

Millions of Czechs strike for democracy

PRAGUE, Czechoslovakia -- Millions of people ignored government pleas and joined a nationwide general strike Monday in the largest and most dramatic demonstration so far for democracy and an end to Communist Party rule.

"We don't want you anymore!" a flag-waving crowd of 200,000 roared in a thunderous chant that echoed off the 19th-century buildings surrounding downtown Wenceslas Square. It was the 11th straight day of massive protests in Czechoslovakia.

Huge crowds of workers also poured into the streets of Bratislava, the east Slovak industrial center of Kosice, the mining center of Ostrava on the Polish border, and in Usti and Labem, the heart of industrial north Bohemia.

The showing was a resounding victory for the opposition, which had called the two-hour strike a referendum on the Communists' 40-year monopoly on power.

Communist leaders' frantic attempts to

avert the strike failed, as workers joined the pro-democracy movement started by students, artists and intellectuals.

Shaken leaders continued to make new concessions to the opposition:

- The party's Central Committee dumped three more hard-liners from the ruling Politburo, the second major leadership reshuffle in three days.

- The Czech and Slovak ministries of culture announced they had lifted most forms of press censorship.

- The Central Committee approved an inquiry by a parliamentary commission into a Nov. 17 rally in which riot police clubbed hundreds of peaceful pro-democracy demonstrators.

- Deputy premier Jaromir Zak said on state-run TV that after long discussion, it was decided to drop the article enshrining the leading role of the Communists in the constitution from a new draft of the document. "Every political

party has the right to a leading role as long as it is based on results," he said. "It's not possible to lay this down in the constitution."

- The official CTK news agency said parliament, until now a rubber-stamp body under firm Communist control, also would be open to discussion of any draft laws. Vladimir Janku, head of the state's commission on church affairs, was quoted as saying these would include new laws on religion that would end state control over churches and the criticized practice of licensing priests.

But there were still more conditions to be met. Posters demanding free elections and an end to one-party rule were plastered over the windows of shops, hotels and restaurants that closed to observe the strike.

At Prague's largest industrial complex, CKD, workers demanded the formation of independent trade unions.

Hundreds of thousands of joyous workers

streamed into the city's center, carrying banners of their factories, firms and offices in an outpouring of national pride and support for democratic reforms. Sirens howled and church bells pealed as the strike began at noon.

"Look Gustav, how thick the crowd is!" the people chanted, referring to President Gustav Husak, the man who headed the crackdown on democratic reforms after a Warsaw Pact invasion in 1968.

"Dubcek to the Castle!" they yelled, referring to Alexander Dubcek, the ousted leader of the failed "Prague Spring" reforms who was replaced as party leader by Husak. Hradcany Castle, a national symbol, is the presidential residence.

"It has to go to the very end," said Jana Cervenkova, who was among the demonstrators. "As long as the Communists rule, it's going to be messed up as it was for the last 40 years."

Discovery lands safely to end secret mission

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. -- Space shuttle Discovery streaked out of orbit and landed safely Monday at the end of a secret military mission extended an extra day and then an extra orbit by high winds at this desert air base.

Air Force Col. Frederick Gregory, commander of the five-person crew, guided the winged spaceplane to a touchdown on a concrete runway at 7:30 p.m. EST after a five-day flight that covered nearly two million miles.

"Commander Gregory reports wheels stop," said Billie Deason, the Mission Control commentator.

Two sonic booms cracked overhead as Discovery descended through a clear sky and made its sweeping approach to runway 4. Forty-five minutes before touchdown, controllers directed Gregory to shift to 4 from hard clay runway 17 because of more favorable winds.

The rays of the setting sun shone brilliantly off the shuttle as it made its final approach to a centerline touchdown.

The shuttle landed in light crosswinds of 5 mph and a headwind of about 17 mph.

Mission Control lifted its curtain of silence on the flight to report 80

minutes before landing that Gregory had successfully fired two braking rockets to drop the shuttle out of orbit and start it on a fiery plunge through the atmosphere.

"The propulsion officer and the crew confirm that the burn was good," Deason reported after the 3 minute 4 second rocket ignition.

The five-day flight reportedly put in orbit a satellite to monitor military communications over a wide area of the globe.

Although as many as half a million people have flocked to this desert air base to watch previous shuttles land, Monday's touchdown was closed to the public because the mission was classified.

Winds gusting to 30 mph forced NASA to call off a landing attempt here on Sunday. The winds were not as strong Monday, but were high enough at times at more than 15 mph to make conditions unacceptable for a planned landing at 2:52 p.m.

With prospects looking better for the follow-on orbit, controllers directed the astronauts to stay aloft another 89 minutes. As predicted, the winds subsided and NASA gave the astronauts the go-ahead to fire the braking rockets.

Socialist Party in Hungary concedes defeat in referendum

BUDAPEST, Hungary -- The ruling Socialist Party conceded defeat Monday in a national referendum that would postpone presidential elections and give the fledgling opposition more time to organize and field a candidate.

It was the first free election in more than four decades, and the first since the Communists dissolved their party, renamed it the Socialist Party and opened the way for free multi-party elections.

Final results were not expected until today, but the presidential candidate of the ruling Socialist Party said voters Sunday had approved the referendum backed by opposition parties.

"We can be certain that the number of 'yes' votes was higher than the 'no' votes," said Imre Pozsgay, the popular Socialist candidate.

An opposition victory would mean that a new democratic Parliament, to be chosen by June, will elect the president. If voters had rejected the referendum, they would have elected a president directly on Jan. 7.

