

CZECH HISTORICAL ATLAS

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Abstract

The article deals with the preparation of the Historical Atlas of the Czech Republic. The atlas will include maps displaying important historical events of the 20th century. The project is a follow-up to the successful Academic Atlas of Czech History, published in 2014, within which numerous classical and innovative maps covering selected events of the Czech history were created. The new Historical Atlas of the Czech Republic aims to extend and further develop selected 20-century topics from the Academic Atlas of Czech History and choose other significant topics from the Czech history. The results will be presented in a printed atlas and on a web application. The first phase of the project will be focused on research addressing the selection of significant historical events and wider topics which will be presented in the atlas. A survey of older historical atlases, both Czech and foreign ones, together with a literature search of the potential of website applications and technologies through which the atlas will be presented on the web will be conducted. It will be interesting to map prominent international issues as they are recorded in other historical atlases in neighbouring countries.

Keywords: Web atlas, History, Historic Atlas, Czech Republic, Web map application,

INFORMATION ON THE CZECH HISTORICAL ATLAS PROJECT

The project of the “Czech Historical Atlas” is part of the NAKI programme of the Ministry of Culture CR, which should present and link historical fields of science with archaeology, cartography, national, regional and local identity and traditions through a printed as well as electronic atlas. The knowledge of history should be a precondition for the preservation of memory and traditions in the national context.

The project is based on the existing cooperation of the Institute of History CAS and the Department of Geomatics at the Faculty of Civil Engineering, Czech Technical University in Prague in the field of historical atlas cartography in the elaboration of the Academic Atlas of Czech History and other historical and cartographic works. The Academic Atlas of Czech History was published in print in 2014 and won many awards (among others Magnesia Litera 2015). The objective of the project is to make a follow-up to the printed atlas, which was not able to encompass numerous still untreated, but historically and socially significant and attractive topics, mapping particularly the period of the 20th century, and publicise these topics on the prepared electronic web portal “Czech Historical Atlas”, both in the Czech and English version, in the form of specialised maps with a text and picture commentary using modern methods and approaches.

The Czech Historical Atlas portal will open an innovative, still unused in the Czech Republic approach to the results of historical investigations through electronic historical cartography to the professional as well as general public or students. Electronic historical atlases accessible on the Internet are highly demanded by the public in the Czech Republic, although only Internet atlases of foreign origin may be used at the moment. These atlases inform about the Czech and Czechoslovak history very superficially and often contain biased views. Therefore, the Czech Historical Atlas will also fulfil the role of transferring historical science into education using modern cartographic methods, preserving national memory, forming national identity and culture in the widest, multicultural sense and forming the historical awareness of society. The portal will publicise the knowledge of the Czech and Czechoslovak history in international contexts aiming also at foreign visitors.

HISTORICAL EVENTS OF 20 CENTURY

The paragraphs below depict significant historical moments related to the Czech Lands or a wider Central European space on examples of maps elaborated for the above mentioned Academic Atlas of Czech History.

During the 20th century, numerous significant events deserving to be displayed in the map form in the Czech Historical Atlas took place on the territory of today's Czech Republic in the context of all-European development. Political systems changed very often and the history of the Czech state was mostly interconnected with the historical events of Central Europe.

At the start of the 20th century, Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. These lands belonged to the industrially most developed regions of the Empire. The Czechs felt oppressed by Austria at that time and longed for greater competences, or for their own state. The map of Austria-Hungary of that time is in Fig. 1.



Figure 1. Central Europe in 1918 (Semotanová, 2014)

During World War One, Czech soldiers were drafted to the Austro-Hungarian army. It often happened during the war that entire Czech regiments deserted to the enemy and founded so-called legions, which were most numerous in Russia and in France. With the capitulation of Austria-Hungary, this Empire fell apart into several independent republics, including Czechoslovakia, which consisted of Bohemia, Moravia, part of Silesia and Carpathian Ruthenia. The administrative and territorial subdivision of Czechoslovakia in 1920–1938 is displayed in Fig. 2.

The First Republic was marked by the rise and a prominent position of the Czechoslovak state among developed countries of the world. After 1933, when Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor in Germany, the industry became oriented towards armament. The political situation in Europe was getting worse and worse. The so-called First Republic ended by the Munich Agreement (29. 9. 1938) when the representatives of four European powers – Great Britain (Neville Chamberlain), France (Édouard Daladier), Germany (Adolf Hitler) and Italy (Benito Mussolini) agreed on the annexation of Czechoslovak border lands by Germany, Hungary and Poland. The map of Czech Republic's borders before and after the Munich Agreement is in Fig. 3.

