

Information on the events of January 16, 1989, on Wenceslas Square in Prague

Representatives of the so-called independent initiatives (Charter 77, Children of Bohemia, and the Independent Peace Association) continued on 1.16.1989, that is, the day of the 20th anniversary of the self-immolation of Jan Palach, in their already-begun course of confrontation and intensification of pressure on the organs of the state. They organized the laying of wreaths at the statute of St. Wenceslas on Wenceslas Square. Shortly after 15:00 a group of seven persons appeared by the statue, including Alexander Vondra and Jana Petrová, representatives of Charter 77 and the Independent Peace Association, dressed in black. Petr Placák laid a bouquet at the side of the monument, and immediately afterward Jana Petrová and Jana Sternová attempted to do the same. All three bouquets were confiscated by the officers present. The wreaths were decorated with a ribbon with the national tricolor and the words "To Jan Palach – we remember – Charter 77" and "To Jan Palach from the Children of Bohemia". All of the above-named were detained.

During the course of the intervention by the members of the VB [Public Security], about 300 persons assembled in the space around the statue of St. Wenceslas and the Dům potravin [Food Market]. This crowd gradually grew to about 700 persons. In that area between 15:30 and 15:45 13 main organizers of this anti-social act of provocation were detained, and then taken to the MO VB [Municipal Department of Public Security]. These for example included Alexander Vondra, Jana Petrová, Danuška Němcová, Otakar Veverka, Petr Placák, Jana Sternová, and others. At the same time Václav Havel as well was detained and taken to the Municipal Department of the VB. In view of the fact that Veverka and Petrová physically attacked the officers, more force was used on them. The assembled crowd chanted "freedom", "phooey", "Gestapo". By rapid and decisive measures and with the help of water cannons the security units succeeded in pushing this group of persons into the adjacent streets, and then dispersing them. At 17:00 calm and public order had been restored to Wenceslas Square; at 18:50 individual traffic was resumed.

During the course of security operations on January 16, 1989, 26 persons were brought into the MO VB, of which 4 were released for insufficient evidence without charges ... Václav Havel was detained according to Art. 23 law no. 40/74, further steps will be determined in the course of his detention. Two persons requested medical treatment at the hospitals, stating that their injuries occurred during the intervention of the security organs on Wenceslas Square. [...]

Appendix to the Internal Party Information no. 53 on the events of January 13 – 15, 1989, on the causes and nature of injuries suffered by persons during the intervention by security organs on 15 January 1989.

The anti-social events of 15 January were participated in by approx. 1200 to 1500 citizens and most of them were from 18 to 25 years of age. During the course of the event moderate measures were used by the security units (batons, tear gas, and water cannons). 117 persons were brought to the department of the VB [Public Security]. Identification checks were made on another 403 Czechoslovak citizens. At medical facilities 9 persons requested medical treatment, of which 7 were retirees (6 women and 1 man). In 5 of the cases the injuries occurred by the crowd of people after intervention by the VB, in 2 cases injuries were caused by the use of water cannon. One person had eyes washed after being affected by tear gas, and in another one case it is still not clear whether injury occurred by the intervention of the units or by the crowd.

Treatment was provided to:

1. DRÁBOVÁ Božena, born 1921, residence Prague 10, retiree – knocked down by the crowd of people after the intervention of the VB – proximal humeral fracture of right shoulder and head of right shoulder, proximal fracture of the right femur, was hospitalized, injury is evaluated as serious
2. KLIMPOVÁ Antonie, born 1919, residence Prague 4, working retiree, janitor at the Dětský dům [Youth Club] – knocked down by a crowd after the intervention by the VB – bruises and surface scrapes on the forehead and bruised breastbone, after treatment released to the care of family doctor
3. KRASNICKÁ Marie, born 1906, retiree, residence Prague 10, knocked down by the crowd – scrapes on the face, contusion of the left shoulder and torn ligaments on the right little finger, left in the outpatient care of the clinic
4. PROKOPOVÁ Růžena, born 1909, residence Prague 1, retiree – knocked down by a crowd of people – proximal humeral fracture of right shoulder, dislocated right shoulder, scraped forehead, brought to trauma clinic of University Hospital pod Petřínem and hospitalized there. Injury is evaluated as somewhat serious.
5. BECHYNĚ Antonín, born 1922, residence Ústí nad Labem, empl. TONASO Neštětice – knocked down by a crowd – broken forearm, treated at outpatient trauma clinic of the ÚNZ [National Health Institute] Prague 9, sent to the care of UNZ at place of residence
6. Ing. ŠORMOVÁ Marie, born 1943, residence Prague 9, 15, empl. MS ČSÚ Prague 1, Maislova 15 – knocked down by the flow from a water cannon – treated at outpatient clinic, broken nose, cuts on nose, surface scrapes to face and both knees, released after treatment and given to the care of family doctor

7. ŠTÁDLEROVÁ Anežka, born 1916, residence Prague 9, retiree – knocked down by flow of water from a water cannon, treated and hospitalized at the trauma clinic FVL UK [Charles University School of Medicine], complex fracture of the right upper arm, surface scrapes on the face and left knee, treatment is expected to take several weeks

8. CHALOUPKOVÁ Maria, born 1944, residence Prague 6, empl. Praha 1, confectioner's Příkopy – affected by tear gas. Eyewash was carried out; released after treatment. Injury is evaluated as light.

9. ŠAROCH Jindřich, born 1929, residence Prague 3, disability retiree – brought to trauma department of the hospital Na Františku – concussion, fracture on the right side of the cranium and the occipital bone.. Hospitalized, injury is somewhat serious, the cause is being investigated.