

Course: SELECTED CHAPTERS OF CZECH AND WORLD HISTORY

T6 Postwar World: Consequences of Second World War 1945 to 1947

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## Contents

Overall Results of Second World War .....	3
Criminal Aspect of Second World War .....	6
Territorial Changes after Second World War .....	7
War Criminal Punishment .....	8
Post-war Recovery.....	9
Post-War World Order .....	10
United Nations.....	10
Nuclear Weapon.....	12
Peace Treaties .....	13
German Issue.....	14
Summary .....	15
Recommended Sources.....	16

## **POST-WAR WORLD: CONSEQUENCES OF SECOND WORLD WAR**

### **1945 TO 1947**

The Second World War was the largest military conflict in history of mankind. That is why the impact of war was also significant in all possible aspects. The result of war led to defeat of three world powers, of Germany, Italy, and Japan. The new powers, or superpowers, became United States and Soviet Union.

The victorious states attempted to, the same as after First World War, to accept such measures that will prevent the outbreak of war once for all. The result was foundation of organization United Nations.

The course of Second World War proved that waging of war is no more only category of diplomatic relations, but real crime. That is why the trial with persons blamed for triggering the war took place in 1945 and lasted all over second half of 20th century.

Second World War, as “total war” (see T6 Second World War) meant also total destruction of economy and infrastructure that could be fatal. The destructive power of war led to necessity of recovery. Billions of dollars were expend to restore pre-war conditions.

But all attempts to avoid the war were out of success. In 1947 and 1948 the world was confronted with possibility of next conflict – Cold War.

### **Overall Results of Second World War**

The Second World War was the **largest war conflict in history** both according to extend of military operations and number of victims. In total number of dead reached at least 60 million, but it is only approximation, the real height was never exactly assessed.

Population casualties in war were unequally distributed. The most casualties were in countries of **Central and East Europe**, together ca. 44 million, i.e. 72 % of all losses! The next decisive moment is fact that more fallen men and more casualties were on side of anti-Hitler coalition than on Axis due to fact of repression against occupation regimes (guerrilla) and genocide of selected group of inhabitants.

- **During the war there was more civilian than military casualties.**

From total 60 million dead were approximately 20 million fallen men, i.e. one third.

**Population losses of anti-Hitler coalition** and their allies were in total ca. 50 million including 16 mil fallen men.

In each country the situation was as follows:

- **Soviet Union**

- Soviet Union suffered largest population losses, the total number is usually quantified to 28 million including 12 million fallen soldiers, i.e. each seventh inhabitant died (!), but the number could be higher. For example in 1941 Soviet Union has ca. 193 million inhabitants, while in 1945 it was 167 million inhabitants. It meant that only the decrease was 26 million without taking into consideration of population growth.

- **Poland**

- Extent of losses of Poland were also considerable. Together were killed some 6 million inhabitants that meant each sixth (!). The number is very high due to fact that half of them were Jewish inhabitants who died and were killed in ghettos extermination camps. Total number of fallen man was 300 000 men.

- **Yugoslavia**

- In total Yugoslavia suffered loss of 1.7 million inhabitants, each ninth (!). But majority of them became victim of ethnic and religious clashes among nations of Yugoslavia, especially of Croats and Serbs, and of guerrilla fight.

