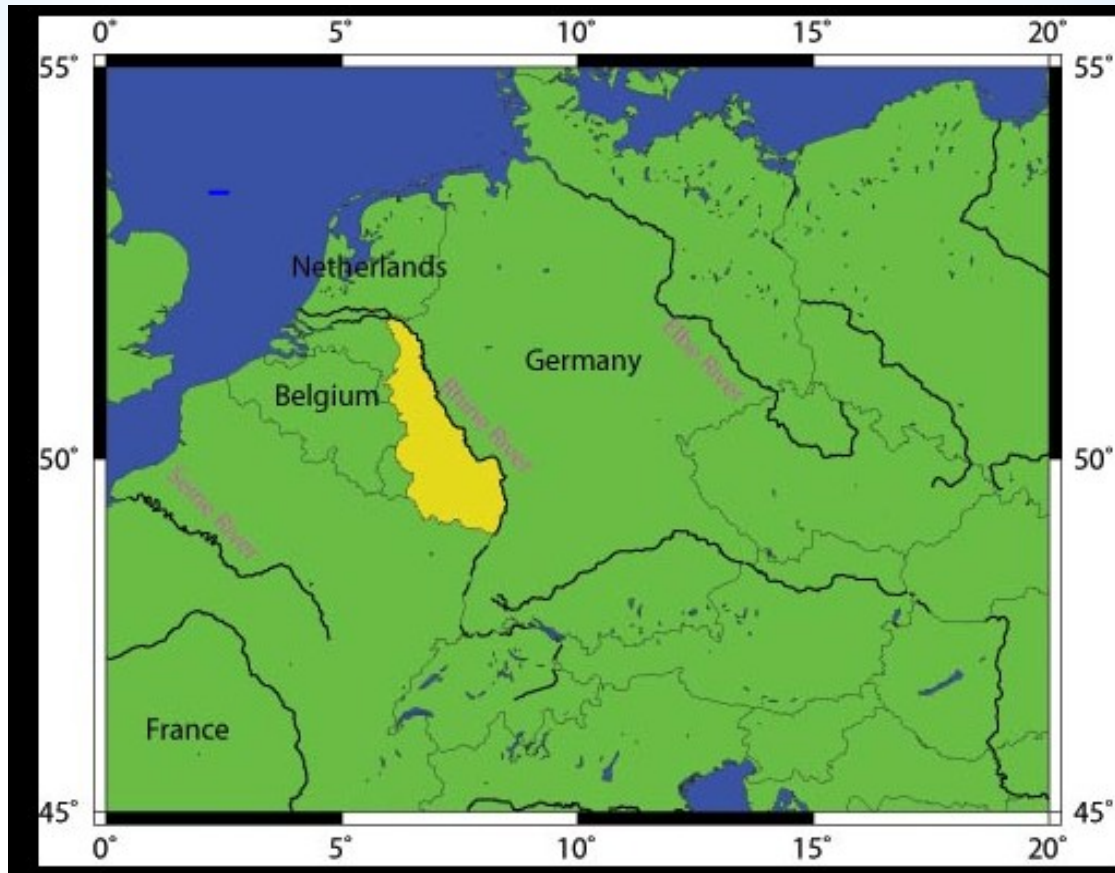


**Central Europe during the Interwar Period**  
**WWII in Central Europe**  
**Liberation of the Central Europe**

# • Central Europe at the beginning of WW II

## • *Germany*

- **The Third Reich – Adolf Hitler** as a Führer (Leader) – all the power centralized in his hands, nazism, Gestapo (secret police – **Heinrich Himmler**) – persecuting of Jews, liberals, Socialist, and Communist opposition – concentrations camps, propaganda (Minister **Joseph Goebbels**), economical prosperity again – preparations for the war → 1935 – Germany began to re-arm, 1936 – remilitarization of Rhineland, **Axis with Italy and later also with Japan ...**
- Blitzkrieg - method of warfare whereby an attacking force, spearheaded by a dense concentration of armoured and motorised or mechanised infantry formations with close air support, breaks through the opponent's line of defence by short, fast, powerful attacks and then dislocates the defenders, using speed and surprise to encircle them. Blitzkrieg attempts to unbalance the enemy by making it difficult for it to respond to the continuously changing front, then defeat it in a decisive (battle of annihilation)



- Location of the Rhineland (as defined by the Treaty of Versailles) along the River Rhine

- Invasion of Poland (Case White) started in September 1939
- Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact
- The success of the invasion marked the end of the Second Polish Republic, though Poland never formally surrendered
- Decisive German and Soviet victory
- Territorial changes: Polish territory divided among Nazi Germany, USSR, Lithuania and Slovakia, Free City of Danzig annexed by Nazi Germany

