

Chapter 3

1938-1944

1938

We entered the twentieth year of our republic. We in Těšany, on the initiative of our mayor Eduard Langášek of No. 33, decided that to celebrate this twentieth anniversary we would set up a monument to those of our citizens who fell in the World War of 1914-1918. This memorial, built at a cost of 14,000 crowns, was to be unveiled on October 28. During the spring, ceremonial alleys of cherry trees were planted along the tracks leading to the vineyards.

The political sky was gloomy as before a thunderstorm. The Germans living in the border regions of our land took to the streets and demonstrated, egged on by agents from Germany. Incidents occurred, and German propaganda on the radio and in the newspapers shouted to the world of the great oppression suffered by Germans in the Czechoslovak Republic. Of course the Germans were not oppressed, they had the same rights as we Czechs, but they were not satisfied and wanted to be joined to the Reich. And among the people fear of another war was growing, especially when it was ordered that boys, girls, young women, and men over military age, should go to evening classes on civil defence in the event of air attack. In these classes, Dr Toman and the teachers showed us how to act under gas attack and how to give first aid to the wounded. On May 22 there was a partial mobilization of certain age groups. The situation was very serious. Daily broadcasts in Czech from Vienna railed against the Czech Government and against President Dr. Edvard Beneš. Towards harvest the situation quietened down, and the soldiers returned home. But the agitation in the border regions and the railings from abroad did not cease.

This year's crops were very good. The weather at harvest time was favourable, and everything was safely gathered in.

On August 12, there was delight at the house of Jara, where a son was born to him. He was christened Josef, and my man and I stood as godparents. On August 30, while threshing corn, 17-year-old Jan Ryšánek from No. 129 touched the electric power line, and was killed on the spot. On September 14, just at the time of the quarterly market, several men received call-up letters with immediate effect, among them our Jara. A week later, on September 22, at 3 o'clock in the morning, constable Frant. Ledba of No. 9 banged the drum and announced that there was universal mobilization of men up to 37 years old. The men from Těšany went mainly to the border at Mikulov [some thirty kilometres to the SSW]. In Těšany itself there were soldiers in the manor house courtyard, in the schools, in the church hall, and also in the yard at Šinkvice Dvůr. The soldiers had an observation post at the triangulation point in the vineyards, from where there was a telephone link to the Těšany post office.

On September 23 we had our annual wine festival, but it was not a happy festival as in previous years. Word flew from mouth to mouth among the apprehensive people that there would be war. All radio receivers had to be handed in at the police station, so that people did not listen to the bullying talk from abroad. Then it was announced, again with the drum, that those without cellars should immediately construct shelters. Here, we all made shelters by the ditch [here and elsewhere, "the ditch" appears to be a reference to the brook which ran along the bottom of the garden before land beyond it was bought in 1922], and many who could bought themselves gas masks. Everywhere, people were saying that if it came to war, the Germans would release poison gases on us.

Then came September 29, where the great powers of England, France, Italy, and Germany determined our fate at Munich. And they decided to make Czechoslovakia capitulate, apparently so as to prevent war. Thus Czechoslovakia was forced to yield its border regions to Germany, Poland, and Hungary. As early as October 1, the Germans occupied our border regions. There, the wild German gang known as the "Nazi militia" started on their activities. They fell on Czech people in their homes and on the streets, and bullied and tormented them into giving up their homes. Many from the borders fled to the republic which our former allies had so shamefully betrayed. To Těšany came a war invalid from Valtice, tobacconist Matoušek. Our Pavel, living at No. 247, gave him a sitting room as a flat. Then a Jewish shopkeeper from Znojmo, Jokl, came by horse with his family, and went to live with shopkeeper Veininger at No. 13. Thus the German border was now only an hour's journey away (the hill behind Nikolčice). [This will have been an hour's journey on foot or with an animal pulling a load, the distance being a mere six kilometres or so.]

On October 13, Miss Mennchenova the teacher died. She was frightened by the thought of another war, and slit the veins of her wrists. She was already in retirement, and had taught in the local primary school for 28 years.

After these unhappy events came October 28, for which so many preparations had been made. In Těšany, as elsewhere, there were no celebrations. The War Memorial, with its statue of "The Liberator", was set up soon after the harvest, but the public celebrations planned for October 28 were postponed until conditions might improve.

In succession to President Dr. Beneš, who resigned on October 5, Dr. Emil Hácha was elected on November 30 as President of our now so small republic, impoverished by the German cockroaches. [In such a context, the single-syllable Czech word "šváb" has a bite of sheer disgust which no translation can reproduce. The writer will use it again when describing the events of the following March.]

1939

The year 1939 had arrived. Czechoslovakia had been sacrificed, but apparently to no purpose. From Germany came clouds of discontent. On March 14, we heard that Slovakia had detached itself from Bohemia and Moravia, and had become an independent "Slovak state". Those who switched on the Brno radio at 6 o'clock in the morning of March 15 heard thunderous music. Then, after a moment, an announcement in German that German soldiers had occupied the central police station in Brno, followed by further rousing marches. We were alarmed and asked each other, "What is going on?" We tuned our radios to Prague, where a female announcer spoke in an agitated and almost tearful voice. "German forces have moved into all parts of our republic. Keep calm. Go about your daily work, workers to your factories, artisans to your crafts, officials to your offices and farmworkers to your fields. Keep calm ... keep calm." And this was repeated every 3 or 4 minutes.

The weather that day was harsh. Snow fell until dawn and then on through the morning, and then, before noon on that March 15, these, these German cockroaches, came through Těšany. Citizens, who came to look at the German tanks and armoured cars travelling from Klobouky to Brno and carrying shabby German soldiers, stood sadly, and many had tears in their eyes. Nobody welcomed them, we looked on them with revulsion and hate. Only the local veterinary surgeon had his right arm raised in salute. In the afternoon, the constable banged the drum and announced that we had become part of the Reich, and that nobody was to offer resistance.

The road-menders received orders to remove the heaps of gravel from the sides of the road, apparently so that they would not impede the passage of the German army. On the second and third day, Germans from Brno came along the roads, and fastened wooden boards on the telephone poles with the notice "rechtsfären". Until the arrival of the Germans, we drove on the left. Now our home was no longer the Czechoslovak Republic, and red banners with a black swastika in a white circle reminded us that we were "Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren" under the protection of the Great German Reich and its Führer A. Hitler. And during the next few months we started to feel the meaning of this protection. Everything that might remind us of the republic had to be removed. ČSR had to disappear from railway wagons and buses, and in its place was substituted BMB, Böhmen Mährische Bahn. We Bohemians and Moravians said that for us these letters meant "Budeme Mít Beneše" (We Will Have Beneš).

The people were constantly provoked by the newspapers, and the constable banged the drum and announced that those who wanted to could go to work in Germany. It was further ordered that all tradespeople must have the names of their firms written in two languages, first German and then Czech. At the crossroads, the German name Tischan appeared above the Czech name Těšany.

Came the harvest. During the afternoon of July 22, we were binding the wheat into sheaves. Great black clouds started to appear behind the Blučina hill to the west, and the impending thunder and lightning forced us to lay down the sheaves and hurry home. Hardly had we reached home when it started to rain, and from the clouds could be heard roaring and ever louder thunder. Then hailstones started to fall like pieces of ice. After the storm, I picked up some that weighed 12–15 dkg, and they lay on the ground a long time before I could collect them. The storm did great damage both to the corn that was still standing and to that which was in sheaves. Those who had already stooked their corn were fortunate. The vineyards and root crops also suffered great damage. In Jara's garden the hailstones broke all the glass panes of the hotbeds, not one remaining whole.

