

IT'S ALL IN THE MIND



LIFE is like riding a bicycle, to keep BALANCE you must keep MOVING

Albert Einstein

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Before 1969

In 1962, when I was fifteen, I persuaded my school friends Ota Subrt and Lada Zeman to join me for a bike ride to a lake, where we could spend a camping holidays on an island. Ota had the best bike, Favorit with a derailleur (3 change-speeds), my bike was Sportka with a single sprocket free-wheel while Lada had to ride his sister's bike, as his own had being broken by his cousin.

One spring morning, I guess it was Saturday as there was no school whilst our parents were at work (there were no free Saturdays yet), we just picked up some biscuits and lemonade and left. However, the most important was our gear - a couple of axes, small saw and several carpentry clinches to build a raft with. Our idea was that our raft would get us from the main land onto the island, search it and decide whether it would be any good for camping. We never said anything at home, that's how it used to be, us boys we played outside – football on a village pitch, swimming and trout catching in the river Elbe, endless games in forests around our village, or we just cycled anywhere, we knew that nobody will miss us.

I often saw that particular island from my father's car when we were driving to his home town Litomysl. From our village Prosečne to town Holice it was 75 km and the lake with that island was about 5 km before Holice.



Lake Smilek with a small island in the middle.

Traffic on the road in those days was totally negligible, no huge vehicles, those few lorries that were around were doing not more than 40-50 km/hour. Very few people had cars at that time, I think that in our village Prosečne, there could have been about five to ten cars only. In

summer, when we were bathing in the cold mountain river Elbe, we often laid down on warm tarmac road to warm ourselves a bit, as there was almost no traffic.

I knew the way from our village through the county town Hradec Kralove rather well and as the lake with its island was close to the road, we could not miss it. When we arrived there, first we ate some biscuits and then started to cut down smaller trees, mainly young alders, to build a raft. Pieces of timber, about 4m long, were joined together with carpentry clinches, but alas, the whole thing sank below the water surface, when one of us stood on it! The wood was wet and heavy, totally unsuitable for a raft and there was no chance to float towards our “dream island”! We collected our tools, parted with carpentry clinches, finished our biscuits and turned back for home.

In Hradec Kralove we got soaked with heavy rain and rather than cycling on a bumpy and often cobbled road we went on a pavement, as there were almost no people, but soon were told off by an authoritative cop to move back onto the road. Although we must have arrived home very late, none of us three remembers that we were in trouble with our parents. As for



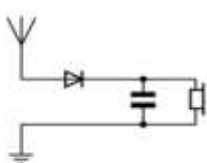
myself I must say, that **“What I did that day had marked all my tomorrows - I became a cyclist”**.

This was our “dream island” which in the early 60’s could be well seen from the road.

During summer time, us four, who were next-door friends – myself, Ota Subrt, Slavek Jodas and Petr Kytmar – always played cards, built dams from stones in the river Elbe, so that we could swim and catch fish there, went regularly to a forest to build hideouts, climb trees, enjoyed mushrooming and

wild strawberry picking. We regularly went to a local village junkyard or even to an industrial dump close to a factory three kilometres across the forest to collect colour metal (mainly copper or lead) which we sold to a scrap yard. Anything with electric wires attached to was also interesting to us because we discovering the “*electric power*”, we dismantled old radios and used the transformers to operate 6-12V lights, small motors or buzzers. I remember once being hit into my hand by 220 volts and flying from the kitchen table right in the middle of the room.

During these discovery years we built simple radio receivers called a crystal set. Crystal radios are the simplest type of radio receiver and can be made with a few inexpensive parts,



such as a wire for an antenna, a coil of wire, a capacitor, a crystal detector, and earphones. It uses only the power of the received radio signal to produce sound, needing no external power.



Playing cards in summer 1963 - from left Ota, Slavek and Petr; I was taking the picture.

In 1963 our lot went to seek another water adventure, this time we travelled by train to Chrudim, although it was only about 80 km, we had to change trains twice, and then walked to Seč dam, some 23 km northwest of the town Chrudim. Following the river Chrudimka I remember coming to a lovely picnic site with birch timber seats and bench with a carved board bearing a sign “As you did not seed, do not harvest”, so we obeyed, sat down in the grass and ate our sandwiches. Besides our necessary gear for camping and food we carried once again a couple of axes, saw and carpentry clinches with intention of building a raft. On the first day we walked as far as Krizanovice dam where we pitched a tent and stayed

overnight. Because we had been walking against the stream it would be pointless to build a raft (besides the water level was too low) and as all the dry timber around Krizanovice dam was used up for campfires and we thought it would be the same at Seč dam. In those days there were no camping gas-cookers and everything had to be cooked on an open fire, hence all dry wood around any water dam quickly vanished. In the evening we raided a co-op farm field with early potatoes and baked them with lunchmeat. The spuds were so good that we got rid of the heavy carpentry clinches and instead filled all empty space in our rucksacks with those lovely spuds.



A raft is one of the oldest means of human transport.

The idea of building a raft and drift on it came no doubt from our raft-water games on a village pond next to a local farm co-op headquarters, the building which used to be an old

German mill house. There was a lot of building timber which we could use to build various floatable rafts and then try to sink them in endless pond battles during our summer holidays. Great fun, especially when we could not swim more than 5 meters. The next day, we continued up the stream to Seč dam, where we camped for about 14 days.



The river Chrudimka below Seč dam.

During that time we had a visit from my parents who came in a car and brought us some supplies. I don't remember much, but my friend Ota recollects an unusual toilet-a large concrete ring with a wooden top in which there were about 8 toilet holes for 8 people who could do the business at the same time. Ota also remembered that the faeces level in 8-men cesspit was so high that now and again our bottoms were splashed with... Proper toilets were quite far from our camping spot, so we used this lavatory built most probably for pioneer campers (a youth organisation that replaced the Scouts movement after the WW2).

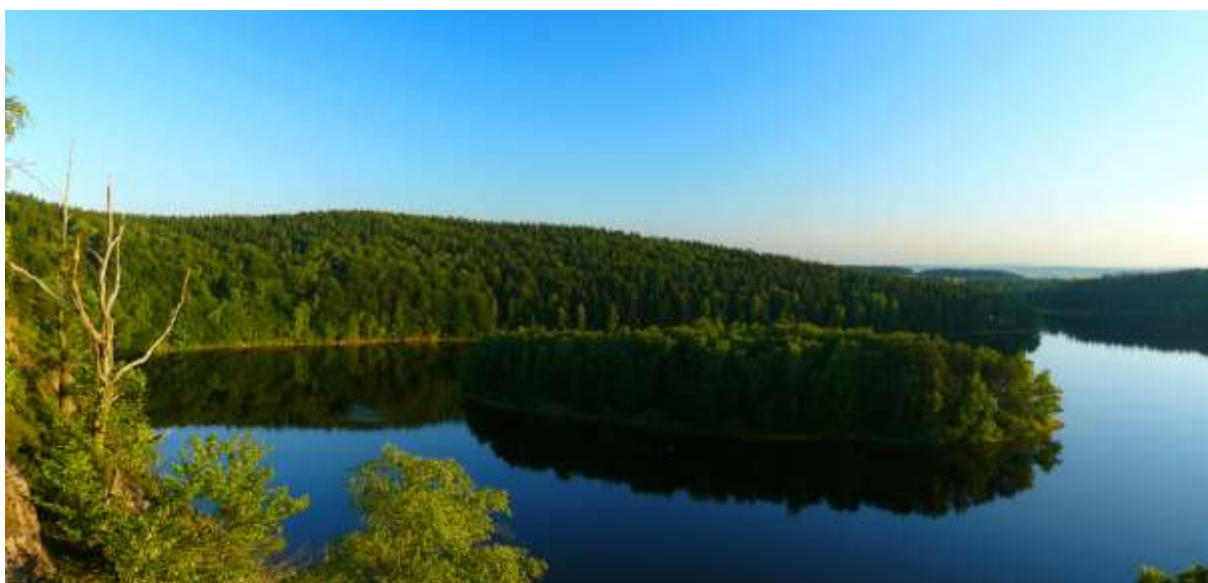
We must have liked that Seč reservoir so much since next year I managed to persuade my friends from our "Goat Ring" (a part of our village where we lived and where in the 50's most of the residents kept goats, e.g. my granddad and grandma kept two goats and neighbours on both sides, too, hence the nickname) to go there again. In summer 1964 we decided to cycle there on our bikes, the distance being about 110 km. I cannot remember what bikes my

friends had, I would have thought that Ota's bike with a derailleur was the best one, whilst I adapted my bike to look like the one bellow, only instead of picnic gear, there was a small suitcase full of tin food.



“Nothing compares to the simple pleasure of riding a bike” (J. F. Kennedy).

The only thing I remember from that trip is that Slavek and young Petr-were so exhausted before reaching Seč dam, that they pushed their bikes even when coming downhill because they could not cycle against the wind. In 1964 I was 17, Ota and Slavek were 16 and Peter was only 13.