## • Invasion of Poland



- **German–Soviet Non-aggression Pact**

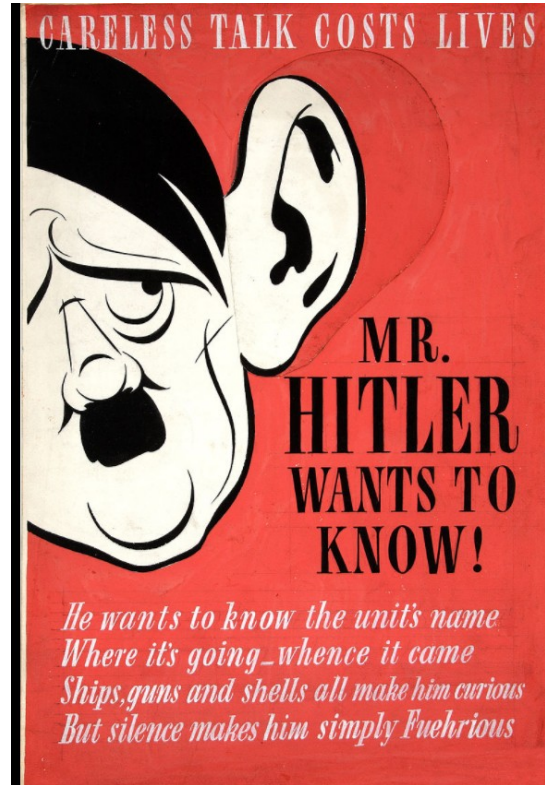
J.V. Stalin and J. von Ribbentrop shaking hands after the signing of the pact.

- Battle of France (Fall of France) started in May 1940
- Decisive German victory and French capitulation
- Creation of the Axis puppet state Vichy regime in Southern France  
Vichy France or the Vichy regime originated (government was formally free but collaborated with Nazi Germans and after some time it came under the absolute power of the Third Reich)
- Beginning of guerrilla warfare by French Resistance cells
- Japanese occupation of French Indochina
- Territorial changes: divided into two parts - north was occupied by Nazi Germans and south Vichy regime

- **Battle of France**

- Battle of Britain - military campaign of the WWII, in which the Royal Air Force (RAF) defended UK against large-scale attacks by the German Air Force (Luftwaffe), started in July 1940
- It has been described as the first major military campaign fought entirely by air forces
- British victory
- The Battle of Britain takes its name from a speech by Winston Churchill to the House of Commons on 18 June: "*What General Weygand has called The Battle of France is over. The Battle of Britain is about to begin.*"

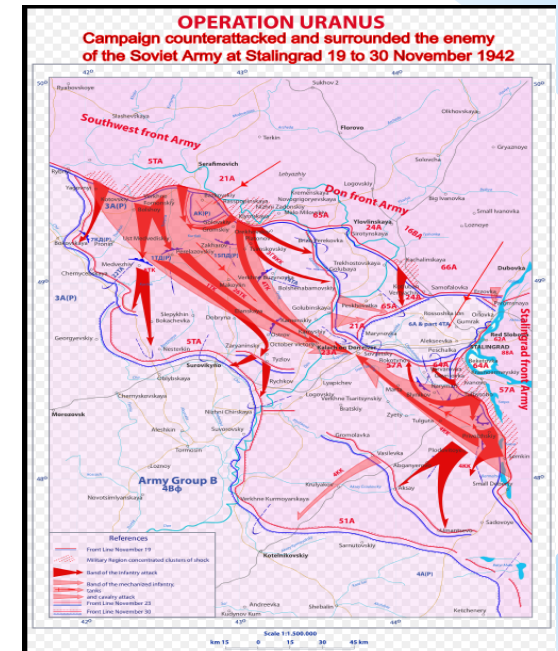
- **Battle of Britain**



- **British propaganda**



- Operation Barbarossa – Nazi Germans attack on USSR started in Summer 1941 and ended in Winter 1941 - End of lightning war in USSR
- Fall 1942 – Winter 1943 **Battle of Stalingrad** – crucial point of WW II – USSR won and launched great offensive - destruction of the German 6th Army and retreat of the Axis from the Volga and the Caucasus



- **Operation Barbarossa and Battle of Stalingrad**



- 1944 – crisis of Nazi regime
- On 6 June 1944, the Allies began Operation Overlord (also known as "D-Day") – the long-awaited liberation of France
- January 1945 – Germans stopped by French and American troops at Western front
- 1944-1945 - Allied victory - The defeat of Nazi Germany and the liberation of Western, Northern and Central Europe

