

CN 16

(ATtribution REQUIRED)

CS - 1ST ADD - 0100 INTRO - SHOOTING IN PRAGUE (CN 11) XXX OCCUPIED

UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL REPORTED FROM PRAGUE THAT THE GUNFIRE WAS DESIGNED AT CLEARING WENCESLAS SQUARE OF ABOUT 100 YOUTHS WHO WERE WHISTLING AND JEERING AT SOVIET TROOPS THERE.

UPI SAID MOST OF THE YOUTHS SCATTERED UNDER THE FIRE, BUT THAT HALF A BLOCK AWAY ABOUT 15 YOUNG PEOPLE REMAINED AT THE BASE OF THE POSTER-COVERED STATUE OF KING WENCESLAS. UPI SAID THE YOUTHS WERE SITTING QUIETLY, AND QUOTED ONE OF THEM AS SAYING: "WE WILL WAIT UNTIL WE SEE PRESIDENT SVOBODA COME RIDING DOWN THE SQUARE."

UPI'S CORRESPONDENT SAID THERE HAD BEEN OTHER SHOOTINGS NEAR THE RIVER ABOUT 2000 MT, WHERE SOVIET SOLDIERS FIRED MACHINE GUN BURSTS INTO THE AIR. UPI SAID THESE SHOTS WERE FOLLOWED BY TWO ROUNDS OF TANK CANNON FIRE THAT ECHOED THROUGH THE CITY.

UPI SAID TRACER BULLETS ARCHED UPWARDS FROM THE RIVER. DOWNRIVER AT LEAST ONE MORTAR FLARE BRIGHTENED THE SKY AND LIT THE GROUND ENOUGH FOR TROOPS TO OPEN UP WITH A SUSTAINED ROAR OF AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE.

UPI SAID YOUNG HECKLERS PRESSED CLOSE TO TWO TANKS AT WENCESLAS SQUARE AND THE CREW OF ONE OF THEM RACED THEIR ENGINE, FILLING THE AIR WITH A MECHANICAL ROAR AND A BILLOWING HAZE OF BLUE EXHAUST SMOKE.

THEN THEY LET GO WITH VOLLEYS OF SINGLE SHOTS AND OCCASIONAL BURSTS OF AUTOMATIC WEAPONS FIRE OVER THE HEADS OF THE CROWD, UPI REPORTED.

TB/A 0154/68 AUG 26/3

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