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X/13 BRIT--BRITISH STUDENTS UNION COORDINATING HELP FOR CZECHOSLOVAKS

(CN-238) XXX TODAY

IN ADDITION, THE BRITISH HOME OFFICE (INTERIOR MINISTRY) HAS WAIVED NORMAL REGULATIONS TO ALLOW CZECHOSLOVAK STUDENTS TO STAY ON AFTER THEIR VISAS HAVE EXPIRED AND TO TAKE JOBS AND THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL SECURITY HAS ANNOUNCED THAT STRANDED STUDENTS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR IMMEDIATE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

THE N.U.S HAS ALSO ESTABLISHED "VERY GOOD RELATIONS" WITH THE CZECHOSLOVAK EMBASSY, BUT IT IS NOT RPT NOT CERTAIN HOW LONG THIS CAN CONTINUE BECAUSE OF THE CHANGING SITUATION IN PRAGUE.

THE UNION HAS BEEN TOO BUSY ORGANIZING AND DISPENSING HELP TO KEEP ACCURATE FIGURES, BUT IT ESTIMATES THAT SINCE ITS EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION BUREAU WAS OPENED LAST WEEK, IT HAS PROVIDED BED AND BOARD FOR MORE THAN 300 STUDENTS.

THE EMERGENCY EMPLOYMENT BUREAU WAS OPENED ONLY ON WEDNESDAY BUT DURING ITS FIRST TWO DAYS IN OPERATION, JOBS WERE FOUND FOR ABOUT 100 YOUNG CZECHOSLOVAKS TO TIDE THEM OVER UNTIL THEY DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT RPT NOT TO GO BACK TO THEIR OWN COUNTRY.

THIS IS THE BIG QUESTION FACING THEM AND IT IS A DILEMMA WHICH THE N.U.S CANNOT SOLVE, THOUGH IT TRIES TO PROVIDE A SYMPATHETIC EAR AND SUCH PERSONAL ADVICE AND COMFORT AS IT CAN.

AN OFFICIAL SAID THAT THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THE STUDENTS STILL PLAN TO RETURN, BUT CLEARLY A FINAL DECISION WILL REST ON WHAT HAPPENS IN PRAGUE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

ALTHOUGH MOST OF THE N.U.S EFFORTS AT PRESENT ARE DIRECTED TOWARD DEALING WITH DAY-TO-DAY PROBLEMS OF FOOD, BEDS AND JOBS, IT IS ALSO BEGINNING TO PLAN FOR A POSSIBLE FUTURE AND PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS ARE TAKING PLACE ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SETTING UP SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS FOR STUDENTS WHO FIND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO RETURN.

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