On September 1 of this year, war started between Germany and Poland. It was immediately ordered that house windows be strictly blacked out during evening lighting-up times, and street lights be left unlit. People were hastily stocking up on sugar, soap, salt, coffee, textiles and various other goods.

German soldiers, who were in our towns like flies, bought our goods of all kinds, and sent them to Germany. One German mark was equivalent to ten of our crowns. As a result, the shops were empty.

In October, ration coupons were introduced for flour, bread, sugar, meat, butter, and lard. The grinding and crushing of corn without a permit was forbidden. The ration of corn per person was 13½kg per month. Bran 15kg per month for one pig. Sugar 1.20kg per month, meat 1.20kg plus 40dkg of meat products, butter 12½dkg, children to 6 years ½kg, to 14 years 40dkg. Soap, one bar weighing 5dkg and one ¼kg packet of soap powder per person per month. Pig lard 6–8dkg, artificial fat 27–... dkg [gap left for upper figure and never filled in] as announced. Germans had larger rations in all things than we Czechs.

In the first days of October, news flew around the so-called Protectorate that the war in Poland was finished. On the radio, we constantly heard praise of the heroic German army, until we were fed up with listening.

On November 17, we heard that we no longer had freedom in Prague. That day, they shot 9 students, and dragged 1,220 off to prison. And high schools [effectively, universities and technical colleges] were closed for three years. This was the protection that the Great German Reich was giving us.

At the end of November, compulsory livestock delivery quotas were introduced. We delivered a heifer weighing 400kg, and received 3,600 crowns for it. Livestock had to be taken to the station at Sokolnice, where it was loaded into wagons.

1940

At the start of this year it was ordered that nobody could sell milk freely, nor could they make butter at home. Milk had to be taken to a newly established collection point at Eduard Sedláček's at No. 179. For his own needs, each producer could keep ¾l per person. After a short time, this was reduced to ½l per person.

This winter started truly cold right from the first days of January. There were massive snowstorms, and everywhere on the roads were great snowdrifts. All transport was stopped, and the constable banged the drum and announced that somebody had to come from each house to clear the road. But what took two days to clear was put back again by one night of wind. In our own garden, in the former meadows down by the ditch, we had so much drifted snow that some trees were covered halfway up the crown and some could be seen only as hillocks in the snow. Hungry animals came into gardens and gnawed at the branches of the trees. This long and cruel winter killed a great number of wild animals, hares, and partridges. It dragged on and on, and sowing and field work did not start until the middle of April.

In spring it was ordered that nobody could sell eggs to middlemen, and that eggs must be delivered to a collection point at Alžběta Chaloupková's at No. 109. For each hen, 60 eggs had to be delivered. Shoes, clothes, and cloth were not allowed to be sold freely. Footwear vouchers were issued at the village office, and without a voucher footwear could not be bought. For clothing and cloth, coupons were issued. A sheet contained 100 coupons and was issued for a year, and for a metre of cloth they clipped off 8 coupons at the shop. And so one new thing followed another. Children at school had completely different lessons. Each day they had to spend at least two hours learning German, the textbooks which they had had under the Republic were no longer valid, and others had yet to be published. So that the children could learn to read, they took with them to school "Babička" (Grandma) by Božena Němcová. [The tales of Božena Němcová are as familiar to Czech children as those of Hans Christian Andersen and the Brothers Grimm are to ours, and "Babička" is particularly famous.]

In spring, we saw the first consequences of the cruel winter. Winter rye and wheat had been killed by the frost, so everything was ploughed back. Fruit trees of all kinds, and especially apricot trees, were badly frostbitten. We ourselves had to dig up 32 trees, and those with vineyards suffered great loss.

This spring, our mother Anna Rychlíková fell ill. Her legs swelled up and she became generally weak, and we made her go to Dr. Toman here in the village. When she seemed to be getting no better, she went to Dr. Králík in Klobouky, and he prescribed some tablets. When there still seemed to be no improvement, I went to the doctor and asked what was going on. And Dr. Králík told me that mother had cancer of the liver, and that nothing could be done.

Harvest time came, but it was a barley harvest. Of winter wheat and rye there was just an odd stook here and there, and of spring wheat likewise there was little. But the barley crop was very good, and

this year nearly all the mills would be milling barley instead of wheat.

On July 23, the statue of President T. G. Masaryk the Liberator had to be taken down from the war memorial. And it was ordered that it be smashed. Leopold Vahala of No. 98, the village secretary, and others hid it in the brickwork in the courtyard of the old school, now the village office. Likewise, the relief of President Masaryk above the doors of the secondary school had to be removed. But here also our inhabitants fooled the Germans. They put a wooden frame around the relief and boarded it up, then they plastered over this hiding place with mortar, and now it looks like a protruding square which was added to the wall so that the German notice "Schule" could be put above the Czech "Škola". Again, all books by certain authors had to be removed from the village library. On August 4 the notice "Masaryk Jubilee School" had to be taken down from the secondary school, together with its accompanying motto "Truth Will Prevail".

On September 8, miller Frant. Petlák of No. 90 stepped by mistake into the cutting blades while grinding corn. His leg was crushed almost to the knee. Before he could be got free, he lost a lot of blood, and after being taken to hospital he died.

In the middle of September we took mother to St. Anna's Hospital in Brno. She wanted to go in the belief that she would be cured, but after 14 days the ambulance brought her back and she could no longer walk. Her legs became more and more swollen. In October the swelling reached her waist, and her hands swelled so that she could no longer eat and we had to feed her. Then at seven in the morning of November 4 she lost consciousness, and from then on she no longer knew us. At 7 o'clock in the evening she breathed her last. On November 6, we took her to the cemetery to her eternal rest. Thus she quietly departed from our midst, as quietly as she had lived throughout her life, knowing no delight beyond that of working for her children.

Autumn was very wet, and all field work was delayed. In November, people were still threshing grain and digging potatoes, and Jara was still cutting maize after mother's funeral. The Germans oppressed us more and more, and inspectors started going around, looking to see if someone had hidden reserves of corn or more animals or poultry than he had officially reported, "on the black" as people say. It is further ordered that everyone had to deliver a certain quantity of meat according to the size of his fields, thus ... of pork and ... of beef from 1 hectare [gaps left for amounts and never filled in]. Again, home slaughter of pigs was put under official supervision. A slaughter had to be announced at the village office a week in advance, and slaughtering was restricted to one day in the week. The pig was killed, cleaned, and disembowelled, and then had to remain untouched until the arrival of the mayor, village secretary, and veterinary surgeon. These gentlemen weighed the pig, stamped it, and specified according to its weight how much lard had to be supplied from it and for how long its owner should not receive coupons for meat and fat. Up to 100kg dead weight, 4kg of lard had to be given, up to 120kg, 6kg of lard, beyond 120kg, 8kg. The lard went to the local collection point of Mr. Rumel at Klobouky. For 1kg we received 18 crowns.

This year, the free sale of building materials, wood, bricks, and cement, was prohibited. A permit was needed from the regional office. Again, coal was now rationed, 24q per family per year of coal from Čejč [a town in the mining region to the south-east, a little under twenty kilometres from Těšany].

