(ZŠ Velká Bíteš 2)

The story of František Lysý

Traces of totalitarianism in Lhotka

In the fifties, there were fifteen houses in the village of Lhotka. At that time, some farmers were being driven out of their homes. Six farmers from Lhotka were forced to move out, their property was confiscated and into their houses moved similarly affected farmers from other villages. The eviction orders usually came with the word FOREVER.

The family of Mr. Lysý was one of the six.

František Lysý was born on January 5, 1929. He had one brother, who was four years younger. Their father tragically died in 1944 when František was only fifteen. It was the war, and their widowed mother had to take care of the family all by herself.

“Everything took a bad turn after February 1948. President Klement Gottwald publicly swore then that there wouldn't be agricultural cooperatives – like the kolchoz in the USSR - in our country. But soon everything changed. We bought a tractor – Zetor 25 – and several other pieces of machinery just after the war, to ease up our work. However, not even with their helpcould we fulfill the mandatory contributions. For example, we had to bring in 80q of rye. Nobody cared that this left us with nothing for our own livestock. Should we meet the norms, they would be higher next time, and should we not, the state would call us saboteurs of the five-year plan. Our machines were taken from us, the Integrated Agricultural Cooperative (IAC) confiscated them one by one. The District National Committee sent us a document saying that the IAC is buying the machines, but we haven't seen any money. I tended the fields with horses I borrowed from my relatives. After a long day's hard work, I had to join others in taking night watches. We knew no rest.”

“I was conscripted on October 1, 1951 and served until November 25 1953. I got an extra month to the usual two years. As an unreliable person, I was assigned to the Auxiliary Technical Battalions, just like many other boys from kulak (rich farmers) families. They sent us to the mines, for example. I did the military service in Most, where we received training without weapons. After that, they moved us to Žatec. I remember the constant political lecturing and night alarms.”

I didn't know what was going on at home. My mother and brother kept it secret from me, to make sure I wouldn't do anything stupid. Therefore, I didn't know that my mother was arrested for refusing to enter the IAC. Soon after, my family was evicted. The chairman from Tasov held against us that that we refused to enter the IAC.

The residents of Lhotka frequently changed between 1953 and 1970. Two families were moved into one house and had to work on state-owned farms. At the beginning of 1970, my wife was told about a free position for a machinery repairman at a farm in the nearby village of Křeptov. I managed to get this job. In the same year, following the advice of others I bought back our house in Lhotka. There was, unfortunately, no way to buy our fields back as well; there was no legislation that would allow it. My mother was allowed to return to Lhotka earlier on; my brother got married and remained in Mladějov. They returned our land only after the Velvet Revolution, after the year 1989. Mother did not live to see it back in our hands; she died, aged 92, before the end of the communist era.

A memorial, reminding of the fate of the evicted families, stands on Lhotka's village square since September 2011.

“Is it possible to forgive those who caused you suffering?”

“Yes, one must forgive. I am a religious man and the Bible says forgiveness is necessary. But to forget, I cannot.”

František Lysý and his wife, Libuše Lysá

Women sharing the same fate as Mr. Lysý's family; Lhotka 1953-1956

Františe Lysý's parents, Josef and Marie

The Lhotka memorial

Velká Bíteš Elementary School

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