- **Crisis of Nazi regime**

- Conference at which the leaders of US, UK, and USSR

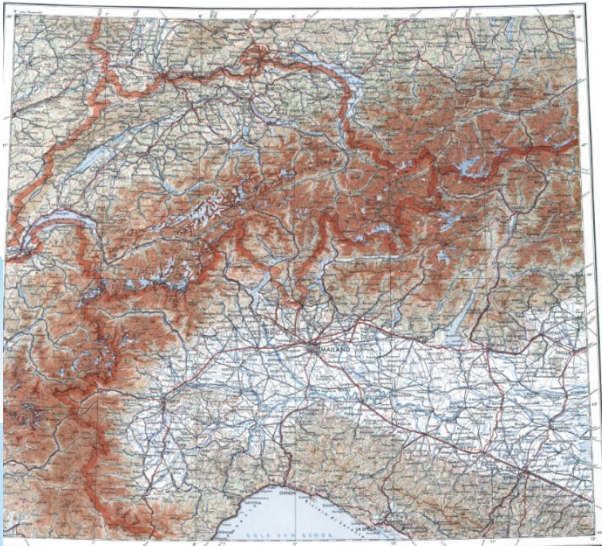


- **World War II conferences of the Allies – Conferences of Big Three**

- **Central Europe at the beginning of WW II**

### *Austria*

- **Operation Otto** - was the plan to occupy Austria during the Anschluss in 1938
- Anschluss - annexation of Austria into Nazi Germany on 12 March 1938
- Austria became a part of German territory
- April 1938 plebiscit confirmed annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany



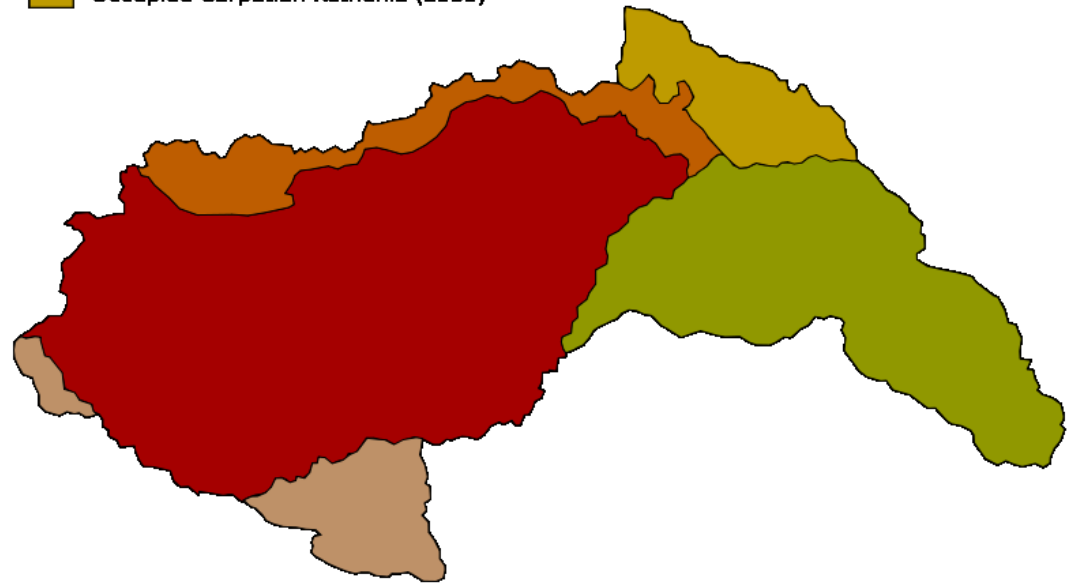
# • Central Europe at the beginning of WW II

## • *Hungary*

- Territorial gains – from Czechoslovakia, Romania and Kingdom of Yugoslavia
- Hungarian nazism
- 1940 - joined Axis Berlin – Rome – Tokyo
- Participated on the invasions of Kingdom of Yugoslavia and of the Soviet Union

### **Hungarian Territorial Gains between 1938-1941**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  Hungary (Treaty of Trianon, 1920)  |  Second Vienna Award (1940)          |
|  First Vienna Award (1938)          |  Annexed Yugoslav Territories (1941) |
|  Occupied Carpatian Ruthenia (1939) |   |



# • Central Europe at the beginning of WW II

## • *Poland*

- Endangered by Germany but also by Soviet Union
- Attacked by Nazi Germany on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939 without declaring war on Poland
- 17<sup>th</sup> September – USSR attacked Poland and occupied eastern part of Poland
- So called “*New Partition of Poland*” – **western** part under German Reich, **central part** – General Gouvernement (with the capital city of Krakow) – the head **Hans Frank**, **eastern part** – occupied by USSR
- Many concentration camps in Poland – Auschwitz, Majdanek, Sobibor, Treblinka ...
- Segregation of Jews – a big ghetto in Warsaw – from April to May 1943 – **Warsaw Ghetto Uprising**
- Out of Poland's prewar Jewish population of 3 million, only about 369,000 survived
- **Polish resistance movement** – Polish government in exile led by Władysław Sikorski as Prime Minister, in Poland the Home Army (Armia Krajowa) and the Peoples Army (Armia Ludowa)

# 1939 - 1941



# After 1941



- Map of New Partition of Poland



- **Central Europe at the beginning of WW II**

- *Czechoslovakia*

- Numerous German minority, **Sudeten German Party**, leader *Konrad Henlein*

- April 1938 – **Carlsbad Decrees** demanding the autonomy for Sudeten Germans and the freedom to profess Nazi ideology, Sudeten Germans expected that President Beneš will refuse their exaggerated requirements

