

CHRONICLE OF EVENTS

JANUARY

Monday 2nd January

In Document No. 1/89, Charter 77 announced that its new trio of spokespersons would be Tomáš Hradílek, 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. Piniór, 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

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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 Haýel. (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)

In a letter to the District Prosecutor for Prague 1, 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 Štencl. 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 Špirk 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.