

X/13 C/S - 1ST ADD PARIS AMBASSADOR (CN 232) XXX PRAGUE

AMBASSADOR PITHART CUT SHORT HIS HOLIDAY IN FRANTISKOVY LAZNE AT DAWN YESTERDAY AND RETURNED TO PARIS, LEAVING HIS PAPERS AND CAR INSURANCE DETAILS BEHIND.

"WE WERE ALERTED AT 4 OCLOCK YESTERDAY MORNING" HE EXPLAINED. "MY WIFE AND I WERE STAYING IN THE CZECHOSLOVAK SPA. I IMMEDIATELY DECIDED TO LEAVE CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND TO RETURN TO MY POST IN PARIS".

THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE HAD A CAR WITH BELGIAN LICENCE PLATES, BUT NO PAPERS. ALL THE SAME, HE SAID, HE DECIDED TO TRY TO CROSS THE NEAR-BY BORDER INTO WEST GERMANY. ON THE TRIP, HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY CZECHOSLOVAKIAS AMBASSADOR TO BERN, WHO ALSO HAPPENED TO BE IN FRANTISKOVY LAZNE.

"CLOSE TO THE FRONTIER", SAID DR PITHART, "WE SAW BETWEEN 200 AND 300 SOVIET TANKS AND ARMoured CARS. SINCE OUR CAR HAD A FOREIGN LICENCE PLATE, THE SOLDIERS LET US PASS, AS ALL FOREIGNERS WERE PERMITTED TO LEAVE CZECHOSLOVAKIA. I EXPLAINED TO THE CZECHOSLOVAK FRONTIER GUARDS I WAS RETURNING TO THE EMBASSY IN PARIS, OBEYING THE GOVERNMENTS ORDER THAT EVERYBODY SHOULD REMAIN IN HIS POST".

AMBASSADOR PITHART DROVE HIMSELF ALL THE WAY TO VERDUN, ABOUT 250 KILOMETERS EAST OF PARIS. THERE THE EMBASSY DRIVER WAS WAITING FOR HIM AND HE COULD EXCHANGE HIS TINY SKODA CAR AGAINST A MOST COMFORTABLE SEDAN.

THE AMBASSADOR SAID MRS. PITHART REMAINED IN FRANTISKOVY LAZNE WHERE SHE IS UNDERGOING TREATMENT FOR A HEART CONDITION. HIS SON IS PRESENTLY IN ISRAEL TOGETHER WITH A GROUP OF CZECHOSLOVAK NEWSPAPER MEN. ONE OF HIS DAUGHERS IS IN FRANCE, WHILE HIS SECOND DAUGHTER REMAINS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

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