1941

This winter again, there were showers of snow such as last year, but the frosts were not as severe. Again transport was disrupted, and citizens were called on to clear snowdrifts. In March the weather warmed up, the snow melted, the trees started to be covered in buds, and we were all pleased that spring had come. But winter returned with severe frosts and corn was again killed by frost, though not to such an extent as last year. The condition of the wild animals was wretched and once again many hares and partridges were frozen to death, 7 to 8 pairs of partridges being counted around Těšany this spring. Spring was cool with frequent rain, the corn looked very well, but everything was late, because sowing continued until mid-April and planting throughout the whole of May. The harvest started on July 26. The weather was very cool and wet and the corn was constantly being turned, but in spite of this it sprouted and grew in the sheaves and stooks. The harvest dragged on a long time, and there were stooks outside until the end of August.

The political situation worsened after June 22, when war with Russia started. The German political police known as "the Gestapo" arrested the leaders and members of the Communist Party, who were suspected of anti-German intentions. By official order, large V signs were stuck and painted on windows and walls in towns and villages. This V apparently meant "Viktoria" or victory. The newspapers were full of praise for the bravery and valour of the German army, to such an extent that

we lost our taste for reading them. And on the radio, German alone was heard. But we listened to the transmissions from London and Moscow, where there were broadcasts in Czech several times a day. For listening to the news from London or Moscow, people were sentenced to several years in jail or to death. The countryside and the towns were full of spies and agents, who informed against Czechs for every word spoken against Germans.

The supply situation was worse, and the corn ration was reduced to 11½kg. People threshed their corn as quickly as possible after harvesting, and took it to the mill so as to have it ground without a permit (on the black). Dobrovolný, the local miller, ground day and night so that people could stock up a little before the post-harvest inspections. Grinding on the black was 50 crowns for 1 cent, grinding with a permit 14 crowns. There was an inspection at the start of September, which found Dobrovolný with 20 cents of corn on the black. The corn was confiscated, and the miller handed over to the court.

The inspection went forward next day to our Tonda at Třebomyslice. The same inspector, Květoslav Rýva, found Tonda with 35 cents of corn on the black and 35q with a permit. But he did not acknowledge this permit, and charged Tonda with 70 cents on the black.

Dobrovolný, our Tonda, and the Měnín miller who met with the same fate, were sentenced each to 4 months in jail. In addition, Tonda received a fine of 70,000 crowns from the corn federation and 20,000 from the district, total 90,000 crowns. I do not know what fine the other two millers received.

In the autumn, a sowing plan was instituted. Everyone, according to his holding of arable land, had to sow a certain amount of wheat, rye, barley, potatoes, beet, and oil-plants (poppy and rape). The sowing of fodder crops was reduced to the minimum. It was ordered that corn, after subtraction of seed corn, the ration for pigs, and the corn for nourishment of members of the household, had all to be delivered to the corn co-operative. There was no allowance of corn for poultry, but the quota of eggs to be delivered was increased from 60 to 65 per laying hen.

People from the towns came into the countryside, where they bought provisions of all kinds and offered markedly increased prices. Inspections occurred quite often. Two or three officials would arrive unannounced at the village office, and would select certain houses where they went and searched. The word "Inspection!" would flash like lightning through the village, and there was a feverish hiding of corn, flour, meat, lard, hens, and so on.

One morning after the harvest, five-pointed red stars appeared on barns and walls, and with them the slogans "Long live Stalin" and "Long live Russia". Also the letters PP, which signified "pracuj pomalu" (work slowly), so that we Czechs, who were forced to work in the arms factories and other industries important to the war effort, would sabotage and delay the work. Constable Ledba of No. 9 had to plaster over these stars and slogans with lime. The Gestapo looked for the perpetrators, but found nothing.

Winter arrived very early. A severe frost started towards the end of November, and on December 2 there were 17 degrees of frost. The manor estate, which had been under German management since the 1939 harvest, lost 30 measures of beet which had been left in the ground. (The tenant of the estate, Julius Hochberg, was Jewish, though baptized, and its owner was Prague lawyer Bechr, likewise Jewish, who had slipped off in time to England. All Jewish property had been put under German management.)

Towards the end of the year, Ludvík Dobrovolný's mill was officially closed. Těšany was now assigned to Pecl's mill at Ujezd. Corn had to be taken there by bulk permit. The mayor established how many draught animals would be needed, and those nominated had to collect the corn from people, take it to the mill, and bring back the flour, all completely without payment.

1942

The new year started with snowstorms, and great drifts were piled up on the roads. All transport was stopped, and paths on the roads had to be cleared daily. Those coming from the towns said that whole trains were arriving from the Russian front full of frostbitten German soldiers. Schools were being converted into military hospitals.

In January a master chimney-sweep, the German Eduard Veinalt, arrived in Těšany. For as long as anyone could remember, we had formed part of the round of the Klobouky sweep. Now, following the arrival of the Germans, a new round was created, taken partly from the Klobouky round and partly from the Židlochovice round. He was billeted at No. 13, whose owner Veiningr, a grocer and a Jew, had to move out into rented accommodation.

On March 26, all the inhabitants of our village were greatly upset. The bells were taken down from the tower, as had been done during the war 25 years ago, so that the metal could be used for military

purposes. This day nobody in the village did any work, and we all came to say goodbye to the three bells, which had to be taken away intact. They rang for a whole hour before noon, and then were lowered down. The only bell left in the tower was the small passing bell. The first funeral without a full ring of bells was that of Filomena Bučková, a retired smallholder's wife of No. 132.

On March 29, our Tonda was called before the German court at the Palace of Justice in Brno. It had seemed to the Germans that the local court had dealt with him too lightly. Here, he was tried again by the German court, and condemned as an enemy of the German Reich to 15 months imprisonment to be started immediately. He was first held for six weeks at Cejl in Brno, then he was taken to the prison of Beyreuth in Bavaria, where he was for 15 whole months. He was allowed to write home only once every 6 weeks, and from home to him they could only do the same. During the whole period of his imprisonment, he could not be sent any parcel. Doba took over at the mill to help out his sister-in-law, and remained there for the whole period of Tonda's absence.

The situation got continually worse. Teachers, policemen, and postal officials had to take examinations in German. Inspections occurred frequently and without warning. And those who had failed to supply their quota of eggs in 1941 had to pay a fine of 5 crowns for each undelivered egg.

By official order, large letters V, apparently indicating Viktoria or victory, had to be stuck on the walls of public buildings, buses, stations, and even private buildings. And everywhere large notices were stuck up, "The Reich is victorious on all fronts."

On May 16, the news spread like lightning that the Gestapo (the German criminal police) had arrested school director Stanislav Pavliček and taken him with them. So it has already come to this, said the frightened people to each other. And a few days later the Gestapo took teacher Ladislav Kučera, a native of Nykolčice. We had still not got over the visit of the Gestapo when news spread that an attempt had been made on the life of the Reich Protector and chief of police SS Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich. A week later, on June 4, the seriously wounded Heydrich died. We Czechs took secret delight that the Devil had taken one of the murderers of our nation. But after a few days our delight turned to horror and dismay. Martial law was announced. And the Gestapo came by day and by night, and arrested hundreds of people (many only in their night clothes) and took them to the Kounicová College in Brno. The same was happening throughout the so-called Protectorate. Hundreds of people were shot and hanged daily, and it was enough that one person showed of another that he approved of the attack for the latter to be taken by the Gestapo and executed.