- **Other countries**

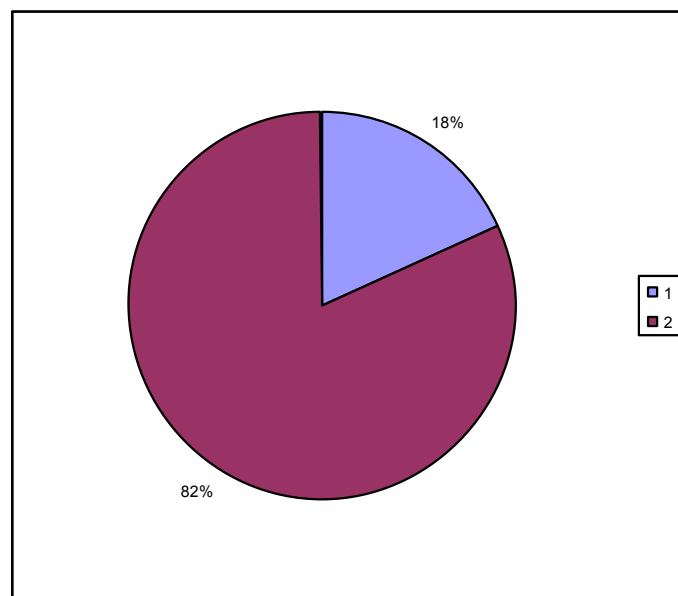
- In other countries of United Nations the number of dead was as follows:
- In **China** there was 10 million dead including 2,5 mil fallen men,
- in **France** 650 000 dead including 200 000 fallen men,
- in **Greece** 550 000 dead including 10 000 fallen men,
- in **U.S.A.** 405 000 dead in which majority of them, 399 000, were fallen men,
- in **United Kingdom** 375 000 dead including 300 000 fallen man, and
- in **Czechoslovakia** 265 000 dead including 3000. Taking into account also German population means that total losses overcome 500 000 dead.

**In Axis countries the majority of dead goes to the detriment of Germany:**

- **Germany**

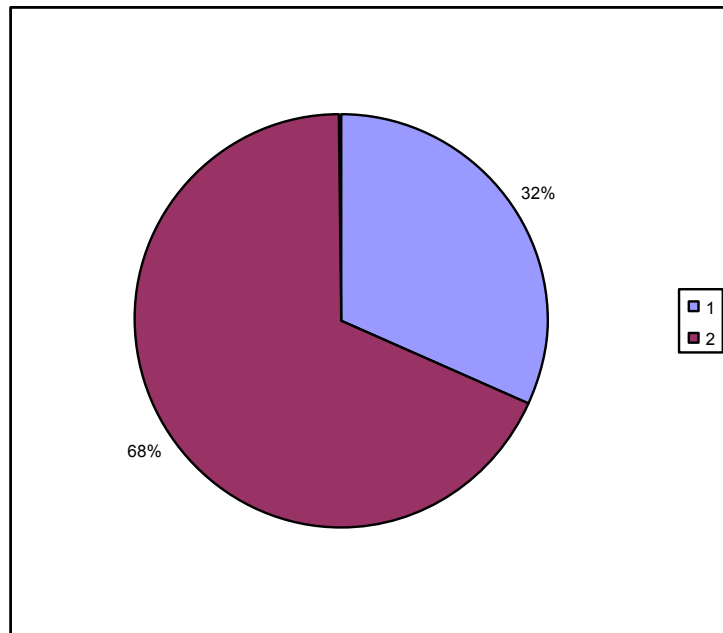
- Germany suffered the largest losses of Axis countries, especially during 1945. In total ca. 6.5 million people died each eleventh, but majority of them were military casualties, together 4 million.
- **Japan**
  - In Japan the total number reached 2.5 million, each twenty eighth, especially during 1945 and majority of them were military casualties, ca. 1.5 million.
- **Other countries**
  - During war allies of Germany and Japan switched to side of anti-Hitler coalition, part of losses comprises on fight against Axis, but situation was as follows:
  - In **Romania** total number of dead was 600 000 including 300 000 fallen men,
  - in **Italy** 500 000 dead including 200 000 fallen men,
  - in **Hungary** 385 000 dead including 25 000 fallen men
  - in **Finland** 50 000, while civilian losses were minimal, and
  - in **Bulgaria** 15 000 dead.

#### Overall Results: Human Losses



The blue colour is for number of human losses of Axis, the violin is for United Nations.

#### Overall Results: Number of Fallen Men



The blue colour is for number of number of fallen soldiers of Axis, the violin is for United Nations.