Seč reservoir-surface area is 220 ha, maximum length 6.5 km and the dam height is 42 m.



The steel pipeline from reservoir to the power station is 1280 m long and until 2010 the large part of it was mostly made of larch wood (this is interesting as I had seen a similar project in US at Tokette Lake Power Station; wooden pipe Ø 4 m was made from Redwood timber).

Our adventure at Sec reservoir was marked with a long lasting rain, so much so, that water level dangerously approached our tent. I remember fishing, I should have said poaching because we had no permit, but since our site was rather secluded we were not too much concerned.



As boys we were interested in photography, we not only had simple cameras, but also did our own developing of black and white films. My first camera took photos 6 x 6 cm and on one film I could place 12 pictures. Exposed film was then placed in a plastic developer-tank (done in darkness) and bathed in a developer liquid, washed with water, and bathed again in a fixer and finally washed in water. A developed film was placed into 6 x 6 cm frame together with a photo paper (all in darkness), then an electric bulb was switched on to lit up the frame for a few seconds; photo paper was placed again in a developer and fixer liquid, finally washed in water and the picture was hanged up to dry.

This was one of my first photos (1963). It must have been a summer day, late afternoon and granddad

with his rake is going to make haystacks. I took the picture from a road side ditch.

School, employment and the national service

In 1953 I started my elementary education in our village school at Prosečne. It was only a small school and after five years I had to travel by bus to Hostinne (our nearest small town) to finish nine years of compulsory basic education. I must have enjoyed those bus journeys as I continued travelling to Hostinne grammar school for further three years.



Even today I remember where I was when I heard the news about the assassination of US president JF Kennedy. It was at Hostinne bus station and at that time, 22.11.1963, I was in the second grade of grammar school.

President J. F. Kennedy in 1963.

JFK is one of the most popular American presidents. Many of his speeches (especially his inaugural addresses) are considered iconic; and despite his relatively short term in office, and the lack of major legislative changes coming to fruition during his term, Americans regularly vote him as one of the best presidents, in the same league as Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

He spoke of the need for all Americans to be active citizens, famously saying: "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." He asked the nations of the world to join together to fight what he called the "common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself."

JFK Eternal Flame Memorial at the National cemetery in Arlington.



When I finished my grammar school I became interested in a professional career in the army and I fancied a job as an air traffic controller. I went for a medical check up to military hospital in Jaromer, but failed my eye test, as I did not recognize multicoloured signs from a testing book (pages with hundreds of colourful dots with signs of the same colour). Discharged! Another occupation I was interested in was a TV mechanic (I had A level in physics and enjoyed any work related to air communication and wires), but in those days, the

Czechoslovak five year national plan reckoned with only one mechanic for the whole Trutnov district, and as I had no strings to pull, there was no chance.



For the third time I was lucky. My friend, who worked at the SKODA factory in Vrchlabi, some 12 km from my village, told me about well paid jobs on a car production line. I went for an interview, no medical tests for colour blindness, just the basic health tests and I started the following week.

Skoda 1202 as a station wagon.

The car maker AZNP Vrchlabi worked on morning / afternoon shifts and the work load in comparison with today, was rather moderate, yet the pay was above the national average. My job was to fit the wipers, a hand break and a heater and I always had enough time to sit or look around, sometimes I went to see my friend who sprayed paint on car skeletons. The following year I was conscripted to the army for two years national service.

I would like to mention one more episode from my teens. Reading books about partisans and WW2 resistance inspired us to play games in a gorge behind our house-on one side there were the Germans and on the other the partisans (no need to say that nobody wanted to play the Germans, so we had to draw lots). When we were about thirteen we made our weapons from wood, just as we made our ice-hockey sticks.

When I was about sixteen my father rented a small bit of land and for a couple of years he grew camomile on it to sell as medicinal herb. I did not take it very well when my friends played football whilst I had to help father to harvest the camomile blossoms. Father had to dry those harvested blossoms before he could take them to be sold and as he had grown quite a lot of camomile, he was allowed to dry it in the loft of large village hall. We used a roll of paper to cover the floor and spread the blossoms over it. The loft was dry and hot and camomile blossoms dried very quickly. It was quite dark there and once I noticed a large box filled with various objects. I did not want my father to notice that I was interested in the box, so I just put my hand inside to feel the bits and pieces, and I was sure felt a gun barrel there. So, I told my friends about it and we planned to investigate. On the ground floor of the building there was a village council office with a secretary and chairman of the village communist party. Our plan



was to get in the loft and should that be a weapon to throw it through a small roof window outside into a lilac shrub, wait till darkness before taking it away. One late afternoon when the party chairman was not there and his secretary was too busy, we sneaked through the hall, got into the loft to find a submachine gun and threw it

into the dense lilac shrubbery. The British Sten gun, the same weapon that was used in Prague during assassination of SS general Reinhard Hydrich, an operation Anthropoid (27.5.1942) carried by the Czechoslovak paratroopers.

The STEN (or Sten gun) was a family of British submachine guns chambered in 9x19mm and used extensively by British and Commonwealth forces throughout World War II and the Korean War. They were notable for having a simple design and very low production cost, and so also making them effective insurgency weapons for resistance groups. The Sten gun in Prague failed to shoot and it was the bomb thrown by a second paratrooper that did the job.

Many historians regard Reinhard Heydrich, as the darkest figure within the Nazi elite. He was directly responsible for the special task forces which travelled in the wake of the German armies and murdered over two million people, including 1.3 million Jews, by mass shooting and gassing. That operation Anthropoid was regarded as one of the most important act in occupied Europe and in response Britain and France retracted their signatures on Munich Agreement, which in 1938 robbed Czechoslovakia of about one third of land. In the whole history of WW2 this was the only case when resistance successfully liquidated one of the top Nazi chiefs, so that was really unique.

I wonder how did this British weapon get to our small village in Krkonoše mountains? Anyway, my Sten gun was totally rusty but with a proper care it became functional. I regularly cleaned it but never played any game with it. However since it was very hard to get any ammunition I only fired about five shots from it in all (just as well). One day, when still at my grammar school, I was doing practical tuition at KRPA (all grammar students had to go once a week to learn a trade, girls mostly went to horticulture while boys to local factories), two cops came to see me and asked for my weapon; I denied having any such thing until I was told that I'd be expelled from school if I did not cooperate, so I took them to our bunker and gave it to them. The communist police could boast with a huge web of informers, so eventually that was waiting to happen. When in the army, my company commander captain Bartoš read me about this episode from my dossier (files done by the state security) and we had a good laugh.

The National Service 1966 – 1968

In September 1966 I was conscripted to a regiment in Kutná Hora which was under the Ministry of Interior. I did not know what to think of it all, but there was no time to think, I was not expected to think, I was expected to run and I was good at it.

I shall never forget my first day – after disposing of all civilian clothes, I got a short military hair cut done by a bloke who claimed to be a prisoner and who said he could kill me if he wanted. I did not want to be killed as yet, so I bribed him with a bottle of home-produced plum brandy and that made him happy.

The first month in the military service was a real madhouse – shouting, running, never standing still. After that initial training I found myself at a medical battalion and because I

was good at running and I had been to a grammar school I was sent, along with other few blokes, to a medical non-commissioned officers (NCO) course in Frydek-Mistek.

That NCO course lasted about eight months and I remember the following two stories. One night we were to practice night fighting in those parts of Ostrava town which were to be demolished due to mining of black coal (Ostrava being a synonym for the Czech coal industry). At about ten o'clock in the evening we were brought in to this deserted part of town on military transporters and the battle begun - darkness, smoke, light rockets and lots of shooting with blank ammunition - an utter turmoil. After about one hour later, when I used up all my blank cartridges and had enough of this chaos, I found myself next to a huge Russian bulldozer called after Stalin –“Stalinec” (dozer built from 1933 on licence from US Caterpillar), climbed inside, closed the door, laid my gun on the floor and had a nap; in about an hour, feeling refreshed, I climbed down from the cabin and joined the battle again. The second episode is related to our medical classroom. Normally all medical lectures were given by doctors, but on that particular day no doctor was available, so our commander, smart and likeable major Šivic, gave us a talk on medical practice and begun his lesson with a description of intercourse. He said to us “You naive boys, if you were to make love never put a pillow below girl's bottom, but always below her lower back”, well, things like that cannot be forgotten, can't they!



*In training
at Kutna
Hora.*



At the start of a giant slalom race. This competition was organized by another army unit, based in Banska Bystrica, Slovakia.

Skiing brought a certain touch of *divertimento* to my army days. Being a skier, I was sent to represent our regiment at downhill competition in Donovaly, Tatras

Mountains in Slovakia. However, it turned out to be a giant slalom and I was disqualified for missing one gate due to the fact that I could only turn well to one side. I had a lot more fun doing biathlon on wooden cross-country skis, with a sub-machine gun on my back. This took place in my home mountains Krkonose where we did not compete, but just trained and had a jolly good fortnight in a luxurious Ministry of Interior villa in Spindl Mlyn. The intention of the officer responsible for our regiment's sports activities was to introduce biathlon to our



regiment. That officer was a good bloke and by introducing us to sport he made the army days more tolerable to us.

