

## CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

## INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

SUBJECT 1. Listening to Foreign Broadcasts  
2. Public Loudspeaker Systems

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REFERENCES

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1. Listening to foreign broadcasts alone or with one's own family was not forbidden, but listening in a group, organizing such groups, or spreading what one heard on a foreign broadcast was forbidden and punishable.

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[REDACTED] If an SNB or STB man observed a person listening to foreign broadcasts alone, he could do nothing to him directly, but the person would fall under suspicion, and his listening to foreign broadcasts could be cause for surveillance.

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2. [REDACTED] almost every family listened to foreign broadcasts; some families listened regularly.

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[REDACTED] During recent years these people have become disillusioned with Communism and have become more and more interested in news from abroad. It was common knowledge that almost all the people in that neighborhood listened to foreign broadcasts and discussed the broadcasts among themselves.

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3. RFE seemed to be the most popular of foreign stations, partly because, in contrast to VOA, it transmitted all day long. RFE was known primarily for the facts it broadcast, but the comedian Rudolf KOHOUT was very popular. BEC was next in popularity to RFE, as BBC seemed to have fairly recent news and was not jammed. VOA was too weak to be heard clearly in the Mnichovo Hradiste area. A smaller number of people listened to Swedish, Yugoslav, and Canadian broadcasts.

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In general HFE was the most jammed of the foreign stations that could be heard in the Mnichovo Hradiste area, but it could still be heard quite clearly. Evening transmission seemed to be less jammed than those at other times.

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Sets for reception of only local stations were not being manufactured in Czechoslovakia, and even the smaller and older sets were capable of receiving foreign broadcasts. Only a very small number of people had not bothered to replace the short-wave units in their sets that had been removed by the Germans during the war. the number of radio sets in Czechoslovakia is, if anything, increasing, as no family in Bohemia and Moravia seemed to be without a radio.

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Everyone in the larger towns and cities seemed to have them, but in Slovakia in general only about every third family had a radio. In the more remote areas there were almost none. All the radios in Slovakia could get foreign broadcasts

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5. Each owner of a radio set had to register his set with the local post office; a tax of 75 crowns was payable every three months.

6. There was no shortage of radio sets, and if one had the money, there was no difficulty at all in obtaining one. the "Talisman" set, which cost 2,200 crowns, and the "Symphonie" combination radio-phonograph which cost 11,000 crowns. Tesla manufactures all the sets that are currently being sold on the market, but many people have old German sets. All new sets had short-wave bands. there was no difficulty in repairing radio sets, never shortages of repair parts, even of miniature tubes for makes of foreign manufacture.

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The only problem about repairs, as about buying a new set, was the cost, which was very high. Every family was willing to make sacrifices in order to keep their radios in repair, as the radio was considered an essential part of the home.

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9. Loudspeaker systems were installed on the streets of every city and town and most villages in Czechoslovakia. Some of the more isolated villages did not have them, usually because the village could not afford the costs of purchase and installation.

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In Mnichovo Hradiste the street loudspeaker system was installed during world War II. The speakers were placed in strategic places such as on church towers and tall buildings, so that they could be heard as far as possible. In the larger towns they were installed along some of the main streets. The loudspeakers in a single town were all connected and were controlled from the office of the local national committee in that town. The loudspeakers were never controllable from the street.

10. The loudspeaker systems were utilized mostly for announcements of purely local interest, such as information about Communist Party functions, theater performances, motion pictures, or requesting an individual to report to the office of the local national committee; announcements were made of gas shortages, that specific trains were not going to run, or that the electricity would be cut off. Radio broadcasts were aired over these systems only on rare occasions and then only if an important speech was to be made by some high government official. The systems were used mostly during rush hours, at noon, or at supper time, never at night, but if there was information the local national committee thought the people should know at 2 p. m., for instance, they would broadcast it at that time.

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