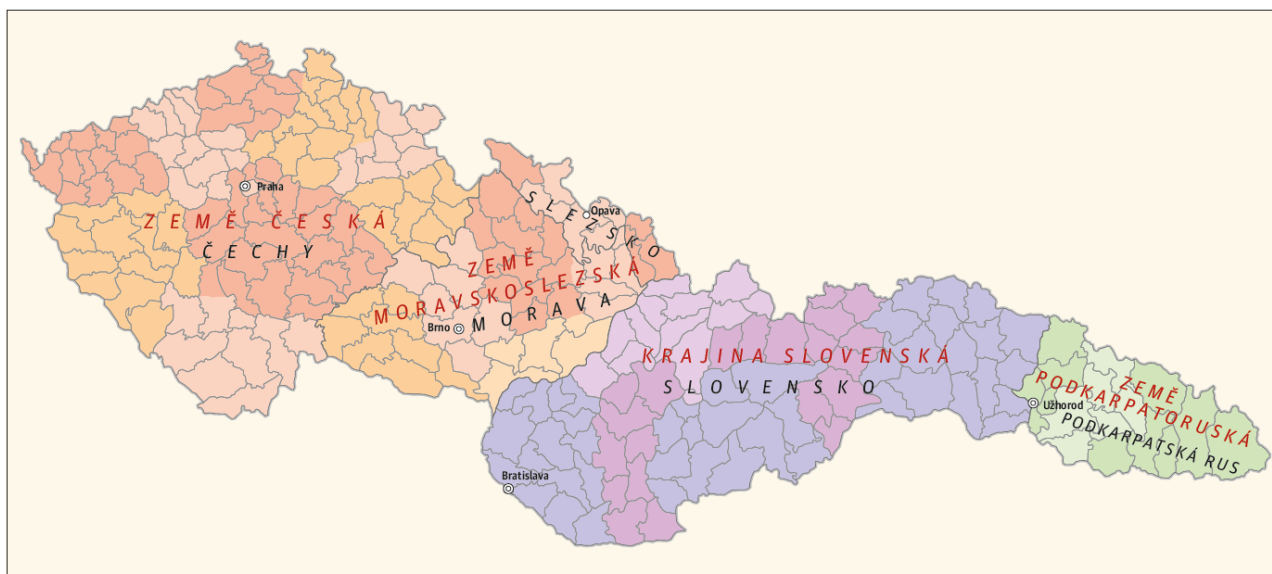


Figure 2. Administrative and territorial subdivision of Czechoslovakia in 1920–1938 (Semotanová, 2014)



Figure 3. Administrative and territorial subdivision of Czechoslovakia in 1920–1938 (Semotanová, 2014)

The so-called Second Republic without the annexed borderland lasted for less than five months. On the 16th March 1939, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia was declared, occupied by Nazi Germany. The map of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia is in Fig. 4. During World War Two, many people were deported from the Czech territory to concentration camps. World War Two finished by the liberation when the west of our territory had been liberated by the American Army, and the majority of our territory by the Soviet Red Army. Many Czech soldiers had fled abroad after the start of WW2 where they joined the armies of allies and fought against the Nazis. A map with the territories where Czech soldiers fought during WW2 is displayed in Fig. 5.



Figure 4. Territory of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (Semotanova, 2014)



Figure 5. Czechoslovak troops in World War Two (Semotanova, 2014)

After World War Two, Czechoslovakia was restored without Carpathian Ruthenia, which became part of the Soviet Union. A map with marked borders of Czechoslovakia after World War Two is in Fig. 6. After WW2, all citizens of German nationality were moved away from Czechoslovakia, there were about three million of them. A map displaying the post-war displacement of Germans is in Fig. 7.



Figure 6. Territorial development of Czechoslovakia after 1945 (Semotanová, 2014)



Figure 7. Displacement of German citizens from Czechoslovakia after World War Two (Semotanová, 2014)

In 1948, communists took over power and kept it until 1989. On the night of the 20th - 21st August 1968, the invasion of the Warsaw Pact troops to Czechoslovakia took place. Subsequently, the Soviet Army settled down on the territory of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and stayed there until 1991. A map with the intervention of occupation forces to Czechoslovakia in August 1968 is displayed in Fig. 8.

