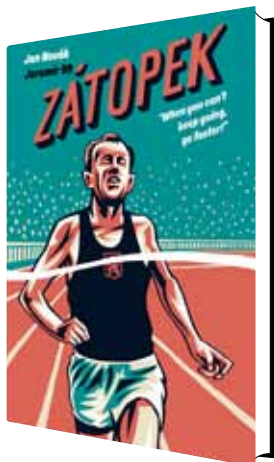


# Zátopek



**Jan Novák** (script), **Jaromír 99** (art)

## A story of speed, courage, and the quiet rebellion of a national hero

An electrifying graphic portrait of legendary Czech runner Emil Zátopek – four-time Olympic gold medalist and one of the greatest runners in history. The book traces his path from humble beginnings to global fame, culminating in his unprecedented triple gold at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics. But Zátopek was more than a phenomenal athlete – he stood up to the regime, defended his fellow competitors, and paid a steep personal price for his integrity.

With expressive linework, cinematic framing, and emotional precision, the creators capture the rhythm, grit, and force of one of Zátopek's legendary races.

# So Far So Good



**Jan Novák** (script), **Jaromír 99** (art)

## A true story drawn in shadows: rebellion, escape, and the price of freedom

The Mašín brothers' real-life story – two young men who took up arms against Czechoslovakia's communist regime in the 1950s – is one of the most explosive chapters in modern Czech history. Branded either as heroes or criminals, they carried out sabotage missions before attempting a daring escape to the West, pursued across East Germany by tens of thousands of Volkspolizei. Their journey, still fiercely debated today, is a tale of moral conviction, brutal choices, and survival against the odds.

A visually striking, morally charged graphic novel about rebellion, loyalty, and what it means to fight for freedom – by any means necessary.

**Jan Novák** is a leading Czech writer and documentary filmmaker, a recipient of the major literary prizes like Carl Sandburg Literary Award or Magnesia Litera. With Jaromír 99, he co-created three acclaimed graphic novels. Their first two works, *Zátopek* and *So Far So Good*, have been translated into six languages. Their third graphic novel is *Čáslavská*.

**Jaromír 99** (Jaromír Švejdlík) is a Czech comics artist and musician. He's best known for the graphic novel *Alois Nebel*, which was adapted into an animated film. His signature black-and-white style is his trademark.



foto © Richard Klíčník

**Zátopek** 📅 March 2016 📖 208 pages 📄 samples EN/DE/FR

**RIGHT SOLD TO:** Germany (Volland & Quist), France (Des ronds dans l'O), Spain (Aloha editorial), Bulgaria (Janet 45 Publishing), Great Britain (SelfMadeHero)

**Zatím dobrý** 📅 November 2018 📖 256 pages 📄 samples EN/DE/FR

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# **Plot summary of Zátopek**

## **Emil Zátopek: The Legend Who Conquered Helsinki and Changed the World of Running**

The document, titled "zatopek\_2016-book\_final.pdf," is an illustrated comic-book adaptation of the life story and career of one of the greatest athletes of all time, the Czechoslovak runner Emil Zátopek (1922-1987). The narrative details his journey from humble beginnings to his unprecedented Olympic triumphs and his unforgettable influence on the world of track and field.

### **The Birth of a Running Phenomenon**

Emil Zátopek was born in Kopřivnice and began his professional career at the age of fifteen as an apprentice at the Baťa Škoda Works in Zlín. He essentially came to running by accident when, in 1941, he was forced to participate in the "Run Through Zlín" race.

A key turning point in his career was meeting Dr. Jan Haluza, his only coach. With Haluza's support, Zátopek developed a revolutionary and, at the time, unorthodox interval training method. His philosophy was that intense short bursts (e.g., ten repetitions of 200 meters at full speed) were more effective for developing speed and endurance than continuous long runs. This grueling method earned him the nickname "The Czech Locomotive." Although Zátopek was forced to part ways with Haluza after the 1948 communist coup (due to the coach's political inconvenience), he kept the training methodology.

### **First Victory and a Fateful Meeting in London (1948)**

At the 1948 London Olympic Games, Zátopek won his first Olympic gold medal in the 10,000 m event, setting a new Olympic record and claiming Czechoslovakia's first track and field gold. He also added a silver medal in the 5,000 m race.

