

CZECH HISTORY
LECTURE 10
1867-1918

Austrian-Hungarian dualism

The Golden Age (??) of Austria under Franz Josef I. Fundamentals of Czech technical and economic development. Czech culture - first international success. Czech as a fully fledged language was used. Ordinary citizen had more civic rights than in most of the 20th century.

Long-term peace in Europe. Stability of international relations.

After defeat of Austria in 1866: absolutism fell. Constitutionalism. Division into Austria - Hungary. Dual centralism.

December 1867 - constitution. The Imperial Council, an advisory body, was turned into a proper PARLIAMENT. Equality before law, sanctity of property, freedom of movement, assembly, speech, conscience, confession, scholarly research. Independent judiciary. Compulsory eight-year school education. Germans were at an advantage due to electoral advantage. German language was not an official language.

But Emperor remained untouchable, unaccountable. Commander of the army. Could make decisions when parliament not in session. Great power, but integrating and calming influence.

General right to vote however not until 1897, equal voting rights not until 1907. Right to vote depended on wealth and the amount of taxes paid.

LIBERALISM - believed that only those who are qualified by their social standing and education should make political decisions. Freedom to do business. Individuals should be self-reliant. The function of the state: defining the rights of the game, "NIGHT WATCHMAN". Liberalism did not like religion, was enthusiastic about technological progress. Entrepreneurs throughout Austria. The German middle classes were aware of their culture and the importance of their language. Indifference to other nationalities. Their middle classes looked for allies among the nobility, church, this alienated the German liberals.

SOCIALISM and MARXISM - Marx and Engels, contradictions. Ways of manufacture predetermine social organisation. Class struggle between owners of the means of production and labourers who sell their labour. Socialist revolution will abolish private property

Social democratic parties in Austria adopted Marxism. Viktor Adler: it is the task of the social democratic party to prepare not the revolution, but conditions for it. To organise the proletariat. Proletarian culture to win over bourgeois culture. To cultivate sophistication of the working classes. Long term effort and work. Later, fully reformist policies.

CATHOLICISM - world view - criticised liberalism for its insensitivity to poverty. Lower classes. CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM. Image of the enemy: blackmailing capitalist, intriguing socialist. Antisemitism. In the Czech Lands, political catholicism only in Moravia.

End of the 19th century: change of the spiritual climate. Fear of nationalist and social conflicts. Insecurity. ERNST MACH - new unsettling scientific discoveries. EINSTEIN - THEORY OF RELATIVITY (first version in 1905). SIGMUND FREUD, founder of PSYCHOANALYSIS. Rationality is only a thin veneer in Man.

PACIFISM.

TOMÁŠ GARRIGUE MASARYK

Professor of sociology and philosophy at newly organised Czech University in Prague. His doctoral thesis about increases in suicide rates - tried to understand his times and human life. LOSS OF FAITH IN THE MEANING OF LIFE, which had been given by religion.

Masaryk found superficiality, weakness, hypocrisy in Czech society (Česká otázka, Naše nynější krize -- The Czech Question, Our Current Crisis).

Masaryk rejected clichés and demanded constant, small, sustained everyday work, striving for the increase

of education and sophistication of the nation. Czech reformation, Czech tradition, ideals of humanity, Czechs peacefully living within Austria - REALISM. (Also: Josef Kaizl and Karel Kramář)

Masaryk's moral and cultural influence.

In 1886, Masaryk and his friends cast doubt on the authenticity of RUKOPIS KRÁLOVÉDVORSKÝ A ZELENOHORSKÝ (THE KRÁLŮV DVŮR AND ZELENÁ HORA MSS). The whole nation against them - he did not relent.

Leopold Hilsner - accused of a "ritual Jewish murder of a young girl" - against bigotted Czech journalism, Masaryk defended Hilsner's right for a free and objective trial, against antisemitism.

In 1910, he was sixty. His friends thought his life's work had been done.

CZECH POLITICS

1866 - Czechs remained pro-Austrian and hoped that their fidelity would be rewarded. No. Czech protest actions in 1867 František Palacký, František Ladislav Rieger - a ridiculous "Pilgrimage to Moscow" - attempts at incipient foreign policy, also contacts with French Emperor Napoleon.

1868 - laying of the National Theatre Foundation stone in Prague. Public political rallies, tens of thousands. Self-confidence of the Czechs. Negotiations with the Emperor.

1871: FUNDAMENTAL ARTICLES: pre-requisites for future Czech autonomy, not so strong as Hungary's. There was to be a land assembly, a land government. Special law dividing districts on the basis of nationality. GERMANS forced the Emperor to give this project up.

PASSIVE RESISTANCE BY CZECH POLITICIANS from October 1873 until 1878. Moravians broke this boycott in 1874. Wrong policy because they deprived themselves of influence.

New opposition against the Old Czechs: the Young Czechs did enter parliament in 1874 (both parties were middle class). Young Czechs: aspiring young entrepreneurs. Influential Czech paper Národní listy - The Nation. Fierce conflicts between Old Czechs and Young Czechs.

CZECH PARLIAMENTARY POLITICS:

The Iron Ring of the Right, premier Eduard Count Taaffe - supported by the Czechs against the strongest party of German liberals. Taaffe, conservative, but reforms, if useful. Put off controversial decisions and did not give the Czechs too much, he knew that they would not stop supporting him because German liberals would have won.

Division of Prague university (1882) into a Czech and a German part. Some official language liberalisation. Policy of "crumbs". Czech bureaucracy. Open parliamentary debates. Increasing sophistication of the populace.

1890 - attempts at national ceasefire. Czech-German negotiations. "Punctations" Division of public service in Bohemia according national lines. Germans more rights in their regions. Old Czechs took part in these, Czech public under the influence of the Young Czechs rejected them. End of the Old Czechs and Rieger.