Biathlon was a relatively new sport since the first time it appeared in the Olympic Games was in 1960. It is a winter sport that combines cross-country skiing and rifle shooting. The early competitors (1958 to 1965) used .30-06 Springfield before the .22 LR was standardized in 1978.

In spring 1968 our regiment started to practice response against demonstrating students and I started to learn English. Our officer responsible for political brainwashing (*function of commissar comes from Russia*) kindly let me have his office door key when leaving home in the evening, and I could study there undisturbed from my textbook *Teach Yourself English*.

As non-commissioned officers, we started to collect various “trophy” – advancement to

a rank of sergeant, a badge for Excellent soldiers, a photo under the Regiment's Standard or a complementary letter sent by the battalion commander to our parents.

*From right to left:
company commander
Bartoš, platoon
commander Kuriš,
squad commanders-
Pergler, Vodehnal and
Chvojka.*



Invasion 1968

(Following photos were taken from a book “Invasion 68” by Czech photographer Josef Koudelka; same applies for text and signs around photos in italics).

In August 21, 1968 I was on a leave at home, when at around 7 a.m. I had seen low flying fighter planes above our village with to me unknown insignia “two white lines”, and on my small pocket radio there was something reminding me of a dramatic play, why so early in the morning? The Russian Invasion had begun.



When I returned back to our barracks I found an utter chaos. What were we to do when being attacked by our ally? We all stayed for several days within our compound behind barbed wire fence until finally we were sent to Prague. As our regiment was trained to come to help the capitol in case of attack, it turned out horribly wrong. We were not a fighting force, but a kind of defending, logistical and casualty force, hence medical, chemical, communication, army engineers and transport companies within the regiment. So, all these units went to Prague to replace the Russian soldiers at strategic points, the idea being, that from now on the Czech army would “guard these locations against the contra-revolutionists” itself. Who were those bad contra-revolution guys we had no idea, but very soon we had a very good idea what was done to us by the Russians. Our medical company was sent to guard the Czechoslovak Radio building and some of the following photos come from there.



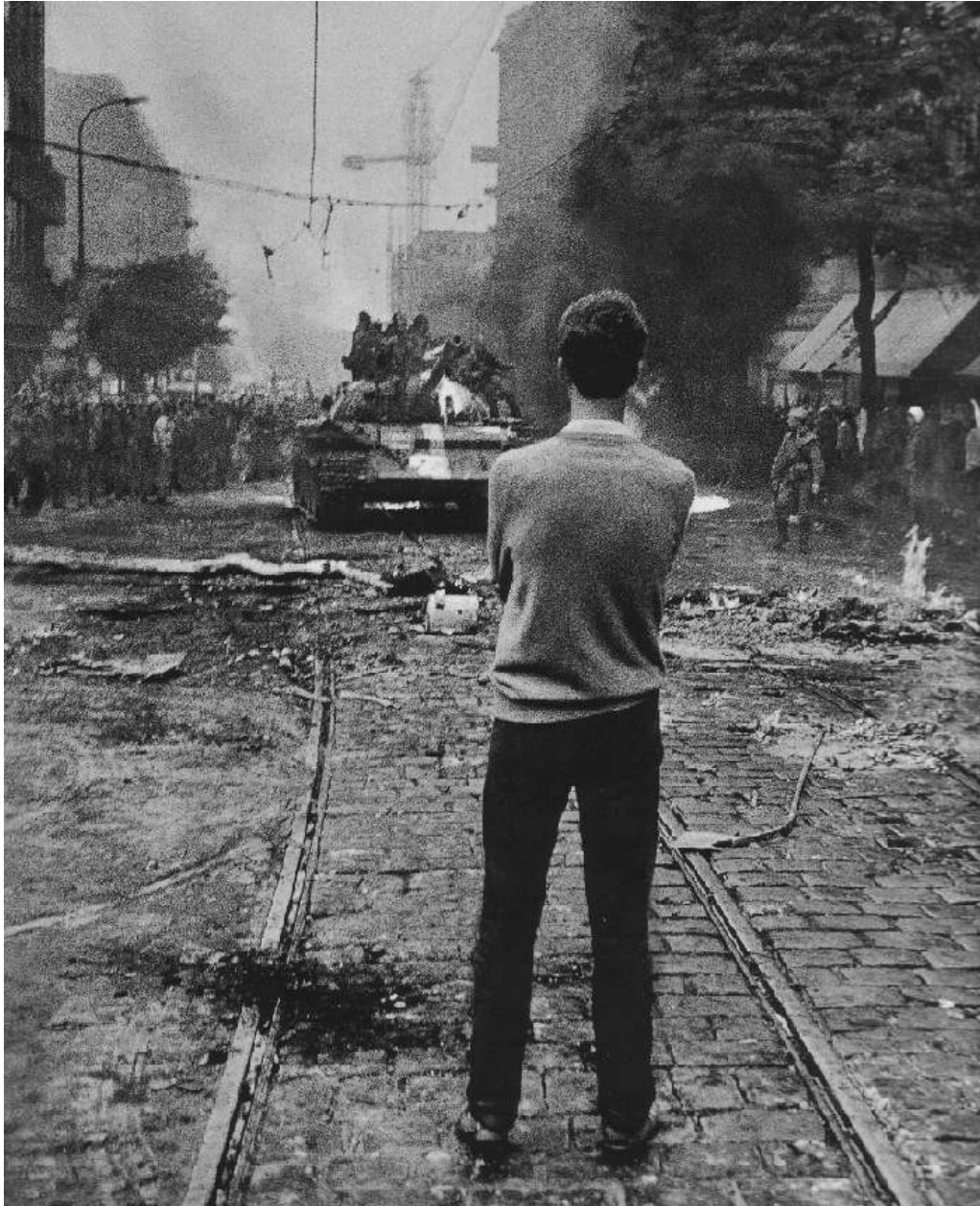
*Long live Red Army,
but somewhere else;
Murders bugger off
home.*



Dears yesterday - murders today; Soviet circus in Prague again; don't provoke, don't feed; We don't want Russian freedom; Dubcek did not call you, piss of behind Ural; Lenin wake up Breznev got mad; Get away with Russian Bolshevism; Proletarians from all countries go home; Our dead bodies don't need your wheat; Don't forget, the censorship is the end of truth; Breznev, your tsar.



"Your place is in Moscow".



*From the book by Z. Mlynar "(at the time of Invasion the first secretary of the Communist party) "**Frost comes from Kremlin.**" Suddenly the Dubcek's office door flung open and about eight soldiers burst in, surrounded us from behind and pointed their machine guns at our napes. The soldiers tore off all telephone cables, closed windows so that no sound from the outside crowds, singing the national anthem and chanted Dubcek's name from behind the chain of paratroopers, could be heard...by now we were sitting silently around the table with sub-machine guns pointed at us."*

This scene reminds me of a storming of the Winter Palace at Saint Petersburg in 7.11.1917, when Bolsheviks, without a fight (the palace was guarded only by some cadets and women battalion of 137) entered the Malachite room and arrested the whole Kerensky government. (at school we were brain-washed that there was a real battle with a proper storming of the Winter Palace).

