

Abstract

This dissertation explores the phenomenon of Post-World War II Displaced Persons, i.e. persons who were relocated due to the events of World War II. Following international research on the issue, this thesis examines it in the Czechoslovak context, both in terms of how the authorities in Czechoslovakia approached the problem and by directing attention to the group of Czechoslovak Displaced Persons themselves. It also discusses the cooperation with the Western Allies and focuses on the territory that was administered by them after the end of the war. The focal point of the thesis is the year 1945, a period when intensive efforts to care for and repatriate Displaced Persons (as originally understood) took place.

A separate chapter outlines the development of Displaced Persons as a research topic and the principal research questions associated with it. The second part of the thesis investigates the international and Czechoslovak structures that provided care for the displaced, across several temporal levels. First, the organized efforts created to care for Displaced Persons are set in the long-term institutional and ideological context. Next, it describes how the cooperation and network of institutions that were to include the Displaced Persons in their purview were planned and constituted during World War II. The actual process of the organization of Displaced Persons and their repatriation during 1945 is then traced, with a particular focus on the participation of the Czechoslovak authorities in this effort. This crucial period is divided into several stages, and the various problems encountered in these stages are analyzed. Special attention is also given to the work of the repatriation liaison officers, the specific issues addressed, and the management of the camps for Czechoslovak Displaced Persons.

The third part of this thesis then focuses on the group of Czechoslovak Displaced Persons themselves. It presents their own activities in the camps during the period between liberation and repatriation. Using the example of speeches in their own press, it is examined whether they perceived their status of being in the process of relocation as specific. Similarly, the question of whether these returnees (repatriates) were perceived as a special compact group in society is developed through an analysis of media discourse in post-war Czechoslovakia. The discussion also considers the topics that developed in Czechoslovakia in connection with the issue of Displaced Persons in the subsequent period.

Keywords: Displaced Person, DP-Camp, repatriation, repatriation liaison officers, liberation, post-war Czechoslovakia, post-war Germany