his words were truly compelling and had something of the sermon about them. When he came to introduce himself, he said he was a server at one of the Prague churches. Then I was called on, as a former

Charter spokesperson, to read the latest Charter 77 document that reacts to the events surrounding the Palach anniversary. I therefore stepped up also and read out the whole text, even though it is fairly lengthy, and then said a few words on behalf of Charter 77. That more or less brought things to a close. At the end of the rally people sang the National Anthem and then dispersed while the police looked on quietly and unobtrusively. The senior officers present made no move to interfere.

When it started to become clear that the brutality of the previous days was not going to occur, people began all at once to liven up and what I'd describe as a joyful atmosphere started to prevail. People were overjoyed at being able to meet together and express their views out loud. It seemed to me as if all those ideological cobwebs which our press had started to spin around it all had suddenly dissolved. People said so in so many words: "We aren't 'elements', we are here as Czechs, as patriots who want to do something." What was remarkable was how everyone, including the young people, spoke in a positive and constructive manner. It all looked quite joyful and clearly purposeful to my eyes.

(Abridged from reports telephoned to Radio Free Europe. Ed.)

D 28

19th January 1989

Rudé právo: *A determined stand on acts of incitement*
Prague City Council calls on citizens to distance themselves from the troublemakers * The Presidium of the Municipal Committee of the National Front in Prague supports the legal measures of the authorities necessary to ensure law and order

PRAGUE (ČTK) – Several bodies and organisations immediately commented on the acts of incitement by anti-socialist elements in Prague's Wenceslas Square which continued on Wednesday.

Following a consultation with the chairmen of local national committees in Prague districts 1-10, the Council of the Prague City National Committee (NVP) discussed the report of the Chief of Police for Prague and the Central Bohemian Region about the prevention of acts of incitement by anti-state elements in recent days. It also discussed many letters and suggestions made by Prague citizens during personal visits to National Committee offices, in which disapproval was expressed with the actions of the troublemakers. Not only do those irresponsible elements obstruct the process of restructuring and the development of socialist democracy in our city, they also disrupt respectable Prague citizens and inconvenience their daily lives.

Blame for these illegal actions which Prague has witnessed over recent days rests fairly and squarely with the so-called Charter 77 and other unlawful organisations and their spokesmen.

The Council of the Prague City National Committee (NVP) values the determined action of the police force and the people's militia, as well as of all those who helped ensure law and order in the city in recent days.

The Council assures the citizens of Prague that with their co-operation it will use all its legal authority to prevent acts of incitement disrupting the life of our city, and have the culprits brought to justice.

It also appeals to citizens to distance themselves from the actions in question, to take measures themselves in their own neighbourhoods and workplaces, as well as in the affiliated organisations of the National Front, to set up a mirror to those who disrupt the life of the city through their acts of incitement and give Prague – the capital of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic – a bad reputation throughout the country and elsewhere, and to actively contribute towards law and order in the city.

*

At its meeting, the presidium of the municipal committee of the National Front in Prague studied the statement of

the NVP Council on the acts of incitement by anti-state elements in Prague in recent days and declared full support for it. It noted that a large number of upright citizens belonging to the political parties and public and special interest organisations affiliated to the National Front, as well as different work forces in Prague have conveyed to the municipal and central authorities their vigorous condemnation of those acts of incitement which have been instigated by a group of people hostile to socialism on the instruction certain western media. The people of Prague expressed their rejection of attempts to obstruct the process of restructuring and democratisation of our society by violating law and order (sic) at a mass rally on 27th October last year at which they paid tribute to the seventieth anniversary of the creation of an independent Czechoslovak state.

We call on all citizens of Prague to show restraint and thereby assist in the maintenance of calm and order. In particular, we appeal to parents and teachers, foremen, and senior officials responsible for the economy to explain to their children, pupils and colleagues the need to observe the principles of peaceful coexistence in our capital city and the danger that people face from dangerous provocateurs.

The presidium of the municipal committee of the National Front in Prague endorses all legal measures taken by the authorities necessary to maintain the peace and law and order in the city and directed against those who break the law and organise incitement.

Let us all do our bit to ensure that life in our city goes on in such a way as to favour the development of everything contributing to reconstruction and democratisation and a happy life for our fellow-citizens, the statement declares.

*

The Presidium of the Prague Trade Union Council deplores the acts of incitement instigated in the recent period by the so-called independent structures including the so-

called Charter 77 – with major assistance from undesirable centres of subversion.

This condemnation of anti-state activities is also condemned (sic) by a large majority in our factories, plants and other organisations.

We are expressing the opinion of our trade unionists who demand that the peace and order should not be infringed in our capital city, since it is absolutely vital for implementing the momentous tasks flowing from the reconstruction of society, for the work and recreation of the people of Prague and their life as a whole.

We endorse the determined measures taken against the troublemakers by the security units together with the People's Militia. We forcefully demand that the instigators of these acts of incitement should bear full responsibility for their actions.

*

At a joint meeting, the defence and security committees of both chambers of the Federal Assembly heard a report by the Minister of the Interior of the ČSSR, František Kincl, about the measures taken to maintain order in recent days, particularly in the capital city of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, Prague.

They adopted a resolution in which, as elected representatives of the people, they express total support and appreciation to the officers of the Public Security Corps and People's Militia for the determined action and their efforts to maintain order and prevent the sowing of unrest in current developments in Czechoslovakia.

They trust that the authorities involved in the prosecution will take determined action in the spirit of valid legislation against provocateurs, organisers and ringleaders of the disturbances.

Riotous behaviour continues

PRAGUE (From our own correspondent) – As the public has been informed, since Sunday 15th January the centre of Prague has been the scene of continued acts of incitement and riotous behaviour disrupting public order and

complicating the life of inhabitants in that part of the city. Again on Wednesday a crowd of some one thousand people assembled in the late afternoon at the top of Wenceslas Square, disrupting the usual flow of traffic. Once more the purpose of the unauthorised assembly was evident from the slogans that were shouted, attacking the socialist system and its leaders.

The instigators of those actions are intent on destabilising our society and putting pressure on the socialist state. It is clear for all to see that these provocative attempts at confrontation with the state power coincide with the closing session of the Vienna follow-up talks of the Conference on European Security and Co-operation.

D 29 (19th January 1989)

Eyewitness accounts of the 19th January demonstration

An unnamed witness:

There have clearly been hundreds of instances of brutality and sadistic treatment meted out by the police in recent days to unarmed citizens peacefully trying to commemorate Jan Palach. The most brutal attacks, however, were on Thursday 19th January. A cordon of police isolated a group of people assembled on the central reservation in Wenceslas Square from the rest of the crowd and then each demonstrator was set upon by three, four or even five uniformed policemen wielding truncheons. The police threw them to the ground and beat and kicked them, before forcing them, with their arms twisted up their backs, into side streets, kicking them all the while. They made them stand there with their hands above their heads facing the parked cars while they beat them across their legs, backs and heads to shouts of, "So it's freedom you want!" After checking their papers, they drove them off to various police stations where they made them stand for hours on end in corridors or in meeting rooms. The slightest protest

or even talking would lead to beatings or manhandling. And all this took place beneath a large sign on the wall saying: "A cool head, a warm heart and, above all, clean hands. Dzherzhinski."

After interrogation many of those arrested had to wait many more hours for their release, and before they learnt if and when they would be summonsed. People who had been taken to Opletalova Street reported that they saw lying on the ground amidst the parked cars a boy about twelve years old who was being brutally kicked by policemen. That same day, at Můstek, an disabled news-vendor was savagely beaten. He is a well-known figure, with paralysed hands and a severe speech impediment, who can scarcely drag himself about and sells *Večerní Praha* in the metro vestibule. Elsewhere at Můstek, a crowd formed round some policemen who were beating a man lying on the ground. When people started shouting that these were Gestapo tactics, the policemen turned on the bystanders and started to lay into them with their truncheons, seizing some of them and pushing them into police cars. Those arrested included a sixteen-year-old lad who was on his way from the metro to his dancing class.

The police were clearly targeting the youth. One of the Black Marias contained only boys and girls aged from 14 to 16. After a considerable time they were driven away and made to get off the bus somewhere they didn't know. There they were made to run between two lines of policemen who beat them with their truncheons. Then the girls were taken one side and the boys were made to strip naked and stand up against a wall with their arms held out. The police officers then beat them savagely all over their naked bodies to shouts of "So things are so bad in Czechoslovakia, are they?", "We'll show you Gestapo tactics", etc. etc. In the end, they were taken to the police station in Lazarská Street where they were made to sign something that made no sense to them – most likely a confession of some kind – and they were informed that they would be charged with riotous conduct and slander of the Republic.

The boy who got caught up in it on his way to his dancing class is now at home confined to bed in a severe condition, his mouth lacerated from the kicking he received and his back covered with wheals caused by the truncheons. For fear of possible repercussions, his parents are scared to seek either medical treatment or legal assistance. Such reactions are not unusual among ordinary folk. The police, who foster them by the way they treat people, count on such reactions. And youngsters have not merely been the object of physical attacks in the recent days, they have also been singled out by news broadcasts, the press and television. They seemingly count on the likelihood that out of fear and ignorance young people will not seek legal assistance. Youngsters can easily be used as evidence of confused ideas and it's not difficult to label them as criminal elements.

Jiřina Šiklová:

I arrived at Wenceslas Square around five o'clock. The square was packed – from the top end down almost as far as the *Zlatá husa* hotel below Jindřiřská Street. I managed to get up as far as the group opposite the Blaník bistro where the planned discussion was originally supposed to take place. A discussion was already going on within the group. Professor Milan Machovec spoke, followed by Jaroslav Kolafa, but I didn't hear their speeches, only the statement by the representative of the John Lennon Club.

Tomáš Tvaroch of the Independent Peace Association spoke next. Slogans were chanted, the most frequently repeated being "Long live the Charter!", though I also heard "Release Havel!", "Release political prisoners!", "Long live Gorbachev!", "Gorbachev is watching!", "The world is watching!". Once or twice someone shouted "Bring back Dubček!". Interestingly enough, they were mostly youngsters. There were older people there, too, but the overwhelming majority were of the younger generation. And they all behaved in an orderly fashion, even with courtesy and willingness, such as when signatures were being collected on the spot to a resolution calling for the

release of political prisoners. What I also found surprising was the absence of any slogans that might have been misinterpreted. For instance people chanted "Who is to blame?" and followed by the rejoinder: "WE know!" – but no actual names were mentioned.

At about quarter past five, a police announcement boomed out from a loudspeaker on the corner of either Krakovská or Štěpánská Street: "Disperse, citizens, your demonstration is unauthorised. Disperse or you will place yourselves at risk." The announcement was repeated several times during the next five minutes, after which the strong-arm squad appeared: the are the fellows in white helmets that get out of blue police wagons – they're known in Prague these days as "Jakeš's smurfs". They advanced from two sides, from Krakovská Street and the big grocery store *Dům potravin*, and I must say that there was a fundamental difference between the behaviour of the uniformed SNB policemen and the riot police units. The SNB officers reprimanded people and even shoved them around, but they didn't beat them up. The strong-arm squads lashed out in all directions and I had the feeling that they roared as a way of inciting each other. People – where I was, at least – started to clasp each other and shout "Unity is strength!", but they were understandably uneasy and in the end retreated before the crack units. I personally saw some of the strong-arm squad beating a one young fellow in a white jacket until his face was covered in blood from a head wound; two men dragged him away, apparently unconscious. At that moment another white-jacketed youngster rushed up and started shouting at the assailant, so they took him away as well. They put the first lad in an ambulance and arrested the other. It was only then that people starting shouting "Fascists!" at them. If it hadn't have been for treatment like that, they would have never shouted such things.

By the *Dům potravin*, I saw something that was new to me. A police bus was standing there and those arrested were being made to stand in a way I only knew from

Ruzyně prison, i.e. legs apart and hands above their heads, palms against the side of the bus. There were ten or a dozen of them stood like that along the side of the bus. That's about all.

(Abridged from reports telephoned to Radio Free Europe. Ed.)

D 30

20th January 1989

Rudé právo: We won't let them subvert our Republic

This week, there has been riotous behaviour in the centre of Prague. The slogans that have been chanted at Wenceslas Square attacking the socialist state, its government and the Communist Party, prove that these were anti-government demonstrations. Behind these demonstrations are not only the political has-beens of 1968-69 but also new anti-socialist groupings relying on the political and material support of the forces of reaction in the NATO countries, particularly the USA.

Over these past days, *Rudé právo*, along with the rest of the daily press, radio and television, has been explaining the background and context of these disturbances, timed to coincide with the closing session of the Vienna talks. The pretext for Sunday's acts of incitement at Wenceslas Square was a rally to mark the twentieth anniversary of the senseless and tragic death of the student Jan Palach. It followed lengthy planning abroad, particularly by the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe. Those radio stations publicised and in fact instigated appeals for a repeat of similar senseless acts. Moreover our people also drew attention to this aspect of "co-ordinated co-operation" between the American radio stations and the so-called charter.

Even some "chartists" distanced themselves from that act which raised a tide of public opinion against its ring-leaders. Professor Milan Machovec, for instance, requested *Rudé právo* to print what he said. This was a warning against any recklessness.

The instigators of the anti-state exercise did not take into account the fact it had been banned, nor reasonable arguments, and tried to stir up unrest. They brought loudmouths and hooligans with them to Wenceslas Square and claimed that they represented public opinion and disapproval of the political orientation of our state. A lot of youngsters also came there who had no political experience at all, most of whom have entirely abstract or naive ideas about the words they repeated, parroting the instigators of the disturbance – words such as freedom, democracy, etc. It is a fact that should give many adults – including parents, youth leaders and teachers – food for thought.

Even 13- and 14-year-old pupils turned up at the demonstration. As some of them declared, they came there because it was supposed to be a "sensation" or "fun".

The instigators weren't at all interested in "sensation" or "fun", however. Furthermore this is borne out by the fact that the "charter" also summoned to Prague many of its supporters from outside the capital. Almost 50% of the active participants in the acts of incitement were not from Prague.

For some time now it has been increasingly obvious that the anti-socialist forces and their Western sponsors are deliberately aiming at a confrontation with the Czechoslovak socialist state and attempting to establish some form of opposition within the socialist state, and gradually to win a share first of political power and then of decision-making about the very nature of the system, while planning revenge for February 1948.

In recent days, a whole number of bodies and organisations have taken a stand on the acts of incitement by anti-socialist forces in Prague. They include the Central Committee of the Socialist Union of Youth (SSM), the Czechoslovak Union of Anti-Fascist Fighters, the presidium of the Prague Trade Union Council, and others, as we have reported in the press (sic). On Thursday, meetings of local branches of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

took place in every district of the capital. Their opinion was unanimous: put a determined stop to the anti-socialist escapades and their ringleaders.

The state authorities, the Central Committee of the National Front and the editorial board of *Rudé právo* are receiving petitions from labour collectives from our factories and many other workplaces and parts of our homeland: Let us not allow anyone to disrupt our process of reconstruction and democratisation and exploit it for anti-socialist ends.

Our socialist society and our political system create enormous scope for a broad, democratic assertion of the pluralism of interests and opinions of all social sectors and of all interest associations and political groups of working citizens. However, socialist pluralism has nothing in common with the creation and functioning of anti-socialist structures, nor will it have. Power in this country belongs to the working man. He fought for it and won it in difficult battles, and socialism was his choice.

It is inadmissible for our society to return to the conditions of the bourgeois republic. It is entirely out of the question. There are no two ways about it – whether they like it or not!

Quite rightly we have heard anew in recent days the words: We won't let anyone subvert our Republic!

D 31

20th January 1989

Cardinal František Tomášek writes to Czechoslovak Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec

Dear Prime Minister,

Allow me to express on my own behalf and on behalf of the Catholic people, our satisfaction that Czechoslovakia has also endorsed the conclusions of the Helsinki Follow-Up Meeting in Vienna which ended a few days ago. The agreements signed there will have economic and political repercussions not only for our state but also for a large part

of the world, and we therefore welcome them. We have noted with particular interest those parts of the agreement that give concrete form to the commitments of the participating states, including the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, regarding civil liberties, and within their framework, the explicit right to the full development of the religious life of believers and churches. The time has come for an end to inequality. We look forward to a thorough reform of Czechoslovak law in order to implement scrupulously the undertakings accepted in Vienna and Helsinki. Even more important for the relations between believers and states is that the authorities should strictly respect these undertakings. In this connection, I note with regret that the measures taken by the police against peaceful assemblies in Prague on 17th January and other days, have seriously shaken the confidence of believers, in common with a large section of the population. Brutal violence cannot suppress our citizens' desire to enjoy the measure of freedom which has become an accepted feature of twentieth century life. I fear that curbing dialogue between citizens and government will provoke a confrontation prejudicial to all. In the name of Christ's Gospel from which our national culture and the culture of Europe derive, I request you: "Take the path of direct dialogue between State and Church, and all citizens – without delay!"

Yours faithfully,

František Cardinal Tomášek, Archbishop of Prague

D 32

20th January 1989

Eva Kantůrková writes to Václav Havel's wife Olga

Dear Olga,

If Václav was free he could defend himself. But since he has been committed to prison again, it is up to us who know, love and respect him, to assume his defence. I hope

that the following experiences of my family will help counter the vile slander that the Havel brothers – i.e. Václav's uncle and father – were somehow collaborators with the Gestapo during the German occupation.

I don't know where *Večerní Praha* gets its information (v. *Večerní Praha* of 12th January 1989 in its article "Quo vadis Charter!") I myself was only a child during the war, which is probably the reason why I have an indelible memory of the people who helped my persecuted parents in some way. My father was the journalist Jiří Síla, quite a well-known and respected figure in the history of Czech journalism, who, having been an editor of the pre-war communist weeklies *Haló noviny* and *Tvorba*, was unable to find work during the occupation. To prevent him being sent as forced labour to Germany, Mr Miloš Havel, the founder and proprietor of Barrandov Studios (i.e. Václav's uncle), provided him with a living for several years by pretending he was a script-writer. In this way he protected not just him but a whole lot of other Czech writers who were banned from publishing. Suffice it to mention Jan Drda among many others. And his sponsorship was generous and simple-hearted and not patronising in any way. Those who slander Václav's uncle should take a look at the output of the Barrandov studios during the entire period of occupation, and even in the worst periods of the Heydrich era. The Havel studios produced *The Grandmother* – now the classic film version of Božena Němcová's novel, and just recently the television here broadcast *Pantáta Bezoušek* another of Havel's patriotic productions.

It looks as if some people are prepared to stoop to any lie in their attacks on Václav. And it is because there are some people who are inclined to believe them that I am writing you this letter, Olga. Like the majority of people in this country, I want to see justice done and Václav released from prison along with the other friends.

With best wishes,
Yours sincerely,
Eva Kantůrková

D 33

(20th January 1989, Bratislava)

Miroslav Kusý: *The Czechoslovak "enemy image"*

(...) The title of the editorial in today's *Rudé právo* is identical with the slogan that kicked off the campaign against the Charter in the spring of 1977. "We won't let them subvert our Republic", the title reads. Even the argument is the same, viz: we are anti-state, we are directly supported by NATO, particularly the USA, everything we do is planned by the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe. The thing is that the regime can sling as much muck at us as it likes. And we have to put up with it and not say a word. As far as the courts and the mass media are concerned we cease to exist here at home the moment we try to protest or demand that our points of view on matters be published. We try to explain our views in samizdat but that is totally outweighed by the resources available to the regime. (...)

Unlike the Soviets, the Hungarians and the Poles, there is no opposition here – says the regime. And, as the afore-mentioned editorial in *Rudé právo* (and the Bratislava *Pravda*) boasts, there never will be. As far as the regime is concerned it is entirely a matter of a lunatic fringe. We are just frustrated careerists and saboteurs. And believe it or not, the State Security have even come up with a technical term for us: agents of the "IDCs" – IDC standing for *ideovo diverzní centrály* (centres of ideological subversion). "Just look at who they write and broadcast for!" It's a well-worn argument, one that Novotný once used against Husák, when the latter published his criticisms of the erstwhile regime in *Der Spiegel* for want of an alternative. See, now he's shown his true colours! roared Novotný, thumping the table.

There's another favourite argument. With what relish our newspapers go on and on about the class origins of someone like Václav Havel. Just look, they say, here you have a typical example of the sort of people we are dealing with. He comes from a family of capitalists, large entre-

Laying flowers in memory of Palach is a shameful act of incitement in your eyes. You dispatch your water-cannon against people even before they reach Wenceslas Square and beat them up with truncheons even before they have a chance to speak at the square. No matter what, you always go at it like a bull at a gate, whether it's the candle-light prayer vigil of Bratislava catholics, the Jan Palach remembrance or the Czech Children's "Hyde Park". You treat them all as if they were all-out counter-revolutionary operations – anti-government uprisings. At a time when the military dictator Jaruzelski is inviting Polish opposition leader Lech Walesa to the round table, and the central committee of the Polish communist party is legalising political and trade union pluralism – and hence opposition *per se*, you just keep going full pelt towards confrontation in your uncompromising, thick-headed Stalinist way. Has it ever occurred to you how one blast from a water-cannon can transform a crowd of ordinary, discontented citizens into active and determined opponents of the regime that dispatched it?

(Abridged version of a Radio Free Europe broadcast. Ed.)

D 34

21st January 1989

Rudé právo: Communiqué from the presidium meeting of the Communist Party's Central Committee and They threaten...

PRAGUE – At its Friday meeting, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia dealt with a number of matters related to domestic policy, including the situation which arose in Prague in connection with attempts to hold anti-state demonstrations.

It valued the stand of communists, members of other political parties and those without party affiliation who had striven to maintain calm and order. It expressed sup-

port for the forces of order and the People's Militia, paying tribute to their political awareness and their high level of discipline. In this connection, it stressed the enormous importance of developing political activity among the broadest sections of society, in particular the young. It underlined that the acts of incitement should be seen as part of attempts by subversive elements at home and abroad directed against the socialist state, its foreign and domestic policies, and against the perestroika in our society. It steadfastly rejected attempts to destabilise our society and fully supported the measures being taken by state and party authorities to guarantee law and order in accordance with the Constitution of the ČSSR and the laws of our country which apply to all citizens without exception. (...)

They threaten...

On Friday, the editors of *Rudé právo* received dozens of anonymous telephone threats. They were also received on the emergency telephone number 158. The threats were directed against the Prague police. The anonymous callers said that if the authorities did not allow the demonstrations at Wenceslas Square on Friday to pass off without interference fire-arms would be used.

There was also a man's voice who issued the following warning: "if a film is screened in the Blaník cinema on Friday afternoon the place will be blown up". These are unquestionably threats from the organisers and instigators of the events at Wenceslas Square.

Some upright and decent citizens who gave an interview to *Rudé právo* in which they condemned the hooligans and demanded calm and order for their work have also become the targets of anonymous threats. One of the women told us in distress how an unknown voice abused her over the telephone and threatened her friend whose views we also published. "Tell her that we'll find her and do something terrible to her. She'll never forget as long as she lives. Have you got the message?"

That is what some of that anonymous throng are like. There is only one possible response to such threats, and that is to repeat: "We won't let them subvert our Republic". And those who go as far as to threaten their fellow-citizens with physical violence can expect not just condemnation but also fitting repercussions.

Jan Jelínek

D 35

21st January 1989

Letter from Cardinal František Tomášek to the Czechoslovak Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec

Dear Prime Minister,

In connection with the citizens' demonstrations at Wenceslas Square over recent days and their repression by the police I have been approached by believers among our citizens to express my point of view on these events and try from my side to pour oil on the troubled waters of citizenry and the authorities alike. I regard it to be my duty as a citizen of this state and a representative of the Catholic Church to submit the following statement and request to you: It is not true that the demonstrations at Wenceslas Square in recent days were provoked by foreign media and that the demonstrators were unruly citizens who had been led astray. On the contrary, the causes of those events must be sought in the shortcomings of the state leadership over the past decades. There is no need to repeat once again all the events of the recent past which have shown that Czechoslovak citizens do not enjoy complete freedom and that they are deliberately manipulated by the regime into doing – blindly and contrary to human dignity – only what is explicitly permitted or ordered and not demanding those things pertaining to the fundamental purpose of human life. The desire of our citizens over these past days to pay peaceful tribute to Jan Palach on the anniversary of his death – to a young man who loved and defended freedom

and sacrificed his life in the hope that his fellow citizens would realise the price of freedom – is a true reflection of the views of our country and its longing for complete freedom. In using violence against those demonstrations by freedom-loving citizens the police not only contravened our existing legislation, they also acted contrary to human decency. The police thereby exceeded their authority and damaged the reputation of our country at home and abroad.

Prime Minister, I am writing to you as the supreme representative of our state and state executive with the urgent request that you use your authority to direct the security forces to end their violent interference with the freedom of expression of ordinary citizens and give greater heed to the people's just demands. The elimination of our country's economic shortcomings requires a high level of committedness on the part of our citizens and that is unthinkable without social and legal security and an improvement in the moral climate. As a representative of the Church, which has an experience of such questions going back almost two millennia and which has a deep awareness of the mentality of the nation and the human individual, I believe that I am qualified to express an objective standpoint.

František Cardinal Tomášek
Archbishop of Prague

D 36

(21st January 1989)

Eyewitness accounts of the national pilgrimage to Jan Palach's grave in Všetaty

Emanuel Mandler:

We left Prague at a quarter to two from Vysočany station. There was a group of uniformed policemen standing around but they didn't check our papers. We arrived at Všetaty at about a quarter to three, by which time the entire

station was surrounded. We were immediately detained and taken to a local state farm by Avia truck in which we were kept waiting in the yard watching them drive off groups of those who had arrived before us. I waved to Eva Kantůrková, among others. I have no idea where she was being taken – home, I trust. An hour later, they came and selected a number of us, including Dr Čarnogurský, Litomiský, Doležal and myself, and took us to a kind of waiting room. Some time after five-thirty, they took me off for interrogation, the purpose of which was clearly intimidatory – judging from the way they treated me, at least. Immediately afterwards they put us in a car and drove us off in the direction of Prague. They dropped us off in groups; I was dropped in Brandýs. A bus was due at that moment so I got back to Prague without a hitch. However at the time I was leaving, Martin Litomiský was still in interrogation, so I have no news of what happened to him. All in all I can say that – from what I could gather – the people who came to Všetaty all behaved with great dignity, which is what I expected from people who came to pay tribute to the memory of Jan Palach.

(Abridged from a report telephoned to Radio Free Europe. Ed.)

From a letter to Professor Zdeněk Dienstbier, Head of the Institute of Biophysics and Nuclear Medicine and Chairman of the Committee of the Czechoslovak Public for Human Rights and Humanitarian Co-operation, from Prague resident Vladimír Treml:

On Saturday 21st January 1989 I, in company with many other passengers set off by train from Prague-Vysočany station where a large contingent of uniformed police carried out identity checks on people as they arrived. We were even kept under surveillance in the train, and police patrols were deployed along the track at intermediate stations. At 12.35 we arrived at Všetaty where we got off the train and were obliged to walk past a cordon of policemen while being filmed. We were then immediately searched and arrested by uniformed police officers assisted by members of the People's Militia, State Security officers and dog-

handlers. Our identity cards were confiscated and within the very station precincts we were loaded on to waiting police vehicles – Black Marias – and driven off under police surveillance to buildings belonging to the State Farm at Všetaty. They kept us waiting in the Black Marias for about an hour. We were not allowed to leave the vehicles, which were so full that some people had to stand the whole while. Meanwhile other vehicles arrived bringing more detainees. A police officer then called each of us out by name and we were led off to a room under close guard. About half an hour later a police officer again called us out by name and handed us back our identity cards. We were then made to climb aboard a Black Maria waiting for us in the yard, under the pretext that we were being taken off for further interrogation. We left Všetaty guarded by five police officers and were dropped at a lonely spot on the outskirts of some village, with orders to find our own way home by the shortest route. After walking some distance, we discovered we were on the outskirts of Čelákovice. Our group included a number of senior citizens for whom this was a gruelling and stressful situation. Having heard Czechoslovak Television's report about Všetaty on my return home I can no longer stay silent, although I doubt whether the Committee of the Czechoslovak Public for Human Rights and Humanitarian Co-operation of which you are Chairman will take an appropriate stand and condemn the distorted and mendacious reports given out by our media and the unlawful and unconstitutional treatment of citizens by certain state authorities.