- Czechoslovak government was forced to conclude an agreement with Henlein but he refused all their suggestions according to Hitler's instructions

- Several negotiations on Czechoslovakia between Adolf Hitler and British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain during September 1938

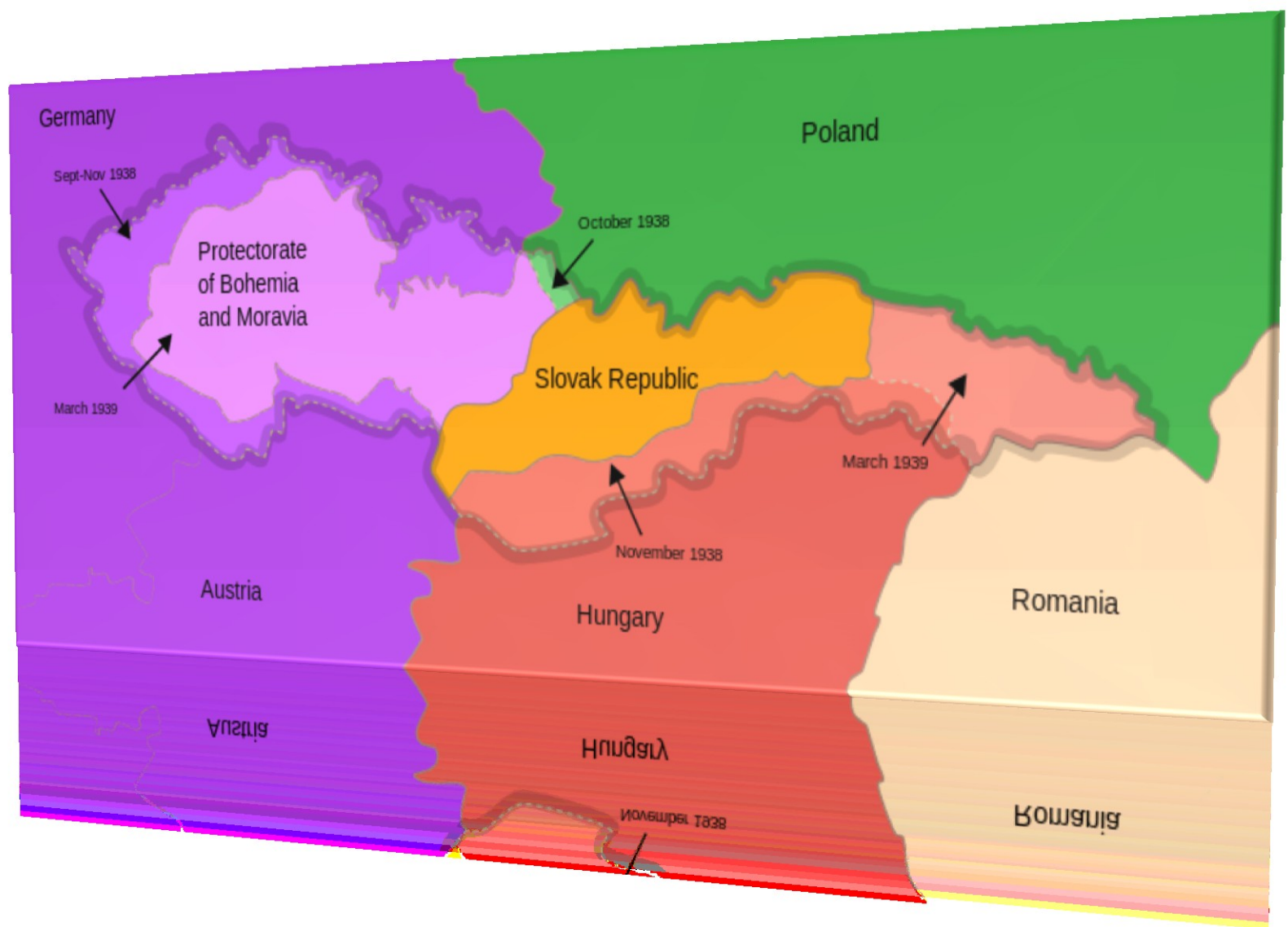
## • **Central Europe at the beginning of WW II**

- 15<sup>th</sup> September – **Berchtesgaden** – Great Powers were putting pressure on Czechoslovak government to accept Hitler's requirements – he wanted Sudeten, firstly Czechoslovak government refused British and French pressure but on 21<sup>st</sup> September was forced to accept A. Hitler's requirements
- 22<sup>nd</sup> September – **Bad Godesberg** – new A. Hitler's requirements – he wanted to occupy Czechoslovak fortification and at the same time, requested Czechoslovakia to urgently agree on the territorial claims of Poland and Hungary
- A. Hitler announced that he will attack Czechoslovakia on 28<sup>th</sup> September (according to the **Case Green** prepared already in April 1938)
- Change of the government in Czechoslovakia – Prime Minister **General Jan Syrový**, "*Give us weapons or Syrový*"
- 23<sup>rd</sup> September – general mobilization in Czechoslovakia

