

**November 23, 1989**  
**Teleprint from Jozef Lenárt, Secretary of CC CPS, to  
Regional Committees and Municipal Committees in  
Prague and Bratislava**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

Lenart presents information on an upcoming strike, planned by a now-unified organization of protesters called the Civic Forum. He reports the demands of the Civic Forum, explicated in their proclamation.

**Credits:**

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**Original Language:**

Czech

**Contents:**

- English Translation

It is evident from the information of the party regional (municipal) committees that in all regions measures were adopted according to the teletype of the General Secretary of the CC CPCz. Working groups of party organs were dispatched to crucial centers and businesses in order to secure uniformity of information and analysis of the political situation. But even when the measures were adopted for the protection of businesses and factories against penetration by the opposition and the spread of negative demonstrations, in a series of instances the posting of appeals, flyers, organization of petitions eliciting pressure tactics against the CPCz and the government took place.

The students are continuing their efforts to establish contacts with workers in establishments and gaining support for the general strike. In factories, no tendencies toward strikes have been exhibited so far. On the contrary, in important political-economic centers, the workers are expressing demands for peace and work.

The opposition forces are trying to unite striking students and the part of the public which is in solidarity with them in the demands of the Proclamation of the Civic Forum, established on 19 November. The Civic Forum consists of: Charter 77, The Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee, The Circle of Independent Intelligence, The Movement for Civic Freedom, Artforum, Renewal, independent students, The Czechoslovak Democratic Initiative, VONS, Independent World Coalition, Open Dialogue, Czechoslovak PEN Club Center, several members of the Czechoslovak Socialist Party, Czechoslovak People's Party, representatives of religious, creative and other groups, several former members of the CPCz. The proclamation was signed by: Eng. Rudolf Battěk, Petr Štěpánek, Václav Havel, Milan Hruška, Prof. Dr. Milan Jelínek, Milan Káňka, Dr. Lubomír Kopecký CSc., J. Kříž, Kříž, Václav Malý, Martin Mejstřík, Petr Oslzlý, Dr. Libor Pátý CSc., Jana Petrová, Jan Ruml, Prof. Dr. Václav Šilhán, Ondřej Trojan, Eng. Josef Vavroušek CSc., [and] Saša Vondra.

The demands of the Civic Forum's proclamation go much further than the original expectations of the students, expressed in the joint statement of the Presidium of the Municipal Council of the SSM 5 in Prague and the MVR SSM, and the statement of the Secretariat of the CC SSM. It is necessary to reveal this fact. We present a shortened version for your information, for it contains a clear confrontational character, demagoguery and tactics of mounting attacks against the party through certain individuals. It can be expected that these demands will increase in intensity. Text of the proclamation:

1. That those members of the Presidium of the CC CPCz who are directly connected with the preparation of the intervention [in Czechoslovakia] by the five members of the Warsaw Pact in the year 1968 and who are responsible for the long years of devastation of all areas of our society, and who for years refused any kind of democratic dialogue with society, will immediately step down.
2. That the First Secretary of the Municipal Committee (MC) CPCz in Prague and the Federal Minister of the Interior, who are responsible for all of the measures which the police have carried out over the last few months against the peaceful demonstrations of citizens, immediately step down.
3. That a committee be set up which will concretely investigate these measures, find the culprits and propose punishments for them. Civic Forum representatives must be included in this committee.
4. That all political criminals, including those who have been detained in connection with the last demonstration, be immediately released.

In its proclamation, the Civic Forum further calls for carrying out a general strike on 27 November 1989, from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

In discussions with students and the public, it is necessary to show that the Civic Forum is misusing the original demands of the students, directed primarily at the investigation into the security force's intervention on 17 November 1989. It broadens them to ever more momentous

political demands, aimed at destroying our social order. Several flyers distributed in Prague signed by Astudents on strike@ endorse these demands.

Strike committees, the composition of which often changes, are negotiating with school administrations. Students are outside of the school buildings and their faculties throughout the day. Students are keeping watch to make sure that only students and school workers enter.

At several universities other demands are being submitted of a general political nature, which the univer-sity administrations are rejecting.