I protest against such treatment and since the system chooses to treat me this way I intend to alter my attitude to the system.

I apologise for bothering you with the matters set out above, but I do so among other reasons because I am an employee of your Institute and I would like hereby to forestall any possible false interpretations of my actions from other quarters.

Eyewitness account of Karel Koutský from Prague:

On Saturday 21st January, I travelled with a friend to Všetaty where we wanted to visit Jan Palach's grave. We went by rail, but as soon as we got off the train the police caught us and checked our papers. They wanted me to show them what I had in my knapsack. As I was reluctant to obey and told them "you have no right", I was dragged off to a bus where about five policemen were standing. I was made to stand leaning against the side of the bus with outstretched arms and my legs apart, and they searched me like a common criminal. They then made me show them my knapsack in which I had a camera, a New Testament, personal religious photographs and a book. I had not taken these things with me deliberately (apart from the camera); I always have them with me.

They confiscated everything (apart from the book). They took me off for questioning, and after twenty minutes they returned only my camera. They also asked me questions of a purely personal nature. They then took us off by bus to a spot the other side of Stará Boleslav.

Eyewitness account of Luděk Marks:

It started to get dark before five o'clock. We continued walking along the main road and it was already dark by the time we got to Všetaty. At the bend before the level crossing we could make out a group of people and a VB patrol car. We intended to leave the roadway and skirt the level-crossing, but one man – a civilian in a blue nylon jacket wearing black leather gloves – ran after us and ordered us to stop because he was from the police. When my friend asked him to show us his identity card, he did so, but it was too dark to see it properly. He ordered us to follow him and started walking towards the level crossing where a number of police officers and another plain clothes man were standing. The latter also took part when the uniformed officers started interrogating my friend Petra. The plain-clothes man who had arrested us, grabbed me by the top of my lapels and pulled me one side. He asked me what we were doing in Všetaty, and if there

hadn't been "enough of it already" that week. When I failed to answer questions about my part in the demonstrations at Wenceslas Square from 15th to 20th January, he punched me in the stomach and threatened further violence. Meanwhile the police officers and the other plain clothes man were searching my friend's bag. I understood from what they were saying that they were looking for candles. They ordered me to turn away from them. I overheard one of them saying: "Don't dirty your hands on her". About ten minutes later they took hold of us and dragged us off in the direction of the village. They were particularly brutal in their treatment of Petra. Two officers held me by the arms and under my arm-pits. I stopped and looked towards the group surrounding Petra. One of the officers dragging me away shouted: "What are you wriggling for?" and called to the others "He's squirming". He forced me over to the police car and took out a pair of handcuffs. The plain clothes man who had arrested us then came over. After saying "Don't put those on him", he punched me in the left eye with full force. I blacked out and fell to the ground. The one who wanted to put the handcuffs on me started to pull me to my feet and beat me over the back with his truncheon. Two officers then hauled me off in the direction of the group that was leading away Petra and another pedestrian. (He had been stopped shortly after us and had told them he was going to Všetaty to visit a certain Mr Mysliveček.) We were taken to the local police station and ordered to stand in the corridor facing the wall. There were some 15 to 20 other detainees with us. Shortly afterwards, the plain clothes man who had previously attacked me rushed out and roared at me: "If you assault a police officer again, I'll make mincemeat of you!" I started to realise how they were trying to frame me. All the detainees, including Petra and the man arrested with us, were told to come into the orderly room. I remained in the corridor alone. StB officers walked by me with comments like "That's that Marks fellow", "He's notorious". I was told to follow one of them who would

interrogate me. I was mostly questioned about the incident at the level crossing. Half an hour later I was driven away by the prosecutor in attendance to the regional prosecutor's office in Mladá Boleslav, where I was interrogated by the examining magistrate Zdeněk Rohan on suspicion of having assaulted a public servant. After being cautioned, I filed a complaint. The examining magistrate and the prosecutor, who was present throughout the interrogation, then took me off for a medical examination. The doctor chiefly examined my left eye, which still bears evidence of violence. He gave the examining magistrate and the prosecutor copies of his medical report. I was then released, at about 11.30 p.m. Three days after my arrest I received at my permanent address a notification from the Mladá Boleslav prosecutor's office that I was being summonsed on a charge of assaulting a public servant. The grounds given read as follows: "On 21.1.1989 at approx. 17.30 hrs. at Všetaty, Mělník district, while being brought in by a VB patrol composed of Lt. Zahorajko and Sgt. Tesař, he swung his fist at Lt. Zahorajko with the intention of hitting him. The blow did not fall, however, as Lt. Zahorajko dodged in time."

Eyewitness account of Leoš and Michaela Mayer from Liberec:

On Saturday 21st January, we went to Všetaty to pay tribute to the memory of Jan Palach. After getting off the train and walking about two hundred metres, we suffered an unprovoked attack from a terrorist gang of five men in civilian clothes. They jumped out of a car that had overtaken us and stopped, and started tearing the Independent Peace Association badges from our clothes, as well as an anti-nuclear badge. When we protested, they pushed my wife and me roughly against the car, ripping the right lapel of my coat in the process. They then proceeded to search us on the spot, dragging the bags off our arms and tipping their contents out on the muddy ground. We had food with us for the whole day in two glass jars, one of which they broke. They confiscated some forty photos of art objects

of different genres, an exercise-book with a German word-list, a letter from *Vokno* and a report on the political prisoners Hanka Marvanová, Tomáš Dvořák, Ivan Jirous, Petr Cibulka and others. They twisted my wife's arms and forced her over the side of the car. When I protested against this treatment, they threw me to the ground saying: "You little shit, whinge as well, will you?" They punched me several times in the shoulders and back as I lay on the ground. One of them also kicked me in the knee, injuring me slightly. I was then told, with a torrent of abuse and insults, to get up and pick up my things. As I stood up I received a further blow in the stomach. In my bag there were also my wife's knitting things that she had brought with her for the journey. When they saw it she was asked: "What d'you need your knitting with you for, seeing as you've only come here to make a fucking nuisance of yourselves? Haven't you got time enough to do it in Liberec?" They then put us in the car and drove us to a local farm building which the police had turned into a temporary interrogation centre. After showering us with coarse abuse such as "Another peep out of you, you bastard, and I'll rub you in this here mud", they handed us over to the uniformed police with instructions that we were not to talk to each other.

After interrogation, they returned almost everything that had been quite unlawfully confiscated, except for the badges and the report on political prisoners. After keeping us waiting several more hours in some office, and making two unlawful videos of us (during both video sessions, they filmed my wife by holding her by the hair and turning her head towards the lens, as she refused to be filmed) they drove us off with a dozen other detainees and dropped us at various points in the region. All access routes were closed with police road-blocks and patrol-cars.

After driving us about 12 kms., they dropped the first of the detainees, with a child of about ten. Ten or fifteen kms. further on, they wanted to drop me off with three other people, but without my wife. Both of us vehemently

refused this. Their reaction was to try and force me off the bus, which they didn't manage to do. One of the uniformed men twisted my wife's arms behind her back and forced her face into the back of the seat in a painful way. Everyone in the bus protested violently against this, after which they left us alone. They then started abusing everyone in the bus, cursing and insulting us all in the nastiest way: "You'll be stealing next." We took great offence at that remark and when we protested they shouted, "Shut your mouths! Shut up!", etc. At the next stop, about ten kms. further on, they decided to have mercy on both of us and threw us off the bus. The nearest railway station was Kolín, about 25 kms. away. We were therefore abandoned in the middle of fields without any means of transport or money.

(From the samizdat publication *Palachův týden* /The Palach Week/, the fourth section of which is devoted to testimonies about the events of 21st January. Ed.)

D 37

22nd January 1989

Charter 77 Document No. 8/89: *Statement about the January events*

On 15th January 1989, representatives of Czechoslovakia signed the Concluding Document in Vienna. In doing so, they pledged, among other things, "to respect the right of their citizens to contribute actively, individually or in association with others, to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms" (principle 13e) and "to facilitate direct contacts and communication among those persons, organisations and institutions, within and between participating States, and remove, where they exist, legal and administrative impediments inconsistent with the provisions of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe" (principle 26).

Over the past week, police units assisted by the People's Militia have been brutally dispersing peaceful

gatherings of citizens at Wenceslas Square in Prague. Even prior to then, certain representatives of the regime and a section of the press had initiated a campaign of lies and slander against the independent citizens' initiatives. They have been insinuating, and even openly asserting, that the leaders of the citizens' movement are seeking to drive young people to suicide. They write about "telephone threats" to place bombs in "a cinema", "a department store" and elsewhere. Someone is even supposed to have threatened to use firearms. The issue of *Rudé právo* for 21st January claims that they are "unquestionably threats from the organisers and instigators of the events at Wenceslas Square". The paper does not divulge the real organisers of those provocations, but instead accuses the independent initiatives, and chiefly, Charter 77. Then, in a manner reminiscent of the fifties, the paper goes on to allege that the citizens' initiatives are directed from "hostile centres" abroad—thereby voicing its rejection of better international relations and showing disrespect to Czechoslovakia's partners in the Helsinki process.

A second, more moderate, propaganda ploy takes the line that "provocative actions impede the process of restructuring", that demonstrations do not solve anything, that "we will accept discussions, but will not tolerate the unconstructive fomenting of hysteria".

Let us first of all summarise the facts.

Neither Charter 77 nor any of the other citizens' initiatives organised any demonstrations. Representatives of five initiatives agreed that on 15th January at 2 p.m. they would lay flowers on the spot where, twenty years ago, Jan Palach sacrificed his life as a warning against creeping capitulation and the progressive demoralisation of Czechoslovak society, i.e., the very situation that indeed came about and with which we are still saddled. There was to be a short ceremony of remembrance at Wenceslas Square attended by a few dozen friends. In addition, the independent initiatives invited their fellow-citizens to commemorate Palach by laying flowers on his grave in

Všetaty on 21st January 1989 – individually, and at a time of their own choosing. In other words they did not organise any mass demonstrations at the cemetery either.

It would seem that those elements of the regime who feel threatened by the positive developments in several countries of Eastern Europe, and by the improvement in international relations – reflected also in a revival of civic awareness in Czechoslovakia – apparently decided to take this opportunity to launch an offensive against the independent initiatives. They rejected all further talks on alternative ways of honouring Palach's memory. The situation was aggravated by the letter announcing that another human torch would be lit on 15th January. One option would have been to treat it as provocation. But the possibility could not be ruled out that someone had really decided to undertake that desperate act. It had to be prevented. And since Czechoslovak Television turned down Václav Havel's offer of an appeal, he made use of foreign radio stations.

Accordingly, on 15th January, the regime had a pretext for closing Wenceslas Square. This was not the case on the subsequent days, however. On the Monday, it exploited the fact that some representatives of the citizens' initiatives – who had been held in custody the previous day – laid wreaths by the statue of St Wenceslas. Since the citizens in question had not made their individual intentions public they can hardly be accused of organising a demonstration. Photographs of their arrest prove that the only other people present were passers-by. Immediately afterwards, hundreds of policemen, supported by armoured personnel carriers and water-cannon, burst on to the square, which was being used by thousands of pedestrians as usual at that time of day. On Tuesday 17th January, following yet another invasion of Wenceslas Square by police units, the public, and particularly young people, were justifiably incensed by the authorities' behaviour. As a result, slogans were shouted condemning violence, and demanding freedom, democracy and the

release of those arrested. The slogans included: "Write the truth!", "Stop your lies!", "Long live Charter 77!", "Long live Havel!", "Human rights!", "A new government now!", "Bring back Dubček!", "Gorbachev is watching!", "Palach lives!", etc. On Wednesday and Thursday, thousands of people assembled quite spontaneously to discuss the situation. Let us emphasise that in spite of the brutal police intervention, especially on Thursday 19th January, when many people were injured, the demonstrators behaved calmly and with dignity. They did not attack the special strong-arm units, did not throw stones, did not damage any public property. On the contrary, when those fleeing the water-cannon knocked over litter bins, they stood them up again and put back the litter. Can such behaviour truly be described as "unconstructive fomenting of hysteria"?

In the circumstances, the brutality employed by the forces of order was not only unjustified, it was deliberately targeted at passers-by at Wenceslas Square. It would seem to have been an attempt not only to intimidate all expressions of independent thinking but also to foster the feeling in ordinary people that the regime can do what it likes with them. The regime's actions are tantamount to an open attack on society and on the evolution towards democracy within the systems based on the crumbling Stalinist model. They are also a blow to international rapprochement. The latter can only be achieved if human rights are accepted as commonly shared civilised values.

None of the independent citizens' initiatives in Czechoslovakia advocates violence. On the contrary, they all seek dialogue. We do not want the regime's leaders to goad society to an explosion that would not only sweep them away, like Gomulka or Gierek, but also harm society as a whole in the long run. Ever since it came into being twelve years ago, Charter 77 has been proposing to the powers-that-be just such a peaceful dialogue about how to bring our country's political practice in line with the international human rights covenants. However, their reaction

has been nothing but slander, persecution, police harassment and imprisonment. The independent initiatives' readiness to compromise was proved just a few weeks ago when they agreed to transfer a demonstration to mark the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from the city centre to Škroup Square, and by the calm and dignified way it was conducted. Similarly, the Independent Peace Association asked the Mayor of Prague to allocate them a hall to which they might transfer the discussion sessions which they hold on the last Saturday afternoon in the month at Wenceslas Square. Their request was refused.

Violence in place of dialogue is therefore the monopoly of the regime, or rather, those of its leaders who are responsible for the lamentable state of Czechoslovak society. We therefore demand that they resign at long last and make way for politicians capable of initiating a society-wide dialogue.

We demand the dismissal of all those officials responsible for the unjustified and brutal behaviour of the police and People's Militia towards peaceful gatherings of citizens. Chiefly this means the Federal Minister of the Interior and the chief of police for Prague and Central Bohemia.

In the absence of a dialogue, not only is a democratic transformation of society unthinkable, it is equally impossible to solve today's most pressing economic and social problems. But if there is to be a dialogue, all those arrested must be released forthwith and all charges against them dropped. There must be an end to the campaign of lies in the media. It means the opening up of the press to genuine debate as well as the registration and legalisation of independent groups and journals. We are ready to put forward the names of people to take part in a constructive television debate with representatives of the authorities. With a view to allaying tension and paving the way for dialogue, we request the city authorities of Prague and the municipalities of all places where citizens so wish, to make

available public premises or halls where everybody may freely express their views and discuss the way forward for Czechoslovak society.

Charter 77 is not a political organisation capable of proposing political blueprints. What it can offer is the experience of plurality in action and of dialogue between different political convictions, social attitudes and spiritual outlooks. It can offer this experience as a modest contribution towards the society-wide dialogue which is sorely needed.

Tomáš Hradílek – Charter 77 spokesperson

N. B. Charter 77 spokespersons Dana Němcová and Saša Vondra are being held in custody.

D 38

23rd January 1989

Rudé Právo: They went away disappointed

VŠETATY (from our correspondents) – On Saturday afternoon, the instigators of the subversive rallies in connection with the anniversary of J. Palach's senseless tragedy, tried to organise a further stunt, this time at Všetaty in the district of Mělník. It was intended to hold some sort of demonstration rally at the local cemetery near the Palach family grave, attended by representatives of the embassies of certain NATO countries (Canada, USA, Great Britain, etc.).

American radio stations started inciting listeners to take part in the event several days previously. Therefore the council of the local National Committee in accordance with the opinion of citizens requested the police to take preventive measures to safeguard public order in the locality. No more than 200 people arrived in Všetaty during Saturday from different parts. The ringleaders' ambitions were thwarted and order was not disrupted in the locality.

We interviewed some of the participants on the spot: what interested us above all was why they had come to Všetaty.

Šimon H., an 18-year-old grammar-school student from Prague: I am here by chance (?); my parents had gone to the mountains, so I just came to see what was going on. Naturally I knew about the event beforehand.

Petr J., a 17-year-old vocational school student from Prague: I was at Wenceslas Square on Thursday where there were a lot of policemen. That's where I heard about Všetaty. My mates and I thought we'd go and have a look – just from a distance, which is why we went on foot from Neratovice. It's silly that Palach killed himself. I think it was misused.

Vojtěch M., a 17-year-old vocational school student from Prague: We came to see if the police were going to intervene like in Prague. Our parents know nothing about it, I only told Grandma. I think there should be more freedom here. For instance, if I wanted to go on television I'd need a permit (?).

Jiří K., a 35-year-old manual worker from Prague: I went for a day out with my son to Tišice. The pub there was closed and we were planning to have our lunch in Všetaty. We started to walk there along the railway line. I knew there was something in the offing. In fact it was said there'd be tanks out all around.

Pavel L., a 17-year-old apprentice from Mělník: I couldn't care less about what's going on here. I only came out of curiosity.

Petr K., a 35-year-old civil engineer from Turnov: I came to lay some flowers. What's wrong with that? Everyone has his own views and should have the right to voice them publicly. I see no harm in that.

Pavel S., an 18-year-old manual worker from Ústí nad Labem: A few of us came, the locals from the pub. We wanted to see it. The State should be more just. Like when I work and someone else doesn't, he gets the same as me, or more, even.

Rudolf M., a 25-year-old specialist from Ústí nad Labem: I believe that glasnost should apply to everything. We have censorship here, and that is why I have come to

see what is happening. (Censorship was abolished in the ČSSR in 1968, *Rudé právo* editors.)

Josef R., a 16-year-old apprentice from Ústí nad Labem: I came to see my cousin; if my Dad finds out I've been here I'll get a belting. He says that only loonies go to events like this.

More people like that came to Všetaty. The motives for their trip and their views were often the same. Most of them – or so they say – were in Všetaty and taking part in similar events for the first time. What they knew of Palach was either little or biased. But that is what the organisers wanted – to entice as many uninformed people as possible, just like them, so as to be able to present their views as the voice of public opinion. But other people came apart from them, including the organisers themselves. One of them was brought personally in a car belonging to the West German TV station ARD. They all left together – disappointed.

*

As the West German DPA press agency maintained on Sunday, according to their information from "charter" sources, some sort of "protest march" was going to be organised from Loreto Square to Prague Castle. That "march was a flop", the agency announced. We checked out the news in other quarters. It was true: the "march" did not take place.

Vlastimil Bradáč, Jiří Janouškovec

D 39

23rd January 1989

Charter 77 Document No. 9/89: *List of Czechoslovak political prisoners. Brief excerpt*

On 22nd January this year, the members of the spokespersons' group joined with other Charter 77 signatories in a hunger strike to protest against the unjust imprisonment for political reasons, of many Czechoslo-

vak citizens. At the same time, the Charter 77 spokespersons are submitting to the appropriate Czechoslovak institutions and the public at large a list of Czechoslovak political prisoners whose cases were being defended or monitored by the Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS) as at 21st January 1989. The list has been drafted on the basis of VONS's recapitulatory communiqué No. 860 of 10th January 1989 and other material from the Committee. In this brief report we only give the prisoners' names.

I. Serving prison sentences:

a) cases taken up by VONS: Jiří Boháč, Petr Hauptmann, Augustin Navrátil (under mandatory protective surveillance at a psychiatric clinic), Antonín Pernický, Kamil Petrovický, Jiří Wolf

b) cases of espionage which VONS recorded because of doubts about their guilt: Viktor Dedera, Ondřej Hoch, Josef Römer, František Veis

II. Imprisoned during the past three months: Slávek Popelka *, Petr Cibulka, Tomáš Dvořák, Ivan Jirous, Dr Hana Marvanová, Eva Vidlařová

III. In custody since 16th January 1989

In the course of the brutal and senseless police operations intended to suppress the tributes to Jan Palach's memory at Wenceslas Square, the following people were arrested, charged with riotous conduct and held in custody (incomplete list): Stanislav Penc Jr., Jana Petrová, Saša Vondra, Jana Sternová, David Němec, Josef Žáček*, Marek Ptáček*, Dana Němcová, Ota Veverka, Jitka Vavříková, Petr Placák, Jiří Fiala, Václav Havel, Bořislav Holeček*, Jiří Svoboda*, Lubomír Jaroš*. Others were arrested and charged during subsequent days. It is likely that some of those charged were held on remand. On 19th January alone, according to information in the Czechoslovak official press, 280 persons were arrested, of whom 23 were charged with various offences and 80 are being prosecuted

for misdemeanours. There was no announcement of the numbers being held in custody.

(* released in the interim)

D 40

24th January 1989

Rudé právo: Meeting of the Committee for Party Work in the Czech Socialist Republic

PRAGUE – At its meeting on Monday, the Committee for Party Work in the Czech Socialist Republic discussed the report of the Czech Minister of the Interior and the Environment, Václav Jireček, about the situation as regards state security, including the attempts to hold anti-state demonstrations in our capital. It welcomed the responsible stand taken by labour collectives, communists and members of other political parties who resolutely rebuffed the endeavours of the subversive forces directed against our socialist society.

The Committee expressed its support for and appreciation of the members of the National Security Corps (SNB) and the People's Militia for their political maturity and determination in the maintenance of order. It fully supported all legal measures taken by the authorities to ensure calm and order, and to deal with lawbreakers.

It emphasised the demand for the launching of a broad ideological offensive and efforts to promote political work by party organisations in the workplace, among the youth and in citizens' associations. It is necessary to mobilise all their resources and stand in the forefront of efforts to fulfil the 1989 plan and tasks devolving from restructuring and the democratisation of society. (...)

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D 41

24th January 1989 (Petřvald)

Letter from workers in Petřvald (N. Moravia) to the Communist Party's Central Committee

Dear Comrades,

When we talk about new thinking, public information and restructuring, as we now do every day, we also have in mind the right to inform and the right to receive accurate information. However, when a situation arises such as last week's demonstrations at Wenceslas Square in Prague, and the media berate it as a stunt by a handful of anti-state elements organised by the so-called Charter 77, financed by the West, it is quite logical that ordinary citizens should seek the answers to a whole number of questions that incomplete reporting of this kind brings to mind. Who are Charter 77, for instance? Where did they come from, where are they going and why has there been no statement from them so far in the media about the serious accusation that they are anti-socialist in character. In the Soviet Union, for instance, certain long-standing so-called dissidents such as A. Sakharov have been given an opportunity to express themselves – to put it simply, they have become constructors of perestroika. We are not trying to say that, like in the Soviet Union, the same goes for most of those people, but we have no doubt that they include a good number of constructively-minded persons. And even if in certain cases their views were not constructive, we do not believe that this fact will subvert the Republic. On the contrary, it will strengthen it, because the wavering and easily influenced citizens who joined those convinced opponents of the present government at Wenceslas Square will be able to clarify their views by such a confrontation of ideas. As young citizens, we realise how little we know for sure about the nineteen fifties, for example, or about 1968, Jan Palach, and, of course, about the activity of people connected with Charter 77. In school, we didn't learn about who T. G. Masaryk was, and we were already adults by the time we first celebrated the founding of the

Republic. There is a good deal we want to know. But when we talk about new thinking we certainly don't have in mind public information as it used to be. What we mean above all is the opportunity for all citizens – i.e. including Charter 77 – to be accurately informed and to inform others. We don't believe that citizens or Chartists shun such opportunities. We are educated nations, so correct views are bound to emerge. Speaking for ourselves, we do not believe that views emerging in such a way would obstruct our honest work for the socialist future of our country.

The undersigned workers at Tesla Petřvald, Karviná district.

Rostislav Němčík, Miroslav Katolický,
Petr Faltýnek, Dalibor Nevřivý,
Zdeněk Papučík, Petr Vidlař,
Stanislav Helma, Miroslav Ondruš,
Josef Březanský, Luboš Kvoch

D 42

26th January 1989

Report by the independent East European Information Agency (VIA)

On 26th January 1989, there was an official conference at which government spokesman Miroslav Pavel provided a statistical account of the week of demonstrations in Prague. The identity of 1406 persons was checked, 516 were arrested, 13 were fined, 130 were charged with misdemeanours (carrying maximum penalties of 3 months' imprisonment and fines of up to 5000 crowns), 79 have been charged with riotous conduct, and three are on remand: Václav Havel, Jana Petrová of the Independent Peace Association and Ota Veverka of the John Lennon Peace Club. In addition, 16 people are in medical care, two of them with serious injuries. The numbers of arrested would seem to refer to those held for at least a day

in a remand cell, those held for several hours after their arrest are not included; 397 arrests were originally announced for Sunday 15th January and Thursday 19th January alone (see *Mladá fronta* for 21st January). An estimated 400-500 people – all those who arrived by train – were arrested on 21st January in Všetaty and prevented from visiting the cemetery containing the urn with Palach's ashes. The number of those arrested and detained for several hours certainly exceeds a thousand. The most brutally suppressed demonstration last week was on the Thursday; on the Friday, the number of demonstrators was significantly lower – some one thousand people – and there were very few instances of violence.

On 25th January the following were released on the order of the Prague 1 court, which upheld their appeal against the prosecutor's remand order: Dana Němcová and Saša Vondra, two of the three Charter 77 spokespersons; Charter 77 signatories Jana Sternová and David Němec; Petr Placák of the Czech Children group; and Stanislav Penc of the John Lennon Peace Club. Jana Petrová of the Independent Peace Association and Ota Veverka of the John Lennon Peace Club and the Community of Friends of the USA, remain in prison, having had their appeals refused by the same court. The eight are all charged with riotous conduct, an offence under Article 202, Sect. 1 of the Penal Code and face sentences of up to two years in prison. On 24th January, they were all informed of the outcome of the preliminary hearing. The substance of the charge in each case is that they laid flowers, or attempted to, near the statue of St Wenceslas on 16th January whereby they allegedly provoked a riot. Jana Petrová and Ota Veverka face a further charge of assaulting a public servant, an offence under Article 156, Sect. 2 of the Penal Code, which they allegedly committed by addressing insults at advancing policemen. Eye-witnesses deny, however, that they said anything of the sort.

On 22nd January, the prosecutor ordered the release of Luboš Holeček, Josef Žáček, Marek Ptáček, Jiří Svoboda

and Lubomír Jaroš who were also originally remanded on charges of riotous behaviour. Instead of hearing the outcome of the preliminary hearing as they also were due to on 24th January, they were informed that their cases had been handed over to the National Committee to be dealt with as misdemeanours. Jiří Fiala and Jitka Vavříková, who were also named in media reports as being among the arrested organisers of the Monday demonstration, have probably also been released. Václav Havel is due to hear the outcome of his preliminary hearing on 27th January.

A number of independent activists were held for 48 hours for questioning. They include Martin Palouš, Martin Věchet, Václav Malý (whose home was searched), Jaroslav Šabata, Petr Pospíchal, Jiří Štencl, Rudolf Bereza, Tomáš Hradílek (Charter 77 spokesperson), František Melichar and Stanislav Devátý. The last named managed to evade police patrols at Všetaty on 21st January and throw a wreath of flowers and a crown of thorns over the fence towards the spot where the urn with Palach's ashes is placed.

D 43

26th January 1989

Statement by members of the Movement for Civil Liberties

The regime in Czechoslovakia is in a state of crisis, taking the form of chronic economic stagnation and the persistence of undemocratic conditions. This situation was also reflected in the massive repressive operations against citizens wishing to honour the memory of Jan Palach, as well as against others who happened to be at Wenceslas Square in Prague. The depth of the social crisis can also be gauged from the fact that the regime deployed not only the regular police against the demonstrators but also riot police units, and for the first time, in defiance of the Constitution, the Communist Party's own para-military units, the People's Militia. The units involved used truncheons, water-can-

non, tear-gas and armoured personnel carriers. We could mention numerous examples of violence and brutality against young and old that we witnessed on the streets of Prague during those days.

The public was not officially given any specific details of the brutal attacks, but it is known that many injured people had to seek medical treatment. Several hundred citizens were arrested by the police, and dozens of them remain in custody charged with riotous conduct and public order offences, including leaders of the independent citizens' initiatives who now join the ranks of those detained since last year. Citizens are aware of these facts from their own experience. News of these facts travels by word of mouth from one end of this country to the other, as well as abroad. And it does so in spite of the lies and distortions of official propaganda with its hackneyed arguments about subversive centres running these events from the West.