## • Central Europe at the beginning of WW II

- 29<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> September – Negotiations of Great Powers in **Munich** (Germany – Hitler, Italy – Mussolini, Great Britain – Chamberlain, France – Daladier) – about Czechoslovak frontiers and German requirements but without Czechoslovakia – France and Great Britain were Czechoslovak allies but they signed the agreement with the enemy:
  - **Munich Agreement**, Czechoslovakia (Czechoslovak troops) had to evacuate Sudeten and cede it to Germany
- The USSR did not reply for the Czechoslovak application for the help
- From 1<sup>st</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> October Czechoslovak borderland was occupied by German troops and annexed to Germany, Poland got the area around Teschen and Spiš, Hungary got Carpathian Ruthenia and southern parts of Slovakia
- Czechoslovakia lost 1/3 of its area, 1/3 of light industry, in southern Slovakia fertile soil important for agriculture was lost
- The First Czechoslovak Republic was dissolved, so called **Second Czechoslovak Republic** till March 1939 – President **Emil Hácha**, no parliamentary democracy anymore
- The **(First) Slovak Republic** was a client state of Nazi Germany which existed between 14 March 1939 and 4 April 1945

- **Munich Agreement**



## • Central Europe at the beginning of WW II

- 13<sup>th</sup> March 1939 – Slovak Prime Minister **Jozef Tiso** was invited into Berlin – he was made to enforce the separation of Slovakia
- 14<sup>th</sup> March 1939 – **Slovak State** was proclaimed, dependent on Germany
- 14<sup>th</sup> March 1939 – President **Emil Hácha** and Foreign Minister **František Chvalkovský** invited to Berlin – A. Hitler threatened with bombing of Prague – they were forced to sign the document asking Germany for protection what was in fact forced capitulations
- 15<sup>th</sup> March 1939 – German army occupied Bohemia and Moravia – dissolution of Second Czechoslovak Republic
- 16<sup>th</sup> March 1939 – the occupants proclaimed **Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia** – it was part of German Reich, formally autonomous state with so called State President Emil Hácha and Prime Minister Rudolf Beran but the real power was in hands of Reichsprotektor **Konstantin von Neurath** and later **Reinhard Heydrich**

## • Central Europe at the beginning of WW II

- **Jews** were dismissed from the civil service and placed in an extralegal position
- The Czechs launched secret resistance movement to Nazi occupation, Czechoslovak Government in exile in London
- Mass demonstrations in October 1939 – the anniversary of establishing of Czechoslovakia – one student **Vojtěch Sedláček** was shot to death and the second one – **Jan Opletal** was seriously injured and died later, his funeral on 15<sup>th</sup> November became a new mass manifestation
- The Nazis started an intervention against students on **17<sup>th</sup> November** 1939 – 9 students were executed, 1200 of them deported into concentration camp in Sachsenhausen, all the Universities in Protectorate were closed (→ International Students' Day)

## • Readings

- Seton-Watson, Hugh: Eastern Europe 1918 – 1941. Hamden 1962.
- Rotschild, Joseph: East Central Europe between the Wars. Seattle 1974.
- Voráček, Emil and others: The Disintegration of Czechoslovakia in the end of 1930s. Policy in Central Europe. Prague 2009.
- <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/toc.html>

