

A Turning Point Day

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March 15, 1939, was a day of infinite infamy for me. I was in 4th grade walking to school several blocks away on a heavy overcast grey day, to stop for my friend Jirka (George). As we walked toward the main avenue of our neighborhood we witnessed people shaking their heads, wiping away their flood of tears. What was happening?

We soon understood as we watched armored trucks roll by with huge black swastikas displayed, followed by motorcycles with side cars occupied by helmeted soldiers in grey uniforms mirroring the weeping sky.

In school we learned the awful truth that our beloved democratic country had been forcefully and illegally occupied by our behemoth mortal enemy, Germany's Nazi Third Reich.

Czechoslovakia was no longer. It felt like a pawn taken in a grand international chess game. Having been betrayed by Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union at Munich, we were left totally defenseless and now our freedom had vanished.

This was the end of my carefree childhood. I was soon to begin to prepare to leave my homeland and my friends for the distant shores of England. Two months later I was in a strange land, living with a new family, trying to cope with a language I could not understand. I began a new life that would change me forever.

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