In actual fact, however, it was a deliberately orchestrated confrontation with citizens for which the regime is to blame. The independent citizens' initiatives wanted nothing else but to pay peaceful tribute to the inspiring sacrifice made by Jan Palach when he burnt himself to death twenty years ago. On Sunday, 15th January, the representatives of the independent citizens' initiatives wanted to lay flowers by the statue of St Wenceslas and on Saturday 21st January a national pilgrimage was due to take place to Jan Palach's grave in Všetaty. The organisers were prepared to ensure that these ceremonies of remembrance pass off in calm and dignity, as was the case of the rally on Škroup Square on 19th December last year. We are convinced that had it not been for the police intervention, both ceremonies would have taken place in a calm and orderly manner.

What actually happened in Prague and Všetaty during the period 15th-21st January was a senseless war, waged by the security services against peaceful citizens. As a result of that unprecedented display of brutality, civil

liberties and human rights were ruthlessly trampled on. It happened in the very week when the Concluding Document of the CSCE meeting was ready for signing, at a time when Europe as a whole is seeking paths to mutual understanding and peace, a time when the totalitarian form of government is becoming an anachronism. Admittedly the Czechoslovak leaders continue to table their proposal for the creation of a "zone of confidence, co-operation and good-neighbourly relations on the line of contact between the Warsaw Pact and NATO states", but in their own country they are continuing to deepen the gulf between government and citizens. We are becoming a curiosity in Europe. In Czechoslovakia, different views are answered with truncheons, water-cannon and imprisonment.

The appalling events of last week will not discourage our continued efforts in favour of democratic rules of co-existence. With a view to our continued progress in this direction, we make the following demands:

1. Release forthwith all remaining citizens arrested in the week of 15th – 21st January, and all other political prisoners.
2. Set up a commission of the Federal Assembly and Czech National Council to investigate all circumstances surrounding the preparation and deployment of security forces against citizens in Prague. By what right was the People's Militia used against the people? Who gave the order for this unbelievably reckless course of action and the beating up of citizens who had committed not the slightest act of violence and were merely exercising their constitutional right to express their opinions? The units and individuals responsible must be identified and punished.
3. The attitude adopted by the authorities to the events of 15th – 21st January afford no meaningful prospects. The efforts made by the representatives of the independent citizens' initiatives to negotiate with the Prague City Council in order to ensure the peaceful conduct of the ceremony of remembrance and avoid confrontation came to nothing because of the rejection of a possible agreement, and the political leadership decided on a course of

brutal repression. However, to treat people like enemies of the state and society merely because they express, in a constitutionally acceptable way, views different from the official ideology, amounts to an attempt to preserve a monopoly of power. Stop thinking and acting in this way. End your lying and hate-filled propaganda in the mass media and allow objective information about the actual situation in the country.

4. We are convinced that there is only one meaningful and hopeful way of ending the present overall crisis and creating a stable society capable of developing in harmony: namely, the path of negotiation and dialogue. None of the representatives of the critically-minded groups seeks to advance the cause of society through confrontation. However, if we are to achieve the situation we desire, the powers that be must change their irrational attitude towards the independent citizens' initiatives and the political groupings that are coming into being.

The representatives of the citizens' initiatives are ready for a dialogue on an equal footing.

Milan Uhde, Tomáš Bělka, Jaroslav Mezník, Jaroslav Popelka, Jan Šabata, Milan Jelínek, Jaroslav Šabata, Jiří Kantůrek, Petr Brodský, Ladislav Lis, Ilja Květoň, Petruška Šustrová, Jiří Gruntorád, Rudolf Battěk, Olga Šulcová, Pavel Nauman, Daniel Kroupa, Lenka Marečková, František Postupa, Pavel Křivka, Rudolf Bereza, Kateřina Zukalová, Jana Hradílková, Tomáš Hradílek, Vít Zukal, Simona Hradílková, Dolores Šavrdová.

D 44

26th January 1989

The Initiative of Those Who Work in the Arts writes to the Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec

Dear Sir,

Following the events of recent days, an initiative has come into being, which has issued the text to be found on the

attached sheets. In signing it, we endorse the demands voiced in the text and each of us vouches for the authenticity of all the other signatures. We request you, in your relevant discussions and decisions about the events in question, to take into account our attitude to what happened.

The Initiative of Those Who Work in the Arts

A copy of this letter and appendix is being forwarded to the media for their attention.

Appendix: 63 sheets with 692 signatures

Text:

On 16th January 1989, Václav Havel was arrested at Wenceslas Square along with other participants in the ceremony of remembrance to commemorate Jan Palach. We, who know Václav Havel as an outstanding dramatist and person of honour, are perturbed and affronted by the manner in which the media have treated the event. As workers in the field of culture we firmly believe that the existing social problems cannot be covered up, let alone solved by means of calumny, imprisonment and violence. We therefore urge the Czechoslovak authorities to enter into dialogue, the need for which they themselves emphasise. Naturally, a precondition for such a dialogue is the release of Václav Havel and all those wrongfully arrested, as well as truthful public information.

D 45

27th January 1989

Letter from sixteen Czechoslovak citizens to Andrei Sakharov

Dear Mr Sakharov,

As we are occasionally informed by our media, changes are taking place in your country that one may qualify reservedly as at least a partial attempt to overcome the worst excesses of the Stalino-Brezhnevite system of controlling and manipulating people. The new men at the helm of the Soviet government are concentrating their

efforts on analysing and condemning the crisis phenomena and crimes of the preceding era, now described in your country as a period of stagnation. Soviet citizens learn from the pages of the official press shocking information about the cynical devastation and moral decay of their own society in earlier years. A cautious debate has been initiated about so-called blank pages of history. A certain number of political prisoners have returned from concentration camps. You yourself, as a well-known and long persecuted champion of human rights have even entered the public arena of political activity. Although the fragmentary nature of the the information available to us and our own justified scepticism mean that we are very circumspect in assessing the true purpose of present Soviet developments, we none the less welcome everything that helps alleviate the lives of your fellow citizens and promote greater freedom and human dignity in your country.

We are sorry to inform you that we are witnessing an entirely opposite trend in Czechoslovakia. In spite of the noisily proclaimed democratisation of society and reconstruction of the system, the present ruling elite, which has been in power for twenty years now, is engaged in turning the clock back to the darkest days of fifties terror and reviving the annihilatory practices of the nineteen-seventies. The governing clique which arrogantly made itself a synonym for socialism, peace and progress in general is now openly and unashamedly asserting its determination to ignore the catastrophic national crisis which it created and reject all possible dialogue with society. Independently-minded and free-speaking citizens are automatically labelled enemies and they are assigned just one partner – the political police. In connection with the recent anniversary of Jan Palach who immolated himself twenty years ago at Wenceslas Square in protest against the creeping lethargy and demoralisation of society in the wake of the Warsaw Pact occupation of Czechoslovakia, the wave of repression has reached it highest peak so far. Even prior to the anniversary date, the official Czechoslo-

vak press unleashed a sordid campaign to scandalize and besmirch selected individuals from the independent citizens' initiatives, on the basis of the crudest fabrications. You hardly need us to explain to you the purpose which such "arrest warrants in newsprint" serve and that there is no means of defending oneself publicly against them. Likewise we trust that you have heard about the subsequent events in Wenceslas Square where, for an entire week, the police, with extreme brutality, beat up and arrested scores and hundreds of peaceful citizens calling for freedom and democracy. The aggressiveness of some of the police actions and the demonstrative brutality of their operations give one grounds to believe that the Czechoslovak authorities have decided on some kind of "final solution" to the human rights question in our country. With the signatures beneath the Concluding Document of the Helsinki follow-up conference in Vienna not yet dry, the machinery of repression and intimidation is in full swing here. There has been a sharp rise in the number of political prisoners. Out of all of them we should at least mention the art historian Ivan M. Jirous and the music publicist Petr Cibulka who have been in prison since October 1988 an account of their cultural and social activity; the actress Eva Vidlařová, imprisoned for showing solidarity with Petr Cibulka; the lawyer Hana Marvanová and technologist Tomáš Dvořák – two young activists of the Independent Peace Association; and finally, Václav Havel, Jana Petrová and Ota Veverka whose offence consisted in laying flowers near the statue of St Wenceslas where Jan Palach burned himself to death. We could go on enumerating these cases for much, much longer and there would still be a risk that we had forgotten someone or that there are some we have not yet heard about. The ossified and incompetent regime is waging an inexorable war against the nation, employing massive terror in the process.

Why are we actually approaching you with all this? We would like to ask you to inform your country's public of

this situation, since they are so far dependent on the false and distorted reports given in the official Soviet media which essentially rely on Czechoslovak sources and identify totally with them. We are depicted in your media as enemies of perestroika and democracy, which is actually an intriguing distortion of the facts. Not merely is the Soviet leadership reluctant, for some unknown reason, to distance itself from a legacy as infamous as the August 1968 intervention, it even refuses at least to stand one side neutrally as we try to come to terms with it ourselves. It is a baffling phenomenon and one that seriously undermines the credibility of perestroika and glasnost as ways out of overcoming totalitarian hatred. How, for instance, can one take seriously the spectacular removal of signs with the name of Leonid Brezhnev from Russian street corners when the very circles who organise this performance either ignore or even support something far worse: the bankrupt totalitarian regime imported by tank to the heart of Europe by the selfsame Leonid Brezhnev twenty years ago.

Zbyněk Hejda, Ivan Lamper, Petruška Šustrová, Anna Šabatová, Stanislav Devátý, Petr Uhl, Jan Ruml, Martin Palouš, Joska Skalník, Karel Šrp, Monika Kafková, Andrej Stankovič, Victor Karlík, Filip Topol, Tomáš Šilla, Jan Urban.

D 46

29th January 1989

VONS Statement No. 897: Suppression of demonstrations – 15th-21st January 1989

Each afternoon from 15th to 20th January 1989, spontaneous demonstrations of citizens took place in and around Wenceslas Square in Prague. They were suppressed by the combined force of the police (VB and StB), the Interior Ministry's special units, and the People's Militia. The forces of repression acted with varying degrees of brutality, their most indiscriminate and cruel treatment of demonstrators being on Thursday 19th January. Defenceless

and unresisting citizens were subjected to savage and unlawful treatment not only in the square and a large area of the city centre; such treatment continued when detainees were brought in to various police stations. Similar indiscriminate treatment was meted out by the police to citizens who travelled to Všetaty on 21st January to visit Jan Palach's grave.

On 26th January 1989, government spokesman Miroslav Pavel announced that in the course of the events at Wenceslas Square, 519 persons were arrested, 79 of whom have been charged for riotous conduct under Article 202 of the Penal Code; 96 have received summonses for misdemeanours and 130 for petty offences. According to his statement, 16 people are receiving medical treatment, 4 of them for serious injuries. The government spokesman did not reveal how many defenceless people had been beaten by the armed guardians of public order. We are also unable to provide such details as we have only fragmentary information and it will be hard for us ever to obtain a complete and accurate picture of the brutalities committed by the police and para-military units during the week of 15th-21st January 1989. We are therefore publishing at least the information so far available to us – apart from that given in our individual communiques.

John Bok, of Březinova 7, Prague 8, has lodged a complaint against the police officer who, at 1 a.m. on 16th January 1989, in the interview room of Bartolomějská Street police station, insulted him in a crude manner, throttled him, forced him backwards over the back of a chair and threatened to kill him. At 2.30 p.m. on 14th January, John Bok had been beaten with truncheons at Wenceslas Square and savaged by police dogs. After being taken to Bartolomějská Street police station, he was kept waiting almost ten hours before being interrogated.

Ivo Müller, of Čimická 223/104, Bohnice, Prague 8, has also lodged a complaint in which he declares that on 15th January 1989 he was attacked in Republic Square in Prague by police officers who injured his shoulders and

back so severely that he was granted sick leave. After arrest he was taken in a bus along with other detainees to the area of Příbram (circa 30 kms. S. of Prague, trans.) where the police dropped them off one by one without returning their identity cards. We know that several such buses left Prague in different directions, and that in some cases beatings even continued en route.

Soňa Louženská (21) of Kostnické náměstí 8, Prague 3, submitted a report to the regional police watch-committee in Prague about the events she witnessed during the night of 19th January. In her report, she describes being part of the crowd that was forced out of Wenceslas Square into Vodičkova Street around 7 p.m. During that operation, police officers beat with truncheons anyone they encountered, dragged people off tramcars, and even beat up an elderly man who was peacefully going to get on a tram. Soňa Louženská was pulled out of the crowd along with several others and they were all taken in handcuffs to Bartolomějská Street police station and hustled into a basement room. There, and subsequently in other areas of the building, the police constantly shouted at the detainees, insulting them, and from time to time kicking and beating them. The detainees were then forced to stand astride facing the wall with their hands above their heads. They were forbidden to turn their heads or move in any way, and anyone who did so was immediately beaten. Young males between the ages of 14 and 20 were subjected to the most savage treatment. Soňa Louženská ended up in a room where there were about 20 chairs in three rows. There she was made to sit for four hours without moving while threats were continually hurled at her. During that time the male detainees who had previously been standing in the corridor were brought in a few at a time. They were in their underwear, and carrying their clothes. Soňa Louženská insisted on being taken to the station commander, but the police officers laughed at her and shouted "There's no one in command here today!" She was released after being questioned and photographed.

On 19th January, at Bartolomějská police station, David Vitek (16), of Březinova 7, Prague 8, in the company of other detainees, was made to run from the car right up to the second floor of the building along a cordon of policemen who beat them as they passed. He was made to stand naked in the corridor leaning with his hands touching the wall.

On 19th January, Miroslav Jirec from Karlovy Vary saw thirty-three arrested persons at the police station in Školská Street in Prague 1 being subjected to hours of degrading treatment and beatings, some of them forced to stand facing a wall from six in the evening to three thirty the next morning. Miroslav Jirec witnessed how one of the persons under arrest, Václav Ernest, insisted on being released on the grounds that he had been arrested by mistake on his way home from work to Wenceslas Square where he lived. The policeman took him up to the first floor from where a cry was subsequently heard. Václav Ernest came back with his sleeve torn and spitting blood. From time to time he would have intermittent fits of hysterical laughter and weeping. Because he was unable to stand, the police handcuffed him to the window bars. Another of those under arrest fainted after interrogation and was later taken away in an ambulance. Miroslav Jirec himself, who suffers with his legs and back, was made to stand up against the wall for over three hours, even though he informed the police of his medical condition.

We have many testimonies about the behaviour of the forces of repression at Wenceslas Square in the afternoon of 19th January. The police and shock troops completely sealed the top half of the Wenceslas Square, where a large number of people had assembled. All access ways were closed so that when the order to disperse was given, no one could obey it. The police then started savagely beating defenceless people who had no means of escape. Hence the assertion that the police action was designed to achieve order and clear the square is clearly fabricated.

Leoš and Michaela Mayer from Liberec travelled to Všetaty on 21st January to pay tribute to Jan Palach's memory. As they got off the train they were set upon by a number of men in civilian clothes who pushed them around. In the process they twisted Mrs Mayerová's arms and threw Mr Mayer to the ground and punched him. They then emptied out their bags into the mud. Thereafter, the Mayers were taken to the local co-operative farm building where they were interrogated by the police. The couple were then illegally filmed, in the course of which Mrs Mayerová was held by the hair and her face was forcibly turned towards the camera. Eventually the Mayers were loaded with twelve other detainees on to a bus, from which detainees were dropped at intervals of several kilometres. During the journey, the police insulted them and subjected them to physical violence. Mr and Mrs Mayer were put down in the midst of fields, some 25 kms. from Kolín.

Petr Holeček, born 26.3.1962, residing at Nad olšinami 29, Prague 10, travelled to Všetaty on 21st January from Vysočany station where many policemen were deployed, carrying out identity checks on passengers and taking some individuals away. At Všetaty station, a cordon of policemen stood along the entire length of the train. All passengers were photographed and filmed. Three buses and several police vehicles stood at the station exit. The arriving citizens were stopped within the station precincts and searched by the police. They were then driven off by bus to the main building of the local co-operative farm for interrogation. Petr Holeček was savagely beaten up by police officers in the station lavatory, so that he suffered a broken nose and other injuries that required his subsequent hospitalisation in Prague at the surgical department in Londýnská Street. After interrogation, all detainees were once more loaded on to buses and driven off to distant destinations. From the bus it could be seen that Všetaty was entirely cordoned off with all-terrain vehicles patrolling the fields and police road-blocks on all access roads.

In connection with the suppression of the spontaneous demonstrations in Prague, the police picked up the following people from their homes or workplaces and detained them for 48 hours: František Melichar from Prague, who was imprisoned in the fifties for political reasons, Martin Palouš, a Charter 77 signatory, also from Prague, and Martin Věchet from Trutnov. In Brno, Charter 77 signatory Petr Pospíchal was detained by the police and driven to Znojmo, where he was held for 48 hours in a remand centre. In the course of questioning, the police interrogator threatened to shoot him. Charter 77 signatory Jiří Štencel (18) from Litovel was taken by police to a remand centre at Bruntál, where he was beaten unconscious. Charter 77 signatory Jaroslav Šabata from Brno was held for 48 hours in a remand cell at Hodonín. Charter 77 spokesman Tomáš Hradílek from Lipník nad Bečvou was taken to the remand centre in Přerov. Rudolf Bereza from Ostrava was also held for 48 hours. We assume that other citizens were also detained although they did not take part in any demonstrations.

D 47

29th January 1989 (Moscow)

Message from Yelena Bonner, Andrei Sakharov, Larisa Bogoraz and Lev Timofeyev to the heads of state attending the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe

We have learnt from the Western media and private sources that a campaign has recently been unleashed in Czechoslovakia against activists of the movement for democratisation of that country. Peaceful demonstrations have been broken up and their participants beaten up and arrested. Many of those arrested face possible trial and imprisonment. In the same period, official spokesmen have been speaking cynically about the inadequacy of the measures taken and the government is threatening a further escalation of violence. One would think that such a blatant violation of the human rights agreements just

reached in Vienna would arouse protests from official figures in all the countries involved in the talks on European security and co-operation. So far, however, not only does the government-controlled media in the Soviet Union fail to condemn the actions of the Czechoslovak authorities, but its reporting of them supports the violence and slanders that society's democratic movement.

In this connection, we feel it necessary to voice our concern about such a blatant violation of the Vienna accords. We believe the events in Czechoslovakia and the manner in which they are reported in the Soviet press merit specific attention at the Paris meeting in May on the human dimension of the CSCE.

Yelena Bonner, Andrei Sakharov, Larisa Bogoraz, Lev Timofeyev

D 48 29th January 1989 (Roxbury, USA)

Arthur Miller: *Where is the future?* (On the imprisonment of Václav Havel)

Václav Havel is imprisoned again! I feel a particular sorrow at this news, a feeling that goes beyond Havel's torment. But I am not hopeless. I am old enough to remember the impression, which no one used to question, that Czechs were our contemporaries, with very similar concepts of the future and modernity, of progress and morality.

Now I cannot recognize Czechoslovakia. What kind of government repeatedly imprisons one of its most talented and honest sons? My mind halts at the doorway of this kind of justice, and I think the same is true of ninety-nine percent of the people who contemplate this new travesty.

I happen to have been visiting Prague very soon after Jan Palach's self-immolation, an extremely complex act of affirmation and despair. I recall Czechs asking me whether I thought he had done a useful thing, or whether

it was merely one more futile gesture, perhaps even an explosion of egotism doomed to be washed down the memory hole of our age. In view of Palach's suffering it was impossible at the time to deny its sublimity, but as the years passed the political utility of his action has ceased to be the point, at least for me. What became far more important was the manifest authenticity of his human identity as expressed in his sacrifice. What other creature on earth could have imagined for himself the beauty of a future of freedom and justice to the point of self-immolation in its cause? The puff of smoke that for a short moment drifted over his lovely city was a monument far more solid than stone or steel, immeasurably more enduring, for man was born to freedom, it is his right at birth, in life and death.

The new arrest of Václav Havel and the continuing harassment of other people dedicated to a free Czechoslovakia is simply an attempt to call back the smoke that Palach sent billowing into the sky. It cannot be done. The atoms of that swiftly passing shadow are mixed in the air we all breathe, they lie in the snows of the mountains and they cannot be called back, anymore.

And so my despair transcends Václav Havel's anguish; it rises from the mindless waste that this vain act entails, from the barren repetitiousness of its ultimate futility. His jailers are catching at smoke, throwing a net over a cloud. The world knows that the future is in Havel's cell and the past is outside.

D 49 30th January 1989

Letter from students at the Academy of Creative Arts (AMU) to the presidium of the Central Committee of the Socialist Youth Union (SSM) concerning the events at Wenceslas Square and the SSM's statement of 20th January 1989

In recent days, the citizens of Prague have witnessed rallies by thousands of people at Wenceslas Square. Many

of us passed through the square at the time those rallies were in progress, on the way to cultural activities, the cinema, or the Metro. Many of us witnessed – either directly or indirectly – what happened at those rallies purely out of professional curiosity, connected with our course of study. After the Central Committee of the SSM issued its statement – published in *Mladá fronta* of 20th January 1989 – a lively debate about those events started among students of the Academy of Creative Arts (AMU). At the request of the rank-and-file membership, the AMU SSM committee held a meeting and mandated the faculty committee of the SSM to organise special members' meetings from which there emerged fundamental disagreement with the statement of the SSM's Central Committee. As humanistically-minded people we are unable and unwilling to endorse the actions of the security forces that we witnessed at Wenceslas Square. We believe those actions to have been in striking contradiction with the ideals of our nations and the ideology of the socialist republic. As students of the arts we are taught in the spirit of authentic humanitarian relations between people and nations without discrimination. For us, this attitude is a matter of honour and moral conviction. When we enrolled at our arts schools we pledged to the Czechoslovak people and state that: "...With creative humility, while aiming for the highest standards, we shall perform and strive to work in a spirit of ethics, human sensibility, and human dignity. We will prevent the creation of and support for works propagating licence, violence, exploitation and enslavement, as well as manifestations liable to sap people's moral fibre." (The academic oath.) It is not our intention in this letter to comment on the legality or otherwise of the aforementioned gatherings. However, it strikes us that the fact that people took part in those demonstrations was a sign that they, and particularly the youth, are overcoming their indifference to civic issues, even though in some cases they attended the demonstrations merely out of natural human curiosity. Where we do take issue with the

statement, however, is when it maintains that this was a headstrong act of hooliganism or vandalism – anarchy, even. *The youngsters involved neither caused material destruction nor indulged in violence.* The inappropriate intervention by the Interior Ministry's units created stressful situations. We therefore demand that this be taken into consideration when people's behaviour is assessed and that no action be taken against citizens. The question of how people should be able to express their differing views is now becoming an urgent issue. We are of the view that the problems that led citizens to take part in those rallies could be solved another way without transgressing Czechoslovak laws, and without it leading to accusations of wishing of overthrow our system and state. The existing programmes referred to in the SSM statement are probably not flexible enough to be able to tackle the problems which have accumulated. No time must be lost in drawing lessons from this fact nor in tackling society's problems. We are in favour of democratisation, but democratisation is not an empty expression. It means something specific, which we would like see put into practice. And our representatives and elected leaders should above all be aware of this fact. We request that the views expressed here be regarded as an attempt to improve the social climate at a time of ongoing reforms. As part of the ongoing dialogue in the media we request the publication of our views in full.

(The text of this statement was approved at a special membership meeting of the faculty branch of the Socialist Youth Union held at the Academy of Film Art on 27th January, at the Academy of Music on 30th January and the Academy of Dramatic Art on 26th January 1989.)

Copies to: *Mladá fronta*, *Mladý svět*, The city committee of the Communist Party, The Prague City Council

Appendix: list of students who endorsed the above statement of views with their signatures

The authenticity of the signatures is guaranteed by the individual faculty SSM committees at the Academy of

Performing Arts. The sheets of signatures submitted with the statement are the property of the academy committee of the SSM.

Number of signatories: FAMU (film) – 92 students, HAMU (music) – 53 students, DAMU (drama) – 99 students; total 244 students

D 50

31st January 1989

Open letter from Olga Havlová and Ivan Havel to all those who asked for news of Václav Havel

Friends,

Increasing numbers of personalities and institutions abroad have protested against Václav Havel's latest imprisonment. To date, over 700 people employed in the world of culture here have voiced their support for him. Their numbers are growing daily, and they range from academics to songwriters, and from actors and directors to philosophers and writers. But the authorities go on keeping Havel in prison regardless.

Our thanks goes out above all to all those of you who live here under the present conditions and have registered your solidarity with Václav Havel and your protest against the reprisals already suffered or still risked by those who took part in the tributes to Jan Palach's memory at Wenceslas Square in January. Thank you for your understanding. You have voiced your rejection of violence and declared that you know Václav Havel to be someone quite unlike the picture painted of him in our country's official media. In doing so you have also encouraged Václav Havel's companions who were arrested and charged either for what they did not do, or for doing what was their moral and civic duty.

Our thanks go not only to well-known figures, but also to those many citizens who made use of one of the names

and addresses unlawfully published in the press in a way not intended by the authorities and expressed their encouragement to us personally, either by letter or phone.

Olga Havlová, Ivan M. Havel

D 51

(Early February)

Václav Havel writes from prison

I am deeply moved and encouraged by the expressions of solidarity that I have heard about. What I consider most important is that even artists and academics employed in the official structures have supported me. It is important not just for me but above all because it is evidence of a growing spirit of freedom and civic dignity within our society.

D 52

1st February 1989

Letter from the Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee to the Polish Helsinki Committee

Dear Friends,

It was a pleasure to receive your letter of 25th January 1989. Thanks for your solidarity. We think it is a very good idea of yours to take steps to achieve an international solution of the human rights situation created in Czechoslovakia by the authorities. These steps are urgently required, among other reasons because at least three representatives, Václav Havel, Jana Petrová and Ota Veverka have been held in prison since 16th January. We think it extremely important that the new scope offered by the international monitoring mechanism established by

the Vienna Concluding Document of the CSCE is being used and fully support this approach. We would also ask you to inform the Vienna secretariat of our federation of these steps, and either via them or directly, the Helsinki committees in all countries, so that the individual Helsinki committees and the International Helsinki Federation as a whole might adopt a similar approach if they so wish.

We would also like the Helsinki committees to support the proposal to include the question of the Czechoslovak state authorities' flouting of the CSCE Final Act on the agenda of the May CSCE meeting in Paris. This proposal has been tabled by four Soviet citizens: Larisa Bogoraz, Yelena Bonner, Andrei Sakharov and Lev Timofeyev (the latter being the president of the Soviet Helsinki Committee).

We welcome support for both these proposals: the Polish and the Soviet, not only from individual Helsinki committees but also from other civic initiatives, particularly in those countries where Helsinki committees have not yet been established.

Yours sincerely,

The Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee

Dr Jiří Hájek, Chairman, Kosatcová 11, 106 00 Prague 10

Appendix:

1. Letter from four Soviet citizens
2. Our Committee's reply to Moscow

At the same time, the Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee also sent the following request to the Secretariat of the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights:

- a) that they should invite the individual Helsinki committees to support the activity of the Polish and Soviet committees;
- b) that in those countries where Helsinki committees do not exist (e.g. France, Spain, Greece, Turkey, Portugal, etc.) they should ask other human rights organisations or initiatives (e.g. Amnesty International, FIDH, etc.) to support the Polish and Soviet proposals. (Editorial note)

D 53

2nd February 1989

Covering letter to the Petition by Czechoslovak citizens concerning the events of 15th-21st January 1989, addressed to the Czechoslovak authorities

The Federal Assembly of the ČSSR, the President of the ČSSR, Dr Gustav Husák, the Federal Prime Minister, Ladislav Adamec, the Committee of the Czechoslovak Public for Human Rights and Humanitarian Co-operation, ČTK, the editors of *Rudé právo*

In mid-January, officers of the Interior Ministry and other armed units committed repeated assaults on the peaceful civilian population. A number of citizens have felt impelled to express their feelings on public issues, particularly in view of the fact that they are confronted every day with the Czechoslovak media's insulting campaign of disinformation about the aforementioned events which were the most blatant – albeit not isolated – example in the recent period of how the observance of law in our country has deteriorated. A large number of complaints about the behaviour of police officers and People's Militia have been sent to the editorial boards of newspapers, radio and television, as well as to higher inspection authorities of the Government, the Communist Party and the trade unions, along with requests for explanation and redress. However, the authors of those communications have neither had their views published nor received any truthful replies.