During the Games, he met javelin thrower Dana Ingrová, with whom he shared not only a love for sport but also the exact same birthday (September 19, 1922). Despite initial resistance

from Dana's family, they soon married. In the time between the Olympics, both Zátopek and his wife continually pushed boundaries, with Emil breaking the world record for the 10,000 m three times.

## **Helsinki 1952: The Immortal Golden Triple**

The peak of Zátopek's career came at the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games, an event that is indelibly marked in sports history.

**Standing Up to the Regime:** Before flying to Finland, Zátopek fearlessly confronted Communist Party officials. He demanded the inclusion of his friend and protégé, Stanislav Jungwirth, whose father was a political prisoner. Zátopek declared that he would not fly without Jungwirth and ultimately succeeded in his threat.

**The Golden Medal Streak:** In Helsinki, Emil Zátopek achieved a completely unique feat that no one has replicated before or since. He won three gold medals in a single Olympiad:

10,000 m

5,000 m

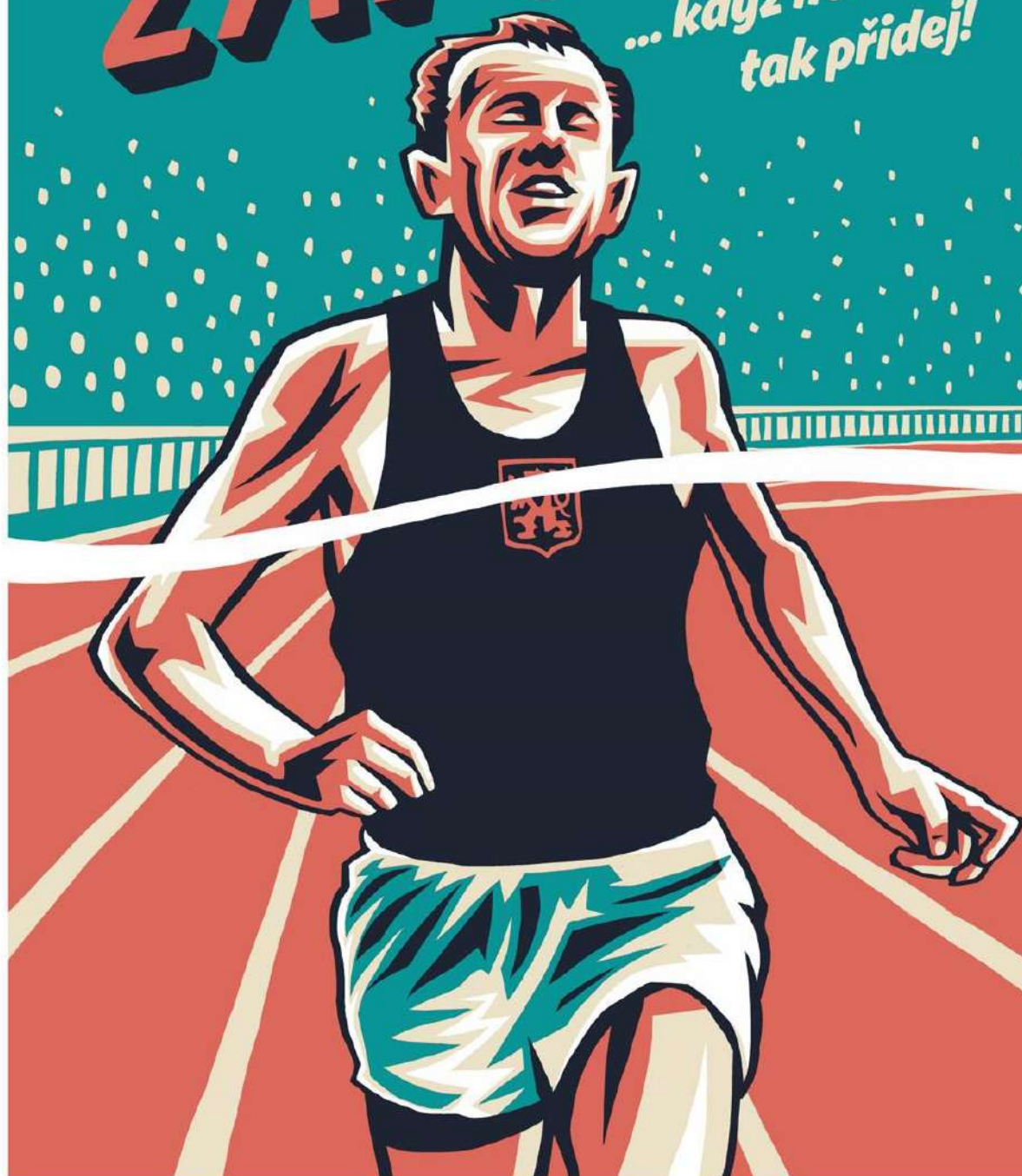
The Marathon (which he was running for the very first time in his life)

