

Family Burden

My adolescence years

In my teenage years, since fifties, my parents permanently wrangled with my uncle's family. My father and my uncle were joint owners of a hunting lodge with adjoining grounds and farm buildings. They were trivialities at first (like different farming methods), but soon they got involved in an argument; my mother was charged with killing a cat.

Uncle Ivan was a lawyer himself, but he had pleaded the case by a counselor of ill repute. Finally, they reached an agreement on dividing the properties, except for a path dividing two objects of the same owner. The judge warned them at once that this arrangement will lead to another controversy in future. She was right – my sister Olga got involved in another argument with her cousin Jan and she won the case. This happened in the year 2010; whole the case lasted for more than 50 years.

On the rout

My family experience brought me to the decision that I leave home to live among “normal” people.

In August 1970, after finishing my studies, I started work at *Tesla Electronic Works* at Rožnov, Moravia. The town was situated in a nice hilly landscape. The times after *Soviet Invasion* were rather difficult though – some people had to leave their positions¹. The atmosphere in the company, which used to be the leader in electronic branch, was getting worse. At the beginning, people were assessed according their results, but gradually it was for *crawling into ass*. In the year 1978 I joined a department of Slovak Academy of Science seated in Piešťany, Slovakia, and later on I started work at an innovative IC production² line in Tesla Piešťany.

The political situation in Slovakia was much better – there was chaos, but the basic moral values were observed.

The *Velvet Revolution* caught me up at *Agricultural Farm Slušovice*, Moravia. I joined the local *Civic Forum* and took part at manifestations. My permanent address was in Piešťany; when traveling to Prague, I stayed overnight at my parents. I could also stay at our lodge. Immediately after *November 17th* the Austrian borders were opened for Czechoslovak citizens. I used the opportunity and with my friend Marie Bobková we started on a journey to Vienna. Marie had many friends and relatives there. We also visited my friend Hana Chvátalová, who emigrated in eighties with her son. She was a cook in a cloister in the center of Vienna.

The journey wasn't very pleasant; I had a bad cold and Marie was somehow panicky. She took pills all the time. After we crossed the border back to Moravia, she became normal.

1 People who refused to declare an agreement with the invasion, had to leave leading positions, some former leaders were dismissed

2 Production of integrated circuits (chips) in the license of Japanese firm *Toshiba*.

Back home

After Revolution the once famous Agrocomplex Slušovice started to disintegrate; I myself I became a “dissident” for my involvement in the Civic Forum³. I spent a few days in Piešťany and spoken with my former colleagues; they didn’t understand “*what do Czech people want?*”, they hadn’t the faintest idea about democracy. I turned back to my parents – I still had a little room in their flat. For some time I worked in the forest and stayed at the hunting lodge. Then I started to guide foreigners at the Memorial Terezín⁴. At the beginning of the school year I started to teach at *Josef Jungmann Grammar School* in Litoměřice, some 5 km away. They urgently needed a teacher of foreign languages, English and German.

It was very exhausting for me – I only had essential knowledge of these languages without methodical training. At the end of the school year I was totally exhausted.

During holidays, however, I soon recovered, and in the next school year I started to teach at the *Apprentice Training Center* at Praha-Vysočany. It was much easier for me – I was there in my branch. In addition to languages, I taught also electrical engineering, automation, physics and also humanitarian subjects like political economy, ecology and even gymnastics. In the free time I translated *Compendium of the Viola d’amore* by František Slavík.

The Golden Fever

The political development in Czechoslovakia went other ways than we hoped. We were free to travel, free to say our views and had free elections. But there were other forces that moved the society. During two years our country was divided into two independent states. An unmethodical *transform of economy* created a new class of the riches and caused splitting of the society. On the other hand, the *restitution* of confiscated properties generally had positive effect – the original owners or their descendants usually had liable relation to the gained possessions. The restitution needed a lot of administrative work; but my parents – in their eighties – had managed that. This way, my father became owner of a forestry house and about 90 hectares of forest. Once my father entered an office, and the clerks adored him. When he decided to give the forestry house to me and my sister *Lída*, I hesitated a little – the history of co-ownership is going to repeat! But I had no choice – otherwise I would end up in the street. There arose another problem: the forester house wasn’t free, there was still the former forester, Mr. Zíka with his family staying there – he asked ransom. Father had to rent him out his forests.

3 Civic Forum lost in local elections

4 In German *Theresienstadt*, the former Jewish Ghetto

Farming at Sloup

Finally, I could move to my part of the house; the other part was used by my niece Věra with her husband Dan and a little daughter. We were good friends at first, but gradually some problems occurred – Dan wanted to reign in the house. He often came home drunken and was aggressive; we had to hide at our neighbor Nora Remeňová. Finally, they got some financial support from Lída and moved to northern Bohemia. I stayed in the house alone. When I retired, I bought two sheep and made the hay. During the time, I accommodated several people. Some helped me, other stole. One of my tenants went out to pray on the Charles Bridge; God knows what he is doing now, in the pandemic.

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Jan Matys