As a result, a petition has spontaneously originated setting out how a considerable section of the public views the situation and requesting certain measures to solve it. Some of the sheets of signatures are being forwarded as they are received to the highest Czechoslovak authorities or the Committee of the Czechoslovak Public for Human Rights; some are being held by a number of volunteers who are establishing a list of the signatories to be sent to the aforementioned authorities and acting as guarantors of their authenticity. The wording of the petition varies in

minor details, due evidently to different individual reactions to the events. The following is the most frequent version of the text:

In accordance with our right of petition enshrined in the Constitution of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic,

- we protest against the brutal assaults committed in the recent period by police (VB) and security police (StB) officers against innocent citizens;

- we demand the immediate release and exoneration of all persons unlawfully arrested in connection with the events in Prague during the period 15th-20th January 1989;

- we emphatically repudiate the campaign of lies conducted by the Czechoslovak media concerning those events;

- we call for an immediate investigation of all unlawful actions and criminal offences committed by officers of the Interior Ministry on those and other occasions, as well as a factual public account of the results of those investigations and just punishment both of the culprits and those officials responsible for the police violence;

- we resolutely demand the initiation forthwith of an open nation-wide dialogue on the causes of the state of economic and social decline which Czechoslovak society has sunk into in recent decades and on ways to halt and overcome it.

Only then might we be able to take seriously the official slogans about "restructuring", "new thinking" and "the process of democratisation". Only then might it be possible to believe that the signature of the ČSSR's representative on the Concluding Document of the Vienna CSCE Meeting is not merely an attempt to deceive world public opinion.

Prague and Czechoslovakia, January 1989

(There follow the names, occupations, addresses and signatures of the petitioners.)

By 31st January 1989, the petition had been signed by at least 2101 persons, but it is quite likely that there are many more that we do not know about. From the occupational details supplied by most of the signatories, the social composition of the petitions' supporters would be roughly as follows:

Manual workers:	22%	462
Artists	15%	315
Students and apprentices	9%	189
Technicians	8%	168
Technical professions	8%	168
Civil servants	6%	126
Pensioners, housewives	5%	105
Cultural workers and journalists (half of the latter being media employees)	5%	105
Doctors and health workers	5%	105
Scientists	4%	84
Service employees	3%	63
Liberal professions	3%	63
State employees	1%	21
Clergy	0.7%	15
Managerial staff	0.3%	7
Others	5%	105
Prague	80%	
provincial towns and urban districts	9%	
small towns	6%	
rural	5%	

These data are only a rough guide, partly because more and more citizens are coming forward to sign the petition all the time. If possible, we will record and publish any eventual changes in the percentages given here.

Evidently, the petition's signatories are not a "pressure group", but simply decent citizens sharing a concern that Czechoslovak society should develop along positive lines.

The same applies to those of us who vouch for the accuracy of the information supplied and the authenticity of the signatures on the attached lists.

We request you to publish this letter.

Jiří Exner, Nad Kajetánkou 1, Prague 6
 Markéta Fialková, Leninova 660/93, Prague 6
 Vladimír Šebek, Pražská 4, Neveklov

Appendix: list of 1465 signatories to the petition about the events of 15- 21.1.1989

NB. A list of 636 signatories was previously sent on 27th January to the Federal Assembly, the office of the President of the Republic and the ČTK press agency.

D 54

2nd February 1989
 (Gottwaldov-Zlín)

Letter from the Community of Friends of the USA to the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly

Ladies and gentlemen,

We recently sent you a wide-ranging petition signed by 430 Czechoslovak citizens. In it we pointed to the discrepancies between citizens' constitutional rights and instances of lawlessness which have now reached an intolerable level in our society. We asked you to grant a number of requests that we still regard as essential pre-conditions if Czechoslovak society is to become a truly democratic system. These included the release of political prisoners, respect for freedom of association, freedom of speech and freedom of the press; an end to discrimination against activists of the independent initiatives and the misuse of the media for the purpose of lies, slander and incitement against all those people who act in accordance with their conscience and convictions.

Those were the main demands set out in our petition. We trusted that you would pay due attention to our requests and respond to them in a manner appropriate to a civilized country with an advanced legal system.

And the response came. Thousands of policemen and members of the Communist Party's illegal troops used the tribute to Jan Palach's memory as an excuse to invade the streets of our capital city and, with unconcealed hatred, prescribed for the peacefully assembled citizens a new version of an old remedy: a dialogue, yes, but only with our truncheons, dogs, tear gas, armoured personnel carriers and water-cannon. A six-day offensive against the civilian population ensued, culminating in the hysterical police occupation of Jan Palach's grave in Všetaty. It was accompanied by a campaign of lies, slander and witch hunts in the mass media against selected individuals or groups of citizens. The numbers of political prisoners rocketed and hundreds of citizens have been charged. The witch hunts and slander campaigns continue. It looks as if the regime has decided on the final liquidation of everything originating spontaneously at the grass roots, everything that clamours for freedom and democracy.

It would be naive to suppose that all of you who sit in the government or Federal Assembly are totally uninformed about the current wave of violence and repression in our society. The official media have brought us reports of declarations in which you identify yourselves fully with the brutal behaviour of the police and People's Militia during the peaceful gatherings at Wenceslas Square in Prague. We don't intend to judge anyone. One may merely deplore your attitude. The fact is that we profoundly believe that violence and terror will never succeed in suppressing people's natural yearning for freedom and justice. And neither truncheon blows nor imprisonment will blunt this belief. After the massacre at Amritsar, Mahatma Gandhi declared: "I cannot maintain any respect or favour for a government that has gone from one evil to another in order to protect its immorality. I have therefore

made so bold as to propose non-co-operation which enables those who wish to have no connection with the government to do so. The latter must then, without violence, compel the government to alter its ways and rectify its misdeeds." Should you decide, however, to pursue further your futile policy of violence and prolong the unjust imprisonment of Petr Cibulka, Tomáš Dvořák, Václav Havel, Ivan Jirous, Hana Marvanová, Jana Petrová, Eva Vidlařová and many other citizens, we shall be obliged to embrace Mahatma Gandhi's above-quoted idea. In such a case, civil disobedience would be the only possible response to the immoral policies of the authorities and the only way for people to assert themselves as citizens. In view of the seriousness of our declaration, it would be better if you regard this as an open letter.

On behalf of the Community of Friends of the USA

Petr Bartoš, Jana Jungmannová, Vladimír Trlida, Stanislav Devátý, Pavel Jungmann, Radomír Vítek, Petr Holubář, Bedřich Koutný

D 55

5th February 1989

Ludvík Vaculík: *Communism is best-ial*

After haunting Europe for over a century, the spectre of communism is ending its run by treating us as well to an open display of its true nature: beating up people on the main street. And the Soviet playwright Shatrov is wrong (unless it's just subterfuge) when he makes out in his play "Dictatorship of Conscience" (being performed at the Workers' Theatre in Zlín¹) that communism is a noble idea that merely needs purging of evil; that's impossible – it is evil.

I didn't go to Wenceslas Square that day because I'd have certainly rushed into something and got myself killed by them in the process. They say that people were shouting "fascists" and "Gestapo" at them. No way! They are not brutal because they have lost their nerve or got out of control. They're not "fascist-like". They are separate and autonomous species in whom bestiality is born and bred – and manipulated. So next time you should shout "communists" at them and they won't take offence – in the same way that a pig won't take umbrage if you call it one (according to Klement Gottwald). Moreover, they're not bestial only when they're beating people up, they're that way all the time: when they're holding meetings, exchanging opinions, lecturing, educating or broadcasting. And this latest display is only a practical demonstration of their own words. "We have the leading role", they say ex cathedra, and anyone who denies it gets a walloping – that's one thing they're agreed on. It goes without saying that if you're "leading" something you have to give it a whack. So there you have it. With its back to the wall on account of its own actions, communism has given up its century-old scholarly flirtation with Hegel and ended up battering people: it's in its philosophical genes. And when the latter combine with the biological genes of North Moravian² thuggery, communism "puts forth a scarlet flower".

They always were beating somebody, of course, only they used to do it secretly or behind closed doors, unbeknown to other people or counting on their debased awareness. In that respect, the recent events have been a move away from darkness towards the light. And that's not all the government has been doing to assist us: after twenty years of suppressing information about every manifestation of civic dissent it has also made room in the media for Charter 77 and other groups, and given publicity to certain worthy names. It has at last fired young people's interest in Jan Palach! With the very worst of intentions, *Rudé právo* published the rhapsodic programme of the Czech

Children: though its text must have charmed many of the paper's readers as it bubbled like a forest spring amidst the surrounding verbal sludge.

There's one real poser I don't have an answer to yet. Where did they manage to find so many thugs, both uniformed and otherwise? Who trained and directed them? And when we've seen the back of the present stopgap government, what will we do with so many moral defectives? The idea of a "common European home" is currently germinating both West and East, and the first basic legal instruments are tentatively laying the foundations of a more humane order within it. When that home is eventually set up, actions which are the product of a criminal disposition will be brought to trial. No doubt thousands of those indicted for cruelty in the performance of their duty will try to use the old Nuremberg alibi: "I was only following orders". It would therefore be worth the effort to get the following clause inserted in a future European legal code: All those who obey orders contrary to humanity shall forfeit their civil rights.

¹ The Moravian town, once the heart of the Bata footwear empire, known between 1953 and 1989 as Gottwaldov after the Communist leader and President Klement Gottwald.

² A reference to the newly appointed Minister of Interior. Ed.)

D 56

6th February 1989 (Paris)

Letter from the Paris-based International Committee for the Support of Charter 77 to the French President François Mitterand

Dear Mr President,

In Prague, on 9th December last year, you met the playwright Václav Havel, the defender of human rights in Czechoslovakia. This world-renowned author was arrested on 16th January and is still in custody, facing a possible prison term of up to two years. Mr Havel's

offence is to have laid flowers in memory of the Czech student, Jan Palach, who burnt himself to death in Prague twenty years ago in protest against the prevailing lack of freedom in his country.

We appeal to you, Mr President, to avail yourself of your high office to remind the Czechoslovak government of the pledges made by it in the field of human rights when it signed the Helsinki Final Act, pledges renewed only recently at the follow-up conference in Vienna. The arrest and imprisonment of Václav Havel and other peaceful supporters of the independent citizens' initiatives are a major obstacle to the construction of a common "European home", a concept also endorsed by the leaders of the Czechoslovak state.

Yours respectfully,

France de Nicolay, Secretary of the International Committee for the Support of Charter 77

D 57

10th February 1989

Joint Charter 77 / Helsinki Committee Document: "Our attitude towards the Vienna document". (Charter 77 Document No. 11/89; Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee No. 40/89)

To the President of the ČSSR, the ČSSR Federal Assembly, the ČSSR Government, the Czechoslovak Committee for European Security and Co-operation, the Committee of the Czechoslovak Public for Human Rights and Humanitarian Co-operation, the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights

In common with all other citizens seriously concerned about events here at home and abroad, we welcome the successful conclusion of the Vienna CSCE Meeting. We

concur with the Czechoslovak representative when he declared on 17th January 1989 that the Concluding Document was "the outcome of positive determination, realism and new approaches to the problems of today's world". It is a major contribution to the overall process of overcoming world tension, and reviving awareness of the reality of a community of nations. It is also a challenge to the latter to co-operate in the construction of a common European home. What lends the document its particular emphasis and dynamics is what is described in its text as the "human dimension" of the CSCE, in other words, the new provisions on human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as the clauses concerning the development of and support for human contacts and relations within the framework of European co-operation. All participating states reiterate that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is an essential factor for peace, justice and security, necessary to ensure the development of friendly relations and co-operation in Europe and throughout the world. Similarly, in the spirit of the well-known principle of the Helsinki Final Act that individuals have the right "to know their rights and duties and act upon them" it accords the exercise of that right an active role in the process of détente, confidence-building and the creation of an atmosphere of security and co-operation in Europe. Not only states and their authorities, not only official institutions and governmental organisations, but also ordinary citizens and their associations may be active and legitimate partners in that process. Everything that was acknowledged in that respect in Madrid in 1983 was confirmed categorically in Vienna. Participating states pledge to recognise, respect, and directly encourage such initiatives, eliminating all obstacles to their activity and guaranteeing their freedom to express their views on problems of the Helsinki process, particularly concerning its human dimension. Thus, together with the other provisions concerning freedom of belief, minority rights, and official arbitrariness, the participating states (i.e. includ-

ing our Republic) are creating a common concept of European co-operation: co-operation between legitimate states and their fully-fledged citizens. All the provisions in the document are worded as an expression of the common determination of all participating states, and each of them accepts those provisions as pledges not only to their negotiating partners but – in the human dimension – to their own people, to each of their citizens. Speaking on behalf of the government, the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister assured the participants in the talks that "the ČSSR has always been among those countries working for the consistent fulfilment and creative evolution of the Helsinki process" (v. Rudé právo of 19th January 1989).

However, the reality and experience of many years, and in particular what happened in Prague at the very moment that speech was being delivered in Vienna, serve to devalue those assurances. If the Czechoslovak administration and leadership wish in future to rank among those who consistently fulfil the principles and commitments of the CSCE, these words must be accompanied by and give rise to clear actions. Those of our citizens who are following the Helsinki process may note with a certain moral satisfaction that a whole number of proposals and suggestions have been put forward both within the Charter 77 framework and by individuals, even if this satisfaction is tinged with regret that so far they have been ignored by the relevant authorities. All the more forcefully, therefore, do they now demand the fulfilment of the pledges and promises set out in the Vienna CSCE document.

1. Above all, it is a commitment to publish in the foreseeable future complete texts not only of the latest CSCE document but also the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (not published here since 1968), and the International Human Rights Covenants, as well as the legal norms governing human, civil, economic, social and cultural rights.

2. Knowledge about human rights should be effectively incorporated in teaching curricula and educational pro-

grammes at all levels, as well as in extra-mural education and the programmes of the mass media.

3. In line with the appeal contained in the Vienna Document, the Czechoslovak government ought to revise its existing reservations about the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In particular, it should a) in accordance with article 41 of that Covenant, recognise the competence of the Human Rights Committee set up under that Covenant; further, it should accept and discuss communications from other parties to the Covenant concerning shortcomings in its application here; and b) sign the optional protocol to that Covenant, concerning the right of citizens to make direct approaches to that Committee.

4. Since, with their ratification on 23rd March 1976, the Covenants became a part of our legislation, it would be necessary, a) to ensure that interpretation of the respective provisions of our legislation always comply with the Covenant; b) to revise those provisions which directly contravene both the Covenants and the conclusions and pledges of the CSCE (particularly as regards our criminal law, where discrepancies are most flagrant).

5. It is necessary to revise the legal code and the respective administrative regulations and practice in line with the pledge to respect citizens' rights to work for the implementation of CSCE commitments, particularly in the human rights sphere (in the human dimension of the CSCE), to associate together to that end, to establish mutual contacts within their own country and within the framework of the community of CSCE states, as well as to remove all obstacles to that activity and ensure freedom of oral and written expression (including in the press) concerning CSCE matters.

6. The credibility of Czechoslovakia's efforts at implementing the Helsinki process was seriously undermined by the brutal actions of the authorities during the period 15th to 21st January 1989, at the very moment when the document – which among other things commits its signatories to prevent, prohibit or punish "cruel, inhuman or

degrading" treatment of people by national authorities – was being signed. We request the constitutional authorities to join with representatives of Charter 77, VONS and the Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee in an investigation into the course of those days' events in Prague and their repercussions, in order to determine responsibility and draw the necessary conclusions. There must also be a halt to the prosecutions and other discriminatory measures against all victims of the recent repression. A truthful account of the investigations must be published and, in the spirit of the afore-mentioned pledge in the document, steps must be taken to prevent any recurrence of such phenomena. Such steps could be taken without delay and at no great cost. Their outcome, particularly in the light of the forthcoming Conference on the Human Dimension to be held in Paris in May and June of this year, could favourably affect those negotiations.

Charter 77 and the Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee reiterate that their representatives are ready and willing to provide details of the above proposals and take part in talks about them, as well as about other possible steps towards implementing the principles and provisions of the Vienna document. They will be considering further possible measures towards fulfilling the conclusions, principles and provisions of the CSCE before submitting further proposals in this connection. They believe that it would be fully in accord with the spirit of the document and of the statements made by different participating states, including our own, if the authorities charged with its implementation were finally to initiate a practical, constructive and fruitful dialogue with those who have long been dealing with the matters in question and wish to assist in solving their problems and tasks.

On behalf of Charter 77: Tomáš Hradílek, Dana Němcová,
Saša Vondra – spokespersons

On behalf of the Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee: Jiří Hájek – Chairman

D 58

11th February 1989

Rudé právo: *We are relying on all honest people.* From the speech given by the General Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party Miloš Jakeš on 9th February at a meeting with top media executives

(...) Another key issue in the present phase is the activation of anti-socialist forces and various groups that are trying to create and act as an opposition. Their actions have widespread support and assistance in the West. The radio stations, Radio Free Europe, Voice of America and others play a direct role in their organisation. A new phenomenon in the activity of anti-socialist forces is the transition from covert operations to attempts at open confrontation, including the encouragement of psychological pressure, intimidation and even psychological terror against people who remain firm in their support of socialism and have publicly condemned their activities. The recent period has also seen attempts to organise and misuse petitions, particularly among cultural workers and other groups of intellectuals. Attempts are also being made to exploit young people's lack of experience, and even their confusion. And nowadays the actions of the anti-socialist forces are even supported by various criminal elements. The tactic of the illegal groups is to call into question the State's right to take action against those who violate the Constitution, the laws and public order.

Nor can one ignore the activity of illegal church structures, and even of some church leaders and their attempts to exploit the religious feelings of a section of believing citizens in an anti-socialist direction. There is a fundamental need for us to counteract these attempts by the consistent implementation of our policy towards the churches and believers, the absolute majority of whom make an honest contribution towards the development of our society.

There is also an upswing in activity by certain erstwhile leaders of political parties from 1968 who are seeking to

organise a so-called "Club of Socialist Renewal". They purport to be pioneers of restructuring and are trying to rehabilitate themselves and the policies they pursue.

Nor is it a coincidence that during January's acts of incitement the anti-socialist forces even tried to misuse the negotiations regarding the Concluding Document of the Vienna follow-up meeting. The activity of these forces provided the opportunity for a fresh campaign against Czechoslovakia, the Party and socialism by certain political circles in the West, even though there are also some realistic attitudes there.

Our position is unequivocal: we have signed the Concluding Document; we took an active part in its drafting; and we will implement it. Its text will be published here in an extensive print run. However, in keeping with the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference we cannot allow attempts to disturb the sovereignty of our State such as those made by certain western political circles and media.

Public opinion about the activities of the anti-socialist forces and illegal groups is categorical among the overwhelming majority of citizens. They condemn their activity and demand law and order and conditions for calm and creative work. They want to continue in the spirit of the line already traced out, namely, restructuring and democratisation. We will not be deflected from this course. This is the unyielding stance of the leadership of the Party, National Front and Government. We must take every opportunity to find a more effective solution to problems which have a whole number of subjective causes, in addition to objective circumstances – problems which hostile forces seek to exploit. This concerns our economy, first and foremost, such as the stabilisation of the market, the implementation of economic reform, and a thorough fulfilment of the decisions we have taken. At the same time, it is necessary to conduct a combative dialogue with all those who are in favour of socialism, with the exception of overt enemies. We must win over all honest people and work with former members of the Party,

who by and large contribute to the development of socialist society. It is also necessary to win over those citizens who are being manipulated and do not have a clear standpoint. We must foster people's persuasion that the path we have embarked on is the right one, that we are capable of fulfilling our tasks and coping with the problems we encounter.

The political approach does not imply, of course, that we shall tolerate illegal activities, public order disturbances, threats to the safety of decent people, or allow the latter to be harassed or terrorised on the pretext of democracy. Whenever legality is infringed this approach must be adopted promptly and unswervingly, irrespective of those involved. This is a matter for the state and the appropriate authorities, and not the business of pressure groups." (...)

D 59 11th February 1989

Message from the students of the Comenius Evangelical Theological Faculty to the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly

Book of Proverbs, 31, 8-9: Open thy mouth for the dumb, In the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction. Open thy mouth, judge righteously, And plead the cause of the poor and needy.

Dear Deputy,

Like many of our fellow-citizens, we are angry about the unrestrained assaults by para-military units on 28th October 1988 and during the period 15th to 21st January 1989, as well as about the unobjective reporting of the entire affair by the media.

We believe that those events were the logical outcome of the deepening demoralisation of our society. It is a crisis that affects the very roots of our nations' existence. As Christians, we believe that God is the supreme authority,

and it is above all from that position that we must protest when the state becomes an instrument of lawlessness. We have no other option today, therefore, but to condemn the violence that occurred as well as its official justifications. We are convinced that there can be no solution to the situation created without the active involvement of all citizens.

We therefore appeal to you to use your authority to support a solution to the present crisis. It is necessary, first and foremost, to prevent any victimisation of those who availed themselves of their constitutional right to express their views. Action must be taken to assess the degree of responsibility of specific individuals for the violence committed.

Please be assured of the sincerity of our intentions and take seriously what we have to say.

Yours faithfully

Students at the Comenius Evangelical Theological Faculty
(42 signatures)

(The letter's signatories requested the secretariat of the Federal Assembly to duplicate this text and distribute it among the Deputies. Ed.)

D 60 16th February 1989

Czechoslovak citizens' petition – further signatories

On 2nd February 1989, a petition by Czechoslovak citizens was handed in to the Federal Assembly of the ČSSR, the President of the Republic, the Federal Prime Minister, the Committee of the Czechoslovak Public for Human Rights, ČTK, and the editors of *Rudé právo*, with a request that it be published. So far this has not happened. However, on 15th February, an addendum to the petition was

sent with a second request for its publication. The text reads as follows:

To The Federal Assembly of the ČSSR, the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister of the ČSSR, the Committee of the Czechoslovak Public for Human Rights and Humanitarian Co-operation, the Prosecutor General

Re: Further signatures to the Czechoslovak citizens' petition concerning the events of 15th-21st January 1989

On 2nd February we informed Czechoslovakia's supreme authorities and the ČTK press agency about a petition by citizens reacting to the January events in and to the overall situation in Czechoslovak society at the present time. We wish to draw your attention to the fact that as of 15th February 1989, a further 1266 persons, at least, had appended their signatures, bringing the total of signatories to a minimum of 3367.

In terms of social stratification, the increase has been above all in the manufacturing sector, i.e. among technicians and manual workers, as well as among scientists. The proportion of artists has dropped markedly, since, from all reports, it was chiefly they who were responsible for this particular citizens' initiative. The present composition is therefore as follows:

Manual workers	23%	774
Artists	12%	404
Technical professions	10%	337
Technicians	10%	337
Students and apprentices	8%	269
Civil servants	6%	202
Pensioners and housewives	5%	168
Cultural workers and journalists	5%	168
Scientists	5%	168
Doctors and health workers	4.5%	152
Teachers and social workers	4%	135
Service employees	4%	135
Liberal professions	2.5%	84
Others	1%	34

In terms of demographic stratification the representation of Prague inhabitants has fallen markedly in favour of citizens of other towns:

Prague	64%
Provincial capitals and Urban districts	23%
Small towns	9%
Rural	4%

According to reliable sources, more and more citizens are signing the petition. Should there be any substantial change in the numbers or the social stratification of the signatories we will once more endeavour to make these known. We believe that in view of the scope of this initiative and the content of the petition, the latter may be regarded as a "citizens' suggestion", and for this reason we are also forwarding a copy of our communication to the Prosecutor General of the ČSSR.

We vouch for the authenticity of the signatures entered on the attached list. We ask you to acknowledge receipt of this communication and take the necessary steps to publish it, along with our previous letter.

Jiří Exner, Nad Kajetánkou 1, Prague 6

Markéta Fialková, Leninova 660/93, Prague 6

Vladimír Šebek, Pražská 4, Neveklov

Copies of text and covering letter to: ČTK and Rudé právo
Appendix: the most frequent version of the text of the petition about the 15th-21st January events plus a list of the further 1266 signatures.

D 61

16th February 1989

Statement by the Movement for Civil Liberties: *Paths to democracy in the wake of the January events*

Just a few short weeks have passed since the January events. It is clear none the less that they represent an important milestone in our most recent history. For an

entire week people from Prague and other parts took to the streets of the capital where they were beaten, assailed with water-cannon, armoured personnel carriers and police dogs and risked persecution at the hands of the police, the authorities and the courts. In so doing, the thousands and tens of thousands who took part were voicing their forthright rejection of the regime's efforts to maintain them as a silent and passive mass.

Their protests reflect society's growing determination to decide its own future. More and more people are unwilling to look on in silence while their lives, the lives of their children, and the fruit of their work are manipulated by a regime that feels responsibility to no one. The public rejects the malicious campaign waged against the demonstrators, the citizens' initiatives and all manifestations of independence. Even a considerable number of employees in the fields of culture and learning have joined with industrial workers, entire workforces and students in calling for freedom of expression and voicing support for all those unjustly imprisoned. In particular they have come out in support of the writer Václav Havel. A similar stand has been taken by the representative of the Catholic Church, the Archbishop of Prague, Cardinal František Tomášek.

In spite of this manifest evidence of society's political emancipation, the official media are continuing their unscrupulous campaign of lies and calumnies against those who demonstrate civic courage and seek a way out of society's crisis. A particularly sorry chapter in this whole campaign is the exploitation of extreme reactions to the social crisis. There is no way we can determine the reliability of the reports of terrorist threats put out in recent days. We have no idea who is behind those provocations or the terrorist attack in Ústí nad Labem. What is certain, however, is that the regime is exploiting them to blacken and discredit the different independent citizens' initiatives. It is hardly necessary to emphasise yet again that terrorist methods of all kinds are entirely incompatible

with our ethical and political principles and at variance with the declared principles of all the other citizens' initiatives. On the contrary, it is the authorities which reject dialogue and instead provoke violence. It is they who employing brutality against citizens. At the same time they are deliberately dramatising the situation and fostering a climate of confrontation within society. The latest legal measures adopted do nothing to improve the state of public order or protect citizens' rightful interests. Instead they have brought the country to the brink of a state of emergency.

In the face of the current profound crisis we declare once again that we are advocates of nation-wide dialogue as the only possible means of restoring confidence and initiative within society. Without such confidence or a determination on the part of the majority of our citizens to take part in putting our affairs to rights and implementing fundamental political and economic reforms, we will become a country without a future. We will be overtaken by a disaster, the nature and extent of which can already be gauged. There can be no exclusions from a nation-wide dialogue. One cannot exclude the citizens' initiatives, which were working for a constructive dialogue long before it became an official slogan. One cannot exclude from it the churches, the social organisations, economic managers at all levels, the new government or, of course, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Ladislav Adamec's government came into office on a platform that acknowledged the state of the Czechoslovak economy to be considerably worse than had previously been officially assumed, and that this had deep-seated historical causes. This throws new light on the many critical voices who for years on end drew attention to the erroneous concepts and dubious practices within the life of society. Notwithstanding, the political leadership continues to display an unwillingness to learn from its own mistakes and just keeps up the same old inane monologue, impervious to any alternative opinion. It is an aberrant policy whose harmful-

ness is realised not only by the general public but also by many Communist Party members and officials.

The dramatic backdrop to this stagnation are the fundamental changes taking place in the Soviet Union, Poland and Hungary. Our country's political leadership is taking a conspicuous stand against those trends. Out of fear for their own status they are resisting radical changes and becoming in the process the main protagonists of Stalinist concepts in Eastern Europe. The ramifications of this represent a major threat to the process of détente which the Vienna CSCE meeting pushed ahead in such a remarkable fashion.

We wish to point out most earnestly the responsibility borne at this present time by the top political leaders in this country. For many of them, the weight of their pasts, their own part in the deepening stagnation and in fostering Brezhnevite conceptions of "really existing socialism" lead them to fear for their own positions. Hence they are afraid of direct talks with our country's citizens. They have become accustomed to using repression as a means of tackling trickier situations and they are now clearly at a loss. Before they start pointing the accusing finger at the middle ranks of officialdom, they should start to consider their own responsibility.