The student strike committees are run from one center which is probably connected to the spokespersons of the independent initiatives. Some artists and representatives of independent initiatives also have made appearances at several universities and led discussions with the students that often have called for a general strike and agitated for an active connection between the student strikes and the worker unions at factories and collectives. The majority of strike committees are in negotiation with the school administrations.

The CPCz Works Organization and CZV CPCz at the universities are planning their political acts in such a way that the employees and teachers in schools would be able to continue fulfilling their work duties, which is not the case in the majority of instances. At several universities, however, differences of opinion exist between the teachers and the staff, especially the younger ones, for whom several—including party members—generally support the political demands of the students which the school administration opposed.

The Ministry of Education adopted measures to bar the students from using duplication technology, and computers, and to try and keep the students in the schools.

The main task is to resume instruction in high schools and universities as soon as possible. In those places where it is impossible to engage in discussion with the students, it is necessary to offer them a specific program to turn their attention to a constructive outlet for their activities.

At the high schools we must take advantage of the PTA meetings [to ensure] that the school administrations are in constant contact with the students' parents. The national committees and school administrations are responsible for the situation in the schools, and must control the situation and direct the activity of the teachers.

The representatives of strike committees from all schools and representatives from the universities in the CSR will meet on 23 November at the agricultural college in Prague Suchdol with the representatives of the Ministry of Education of the CSR for an open dialogue intended to exchange information on the situation and to reach agreement on the next steps, including the resumption of the normal school year and an end to the strike.

The situation among the workers of the cultural front is basically unchanged. Other cultural institutions in the capital and in other regions of the republic are gradually joining in the protests against the intervention of the security forces on 17 November 1989. Prague sculptors and painters have [now] also joined the strike. The attempt to reverse the decision to strike has so far been unsuccess-ful. Some theater directors have said that their influence on the developments could be even further diminished because the strike committees are handling the decisions.

The situation in the clergy and religious groups was basically solid on 21 November, without any tendencies toward activism on the part of spiritual and religious people.

While there is peace within the clergy and religious groups in our republic, the prevailing sentiment [among them] is one of apprehension about possible further developments.

The exception is the Roman Catholic Church. Cardinal Tomáše k=s written statement entitled ATo

all the People of Czechoslovakia, reproduced in *The People's Democracy* 6 on 22 November, is of a confrontational character. The statement, prepared by the former cleric Malý who is the leading proponent of illegal organizations, is the sharpest criticism of the political development of the last forty years to date.

On the other hand Cardinal Tomášek expressed his constructive position in a personal conversation with the Head Secretary of the MC CPCz, comrade Štěpán, on 22 November 1989, in Prague, where he stated the following: "The situation surprised me, I can not yet express myself. I would like to get acquainted with the situation in order to openly express myself. I am convinced that there is good will on both sides." This conversation, broadcast on the television news on 22 November, should be used as an argument against the articles in *The People's Democracy*.

The planned so-called Thanksgiving service, which is supposed to take place on 25 November 1989, in the St. Vitus Cathedral in the Prague castle on the occasion of the elevation to sainthood of Anežka Přemyslovna, is in serious danger of being misused. Although the event was announced as early as two months ago, the current level of preparation, whose purpose is to attract the largest possible number of believers, has intensified. To this end a circular was recently sent to all the dioceses in the CSR. Apart from this, a group of believers, who have prepared pilgrimages to Rome, is planning a significant activity, namely the mass would be preceded by a procession of believers through Prague beginning at the buildings of the former convent on František and ending at the castle.

From the letters and resolutions arriving at the CC CPCz it is clear that the opinion within society and within the ranks of the strikers are differentiating. They mostly express support for the policies of the party and request acceptance of measures to ensure a renewal of peace and to create normal conditions for work.