His great triumph was completed by his wife, Dana Zátopková, who also won gold in the Javelin Throw in Helsinki, bringing the couple's Olympic gold tally to four. Zátopek's performances in 1952 cemented him as a global sports icon and a symbol of unbreakable will.


Jan Novák  
Jaromír 99

# ZÁTOPEK

... když nemůžeš,  
tak přidej!







*Houšťka Park, Czechoslovakia, 1952*

*IN THE EARLY 1950'S, THE CZECHOSLOVAK PEOPLE'S ARMY OFFERED THE BEST TRAINING CONDITIONS IN THE COUNTRY IN ALL SPORTS. MOST OF THE TOP TRACK AND FIELD ATHLETES COMPETED FOR ITS DUKLA PRAHA TEAM.*

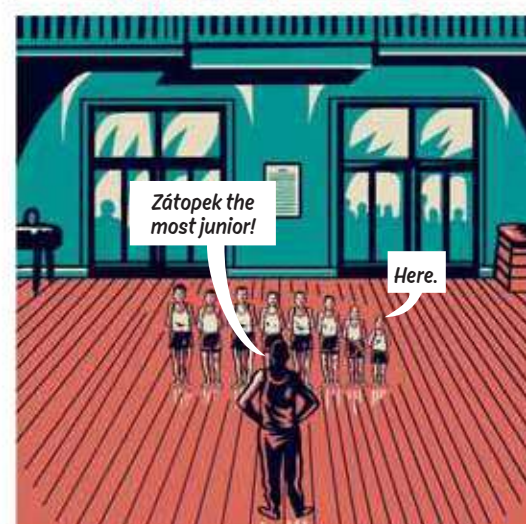


*DUKLA'S BIGGEST STAR WAS THE LONG-DISTANCE RUNNER EMIL ZÁTOPEK. BEFORE THE HELSINKI OLYMPICS IN 1952, ZÁTOPEK TOOK UNDER HIS WING STANISLAV JUNGWIRTH, A TALENTED MILE-RUNNER.*













EMIL ZÁTOPEK HAD SIX BROTHERS AND ONE SISTER. THE FAMILY LIVED IN A TWO-ROOM HOUSE WHICH ALSO SERVED AS HIS FATHER'S TABLE-MAKING WORKSHOP.



Yesterday, Emil ran like a madman across the whole town! I saw him! He was all sweaty and gasping for breath!

IN THOSE DAYS, POOR FAMILIES DREADED INCURABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES SUCH AS TUBERCULOSIS MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE.



Is that true?

No, it ain't... I mean... Well, kind of...



How come?! How many times do I have to tell you NOT to strain yourself?!



But my teacher sent me to Majer's butcher shop for three slices of ham... Said I was the fastest kid in the class.



Well, if it was the teacher's idea... But you slow down the next time! That ham from Majer is stinky already anyway!



Kopřivnice, 1937



The main thing is never to strain yourself! None of that soccer! Forget about running! So you don't wind up with the TB...

None of them sports better even cross your mind!


THE TABLE-MAKER ZÁTOPEK BECAME A COMMUNIST BEFORE THE WAR. HOWEVER, HE SENT HIS SON EMIL TO APPRENTICE WITH THE BIGGEST CAPITALIST IN THE COUNTRY.