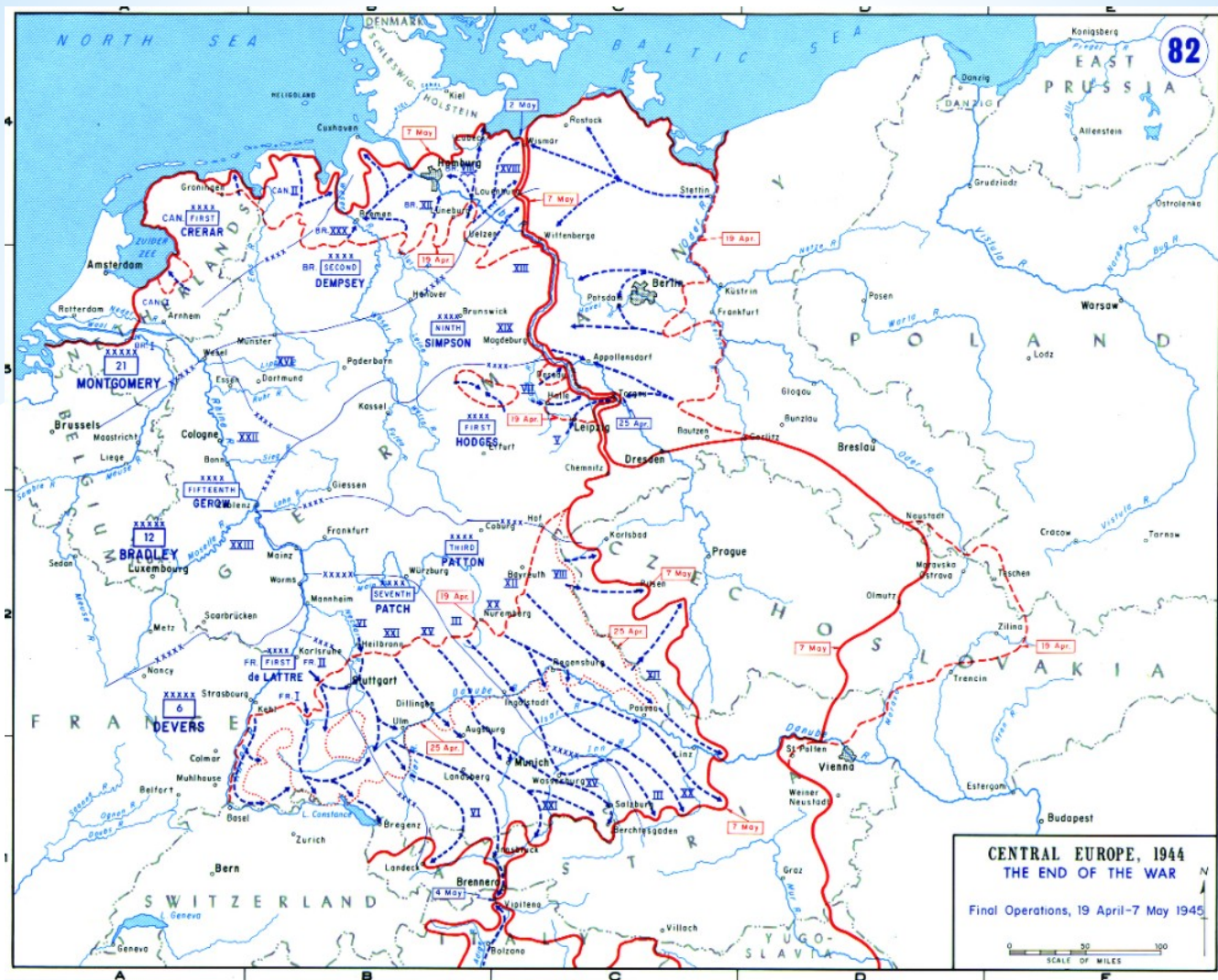
## Demarkační linie



- **Red Army x Western Allied Army: Europe was liberated by Red and Western Allied Army.**

In general "Line of Contact" refers to the demarcation between any two armies, or more, and this contact can be between belligerent or between allied armies.





- Final positions of the Western Allied and Soviet armies, May 8, 1945

## • Liberation of Central Europe

- The Soviet Red Army
- Since March 1943 to May 1944 – the territories in **the Ukraine** were liberated
- August 1944 – Nazi regime in **Romania** was overthrown
- September 1944 – also **Bulgaria** became a member of anti-Nazi alliance
- **Yugoslavia** – strong resistance movement – communists (Partisans) under the leadership of **Josip Broz Tito**, in October 1944 – Belgrade was liberated with the help of Red Army, the rest of Yugoslavia liberated mostly by Partisans
- From October 1944 till February 1945 – fights in **Hungary**, siege of Budapest

## • Liberation of Central Europe

- In April 1945 German-Hungarian forces finally pushed from Hungary to Austria
- February 1945 **Poland** (17<sup>th</sup> February – liberation of Warsaw)
- In January 1945 – the Provisional Government in Poland – with Soviet support
- Members of anti-German resistance movement that remained loyal to London exile government were arrested by the Soviets, many of them exiled
- The conflict in Poland continued – since 1943 – Polish-Ukrainian War

# • Liberation of Central Europe

- From 29<sup>th</sup> August 1944 till the end of October 1944 – **the Slovak National Uprising** – Partizans and members of so called First Czechoslovak Army against German occupation
- September to November 1944 – Red Army crossed border mountains after cruel fights and entered Slovakia (Battle of the Dukla Pass – 22,000 soldiers of Red Army were killed)
- Then the Red Army advanced through Slovakia towards Vienna, during this advance Bratislava was liberated (4<sup>th</sup> April 1945), then Brno (26<sup>th</sup> April) and Ostrava (30<sup>th</sup> April)



**General Ludvik Svoboda,  
Commander in Chief of the  
First Czechoslovak Army**

## • Liberation of Central Europe

- Western part of Bohemia was liberated by American troops (Western Allied Army) under the command of general George S. Patton but the Soviets asked Americans to stop in Pilsen and not to continue to Prague
- 5<sup>th</sup> May 1945 – **the May Uprising of Bohemian People** in Prague and then in the whole country
- Soviet Generals refused an offer of General Eisenhower – he wanted to send American troops to help the uprising but the Soviets wanted to liberate Prague themselves
- **8<sup>th</sup> May 1945 – liberation of Prague and the end of the WW II in Europe**

