

CN 141

CS - 1ST ADD - STUDENTS FORCED AWAY (CN-140) XXX PAST

THE STUDENTS PLACED BANNERS ON WENCESLAS' LANCE AND FOR THE FIRST FEW DAYS THE STATUE WAS COVERED ENTIRELY WITH BANNERS, POSTERS AND PAINTED SLOGANS ATTACKING THE SOVIETS AND PLEDGING SUPPORT FOR THE CZECH LEADERS.

LATER, WHEN THE RUSSIAN TANKS AND ARMORED CARS OCCUPIED THE SQUARE, YOUNG STUDENTS SAT IN SILENCE AT THE MONUMENT BASE THROUGHOUT EACH NIGHT.

THEY REFUSED TO RUN, OR TO EVEN FLINCH, AT THE ROAR OF MACHINE GUNS FIRED OVER THEIR HEADS IN AN EFFORT TO FRIGHTEN THEM AWAY.

THEY SAID THEY WERE "WAITING FOR PRESIDENT SVOBODA TO COME RIDING DOWN THE SQUARE."

WHEN SVOBODA FINALLY CAME RIDING DOWN THE SQUARE CARRYING NEWS OF THE COMPROMISE REACHED IN MOSCOW, THE STUDENTS FELL SILENT.

THEY STRIPPED THE MONUMENT OF ITS SLOGANS, LEAVING ONLY THE NATIONAL BANNERS, THE NATIONAL MOTTO, AND A POSTER THAT SAID OVER AND OVER AGAIN, "NEVER GIVE IN."

IN FRONT, THEY SPREAD FLOWERS AND LIGHTED CANDLES IN MOURNING FOR THOSE WHO DIED IN THE OCCUPATION.

AND UNTIL THE GARDENERS CAME WITH THEIR FRESH PLANTS THE STUDENTS HAD TAKEN TURNS HOLDING THEIR NATIONAL COLORS, PLUS THE BLACK FLAG OF SADNESS, AS A SILENT PROTEST AGAINST THE FATE OF THEIR SMALL NATION.

JON/L 1930/68 SEPT 3 HB

EA