In the circumstances, we feel bound to press the following demands:

1. We call for the resignation of those members of the political leadership who, though responsible for the present state of society, continue to limit scope for dialogue and block fundamental political and economic change.

2. We call on the Deputies of the Federal Assembly, to recognise their responsibility towards the people and refuse to ratify the legal measures adopted by its Presidium on 14th February 1989 which reinforce existing repressive legal powers against citizens.

3. We urge that citizens' rightful demands and the requirements of public order be met not by the restriction of fundamental civil rights or the adoption of emergency

legal provisions and further repressive measures against citizens, but on the contrary by action on the part of the country's political leadership, government and legislative bodies to respect civil rights, above all by guaranteeing all citizens and independent initiatives freedom of assembly, freedom of association and freedom of expression. The recognition and guarantee of those civil rights and freedoms is an essential condition for the involvement of citizens in the process of political and economic change, as well as in public affairs and in the social dialogue – the all-embracing, open debate about the path to democracy.

On behalf of the provisional co-ordinating committee and supporters of the Movement for Civil Liberties

Rudolf Battěk, Václav Benda, Pavel Bratinka, Ján Čarnogurský, Tomáš Hradílek, Jozef Jablonický, Jiří Kantůrek, Jan Kozlík, Miro Kusý, Ladislav Lis, Anna Marvanová, Jaroslav Mezník, Pavel Nauman, Jaroslav Šabata, Milan Šimečka, Jan Šimsa, Jan Štern, Saša Vondra

D 62

18th February 1989

Letter from the independent initiatives to the governments of the CSCE participating states and to all friends at home and abroad

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We wish you to know of our deep gratitude for all the expressions of solidarity with Václav Havel and his imprisoned friends. A large section of Czechoslovakia's artistic and academic community – some three thousand personalities – have signed two petitions calling for their release and supporting all the victims of the January events in Prague. Protest was also voiced by Cardinal Tomášek, as well as a number of trade-union and youth organisations, and many other Czechoslovak citizens. At the

same time, a whole number of different solidarity actions are being organised abroad in support of all the victims. There are so many new ones emerging all the time that it is impossible for us to thank all the groups and individuals whose concern has been aroused by recent developments in Czechoslovakia - quite legitimately so in view of the fact that while the Concluding Document of the Vienna talks was being signed, the centre of Prague saw a display of violence of a kind not witnessed since 1969.

All of us here sense that the evolution towards greater security, confidence and co-operation is being seriously jeopardised. We have additional, substantial grounds for believing so. In Vienna, the Czechoslovak government pledged, in accordance with Principle 13, to develop its laws, regulations and policies in the field of civil, political and other rights and fundamental freedoms and implement them in order to guarantee effective exercise of these rights and freedoms. Less than a month later, on 14th February 1989, the presidium of the ČSSR, in the presence of the General Secretary of the Communist Party, Miloš Jakeš, adopted a legal measure which at a stroke increases two-fold the level of penalties that can be incurred by participants in totally peaceful public assemblies of the English "Speakers' Corner" variety. Moreover it also includes a clause that has horrifying implications in terms of legal and political culture. This new legal provision states that "anyone who drafts, or assists the drafting and dissemination of printed materials whose content harms the socialist State's concern for maintaining public order" will receive a prison sentence of up to 6 months or a fine not exceeding 20,000 crowns. Take note: there is nothing here about specific people actually disturbing public order on the street or elsewhere. The threat of a six-month prison-sentence now hangs over anyone who puts out a text offending the rulers of the day, as well as over anyone who assists them or passes the text on. Vague regulations about "harming the State's concern for maintaining public order" can be applied without difficulty to all independent

publications, petitions, statements or tracts. And that regulation, which is Czechoslovakia's own peculiar way of implementing the Vienna accord, was printed in bold on the title page of the official newspapers.

Another pledge that the Czechoslovak government made in Vienna was to prohibit cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of citizens and that it would take effective legislative, administrative, judicial and other measures to prevent and punish such practices. Shocked by the January events, the public here is demanding that the culprits be brought to book. And what is the outcome? On 21st February, it will be not the ruffians who are due to be tried, but those who have been seeking to protect their fellow citizens from violence and tyranny: Václav Havel, two of the current Charter 77 spokespersons, Dana Němcová and Saša Vondra, former Charter 77 spokesperson Jana Sternová, a representative of the Independent Peace Association Jana Petrová, a representative of the Czech Children Petr Placák, Charter 77 signatory David Němec and two founder members of the John Lennon Peace Club Otakar Veverka and Stanislav Penc, Jr. Their crime? Wanting to lay flowers by the statue of St Wenceslas in the afternoon of 16th January.

That is the main reason, Ladies and Gentlemen, why we are approaching you once more. It is not our intention to plead the cause of our indicted friends. They do not need it. What might have escaped attention, however, is the profounder international aspect of these trials. If in any other participating state there was a resumption of persecution against people of great moral authority, the Helsinki community would regard it as a danger signal. The fact that the present Czechoslovak leadership has chosen to ignore so blatantly not only public opinion at home but also the protests of the international community is also a danger signal. It creates the danger that the practice of signing agreements and not implementing them will go on as before. The forces of Stalinism, the forces of yesteryear, are not surrendering. And it would be

foolish to underestimate their supranational links and ties of co-operation.

Arthur Miller wrote that "the future is in Havel's cell and the past is outside". It's beautifully put, but it's a humiliating thought. Can we really allow our future – and yours – to languish behind bars? Those who gaoled Václav Havel and his fellow-detainees count on getting away with it again. They assume that the momentary protests will die away and they will have their own way once more.

Let us join in showing them that this time they are mistaken.

Czech Children: Petr Placák

The Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee: Jiří Hájek, Chairman

The Democratic Initiative: Bohumil Doležal, Emanuel Mandler

Charter 77: Tomáš Hradílek, Dana Němcová, Saša Vondra
The John Lennon Peace Club: Heřman Chromý, Stanislav Penc, Jr.

The Independent Peace Association: Jan Chudomel, Jan Svoboda, Růt Šormová

Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity: Petr Pospíchal, Anna Šabatová

The Community of Friends of the USA: Petr Bartoš, Pavel Jungmann, Bedřich Koutný

VONS – The Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted (Czechoslovak Human Rights League, FIDH-affiliated)

D 63

19th February 1989

Charter 77 Document No. 15/89: *Reflections on Jan Zajíc's sacrifice*

Jan Zajíc: *The last...*
The last thing I hear
Is your cowardice
It screams in the fields

It roars in the towns
It whimpers at the crossroads
It yells in fear of death
And doesn't realise
that death is a warning and a lure
From church-towers the death-knell
tolls
For nation and country
In the name of your
life
I burn
Jan

On 25th February 1969, a little more than a month after Jan Palach's death, Jan Zajíc, a 19-year-old student at the College of Railway Engineering from Vítkov in the district of Opava, burned himself to death at Wenceslas Square in Prague. His action, like that of Jan Palach, was motivated by a love of the truth. Both of them sought to stimulate people to protest against lies and injustice, as well as against self-seeking acquiescence.

Even by then, Jan Zajíc's death was overshadowed by the name of Palach and its impact was dulled by normalisation's continued advance. Twenty years on, the anniversary of Palach's self-immolation was the sign for an entire week of spontaneous demonstrations unprecedented in Czechoslovakia since normalisation. We believe that we all owe much to the memory of Jan Zajíc. A young man who decided to sacrifice his life in order to arouse his fellow citizens from their growing lethargy ought not to be forgotten.

Let us try, at least now – twenty years on, to react to Jan Zajíc's action. Not demonstratively this time, but all of us in our own locality and as each of us sees fit. It depends on each one of us how things turn out in this country. All around us, we see lies and injustice. We are all witnesses of irresponsible, foolhardy and careerist decision-making. Let us refuse to put up with it. When they are made singly, appeals, complaints and protests can

be hushed up. When they come in their thousands – when all those affected by an unjust decision will raise their voices in protest, it will be impossible to hush them up, ignore them or misrepresent them. Let us wake up to the fact that our countryside is not devastated by official decrees, but by ourselves, when we implement those decrees. Let us remember that power, according to our Constitution, belongs to the people, not the governing authorities. The fact that, for fear of unpleasantness, we unprotestingly carry out each and every order, no matter from whom, or we fail to speak out even when we know something is bad or harmful, makes us authors of injustice and wrongdoing. No one can do it for us. If we sit around waiting for someone else to do something about our lamentable situation then we'll wait for ever. It's not true that individuals can have no influence on affairs. Approach your elected representatives at every level of representative authority from local councils up to the Federal Assembly of the ČSSR. They are not our lords and masters. They are supposed to be the administrators of our country and the trustees of our common property. Call attention to every injustice and refuse to be fobbed off. In our daily lives we all encounter many things we do not agree with. Let us refuse to be silent. Let us criticise, let us seek and suggest remedies of benefit to all concerned. Our countryside, our economy and our society are in a deplorable state. Let us try to change and remedy matters. It depends on us, first and foremost. Let us not be afraid to sacrifice a quiet life and our creature comforts. Let us not seek refuge in anonymity. After all, Jan Palach and Jan Zajíc had the courage to sacrifice their dearest possession – their lives.

At the end of his farewell letter, Jan Zajíc wrote: "Let my torch enkindle your hearts and light up your minds. May my torch light the way to a free and happy Czechoslovakia." Let us try to heed his call.

Tomáš Hradílek Dana Němcová Saša Vondra
Charter 77 spokespersons

D 64

20th February
(Bratislava)

Letter to Václav Havel from the Slovak writer Ivan Hoffmann, one of the publishers of the independent magazine *Fragment-K*

Dear Mr Havel,

One of these days, and we all hope it will be soon, you will be back amongst us again, and I can imagine with what emotion you will read the list of those who signed their names to appeals for your release. Every one of those who overcame their indifference to public matters or their fear of the regime and its hysterical reactions, and bravely took part in this act of solidarity linked their destinies with your own. By openly expressing their rejection of the status quo, hundreds of cultural workers became artists and moral authorities in the eyes of their nation. For a cultural worker is not necessarily synonymous with being an artist. The first describes a way of making a living, the second implies an intrinsic involvement in the fate of humanity.

All the same, when the moment comes for you to read the names of those well-known and lesser known artists I would sooner not be present. The fact is that I could not fail to notice something that will probably escape your attention, namely, the lack of support you received from my Slovakia. I would be ashamed. And it is out of shame that I am writing to you.

To say that people in Slovakia are more frightened than people in Bohemia or Moravia would probably be an over-simplification. After decades, here, as elsewhere in Czechoslovakia, fear is deliberately incorporated into the lives of citizens, who are constantly aware of their dependence on the state bureaucracy and the regime. In such an atmosphere one cannot condemn fear. It is something normal. It is my belief, however, that there is another, more serious, reason for the unwillingness of the majority of Slovak cultural workers to join with their Czech col-

leagues. I refer to the state of Slovak culture. It gives me no pleasure to say it, but it must be said.

In Bohemia and Moravia, there has always been tension between genuine culture – authentic even at the price of persecution or internal emigration – and state-run cultural activity, with its dearth of real personalities and truth. No such tension exists in Slovakia. Maybe at difficult moments of Czechoslovak history Slovak state-run cultural activity has looked a bit less contemptible than elsewhere in the Republic; but the price is enormous: the absence of any free parallel cultural activity. (I can apologise personally to those Slovak artists who depart from that rule, as they can be counted on the fingers of one hand.) And therefore, whereas in Bohemia and Moravia, it can happen that officially-recognised artists feel the need to associate with those deprived of official recognition who represent what is best in Czech and Moravian culture, in Slovakia, those working in culture have no one to relate to or emulate. Riddled with compromises, abjectly vacillating between the permitted and the tolerated – when not actually serving the dominant ideology – Slovak culture therefore does not have the same capacity to perceive its goal, transcend itself and speak out in support of the persecuted.

As I write to you I have in mind an idea to which you frequently return: the notion that freedom is indivisible, that one cannot be free in a society in which others suffer. Creative freedom is similarly indivisible. One cannot create freely while that right is denied to others. It is my belief that the tragedy of Slovak culture lies precisely in its inability to realise this basic truth. There are reasons for this inability, of course. The goal of Slovak culture is not self-emancipation in the truth, but at best creative self-fulfilment, trade in artefacts. Art here rejects the idea of a programme, it wants no truck with ethics or morality. It only wants to be itself, both in subject-matter and content. Slovak cultural workers view people's relationship with reality (and their own work) only horizontally, without

any thought for its transcendental implications. That is why they are incapable of doing anything that might jeopardise their incomes, status, or monopoly. I am always hearing the view expressed that only the output counts: only those pictures and sculptures that go on exhibition, only those books published by the state. They alone assure their creators' survival. It pains me to reflect on the worth of creations which owe their existence to their authors' silence about the fate of others: works which do not reflect their creators' conscience but instead a cold-blooded compromise with political realities. In Bohemia and Moravia, culture is capable of being the voice of the nation, its backbone, its poverty. It can reflect its poverty or its glory. That is not the case in Slovakia. I always find it embarrassing to hear people seriously assert that the way in which Czech and Moravian artists protest against repression and bureaucratic tyranny cannot be transferred to Slovakia. I am afraid that it is the bitter truth, however. There are just no Slovak artists (again apart from the honourable exceptions) capable of responding to the notion of solidarity and shared responsibility for the fate of freedom in Czechoslovakia. There is no one to heed the idea of freedom's indivisibility. Quite simply, Slovak culture is not the conscience, backbone or glory of its nation.

Dear Mr Havel, it would be a serious omission if I failed to tell you that the missing signatures of Slovak cultural workers are compensated for elsewhere. Your fate and the fate of other political prisoners in this country, as well as respect for human rights is a matter of grave concern to Slovak Christians. They hold you in deep spiritual esteem and their prayers go with you. This is fundamental in my view, because it is only they, who, through their daily concern for their suffering neighbours, will sanctify this undistinguished country. They alone will continue to make the necessary sacrifice in order that this country should not disgrace Europe indefinitely. And although, for want of an alternative, I signed the Czech artists' petition for your release, I am pleased to say that in my prayers I

can be part of the powerful spiritual current focused on you from Slovakia.

One part of that current, motivated not by professional camaraderie but love, is the message from Dominik Tatarka, a Slovak writer close to you in spirit, who, for the past twenty years has not enjoyed professional solidarity here in Slovakia. A few days ago we were sitting at the side of the bed to which he is now permanently confined, his disease-ridden body totally enfeebled. He breathed with difficulty: "I fancy sitting down at my typewriter and typing a couple of letters." "Who would you write to, Dominik?" Martin Šimečka asked him. "To Václav Havel and the Voice of America."

Yours sincerely,
Ivan Hoffmann

D 65

21st February 1989

Ivan Havel on Václav Havel's trial

It has been a very hectic day here in Prague, with two closely-observed trials taking place, as well as several others in different magistrates' courts. All of them were related to the events of Wenceslas Square. Václav's trial was open to the public but there were only twenty or so places in the courtroom. In addition, there was an extremely complicated system for issuing passes, so none of us could be sure of getting in. In the end we were admitted, namely, Václav's wife Olga, myself as his brother, and my wife. Apart from us there were a few foreign reporters, e.g. Associated Press.

I am able to report, that by and large, the proceedings – except for the verdict – were, generally speaking, conducted properly. Testimony was heard both from prosecution and defence witnesses, and their statements were recorded accurately. It should be pointed out, however,

that about an hour into the trial, the judge banned the taking of notes, and later issued a further warning to that effect.

The trial commenced with the indictment, which Václav was allowed to comment on. Basically he declared that he did not feel guilty of anything with which he was charged, and on some points told the court precisely why. He was charged on two counts: firstly, that he allegedly incited people to take part in the ceremony of remembrance for Jan Palach on 15th January and since 9th January had used foreign radio stations for the purpose. In this connection, they called one interesting witness who had apparently declared during the preliminary investigation that he was at Wenceslas Square on 15th January. At the trial however, he stated that he had not been there at all, and when he was asked if he knew something was to take place, he said, yes, but he had known about it since December, and not from my brother via Radio Free Europe.

Most of the witnesses were called in connection with the second charge, i.e. that on 16th January, Václav took part in laying flowers at Wenceslas Square. Those giving evidence also included a plainclothes police official who had been tailing him the whole time. But Václav was only a spectator and stayed on the pavement before walking down Wenceslas Square on his way home. His entire route was scrutinised in detail at the trial and his testimony essentially tallied with those of the witnesses, except on one important point: whether or not he heard the order to disperse, and whether or not he obeyed it.

Various records of his previous trials and convictions were also brought in evidence, i.e. the trial with Ornest et al. in 1977, and the VONS trial of 1979. This was later used as an aggravating circumstance when determining the sentence. The Prosecutor was the next to speak. Basically, he just restated the indictment and tried to substantiate each of its points. The Prosecutor was followed to the stand by Václav's advocate, who analysed the indictment point by point and demonstrated that no proof had been

given that anybody had heard Václav's statement on the radio and on that basis decided to take part in the ceremony of remembrance at Wenceslas Square. The defence counsel concluded that Václav's intention with his radio broadcast had not been to get people to take part in the ceremony but to dissuade the supposedly anonymous person from his desperate act. The defence also drew the court's attention to the fact that the Czechoslovak daily press had been telling listeners – albeit in a very negative way – that something was due to take place that Sunday, so it is by no means clear what it was that led people to take part. And as for the second charge, it was not clear from the witnesses whether my brother heard the order to disperse, and even if he had, all the evidence pointed to the fact that he was indeed leaving the area and was not arrested until an hour later at a place that was entirely calm, and where he was doing none of the things of which he stood accused.

My brother then made his concluding statement.

(Abridged version of a telephone message broadcast by Radio Free Europe. Ed.)

D 66

21st February 1989

Václav Havel's concluding statement at the Prague 1 District Court

Your honour,

Since I have already commented sufficiently on the individual arguments of the indictment, both during the pre-trial proceedings and in this court, I do not intend to repeat myself but will merely sum up my position. I believe that no evidence has been produced to prove either incitement or obstruction of a public servant in the performance of his duties. I therefore consider myself innocent and demand my release.

Nonetheless, I would like, in conclusion, to say something about one aspect of the whole case which has not been touched on so far. The indictment states that I "attempted to disguise the anti-state and anti-socialist character of the planned gathering". That statement, of which, incidentally, no concrete proof is given – nor can it be – imputes political motives to my actions. I am therefore within my rights to dwell for a while on the political aspects of the entire case.

First of all, I must point out that the words "anti-state" and "anti-socialist" have long since lost all semantic meaning, having become, in the course of their many years' entirely arbitrary use, no more than a derogatory label for all citizens who inconvenience the regime for whatever reason, and it has absolutely nothing to do with their actual political opinions. At various periods of their lives, three General Secretaries of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – Slánský, Husák and Dubček – were described in these words. Now the same label is applied to Charter 77 and other independent citizens' initiatives, simply because the government dislikes their activity and feels the need to discredit them in some way. As can be seen, the indictment in my case also indulged in the same kind of political abuse.

What is the real political purpose of our activity? Charter 77 was created and continues to function as an informal community endeavouring to monitor respect for human rights in our country, including compliance with the relevant international covenants or with the Czechoslovak constitution, as the case may be. For twelve years now, Charter 77 has been drawing the attention of the authorities to serious discrepancies between their legal commitments and what is the actual practice in our society. For twelve years it has warned about various disturbing phenomena and signs of crisis, and exposed violations of constitutional rights, as well as arbitrary behaviour, bungling and incompetence on the part of the authorities. In pursuing these activities, Charter 77 is expressing the

views of a broad section of our society, as I am able to gauge for myself every day. For twelve years we have been inviting the authorities to take part in a dialogue about these matters. For twelve years, the authorities have ignored our campaign and merely imprisoned or prosecuted us for our part in it. Notwithstanding, the regime now acknowledges many of the problems that the Charter exposed years ago and which could have long been solved, had the authorities heeded its voice. Charter 77 has always stressed the non-violent and legal character of its activities. It has never been its objective to organise street disturbances.

I myself have stressed publicly on repeated occasions that the degree of respect accorded to dissenting and critically-minded citizens is a measure of respect for public opinion in general. On repeated occasions I have stressed that continued disdain for peaceful expressions of public opinion can lead only to increasingly open and forcible social protest. I have repeatedly stated that it will be to no one's advantage if the government waits until people start demonstrating and taking strike action, and that it could all be easily avoided if the authorities were to start engaging in dialogue and displaying a readiness to listen to critical voices.

No heed has ever been paid to such warnings and the present regime is now reaping the fruits of its own disdainful attitudes.

I must confess to one thing: on 16th January it was my intention to leave Wenceslas Square as soon as the flowers had been laid by the statue. In the event, I stayed there for over an hour, chiefly because I was unable to believe my eyes. Something had happened that I would have never dreamed possible. The police's entirely futile interference with those who wished, quietly and without publicity, to lay flowers near the statue, succeeded instantly in transforming a random group of passers-by into a crowd of protesters. I realised just how profound civic discontent must be if something like that could happen.

The indictment quotes me as telling our country's leaders that the situation was serious. In point of fact I told them that the situation was more serious than they thought. Then on 16th January, I suddenly realised that the situation was more serious than even I had previously thought.

As a citizen who wants to see things take a calm and peaceful course in our country, I sincerely trust that the authorities will at last heed the lesson and initiate an earnest dialogue with all sections of society, and that no one will be excluded from that dialogue for being labelled "anti-socialist". I sincerely trust that the authorities will at last stop playing the ugly damsel who breaks the mirror in the belief that her reflection is to blame. That is also why I trust I shall not be convicted groundlessly yet again.

(Václav Havel's statement after the verdict)

Since I do not feel guilty, I have nothing to feel remorse for, and if I am to be punished, I shall regard my punishment as a sacrifice in a good cause, a sacrifice which is negligible compared to Jan Palach's absolute sacrifice, the anniversary of which we were intending to commemorate.

D 67

21st February 1989
(Brno)

Letter from Dr Radomír Malý to the Czechoslovak
Prosecutor General

Dear Sir,

I was extremely sorry to hear on the radio and television the verdict of the Prague 3 District Court sentencing the playwright, Václav Havel, to nine months' imprisonment in the second corrective category. I am a Moravian catholic activist who, together with Tomáš Kopřiva, organised in Olomouc, on 11th December last year, a public prayer rally for the release of from psychiatric treatment of Au-

gustin Navrátil, the author of last year's 31-point catholic petition. Although we went about it in exactly the same way as Václav Havel in organising the ceremony of remembrance at Wenceslas Square, I was not charged with incitement. I took part in the public prayers in Peace Square in Olomouc even though the security police had banned me from entering that city. No one charged me with obstructing a public official in the performance of his duty; I merely received a disciplinary fine of five hundred crowns. If the law in Czechoslovakia applies to everyone equally, then I believe, Mr General Prosecutor, that in organising the prayer rally in Olomouc on 11th December, I should be charged with the two offences that Václav Havel is alleged to have committed in arranging the ceremony of remembrance in Prague on 16th January. I therefore ask you why it is that Václav Havel was brought to court and I was not, even though I committed the same actions, qualitatively speaking? From this discrepancy it is clear that one of two different actions was at fault. If the relevant authorities did not regard my actions in respect of the Olomouc rally to be indictable, how is it that they did so in the case of Václav Havel?

I therefore request you, Mr General Prosecutor, in pursuance of the duty invested in your office, to see that the law is applied and annul the shameful verdict in the case of Václav Havel. If not, I am afraid I must, in the interest of justice and in solidarity with Mr Havel, approach you with a different request – that the same charges be preferred against my own person. I am extremely loath to do so, but my conscience does not permit me to remain silent when someone else is convicted for the same activity I also pursue and I escape prosecution.

I am confident, Mr Prosecutor General, that in the end you will opt for first alternative. As a believing Christian, I trust in the final victory of justice and right. The sooner it occurs in our country the better for us all.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Radomír Malý, Sušilova 9, Brno

D 68

21st February 1989

Announcement by the Committee to nominate Václav Havel for the Nobel Peace Prize

The first major reaction from the rural areas has been a letter from a group of working people – mostly manual workers from the Klatovy region. The letter states inter alia: "It is more than imperative that Václav Havel, a man of such outstanding qualities and creative powers should receive this high accolade. It would be an encouragement not only to him, but also to a considerable section of the public, for whom Václav Havel represents hope for a freer and more meaningful existence in this country. But whether the prize goes to Václav Havel or some other personality, Václav Havel remains the protagonist and disseminator of those values by which we shall stand now and in the future." Signed by 25 working people, namely:

Jiří Marek, manual worker, Ivana Marková, manual worker, Václav Prexl, shop assistant, Milan Novák, manual worker, Zdeněk Vachtl, manual worker, Marie Marková, retired, Marie Nováková, nurse, Jiří Bořánek, manual worker, Jana Bořánková, shop assistant, František Suchý, manual worker, Václav Žufan, manual worker, Petra Hájková, manual worker, Václav Holý, manual worker, Antonín Doležal, manual worker, Alena Hanáková, shop assistant, Jiří Trefanec, manual worker, Josef Janda, manual worker, Jaroslav Majer, forestry worker, Vladimír Komár, manual worker, Lubomír Böhm, manual worker, Erich Sedláček, manual worker, Miroslav Hurast, manual worker, Míla Peroutka, driver, Josef Královský, manual worker.

D 69

22nd February 1989

Jana Sternová's account of her treatment by the police and judiciary

Immediately after I had laid my flowers at Wenceslas Square (on 16th January) in memory of Palach's self-im-

molation, I was subjected to an identity check. The flowers were removed and I was led away in the direction of the police cars. Wenceslas Square looked like it does every day: in other words, a promenade, with nothing out of the ordinary happening. They gradually took all of us away, the young people being dragged to the cars by force. We were driven to Školská Street where we were left standing in the yard while interrogations took place inside. By the time they brought me – I was the last one – the rest were already standing up against the wall. I refused to stand by the wall, saying I had had enough standing at Gestapo headquarters during the war. And I didn't stand there. Interrogations went on until the following morning when I was driven off to Ruzyně in handcuffs, along with a group of youngsters who had been charged with me.

I spent the next ten days in Ruzyně. The first three days were awful. No chance to wash, no toilet things, no comb, no stockings – they had taken them off me, in spite of the cold – a Turkish lavatory instead of a toilet basin, filth, cockroaches. It was dreadful, not to mention the food. At the end of three days I was taken to another cell where my fellow-inmates were changed every other day. I was taken alone to the exercise-yard by warders with the vilest manners – swearing in the obscenest fashion, kicking doors, etc. I was allowed to wash myself once a week – under a cold shower. In short, it was a prison unworthy of human beings in the twentieth century.

It was only after I returned home ten days later that I learnt what had happened at Wenceslas Square. Demonstrations continued the whole week and the behaviour of the security forces was so brutal, I can't get over it. So we were all interrogated and summonsed. The court hearing seemed to me like a put-up job – like an absurd play; to be convicted for laying flowers in memory of Palach's death is something I just can't come to terms with. If only you'd seen those police witnesses. Naturally they spoke the lines that had been scripted for them. Two witnesses in civilian clothes rambled on incoherently – and so it went

on for two whole days from morning to evening. You've already heard the verdict. We were convicted of riotous behaviour, but the word for me means something quite different.

In my closing statement, I couldn't help comparing the way I was arrested during the war and driven from Pankrác (prison) to the Petschek Palace (Gestapo headquarters) without handcuffs. Nor could I help comparing the prison of those days with the cell I had in Ruzyně. My cell in Pankrác was clean. There was a flush lavatory. We could wash ourselves twice a week in hot water, as well as the floor and anything else we wanted to. That was out of the question in Ruzyně.

I think the whole thing was scripted in advance. When I think of Václav Havel who got nine months for nothing; of Jana Petrová who also got nine months hard; of Veverka who got twelve months; and of ourselves standing there, I think to myself, this regime really is anti-democratic and unworthy of twentieth century people, if such a thing can happen just for laying flowers.

(Jana Sternová was born in 1921.- Abridged from a telephone message to Radio Free Europe. Ed.)