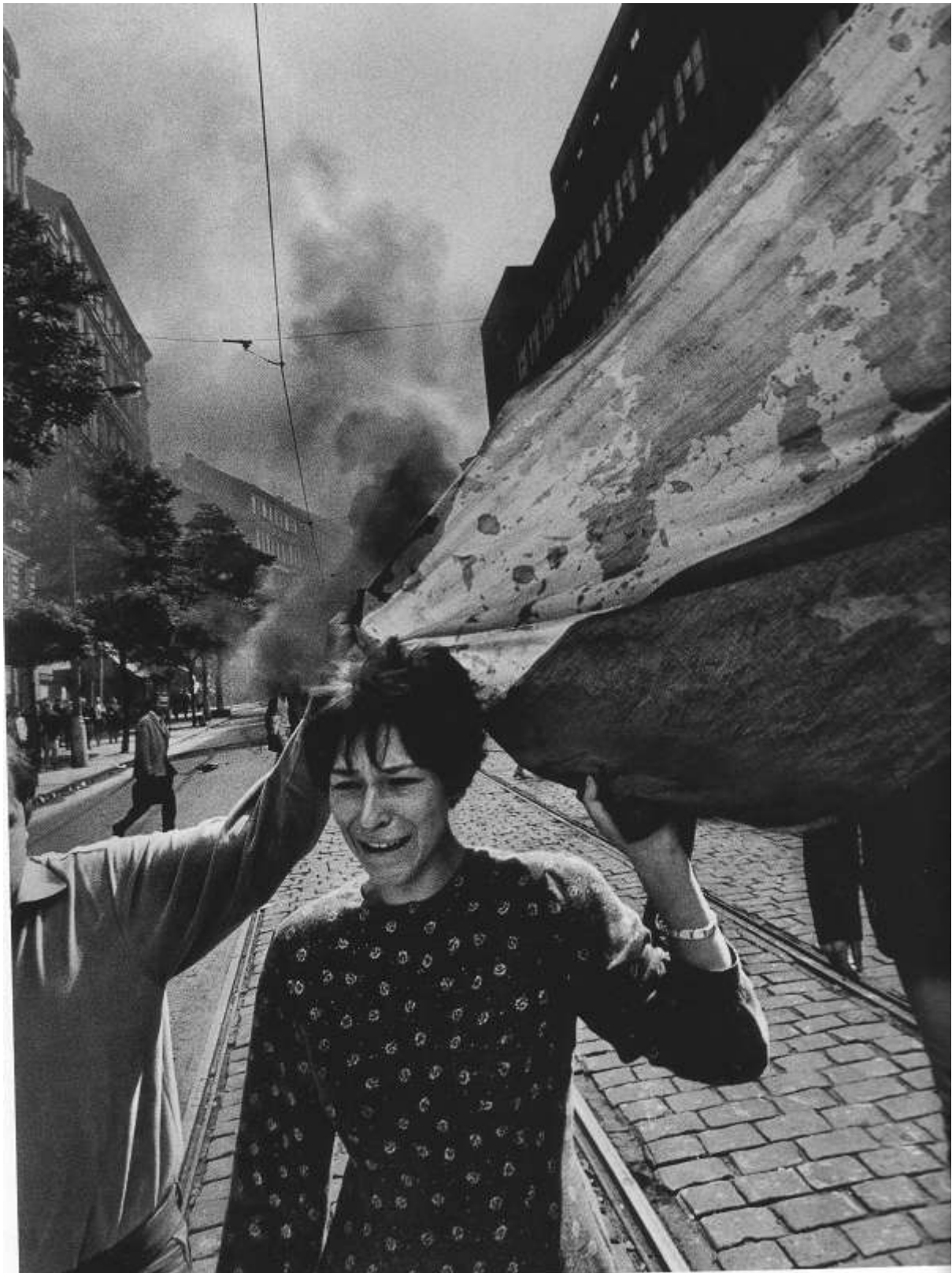


“Brothers with cheeks of countrymen”

/.../All dead, all injured, all, all are victims of occupants! They would not have died, they would not, there would not have been any wounded, were we not occupied! We are right! It is our right to do all, virtually all, to show our resistance. However since we are rational and don't do all that we could do, it is our choice, our prudence! In no case, in no thought, not even in a single word must anyone admit that someone has caused his own death. If so, we would have to admit that dead citizens of Prague, killed during the May 1945 uprising against the Nazis, were also stupid enough to disturb the German occupants and caused their own death. Wisdom and composure are good weapons, but can also be a sign of fear. Let us separate one from another! We should realize and admit that there's nothing wrong with that. Our courage will grow and our wisdom will be more lucid.

They are occupants and shoot at us. Nobody invited them and they are nothing else but murderers. Murderers of defenseless children! Shame to you!

Special edition of Literarni Listy Weekly, 28 August 1968



Soviet export: tanks, lead, death...

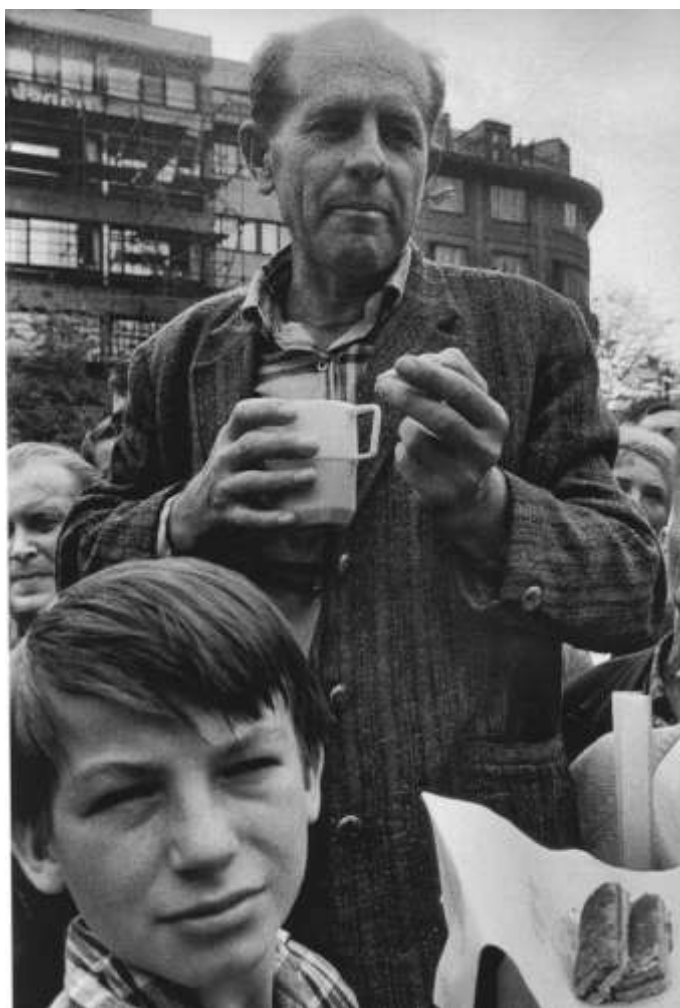


There were numerous interesting slogans written all over Prague, like this one: "***Red brothers, go back to your reservations!***" *Vinnetou* (our Red Indian Chief film hero).

The above pictures were taken just a week or so before our regiment arrived. The Radio House had witnessed terrible times. People died there. Shock awaited us inside as well. The occupants left excrements on the floor, bricks of black bread, broken doors, windows, modern

broadcasting technique thrown out from the windows, valuable documents all over the floor (I found signed photos of one of the best pre-war football goalkeeper in the world F. Plánička and another one of a beautiful young woman Aja Vrzanova, twice world champion in figure-skating, (1948 and 1950), an utter mess, nothing stayed as it was, even the armchairs were smashed.

My post was in the car park at the basement of the building. My mates who were guarding the main entrance to the Radio House refused the entry to all Russian officers. The main door from this garage was locked, whilst the door from director's luxurious limousine T603 was open, so at about one o'clock in the morning, I got inside T603 and had a short nap there. We served 24 hours and then our trucks took us back to Kutna Hora, which was about two hour drive.



exclusion of South African apartheid.

Zátopek's Proclamation

Soviet Union has no place at the Olympic Games 68

The whole sports world lives in a great anticipation of this Olympic Games year. Throughout the modern Olympics, including Mexico 68, it will not be only a question of gold medals, but above all the festival of physical and mental culture, festival of friendship of different nations as expressed in the Olympic Charter.

Any acts of violence against the world nations and communities have been always condemned by Olympic Movement and the guilty countries were excluded from the Olympics.

The last such case was South Africa for its unjust treatment of its black population. Soviet Union was one of the most energetic proposers of such

Today the Soviet Union finds itself in a much more deplorable role. Violent occupation of CSSR is in contradiction with the idea of Olympic Games, so much so, that the Soviet Union loses the entitlement to participate in the XIX. Olympic Games in Mexico.

Emil Zátopek

Rudé právo 24.8.1968

Emil Zátopek (19 September 1922 – 22 November 2000) was a Czechoslovak long-distance runner best known for winning three gold medals at the 1952 Summer Olympics in Helsinki. He won gold in the 5,000 meters and 10,000 meters runs, but his final gold medal came when at the last minute he decided to compete in the first marathon of his life. He was nicknamed the "Czech Locomotive".



Zátopek displaying his trademark expression of pain (1951).

In 1954, Zátopek was the first runner to break the 29-minute barrier in the 10,000 metres. Three years earlier in 1951, he had broken the hour for running 20 km. He was one of the greatest runners of the 20th century and was also known for his brutally tough training methods. He was the originator of interval training. In February 2013, the editors at *Runner's World Magazine* selected him as the Greatest Runner of All Time. He is the only person to win the 5,000 metres, 10,000 metres, and marathon in the same Olympics.

A hero in his native country, Zátopek was an influential figure in the Communist party. However, he supported the party's democratic wing, and after the 1968 Prague Spring, he was stripped of his rank and expelled from the army and the party, removed from all important positions and forced to work in a string of inferior and dangerous positions, such as a uranium mine, refuse collection service, and well digging. On 9 March 1990, Emil Zátopek was rehabilitated by Czech president and philosopher Vaclav Havel.

Zátopek died in Prague on 22 November 2000 at the age of 78, from the complications of a stroke. His funeral at Prague's National Theatre was crowded with leading figures from the international sports world. He was awarded the Pierre de Coubertin medal in 1975. In 2012, he was named among the first twelve athletes to be inducted into the IAAF Hall of Fame. A life-size bronze statue of Zátopek was unveiled at the Stadium of Youth in Zlín in September 2014.

One of Zátopek's quotes: "Victory is a splendid thing, but friendship is even better."



