

CN 167

X-13/ CS -- LHUMANITE: PATRIOTS CROWD PRAGUE STREETS
(ATTRIBUTION REQUIRED)

PARIS AUG. 23 (RFE SPECIAL/OVADIA) -- IN A FIRST DESPATCH FROM THE OCCUPIED CZECHOSLOVAK CAPITAL, LHUMANITES PRAGUE CORRESPONDENT REPORTED IN TODAY'S ISSUE THAT THE CITY IS COVERED WITH PRO-DUBCEK AND PATRIOT INSCRIPTIONS.

THE CORRESPONDENT, CAREFULLY REFRAINING FROM ALL COMMENT, DESCRIBED THE "RAPID" ARRIVAL, EARLY WEDNESDAY MORNING, OF SOVIET TANKS AND PARACHUTERS ON THE SQUARE OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION. ACCORDING TO THE HUMANITE WRITER, PHILIPPA HENTGES, IT TOOK THEM ONLY A FEW SECONDS TO OCCUPY THE DEFENSE MINISTRY ON THE SQUARE.

HENTGES MENTIONED DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE OLD CITY AND IN FRONT OF THE RADIO.

SHE SAID: "IN FRONT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE BUILDING, I HAVE SEEN HOW A CZECHOSLOVAK FLAG WAS HOISTED ON A TANK. IN ORDER TO FREE THEMSELVES, THE SOLDIERS FIRED SEVERAL SHOTS INTO THE AIR".

ACCORDING TO HENTGES, WARNING SHOTS WERE ALSO RELEASED -BY SOVIET TROOPS, SHE SPECIFIED - IN FRONT OF THE RADIO BUILDING, WHERE OVER-TURNED BUSES HAD BEEN USED AS BARRICADES.

SHE QUOTED RADIO REPORTS ANNOUNCING TWO KILLED IN PRAGUE AND SAID "IN LIBEREC, SEVEN PEOPLE WERE KILLED".

"AT NOON", THE COMMUNIST CORRESPONDENT REPORTED, "THE SIRENS OF THE FACTORIES, THE CAR HORNS, THE CHURCH BELLS ANNOUNCED ONE HOUR OF STRIKE TO PROTEST AGAINST THE PRESENCE OF WARSAW PACT FORCES. TRAFFIC CAME TO A NEAR STAND-STILL AND ALL SHOPS WERE CLOSED."

HENTGES SAID: "THE CZECHS ARE CROWDING THE STREETS, AND THEY ARE WEARING TRICOLOURED BADGES. CARS WITH FLAGS ARE PASSING THE STREETS. THE CITY IS COVERED WITH CZECH INSCRIPTIONS. THEY READ: "LONG LIVE DUBCEK", "LONG LIVE SVOBODA", "WE WANT TO BE FREE", "GO HOME". MANY CZECHS ARE DISCUSSING WITH THE SOLDIERS".

IN THE SAME ISSUE OF LHUMANITE TODAY, MOSCOW CORRESPONDENT MAX LEON, DESCRIBED THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE SOVIET CAPITAL AS "OUTWARDLY CALM, BUT PREOCCUPATION IS PROFOUND, FACES WORRIED".

LEON REPORTED ON SOVIET PRESS TREATMENT OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK INVASION AND MADE NO OWN COMMENT.

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