# • Liberation

- States of Central and Southeast Europe were liberalized mainly by Red Army
- From Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia Red Army left immediately, but in Romania, Hungary, Poland, Finland and in occupied zones (Austria, Germany) stayed
- 30th April – Hitler committed suicide
- 2nd May – Fall of Berlin
- 7th May – capitulation of Germany – confirmed again at night from 8th to 9th May
- July 1945 – the Allied leaders met in Potsdam, Germany – this conference confirmed earlier agreements about Germany – so called “*Programme of four D*” (denazification, demilitarization, democratization and decartelization)
- Also the resettlement of German minority from Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia
- August 1945 – **International Trial in Nuremberg** – after almost one year of trial 12 prominent Nazis sentenced to death

# • Nuremberg Trial

- November 1945 – October 1946
- 24 Nazi functionaries were accused of crimes against peace and humanity
- 12 executed
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kWR2I5Q9d9U>





an, W.

e

- Summer 1945, Potsdan



# ● Potsdam Conference

- Main goals: 1. united Germany – 4 occupation zones only temporary
- Plan 4 “D” – demilitarization, democratization, denazification, decartelization
- New boards – polish boards
- Expulsion of Germans from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary
- War reparations - products and raw materials
- Punishment of war criminals

## • Potsdam Conference

- Germany divided into four occupation zones – French in the southwest, British in the northwest, United States in the south, and Soviet in the east, also Berlin, which was situated in the Soviet zone, was divided into four occupation zones
- All the territories that Germany had occupied (Austria, Czechoslovakia ...) were detached
- Germany lost some territories for Poland and Russia, new Polish frontiers on the Oder-Niese line
- Millions of ethnic Germans expelled from Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary returned to Germany

- May 1945 – wild expulsion (15,000 – 30, 000)!! - displacement and expulsion of German populations, Saxon, Austria – 660, 000
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g6IFfQdM7EI&feature=related>



# • Potsdam Conference and expulsion

- August 1945 – transfer of German population from Czechoslovakia and Poland, expulsion of Hungarian population was not agreed
- Related President's Decrees - revoke citizenship, National Administration of firms, confiscation of land
- Immovable property, valuables
- Personal luggage 30 – 50 kilos
- Organized transfer – 1946 - Allied Control Council. 2, 256,000
- 1947 – 48 - Additional transfer - family reunification – 80, 000

# • Peace Treaties

- February 1947 Paris – Bulgaria, Finland, Italy, Hungary, Romania
- With Germany and Japan – complicated

# • Central Europe after WW II

- WW II lasted for 2.194 days
- 30 states, operations – 40 states
- 110 millions of men and women (army)
- Neutral – Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Swiss
- Soviet Union – 27 millions, China – 10 millions, Germany – 6 millions, Poland – 6 millions, Japan – 2.5 millions,...
- Germany - the principle of collective guilt

# • WW II and New World Order

- New superpowers: US and Soviet Union (defeated Nazi Germany), in Asia – growing China
- New trend in European policy – left
- US – the strongest world economy
- April 1945 – OSN - United Nations charter, Security Council, General Assembly (50 states, today more than 193, international law, international security, economic development, social progress, human rights, and achievement of world peace, replaced the League of Nations, to stop wars between countries, and to provide a platform for dialogue. It contains multiple subsidiary organizations to carry out its missions)



# • US <sub>x</sub> Soviet Union

- After the common enemy was defeated – relation between US and Soviet Union became worse and slowly the rivalry began
- US – better economy, atomic bomb, technically better equipped army
- Soviet Union – huge material lost, but still very powerful army – aroused American respect
- After Japan was defeated – H. Truman – stop supplying – first step: from alliance to enemies (Lend-Lease aid)



# • Beginning of the Cold War

- 1947 - H. Truman – Doctrine against Communism
- <http://www.history.com/speeches/the-truman-doctrine>
- 1946 – W. Churchill – Iron Curtain
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jvax5VUvjWQ>
- 1946 – G. Marshall – Marshall Plan, Czechoslovakia and Poland had to refuse – definitive line between East and West
- <http://www.oecd.org/general/themarshallplanspeechatharvarduniversity5june1947.htm>

# • Cold War

- No open military conflict, geopolitical tension after WW II between powers in the Eastern Bloc and Western Bloc
- Rivalry: policy, economy, science, culture and sport,...very dangerous phenomenon of the conflict East and West was armaments