Our regiment withdrew from Prague back to Kutná Hora within about a week. The military service ended for me in September 1968, whilst the troops of the Warsaw Pact were to stay in Czechoslovakia until the early 90's. I am sure they did not want to leave and hoped to stay here forever.

The Czech singer and composer Michal Kocáb, who was newly elected as MP after the Velvet Revolution in November 1989, supervised the departure of the Russian occupants home until the last one left in March 1991. According to his words: "All the politicians were still afraid of the Russians and nobody was prepared to do it, I did not know them, so I did it!"

I bet Michal was singing to departing troops "Ivan, go home your Natasha is waiting for you", a popular song from the August 68.

My English teacher – Mrs. Bernard

When I finished my national service I returned back to the car factory in Vrchlabi, this time as a quality controller of car body work. I worked in white gloves and checked the workmanship of old craftsmen who were building the cars; when I found an uneven surface or an uneven gap, I was to ask those old skilled men to put it right. How embarrassing, I had no skill no experience and yet was to supervise these craftsmen!

After the invasion I intensified my studies of English, my work prospects in the car factory were hopeless, and to live in a society where the communist party told you what you can / cannot do was totally demoralizing, so when I've heard of an English teacher in Hostinne I did not hesitate. I rang a bell at an old house and an old door was opened by an old lady with a walking stick. That old lady was Mrs. Bernard, who, without my anticipation, was opening the door for me into the world. Early in spring she had been to a teacher's seminar in Switzerland where she met a young English student and gave me not only her address but also my first reference in life. Later on I realized that such references carried a big weight in the free world, something like a party membership card in a dictatorship. There is one difference though, in the first case the people talk about friendship and knowledge, skill and human values, whilst in the latter case it is all about discipline, obedience, opportunism and servility.

Besides continuing with my Teach Yourself English textbook, which I bought early 1968, my teacher advised me to purchase "The English for language schools 1-4 grade". I was coming once a week and what I liked most of all was to learn the pronunciation of new words. My lessons, that were taking place in Mrs. Bernard's living room, were always passing much too quickly for my liking. While there, I was observed by an old man wrapped up in a warm blanket and sitting in a well worn out armchair by the fireplace. He attentively watched me when I was doing well, whilst when I struggled he was falling asleep which was most of the time. I was to learn later that Mr. Bernard was born in the 19th century and was even older than my own grandfather.

When I worked on a car production line my monthly wage was around 2200 CZK, my mother who worked at a textile factory was earning about 1200 CZK / month whilst my English teacher was charging me about 10 CZK / lesson. To compare that tuition money with a similar situation in England, where in the 70's, I also was taking private lessons in English - my weekly wage was £11 and one lesson cost me £1.05 (one guinea).

Who were Mr. and Mrs. Bernard

Maria Morawa was born 1907 in a small village Trebnitz, close to Chudowa, which was only about 7 km north of Czechoslovakia. At that time it was a part of Germany with the Czech ethnic minority population. Her father was a brewery supervisor and she had suffered from polio since early childhood. *"My father played piano and together with his friend, who played a violin, entertained the local high society (hunters, administrators and landowners)"*



remembers Mrs. Bernard in her diary. *“At that time there was no radio and gramophone was owned by a few, The WW I put the end to those idyllic times.”*

The photograph was taken in 1987.

During the 30's Ms Morawa was travelling all over Western Europe where she worked as governess or school mistress, various jobs were usually secured by her relatives. She spent a long time in France where she improved not only her piano play, but also French and English. At the end of the 30's she was invited by her aunt, the mother superior of the Ursuline Sisters Order, religious institute of the Catholic Church (*the best known group for the education of girls and the care of the sick and needy was founded in Italy, 1535. The patron is Saint Ursula*) to Hostinne and employed as a school mistress at the convent and orphanage. This religious institute experienced problems both during the Nazi occupation and the communist time. By the way the Ursuline sisters were taking care of the dying president Vaclav Havel at his country home Hradecek in 2011.

In 1942 Maria Morawa married a tailor Robert Bernard, who was much older man from a nearby small town Bad Kudowa. He was born in 1875 and before he died (1973) he wrote his memoir which he called *“Looking back on my Life”*. His handwriting, in black ink, is tidy and clearly readable even today. On the front page of his memoir he quoted Jean Paul (the real name Johan Paul Friedrich Richter, 1763-1825) *“Memory is a paradise we cannot be expelled from”*. This German author of humorous novels had been greatly influenced by the Irish satirical author, poet and essayist Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) whose quote *“Falsehood flies, and truth comes limping after it”* applies more than ever even today.

Here is how Mrs Bernard describes the wedding in her diary (lent to me by her daughter Blazena): *“Robert had a bad name in Kudowa due to his anti-Nazi attitude and was imprisoned on several occasions, so it came as no surprise when the town clerk refused to marry us and at the last minute we were turned out from the town hall. The clerk justified his decision by saying that Robert was 33 years older than I was, and with his first wife (well known writer who died ten months ago) he had no children. He said to me that I should have married a younger man with whom I could have babies and be useful to NSDAP (commonly referred to in English as the Nazi Party). All that I learnt just a few hours before our religious ceremony, which could not take place without the town hall ceremony first. At that time I was living on the first floor of a secondary school, and down to a lower floor, where there was a telephone, it was only a few steps. I had used the phone to its full capacity. In my elegant wedding dress, with a wedding veil fitted by my hairdresser, I had been running from my bedroom downstairs and back to my flat to and fro. When the Kudowa council clerk Schäfer refused to marry me due to the age difference, saying I could still have children, I replied:” I congratulate you, you're right, I will have children, but I do not want my boy to be taken into the war, I only want a girl.” All office clerks that overheard me had a quiet laugh. Even more so, when in nine months my daughter Beate (Blazena in Czech) was born; that clerk was*

ridiculed all over the county, as everyone was talking about it. Our marriage ceremonial took place in a different town."

Robert Bernard was imprisoned during the occupation for insulting the Nazi system. With his brother Josef they smuggled Czech newspapers and other forbidden literature (e.g. Karel Capek's work; Capek was on a list of people wanted by the Nazi police – Gestapo) to Kudowa. At the law court in Breslau (Wroclaw), where the Bernard's brothers were tried, Robert was jailed in Breslau prison while Josef was sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

After the WW2 Robert and his brother visited the Czech president Beneš, the Chief officer of the Czech regiment that was fighting the Nazi on the Eastern front colonel Svoboda and the Minister of Education Nejedly (*to quote from Robert's diary "the man who wrecked it all"*) to appeal for sending Czechoslovak troops to the Glatz region (Klodosko) where there was Czech ethnic minority (the land that had been a part of Germany) and integrate the location into Czechoslovakia. Although the president promised to do so, it was to be all different. At Potsdam Conference (August 1945) it was decided that the whole area, occupied the Russian troops, would be allocated under the Polish administration. The local Czechs who wanted the region to become a part of Czechoslovakia were in better case bullied, imprisoned, or in the worse case paid with their lives for their dream. Bernard family felt uneasy and worried about future, so they escaped across the border to Czechoslovakia. That region in question became

finally a part of Poland in 1958.



At a conference in Potsdam in 1945 – Winston Churchill, Harry S. Truman and Josef Stalin.

Nowadays Bad Kudowa is a pretty little spar town called Kudowa Zdroj and is using the same underground source of mineral water as Lazne

Belohrad a spar town on the Czech side of border, difference being that Kudowa Zdroj is doing well whilst Lazne Belohrad is closed.

Mrs Bernard's described their dramatic escape in these words: *"It was organised by Robert and took place at night in March 1945, from Bad Kudowa. I pushed our 18 months old Beate in a sports pram, but because I could not keep up with fast walking Robert, he often carried our daughter in his hands. After walking for some time we knocked on a window and learnt we were on the Czech territory. The people who took care of us were themselves refugees originally from Breslau (Wroclaw), they were high social democrat officials. Eventually we were taken care of by Red Cross in Nachod."*

At Easter 1945 the Bernards arrived to Hostinne and were accommodated in one of the vacant houses left by the Ursuline Order who in fear of the new dictatorship left for Austria. The house they chose had been orphanage in the 30's. After the war Mrs Bernard earned enough money to enable her to travel across Europe and visit her relatives. In 1970, when visiting Lourdes in France with her sister, she learnt of her husband's death. A few years after Mr. Bernard's death, she married a secretary of the local branch of Disabled Society. One of the first things I did when I returned from England in 1978 was visiting Mrs. Bernard and I also met her husband Mr. Krepela. My old English teacher had died twenty years later, in 1998.

Mrs Bernard's daughter Blažena (Beate) said: "The fact that Robert Bernard was imprisoned by the Nazis most probably contributed to his wife being allowed by the communist regime to continue with her private tuition of foreign languages, besides she was giving lessons to the local party officials, too". The old lady was giving lessons in German, French and English and of course on piano play.