On the last day of May, towards evening, soldiers came to Těšany and surrounded the village. In the evening, constable Frant. Ledba of No. 9 banged the drum and announced that nobody was allowed out into the street, and that those who disobeyed would be shot. The soldiers then went from house to house examining police registration forms and identity papers. They were looking for foreigners and suspected persons. This was the day of the last service in May, the church was full, and after the service the church was surrounded by soldiers and people could not leave. When people saw this, they were seized with horror, and women and particularly children wept aloud. Then the commander said that the women and children could go home but the men must stay put. However, when those of the men who could speak German explained to the soldiers that it was no political demonstration but a religious service, the men too were released.

A week later, the teachers went from house to house carrying a picture of a battered briefcase and flattened cap which had apparently been left at the place of the attack, and asking people if they knew the owners of these things. Those who did not must confirm it by their signature. An announcement was made that if the perpetrators were not found by June 16, every tenth Czech would be shot.

On June 10-12, we all had to go to the village office, where we signed a statement that we condemned the assassination as a shameful act, and that we were and wanted to remain faithful to the Great German Reich. We were greatly in fear of what would happen, and the papers had daily columns naming those who had been executed because they approved of the assassination and betrayed the Reich.

The harvest started in the second half of July. The crop was good but the weather was not favourable, it often rained and so the harvest took too long. Stooks could still be seen in the fields at the end of August. Martial law was lifted, and the terror eased slightly. On July 30 Těšany received another shock, when the Gestapo came and arrested village secretary Leopold Vahala of No. 98. Again everyone was asking, why? Vahala was married and had three children.

Many thought the first of May might have had something to do with it. On 1 May 1942, during the night, two flags, Czechoslovak and Russian, were raised at the highest point in the vineyards. They flew on the pole for two whole days before the police got them down. The Gestapo investigated but found nothing, and those who knew – did not tell.

On August 4, there was an inspection at Josef Král's at No. 52. They had received information, and found meat from a pig slaughtered on the black. The meat and lard were confiscated, and he was sentenced to 8 months in prison. (Jos. Král was the son of the sister of our father Karolina, and so our cousin.)

And this upset had not been forgotten when on August 30 the Gestapo came in a beautiful black car and stopped outside our house. It was 7 o'clock in the evening. I was very frightened that they were coming for us, but no, they went next door. After perhaps a quarter of an hour they came out (one Gestapo and senior policeman Hošek), and with them Jakub Vahala from No. 108, single, 37 years old, road-mender. Then like lightning the news spread that besides Jakub they had taken Josef Novotný the postman from No. 261, married and the father of three children, and Karel Ardély from No. 263, chauffeur and tractor-driver on the manor estate, married with two children. And again everyone was asking who had given information against them and why. People were becoming afraid of each other, brother did not trust brother, neighbour did not trust neighbour, friend did not trust friend, each wondered whether the other might not be a traitor.

And all in all, it seemed to us that the chimney-sweep who had come to Těšany was here as a Gestapo agent. He started his work of chimney examination not only here but in the villages lying on his round. For these examinations, there had to be with him a policeman, a member of the local council, and a fireman. His assistant climbed to the loft, examined the chimney, and told him in what state it was. He then ordered the lighting of a test fire, whether the house or cottage was new or old, to see whether smoke was escaping anywhere. For this, he demanded 60–80–100–120 crowns according to what he thought he could get away with. People objected to this, but he immediately threatened them with the Gestapo. Additionally, he told people that he could obtain this or that for them, in return for which he demanded goats, ducks, butter, or lard. Even in the village office he claimed the right to rule the roost, and if anyone dared to oppose him he threatened them with the Gestapo, who frequently went to visit him.

[Until now, and with the exception of a few early pages, the text seems to have been written using the same pen and ink throughout, but this last paragraph shows several changes of ink. I infer that the writer has finished recounting past events, and from here on or perhaps for a little time past has been making a day-by-day record. In the preface to her 1973 transcription of the second Těšany record book, she says that "in the first months" of 1942 an order came from the German district office that all local chronicles had to be surrendered within three days, and the squirrelling away of the first record book will have been done then if it had not prudently been done before (the second record book was duly surrendered, having been copied in two days by Josef Novotný of No. 261, the writer's brother Jaromír of No. 100, and village secretary Leopold Vahala of No. 98). We may note that we are now on page 120 of a manuscript with 29 lines per page and around eight words per line, the transcription of the record book having occupied the first sixty pages and her own narrative a further sixty. She has been writing very industriously.]

The Germans were fighting ever more furiously over Stalingrad, and the press was full of enthusiastic reports of the victorious progress of the German army. We were despondent but did not lose hope. In the evening or at night we listened to the broadcasts from London, and among those who spoke to us was President Dr. Edvard Beneš, in whom we believed as in our God, and he told us that the Germans were not winning the war.

At the beginning of October, the Germans came in a private car and photographed certain houses, nobody knew why. Then perhaps 14 days later the occupants of the houses photographed were given 24 hours to move out. They were allowed to take furniture and clothing, but everything else, animals, poultry, food stores, and agricultural implements had to be left in the house. The names of those displaced:

Marie Turková, No. 40
Anna Maláčová, No. 55
Štěpán Horák, No. 19

Frant. Horák, No. 41
Magdalena Knoflíčková, No. 149
The holy sisters from No. 18.

No. 18, to which was attached a 45-measure field, was known as "the endowment house", and had been given by Josef Buček and his wife Anna for the establishment of an infants' school. There, the holy sisters looked after children of up to six years. The village office was ordered to find accommodation for those displaced. The village had to repaint the vacated houses, to give them a thorough cleaning, in short to prepare them for new owners. Then large lorries arrived and brought furniture, and other lorries brought coal. [All these apart from No. 149 had been occupied by tract-holders in 1787, and so

were presumably among the best and largest houses in the village.]

In the autumn, forced labour was instituted. From each house, one person had to go to the manor estate and lift half a measure of beet. For this pressed labour, which took a man two days, he received 35 crowns.

On November 14, our village was upset once more. The German colonists were due to arrive. From early in the morning, Germans went in groups from one requisitioned house to the next. Men set out furniture, women lit fires and cooked. They looked after their fellow-countrymen, so that on their arrival they would lack nothing. After midday yet more military and civilian vehicles arrived, bringing officers, soldiers, and many other civilians who were clearly officials. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon, a large bus of the state railways arrived, and brought the expected Germans. All those who had been waiting for them rushed forward to the bus, gave them a noisy welcome, and took them to the houses prepared. No. 18 (the endowment house) was given to the German Tom, Bast received No. 19 (the former property of Štěp. Horák), Veiman received No. 149, the house of Magdalena Knoflíčková, Saval received Turek's house at No. 40, his nephew, also Saval, received No. 41, the house of Frant. Horák, and Maláč's house at No. 55 was occupied by Brener. These incomers whom the German government settled here had come from Bessarabia. The owners who had to move out of their homes were lodged elsewhere, a whole family in one living-room.

The Germans resettled here were young and middle-aged, with lots of children. Only Tom at No. 18 was perhaps 60 years old.