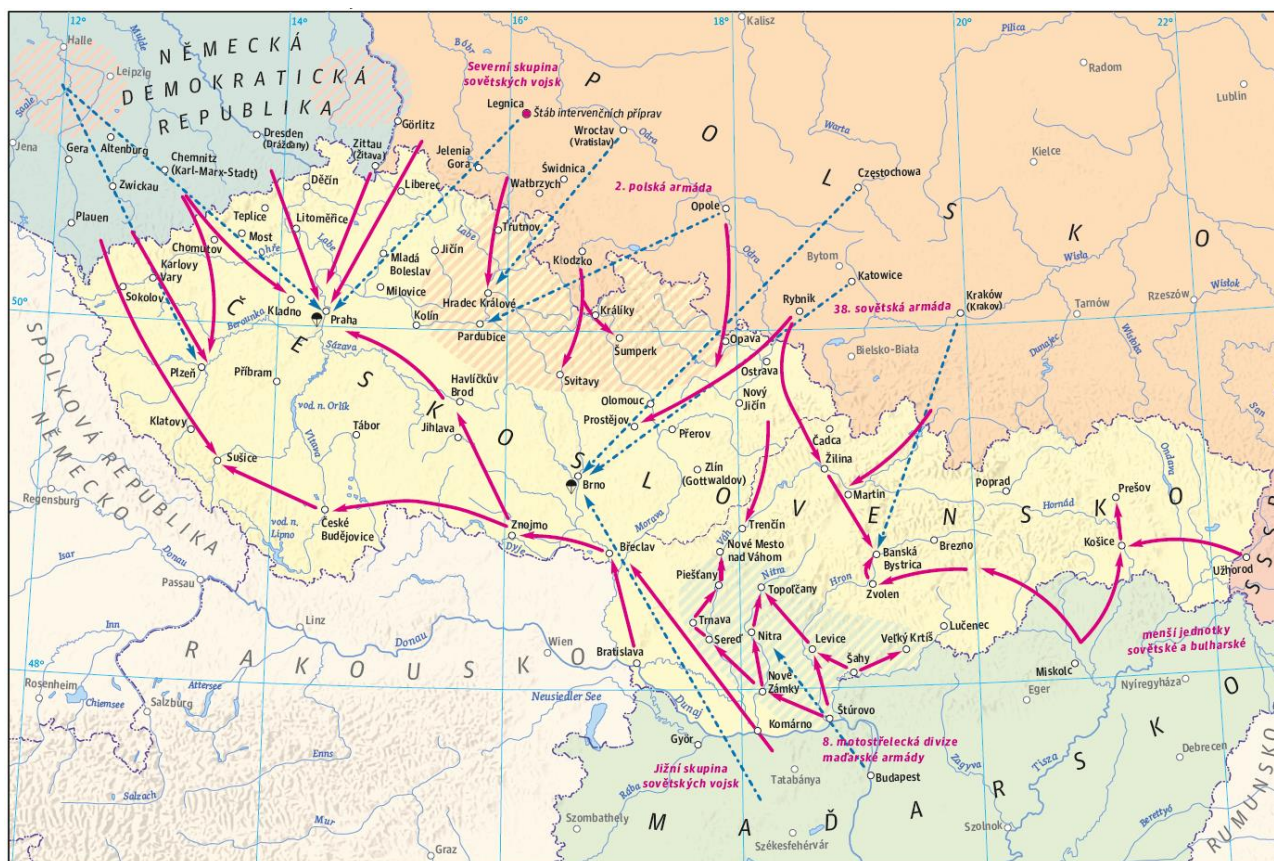


Figure 8. Intervention of occupation forces to Czechoslovakia in August 1968 (Semotanova, 2014)

On the 17th November 1989, the Velvet Revolution started, which did away with the Communist party's sole representation in the government. Subsequently, disputes between the Czechs and Slovaks in their common federation started, ending up with the birth of two independent states – the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic on the 1st January 1993.

The landscape use also went through changes during the 20th century. Mines and dams were built. Agricultural land was consolidated. Water courses were regulated. There were also climatic changes and the growth in extreme weather conditions such as drought, floods, mild and severe winters, etc.

PREPARATORY WORKS ON THE ATLAS

In the first project year, historians will choose significant historical events, wider topics and essential areas whose level of up-to-date research findings will allow their cartographic processing. As has already been said, the events mentioned in the Academic Atlas of Czech History will form a sort of framework for it.

Cartographers' task is to survey all Czech (Czechoslovak) historical atlases published to-date and do a literature search of significant foreign historical atlases (Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1935), (Gotz, 1966), (Machát, 1924) and (Purs, 1965). Another important step is to select a suitable web environment for the creation of the web map application in which the Czech Historical Atlas will be published. The boom of web mapping applications is one of the most dynamically growing fields of digital cartography.

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BIOGRAPHY

Jakub Havlicek (1985), Dept. of Geomatics, Faculty of Civil Engineering, CTU in Prague

He is a post-graduate student at the Czech Technical University in Prague, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Department of Geomatics. His specifications of post-graduate study are focused on cartography and GIS. The main theme of his research are old maps and problematic aspect of the georeferenced old maps. Jakub Havlicek is the author of many articles on Czech and international conferences. Currently he is working on two projects of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic dealing with creating Czech History Atlas and creating interactive web mapping application of the cultural heritage displayed on old photographs.

Tomáš Janata (1984), Dept. of Geomatics, Faculty of Civil Engineering, CTU in Prague

As a post-graduate student of cartography, Tomáš Janata mainly focuses on geospatial data processing and analyses. As a part of an interdisciplinary research team he also deals with historical iconographic sources of the Czech lands and their processing. He teaches several courses thematically connected with digital cartography and geographic information systems. In grant projects in several past years he participated in the creation of the Academic Atlas of Czech History and other cartographic works.