D 70

23rd February 1989
(Munich)

Declaration by the Association of Slovak Writers and Artists Abroad on the conviction of Václav Havel

Having been extremely moved by the magnificent show of international solidarity with Václav Havel by writers, artists, academics and people of other walks of life both in many countries of the Soviet bloc and in the democratic Western world, we are shocked by the nine-month prison sentence which has just been handed down. The Husák-Jakeš regime thereby cynically scorns the human rights and civil liberties which it pledged to respect when it signed the various international accords.

There is absolutely no doubt in our minds that Václav Havel will survive his nine-months of strict penal servitude. The question is whether Husák, Jakeš, Adamec and their political and judicial servants will weather those nine months.

On behalf of the Association of Slovak Writers and Artists Abroad we protest most forcefully against this judgment, as well as against all the convictions of freedom-loving citizens in connection with the demonstration of Bratislava catholics on 25th March 1988. What started then in Bratislava continued in Prague in January 1989 when police units also committed brutal assaults on innocent citizens, merely because they sought to pay dignified tribute to the memory of Jan Palach. Freedom-loving people everywhere must protest with consternation against that system and its methods, since it denies the fundamental principles of liberty and even violates existing legislation in socialist Czechoslovakia.

We remind the present rulers in Prague that they are continuing to use methods from the Stalinist era, when Gottwald sent thousands of innocent citizens to the galleys or prison. President Husák ought to recall those times, since he spent them in prison, and even published a terrifying testimony to them. We remind him and everybody else who bears responsibility for the latest persecutions of freedom-loving citizens that the words of the great Slovak poet Ján Kollár are as true now as they ever were:

Those who are worthy of freedom

Know the value of everyone else's freedom

Those who enslave others, are themselves slaves.

At a time when freedom's dawn is lighting up prison cells from the Baltic to the Adriatic, and in some socialist countries the first steps are being taken towards the restoration of democratic political parties, socialist Czechoslovakia is filling its gaols with new prisoners.

On behalf of the Association of Slovak Writers and Artists Abroad we condemn these violent political methods which are an affront to all friends of freedom and

human dignity wherever they may be. We also call on the regime to put an end to these harsh measures. We demand the release of Václav Havel and citizens imprisoned on political grounds, so that they may pursue their work once more.

At this historical moment, when the era of primitive Stalinist dogmatism and brutality is being shaken to its foundations and when, under Mikhail Gorbachev's leadership, the land of Lenin and Stalin is stimulating moves towards greater freedom and human dignity, from Czechoslovakia, which was once regarded as a model of democracy, we once more hear the truncheon blows of the state police and the clang of prison doors. This is the symbol of communist socialism in present-day Czechoslovakia. And this is how it will go down in history, under the names of Husák and Jakeš.

Now that the regime is using violence to provoke its own citizens this is no time to be silent. It is necessary to defend human dignity and the nation's honour, people's rights and their good name from these assaults. The slaves have nothing else left to lose but their chains.

This is a moment to show our support to all those in prison, all those suffering persecution, all those in bonds of slavery. They are the 15 million Slovaks and Czechs who yearn for freedom, a life of human dignity, and a new government that will respect citizens' freedom and human rights, in accordance with our country's tradition, so that we may return to the family of free and equal nations in Europe.

Honour to tomorrow's victors.

On behalf of the Association of Slovak Writers and Artists Abroad: Dr Imrich Kružliak, Chairman, Stano Dusík, Secretary, Prof. Felix Litva, Editor of *Most*

D 71

23rd February 1989

Announcement by the Committee to nominate Václav Havel for the Nobel Peace Prize

The Committee has been receiving letters from further citizens in support of our proposal. A letter from a group of citizens from Benátky nad Jizerou, Kropáčova Vrutice and Prague states inter alia:

"In the eyes of many of our country's citizens, Mr Václav Havel is someone who has always taken a dauntless and honourable stand in the struggle for human rights and liberty. As everyone knows, only a free human being can know and value human fellowship and hence the peace which all of us on this planet need. By taking this stand, Mr Havel has transcended our narrow national interest and become a fighter for world peace. For these reasons we endorse the candidature of Mr Václav Havel for the Nobel Peace Prize."

Marta Pecharová, disability pensioner, Božena Poddaná, pensioner, Vladimír Poddaný, pensioner, Lenka Dolejšová, waitress from Prague 2, Vladimír Urban, manual worker from Kropáčova Vrutice, Vladka Urbanová, agronomist from Kropáčova Vrutice.

D 72

24th February 1989
(Vienna)

Viennese daily *Kurier*: Karl Johannes von Schwarzenberg, *Not just a crime – an act of folly*

When, twenty years ago, it was suggested to French President Charles de Gaulle that he have the philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre arrested because of his proven links with terrorists and his open expressions of sympathy with terrorism, de Gaulle refused, saying "One does not arrest Voltaires".

In doing so, that great statesman, himself a distinguished writer, displayed an instinctive deference to *the spirit*. De Gaulle, who was quite capable of vigorous action (such as during the fight against Hitler or the

Algerian coup d'Etat), behaved as a man of wisdom who realised that to imprison someone like Sartre would be a sign of weakness and a political error – or, as Talleyrand declared when Napoleon sent the Duke of Enghien before a firing-squad: "It's not just a crime – it's an act of folly."

Ah well, Czechoslovakia's present potentates are simply of a different calibre from de Gaulle and believe that they have to display their might by sentencing a writer – a playwright whose works are staged all over the world – to nine months' strict penal servitude. His crime was to have laid flowers near the statue of St Wenceslas in tribute to the memory of Jan Palach, who, on that spot, had borne witness to his love for his country.

I shouldn't think that those potentates have even read Havel, or understood what his plays – and also his prison letters – are trying to tell his nation and the world: that subtle confrontation between society and the power wielders. But at least they ought to recall the words of Bertold Brecht – himself a convinced communist:

The times change
The grandiose plans of the powerful
Eventually come to a halt
Even if they strut
Like bloodied cocks
The times change
And violence will not avail
The pebbles shift in the bed of the Vltava
Three emperors lie buried in Prague
Greatness will not remain great
And the small won't stay small
The night has twelve hours
And then comes the day

The power wielders display their powerlessness every time they believe they must use force to prove their credibility. That is the real problem of the Czechoslovak leadership. Because the Party has failed, because it purged every one of its leaders who still had something to say to the nation, this movement which, in the thirties still had

distinguished supporters and in the forties commanded a third of the vote, now finds itself in a state of total bankruptcy.

Over these past days, Austria has behaved as a good neighbour and friend of Czechoslovakia. Its government has spoken out clearly. Austria has set in motion the mechanism agreed on when negotiating the human rights question at the CSCE follow-up meeting in Vienna, and proved to the world that it values friendship with the nations of Czechoslovakia, not their government.

The young people who have come out on to the streets during the past two months, the artists and intellectuals who have stood up for Václav Havel, the working people who signed that remarkable petition calling for an end to lies on the radio, on television and in the press, have all shown that they have understood Havel's message about returning to the truth. They will not forget who thought of them in their time of need.

D 73

25th February 1989

Letter to *Rudé právo* from National Theatre player Josef Kemr

Dear Editor,

I offer you the following modest and very brief details as a supplement to the study and family tree published in *Rudé právo* under the title "Who is Václav Havel?"

Miloš Havel, the proprietor of *Lucerna-film* and creator of the Barrandov film studios, was the second private firm to offer me a contract in Czech films. At the time I was an unknown budding actor having an engagement with the Anna Budínská-Červíčková touring theatre company and travelling round the villages of Central Bohemia. It is not long since the anniversary of the nationalisation of the Czech film industry was celebrated. I am now one of the

few people still capable of giving a personal account of the period when distinguished players were perfecting their acting talents in Czech film.

Miloš Havel financed Czech and Slovak sound films when they were still in their infancy. It was in projects jointly financed by the two Havels – Miloš and Václav – during the years of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and in the post-Munich republic that directors like Mac Frič, Otakar Vávra, Josef Rovenský, Vladimír Slavínský, Miroslav Cikán, Václav Kubásek, Karel Steklý, K. Špelicha, František Čáp, Václav Krška, J. Slavíček, V. Binovec, E. F. Burian, Karel Salzer, Václav Wassermann, Jindřich Honzl and Gustav Machatý emerged, along with such pillars of stage and screen as the actors Stanislav Neumann, Jindřich Plachta, Vlasta Matulová, Zdeněk Štěpánek, František Smolík, Saša Rašilov, Bedřich Karen, Theodor Pištěk, Antonie Nedošínská, Otto Rubík, Jiřina Šejbalová, Olga Scheinpflugová, Otomar Korbelař, Jiřina Štěpničková, Karel Höger, Josef Pivec, Hugo Haas, Eduard Kohout, Nataša Gollová, Zdeňka Baldová, Růžena Nasková, Ladislav Pešek, Eva Klenová, Jaroslav Marvan, Andrej Bagár and Karol Plicka. They were all subsequently to receive high awards and even the supreme accolades of State and Party.

Miloš Havel offered actors and directors work mostly on films with Czech subject-matter, both contemporary and historical. Off hand I can name: *To byl český muzikant* (That was a Czech musician), *Jan Výrava*, *Mlhy na blatech* (Mist on the fens), *Muzikantská Liduška* (Lída followed the band), *Pancho se Žení* (Pancho's wedding), *Jarní vítr* (Spring wind), *Jan Cimburá*, *Rozina sebranec* (Rozina the love-child) and *Babička* (The grandmother). They were all box-office hits, but Miloš Havel pursued another goal in addition. He undertook the ethical mission of reawakening and strengthening the Czech nation's dejected patriotic spirit, which had been severely wounded and undermined.

The Havel brothers supported Czech authors, playwrights and budding poets. They were visited by such writers as Vítězslav Nezval, Josef Hora, Jaroslav Seifert, Konstantin Biebl, Vladimír Holan, František Hrubín, František Halas and František Götz. Miloš Havel offered them work as screen writers. In co-operation with Eduard Bass he was working on plans for the first Czech large scale feature film *The Circus Humberto*, a very risky project at the time, as the Germans suspected it might boost the patriotic morale of the subjugated Czech and Slovak nations.

The Havel brothers took on many people as actors, artists, technicians and administrative personnel in order to save them from forced labour in the Greater German Reich. The swaggering, loud-mouthed Greater German interlopers in the form of the well-drilled Wehrmacht, at a time when the Republic was desperate and hopeless, were enslaving, imprisoning and murdering the Czech intelligentsia. The Havel brothers did not lose their heads. They remained calm and level-headed and lent their support to the underground anti-fascist movement and the remnants of the officer corps of the Czechoslovak Army, as well as to outlawed political activists of different persuasions, leaders of physical training associations, partisan operations, and to members of different churches and religious associations, secret sects and lodges. When our national issues were being sorted out and consolidated at the beginning of the new republic, Havel hosted part of the Soviet *generalitet* and their aides de camp in his Barrandov villa. Rudi Seibel, a pro-Czech Sudeten German who was a regular visitor at both the Havels, was entrusted with saving Czech hot-heads from interrogation and imprisonment at Gestapo headquarters.

If I searched my memory I would come up with much more. I've discovered a number of things about certain people with "old-fashioned notions": that they managed to save people from unemployment or *Totaleinsatz*; they managed to provide a living for thousands of people; and

they managed to maintain and increase their property – all of which requires a lot of work, effort, thought, unswerving determination, the patience of Job, and fortitude.

I offer you these few crumbs from my memory in order to ease my conscience and help vindicate the good name of the Havel family.

With Christian greetings,
God bless you!

Josef Kemr, National Theatre, Prague

D 74

27th February 1989

Jiří Dienstbier's proposal for the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Václav Havel

To representatives of independent initiatives in Europe and USA Adam Michnik, Andrei Sakharov, Ferenc Köszeg, Tomasz Mastnak, Mary Kaldor, Timothy Garton Ash, Mient Jan Faber, and others, through the intermediary of the Palach Press Agency

Dear Friends,

In connection with latest developments in Czechoslovakia, the proposal has emerged for Václav Havel to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. As many of you are aware from your personal meetings with Václav Havel and from his work, this Czech writer, who is no professional politician, has campaigned resolutely for many years against force and violence in his own country and in international relations. When, in June last year, there was a proposal for the creation of an international body to bring together independent movements and citizens in grassroots support of the Helsinki process, Prague was suggested as the new association's symbolic capital city, not merely because it is situated in the heart of Europe, but also because throughout history, the fate of Prague has mirrored the state of relations in Europe, and European peace. The events of

the past weeks have once again confirmed this in dramatic fashion. By convicting Václav Havel, Jana Petrová, Ota Veverka and the other citizens, the Czechoslovak authorities are once more creating an "image of the enemy" and violating the commitments they made in Helsinki and Vienna. Thereby they harm not only Czechoslovakia, but the entire process of European rapprochement. Representatives of Charter 77, the Independent Peace Association, the John Lennon Peace Club and the Czech Children have been sentenced to imprisonment or other penalties. These are independent initiatives which seek the path of dialogue in their pursuit of a non-violent, peaceful solution to the deepening crisis in Czechoslovakia. In other words they are trying to prevent destabilisation at the very heart of our still divided continent.

To award Václav Havel the Nobel Prize would be to pay just tribute to his personal contribution to this struggle for peace within central European society, which is also so crucial for peace between nations and states. It would also be a tribute to the independent movements which regard Václav Havel as their leading spokesman.

We therefore ask you seriously to consider the possibility of supporting the nomination of Václav Havel for the Nobel Peace Prize, both on your own behalf and on behalf of your organisations and movements.

With best wishes
Jiří Dienstbier

D 75 28th February 1989

Charter 77 Document No. 19/89: *On the Budapest demonstration of solidarity with Václav Havel and other Czechoslovak political prisoners*

Dear Hungarian friends,

We have learnt with great pleasure of the demonstration in solidarity with Václav Havel and the other Czechoslo-

vak political prisoners that you are organising in Budapest on 2nd March 1989. The playwright Václav Havel, who was present at the birth of our Charter 77 movement, has become a symbol not only of our struggle for human rights and a democratic social order, but also of the ever intensifying international efforts to create a peaceful and democratic community not only in our part of Europe, but throughout the European continent and the world. For nearly twenty years now he has been persecuted for his open avowal of the mutual interdependence of human rights, democracy and peace, both in European and global terms, as well as for his analyses of these problems. He has been gaoled four times already, and spent over four years in prison altogether. We would therefore like to ask you to support the proposal to award this year's Nobel Peace Prize to Václav Havel. The proposal is being submitted in Czechoslovakia by persons eligible to do so, and has the open support of many people in other countries. You may make known your views on this proposal by contacting the Nobel Institute, Oslo.

Dozens of other people are unjustly imprisoned in Czechoslovakia. The following are just a few of those currently in prison. Tomáš Dvořák, Hana Marvanová and Jana Petrová of the Independent Peace Association, Ota Veverka of the John Lennon Peace Club, Petr Cibulka, a publisher of recorded music and independent literature, Eva Vidlařová of the Petr Cibulka Defence Committee, and the poet Ivan Jirous, a representative of the cultural underground. On 23rd February, František Stárek, a publisher of the underground journal *Vokno*, was sent to prison for the third time. Dozens of others were convicted in connection with the demonstrations that took place on 28th October 1988 and on the occasion of the anniversary of Jan Palach's self-immolation; most of them received fines. So long as these people remain in prison or are otherwise persecuted, Czechoslovakia will remain an irritation in Europe, a symbol of anti-perestroika and a bastion for those seeking to reverse the Helsinki process. It is

not only the citizens of our country who want democracy for Czechoslovakia, it is an aspiration shared by all the nations of Europe and the world, and first and foremost by our immediate neighbours.

Solidarity with the unjustly imprisoned is not important in moral terms. We are convinced that the mighty wave of protest which has arisen in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere will oblige the Prague leadership to back down. We are particularly happy that independent initiatives and organisations in Hungary are demonstrating their solidarity with Václav Havel and the other Czechoslovak political prisoners, thereby showing themselves to be true friends of Czechoslovakia.

Tomáš Hradílek – Charter 77 spokesperson

Dana Němcová – Charter 77 spokesperson

Saša Vondra – Charter 77 spokesperson

D 76

28th February 1989

Statement by Slovak writer Lubomír Feldek about Václav Havel's conviction

On 20th January 1989 I sent a telegram to the Czechoslovak Writers' Union in Prague, protesting against the arrest of Václav Havel. On 29th January, I reiterated my protest in a letter to the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

According to the reply I received, my request for intervention in favour of Václav Havel ran counter to the sovereignty of the court which has sole jurisdiction in such cases.

On 21st February, the Prague 3 district court sentenced Václav Havel to an unconditional prison term of 9 months.

The fact that we do not have the right to influence the court's decision does not mean that we have no right to comment on it.

From press reports, it is apparent that Václav Havel was convicted for trying to honour the memory of Jan Palach. It is absurd in my view to convict people on such grounds – particularly in a country which has started to take the path of democratisation. If my memory serves me right, official sanction was given to the possibility of honouring Jan Palach's memory twenty years ago, when President Ludvík Svoboda expressed his condolences – and those condolences were never annulled.

Apart from misgivings about the conduct of Václav Havel's trial, I have grave doubts about whether the Prague 3 District Court had the right to reach a decision affecting all of us – which is what it did de facto.

For its decision did not affect just one writer, but our literature as a whole, and all its best representatives.

For twenty years now, our literature has been separated into impenetrable ghettos. Here at home samizdat authors and those writing abroad have not been accepted. And by the same token accepted writers have found themselves deprived of world attention, even though many of them justly merited it. That too was punishment for something they did not do.

In recent days, the impression has been growing on us that it is a punishment which has now expired.

Taking the example of the Soviet Union, which has fixed as one of its priorities in the cultural sphere the unification of Soviet culture, in whatever part of the world its representatives live, we also have tried to attain our long-standing goal of again reunifying Czechoslovak culture, particularly literature, as the major victim.

Everything that has been achieved in this respect has now been thrown overboard. The conviction of Václav Havel has undone the years of effort on the part of courageous individuals.

Czechoslovak literature is once again thoroughly compartmentalised. Once again we are being punished for something we didn't do. How long is the sentence this time

– and what is it for? Could the Prague 3 District Court tell us?

This unjust punishment has not been inflicted on Václav Havel alone, nor solely on the writers' community, but on our whole country. The decision of the Prague 3 District Court has tarnished the name of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic throughout the world. Who benefited from it?

I request my statement to be attached to the minutes of today's meeting of the Committee session of the Czechoslovak Writers' Union.

Lubomír Feldek

D 77

(End February 1989)

Statement by the Peace Activists Defence Committee

Last year, two initiatives came into existence in our country with the word peace in their names: The Independent Peace Association – the initiative for a demilitarised society, and the John Lennon Peace Club. The two initiatives share the conviction that concern for peace is not something to be delegated entirely to the professional politicians, whose negotiations are always to some degree subordinate to power interests, that peace among people is the responsibility of each of us. This conviction has led those active in the initiatives in question to express in peaceful ways their rejection of all sources of tension within society and all manifestations of tyranny.

Although both initiatives are working for a nation-wide dialogue and have also invited government representatives to take part, the authorities have chosen to treat them in a confrontational manner. Sooner or later, the regime will be obliged to come to terms with the fact that an authentic public opinion is beginning to stir in our society alongside a growing awareness of shared civic responsibility. We are therefore perturbed by the fact that so many

of our fellow-citizens who are involved in the independent peace initiatives continue to suffer persecution, and hence personal suffering, because of their readiness to stand up consistently for what they believe in. These citizens are extending the frontiers of freedom for all of us. We feel duty-bound to express our solidarity with them. We have therefore set up the Peace Activists Defence Committee. Membership is open to anyone wishing to take specific action to assist peace activists persecuted for their independent views. Our primary aim is to inform the public about unjust treatment of peace activists, collect information about all manifestations of solidarity with them, and assist them and their families.

Jiří Dienstbier, Václav Malý, Jiří Pavlíček, Tomáš Tvaroch, Luboš Vydra

Addressed to:

The Prime Minister of the ČSSR, the Federal Assembly, the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the Czechoslovak Peace Committee

Copies to:

VIA, ČTK, *Rudé právo*, *Mladý svět*, AFP, Cardinal Tomášek

D 78

2nd March 1989

Charter 77 Document No. 21/89: *Letter to the President of the Republic*

Mr President,

In accordance with Article 29 of the ČSSR Constitution, we draw your attention to certain matters of grave concern which are impairing relations within our society and harming the interests of the Republic abroad. You are undoubtedly aware of the aggressive and provocative manner in which the authorities dealt with the peaceful ceremony in memory of Jan Palach at Wenceslas Square, with the clear intent of provoking clashes. That brutal assault was aimed

at deterring the reawakening of civic activity and courage. Instead of an objective enquiry into these oppressive operations which Prague has not witnessed for so long, people are being prosecuted on trumped-up charges and a slander campaign is being waged in the media. This policy has aroused protests among a considerable section of the Czechoslovak public and in other countries, particularly in view of the fact that these overt violations of the Vienna Concluding Document occurred at the very moment it was being signed by Czechoslovakia's representatives.

In spite of those protests, a month after the Wenceslas Square events, trials reminiscent of the notorious "Prague Trials" of yesteryear have taken place in the capital, aimed at justifying retrospectively the oppressive and violent treatment of peaceful citizens. On 21st and 22nd February, sentences were passed on Václav Havel and seven other citizens. The trials seriously violated the Penal Code, particularly Article 2, Section 5 which requires that "equal care must be taken to examine evidence both against and in favour of the accused". The placing of flowers was held to be riotous behaviour. For that action, Otakar Veverka was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment, Jana Petrová to nine months' imprisonment and five other defendants received suspended sentences and fines.

Internationally respected jurists from France, West Germany, Holland and Sweden came to Prague for the trials but were not admitted to the courtroom. And although dozens of foreign journalists also came, only four received permits.

Trials from which the public were virtually excluded are now being presented as a judicial justification for the unlawful and frenzied actions of the authorities at Wenceslas Square. You yourself must know better than anyone else, Mr President, how hard it is to credit these attempts by the authorities to legitimise their high-handed, arrogant behaviour. Official talk of restructuring and democratisation will scarcely gain credibility if the authorities return to the practices and methods of the nine-

teen fifties – to which you yourself fell victim. Likewise one can scarcely expect public support for any reforms – however half-hearted – unless the mistakes, deformations and wrongs of the past twenty years are remedied.

The violence of the January days and the attempts to legitimise it through the afore-mentioned trials and legal proceedings still pending also call into question Czechoslovakia's credibility as a signatory to the Vienna Concluding Document and the government's proclaimed support for Gorbachev's "common European home" policy – including the much-trumpeted initiative to create a "zone of trust and co-operation" in Central Europe. The thousands who have signed petitions and letters have rightly called for an end to the government's tyrannical behaviour and the initiation of a dialogue between the government and society. Ever since the creation of Charter 77 twelve years ago, the citizens' initiatives, which have been advocating such a dialogue with the support of specific, documented proposals, have been the voice of the "silent majority". In the Vienna Document (principle No. 26) the Czechoslovak government pledged not only to tolerate the activity of such initiatives, but also to respect and facilitate them.

Mr President, we appeal to you to exercise your rights in the interest of peaceful and necessary change in Czechoslovakia and of our country's dignified standing in the world by ordering a halt to prosecutions, the reversal of verdicts and the quashing of sentences, where applicable, in the cases of Václav Havel, Jana Petrová, Otakar Veverka, Miroslav Šrámek (sentenced by the Prague 8 District Court to one month's imprisonment for taking part in the demonstration at Wenceslas Square on 19th January 1989) and all others prosecuted or convicted in connection with the demonstrations of 15th-21st January.

Prague, 2nd March 1989

Tomáš Hradílek – Charter 77 spokesperson

Saša Vondra – Charter 77 spokesperson

(Charter 77 spokesperson Dana Němcová is in hospital)

D 79

5th March 1989
(Moscow)

Letter from Soviet and German writers and academics in support of Václav Havel

To the press of the ČSSR. Copies to the Soviet journals *Sovetskaya kultura*, *Literaturnaya gazeta* and *Moscow News*, and to the West German press.

Dear comrades,

We cannot conceal our grave concern about the imprisonment of the world-renowned playwright Václav Havel. The repressive treatment of representatives of what was until recently a flourishing culture undoubtedly harms both that culture and the State. We hoped that such reprisals against an outstanding writer were unthinkable, not just here, but in all the socialist countries. This also explains our appeal. It is a matter that concerns not just us but the world as a whole. The fate of every single individual – and all the more so when it is someone as distinguished as Václav Havel – is inseparable from the fate of those major changes which are now under way in Eastern Europe. His imprisonment for expressing an opinion, for a normal symbolic act, has offended all those who favour these propitious developments. And in fact it damages their opponents as well, since actions like these can only compromise them even more.

We attach great importance and significance to the fact that the latest issue of the journal *Tyatr* has just printed "Catastrophe", a play by the celebrated playwright Samuel Beckett, dedicated to Václav Havel.

We are firmly resolved to speak out loudly in defence of Václav Havel – because in doing so we also defend ourselves. We believe that this official error will soon be corrected.

Yuri Lyubimov, Irina Solovyeva, Shmelyanski, Natan Eidelman, historian, Bulat Okudzhava, poet, Yuri Afanasyev, Vinogradov, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, poet,

Boris Iskander, Messerer, Birger, Yuri Karyakin, Roald Sagdyeyev, academician, foreign member of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, Lev Kopelev (now living in W. Germany), Günther Grass, writer, Siegfried Lenz, writer, Raisa Orlova, poetess (now living in W. Germany), Hans Werner Richter, writer, Carola Stern, journalist, Wolf Biermann, poet.

D 80

6th March 1989

Letter from the Chairman of the International Helsinki Federation to Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec

Dear Prime Minister,

I write to you on behalf of a delegation made up of representatives of six countries: Karl Johannes von Schwarzenberg, President of the International Helsinki Federation, Jiří Hájek, former Czechoslovak Foreign Minister and Chairman of the Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee, Bjorn Elmquist, member of the Danish Parliament and the Danish Helsinki Committee, Jeri Laber, Executive Director of the Helsinki Committee USA, and Gerald Nagler, General Secretary of the International Helsinki Federation.

We wish to express our disappointment and grave concern at the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister's refusal to meet with us. This disappointment is quite understandable since some of us have had to come a very long way to be here. Our greatest concern, however, is the fact that the reason for cancelling the meeting is the Czechoslovak authorities' negative attitude to the inclusion of Dr Jiří Hájek in our delegation.

Dr Hájek is chairman of a committee whose task it is to monitor and assist the implementation of the CSCE agreements. Principle 26 of the Concluding Document of the Vienna CSCE meeting, endorsed by the Czechoslovak government on 10th January 1989 – i.e. just recently – not only specifically commits governments to respect the

organisation's right to do this, it actually requires them to "take effective measures to facilitate access to information on the implementation of CSCE provisions". To exclude the representative of our Czechoslovak member committee from a meeting to discuss the implementation of the CSCE agreements is incompatible with the pledges signed.

It is extremely important, in our view, for the Czechoslovak authorities to initiate a dialogue in their country with independent groups such as the Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee. We hoped to assist such a dialogue.

The request from the International Helsinki Federation to meet with leading government representatives of the ČSSR was motivated by deep misgivings over recent events in this country. The International Helsinki Federation monitors the situation in all CSCE countries. Whereas neighbouring countries are liberalising their societies, in Czechoslovakia, citizens are being sent to prison for the non-violent expression of their opinions.

The delegation of the International Helsinki Federation protests against

- the police brutality used in Czechoslovakia against participants in the peaceful demonstrations of August, October and January 1988-89;
- the arrest of human rights activists and other citizens during recent months;
- the trials and convictions of citizens exercising their right to free expression, including the Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee members Václav Havel and Jana Petrová;
- the continuing court proceedings, some of which are taking place this week, against other citizens trying freely to exercise rights guaranteed in the Helsinki Agreements;
- the denial of arrested persons' rights, such as the denial of visits by family members, the refusal to send prisoners' letters, or other restrictions;
- the ratification of Article 156a of the Penal Code and Article 6c of the law on summary offences which are

further restrictions of citizens' rights running counter to the spirit of the Helsinki Final Act, and introduced since the conclusion of the Helsinki talks.

