

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.  
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- At the end of March 1954, a further reduction in the prices of various goods and foodstuffs took place in Czechoslovakia. Shortly afterwards, members of the C.P. in all enterprises and factories introduced the slogan: "We thank the Government for reducing the prices--we are hardening the norms." This slogan was supposed to have been a spontaneous expression of gratitude but in actual fact was forced upon the majority of the workers by Communist trade union officials who were acting on the instructions of the Communist Party. The action caused a great deal of discontent among the workers as they felt that the reduction of prices was largely counterbalanced by the new norm rulings.
- The workers in the area of Decin and Usti nad Labem were trying to resist the "hardening of norms" but in most cases had to capitulate and accept. The following incident illustrates how the "hardening of the norm" process was carried out in the Decin area.
- At the Decin quay, about 40 workers are employed, none of whom had ever made any suggestion about "hardening the norms." About 10 April 1954 they were informed that six workers from the Prague-Holesovice Harbor would be working with them for some time to gain experience. The leader of the Prague group was Horak (fnu), well known as an ardent Communist, and the Decin workers gradually found out that the other Prague workers were also either C.P. members or functionaries.
- At this particular time they were unloading iron ore in Decin Harbor, and the unloading norm rate was Kcs. 4.10 per ton. The Prague workers, after about three days, suggested hardening the norm and making it Kcs. 3.90 per ton. The Decin workers strongly opposed this and refused to accept it. This led to continuous quarrels between the Prague and Decin workers, and relations were very strained.
- On the morning of 20 April 1954, the water level was low, and unloading was therefore more difficult since the craft could not reach the bank. The Decin group:

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went to see the manager of the quay, Vondrich (fnu), and demanded a 10% increase in wage rates, which was justified and usual under those water conditions. Vondrich refused their demand, stating that the Prague group were still working for Kcs. 3.90. Thereupon 16 Decin workers, led by Korinek (fnu), went back to the Prague group and started an argument which led to a fight. Vondrich called out the harbor workers militia, but only two of the militia men turned up out of six. They tried to stop the fight but clearly appeared to be on the Decin workers side.

6. About noon the workers were still arguing, and the manager therefore called the local SNB commandant and also the director of Decin Harbor. The commandant came along with another SNB member and talked to the Decin workers, trying to calm them and telling them to carry on with their work or they would suffer the consequences. This attitude was not very favorably received by the Decin workers, and a violent quarrel ensued between Korinek and the SNB commander. Finally the director of the harbor, Frantisek Klimes, who is a former bargeman and very popular among the workers, arrived; he promised the Decin group that their demand would be considered and appealed to them to carry on working. At about 2 p.m., all returned to work.

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