

Czech History & Culture

Lecture nr. H3:
The formation of Czech state – part III.
(1945 – 1968)

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...from the last lecture...

- First Czechoslovak Republic
 - ➔ 1918 - 1938
- Agreement permitting Nazi Germany annexing Sudetenland (1938)
 - ➔ Munich agreement
- Who was not invited to the Munich conference to decide about the future of Czechoslovakia?
 - ➔ Czechoslovakia (about us without us)
- The concentration camp in Czechoslovakia
 - ➔ Theresienstadt (Terezín)
- Prague was liberated by
 - ➔ Red Army (Soviet Union)

Czechoslovakia during the WW2

- Independent Slovak Republic, takeovers by Hungary and Poland



Liberation of Czechoslovakia

- US Army (app 150.000) and Red Army (app 2 million)
 - Czech national resistance (app 130.000)
 - Prague uprising (5 – 8. 5. 1945)
 - Prague
 - liberation 9. 5. 1945
 - by Red Army
- 
- Czechoslovakia
 - Part of Eastern block
 - Controlled by USSR



Third Czechoslovak republic

- 1945 (end of WW2) – 1948 (Communist Czechoslovakia)
- Czechoslovakia reappeared
 - the same territory except for the Subcarpathian rus
 - President: Edvard Beneš (came from exile in London)
 - 1946 - parliamentary elections
 - Winner: Klement Gottwald (Communist Party)
- Decrees of president Beneš (Beneš decrees)
 - Laws prepared by Czechoslovak government in exile (London)
 - Enabled deportation of Germans and Hungarians after WW II

Deportation of Germans

- Sudetenland mostly inhabited by Germans
- 1945 app 3 million of Germans in Czechoslovakia
- App 1 million deported to American zone (West Germany)
- App 2 million deported to Soviet zone (East Germany)
- 250.000 allowed not to move
- App 15 - 30.000 casualties



Coup d'état of 1948

- „Victorious February“ (17 – 25. 2. 1948)
- Communist Party takes control over the government
 - The most powerful political party
 - Supported by Soviet Union
 - Ability to promote the communist program
 - Communist influence on the police forces
 - Protests and demissions of non-communist ministers
 - New ministers from Communist Party
- 9. 5. 1948 - declaration of People's republic
 - president Edvard Beneš abdicated
 - Klement Gottwald - General Secretary and President

Communist Czechoslovakia

- Behind the „Iron Curtain“
- Eastern Bloc – Cold war
- Refusal of Marshall Plan
- Military alliance - Warsaw Pact
- Planned economy introduced
- Building communism
 - Nationalization
 - Industrialization
 - Collectivization
- Secret police, Persecutions
- Censorship (suppression of speech)



Prague Spring 1968

- Period of political liberalization
- Reformist Alexandr Dubcek became General Secretary
- Partial decentralization of economy – mixed economy
- Partial democratization, freedom of speech
- Federalization – Federation of Czech and Slovak republics

➔ Soviet reaction?

- Warsaw Pact military invasion of Czechoslovakia
- period of "Normalization"

The résumé

- After the WW II Czechoslovakia became part of
 - ➔ Eastern Bloc
- Controversial Beneš decrees enabled after WW II
 - ➔ Deportation of Germans from Czechoslovakia
- First Czechoslovak communist president (1948)
 - ➔ Klement Gottwald
- What is the „Warsaw Pact“
 - ➔ Military alliance of communist countries
- What is „Prague Spring 1968“
 - ➔ Period of political liberalization and democratization