Václav Havel made an appearance on Wenceslas Square on 22 November, which also was shown on the Czechoslovak television program "Contact." He spoke about the tactical approaches of the opposition forces at the current time. He greeted all the workers who are supporting the demands of the artists, students and intelligentsia, and who are founding civic forums and strike committees. After twenty years, history is returning to our country. For that we have to thank the free-thinking students and young people in general, to whom the future of our country belongs. He thanked theater and other artists, who rebelled after many years of degradation. He said that the Civic Forum is becoming a real representative of critical thinkers, and is beginning to be taken seriously through the power of freedom. Within the next few hours the Forum will try to unify the introduced demands into a single list. He expressed his faith in the support for the demands, in the form of a general strike. He informed [the people] that Civic Forum had written a letter to Bush and Gorbachev, who were supposed to discuss the developments in Eastern Europe, which requested support for democratization efforts in Czechoslovakia. He announced that telegrams were sent to Solidarity [the independent Polish labor union] and to the People's Fronts in the USSR and Hungary.

Analysis of the broadcasts of Western radio stations during the course of the last year has revealed that they are intensifying their attacks against the authorities with the aim:

\$ of gradually creating in the minds of the populace the opinion that, considering the illegality and brutality of [the authorities'] actions against the peace-loving demonstrators and citizens, it is possible and humanly justified to use the same means against them,

\$ of creating pressure to change the laws dealing with the actions of security and the judicial organs, to limit their numbers and completely restructure them, and especially to limit the [powers of] State Security,

\$ of creating a separation between the police units (especially with Public Security 7 on one side and State Security 8 and Emergency Units on the other) and a separation between the

Investigative apparatus of the State Security and judicial organs,

\$ of more deeply discrediting the state and, especially, the party leadership through attacks on the authorities, and introducing the idea that it is possible to resolve the growing problems of ineffective leadership without recourse to the methods seen in the fifties=.

It is possible to conclude that the attacks against the state power apparatus will have a tendency to rise. This was fully proven in the period starting 17 November.

Since the situation is changing very fast it is essential to act constructively and accurately.

Party organs at all levels must stop being on the defensive. The Central Committee of the CPCz will deal with the current political situation at its meeting on 24 November 1989, and discuss the role of the party. Regional and district CPCz organs and basic party organizations must mount pressure against the opposition independently of the preparations of the Plenum. We are fighting for public opinion. The future of the country and its citizens is at stake. Every act, day and hour is decisive.

We must show the harmfulness of pressure tactics, which prevent real dialogue, and from which new political demands are constantly being introduced that go far beyond the boundaries of the previous spontaneous student reaction.

We must demonstrate to the workers and students on the basis of concrete facts what the losses caused by strike actions are, in relation to businesses, districts and individuals. No long words, but concrete numbers.

We must show the moral damage of continuous strikes in high schools upon the psyche and discipline of the students, on their future development and on their education. We have to call on the parents at the same time and show them how children are drawn into confrontational acts by those who present themselves as Afighters for humanity.

Our tactical agenda must rest on plans to divide the until now united front of participants in the protest. It is essential to differentiate between those who participate in strikes and those who go to protest gatherings, and the organizers of these acts and those who go to open confrontation and take advantage of the inexperience of young people.

It is necessary to prevent the entry of emissaries from the opposing forces into factories, their demagogic influence on the workers and their inflammatory speeches against socialism and the Communist Party.

It is necessary to concentrate all of our forces on stopping the general strike. We must talk with young people and other citizens about how the original student demands—investigation of the events of 17 November 1989—together with the call for a general strike is being realized. Added to that we must mobilize the entire apparatus and party caucus, communists in national committees, representatives and activists from national committees. It is necessary to make an impact on the members of strike committees. They are not united in the question of the aim of the general strike. It is necessary to take maximum advantage of each different opinion in the strike committee to ensure the main goal—preventing the general strike.

In connection with the dramatic developments in the internal political situation, the activity of non-communist political parties (in particular the Czechoslovak People=s Party) is intensifying. This is resulting in their orientation in the wrong direction, even though these parties are members of the National Front.

Directly after the CC CPCz meeting it is necessary to acquaint the functionaries and the party caucus with its conclusions, establish a concrete plan, unify the commu-nists behind the fulfillment

of the decisions, explain them and seek a wide public for them.

Jozef Lenárt [in his own hand]

Secretary of the CC CPCz