1891 - glorious election victory of the Young Czechs. Young Czechs soon learnt that they cannot be as radical as they hoped.

THE RISE OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY IN BOHEMIA.

First, trade union associations. Influence of marxism. Cruel suppression of a strike at Svárov in 1870. Reverberations of the Paris Commune in 1871.

Austrian Social Democratic party founded in 1874, split between radicals and moderates, renewal in 1888 - 1889. Eight-hour working day and general suffrage. demands.

Eight hour working day never became law in Austria.

Highly industrial developed Czech Lands played an important role in the social democratic movement.

CZECHOSLAVONIC SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC WORKERS' PARTY founded in Prague in 1878. It was broken up, later resurrected at the end of 1880s.

1st MAY 1890 - mass demonstrations - like in most of Europe. Democratic, parliamentary, was supported by 30 per cent of the population.

OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES:

Gradual extension of suffrage from 1882.

Omladina (The Young Ones) Radical students and workers, attacked the Austrian state and the emperor.

January 1894 - 68 adherents of Omladina sentenced to prison (police regarded them as a conspiratory organisation)

1890s. AGRARIAN MOVEMENT. THE AGRARIAN PARTY was founded in 1903 and addressed the population from the countryside. A dense network of cooperatives and other associations. Led by Antonín Švehla.

Christian-socialist party.

1897: Young Czechs very strong in elections. Premier Kazimír Badeni published Badeni's LANGUAGE DECREE - each submission was to be dealt in the language in which it was submitted. German campaign against this. Badeni fell, nationalist and anti-Jewish riots in Prague,

CZECH NATIONAL SOCIALIST PARTY arose from this.

TOWARDS A MARKET ECONOMY

In the second half of the 19th century, Czech Lands became a direct part of modern industrial civilisation. Density of population, good communications, railways, mineral resources. Steam engine.

EMIL ŠKODA - 1869 -Austrian entrepreneur, purchased a small factory owned by count Valdštejn and turned it into a business of a European reknown.

Overall lack of indigenous capital. Cooperative banks - typical feature of Czech business.

Good education - became a spur to economic development.

BOHEMIA BEFORE THE 1ST WORLD WAR:

Similar levels of development both Czechs and Germans. Similar cultural habits. 37 per cent Germans in Bohemia. Hostility between Czechs, Germans. Mostly about schools. Enticing pupils from the other nationality. Czechs won. Germans ignored Czech culture. Prague Germans even ignored Czech music, which Vienna loved. Czechs never went to the German theatre.

But many mixed marriages, bilingual families. Business relations. Social democrats collaborated. Czechs could not identify with the Austrian state. Used the advantages, but did not feel responsible for it.

Czech culture - Extensive basic education network. Highest literacy in Austria in the second half of the 19th century.

Encyclopaedias: Otto's monumental encyclopaedia. Translations, Major poets: Májovci, ručovci, lumírovci, Modernism, Symbolism, decadence, Fiction writers. Very good newspapers. Extensive book buying. A dense network of public libraries. Cultural associations. Sokol. pubs, coffe houses.

The National Theatre in Prague - opened in 1881, burned down, reopened in 1883. Waterworks in Prague from 1880s - new hygiene practice. New blocks of flats, comfortable. Neorenaissance, art nouveau. Impressionists, cubists, expressionist.

"We have only two weapons: the book and the school" - poet Jaroslav Vrchlický. Emphasis on increasing the intellectual sophistication of the nation. Literature stood in for politics.

FIRST WORLD WAR:

28th June 1914 - Sarajevo assassination: killed Franz Ferdinand d'Este. End of an era. Gavrilo Princip. Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, Turkey, Bulgaria), Allies (Russia, France, Britain - in 1915, Italy joined the Allies).

War of conquest. But aggressive Germany. Germany wanted new colonies.

Four fronts. Trench warfare. Mass killings. War of attrition. Hinterland affected.

CZECH LANDS - DEPRESSED. Czechs did not know why they had to fight Russia. Hostile behaviour of Austrian authorities towards the Czechs. No more tolerant Austria. Czech culture important. In conflict with the army commanders. Censorship.

1914: MASARYK WENT ABROAD to declare a personal war on the central powers. A small group of supporters at home. Maffia - lead by Edward Beneš. To be in touch, to make Czech politicians not to support Austria.

Masaryk - help from English and US intellectuals, Czechs in the US, Russia.

Masaryk, Beneš, Slovak Štefánik set up a CZECHOSLOVAK NATIONAL COUNCIL in 1916. First, the Allies did not support the breaking up of Austria, but later yes.

Czechoslovak legions on the Italian, French and the Russian fronts. Czech emigres and POWS. Great impact of these on the Allies. Summer 1917 - Battle of Zborov - three Czechoslovak regiments (Czechoslovak Brigade) fought excellently at Zborov.

France, US and Britain recognised the Czechoslovak National Council. They needed the Czech troops.

Within Bohemia - Czech tsardom - Karel Kramář - unrealistic. Russian help did not materialise, Russians were defeated in 1915 at Gorlitz.

November 1916 - Czech union- MP of Austrian Parliament, THE NATIONAL COUNCIL - the supreme Czech body at home.

From 1917, Czech public opinion for the breaking up of Austria. Manifest of Czech Writers (May 1917 - Jaroslav Kvapil). The Czech union demanded the creation of a federal Austria of equal nations.

The National Council took over power, gradually. Control over food supplies from Bohemia to Vienna. National Council respected also by socialists, only one independent action: 14th October 1918 - general strike.

Danger of political disintegration. Czechs contributed to this. The Czechs separated themselves from rest of Austria. On 28th October 1918 the National Council took over the main food storehouse, Obilní ústav, declared independence in Prague.

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