

4. Czech history as a key to understanding contemporary behaviour: ideas, trends, cornerstones

Lecturer: Pavel Pšejda

Objective: To explain the importance of history for contemporary social and political behaviour.

Lecture: In this session, key points in the older Czech (and Czechoslovak) history will be discussed and presented as fundamentals of present political culture and public policy in the Czech Republic. The historical relations of Czechs and Germans, psychological dimensions of the Czech identity, fears of assimilation as a reason for political views, language as a myth legitimizing self-perceptions of the Czech nation, the creation of Czechoslovakia – all these issues and many others will be elaborated in as much detail as possible.

Assigned reading:

Fawn, Rick: *The Czech Republic: A Nation of Velvet*, Amsterdam: Harwood Publishers, 2000. pp. 1-13.

Innes, Abby: *Czechoslovakia: The Short Goodbye*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001. pp. 1-16.

Additional reading:

Hájek, Jan; Kolář, František; Matoušek, Václav; Vágner, Petr: *The Heart of Europe*, Pardubice: Theo Publishing, 2000.

Issues for discussion:

Explain the relation of Czechs and Slovaks.

Describe the circumstances of the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia in 1938.