Talking to Blažena I was interested to hear what kind of music her mother liked. She recalled that the main source of music at that time was radio and remembered that programmes her mother had enjoyed most were moderated by Anna Hostomska (1907-1995). Hostomska's narrative presentation of music attracted huge numbers of listeners. The weekly series called "Your favourite tunes" went on for ten years and every week she was receiving thousands of letters (e.g. one week she had received around 14,000 letters). Listeners enjoyed being drawn into the programme by answering various musical puzzles. During the series they could hear over 1400 tunes from 321 operas by 138 composers. As a radio presenter Anna Hostomska could talk with great knowledge about world and home music and had prepared numerous radio programmes. To her "Your favourite tunes", which was based on classical music, in 1960 she started another very popular musical programme called "Music that I like"- where she invited well known personalities, such as Emil Zatopek and discussed music of their choice. It's quite likely that she might have been influenced by BBC Radio 4 programme "Desert Island Discs" which was started by Roy Plumley as early as in 1942 -

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/2GMPrBkgB9jHhBjwCZ3RnxP/the-75th-anniversary-of-desert-island-discs>.

Addition

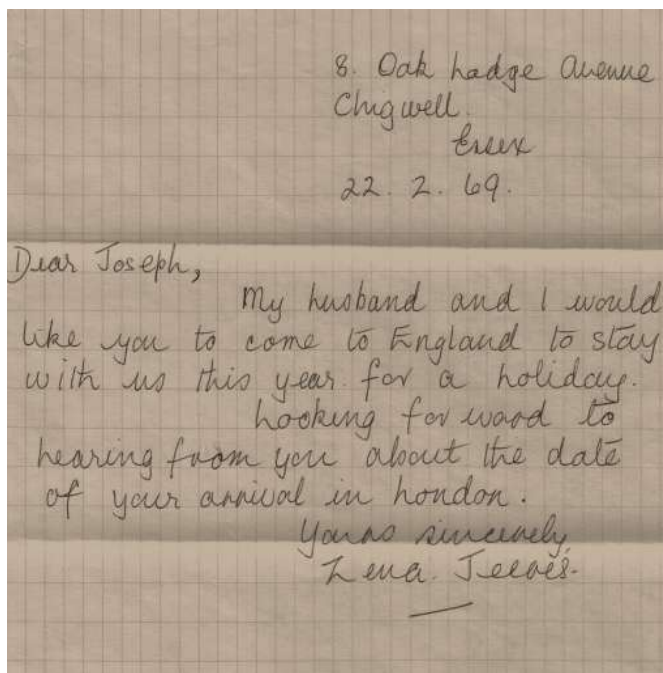
On the ground floor of my teacher's house there was a tailoring shop which I passed every time when visiting my English teacher. It was run by a smart Slovakian tailor from my village, Mr. Perička, whose nickname was "*Prepych*" a Slovak word for "*luxury*". I do not know who gave him that nickname, but most definitely he must have been the only man in our village who wore a suit and tie to his work, hence "*Mr. Luxury*." He had loads of western fashion catalogues and before leaving for England I had chosen an elegant suit which he tailored beautifully and I completed my smart suit with sporty hat and brown plastic coat (a very modern commodity from DDR) which gave a false impression of being waterproof. When I returned back to CSSR in 1978 *Mr. Luxury's* shop was closed as the party integrated him with a big socialist tailoring factory in Vrchlabí. I wonder was my suite the last straw for the local communist party cell?

Invitation and visa

That young lady, whom my teacher met early in the spring 1968 on a seminar in Switzerland, was Joyce Jeeves and I had written my first letter to her shortly before Christmas. It was the time when an average person could only dream of travelling to the West, as everything was under control of the Communist party. To have a passport with a visa was not enough, we needed so called exit clause, or rather permit stamp. For travelling to socialist countries on holidays we would get "tourist exit clause stamp". This however would not do for the rest of the world, there we needed "one-off exit clause stamp" and it was a long bureaucratic process lasting several weeks. An application for this permit had to be approved by various people and bodies, e.g. the local village council or a trade union organisation at work, both teams

being under control of communist party. When I managed to get my passport and that one-off exit clause stamp, I had to get over another obstacle which was getting the hard currency from the State bank, no currency no chance to travel. I knew it was pointless to apply at the State bank, as the available amount for travelling purposes would be reserved for prominent figures, or party members. So the only way was to get an invitation from the West.

I sent a letter of invitation to Joyce Jeeves, hoping that she would the same for me and she did, rather her mother did.



8. Oak Lodge Avenue
Chigwell.
Essex
22. 2. 69.

Dear Joseph,

My husband and I would like you to come to England to stay with us this year for a holiday. Looking forward to hearing from you about the date of your arrival in London.

Yours sincerely,
Lena Jeeves.

An invitation letter written by Mrs Jeeves.

Reading Joyce's letters once again (see in the Appendix) I only now realise how difficult it must have been for Joyce's parents to go through this process. Those letters were some of the most important letters in my life, more important than that bloody passport itself. At the State bank in Trutnov I had a good chance of being granted the maximum allowance for tourists travelling on invitation, i.e. five pounds, as my friend Ladia's girlfriend Marcela had worked there and it was up to her now to help me to get it. After Marcela got me those five pounds my steps led once again to the Trutnov passport office, where I produced a reference from my employer, an invitation from Mrs Jeeves and filled an application of "one-off exit clause". I received the most valuable stamp in my passport "one-off exit permit". It was valid from 2nd May 1969 for 11 days. As it happened, my uncle from USA who came to visit his homeland, stayed with us for a few days and learning about my plans, he advised me not to be a fool and apply for a longer permit than 11 days. So once again I went to see the Skoda car factory director and applied for a longer unpaid leave, he said to get the reference from trade union and when I did it, the director gave me his permission for an unpaid leave. With his approval I

went back to the passport office and the clerk, using his pen, corrected figure 11 to 91. Great!!!

My last steps in pursuit of my dream visit to England led to the British Embassy in Prague. At that time I was familiar with about 20 lessons from “*Teach Yourself English*” textbook and I



rather looked forward to my very first conversation with a real Englishman. I took a day off work and went to Prague by an early train. In those days the usual way to travel to Prague was by train from Hostinne. It was a very early train called Krakonos leaving Svoboda in Krkonose Mountains. So, I got up as early as 3 a.m. and as there were no buses so early I had to walk about 6 km to the train station. In Prague I found the British Embassy, went in and did not have to wait long before I was called in to the ambassador's office.

British coat of arms at the Prague Embassy.

I remember a large wooden desk and behind it a friendly man who took my passport together with Mrs Jeeves's letter and without too much ado placed a large one page stamp in it. I cannot remember anything from our conversation. Later on I learnt from one of Joyce's letters that a clerk from the British Home Office visited Mrs Jeeves and made some enquiries about me. I returned home at about midnight.

I recollect one small episode on the train back from Prague. At the main railway station, I bought myself the only English newspaper there, the communist *Morning Star* and sitting in a compartment I was trying to read the headlines. Opposite me was sitting an older man dressed in a smart tweed suit with a tie. It did not take long before he spoke English to me. He was a Czech living in Australia and I cannot remember whether he was here on holiday or returning home. I bet that must have been very thrilling to me.



Tweed is a rough woollen fabric. Tweeds are an icon of traditional Irish and British country clothing, being desirable for informal outerwear, due to the material being moisture-resistant and durable.

Departure

I left Prague on the 2nd May 1969. Had I left my departure for the following month it would have been impossible, as the politics went from bad to worse and the gate became shut. At home I said good bye to my mother (I did not want to make my departure too dramatic, so I did not tell her I was planning to stay in England for a long time). My sister was at school, so that was simple. When saying farewell to my father in Prague, I also did not tell him about my intention not to return.

My father, who was one of about ten lucky people in our village to have a car, refused to drive me to Prague, as he would not be able to cope with the town traffic, so I asked one of my friends to come with us and drive my father's car back home.

Driving in Prague and not being used to trams I almost collided with one, good job my friend Olda gave me a shout to stop. We arrived at the Czechoslovak Airlines office in the centre of Prague, and from there I was to take a coach to the airport. I left my suitcase with the receptionist and went for a short walk on the main street. Looking towards Letna, I saw a



huge heap of big stones from what it used to be Stalin's monument and now it had been blown to bits, I turned the other way and walked to the town centre, and whom should I meet-my schoolmate from grammar school Petr Medilek who was studying at the Math-Phys University. At the airport I bought myself my very first Coca-Cola, I was 22 and my life was in my hands.

Although the BEA were flying twice a week my plane was half empty. The captain and his stewardess are welcoming us few passengers.

Hawker Siddeley Trident 3B with three Rolls-Royce engines. It was the first aircraft with the rear T-tail, and also the first one in civil service to land on automatic pilot (in 1965).



My choice of music from those years -

Waldemar Matuška (1932-2009)

A Czechoslovak country singer popular in his homeland during the 1960s and 1970s. When in



1986 he emigrated to the USA the communist party banned all his songs and destroyed recordings of "I'm My Own Master".

Song I would choose is "You still carry dreams of youth in your pockets".