Zlín, 1937




AT THE AGE OF FIFTEEN, ZÁTOPEK BECAME ONE OF "BAŤA'S YOUNG MEN." BAŤA WAS AN INDUSTRIALIST WHO APPLIED AMERICAN MANUFACTURING METHODS TO SHOE MAKING. AS ONE OF THE WORLD'S BIGGEST PRODUCERS OF SHOES, HE PRACTICALLY CONTROLLED THE TOWN OF ZLÍN.






ZÁTOPEK SIGNED UP TO STUDY CHEMISTRY. THE CLASSES WERE HELD IN THE EVENING AFTER AN EXHAUSTING SHIFT ON THE PRODUCTION LINE.



IT WAS GENERALLY AGREED THAT THE WORST PLACE TO WORK IN THE GIGANTIC PLANT WAS THE RUBBER SHOP.




What the hell do you think you're doing?

I don't know, somehow it got stuck by the heel, sir.



How long is our shift?

Eight hours.




I said: how long is our shift?!

Oh, you mean... It's 28 800 seconds seconds long.



And how many pairs of shoes are we supposed to make?

2 400 pairs of shoes.



And therefore, what is the norm?!

6 seconds a piece, and I am trying to do that, sir, but when it gets stuck like this, then I...





*Even if we all shit blood,  
we'll never catch up today!*

*Why don't YOU just shit  
your drawers, sir...*



*Bat'a's industrial park, Zlín 1937*







IN MARCH OF 1939, HITLER INVADED  
THE REMNANTS OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA.



AND LIFE IN THE GERMAN PROTECTORATE OF  
BOHEMIA AND MORAVIA CHANGED DRASTICALLY.



So Emil,  
Saturday's  
another Zlin Run!  
I'm putting you  
down on the list.

Oh, but I can't go, sir. I have  
this horrible stabbing pain  
in the knee, it's real bad!

That's how you got out of it  
for the past three years!  
This Saturday, you're  
running and that's that.



But I'm barely walking by the  
time I get to punch out at night...

This year you'd have to show  
me a note from the doctor!









So I AM going to survive this, after all! I'm not going to die! Might as well give it all I got if it isn't going to kill me.

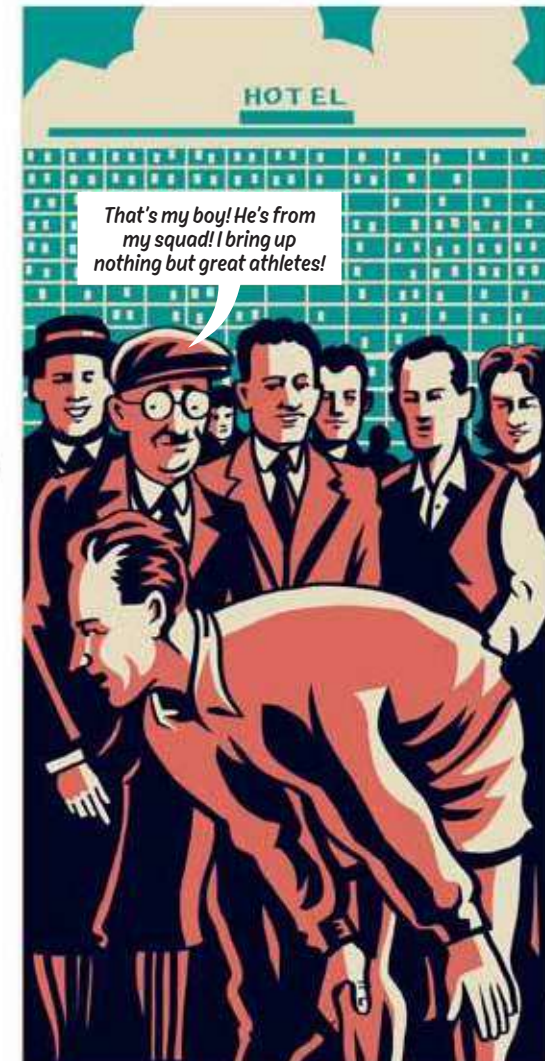


I really can't anymore. So step on it!



I'm such a moron! If this race were only ten meters longer, I'd beat him!

Hi, there! I'm Emil! Emil Zátopek! And congratulations! You sure showed me how it's done!