So we came towards the end of a year in which there were few delightful days. The Germans in their raging fury relaxed not a jot, and the Gestapo were constantly spying and taking new victims to the Kounicová College, where they were forced to confess by inhuman torture and torment. And every day great numbers of people were executed there by hanging and shooting. Miller Tocháček from Šitbořice was among them.

Festivals were largely cancelled and redesignated as working days. Only Christmas, Easter, and All Souls Day remained.

The gymnastic associations Sokol and Orel were dissolved, and their property confiscated. Theatres were closed, nothing but visits to the cinema being permitted, and these perhaps only because the weekly newsreel showed victorious despatches from the front.

Morality declined greatly during the war. The secret distillation of spirits was widespread (they were made from molasses, from beet, or from potatoes with the addition of cereal or maize bran), and they sold at a strength of 50 degrees for 500–600 crowns.

The price of all farm products on the so-called black market (that is without coupons) constantly increased. [Here and later, I am putting these tables into a standard form, and am not attempting to reproduce the precise layout of the original.]

Item		Black market price (crowns)	Official price
Wheat and rye	1q	800	196
Barley	"	400	170
Potatoes	"	200	70
Maize	"	1000	180
Butter	1kg	300	36
Lard	"	500	32
Fattened goose	"	180	28

Cigarettes and tobacco were likewise on the ration, each man (non-smokers included) receiving 45 cigarettes per week. One ordinary cigarette known as Zora cost 30 haléf, but 3 crowns on the black market.

A consequence of this black-market trading was that between people with plenty of money, the German mark was accepted tender. One mark was equivalent to ten of our crowns.

All employees of state services and offices had to get the baptismal and marriage papers of their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents to see whether any of them might be of Jewish origin. All the Těšany Jews, a total of 12 people, were taken away to Terezín during the autumn, having first been deprived of all property, valuables, bank deposits, and ready money. The same was happening to Jews in all towns and villages throughout the "Protectorate". Thus were the Jews rewarded with evil for good, as is the way of the world. Jews had always owned the great industrial enterprises in which the majority of Czechs worked. They had forced their employees to send their children to German

schools, and so had Germanicized our people. For these services they were now being rewarded by the German Reich and its leader.

1943

This year, winter was very mild.

Inspections were frequent but did not find much, because people had made good hiding-places in which they had concealed their reserve stocks. Persecution by the Germans was great, but some people were just not afraid and killed pigs for themselves on the black. But woe betide if someone informed on them. Tavern keeper Jan Čermák from Rozařín was sentenced to 18 months in prison for butchering a pig without a permit.

January 13. All those who had rented fields from the owners of the houses taken over by the Germans were called to the village office. Here they were told that the tenancies must be given up to the new owners. And where the fields had not been sown, they had to give the Germans a proportional amount of spring seed, that is barley, oats, maize, or potatoes. Some had to give hay, straw, or hens.

January 20. It was ordered that children from 10-18 years be registered with the so-called "Kuratorium" established by the Germans for youth training throughout the whole Protectorate. Participation was compulsory.

February 2. Stalingrad fell, the first defeat of the Germans. Thus were fulfilled the words of President Beneš, when he said to us in one of his broadcasts from London, "If the Germans don't capture Stalingrad by October 10, they will never capture it." And they didn't. The Germans declared a period of mourning, and even the cinemas were not open. Mr. Eduard Veinalt, the almighty master sweep, evidently thought that the period of mourning did not apply to him, and that very day he held an evening party in his home to which he invited not only foreign guests but some of the local people. It was sad to see our citizens and their friends going to these parties, and even taking gifts. The most frequent guests at his house were the veterinary surgeon Dr. Mikulášek and some of the teachers.

Our cereal delivery quotas were reduced by two per cent, but the same amount of flour had to be produced. The miller was ordered to deduct this 2% from his payment to the producer, but he had to provide flour as from a full quota (11½kg per person per month). So to give a greater weight of flour, the corn had to be more thoroughly ground, so that 1q yielded 93kg of flour, 2kg of dust, and 5kg of bran. The miller, having bought the corn, had to deliver it ground to the shop from which flour was issued for coupons. The Těšany mill remained closed, and corn still had to be ferried to Újezd.

February 8. An agricultural inspection descended on Těšany, and was established at Rotnágľ's tavern. The constable banged the drum, and announced that all who tilled land should bring their record books to the inspection. These books recorded measurements of arable land and how much of the land was sown and planted, how much corn was reaped, how much went to fulfil the producer's quota, how much was delivered to the co-operative, and who had how many animals and poultry. The allowance for pigs was ½kg bran per day, but nothing was allowed for cattle nor for poultry.

In the tavern was the notorious inspector Riva, who had many millers on his conscience. It was he who had sent Tocháčka from Šitbořice to the gallows, and our Tonda was likewise in prison through him. Riva roared at people that they had hidden reserves and either they gave them up voluntarily or he would come and look for them, and he threatened them with imprisonment by the Gestapo. People were scared and gave as much as they could, and many didn't even keep what belonged to them for sowing and grinding.

The weather in the second half of February was beautiful, and spring wheat was already being sown on February 27. And on March 1 the sowing of barley was in full swing.

March 4. There was a requisitioning of horses, waggons, and agricultural equipment for the benefit of the newly arrived Germans. Six horses were taken, with harness. Additionally, Ludvík Rychlík of No. 169 (the brother of my man) had to give up a waggon, as did Josef Novotný of No. 134 (both were cottagers, the first was a railway worker and the second a tailor). The Mayor, Eduard Langášek of No. 33, had to give up a roller and a three-part harrow, Štěpán Novotný of No. 47 a plough, Jan Mahovský of No. 53 a corn reaper, Adolf Vystavěl of No. 17 likewise, Alois Žáček of No. 14 a hay reaper. All this equipment was given to No. 40 and No. 19, whose previous owners had let out their fields on hire. Similarly, these Germans received horses, as did those at No. 149.

March 8. One classroom in the primary school had to be vacated for the German children from Těšany and from Nesvačilka and Moutnice, where there were likewise German settlers.

The inhabitants of Těšany were curious to see how the Germans would manage. They tried to get on good terms with our people and sucked up to them, but we did not trust them. They boasted that they

had large farms in Bessarabia, but that when the leader of the German Reich called on all Germans to return to the Reich they heeded the call, even though their stock had been in Bessarabia for more than 300 years, never merging with the nation in which they lived.

The Germans started sowing, and at once we saw that they had never had sowing machines in their hands before. They didn't know how to set the machine so as to deliver a particular quantity of corn. The German Tom was sowing spring wheat and had the machine set for maize, so of course the seed did not run into the machine properly, until somebody saw what was happening and fixed it for him. The other Germans prepared the soil no better for sowing and they did no harrowing, and so as not to have to guide the machine they left the shaft in it, sowed the corn, and closed the machine. The German himself sat on top and sowed, and nobody walked behind to see how the seed was falling or whether the funnel was exhausted. They tied a piece of board to the machine which slightly evened out the soil, but after sowing they neither harrowed nor rolled.

March 20 was another alarming day. Inspector Riva came again, with a military escort. Armed soldiers to a total of 60 surrounded the village, and immediately the constable banged the drum and announced that nobody could leave the village and that everyone had to collect his records and go to Rotnágľ's tavern at No. 151. People were alarmed, and everyone who had something "on the black" immediately hid it, whether corn, lard, or hens.