The International Helsinki Federation therefore requests the following:

- the immediate release of all political prisoners and an immediate halt to legal actions against them, including those citizens who protested against the police brutality during the recent events in Prague;
- guarantees of the proper conduct of trials, i.e., in the cases of those prosecuted for political offences, by holding them in public in the presence of foreign observers;
- a halt to the abuse of passport and visa regulations to punish political activists and the removal of the obstacles preventing members of the Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee maintaining contact with Helsinki observers in other countries and taking part in their meetings;
- recognition of the right of the Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee and other independent initiatives in Czechoslovakia to exercise and assist the observance of human rights guaranteed by the Helsinki agreements.

Looking forward to your reply,

Yours faithfully,

Karl Johannes von Schwarzenberg,
Chairman of the International Helsinki Federation

D 81

16th March 1989
(Strasbourg)

Resolution adopted by the European Parliament; jointly tabled by the Socialist, Christian Democrat, Liberal, Democratic Alliance and Communist groups

The European Parliament,

A. recalling that the present government of Czechoslovakia is not only a party to the Helsinki Final Act, but this

year signed the Vienna agreement in the framework of the CSCE which re-affirmed respect for human rights,

B. whereas, contrary to those international agreement and the urgent appeal formulated by the European Parliament, the Czechoslovakian writer Václav Havel was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment with hard labour on 21 January 1989, Ota Veverka and Jana Petrová were given prison sentences of 12 months and nine months respectively, and five other Czechoslovakian citizens were given sentences, simply for having taken part in a peaceful demonstration to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the death of Jan Palach,

C. whereas several European governments, the USA and hundreds of intellectuals, writers and private individuals have petitioned the Czechoslovakian Government to release Havel,

D. recalling its resolution of 19 January 1989 and 16 February 1989 on Czechoslovakia to the effect that the fruitful development of East-West relations depended in part on both sides fulfilling their obligations,

1. Condemns the arrest of Václav Havel and his friends and calls for them and the other political prisoners to be released immediately;

2. Notes that this incident constitutes a serious violation of the final document of the Vienna Conference, which was signed, inter alia, by the Czechoslovakian Government;

3. Calls on the Foreign Ministers of the Twelve, meeting in European Political Co-operation, to make an official protest to the Czechoslovakian Governments and to do everything possible to secure the release of peaceful opponents as soon as possible;

4. Instructs its delegation to the parliament of Czechoslovakia to raise the question of political oppression with the delegation of the Czechoslovakian Parliament;

5. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the Foreign Ministers Meet-

ing in European Political Co-operation, the Heads of State and the Czechoslovakian Government.

D 82

16th March 1989
(Bonn)

Resolution adopted by the German Federal Parliament in Bonn; tabled jointly by representatives of the Christian Democrat, Social Democrat, Free Democrat and Green parliamentary groups.

The German Federal Parliament has noted with astonishment that a number of human rights activists have been convicted in Czechoslovakia in the recent period – the world-renowned writer Václav Havel to nine months' rigorous imprisonment, Ota Veverka and Jana Petrová of the independent peace and human rights movements to twelve and nine months' imprisonment respectively, and David Němec, Stanislav Penc, Petr Placák and Alexandr Vondra to fines and suspended prison sentences of several months each. They were indicted for attempting to commemorate, at Wenceslas Square on 16th January, the 20th anniversary of Jan Palach's self-immolation in protest against the occupation of Czechoslovakia. Under the terms of recently toughened Czechoslovak legislation, this was deemed to be riotous behaviour, even though the defendants did not engage in any violence.

The German Federal Parliament welcomes the Federal Government's swift reaction to the verdicts and its expression of shock and amazement, as well as its appeal to the Czechoslovak government to annul them, and the appropriate initiatives it undertook within the EPC [European Political Co-operation] framework.

The German Federal Parliament notes with grave misgivings that Czechoslovakia has thereby flagrantly violated the Vienna Concluding Document of the CSCE which requires respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms.

In the view of the German Federal Parliament, improved co-operation in Europe can only be ensured if all states work to strengthen peace at home and abroad and if they respect all civil and human rights.

The German Federal Parliament supports the Federal Government's initiatives and calls on it to continue to use every opportunity within the framework of the CSCE process, the EPC and the Council of Europe to induce the Czechoslovak government to respect human rights as it pledged to when it signed the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference, the Vienna Concluding Document of the CSCE and the UN Human Rights Covenants.

D 83

20th March 1989

Letter from eight independent initiatives to members of the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are writing to you at a moment when our Republic finds itself at the crossroads. There are two possible ways forward. One is the way of democratic renewal – not an easy course, admittedly, but the only possible one if we are to heal our society's deep economic, ecological and moral wounds, and for our part, we have always been more than ready, as we are today, to be part of such a process. Alternatively, the government can continue its violent treatment of the independent citizens' initiatives in an attempt to suppress renescent civic courage. There is no future in such a course, however. It is a path leading to economic and social catastrophe.

During your present meeting you are due to ratify the so-called "legal measures" adopted by the Presidium of the Federal Assembly on 14th February this year. Do you think this is what your voters want? Think about it before

you raise your hand in approval. In Vienna, the Czechoslovak government ceremoniously pledged under Principle 13 of the Concluding Document to develop its laws, regulations and policies in the field of human rights in order to guarantee their effective exercise. Further, by endorsing Principle 26, it recognised the legality of the independent citizens' initiatives, and actually pledged to facilitate association, communication and contacts among citizens working to promote the implementation of the Helsinki documents. It also pledged to remove legal and administrative impediments to such efforts. The so-called "legal measures" placed before you are totally inconsistent with this standing international pledge and with our legal culture.

Dear representative, You bear an enormous responsibility. If you ratify these measures which bring us closer to a state of emergency, under which there can be no question of free speech, or freedom of peaceful assembly and association, then you will be ratifying a flagrant violation of a newly-signed international agreement. You will thereby also be giving your unconditional approval to repression and the spiral of political trials and imprisonment of persons enjoying undoubted authority both here and abroad. Thanks to its present foolish policies, Czechoslovakia has already become an object of international denunciation and the risk is that the criticism of the majority of the Helsinki community will also be reflected in relations that are of crucial importance for our economic development.

The people who are urging this course on you will leave the scene. But you will not be able to escape your responsibility. Each of you should about think carefully whether one day you will be able to face your fellow-citizens and your nearest and dearest – your children – with a clear conscience.

We therefore request that you:

Do not vote for a measure that violates our international commitments.

Act in accordance with your responsibility towards citizens and true legality.

Charter 77 – spokespersons Dana Němcová, Saša Vondra, Tomáš Hradílek

The Movement for Civil Liberties – Václav Benda, Jaroslav Šabata, Ján Čarnogurský

The Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee – Jiří Hájek, Ladislav Lis, Václav Malý, Jan Štern

The Independent Peace Association – Tomáš Tvaroch, Jan Svoboda, Jan Chudomel

The Community of Friends of the USA (SPUSA) – Bedřich Koutný, Petr Bartoň, Pavel Jungmann

The Democratic Initiative – Emanuel Mandler

The Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS) – Petr Uhl, Andrej Stankovič

The John Lennon Peace Club – Stanislav Penc, Heřman Chromý

D 84

21st March 1989

Václav Havel's concluding statement at the appeal hearing before the Prague Municipal Court

Members of the court, members of the public,
The events just prior to my arrest, the manner of my interrogation and the conduct of my trial have all given me a fairly reliable notion of the actual reasons why I am in prison. However, since I lack any concrete evidence to prove my assumption, it must remain a hypothesis. Nonetheless, it all hangs together so well that I feel I am entitled to talk about it here.

After 3 p.m. on 16th January, the Security police (StB) received the news that representatives of independent

citizens' initiatives had tried to lay flowers in memory of Jan Palach near the statue of St Wenceslas. StB officers immediately arrived at Wenceslas Square, where, at 3.25 p.m. they also noticed me among the group of people gathered there, and placed me under surveillance.

I did not lay any flowers by the statue. I did not behave at all conspicuously and did not come into any contact with the police. It would therefore seem that somewhere lengthy consultations were taking place about whether I should be arrested or not. Apart from that, they were most likely waiting for the the right group to arrive, i.e. the officers who have me "in their care", in other words, who know something about me and could put pertinent questions to me at an interrogation. That phase lasted about an hour and culminated in my arrest at 4.30 p.m. in front of the Pragoimpo building, just as I was leaving Wenceslas Square. The haste with which the StB officers pushed their way through the crowd towards me is evidence that they feared I would leave Wenceslas Square and deprive them of at least formal grounds for my arrest. I was not arrested as someone obstructing a public official in the performance of his duty, but quite simply because I was who I was.

I then waited some eight hours at the police station in Školská street to learn what they intended to do with me. The interrogation I underwent was a fairly general affair which touched on various different matters and did not point towards any specific suspicions that might be confirmed or disproved. On the contrary, it was clear that they did not yet know whether I was actually to be charged with anything, and if so, with what.

The decision was eventually reached. Accordingly, I was detained and later charged and remanded for an alleged breach of the peace. However, since my mere presence at Wenceslas Square did not provide sufficient concrete grounds for charges to be preferred against me, let alone for me to be held on remand or convicted, the authorities also took certain other actions into account.

namely, statements of mine which had been broadcast by foreign radio stations concerning the events of 15th January, for which I would seemingly not have been prosecuted otherwise. This second count was therefore included in my indictment for purely functional reasons, so the authorities would have at least some sort of grounds for the indictment and verdict.

The fact that my indictment was re-formulated several times, that my case was first discussed at a ministerial council even before Major Žák had written his report on my arrest, not to mention the desperate and largely unsuccessful attempts to obtain witnesses who might say something specific against me, as well as many other factors, all create in me the strongest of impressions that it was first decided that I should go to prison and only afterwards was an effort made to contrive some legal grounds.

The trial was properly and objectively conducted. All the more astonishing therefore was the verdict, which was totally at variance with the evidence produced. It struck me that the decision had been taken before the trial, and somewhere other than in the courtroom. And this only confirmed my impression that I had been arrested because I was who I was, and was convicted only because I had been arrested.

Consequently, the verdict appears to me as no more nor less than an act of vengeance for the fact that I hold the views I hold and do nothing to conceal them. The actual terms of the judgement seem to me to be a substitute for something else, and a very poor one at that. In the circumstances, it strikes me that the verdict would have been far more honest had it merely stated: "Václav Havel, you are getting on our nerves, and so you will go to prison for nine months".

In the recent period, and in fact in connection with my own case, there have been several occasions on which the independence of our judiciary has been asserted. I sincerely trust that this appeal tribunal will demonstrate that independence by ordering my release.

D 85

(21st March 1989)

Account by Ladislav Lis of Václav Havel's appeal hearing at the Municipal Court in Prague

I was one of the 450-500 people who assembled in the courthouse. There was tension and drama in the air, with people in the crowd expressing many differing views about whether the court would overturn the verdict, or whether he'd get an even harsher sentence. Whatever their views, they all expressed warm support for Václav Havel. It was a demonstration of sympathy with him and the other convicted activists, as well as a rally to mark 21st March, which had been declared a day of solidarity with political prisoners. It was particularly interesting in the sense that elsewhere the regime prevents us publicly demonstrating or protesting against such judgments, yet quite a large number of us were able to express our views right in the courthouse. In other words, a rally, that would otherwise have taken place in the street, in a public square or in some hall or other was taking place in the very courthouse. And when we received news of the court's decision it was greeted with great indignation and disgust and shouts of "Disgraceful!", "Shame on you!", "Release Havel!", "Free Havel!", etc. At the same time, the spontaneous proposal emerged that we should organise a 24-hour hunger strike in protest against the verdict. The proposal was signed on the spot by 150 people. I think it was both symbolic and symptomatic. On the one hand you have the regime doing its best to scandalize the citizens' campaigns and their representatives, while on the other, you get people coming from as far afield as Tábor, Soběslav, Plzeň, Jihlava and North Bohemia – all of them fully aware what's at stake – and they're ready to defy official sanctions and proclaim out loud their right to freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of speech.

(Abridged from a telephone message to Radio Free Europe. Ed.)

LIST OF DOCUMENTS AND TESTIMONIES

- D 1** 2nd January 1989 From the representatives of independent citizens' initiatives to the interior affairs department of the District National Committee for Prague 1
- D 2** 9th January 1989 Václav Havel's statement on the anonymous letter about the planned suicide by self-immolation
- D 3** 9th January 1989 Dana Němcová's statement on the anonymous letter about the planned suicide by self-immolation
- D 4** 10th January 1989 Statement by the Movement for Civil Liberties: *Jan Palach's challenge*.
- D 5** 11th January 1989 The independent initiatives' attitudes to the banning of the Jan Palach remembrance ceremony
- D 6** 11th January 1989 Independent initiatives' appeal for a national pilgrimage to Jana Palach's grave at Všetaty
- D 7** 12th January 1989 Rudé Právo: *The events twenty years ago. It was sheer recklessness*
- D 8** 12th January 1989 Václav Havel's second statement on the anonymous letter of 9th January
- D 9** 12th January Statement by the Prague Masaryk Association
- D 10** 12th January 1989 Večerní Praha: *Quo vadis, Charter!*
- D 11** 14th January 1989 Slovak writer Hana Ponická to the author of the anonymous letter received by Václav Havel and Dana Němcová
- D 12** 14th January 1989 Mladá fronta: *TASS comments on rabble-rousing appeals in ČSSR. Their plans are immoral*
- D 13** 15th January 1989 Charter 77 Document No. 4/89: *In memory of Jan Palach*
- D 14** (15th January 1989) Several eyewitness accounts of the 15th January demonstration
- D 15** 16th January 1989 Rudé Právo: *ČTK report*
- D 16** (16th January 1989) Further eyewitness accounts of the 15th January demonstration
- D 17** 16th January 1989 Statement by Vlasta Chramostová and Libuše Šilhánová on the events of 15th January 1989 addressed to the Czechoslovak government and Communist Party
- D 18** 16th January 1989 The Democratic Initiative writes to the Federal Assembly
- D 19** 16th January 1989 Večerní Praha: *Halt the trouble-makers*
- D 20** 17th January 1989 Rudé právo: *The aim is clear: to stir up unrest. Exploitation of Jan Palach's tragic death*
- D 21** 17th January 1989 Charter 77 Document No. 5/89: *To the governments of the countries involved in the process of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe*
- D 22** (17th January 1989) Further eyewitness accounts of the events of 15th and 16th January
- D 23** 17th January 1989 Večerní Praha: *They are taking leave of their senses*
- D 24** 18th January 1989 Rudé právo: *Essential measures to keep the peace*

- D 25** 18th January 1989 Letter to the government from former Communist Party members
- D 26** 18th January 1989 Report by the Independent Peace Association on talks with a cabinet representative
- D 27** (18th January 1989) Eyewitness accounts of the demonstrations of Wednesday 18th January
- D 28** 19th January 1989 Rudé právo: *A determined stand on acts of incitement*
- D 29** (19th January 1989) Eyewitness account of the demonstration of 19th January
- D 30** 20th January 1989 Rudé právo: *We won't let them subvert our Republic*
- D 31** 20th January 1989 Cardinal František Tomášek writes to Czechoslovak Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec
- D 32** 20th January 1989 Eva Kantůrková writes to Václav Havel's wife Olga
- D 33** (20th January 1989, Bratislava) Miroslav Kusý: *The Czechoslovak "enemy image"*
- D 34** 21st January 1989 Rudé právo: *Communiqué from the presidium meeting of the Communist Party's Central Committee and They threaten...*
- D 35** 21st January 1989 Letter from Cardinal František Tomášek to the Czechoslovak Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec
- D 36** (21st January 1989) Eyewitness accounts of the national pilgrimage to Jan Palach's grave in Všetaty
- D 37** 22nd January 1989 Charter 77 Document No. 8/89: *Statement about the January events*
- D 38** 23rd January 1989 Rudé Právo: *They went away disappointed*
- D 39** 23rd January 1989 Charter 77 Document No. 9/89: *List of Czechoslovak political prisoners. Brief excerpt*
- D 40** 24th January 1989 Rudé právo: *Meeting of the Committee for Party Work in the Czech Socialist Republic*
- D 41** 24th January 1989 (Petřvald) Letter from workers in Petřvald (N. Moravia) to the Communist Party's Central Committee
- D 42** 26th January 1989 Report by the independent East European Information Agency (VIA)
- D 43** 26th January 1989 Statement by members of the Movement for Civil Liberties
- D 44** 26th January 1989 The Initiative of Those Who Work in the Arts writes to the Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec
- D 45** 27th January 1989 Letter from sixteen Czechoslovak citizens to Andrei Sakharov
- D 46** 29th January 1989 VONS Statement No. 897: *Suppression of demonstrations - 15th-21st January 1989*
- D 47** 29th January 1989 (Moscow) Message from Yelena Bonner, Andrei Sakharov, Larisa Bogoraz and Lev Timofeyev to the heads of state attending the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
- D 48** 29th January 1989 (Roxbury, Connecticut, USA) Arthur Miller: *Where is the future?* (On the imprisonment of Václav Havel)
- D 49** 30th January 1989 Letter from students at the Academy of Creative Arts (AMU) to then presidium of the Central Committee of the Socialist Youth Union (SSM) concerning the events at Wenceslas Square and the SSM's statement of 20th January 1989

- D 50** 31st January 1989 Open letter from Olga Havlová and Ivan Havel to all those who asked for news of Václav Havel
- D 51** (Early February) Václav Havel writes from prison
- D 52** 1st February 1989 Letter from the Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee to the Polish Helsinki Committee
- D 53** 2nd February 1989 Covering letter to the Petition by Czechoslovak citizens concerning the events of 15th-21st January 1989, addressed to the Czechoslovak authorities
- D 54** 2nd February 1989 (Gottwaldov-Zlín) Letter from the Community of Friends of the USA to the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly
- D 55** 5th February 1989 Ludvík Vaculík: *Communism is best-ial*
- D 56** 6th February 1989 Letter of the Paris-based International Committee for the Support of Charter 77 to the French President François Mitterand
- D 57** 10th February 1989 Joint Charter 77 / Helsinki Committee Document: "Our attitude towards the Vienna document". (Charter 77 Document No. 11/89, The Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee No. 40/89)
- D 58** 11th February 1989 Rudé právo: *We are relying on all honest people*. From the speech given by the General Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Miloš Jakeš, on 9th February at a meeting with top media executives
- D 59** 11th February 1989 Message from the students of the Comenius Evangelical Theological Faculty to the ČSSR Federal Assembly
- D 60** 16th February 1989 Czechoslovak citizens' petition - further signatories
- D 61** 16th February 1989 Statement by the Movement for Civil Liberties: *Paths to democracy in the wake of the January events*
- D 62** 18th February 1989 Letter from the independent initiatives to the governments of the CSCE participating states and to all friends at home and abroad
- D 63** 19th February 1989 Charter 77 Document No. 15/89: *Reflections on Jan Zajíc's sacrifice*
- D 64** 29th February (Bratislava) Letter to Václav Havel from the Slovak writer Ivan Hoffmann, one of the publishers of the Slovak independent magazine *Fragment-K*
- D 65** 21th February 1989 Ivan Havel on Václav Havel's trial
- D 66** 21st February 1989 Václav Havel's concluding statement at the Prague 1 District Court
- D 67** 21st February 1989 (Brno) Letter from Dr Radomír Malý to the Czechoslovak Prosecutor General
- D 68** 21st February 1989 Announcement by the Committee to nominate Václav Havel for the Nobel Peace Prize
- D 69** (22nd February 1989) Jana Sternová' account on her treatment by the police and judiciary
- D 70** 23rd February 1989 (Munich) Declaration by the Association of Slovak Writers and Artists Abroad on the conviction of Václav Havel
- D 71** 23rd February 1989 Announcement by the Committee to nominate Václav Havel for the Nobel Peace Prize
- D 72** 24th February 1989 (Vienna) Viennese daily Kurier: Karl Johannes von Schwarzenberg, *Not just a crime - an act of folly*

- D 73** 25th February 1989 Letter to *Rudé právo* from National Theatre player Josef Kemr
- D 74** 27th February 1989 Jiří Dienstbier's proposal for the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Václav Havel
- D 75** 28th February 1989 Charter 77 Document No. 19/89: *On the Budapest demonstration of solidarity with Václav Havel and other Czechoslovak political prisoners*
- D 76** 28th February 1989 Statement by Slovak writer Lubomír Feldek about Václav Havel's conviction
- D 77** (End February) Statement by the Peace Activists Defence Committee
- D 78** 2nd March 1989 Charter 77 Document No. 21/89: *Letter to the President of the Republic*
- D 79** 5th March 1989 (Moscow) Letter from Soviet and German writers and academics in support of Václav Havel
- D 80** 6th March 1989 Letter from the Chairman of the International Helsinki Federation to Czechoslovak Premier Ladislav Adamec
- D 81** 16th March 1989 (Strasbourg) Resolution adopted by the European Parliament
- D 82** 16th March 1989 (Bonn) Resolution adopted by the German Federal Parliament in Bonn; tabled jointly by representatives of the Christian Democrat, Social Democrat, Free Democrat and Green parliamentary groups
- D 83** 20th March 1989 Letter from eight independent initiatives to members of the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly
- D 84** 21st March 1989 Václav Havel's concluding statement at the appeal hearing before the Prague Municipal Court
- D 85** (21st March 1989) Account by Ladislav Lis of Václav Havel's appeal hearing at the Municipal Court in Prague

LIST OF CZECHOSLOVAK CITIZENS CHARGED AND CONVICTED

during the period 1st January to 30th March 1989

Details of year of birth (in brackets after name), occupation and place of residence, where these were given in VONS Communiqués. VONS Communiqués are also the source of data about the cause of indictment and, where applicable, conviction. Certain cases are not yet closed. The following list does not claim to be exhaustive - for

many reasons that would be clearly impossible to achieve for the time being; above all, it was not possible to ascertain the names of all the hundreds of citizens arrested or briefly detained, not to mention all those harassed, subjected to identity checks, humiliated or even beaten up in the course of numerous police actions. The names of some of them are given in various documents in the present volume. (See in particular D 21, 23, 36, 39, 42 and 46)

Josef Blažek (1958) building labourer; temporarily resident in Prague; charged 19.1.1989 with assaulting a state official and obstructing a public official in the performance of his duty (Article 154/2 and Article 156a of the

Penal Code) for having taken part in that day's demonstration at Wenceslas Square.

John Bok (1945), stage manager, Charter 77 signatory, Prague resident; detained from 21.2.1989 to 24.2.1989; charged with riotous behaviour and obstructing a public official in the performance of his duty (Articles 202/1 and 156a of the Penal Code) for refusing to leave the courthouse during the trial of Václav Havel. (*D 46*)

Jan Brabec (1959), stonecutter, Prague resident, arrested 10.1.1989; charged with riotous behaviour (Article 202/1 of the Penal Code) for allegedly scattering leaflets with a text headed "Release Ivan Jirous" and released.

Petr Cibulka (1953), manual worker, Charter 77 signatory, member VONS etc., Brno resident; several convictions for human rights activities; arrested 14.10.1988; originally charged with conspiracy to commit defamation of nation, race or conviction (Articles 7/1 to 198b of the Penal Code) for preparing to duplicate *Informace o Chartě 77* containing a petition dealing among other things with the responsibility of the authorities for the death of prisoner Pavel Wonka, subsequently charged with attempted incitement (Article 7/1 to Article 100/1a, 3a of the Penal Code) for duplicating *Informace o Chartě 77* as well as storing *Lidové noviny* and similar literature, and most recently charged with speculation and illicit trading (Article 117/1, 2b and Article 118/1 of the Penal Code) for receiving, recording and selling tapes and cassette recordings; still in detention; proceedings against him continue.

Stanislav Devátý (1952), technician; Charter 77 signatory and former spokesman; member VONS; resident of Gottwaldov-Zlín; arrested 16.3.1989, held on remand on a charge of incitement (Article 100/1a) over the 31.12.1988 petition and SPUSA's letter of 2.2.1989 to the Federal Assembly; released 14.4.1989 after hunger strike; arrested 1.5.1989 and remanded in custody on 6.5.1989; released 19.5.1989 after further hunger strike; rearrested

7.8.1989, went again on hunger strike, released from detention on 17.8.1989, but charges brought against him were not dropped, sentenced 29.8.1989 to 20 months' imprisonment. (*C 16th March*)

Pavel Dudr (1949), mechanical engineer; resident of Gottwaldov; charged in November 1985 with incitement (Article 100/1a, 3 of the Penal Code) for storing and distributing literature "hostile to the socialist system"; sentenced 9.3.1989 to 12 months' imprisonment suspended for three years. (*C 9th March*)

Zdeněk Dušek (1959), manual worker; Prague resident; charged with obstructing a public official in the performance of his duty (Article 156a and Article 154/2 of the Penal Code) for taking part in the 15.1.1989 demonstration in Prague; charges dropped 2.2.1989.

Tomáš Dvořák (1965) technical civil servant; activist Independent Peace Association (Independent Peace Association); Prague resident; arrested 22.10.1989 and initially charged with riotous behaviour (Article 202/1 of the Penal Code); charge changed to incitement (Article 100/1a of the Penal Code); convicted 17.3.1989 of conspiracy to commit incitement (Article 7/1 to Article 100/1a of the Penal Code) and sentenced to ten months' imprisonment suspended for two and a half years; verdict confirmed 3.5.1989; released from prison after more than six months in custody. (*C 17th March*)

Jiří Fajmon (1964) from Liberec, railway engineer, Charter 77 signatory, charged with a public order misdemeanour under Article 6a of the law on misdemeanours, for taking part in the catholic demonstration in Bratislava on 25.3.1988; sentenced 27.1.1989 to two months' imprisonment in the second corrective category; verdict confirmed 2.3.1989.

Petr Frřála (1969), manual worker, member of the punk movement, Prague resident; charged 23.1.1989 with riotous behaviour and parasitism (Article 202/1 and Article

203 of the Penal Code) on the grounds that he and a Mrs. J. Karpíšková circulated in the centre of Prague wearing leather jackets with the inscriptions "1968", "Release political prisoners", "In the name of humanity", "The worse the better", "Freedom in the shadow of the truncheon", etc.

Milan Hájek, CSc. (1947), research worker, Prague resident, arrested 19.1.1989 during a demonstration in Prague; sentenced to a fine of 2500 Kčs., after six days in custody.

Václav Havel (1936) writer; Charter 77 signatory and former spokesperson; Prague resident; arrested 16.1.1989 and charged with incitement and obstructing a public official in the performance of his duty (Article 164 and Article 156a of the Penal Code) for statements he made on Radio Free Europe and for taking part in a demonstration at Wenceslas Square; sentenced 21.2.1989 to 9 months' imprisonment in the second corrective category; reduced on appeal to 8 months' imprisonment in the 1st corrective category; released 17.5.1989 after serving half his sentence. (*C 21st March*)

Bořislav Holeček, arrested 16.1.1989 during a demonstration at Wenceslas Square; released from custody on 22.1.1989 when the case was referred to the Prague 1 National Committee for summary proceedings.

František Horký (1955), stoker, Charter 77 signatory, Prague resident; charged with a public order misdemeanour under Article 6a of the law on misdemeanours for taking part in the demonstration at Wenceslas Square on 28.10.1988; case referred to the Prague 1 National Committee for summary proceedings; fined 200 Kčs., the defendant appealed.

Tomáš Hradílek (1945), cattle breeder, currently employed as a labourer; Charter 77 spokesperson; resident of Lipník nad Bečvou; charged 21.2.1989 with incitement and damaging the Republic's interests abroad (Article

100/1a, 3a and Article 112 of the Penal Code) for a statement addressed to the Party and constitutional authorities on 17.1.1989 and an open letter to the Communist Party General Secretary Miloš Jakeš dated 1.2.1989; sentenced 4.4.1989 to 13 months' imprisonment suspended for 2 years; sentence confirmed 19.5.1989. (*C 8th March*)

Petr Chmelář (1968), teacher, Prague resident; charged 31.10.1988 with assaulting a state official (Article 154/2 of the Penal Code) for taking part in the 28.10.1988 demonstration; acquitted 26.1.1989; verdict confirmed 15.2.1989.