### **Criminal Aspect of Second World War**

- Aggression of Axis did not aim to reach hegemony, but to **physically liquidate enemy**: that is why majority of victims from civilians:
- **National Socialist Germany**
  - Nazi regime conducted genocide of non-Aryan population. In first place the victims were mentally disabled people, than Jewish in extermination camps.
- **Japan**
  - Japan did not found any extermination camps, but the high number of its victims was due to the way the Japanese conduct the war, typical example was Nanking massacre.
- **Anti-Hitler Coalition**
  - Also members of United Nations were blamed for criminal deeds.
  - **U.S.S.R.:** genocide of nations allied to Germany, physical liquidation of P.O.W.s.
  - **U.S.A. and United Kingdom:** strategic bombardment, victims ordinarily civilians.

## **Territorial Changes after Second World War**

According to **Atlantic Charter** territorial changes could only happen in nation-wide consent. But this paragraph was not observed. Among victorious states the largest territorial gains had:

- **Soviet Union**
  - After 1945 recognition of war expansions, i.e. gain of part of Finland, Baltic lands, Eastern Poland, and Moldova (part of Romania), and post-war territorial gains, i.e. part of Prussia (Germany), Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia (Czechoslovakia), Southern Sakhalin and Kuril Islands (Japan)
- **Poland**
  - The largest changes: loss of Eastern territories vs. gain of Eastern part of Germany
- **Yugoslavia**
  - Gain of Northern shores of Adriatic Sea (dispute with Italy)
- Defeated states: return of occupied territory and loss of their own territory
- **Germany**
  - The largest territorial losses = territory East of Odra and Nysa Rivers, i.e. Silesia, Pomerania, and Prussia; Saarland under administration of France
  - Own territory divided into occupation zones, i.e. Soviet, American, British (Bizonia), and French (Trizonia); also Berlin divided into three sectors
- **Austria**
  - Uncertain status: ally of victim of Nazi regime, until 1955 divided into four occupation zones
- **Italy**
  - Loss of all colonies (under administration of U.N.), Northern part of Adriatic shores, and the Dodecanese
- **European allies of Axis**
  - Finland, Romania; Hungary, Bulgaria
- **Japan**

- Loss of all territories that Japan gained after 1884, i.e. Manchuria, Korea, Pacific islands, Southern Sakhalin and Kuril Island

## **War Criminal Punishment**

According to the wide consensus triggering of war was since Second World War considered being crime. That is why punishment of war criminal took place. But all trials were conducted before the peace treaties were signed and also without any support in law. Since its beginnings these trials became controversial.

- **Nuremberg Trials** were processes before military tribunal that was held in German city Nuremberg, Bavaria from 20 November 1945 to 1 October 1946.
  - In total 13 trials against representatives of Nazi Germany before Nuremberg Court took place.
  - Nuremberg trials were not important only due the fact that the most important political and military leaders of Nazi regime were judged, but also due to fact that principles of prosecution constituted a definition of war crime and influenced the development of international criminal law.
  - According to decision of Nuremberg Court the defendants were blamed to be guilty of
    - 1) **participation in common plan or conspiracy in crime against peace,**
    - 2) **planning, initiating, and waging aggressive wars,**
    - 3) **war crimes,** and
    - 4) **crimes against humanity.**
  - Among dead penalties there were e.g.
  - **Herman Göring**, German minister and leader of air force,
  - **Joachim von Ribbentrop**, minister of foreign affairs, or
  - **Alfred Rosenberg**, chief ideologist of Nazi Party. Numbers of other representatives were sentenced to years of imprisonment.
- **Tokyo Trial** was military trial that was held before International Military Tribunal for the Far East from 29 April 1946 to 12 November 1948.
  - Tribunal was limited in fact that could not judge Emperor Hirohito and his family.



- Tribunal distinguished three types of war crimes, conspiracy to start war, crimes against humanity, and activity as planning or ordering of command structure.
- **Retribution in world**
  - Trial with war criminal and collaborators were held in all countries, but number of defendants differs in each country. Especially large retribution agenda was in France and in Bulgaria.

## **Post-war Recovery**

European countries were badly damaged as consequence of the war. That is why possibilities to help these countries were considered and realized as U.N.R.R.A. and later on European Recovery Programme.