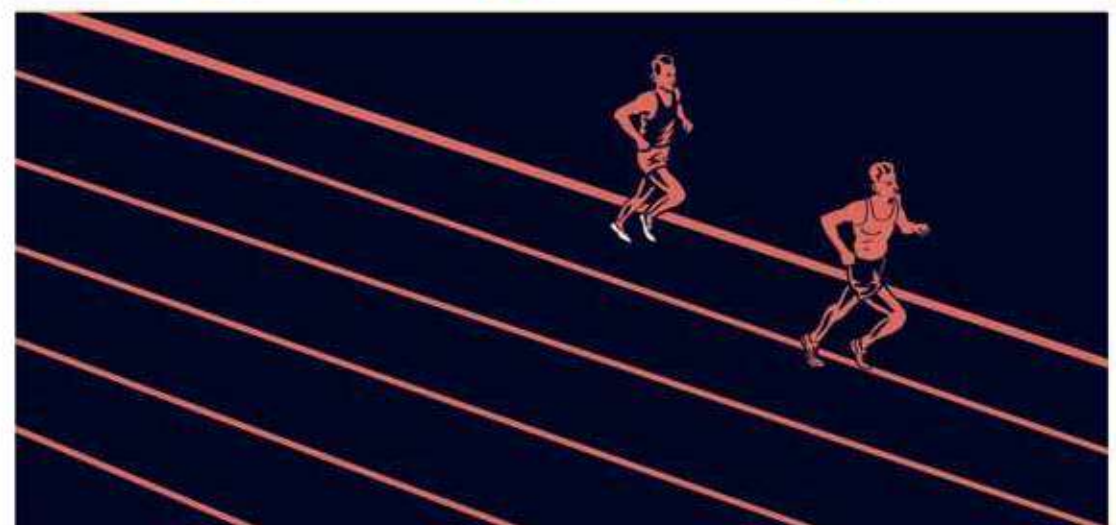
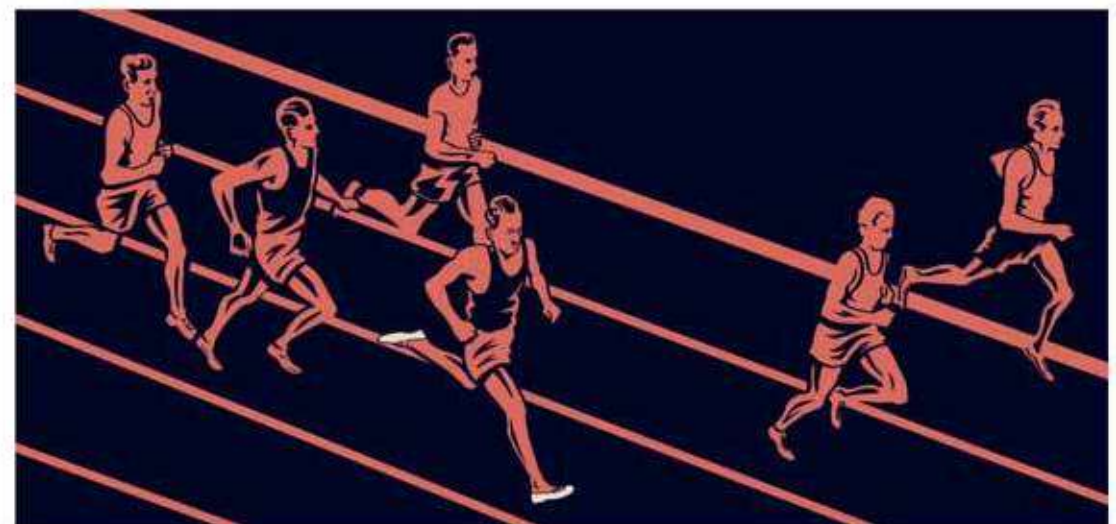
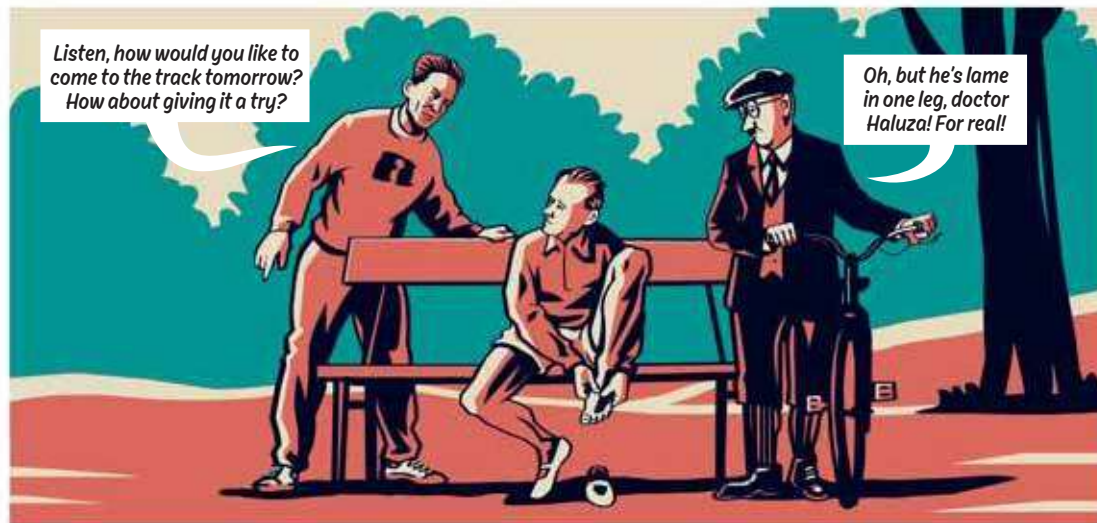
That's my boy! He's from my squad! I bring up nothing but great athletes!