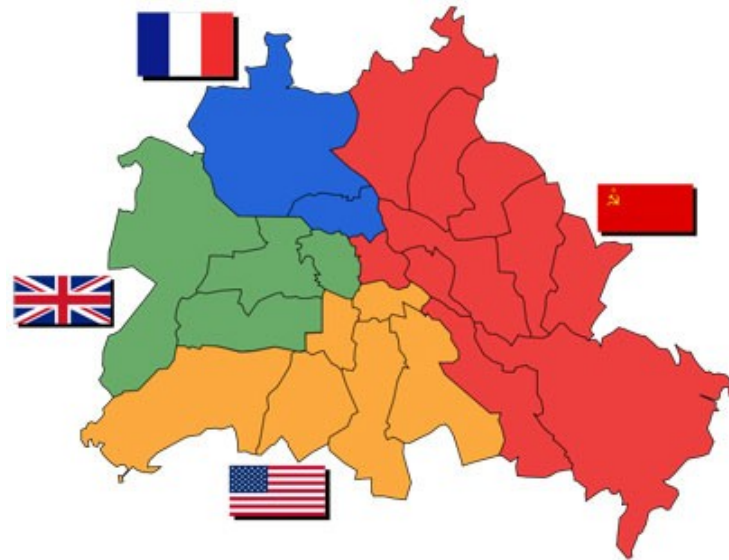
- 1st phase: Berlin Blockade (1948–49) was the first major crisis of the Cold War; Chinese Civil War and the outbreak of the Korean War (1950–53). USSR and USA competed for influence in Latin America, and the decolonizing states of Africa and Asia. Meanwhile, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was stopped by the Soviets. The expansion and escalation sparked more crises, such as the Suez Crisis (1956), the Berlin Crisis of 1961, and the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.
- 2nd phase: Sino-Soviet split. 1968 Prague Spring and Occupation of Czechoslovakia, and Vietnam War (1955–75).
- 3rd phase (period of détente - easing of strained relations, especially in political situation): - Strategic Arms Limitation Talks and the US opening relations with the People's Republic of China as a strategic counterweight to the Soviet Union. Détente collapsed with the beginning of the Soviet–Afghan War in 1979.
- 4th phase - elevated tension: Soviet downing of Korean Air Lines Flight 007 (1983), and the "Able Archer" NATO military exercises (1983). In the mid-1980s -Mikhail Gorbachev introduced the liberalizing reforms. 1989 was a wave of revolutions that peacefully (with the exception of the Romanian Revolution) overthrew all of the communist regimes of Central and Eastern Europe. Dissolution of the USSR in December 1991 and the collapse of communist regimes in other countries such as Mongolia, Cambodia and South Yemen. The United States remained as the world's only superpower.

## • Phases of Cold War

# • Emergency of 2 German states

- Soviet Union x West Bloc
- In western occupation zones – 4 political parties, election, institutions under the occupation power gave the political power to new local governments
- In soviet zone – one party (communists and social democrats), land reform, nationalization of some factories and denacification (schools, offices)
- June 1948 - 3 zones – monetary reform, reparation was cancelled, Marshall Plan

# ● Germany and Berlin



# ● Germany

- Extreme poverty
- The black market - American cigarettes
- Rationing is the controlled distribution of scarce resources, goods, or services. Rationing controls the size of the ration, one's allotted portion of the resources being distributed on a particular day or at a particular time.
- US and GB – 1. 1. 1947 – Bizone and April 1948 Trizone
- June 1948 – decision to establish Germany (3 zones) – Soviet reaction – occupation of western ways to Berlin - collapse in supplying the city- Berlin Crises

- Common control of Germany was finished
- J.V. Stalin – to oust western army from Berlin – centre of the soviet zone
- June 1948 Soviet army started to block Berlin
- Berlin crises  
([http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/BERLIN\\_A/PAGE\\_11.HTM](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/BERLIN_A/PAGE_11.HTM))
- September 1949 – Federal Republic of Germany, Konrad Adenauer, Independent position – West Berlin
- October 1949 - GDR



# • GDR

- President W. Pieck
- Soviet control
- Establishing - two German states - completed struggling for the post-war order in Europe



# ● Soviet Bloc – general info

- J.V. Stalin – new wave of terror, no criticism, labor camp
- <http://www.google.cz/search?q=soviet+working+camps&hl=cs&prmd=imvns&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ei=pR2ZUMrwCIjEswaM8oHIBA&ved=0CAcQAUoAQ&biw=1008&bih=619>
- extreme poverty x extreme investment – army
- Crises of agriculture, 1946 - crop failure
- Soviet policy - Soviet-bloc countries were subordinate Moscow, Soviet advisers in Security forces
- 1949 - Council for Mutual Economic Assistance

- 1949 Council for Mutual Economic Assistance - Soviet Union – economical power – control over the national economies, members: Soviet Union, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, East Germany,...Cuba, Mongolia and Vietnam
- Political (Show)trials – ag. Communist and non – communists - accused of subversive activities, effort to find the culprit responsible for economic problems and effort to discourage people from disagreeing with the regime
- 50's Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia,...
- Milada Horaková

- Nationalization of industry, prohibitions and restrictions on private enterprise and the peasants were forced to join the collective farm
- Hardest enforcement - Soviet interests ended in 1953
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T-EwVVm89og>