



Associated Press
DEFY SOVIET TROOPS: Czechoslovak youths at base of the statue of St. Wenceslas in Prague yesterday. They sought signatures for petition supporting Alexander Dubcek, party chief, and maintained vigil in defiance of curfew.

Vigil in Prague Square

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Special to The New York Times

PRAGUE, Aug. 25—Long-haired youths of Prague have been staging a 24-hour-a-day sitdown vigil around the equestrian statue of St. Wenceslas, defying a Soviet-imposed curfew on their occupied city.

Last night after word had gotten out that the Russians were enforcing their curfew by shooting—three young men distributing anti-Soviet leaflets were killed—two armored cars carrying about 20 soldiers with submachine guns approached the statue in Wenceslas Square.

It was about 3 A.M. There

had been an earlier unsuccessful attempt to terrify the 30 youngsters seated at the base of the monument by firing machine-gun bursts over their heads.

The monument, dedicated to the 10th-century hero saint of Bohemia, has been draped with Czechoslovak flags and plastered with anti-Soviet posters. It stands at the upper part of the square, a broad avenue similar to the Champs-Élysées. Just above it is the National Museum, which was raked by

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A VIGIL IS STAGED AT PRAGUE STATUE

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Soviet gunfire on the first day of the occupation.

In the silence and loneliness of the curfew hours, the young men and women—students and workers—have refused to move as the Soviet armored cars approached them.

When the cars stopped, the youths turned their backs to the soldiers to express their contempt. No words were spoken.

The soldiers simply started tearing off the posters. They tried to reach the higher ones but could not because they had no means of ascent. The youths had used ladders to climb the monument. The ladders were now hidden.

One Russian started to rip down a poster that said "Long Live Svoboda!" He was reminded by one of the students that Ludvik Svoboda was President of Czechoslovakia and was then meeting with Soviet officials in the Kremlin. The soldier ripped down the poster anyway.

Youths at the monument described their experience in undramatic terms. They said that they intended to man the monument 24 hours a day until the Soviet forces go home.

There was an 18-year-old machine-tool worker who was in need of a shave, drinking a mug of beer.

Between his knees sat his girl friend, an 18-year-old clerk with a pretty round face and blue dress. Asked how she felt last night, she replied, "I'm not afraid."

The boy said: "None of us are afraid of the Russians. This is our country."

A young worker from Slovakia who also was present last night said that the Russians did not dare disperse the students because this would give the lie to their assertions that they were here as liberators.

The youths of Prague have many other ways, besides defying curfews, to express their contempt for the Russians. Today at a street corner as a Soviet scout car approached, one boy, catching the driver's eye, stretched out a piece of bubble gum an arm's length from his mouth.

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