Two comments from YouTube:

- *This song always reminds me of my youth and tears come to my eyes. I always realise that we live only once and our lives are short.*
- *Only few understand the whole wealth of truth hidden in the text of this beautiful song*

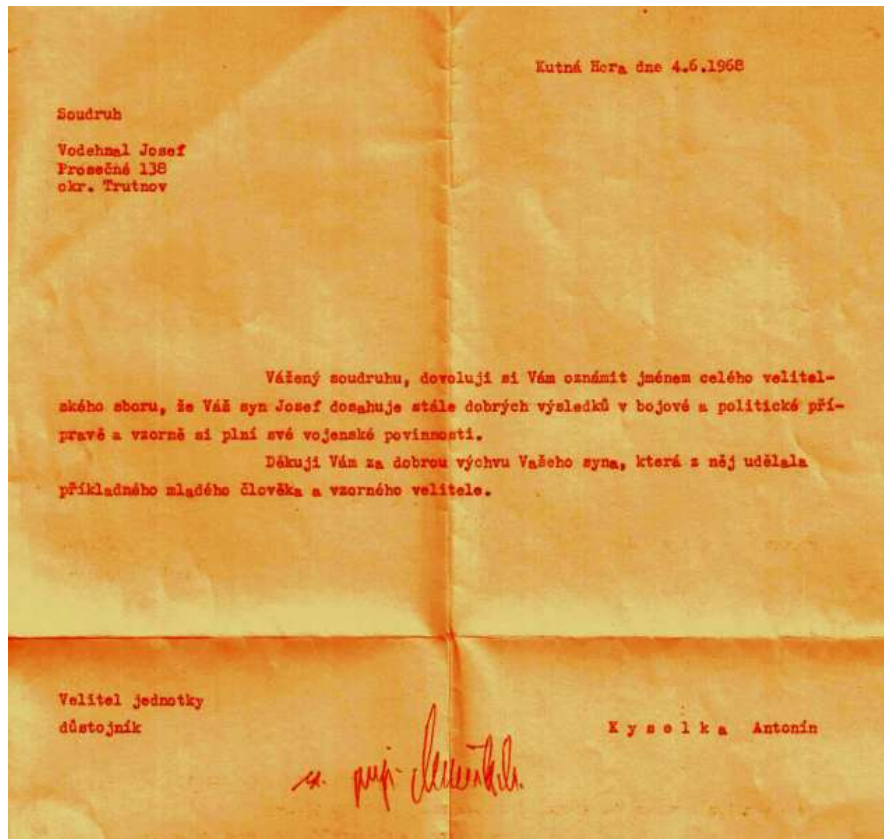
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2kdZtKy6l3s&list=PLFE9BF5EF58F8239F>

DESTINY LEADS THE WILLING AND DRAGS THE UNWILLING

SENECA

Appendix

A letter from my battalion commander to my father



Comrade
Vodehnal Josef
Prosečné 138
Okr. Trutnov

Kutná Hora, 4.6.1968

Dear comrade, in the name of the whole Command Corps, I wish to let you know that your son is achieving good results in fighting and political training and fulfils his military duties to high standards.

Thank you for good upbringing of your son, which made him an exemplary young man and an outstanding platoon commander.

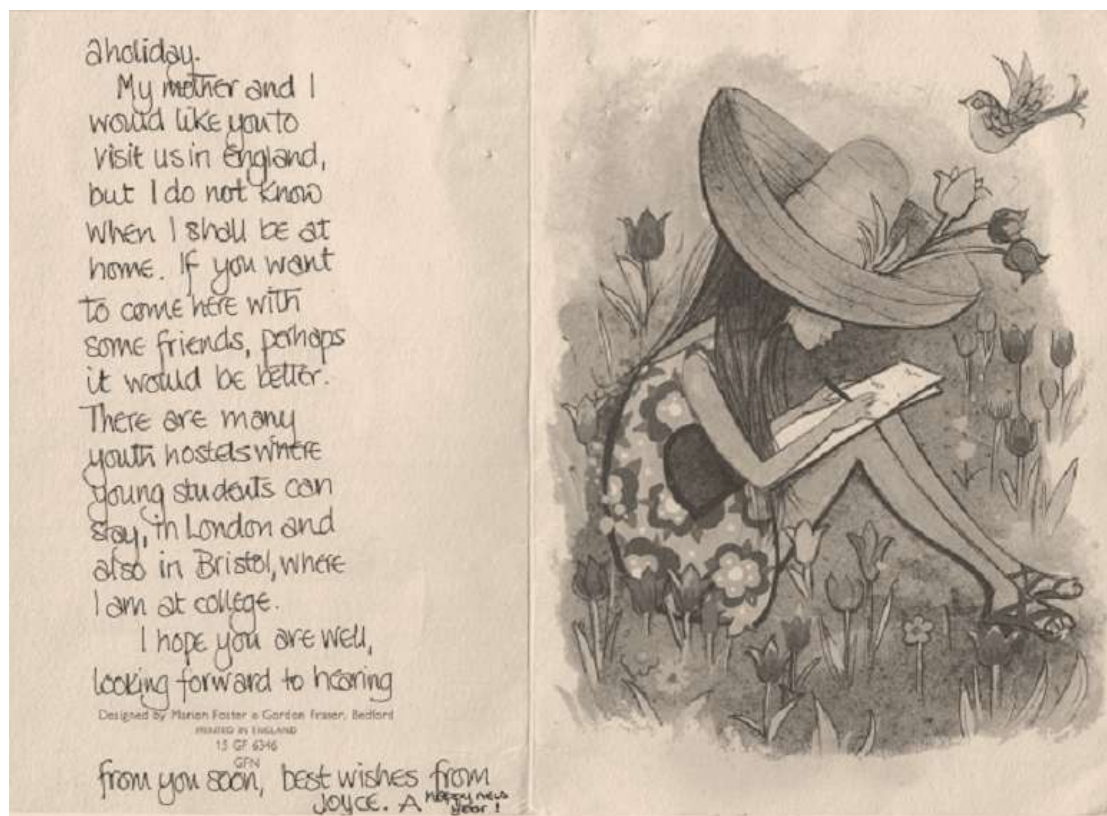
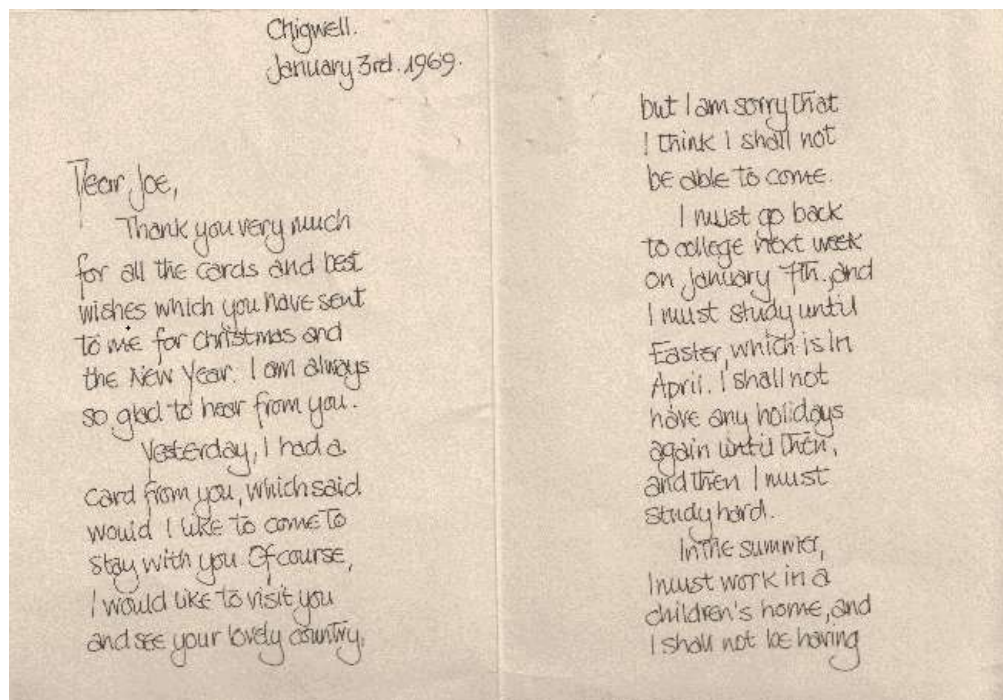
Unit commander

Anton Kyselka

My comments:

It was Spring 68 and I think the officer Kyselka was surfing on the wave of gradual relaxation communist dictatorship. I doubt whether such letters were ever written and sent during the previous years. However the letter reveals two typical aspects of the regime – although my father never was a member of the communist party, he is still addressed as a "comrade", that's how it used to be under dictatorship, simply we were all "comrades", in any official contact "Mr or Mrs" was never used. . Another thing that strikes me is that officer Kyselka does not reveal his rank, it just says "officer", no doubt he had never written or seen this letter and it is signed by someone else.

