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## Charter 77 and the monopoly on violence



It's a cornerstone of human society that the state has a monopoly on violence. The state decides when force may be used legally and how to punish those who violate this prerogative. Miloš Jakeš, the last head of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, said on a [Russian website](#) yesterday that the 1989 revolution was caused by an attempted coup within the Communist Party organized by the KGB. Historian Oldřich Tůma rejected this on [Czech Radio](#) and said that Jakeš simply can't accept that Nov. 17 came about because people were sick of the regime and no longer feared it. Even Tůma said, though, that the deciding factor came when the Soviet tanks stayed put in the summer of 1989, when there were partly free elections in Poland. Czechs can celebrate the 40th anniversary of Charter 77, as rightly they should, but the truth remains that few of them have any firm idea who decided to transfer the monopoly on violence in the Warsaw Pact to someone else, or why.

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