Congratulations, Emil! Wish I'd sent you to that doctor last year!

Congratulations for what?? I lost this race...







## **Plot summary**

### **Zatím dobrý" (So Far So Good): A Graphic Novel Chronicle of the Cold War's Biggest Escape**

Prague – The graphic novel *Zatím dobrý*, penned by Jan Novák with Jaromír 99's stark visuals, is more than just a book—it's a powerful historical account. It tells the incredible, true story of the Mašín brothers, who took up armed resistance against the communist regime back in the 1950s.

### **Revolt Against Totalitarian Rule**

The story throws us right into the deep end of the 1950s, a time when brutal communist terror reigned in Czechoslovakia. Against this backdrop, a small group of young men, led by brothers Ctirad and Josef Mašín, refused to just stand by and watch democracy and freedom vanish. Along with Milan Paumer, Zbyněk Janata, and Václav Švéda, they committed to action—from minor acts of sabotage to armed raids on police stations to get weapons for their cause.

With its striking, black-and-white "noir" aesthetic, the book perfectly captures the brutal, uncompromising nature of their fight, which was essentially a reaction to the communists' violent takeover and the prior execution of the brothers' father, General Josef Mašín.

### **Running the Iron Curtain**

The most dramatic and pivotal part of the comic is their desperate flight to the West in 1953. The five young men, relentlessly hunted across what was then East Germany, faced an unprecedented dragnet involving up to 20,000 members of the Volkspolizei (People's Police).

The book details the exhausting and bloody battle for every inch of freedom. While some members managed to fight their way through to West Berlin, where they later



joined the U.S. Army, two—Zbyněk Janata and Václav Švéda—were captured and subsequently executed.

#### The Family's Fate and a Historical Reminder

The authors don't just focus on the action; they also respectfully highlight the tragic toll the resistance took on the family. The graphic novel clearly maps out the persecution faced by the brothers' mother, Zdena Mašínová, who was imprisoned and ultimately died in jail. Their uncle, Ctibor Novák, was also executed.

Ultimately, *Zatím dobrý* isn't just an adventurous war story. It's a comprehensive historical reminder that uses visually stunning comic book language to open up one of the most controversial and important chapters in modern Czech history. The book wraps up with short biographies of both the survivors and those who were executed, giving the powerful story a final, documentary feel.



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JAN NOVÁK a JAROMÍR 99

# ZATÍM DOBRÝ







18. ŘÍJNA 1953

TEORETICKY BYCHOM TO MĚLI CELÉ  
PŘEHÁZET JINAM, GENOSSEN...

JA, DAS SOLLTE GENÜGEN...  
POŘÁDNĚ TO PROŠPIKUJEM.  
K LÍCI ZBRANÍ!

A NESTAČILO BY  
TO PROSTRĚLET?













