

Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic since the fall of communism

- tough dissidents in November 1989 – controlled revolution
- Havel elected President in Dec. 1989 by the same communist parliament
- impartiality – “need to get involved”
- Havel and squabbles with the Slovaks – 1990 – 1992
- Václav Klaus, Finance Secretary, Thatcherite rhetoric, “normalisation” mentality
- Slovakia: boxer Vladimír Mečiar
- 1992 “opposing election results, break up of Czechoslovakia without a referendum
- voucher privatisation without transparency
- belief in Klaus, rabid anticommunism
- PRE-post-communist period 1989 – 1996(1997)
- Klaus’ ODS reelected in 1996, with reduced majority.
- “Sarajevo coup” autumn 1996
- Freedom Union, intellectual populism
- Elections 1998 – social democrats, Opposition agreement
- June 2002 – social democrats win
- Entry into NATO, entry into the EU
- defensive nationalism
- Right wing media bias – artificial campaigns
- How to deal with the press: Social democratic Prime Ministers: Miloš Zeman, Vladimír Špidla, Stanislav Gross, now “bulldozer” Jiří Paroubek
- economic boom under social democrats
- general disillusionment, slow movement towards the West.
- pre-election period 2006 – shrill hatred
- general election June 2006 – a complete draw (100 – 100 MPs)
- autumn 2006 – several unsuccessful attempts to form a government
- spring 2007 – two social democratic MPs defect to the conservatives, on the very same day the United States applies to the Czech government for the building of its military radar base for its missile defence system on Czech territory
- 70 per cent of the Czech population are against the building of the US radar, the government wanted to go ahead nevertheless
- major reforms of the health service, cutbacks in social services and financial support for the weak; no mandate in parliament for this
- from January until June 2009, Czech Republic held the EU presidency
- but in April 2008, Czech government lost a vote of confidence in Parliament
- the government fell, an early election was to take place in October 2009

- One MP complained that he was elected for four years and the Constitutional Court upheld the decision. No election will take place until the full term of parliament runs out
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 - history of the Czech anti-missile defence movement:
 - <http://czechfocus.cz/art/54041.html>
 - Spring 2010: Unprecedented facebook campaigns against social democratic politicians (attacking them at public appearances with eggs), facebook campaigns against only people:
 - The campaign “Přemluv bábu”
 - <http://czechfocus.cz/art/52439.html>
 - June 2010: In the General Election. The social democrats won the strongest support, but only the right wing parties were able to form a coalition. Existing conservative party (ODS), led by PM Petr Nečas, former Young Communist League activist, formed a coalition with two newcomers: TOP09 (escapees from the former People’s Party) and VV (Public Matters, an ad hoc coalition of dodgy Prague entrepreneurs and a TV journalist). From 2010, this right wing government has been marred by huge corruption scandals. It had a policy of strict, unpopular government cuts, although the Czech Republic’s indebtedness is low, only some 40 per cent of the GDP
 - December 2010: Environment secretary Pavel Drobil’s deputy records his minister admitting that he has been stealing the ministry funds and putting them in the coffers of his own political party (ODS). When the recordings are published, the whistleblower is sacked and the government closes ranks.
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- 2011 The ruling right of centre coalition continues with controversial austerity policy, in spite of the fact that the Czech Republic is the seventh

least indebted country in the EU. At the same time, it is plagued by repeated corruption scandals. Controversially, in an almost totally atheistic country, the government approves a long-term programme of return of property to the Roman Catholic church and other religious organisations, amounting to billions of pounds.

- 2012 The popularity of the right of centre government sinks to an all time low and Social Democrats and Communists record a landslide win in the regional elections in October 2012.

- January 2013 The Prague media and intellectual elite launch an intensive media campaign in support of “their” presidential candidate, “Prince” Karl Schwarzenberg, an Austrian aristocrat, deputy Prime Minister and head of the TOP09 ruling political party, pretending Schwarzenberg bears no responsibility for the controversial government policy. PR specialists present the 75-year old candidate as a “punk”, using the livery of the Sex Pistols music band. The overkill of the campaign misfires and the opposition candidate, former Social Democratic Prime Minister, Economist Miloš Zeman is elected by a wide margin (Schwarzenberg: 45 per cent, Zeman: 55 per cent).

- <http://internationalsocialist.org.uk/index.php/2013/01/czech-presidential-elections-in-the-context-of-crisis/>

- June 2013 Nečas's government falls: It turns out the Catholic PM and father of four children had an affair with Jana Nagyová, Head of PM's office. Nagyová engaged the Czech secret service to spy on Nečas's wife. Nagyová is charged and a caretaker government takes over

- October 2013: Process of “Berlusconisation” starts: Andrej Babiš, entrepreneur and billionaire and owner of Prague leading newspaper Mladá fronta Dnes practically wins the general election. The Social Democrats, Babiš's “ANO” (Asociace nespokojených občanů, The Association of Discontented Citizens) and the Catholic Party (KDU-ČSL) form an incongruous coalition

- 18th February 2014: The Ano, SocDem and Catholic government is inaugurated.

- 2015: European Refugee Crisis led to a huge rise of xenophobia against muslims and refugees in the Czech Republic. The xenophobic narrative was encouraged and disseminated by President Miloš Zeman and Prime Minister, oligarch Andrej Babiš. Zeman was re-elected President in January 2018.

- Andrej Babiš's ANO became the main ruling party in the Czech Republic after its victory in the October 2017 election. The Social Democrats are its minor coalition partners and their support has waned under 10 per cent.

- Babiš is aligning the Czech Republic with Orbán and Kaczyński in the so called V4 formation within the European Union. The V4 group is

strongly against helping refugees. In November 2019, Czech Parliament rejected the request from Greece to take several dozen child refugees from the Greek refugee camps. The country is still in the grip of islamophobia

- Oligarchs like Andrej Babiš and Petr Kellner are taking over the Czech media. Petr Kellner has taken control of the most popular Czech TV station TV Nova. His Home Credit company, which operates mostly in China, is threatening Prague University Chinese experts for pointing out that he behaves like a loan shark in China. (Kellner was later killed in a helicopter crash in Canada.)
- Babiš continues to receive support of more than 30 per cent of the Czech population although large anti-Babiš demonstrations took place in Prague in June and November 2019.
- The oligarch Petr Kellner died in Alaska in March 2021 when his helicopter crashed.
- Andrej Babiš lost the general election in October 2021 and his government was replaced by a right of centre coalition of five parties. The left wing is not represented in the Czech Parliament, nor are young people. While the current government of political scientist Petr Fiala is said to be more “decent” than Babiš’s government (Babiš is investigated by the EU for financial fraud) the Fiala government is fully beholden to right wing ideological stereotypes, so it aims to cut state expenses at the time of impoverishment of citizens due to covid and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This may destabilised the Czech Republic and persuade people to vote for populists, xenophobes and extremists.
- January 2023: A pro-Western, former NATO general Petr Pavel wins the direct elections for Czech President. Many people hail this as a change of the overall atmosphere in the Czech Republic after the end of term of Miloš Zeman as President, others are complaining that Petr Pavel is in the pocket of the right wing and the West. (In the late 1980s, Petr Pavel was a member of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and he worked for the military secret service in the communist army. Critics say that he will just support any regime which is in power.)