Opposition groups favored postponing the vote until after parliamentary elections, saying that otherwise they could not sufficiently organize a serious challenge to Pozsgay. They hope to win strong representation in the new Parliament, giving their candidate a better chance at the presi-

dency.

According to recent opinion polls, the Socialist Party is unlikely to win a majority in the parliamentary elections.

With 91.3 percent of the votes counted, the referendum actually was failing by a narrow margin, 50.2 percent against to 49.8 percent in favor. But Pozsgay and opposition parties predicted a reversal when all votes are counted.

Hungarian radio said there were several thousand more "yes" votes than "no."

Pal Kara, secretary of the referendum committee in Parliament, said 58.2 percent of Hungary's 7.8 million eligible voters cast ballots.

Although he conceded that the referendum would pass, Pozsgay said he was encouraged by the results, noting that the Socialists had urged people to vote no, and "look at the percentages."

"That good result shows how close (the party) was to the public opinion," he said.

Referring to the momentous changes in Eastern Europe and particularly Czechoslovakia, Pozsgay said, "While in Eastern and Central Europe people by the hundreds of thousands are marching in the streets to express their opinion, Hungarians are going to the ballot box to express their political will."



Andy Manhart/Daily Nebraskan

Man builds unsinkable yachts

NEWPORT, R.I. -- Bore a hole in the hull of John Newton's sailboat. Fill it with water and heel it 'til the sails skirt the waves. Go ahead, it won't sink.

Newton builds self-righting vessels out of lighter-than-water, Space Age materials.

The Cat Ketch Yachts he builds in his Port Arthur, Texas, factory are the latest products in a rich three decades of boat building that began in 1957 in Hong Kong, where he produced the successful Grand Banks Trawlers. Now he is setting new standards in sailboat safety.

His 36- to 52-foot sailing yachts are designed by well-known marine architects and have been gathering attention on the boat show circuit this year as sailors look to combine safe, convenient travel with speed.

And while the yachts are built to be safe and easily sailed, they also feature a comfortable and attractive design and they handle well in gusts, as demonstrated during a recent sail through Newport Harbor.

Newton recently sought outside confirmation of the vessels' capabilities from Underwriters Laboratories Inc. The exam was a breeze compared to the rigorous tests Newton and his 25 employees had already put their design to, but the

UL seal of approval should pay off at the boat shows where boating enthusiasts once refused to even stop at Newton's slip after they saw a sign proclaiming the yachts were unsinkable.

"On the face of it, no one would believe it," Newton says.

"We were getting all sorts of weird, rude comments," says his wife, Deidre, who works with her husband to sell the boats. "Like: 'Yeah, that's what they said about the Titanic.' Or worse."

Positive flotation is common in dinghies and lifeboats, but only a handful of large boat makers, such as Kanter yachts in Canada and the European Etap boats, offer it in larger craft.

It's a standard feature on the more than 100 sporty Sparhawk and more traditional Herreshoff yachts Newton has sold in the past five years. The boats are built with lighter-than-water materials below the waterline.

Neal Mahan, a supervisor at UL, only tested Newton's boats for level flotation. And while the yachts far surpassed the minimum requirements, they also impressed their examiner.

"You can flood it, you can take a hit, you can probably cut it in half and it will still float," Mahan says.

The hulls of Newton's vessels are created out of Airex, a foam

used to form the shells of fighter planes. The bulkheads and other spaces below the hull are filled with another Coast Guard-approved foam that also floats.

The materials do not make the boats more susceptible to break up in a collision. Airex is somewhat flexible, and if one of the yachts strikes an object head-on it must break through three feet of hull before the vessel takes on water.

"If the boats hit a container and get a hole, they will sink between four and eight inches and no more. So you can always sail home," Newton said.

But the most unusual feature of Newton's yachts is an exclusive mast design that, along with the boat's careful engineering, eliminates the danger of having a sailboat knocked down by a strong gust of wind.

The design by marine architect Richard Black employs a sealed, hollow, carbon-fiber mast that increases the boat's righting momentum to 180 degrees, more than double the accepted norm. In fact, if the spars ever submerge, the righting momentum actually doubles.

"It would be like tying a bottle full of air to the end of a long pole and trying to push it into the water," Newton said.

Colombian jet crashes; 107 die

BOGOTA, Colombia -- A Colombian jetliner crashed on the outskirts of Bogota on Monday shortly after takeoff, and all 107 people aboard were killed. A caller to a radio station claimed drug traffickers bombed the jet.

Witnesses said the Avianca Airlines Boeing 727-100 exploded before it plunged into a hilly area south of the capital, about a mile from a neighborhood of slum houses and factories. Pieces of the jet were found up to six miles from the main point of impact, police said.

Hours later, a man called Radio

Caracol and claimed that a group called The Extraditables blew up the jet to kill five police informants. He said the five gave police information that led to the discovery of the Medellin drug cartel leader's hide-out.

The man did not identify himself, and the claim could not be immediately authenticated.

Investigators had found no evidence of a bomb, said Col. Edgar Leal, chief of national police for the state. He said the flight recorder had not been found.

Daily Nebraskan

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The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE, Monday through Friday during the academic year; weekly during summer sessions.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by phoning 472-1763 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The public also has access to the Publications Board. For information, contact Pam Hein, 472-2588.

Subscription price is \$45 for one year. Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448. Second-class postage paid at Lincoln, NE.

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