

CN 91

C/S -- 1ST ADD THE TROOPS FADE (CN 90) XXX INVASION

CZECHOSLOVAKS SAID THERE WERE STILL LARGE NUMBERS OF SOVIET SOLDIERS AROUND, BUT THEY WERE SIMPLY KEEPING OUT OF SIGHT. ONLY AT BORDER CROSSING POINTS COULD SOVIET TROOPS BE SEEN.

AT VOJTANOV, IT SEEMED LIKE A QUIET DAY BEFORE THE INVASION. ONLY TWO CZECH BORDER OFFICIALS COULD BE SEEN AT FIRST. BUT THEN A CURIOUS RUSSIAN SOLDIER POKED HIS HEAD BETWEEN THE WINDOW BARS OF A CUSTOMS BUILDING AND OTHER RUSSIANS COULD BE GLIMPSED AT LOUNGING AROUND IN THE NO-MAN'S LAND BETWEEN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND EAST GERMANY.

LIFE IN THE SPA CITY OF KARLOVY VARY SEEMED TO BE BACK TO NORMAL, EXCEPT FOR THE MARKED LACK OF WESTERN VISITORS. CZECHOSLOVAKS STROLLED THROUGH THE STREETS AND CROWDED THE CITY CENTER.

THE PICTURE WAS THE SAME IN TOWNS AND VILLAGES THROUGHOUT BOHEMIA. SOME ANTI-RUSSIAN SLOGANS WERE LEFT PAINTED ON WALLS AND ROADS, BUT THERE WERE NONE OF THE POSTERS THAT APPEARED IN THE FIRST FEW DAYS AFTER THE INVASION.

IN PRAGUE THE PRESENCE OF THE SOVIET SOLDIERS WAS MUCH MORE OBVIOUS. ARMORED CARS PATROLLED THE STREETS, THEIR MACHINE GUNS MANNED BY STEEL-HELMETED SOLDIERS. SOVIET TROOPS WERE CAMPED OUT IN VARIOUS GREEN AREAS OF THE CITY, INCLUDING A CENTRAL PARK.

BUT THE ATTITUDE OF THE CZECHS HAS CHANGED REMARKABLY TO ACCEPTANCE FROM THE HOSTILE AND TENSE ATMOSPHERE OF A WEEK AGO, WHEN TO GO OUT AFTER DARK WAS TO RISK BEING CUT DOWN BY A RUSSIAN BULLET.

(MORE ON BUFF) BG/U/24 SEP 3 1515/68

HB