In the meantime, at the tavern, four inspectors (one of them the dreaded Riva) examined the records and compared them with those in the village office. Those who had delivered the quota appropriate to their holding of arable land and declared crop were released. Those where something disagreed had to remain until the afternoon. In the afternoon, the inspectors divided into four groups and went to the houses whose owners were being detained.

The inspections were thorough. At Štěpán Chaloupka's at No. 109 they found 50kg of wheat in the loft under the straw. After they had finished in the loft, they went and examined the yard and garden, where they saw a freshly covered pit where potatoes had been stored. The inspector considered that something had to be hidden there. Chaloupka had to bring spades and hoes and the soldiers dug, but only found some rotten potatoes which had been left behind. Any hidden reserves which were discovered were confiscated, and the person on whose property they were found had to pay a fine.

March 24. There was a fire at the house of Alfons Turek, No. 297. The fire reached the loft, and destroyed large reserves of fodder and corn. Its cause was not known.

March was finishing and already we had summer, everything was sown, and the vineyards were cut and pruned.

April 5. The free sale of yeast was prohibited. It was now available only on coupon, 4dkg per person per month.

Spring had been fine but dry. May was nearly through, but there was no hay, the corn shoots were small and dry, and people feared that if rain did not come in a few days they would not develop ears. The Germans showed us how they had learned to cultivate. They sowed the beet, but when it emerged they did not immediately hoe it as we do here but left it until it was heavily overgrown with weeds, then they ploughed it back and planted it afresh. Forced labour was instituted. Some people were assigned to the manor estate, others to Frant. Rotnágľ at No. 27. The Germans also had an apportionment of people, as did the other major tract-holders.

In the middle of June there was a substantial amount of rain and the corn developed ears, but the stalks were short.

Since the fall of Stalingrad, the Germans had been making nothing but backwards and evasive manoeuvres, as they themselves acknowledged in the papers and on the radio. It appeared that military fortune was deserting them, though they still went around boasting "Victory is ours".

July 17. Seventeen young German girls arrived in Těšany (apparently on holiday). They got down from their waggon by the mill, and marched through the village singing. It was 8.30 German Summer Time. Going round the Sokol cinema, which was located in the Sokol room of Josef Rotnágľ's tavern at No. 151, they looked boldly and superciliously at the village lads standing nearby. Some of the boys, seeing this, pulled faces and spat. After the cinema performance, the lads were still strolling around, and on seeing lights in uncovered windows of the ground floor of the manor house they went along to investigate.

And through a window the boys saw the German girls bathing completely naked. Nor were the wretched boys content with looking, they threw stones and rubbish at the girls through the broken window. Of course there was a row next day. The girls telephoned to the Gestapo at Hodonín (we had now been attached to the Hodonín region), and the Gestapo made a rigorous investigation and took away five lads, Oldřich Vystavěl from No. 17, Frant Krěpela from No. 32, Rudolf Šemora from No.

290, Josef Horák from No. 216, and Ladislav Suchánek from No. 173. The boys were kept at Hodonín for three weeks, but on the intercession of Hošek, the local police chief (whose good offices owed something to several kilograms of lard from the parents of the young fools), the Gestapo let them go with a severe reprimand.

July 21. The harvest started. The weather was favourable. We hurried on with the work in order to finish quickly. Brother Tonda had written to us from prison that his sentence would end on July 28 and that he would be arriving in Prague at 7 o'clock that evening. We decided to go to Prague to meet him: his sister-in-law, his wife with both children, Doba, Jožka from Dubňany with his boy, and myself.

July 24. Mrs Marie Chalupová at No. 24 had to move out together with her shop, and with her Mr Hanousek the teacher, who was married to her daughter and lived there. Their house was occupied by Koblingr, a German from Lower Austria. Neither Mrs Chalupová nor Mr Hanousek cultivated land, but they had fields out on hire, and the tenants had to relinquish these fields to Koblingr together with their crops. The same day, Ing. Horník, the owner of Šaracký Dvůr, had to move out. In his place was installed a settler, also from Austria, named Jílek, whose parents had moved to Austria from Bohemia. He was a renegade here, who knew Czech well but did not want to speak it.

July 28. We went to Prague. We left Sokolnice at 5 o'clock in the morning, changed to the express in Brno, and at 7 o'clock we left for Prague. Mr Ketner, a state railway official, who had been dealing with the mill records during Tonda's absence, travelled with us. The children stood at the window looking at the passing countryside. Jožka's nine-year-old son (who spoke in the Moravian Slovak dialect of the Hodonín region) constantly asked if we were truly travelling by this train which called itself an express, as it seemed to him that we were going slowly. And so with the merry chatter of children in a happy mood we reached Prague at 10.30.

Mr Ketner went straight to the station information bureau to find out which train Tonda would be arriving by. They told him that from Bayreuth you could arrive by an express from Stuttgart at 7 o'clock in the evening. So plenty of time. First to find somewhere to stay. Mr Ketner knew Prague well, and found us two twin-bedded rooms in the Michael Hotel in Žitná Street. And now to look round Prague with the children for as long as there was time. First we went to the main square in the Old Town to look at the astronomical clock. When after perhaps ten minutes it started to strike 12 o'clock, and the apostles precessed around the window, the children gazed open-mouthed with delight and wanted to wait a whole hour until it struck again. Then we went across Charles Bridge to the Castle. There I saw even from the distance that beside the flag with the Czech lion was flaunting a German flag with swastika. Many memorials were missing from St Vitus's Cathedral and elsewhere. Perhaps they had been put into safety for the duration of the war, perhaps the Germans had taken them to the Reich. In the afternoon we took the children to the Zoo. But at 6.30 we were in the station refreshment room, where that last half hour seemed like an eternity. Five minutes before 7 o'clock, we went to the exit from the station subway and waited. The first travellers started to trickle through, then more and more, until a dense crowd of people was pouring out. Suddenly Jožka shouted "Antonín!" and we saw him lift his head and smile with delight, then perhaps three more stairs and he was embracing his wife and children. We were all in tears at the pleasure of seeing each other again. In the hotel, we talked until 2 o'clock in the morning. Then we slept a little, looked around Prague again, back home in the afternoon, and at 7 o'clock in the evening we got off at Sokolnice. On the way to Začany and in the village, everyone we met welcomed Tonda with delight. And he with delight took up the work at the mill which he had left 15 months before.

People didn't want to go to forced labour on the sequestered manor estate, and the German commissar in charge of it had an announcement made with the drum that people must turn up at work. When this failed, he summoned men from the labour office. They came and called people into the office, where they shouted at them that non-fulfilment of forced labour was sabotage against the Reich. Among those called to the office was Jenofefa Rychlíková of No. 119, the wife of my brother. They were told that if they didn't go to work on the estate they would be sent to prison. The punishment was that they had to be at Klobouky on Sundays from morning to evening and on Mondays they had to be at work on the manor estate, this to continue for 8 weeks. At No. 119 they had 16 measures under cultivation, and there were only two of them to do the work.

The Těšany prisoners were already sentenced. Stanislav Pavlíček, director of the secondary school, was sentenced to 10 years, teacher Ladislav Kučera to 8 years, Leopold Vahala of No. 98 to 6 years, and Jakub Vahala of No. 108, Karel Ardély of No. 263, and Josef Novotný of No. 261 each to 5 years. On September 6, German officials confiscated their property.