**United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration**, or abbreviate as **U.N.R.R.A.**, was international institution founded on 9 November 1943 with goal to provide humanitarian help to countries seriously hurt by the war, especially to refugees.

The U.N.R.R.A. comprised 44 states, but majority of financial support came from the **United States**. Some two thirds of 11 billion dollars was of U.S. origin.

The help was aimed at all needed countries, but special support was given to countries of Balkan Peninsula, i.e. Albania, Greece, and Yugoslavia, than Italy, and Poland. U.N.N.R.A. also co-operated with volunteer charitable organizations

U.N.R.R.A. was dissolved in spring 1949 and partly replaced by Marshall Plan. But majority of its agenda were entrusted to organizations of United Nations, i.e. Food and Agriculture Organization, UNICEF, and World Health Organization.

American government was concerned about spread of Communism in Europe. American President Harry Truman was aware that economic and social instability is pre-condition that enabled rapid spread of this ideology, or political radicalism as such. That is why his State Secretary George Marshall declared in Harvard University so called **European Recovery Programme** on 5 June 1947. According to his author the Plan is named as **Marshall Plan**.

The core of plan was help for European countries, i.e. interest-free loan to needed countries. All countries were appealed to run for this help, but with condition to clearly prove, what their governments will do with the money.

The pre-condition was reason the Soviet Union rejected the plan in Moscow conference in June 1947 and soon was followed by Poland and Czechoslovakia. That in fact meant that European Recovery Programme became limited to 16 **countries of Western and Southern Europe**, i.e. United Kingdom, France, Italy, Germany, Netherland, Greece, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, Luxemburg, and Turkey.

Until 1952 together 13 billion dollars were provided.

European Recovery Programme became the basis of **rapid economic renewal** of Europe that in 1952 reached its pre-war level. Contrary to this consequences of war in Eastern Europe were still visible long after the end of Second World War.

### **Post-War World Order**

During Second World War negotiations about new world order to prevent another war conflict took place. The results were to major deeds regarding affecting world economy:

- **General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs** (GATT) was agreement signed on 30 October 1948 by 23 countries. According to the meaning of its articles signed countries agreed not to raise tariff barriers. Agreement should be only basis for formation of international organization, but this happened in 1990 when GATT was replaced by World Trade Organization.
- **International Monetary Fund and World Bank** was second post-war institution. Fund and bank was established in 1945 on basis of **Bretton Woods** negotiations. Its aim was is to support monetary stability and investment project (the International Monetary Fund – embedded liberalism).

Except these institutions after the end of Second World War several other institutions were founded, among them, e.g. **International Court of Justice in Haag**.

### **United Nations**

One of the most permanent, but indirect result of the Second World War was the establishment of **United Nations** that in fact replaced League of Nations. The aim of this intergovernmental organization was to promote international co-operation, but especially to prevent another such conflict, i.e. to maintain peace and security. The term United Nations appeared on 1 January 1942 in the **Declaration of the United**

**Nations**, document completing Atlantic Charter that was agreed by members of anti-Hitler coalition.

First proposals outlining the purpose of world-wide organization were debated of **Dumbarton Oaks Conference**. On the ground of Yalta Conference establishing conference of United Nation took place from 25 April to 26 June 1945, where met the representatives of 50 countries. On 26 June 1945 **Charter of the United Nations** was ratified and on 24 October 1945 this charter entered into force and the United Nations start to exist.

The main bodies of United Nations are:

- **General Assembly**
  - “Parliament” of United Nations based on the principle that one state dispose by one vote.
- **Security Council**
  - Executive body of United Nations comprised of five permanent members if victorious powers, i.e. U.S.A., Soviet Union/Russia, China, France, and United Kingdom, and five changing members. The position of each member was not equal. Permanent members could exercise the power of veto.
- **General Secretary**
  - General Secretary is representative of U.N. and head of Secretary of U.N. who have Secretariat.

**The Charter of the United Nations** is the foundational text of the organization of the same name:

Preamble

WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS DETERMINED

to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind, and

to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, and

to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and

to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

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To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace.

The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members.

All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.