Vlasta Chramostová, actress, Charter 77 signatory; Prague resident; charged 21.2.1989 with abetting a felony and (verbally) assaulting a state official (Article 165/1 and Article 154/1 of the Penal Code) for an open letter to government and Party authorities; sentenced 10.4.1989 to three months' imprisonment suspended for one year; sentence confirmed 26.5.1989. (*C 20th March*)

Jan Chudomel (1967), pumper for the Central water authority, Prague; Prague resident; charged with a public order misdemeanour under Article 6a of the law on misdemeanours for taking part in an informal gathering at Wenceslas Square on 26.11.1988; case referred 10.2.1989 to the Prague 1 National Committee for summary proceedings.

Lubomír Jaroš, arrested 16.1.1989 during a demonstration at Wenceslas Square; released from custody on 22.1.1989, when the case was referred to the Prague 1 National Committee for summary proceedings.

Ivan Jirous (1944), art theoretician, journalist and poet; Charter 77 signatory; resident of Stará Říše; remanded in custody since 20.10.1988 on a charge of verbally assaulting a state official (Article 154/2 of the Penal Code) and subsequently for incitement and damaging the republic's interests abroad (Article 100/1a and Article 112 of the Penal Code) for a petition demanding clarification of the

death of political prisoner Pavel Wonka; sentenced 9.3.1989 to 16 months' imprisonment in the second corrective category; sentence confirmed 24.4.1989. (*C 9th March*)

Kamil Kastner (1968), manual worker, resident of Plzeň; ordered on 9.3.1989 to pay a fine of 1000 Kčs for a public order misdemeanour under Article 6a of the law on misdemeanours on the grounds that he was present at Peace Square in Prague on 19.1.1989 at the time of a cancelled demonstration by the Independent Peace Association; he accepted the fine.

Jana Karpíšková (1971), manual worker, resident of Jihlava; charged 21.1.1989 with riotous behaviour (Article 202/1), on the grounds that on that day, she and Petr Frtála (see above), circulated in the centre of Prague wearing leather jackets with various allegedly provocative inscriptions.

Otomar Klodner (1964), manual worker, Prague resident; arrested 19.1.1989 and charged with assaulting a state official and obstructing a public official in the performance of his duty (Article 154/2 and Article 156a of the Penal Code) for taking part in the 19.1.1989 demonstration in Prague; case referred 3.2.1989 to the Prague 1 National Committee for summary proceedings.

Tomáš Komárek (1966), electrical power worker, Prague resident; charged with obstructing a public official in the performance of his duty and assaulting a state official (Article 156a and Article 154/2) for taking part in the 15.1.1989 demonstration in Prague.

Jan Křivan (1961), electrician, Charter 77 signatory, resident of Budyně nad Ohří; charged 10.11.1988 with assaulting a state official and obstructing a public official in the performance of his duty (Article 154/2 and Article 156a of the Penal Code) for taking part in the 28.10.1988 demonstration in Prague; sentenced 9.1.1989 to 4 months'

imprisonment suspended for 1 year; sentence confirmed 16.2.1989.

Miroslav Kvašňák (1961), art centre employee, charged 11.11.1988 with assaulting a state official and obstructing a public official in the performance of his duty (Article 154/2 and Article 156a of the Penal Code) for taking part in the 28.10.1988 demonstration in Prague; sentenced 9.2.1989 to forfeit 5% of his salary for a period of 5 months.

Václav Lebduška (1966), Prague resident; charged with a public order misdemeanour under Article 6a of the law on misdemeanours for his presence at Wenceslas Square on 20.1.1989; acquitted 15.2.1989; acquitted again at retrial on 17.3.1989.

Tomáš Majer from Kamýk nad Vltavou; blind, partially hearing and with limited mobility; convicted 10.2.1989 of obstructing a public official in the performance of his duty (Article 156/2 of the Penal Code) for sitting in the company of others on the steps of the St. Wenceslas statue on the evening of 28.10.1988 in Prague and being unable to find his bearings when the police moved in and started to disperse them, checking identity papers and beating up those present; the court declined to impose any sentence and ordered that the defendant receive out-patient preventive treatment.

Luděk Marks (1963) clerk, Charter 77 signatory, Prague resident; charged 21.1.1989 with attempting to assault a public official (Article 8/1 to Article 155/1a of the Penal Code) in connection with the national pilgrimage to Jan Palach's grave on 21.1.1989. (*D 36*)

Dr Hana Marvanová (1962) from Prague, lawyer, Independent Peace Association activist; remanded in custody on 28.10.1988, initially on a charge of riotous behaviour (Article 202/1 of the Penal Code), and then for incitement (Article 100/1 a,b of the Penal Code), convicted 17.3.1989 of conspiracy to commit incitement (Article 7/1 to Article

100/1a of the Penal Code) and sentenced to 10 months' imprisonment suspended for two and a half years; sentence confirmed 3.5.1989 when the defendant was released after more than six months in custody. (*C 17th March*)

František Melichar (1920) pensioner, 1950's political prisoner, Prague resident; charged 20.2.1989 with obstructing a public official in the performance of his duty (Article 156a of the Penal Code) for taking part in the demonstration at Wenceslas Square 19.1.1989; case referred 21.4.1989 to the Prague 1 National Committee for summary proceedings.

Dana Němcová (1934) Prague resident, psychologist, Charter 77 spokesperson; arrested 16.1.1989 and charged with riotous behaviour (Article 202/1 of the Penal Code) for laying flowers at the statue of St Wenceslas in Prague; released 25.1.1989 pending trial. (*C 22nd February*)

David Němec (1962) artist, Prague resident, Charter 77 signatory; arrested 16.1.1989 and charged with riotous behaviour (Article 202/1 of the Penal Code) for laying flowers at the statue of St Wenceslas in Prague; released from custody 25.1.1989 pending trial; sentenced 22.2.1989 to 6 months' imprisonment suspended for 3 years and a fine of 4000 Kčs; sentence confirmed 4.4.1989. (*C 22nd February*)

Jaromír Němec (1935), technician, resident of Gottwaldov; charged in November 1985 with incitement (Article 100/1a, 3 of the Penal Code) for storing and duplicating literature allegedly hostile to the socialist state system; sentenced 9.3.1989 to 18 months' imprisonment suspended for 3 years. (*C 9th March*)

Martin Palouš, philosopher, Charter 77 signatory, Prague resident; charged 8.2.1989 with riotous behaviour (Article 202/1 of the Penal Code), on the grounds that on 18.1.1989 he read out a "Charter 77 document" at Wenceslas Square in Prague; case referred 20.3.1989 to the Prague 1 Na-

tional Committee for summary proceedings. (*C 8th February*)

Stanislav Penc Jr. (1970), Prague resident; arrested 16.1.1989 and charged with riotous behaviour (Article 202/1 of the Penal Code) for laying flowers at the statue of St Wenceslas in Prague; released 25.1.1989 pending trial; convicted 22.2.1989 of a public order misdemeanour under Article 6a of the law on misdemeanours and sentenced to 2 months' imprisonment suspended for 2 years and a fine of 2500 Kčs; sentence confirmed 4.4.1989. (*C 22nd February*)

Jana Petrová (1966), book-binder, resident of Dobruška; arrested 16.1.1989 and remanded in custody on a charge of riotous behaviour and assaulting a public official (Article 202/1 and Article 156/2 of the Penal Code) for laying flowers at the statue of St Wenceslas in Prague; sentenced 22.2.1989 to 9 months' unconditional imprisonment; sentence confirmed 4.4.1989; released 19.6.1989 after serving half her sentence. (*C 22nd February*)

Stanislav Pitaš (1957), manual worker, resident of Šonov near Broumov; arrested 27.10.1988, and charged with assaulting a public official (Article 155/1a of the Penal Code) for passive resistance to arrest; released from custody 23.11.1988 pending trial; sentenced 18.5.1989 to 10 months' imprisonment in the second penal category.

Petr Placák (1964), writer, Prague resident; arrested 16.1.1989 and charged with riotous behaviour (Article 202/1 of the Penal Code) for laying flowers at the statue of St Wenceslas in Prague; released 25.1.1989 pending trial; convicted 22.2.1989 of a public order misdemeanour under Article 6a of the law on misdemeanours and sentenced to 2 months' imprisonment suspended for two years and a fine of 2500 Kčs.; sentence confirmed 4.4.1989. (*C 22nd February*)

Vít Polák (1972), student, Prague resident, charged with a public order misdemeanour under Article 6a of the law

on misdemeanours for taking part in the 19.1.1989 demonstration at Wenceslas Square; case referred 22.2.1989 to the Prague 1 National Committee for summary proceedings.

Jaroslav Popelka (1956), gymnastics instructor, Brno resident; arrested 29.11.1989 and charged with a public order misdemeanour under Article 6a of the law on misdemeanours for distributing leaflets calling for street demonstrations; sentenced 22.12.1988 to eight weeks' imprisonment; sentence confirmed 17.1.1989; released 24.1.1989. Arrested 24.3.1989 and remanded in custody charged with a public order misdemeanour under Article 6a of the law on misdemeanours for distributing leaflets call for a demonstration and discussion about the political situation; sentenced to 4 months' unconditional imprisonment; sentence confirmed 27.4.1989. (*C 24th March*)

Petr Pospíchal (1960), manual worker, Charter 77 signatory, member of VONS and Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity (PČSS), Brno resident; charged 22.1.87 with conspiracy to incite (Article 7/21 to Article 100/1) for his activity in PČSS and as editor of *Informace o Chartě 77*; released pending trial on 18.5.1987; charge subsequently changed to subversion of the Republic (Article 98/1, 2 a, b of the Penal Code); on 16.3.1989, at an interrogation following a house-search, he was told that charges still stood and he risked being taken into custody once more for continuing to collect independent journals. (*C 16th March*)

Marek Ptáček (1970), Prague resident; arrested 16.1.1989 during a demonstration at Wenceslas Square, released from custody 22.1.1989; case referred to the Prague 1 National Committee for summary proceedings.

Jan Rampich (1966), manual worker, Plzeň resident; sentenced 9.3.1989 to a fine of 1000 Kčs for a public order misdemeanour under Article 6a of the law on misdemeanours, allegedly committed on 19.1.1989 by

being at Peace Square in Prague at the time of a cancelled demonstration of the Independent Peace Association; the defendant appealed.

Stanislav Ritter (1963), member of the Independent Peace Association, resident of Most; arrested 21.1.1989 while parading along Charles Bridge in Prague wearing an bed-sheet with the slogans "Freedom of Assembly", "Prison no solution", "Publish the views and aims of the independent groups and Charter 77", etc.; released after 48 hours charged with a breach of the peace (Article 202/1 of the Penal Code); case referred 22.2.1989 to the Prague 1 National Committee for summary proceedings.

Barbora Rosendorfová, actress, Prague resident; charged with obstructing a public official in the performance of his duty and assaulting a state official (Article 156a and Article 154/2 of the Penal Code) for taking part in the 28.10.1988 demonstration at Wenceslas Square; acquitted 26.1.1989; at a further hearing after the prosecutor appealed against the verdict, she was fined 1500 Kčs.

Luboš Rychvalský (1964), night watchman from Prague; permanent residence in Karlovy Vary; charged with obstructing a public official in the performance of his duty and assaulting a state official (Article 156a and Article 154/2 of the Penal Code) for taking part in the 28.10.1988 demonstration in Prague; convicted of a public order misdemeanour under Article 6a of the law on misdemeanours and fined 2000 Kčs.; sentence confirmed 8.3.1989.

Jiří Sivec (1964), manual worker, Prague resident; charged with a public order misdemeanour under Article 6a of the law on misdemeanours for taking part in the 19.1.1989 demonstration at Wenceslas Square; sentenced 14.2.1989 to a fine of 2500 Kčs with the option of four months' imprisonment; sentence confirmed 7.3.1989.

Dušan Skála (1954), Charter 77 signatory, member SPUSA; publisher of the arts review *Host*; resident of

Čechyně in the Vyškov district of S. Moravia; charged 27.10.1988 with conspiracy to incite (Article 7/1 to Article 100/1a of the Penal Code) for preparing to duplicate *Informace o Chartě 77* and storing *Lidové noviny*; released 22.12.1988 pending trial; sentenced 24.3.1989 to 15 months' imprisonment suspended for four years; at the appeal hearing on 27.4.1989 sentence reduced to one year suspended for two years. (C 24th March)

František Stárek (1952), boilerman, Charter 77 signatory and publisher of the independent magazine *Vokno*; resident of Česká Třebová; arrested 23.2.1989, and initially charged with a public order misdemeanour under Article 6c of the law on misdemeanours; indictment later changed incitement (Article 100/1a of the Penal Code); sentenced 26.6.1989 to two and a half years' imprisonment in the second corrective category; sentence confirmed 28.8.1989. (C 23rd February)

Jana Sternová (1921), Prague resident, dancer; Charter 77 signatory and former spokesperson; arrested 16.1.1989 and charged with incitement (Article 202/1 of the Penal Code) for laying flowers at the statue of St Wenceslas in Prague; released 25.1.1989 pending trial; sentenced 22.2.1989 to four months' imprisonment suspended for 1 year; sentence confirmed 4.4.1989. (C 22nd February and D69)

Richard Stockar (1959) from Prague, charged with obstructing a public official in the performance of his duty and assaulting a state official (Article 156a and Article 154/2 of the Penal Code) for taking part in the 15.1.1989 demonstration in Prague.

Jiří Svoboda, arrested 16.1.1989 during a demonstration at Wenceslas Square, released from custody 22.1.1989, when the case was referred to the Prague 1 National Committee for summary proceedings.

Vladimír Šechovcov (1967) from Prague, Charles University student; charged 23.8.1988 with conspiracy to

incite (Article 7/1 to 100/1a, c of the Penal Code) for making posters with political slogans and bringing them with him to Wenceslas Square on 21.8.1988, although he did not distribute them; acquitted 26.1.1989; verdict overturned on 16.2.1989 and the case referred back to the court of first instance.

Dr Libuše Šilhánová, sociologist, Charter 77 signatory and former spokesperson; Prague resident; charged 21.2.1989 with abetting a felony and assaulting a state official (Article 165/1 and Article 154/1 of the Penal Code) for an open letter to the state and party authorities; sentenced 10.4.1989 to 3 months' imprisonment suspended for 1 year; sentence confirmed 26.5.1989. (C 20th March)

Miroslav Šrámek (1965), bricklayer, Prague resident; charged with a public order misdemeanour under Article 6a of the law on misdemeanours for taking part in the 19.1.1989 demonstration; sentenced 6.2.1989 to one month in prison in the second penal category; sentence confirmed 9.3.1989. (D 78)

Jiří Štencl (1971), manual worker, Charter 77 signatory, member of the Independent Peace Association, resident of Litovel; held on remand 14- 26.10.1988 on a charge of conspiracy to commit defamation of nation, race or conviction (Article 7/1 to Article 198b of the Penal Code), on the grounds that with Petr Cibulka he prepared to duplicate *Informace o Chartě 77* plus a petition about the death of political prisoner Pavel Wonka; case referred 10.1.1989 to the National Committee for summary proceedings.

Richard Štencl (1963), night watchman, resident of Nymburk; charged with a public order misdemeanour under Article 6a of the law on misdemeanours for taking part in the 28.10.1988 demonstration at Wenceslas Square; sentenced 20.12.1988 to a fine of 1500 Kčs with the option of one month's imprisonment; sentence confirmed 2.2.1989.

Jiří Tichý (1946), manual worker, Prague resident, Charter 77 signatory; initially charged with assaulting a state official (Article 154/2 of the Penal Code), subsequently with incitement and harming the Republic's interests abroad (Article 100/1a and Article 112 of the Penal Code) for a petition requesting an explanation of the death of political prisoner Pavel Wonka; sentenced 9.3.1989 to 6 months' unconditional imprisonment; sentence confirmed 24.4.1989. (*C 9th March*)

Jindřich Tomášek, Charter 77 signatory, resident of Chomutov, charged with a public order misdemeanour under Article 6a of the law on misdemeanours for taking part in the 28.10.1988 demonstration in Prague; sentenced 3.1.1989 to a fine of 1500 Kčs.

Tomáš Tvaroch (1963) pianist, Independent Peace Association activist, resident of České Budějovice; held in custody from 26.11.1988 charged with a public order misdemeanour under Article 6a of the law on misdemeanours for taking part in the demonstrations of 28th October and late November 1988; sentenced 8.12.1988 to one month's imprisonment suspended for 1 year; released from custody 3.1.1989; sentence confirmed 11.1.1989.

Lucie Váchová (1967), nurse, Prague resident; charged 24.1.1989 with incitement (Article 100/1 of the Penal Code) for producing and distributing leaflets with the Czech Children's Appeal to Czechoslovak Citizens.

Otakar Veverka (1956), boilerman, Prague resident; arrested 16.1.1989 and remanded on a charge of riotous behaviour (Article 202/1 of the Penal Code) for laying flowers at the statue of St Wenceslas in Prague; convicted 22.2.1989 of riotous behaviour and assaulting a public official (Article 202/1 and Article 156/2 of the Penal Code) and sentenced to 12 months' unconditional imprisonment in the second penal category; sentence confirmed 4.4.1989. (*C 22nd February*)

Eva Vidlařová (1947), stage manager of Brno's Theatre on a String, Brno resident; arrested 19.12.1988 and remanded in custody on a charge of abetting a felony (Article 166/1 of the Penal Code) for intervening in the case of Petr Cibulka by organising protests, hunger strikes and petitions and allegedly influencing witnesses; released from custody 9.3.1989; acquitted 5.4.1989; verdict confirmed 2.5.1989. (*C 9th March*)

David Vitek (1972), student, Prague resident; charged 19.1.1989 with assaulting a state official and obstructing a public official in the performance of his duty (Article 154/2 and Article 156a of the Penal Code); charges suspended 3.2.1989. (*D 46*)

Dr. Saša Vondra (1961), geographer, currently employed as a programmer, Prague resident; Charter 77 spokesperson; arrested 16.1.1989 and charged with riotous behaviour (Article 202/1 of the Penal Code) for laying flowers at the statue of St Wenceslas in Prague; released from custody 26.1.1989; convicted 22.2.1989 of a public order misdemeanour under Article 6a of the law on misdemeanours and sentenced to 2 months' imprisonment suspended for 2 years and a fine of 2500 Kčs; sentence confirmed 4.4.1989. (*C 22nd February*) Later remainder of sentence converted into an unsuspended term: Vondra served it between 18.9.1989 and 9.11.1989.

Josef Žáček (1951) Prague resident; arrested 16.1.1989 during the demonstration at Wenceslas Square; released from custody 22.1.1989, when the case was referred to the Prague 1 National Committee for summary proceedings.

Dr Miroslav Žák (1937), veterinary surgeon, and his wife **Věra Žáková** (1937), housewife; both residents of Zlatníky-Hodkovice, near Prague; arrested 28.10.88 and remanded on a charge of assaulting a public official (Article 156/2) on the grounds that during the 28.10.1988 demonstration at Wenceslas Square they held up a poster with the slogans: "We want justice in the courts" and

"Prevent perjury" protesting against the action of the educational authorities in dismissing Mrs. Žáková for religious reasons; released from custody 8.11.1988; convicted 8.2.1989 of a public order misdemeanour under Article 6a of the law on misdemeanours; Mr Žák fined

2500 Kčs., his wife 1500 Kčs.; at the appeal hearing on 14.3.1989, both were found guilty of obstructing a public official in the performance of his duty (Article 156a of the Penal Code) and sentenced to one month's imprisonment suspended for one year.

THE CZECHOSLOVAK INDEPENDENT INITIATIVES

which were in existence between January and March 1989 and which are mentioned in the text.

Charter 77 - a civic initiative which was founded in January 1977 through the publication of Charter 77's Founding Declaration. Charter 77 strives for the implementation of a codex of civic and human rights in accordance with the pledges which Czechoslovakia has undertaken through having signed and ratified the relevant international covenants and agreements.

The Committee for Defence of Peace Activists continues to work of the Committee for the Defence of Hana Marvanová, Lubomír Vydra, Tomáš Dvořák and Tomáš Tvaroch, who were in prison at the end of 1988. Since February 1989, the Committee has been open to "all those who wish to take concrete steps to help those peace activists who are being persecuted for their independent stance".

The Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS) has since April 1978 worked on behalf of those citizens who have been charged or imprisoned for expressing their views or who became victims of the arbitrary behaviour of the police and the judiciary. VONS provides informations on the cases of these individuals. As a member of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), VONS also helps to organise acts of international solidarity in support of these individuals.

The Committee to support Václav Havel's nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize was founded on 17th February 1989. The Committee gathers together expressions of support voices by individual Czechoslovak citizens as well as independent groups for the proposal that Václav Havel be awarded the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize.

The Community of Friends of the USA (SPUSA) was founded in May 1987. Its aim is to encourage contacts between the Czechoslovak and American publics, particularly in the sphere of arts. "The Community of Friends of the USA is not intended to support any particular doctrine", says the Community's Founding Declaration. "The Community has been set up with the aim to spread trust between American and Czechoslovak citizens."

Czech Children - signatories of the Manifesto of Czech Children, issued in Prague on 28th May 1988. Czech Children see themselves as a "loosely-associated spiritual community".

The Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee (CzHC) was founded on 5th November 1988. Its aim is to support the principles and provisions of the Helsinki Final Act.

The Democratic Initiative - a loose association of Czechoslovak citizens who have been sending proposal to the constitutional authorities regarding the implementation of democratic principles in Czechoslovak society since the autumn of 1987.

The Independent Peace Association - an Initiative for Demilitarisation of Society was founded in the spring of 1988 by predominantly young people for whom "peace means more than removal of the threat of war and who

wish to work towards such peace". At present, the Independent Peace Association is striving for the introduction of an alternative to National Service for conscientious objectors.

The Initiative of Those Who Work in the Arts come into being on 26 January 1989 when a letter was sent to the Prime Minister of the Czechoslovak Federal Government. In the course of time, the letter was signed by several thousand individuals active in the sphere of the arts. The signatories of the letter called for Václav Havel's release from prison, for the initiation of genuine dialogue between the government and its citizens and for public access to unbiased information.

The John Lennon Peace Club has been striving, since December 1988, for the introduction of peaceful relations [in society] by all available peaceable means. The Club works particularly in the sphere of the arts.

The Masaryk Society, Prague (The T. G. Masaryk Association) was founded at the end of 1987 and aims to acquaint the public with the ideas and work of T. G. Masaryk and to foster scholarly study of T. G. Masaryk.

The Movement for Civil Liberties - the signatories of the manifesto entitled *Democracy for All*, dated 15th October 1988, which called on the authorities to respect the principles of pluralism.

CZECHOSLOVAK PERIODICALS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT

Fragment-K - an independent literary and arts magazine. Founded in 1988, Bratislava

Haló noviny [Hello] - the Saturday supplement of *Rudé právo*, Prague

Host [Guest] - an independent literary magazine. Founded in 1986, Brno

Obroda, the Club for Socialist Restructuring, was founded in February 1989. According to its policy document, "Obroda" [Revival] supports the humane, moral and social welfare aspects of the socialist order within Czechoslovak society.

A petition of Czechoslovak citizens reacting to the events of 15th - 21st January 1989 was addressed to the Czechoslovak authorities. More than three thousand citizens signed this petition, condemning the police action and calling for a nation-wide dialogue on the causes and ways of tackling Czechoslovakia's social crisis.

Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity (PČSS) was founded in July 1987. It fosters co-operation between independent Polish and Czechoslovak groups, facilitating the exchange of information between them and helping to co-ordinate the various joint activities of these groups.

All the independent initiatives listed above work without official permission from the Czechoslovak authorities. They derive their legality from international codified civil rights, many of which are also founded in the Czechoslovak constitution. Whenever in the past these groups applied for official registration, their application had always turned down by the Czechoslovak Ministry of the Interior.

Informace o církvi [Information on the Church] - an independent Catholic monthly, founded in 1980, Prague

Informace o Chartě 77 (INFOCH) [Information on Charter 77] - an independent periodical featuring Charter 77 documents, VONS Statements and other information. Founded in 1978, Prague

Lidové noviny [The People's Paper] - an independent monthly. Founded in September 1987, Prague

Mladá fronta [the Young Front] - a daily newspaper published by Socialist Union of Youth, Prague

Pravda [Truth] - a daily newspaper published by the Central Committee of the Slovak Communist Party, Bratislava

Rudé právo [Red Justice] - a daily newspaper published by Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Prague

Tribuna - a weekly on ideology and politics, published by the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party

Tvorba [Creation] - a cultural-political weekly published by the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Prague

Večerní Praha [The Evening Prague] - a daily newspaper published by the Municipal Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Prague

Vokno [Window] - an independent periodical "for second and other culture", founded in 1979, Prague

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

AFP *Agence France Presse* - French news agency

AMU *Akademie múzických umění* - The Academy of Creative Arts. It consists of three faculties: The Theatre Faculty (DAMU), the Film Faculty (FAMU) and the Music Faculty (HAMU)

ANSA *Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata* - Italian news agency

AP *The Associated Press* - American news agency

ARD Channel One of West German television

BBC *The British Broadcasting Corporation*

CPZ preliminary remand cell

CSCE The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, Helsinki

ČSHV The Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee (CZHC)

ČTK *Československá tisková kancelář* - The Czechoslovak News Agency

DPA *Deutsche Presseagentur* - West German news agency

EHS The European Economic Community

EPC European Political Co-operation, i.e. the Meeting of the Foreign Ministres of the twelve countries of the European Community

FIDH *Fédération Internationale des Droits de l'Homme* - the International Federation for Human Rights

MFH International Helsinki Federation

MNV Local (or Municipal) National Council

MTI *Magyar távirati iroda* - The Hungarian news agency

NVP Prague Municipal Council

NVS "corrective-educational group" (i.e. prison category in the Czechoslovak penal system)

ONV District National Council

PČSS Polish-Czechoslovak Solidarity

SNB National Security Corps (a general name used for all sections of the Czechoslovak police)

SPUSA The Community of Friends of the USA

StB the Czechoslovak Security police (part of the "National Security Corps")

TASS *Telegrafnoye Agentstvo Sovetskogo Soyuzu* - The Soviet news agency

UK Charles University, Prague

ÚV KSČ Central Committee of Czechoslovak Communist Party

ÚV SSM Central Committee of the Socialist Union of Youth

VB Public Security (the uniformed section of the "National Security Corps")

VIA *Východoevropská informační agentura* - The [independent] East European news agency



The illustrations for this volume have been selected from a collection of photographs taken in Prague between 15th and 19th January 1989 by members of Czechoslovak independent initiatives. The collection has been deposited in the picture library of the Czechoslovak Documentations Centre, Scheinfeld. The editors of this volume would like to thank the unknown photographers for their presence of mind and the courage with which they took these pictures. Thanks are also due to all those who have helped to make the photographs available to us in Scheinfeld.

ACTA, VOL. 1990 will include

A bibliographical list of Edice Expedice [The *Expedice* Book Series] 1975 - 1989

A bibliographical list of Česká expedice [The *Česká expedice* Book Series]

A bibliographical list of the complete output of the Czech emigré publishers brought out between 1970 - 1989

A corrected and supplemented list of Czech and Slovak samizdat periodicals from 1970 - 1989

A bibliography of the *Kritický sborník* [Critical Review] samizdat quarterly for the years 1981 - 1989

Finally I would like to stress something that I regard as far and away the most important aspect of all. Now that we are starting to enter the arena of real politics in a more visible fashion we ought to keep in mind more than ever before the initial and underlying moral motives of our activity, and we should be more wary than ever lest our responsibility start imperceptibly to split in two: personal responsibility on the one hand and political responsibility on the other. We have only one responsibility; whether as the most degraded of prisoners and social outcasts, or as possible mouthpieces of the national will, we must be bound by the same single conscience. To do otherwise would not only be to dishonour our own past it would also put paid to our prospects. It has always been my conviction, and one I still hold to, that the origin of all the symptoms of crisis surrounding us is society's moral crisis and that none of our crises - from the economic and political to the ecological - can be solved unless we solve that moral crisis. In other words we must defeat the diabolical ideology of "I'm all right Jack" and human and civic apathy that have so long and so thoroughly infected our society.

From the article by Václav Havel *The witching hour: between the outcast and the politician* written on 7th October 1989 for the samizdat monthly *Lidové noviny*