September 8. There was a handing-over of poultry. The breeder was allowed to keep four geese, eight ducks, or sixteen chickens for his own needs, but he had to hand over everything else to collectors

who came from Brno. Because German orders did not allow geese and ducks to be fed maize, they were handed over in poor condition. For a goose, which had to weigh at least 4kg, 100 crowns were paid, for a duck (at least 2kg) 45 crowns, and for a chicken (at least 1kg) 22 crowns.

After the harvest, the Těšany mill was reopened. Chimney-sweep Veinalt arranged this, but mill-owner Ludvík Dobrovolný was not allowed to do the grinding. Instead, a German was installed from Chrlice [a village twelve kilometres to the north-west]. He was good towards us Czechs, ground for people without a permit, and sold plenty of flour, and because he was a German he was not inspected so often. But the sweep lorded it over everybody, he arranged that some people didn't have to go to Germany, others he chased there, and he generally extorted and blackmailed people. The German authorities became aware of his activities (and in particular of his evening party on the day of mourning after the fall of Stalingrad), and for arranging the party and not observing the day of mourning like a good German they sentenced him to seven months imprisonment. He would serve this in Graz.

September 16. The Gestapo came and took away field watchman Martin Příbyl of No. 200 and our youngest brother Jaromír Rychlík of No. 100. After a week they released Příbyl without charge, but our Jára would be called before the court.

October 8. We were ordered to gather the grapes. Těšany had to supply the collection point at Pavlovice with 25 cents, this being apportioned among the growers according to their acreages. We ourselves had 24 ares and so had to contribute 40kg of grapes. We were paid 6.50 crowns for 1kg of black grapes and 8 crowns for white.

October 10. Eduard Hrouzek fell down one of the steep drops in the vineyard terraces and seriously injured himself, and died after admission to hospital. He was 26 years old.

November 25. There was an inspection, and it was announced that people must fulfil their quotas of corn, maize, poppy, and potatoes, otherwise there would be no permits for home pig-killing.

On Christmas Eve, Marie Turková died. She had been born on 4 November 1867, and was the chief character of the work "Maryša" by the Mrštík brothers.

1943 was nearing its end, but the end of the war was not yet in sight, even though the Germans, following the fall of Stalingrad, were being beaten on all fronts, as they themselves very clearly acknowledged in the papers and on the radio. As a result of this lack of success, their behaviour was becoming even wilder. The news that came by secret ways out of concentration camps and prisons told of appalling and inhuman torture and tormenting of the inmates, of mass poisoning of prisoners in gas chambers, to the extent that the crematoria were not sufficient to burn the corpses and new ovens were continually being built.

During the autumn, radio receivers had to be taken to the Sýkora tavern, where a mechanic came and removed the short-wave apparatus. This was apparently so that we could not listen to broadcasts from abroad. But it made no difference, because we listened on the medium wave, even though the Germans jammed the broadcasts by growls and whistles and listening was forbidden under pain of death.

Many people had to go from Těšany to work in Germany, and apparently all those born in 1924 would have to go there for retraining in the New Year.

The corn this year had yielded well, but as a result of the spring drought there was little straw. However, there was an abundant crop of potatoes, beet, and maize, and the hay grew very well in the second and third cuttings. However, prices were again markedly higher than those of the year before. The official prices were still the same, and the rise was confined to the black market.

Item		Black market price (crowns)	Official price
Wheat and rye	100kg	1000	
Barley	"	700	
Maize	"	1500–2000	
Lard	1kg	1000	
Butter	"	400	
Fattened goose or duck	"	250–270	
Flour	"	20–30	3.60
Meat	"	200	22–28
Coupon for 1kg of meat	each	150	

(continued)

Item		Black market price (crowns)	Official price
Bread	1.3kg loaf	30	7.20
Milk	1 litre	15	2.10
Eggs	each	8–10	0.90
Slivovice (home-made)	1 litre	1000	
Women's high boots	1 pair	2000	
Material for men's clothing	3m	7000	700

1944

The whole of January was without frost. It started to freeze only on February 6, and then not too strongly. Tavern owners and butchers had difficulty in finding ice to cut for themselves. There were perhaps only 14 days when it froze during the entire winter.

February 13. The funeral of Josef Štefan of No. 201, a former secretary and chronicler of Těšany, was held. [He had written the first five years, 1927-31, of the second record book.]

March 13. We went with Jara to the German court at the Justice Palace in Brno. All the proceedings were in German. The judge asked a question in German, an interpreter translated, and Jara replied in Czech. The charge related to the time when his friends Jakub Vahala, Josef Novotný, and Karel Ardély were still free. They had made a large and strong underground shelter in the vineyard owned by Martin Příbyl of No. 200, and had started on a second in Jara's vineyard. By this, it was alleged, they wanted to do sabotage against the Germans, cutting electrical cables and telephone lines and generally trying to do everything possible to harm the Germans. But when the lads were taken by the Gestapo, all activity ceased, and shelters which would have served them as hiding-places in time of danger remained uncompleted.

The judge, through the interpreter, asked whether he realised that such things were punishable by death. Jara shrugged his shoulders – no, he didn't know. Then they wanted to know about his school education, and whether he was a member of the gymnastic associations Sokol or Orel. Then the court withdrew to consider, and after a short while brought in a verdict of seven months in prison. And at the same time it was announced that he could ask to have the punishment postponed until the winter months, which he was happy to do. Meanwhile they allowed him home.

It seemed to Tonda that they were not sentencing as severely as before, and that perhaps this had something to do with the failure of the German army on all fronts.

April 19. Men arrived from the labour office and assigned people to forced labour. The businesses of some tradesmen were closed down, and their proprietors had to go and work in the coal mines, in the factories, or in Germany.

The winter was not hard, but snow and sleet showers persisted through the whole of March and field work did not start until April. Sowing, spraying of the vineyards, and other spring work started on April 6.

Spring was very cold and wet. Light showers persisted throughout May, and on June 6/7/8/9 it rained throughout the whole of the day and night. It cleared on June 10 but only for a week, then once more thunder and rain. It was not possible to walk to the fields, they were so wet. Beet plants were smothered in weeds, maize and potatoes were not yet to be seen in the grass.

June 18. We were given forced labour on the manor estate. Each house was assigned half a measure of beet, to be weeded, twice hoed, and dug up in the autumn.

On the afternoon of July 17, there was a thunderstorm from the west. It was not too great and stayed over us for only half an hour, but it was followed by hail. I had just been in our vineyard, and during the thunderstorm I was in the shed looking out through the window at the falling hail. When I opened the door after the storm, the ground between the rows of vines and on the lower land to the west was completely white with hail. The growers estimated the loss in the vineyards at 50%, barley was still green but was half flattened, rye and wheat were not as seriously affected. Root crops, beet, potatoes, and maize all had broken leaves.

July 21. The harvest started. The weather was not favourable, and thunder and rain often delayed the work.

August 13. There was a poultry collection, two from each breeding goose and three from each breeding duck. The prices were 96 crowns for a goose and 45 crowns for a duck.

Thanks to the wet weather and a lack of copper sulphate for spraying, the vineyards were attacked by mildew. Halfway through the harvest the weather improved, and the crop was successfully gathered.

The yield was very good up to the strip where the hail fell, but the barley harvest was poor.

August 25. We threshed the corn. And we did it using the electric threshing machine of our Pavel, who had bought it last year from the savings bank "Reifeisenka" in Těšany for 50,000 crowns.