Letters from Joyce Jeeves



1. COLLEGE OF ST. MATTHIAS
FISHPONDS
BRISTOL, ENGLAND

25 JAN 1969

Dear Jos,

Thank you very much for your lovely letter, and the letter from your teacher, Mrs. Bernardora. The pictures and photographs which you sent are really beautiful. Thank you!

I have written to my mother to ask her if I may stay with you, and if you can come here in May. It is very difficult for me to know what I am to do! I have not got a holiday in May, and will not have my summer holiday until July. So I shall be working at college here in Bristol, and my parents will be alone at my home in London.

If you came to England, you would not like it very much if you stayed with my parents in London, and I was not there to show you the city and our countryside. If you came here, to Bristol, it would be very difficult for me to find you a place to stay, and I would not be able to take you out, because I would be at college all the time. I have no friends at home with whom you could stay, because all my friends are working, and do not have holidays until the summer. But I will ask one of my girlfriends in London if you can stay with her, although you would be alone all day then, because she must go to work.

I do not think that I can come to Czechoslovakia this

year, because I must work for a while in a children's home, and my aunt has asked me to go to America with her, to see some American schools. I would like to go, as I have to write a very long study about children's homes, and want to see the homes they have for children who have not got good parents, in all the countries I can visit.

I have also got a boyfriend who would like to go on holiday with me, and it is very hard for me to know what I can do! I want to meet you, and to visit your country very much, and I want you to be able to come here to visit us.

I think that it is best if I



talk to my mother² and my auntie and my boyfriend again, and see what we can decide together.

If you come to stay in Bristol in May, I want you to be happy and enjoy yourself, and I will ask at my college if there is a place where you can stay. I will write to you again, and tell you what I find for you. I think it is more important that you can come here, than it is that I come to stay with you this year. I can perhaps come to Czechoslovakia at Christmas or New Year, as you said in your letter.



So I will do my best to find a place for you to stay here, although I do not know how much money it will be for you.

I will write again soon, and look forward to your next letter.

Please give my best wishes to Mrs. Bernardova, and thank her for her letter. I would very much like to visit her and you at Christmas, as I want to go to America if I can this summer. I will never be able to go there again,

POST CARD

THE ADDRESS TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE

So I would like³ to take the chance, while it is there.

I hope that you are well, and please tell Mrs. Bernardova how difficult it is for me to decide what to do. It is important that I do visit a school or a special home for children for my study, and when I have done it, I will be able to have a real holiday perhaps at Christmas, or the summer of 1970. I hope you understand what I am explaining to you.

If you come to Bristol,



you know that you will have to travel by train to see London, and it is a long way. But if you come to London first, and see my parents for one or two days and then come to Bristol, you could visit London by yourself first. But you can always go by train from Bristol, if you want to go there.

In May, I will have four days holiday (we call it "half-term holiday") on May 24th., 25th., 26th., and 27th.

POST CARD

THE ADDRESS TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE

If you come⁴ to England at about this time, you can stay with me in London for those days, because I will go home then, and after, you could come back to Bristol with me for a week or so. But during this time, also, I have some very important examinations in art, and I will have a lot of work to do for this. I do not know what you think. Would you come with a friend, or some friends, or would you come alone?

Please write to tell me what you want, and what

If you come⁴ to England at about this time, you can stay with me in London for those days, because I will go home then, and after, you could come back to Bristol with me for a week or so. But during this time, also, I have some very important examinations in art, and I will have a lot of work to do for this. I do not know what you think. Would you come with a friend, or some friends, or would you come alone?

Please write to tell me what you want, and what



you think about it all.

As I have said, it is very difficult for me!

Good bye for now,
very best wishes
to you,
from
Joyce.

POST CARD

THE ADDRESS TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE

I hope you can understand what I have written. If you cannot, perhaps someone could help you to translate it. I will write to Mrs. Bernardova soon, when I have addresses for her girls.

CHIGWELL
Essex
Tuesday April 15th.
1969

Dear Joseph,

Thank you very much for your letter, which I received today. I was so glad to hear from you, and I am sorry I have not written to you before now. I was waiting to hear if you were able to come to England.

There are some things I must tell you, if you are coming here on May 2nd. First, we have telephoned the Czechoslovak Embassy in London, and they told us that they cannot help you, unless your firm (the people you work for in Czechoslovakia) send you to this country to study, or to do some work here for your job at home. That means you must have an official reason for coming here.

Secondly, you cannot work in this country until you apply to our Home Office for a work permit. This takes a long time to get, and before you ask for a work permit, you must find a job.

The greatest difficulty we have is finding you somewhere to live. The neighbour, who told us she could have you to stay in her home, is now going on holiday in the month of May. So you will not be able to live there.

My father is a rather strict man, and my mother is not physically well. She also suffers from nervous depression, and that means she becomes ill when she has a lot of work to do, or a lot to worry about. I hope you understand what I am saying! My mother and father say that you can stay in our home for 3 weeks, and after that, you will have to find somewhere else to stay. If you need more money, you will also have to find a job, to earn some money for your keep in a youth hostel, or a room, or a hotel. We cannot have you for more than 3 weeks, because I will be coming home from college at the end of May for a holiday, and my mother finds it very difficult to look after people for a long time. This is not only because she is not strong, but because my father is a very difficult man, and life is not easy with him, especially when we have visitors.

I hope you understand what I mean.

We want to help you very much indeed, but we can give you only 3 weeks holiday in our home. If you want to stay for 3 months, I am sorry but you will have to find your own job and a place to live, after the first 3 weeks.

We have tried very hard to find somewhere for you to study English, but it is impossible to do anything for you until you are here. I am sorry that you cannot live with us for 3 months, but my mother could not do it for so long, and my father would become very bad-tempered with her.

I am at home on my father's holiday at the moment, and on July 10th, I begin my summer holidays. So I shall be home again then, and all our rooms will be full. In August, I am going to America, and I am very excited about this.

Please understand that we want to do all that is possible to help you, and give you a chance to stay in England. But it is so difficult for us as it is for you to make any good arrangements. We understand completely what you want, but we can only give you 3 weeks holiday in our home. We cannot promise you more than that, but you

know that you are very welcome to come for that time to us. What happens after those 3 weeks depends upon you - and luck!

Please write back to me soon, at my college in Bristol, and tell me what you decide to do.

My mother and father send you their best wishes,

I hope that I shall be able to meet you at some time, although I will be in Bristol if you come here at the beginning of May. So you will have to live with my parents, if you come for the 3 weeks.

I hope you are well,
with very best wishes,
from
Joyce.

8 Oak Lodge Ave,
CHIGWELL
Essex. England.
19. April 1969

Dear Joseph,

I am writing to you again, because we have just had a letter from our Home Office.

They asked us if we knew you were coming to England (that is to say, if we knew you wanted to come here), and if we would be responsible for you. They also want to know what you will do here, and how long we will have you to stay.

My mother has written today to the Home Office, in reply to their letter. She has said that she knows you wish to

come here, and that you want to be here for 3 months, to study English at a college in England.

So we have said that we know you will be here for 3 months, and that we are responsible for you while you are here. But my mother says please would you remember that we cannot have you to stay at our house for longer than 1 month, and for the months of June and July, you will have to find a job and earn some money, so that you can find another place to live.

Of course, we will help you all we can to find work, and a place to live, and the chance to study, while you are at our house for the month of May.

Also, we will not throw you onto the street, when you have had one month with us! We will make sure, as I have said, that you have some work, and a place to live, and that you earn enough money to pay for everything you need. I do not know how it will be with the study - I am sure that we shall find a place in a college, where you can do some English. It might be that you will have to go to night-school.

I shall not be here at home, when you arrive. But my parents say that, when you arrive, you must telephone to our house, or send a telegram from the airport, and tell them where you are. (That is, which airport you are at).

Then you must wait at the airport, and my parents will come in the car to meet you, and to bring you here. They can only do this if it is one of the airports near London.

If you arrive here at night, then please wait until the morning before you telephone, or send your telegram to us!

My mother says that there will be a Czech terminal lounge at the airport, but if there is not, then wait in the main terminal lounge for my parents to come.

I will give them your photograph, so that they can recognize you, if possible! My mother is short, with brown hair, and she is rather fat! My father is a big man, but

not very tall, and he has very little hair, (he is nearly bald) and the little bit of hair he has got is white. But if you come, and my parents meet you, they will probably ask for your name to be called out on the intercom. (the radio), at the airport, so that you can come to them.

I hope that this is alright for you.

We are all looking forward very much to seeing you, and we all hope very much that you will be able to come here.

I myself hope that you can come, and that you find what you are looking for in our

country. I am sorry to say that it is not a very wonderful country, in some ways, but there are many kind people, and many good times to be had, if you are lucky enough to meet the right people!

So, we hope to see you soon, and please write again if you have time, and tell us, if you can, whether you will be coming, or not.

With very best wishes to you,

Joyce.

Yes, I was lucky to meet the right people even before the start of my journey – Mrs. Bernard, Joyce Jeeves, her mother and father.