## II

Membership in the United Nations is open to all other peace-loving states which accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and, in the judgment of the Organization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations.

(source: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/index.shtml>)

## Nuclear Weapon

In 1930s principle of fission was discovered and after outbreak of Second World War both sides of the conflict endeavour to build functional nuclear weapon. First attempt to build nuclear weapon dates back to experiments of British Ernest Rutherford and Italian Enrico Fermi. Nuclear weapon could be defined as weapon of mass destruction based on energy of nuclear fission.

- In **Germany** scientists were involved in Unsuccessful attempt to create nuclear weapon that was commenced in 1940.
- **U.S.A.** commenced so called **Project Manhattan**, original code name was Development of Substitute Materials. The aim of project was to create nuclear weapon according to wish of physicist Albert Einstein (Einstein's letter to American president in 1939). Project involved more than 20 000 scientists and technicians in 35 compounds all over U.S.A. and became one of the largest projects ever (4 billion dollars). The decisive compounds were in Hanford in Washington, in Oak Ridge in Tennessee, and in Los Alamos in New Mexico (Robert Oppenheimer).

- **First** successful nuclear blast was triggered in Nevada Desert (Alamogordo) on 17 July 1945. Later on, in September 1945, nuclear weapon was for the first time used for military purpose (see T6, Second World War) on 6 and 9 September 1945.
- **Soviet Union** commenced its nuclear programme in 1943 and its first successful nuclear test was triggered in August 1949. Soviet Union managed to spy out American laboratories and found out their secret.
- **Other powers** gradually cracked nuclear secret and formed so called Nuclear Club. Among countries disposing nuclear weapon there are **United Kingdom** (1952), **France** (1960), **China** (1964), **India** (1974), and **Pakistan** (1998), probably also **Israel**, **South African Republic**, **Iran**, and **North Korea**.

Nuclear weapons brought about huge turn in military strategy. The destructive energy of weapon could not be limited to military targets only and in fact makes even the difference between battlefield and the rear.

## **Peace Treaties**

After the war peace treaties with defeated countries except Germany were signed.

- Paris peace treaties of 10 February 1947.
  - Treaties with **Italy**, **Bulgaria**, **Finland**, **Hungary**, and **Romania**; with **Slovakia** and **Croatia**, states that ceased to exist, no agreements.
  - Allowed to reassume their responsibilities as sovereign states in international affairs.
- **Austria**
  - In 1955 so called State Agreement.
- **German issue**
  - Due to Cold War no peace treaty, partly substituted by Two Plus Four Agreement of 12 September 1990.
- **Japan**
  - After 1945 Japan occupied entirely by U.S. forces, in September 1951 **San Francisco Conference**, on 8 September 1951 peace treaty signed.

## German Issue

According to Yalta agreement German territory was divided into four occupation zones; the situation in 1946 was as it is presented below:

Zone	Area (in square km)	Population
Soviet	108 300	17 300 000
British	97 700	22 300 000
American	107 400	17 400 000
French	42 700	5 900 000
<b>Germany in total</b>	<b>356 100</b>	<b>62 900 000</b>

But Soviet and Americans had different ideas to solve German issue. While Soviet attempted to **preserve unified Germany** that should remain under Soviet influence, Americans and British endeavoured to **divide Germany into few smaller countries**.

In fact British and Americans had to give up their plans and finally in 1955 permitted to integrate Western Germany into structures of Western World (NATO and European Economic Community). On the other hand neither Soviet Union could fulfil their ideas.

The question how to solve position of Germany became important pretext for number of crisis in relations between United States and Soviet Union, especially so called **First and Second Berlin Crisis** (see T8. Cold War).

## Summary

Post-war period did **delimit itself toward events of Second World War**, new category of crimes and their punishment were formed. In effort to prevent to repeat conditions that led to Second World War international political and economic organizations were founded. But capabilities of these institutions to solve the international problems were limited by fact that war co-operation of United Nations ended in turn 1947 and 1948.

Despite number of failures new world order was established that partly affect present day situation in whole world.

### **Recommended Sources**

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