Before noon [no date specified], there was shouting outside, "Look at the planes, look at the English!" I ran out and truly, high in the sky like flocks of silver birds, were many groups flying from the south-east towards Brno.

After a few minutes, we heard explosions from Brno. In the afternoon, workmen started arriving, some of them so alarmed by the attack that they did not wait for the train but rushed home from Brno on foot. They described the havoc that the silver birds had created in a few minutes.

In the papers, the Germans boasted about how many aeroplanes they shot down daily, and now, when English planes were showering bombs on Brno, not a single anti-aircraft gun fired on them. In the collapsed and shattered houses were many dead and wounded, who were brought out from the ruins and taken to the cemetery and the hospital.

Brno was crammed with high-ranking Germans, military officers, civilian officials, directors of factories, leaders of commerce and industry. All were here with their families, who had come with them from the German cities which had been the target of constant attacks from British bombers. Our cities had so far been left in peace, but now it was Brno's turn. Where would the German rats flee to next?

September 21. The Germans ordered teachers Jan Kloc and Rudolf Liška to stop teaching children in school and to go to Hradec Králové [a town 125 kilometres NNW of Brno] to work in a factory.

September 23. A large stack of straw which was in the field a little behind our Pavel's caught fire. Children had lit a bonfire near it, and that was that. A stack which had contained 100–120q of straw lay in ashes. Its owner was Eduard Langášek of No. 33.

October 7. There was a vineyard inspection. The mayor and one of the village council brought regional officials to the vineyards which had been worst hit by hail and mildew, and especially to the vineyard of the German settler Koblingr who had taken over the property of Mrs Chaloupová and Pavel Hanousek of No. 24. This German, either through negligence or through ignorance of vineyard practice, had made such a mess of the vineyard that it would not recover for several years. On October 17, a gathering of grapes was ordered. In view of the damaged vineyards, Těšany had to supply 7 cents of grapes, for which the agricultural co-operative at Pavlovice would send a lorry. Our quota was set at 40kg, at the same price as last year.

Towards the end of October, it was ordered that those who had not fulfilled their meat quotas would not be allowed to slaughter, nor to keep small animals such as goats, rabbits, and poultry.

At the beginning of November, a strengthening of the night watch was ordered (this watch had been in force since the start of the war). Until now, the watch had consisted of eleven men. Ten patrolled the neighbourhood, and the watch commander had to stay in the village office. This watch lasted from 9 o'clock in the evening to 3 o'clock in the morning. Now it was ordered that eleven men had to come on duty as soon as it got dark and stay until midnight, when a second team of eleven men would take over until dawn. This duty applied to all men between the ages of 18 and 60 apart from the priest and the doctor. It was enforced by the German criminal police. They arrived unannounced at the office during the night, and the watch commander had to show them the personal signatures of the men who had reported for duty.

Last year saw the start, and this year the completion, of the building of high reinforced concrete pylons to take the electrical power lines across the land around our village.

November 20. There was a mist so thick that it was impossible to see ten steps ahead. Before midday we heard the roar of English planes above us though we could not see them, and after a short while we heard detonations from Brno, and also from Hodonín and from Vienna like the roar of distant thunder. In the afternoon workers came running from Brno and described with alarm how heavily it had been bombed, and also Hodonín.

My brother Jara, who was sentenced to seven months, should have gone to Graz to start his sentence on November 1, but instead he went to have an appendix operation on the advice of his Czech doctor. By such means did Czech doctors help those convicted of political offences to put off their punishments. Now Jara was back home after his operation. He sent a certificate to the prison at Graz from hospital, attested by the doctors, and from the German authorities came a postponement until January 15. And they assigned him to the German Dr. Revera at Hodonín for further examination in due course.

Autumn was very wet, and the beet harvest went slowly. On the manor estate, despite the forced labour, several measures of beet were killed by frost.

The German settlers in our midst, not caring in the least that the front was just over the hill, were building, rebuilding, and repairing stables and other agricultural buildings. We Czechs could not obtain permits for bricks, wood, nor roofing tiles, but the Germans got whatever they needed. We watched the Germans using artificial fertilizers and nitrates until their fields were white, while we Czechs received only a few kg of artificial fertilizer per measure. When a Czech said to the German settlers that the front was getting close and the Russians were coming, they replied that new weapons were on the way and their leader would be completely victorious.

More and more young people, boys, girls, students, and artisans were being forced to leave school or to quit their employment and go to work in factories and war industries in Germany. Now, however, they took advantage of the bombing raids, which daily showered bombs on German cities, to escape. Once back home, they went into hiding so as not to be sent back, and the Germans did not look for them because they were assumed to have been killed during the raid.

The provisioning for us Czechs was very insufficient. Germans got more meat, fat, bread, flour, and all other foodstuffs and rationed goods on their coupons than we did on ours. We received 1 box of matches per person per month. Soap, 1 cube weighing 30 grammes, and when it was put into water it floated to the top. One 250g box of washing powder per month. The cube of soap cost 2 crowns, the washing powder 2.50 crowns, the box of matches 40 haléf.

Every day, people came into the villages from the towns to buy or barter for meat, flour, lard, in short for everything edible. Some were buying for themselves, others were taking advantage of the shortages to enrich themselves. They bought whatever was on sale on the black market in the villages, and sold in the towns at a greatly increased price.

Prices were again up compared with last year, though of course only on the black market. The official prices remained the same.

Item		Black market price (crowns)	Official price
Sugar	1kg	350–400	7.20
Onions	"	20–25	3
Garlic	"	80–100	10
Butter	"	500	36
Lard	"	1200–1500	32
Fattened goose	"	400	
Pork meat	"	400	36
Pig, 100kg	each	20,000	1300
Wheat or rye	1 cent	1500	196
Barley	"	1000	170
Flour	1kg	40–50	3.60
Milk	1 litre	15–20	2.20
Slivovice (home-made)	"	1500	
“Viktoria” cigarettes	each	5–10	0.50
(smokers had a reduced allowance of 3 per day)			
Eggs	each	10–15	0.90
Material for men’s clothing	3m	9000–15000	
		according to quality	
Men’s shirts	each	1000	
Coupon for meat	each	300	
(ration was reduced to 0.75kg)			
Wine	1 litre	250–350	
Slivovice or other spirit	1 glass	30–40	

The distilling of spirits was so widespread that it seemed as if every other house was doing it. These spirits sold at 800–1000 crowns for 1 litre. By such means, people had amassed so much money that it was not unusual for a householder to have 100,000 or 150,000 crowns in his wallet. Nor was it at all unusual for a player to lose 15,000 crowns or even more during an evening at cards.

The Germans were still the same, a hard, furious, brutal nation. The Anglo-Americans were pressing them from the West, the Russians from the East, and they still vain-gloriously shouted to the world that

victory would be theirs. By various secret ways, news arrived of the frightful and inhuman tortures and bestialities that were occurring in the concentration camps, and of so many executions that the crematoria were not sufficient to burn all the corpses. Now, at the onset of winter with its cruel frosts, the Germans were evacuating the camps away from the approaching front line. They transported the wretched prisoners in open goods wagons, half naked, without hats and almost barefoot. Others they drove on foot hundreds of kilometres deep into the interior. If a prisoner fell out, he was shot so as not to delay the column. These were called "Death Marches".

1944 was near its end and as far as crops were concerned had been wholly good, apart from barley which in some sectors had been beaten down.