

ABSTRACT

The Ph.D. thesis *The Czech-German Study of Post-WWII History on the Territory of the Former Jihlava Language Island (in the Context of Previous Periods)* deals with the area of the former German language island and partly its Czech surroundings, analyses the literature and historical sources dealing with it, and aims to present significant historical moments of the 20th century. At the same time, it tries to describe how these events affected the lives of individuals from Jihlava of different ethnics, i.e. Czech, German, and Jewish. The main ethnics involved are Czech and German, which varied in number during the 20th century not only according to the political situation. Jews have intervened significantly in this dispute, both Zionists and Jews claiming German nationality, as well as those claiming Czech nationality. The Russian minority was the least represented, with only a few individuals, yet it was also affected by the liberation of Czechoslovakia by the Red Army and the post-war political changes. People of Austrian nationality were also a specific group. In the context of forced migration, persons from mixed marriages and anti-fascists also appear in this area.

The Iglau language island gained importance in the first half of the 13th century when a silver deposit was discovered here. This caused a strong German colonisation of the area, which was sparsely populated by the Czech-speaking population. The 13th century is therefore considered to be the beginning of German-Czech coexistence in this area. The German-speaking population gradually gained the upper hand and dominated the Czech population in terms of economy, culture, and political life.

In the second half of the 19th century, the Czech population endeavoured to catch up with the German-speaking majority as a result of growing national consciousness. The situation only came to a head after the proclamation of the first Czechoslovak Republic, when the German population endeavoured to join German-Austria. In the first years of the republic there were many skirmishes, but after 1925 the tendency towards reconciliation increased. In the 1930s, however, developments were already heading in a completely different direction. The economic crisis, which mainly affected the light industry, consumer goods, and especially the export industry, also contributed to this. As the economy of the Iglau region was very dependent on the consumer goods industry, the crisis here was particularly severe and long. The resulting unemployment mainly affected the German population. As a result of the crisis,

German-Czech relations deteriorated, especially when the Germans orientated themselves towards Sudeten German politics. Although the SdP won the 1935 elections, it was only a minor success, as the other parties did not lose all their political power. It was quite obvious (e.g. also at their festivals) that the Germans of Iglau favoured the SdP. Coexistence was destroyed by differing political opinions, which was also very evident in the Iglau region after the Anschluss of Austria and the Munich Agreement. During the Second World War, relations between the two peoples deteriorated even further.

The structure of the thesis is as follows: After a historical introduction, the detailed examination of the resistance of the population is described, including the emergence of illegal groups in the Jihlava language island area during the years 1939 to 1945, as these activities had a major impact on the events of 1945 and the following years.

This is done by highlighting personalities who were active in the various phases of the war by examining how and which illegal group the persons concerned joined and whether they were imprisoned or sent to concentration camps. Primary attention is given to those who, after the liberation of Czechoslovakia, were involved in displacement actions or held positions as guards in internment, concentration and labour camps, or served in other related key positions created at this time. Also mentioned are the events of the first days of May 1945, which ended with the killing of Czech inhabitants in nearby Třešť, Velké Meziříčí and Brtnice. This increased the hatred towards the German inhabitants in the area.

The main topic of the thesis are the events of May, June, and July 1945, which are connected with the formation of revolutionary or local national committees in Jihlava and committees formed in the municipalities of the former Jihlava language island. The thesis also deals with the establishment of the Jihlava District National Committee (ONV), its respective commissions and the Council of the District National Committee. It also discusses the establishment of offices and institutions with national competence related to the creation of the post-war security apparatus.

The author focuses in particular on the internment of the German population of Jihlava, as well as of Germans from the surrounding villages, on the sports field of the local Sokol organisation and the newly established detention camps in Helenín and in Stonařov. The Stonařov detention camp was established after the unsuccessful forced displacement of persons with German or Austrian ethnicity, as well as persons from mixed marriages and not acknowledged German anti-fascists from Jihlava and its surroundings on 9th June, 1945. The deportees were supposed to relocate to the occupation zones of Austria, but were stopped by Austrian border guards and after more than thirty kilometres walk, near the village Hodice/Höditz, they were interned

under inhuman conditions in the Stonařov detention camp. The food supply system was not adequate and soon the internees began to die of typhoid fever, dysentery, and other diseases. The author describes not only the conditions in this camp, the guards in charge of the camp, and the people involved in these mass population movements, but also in the course of the other forced migrations of June 1945. The author attempted to trace the actors who interned the German-ethnic population and carried out their forced transfers to the occupation zones of Austria and Germany.

The murder of Wilhelm Bardas, an inconvenient former chief commissioner at the district office, is also related to the Stonařov camp. Some of those involved in the murder held important positions in the Jihlava District National Committee and, through this murder and other activities, tried to conceal their own (secret police) informer activities during the war years. This murder was not the only one that took place in and around Jihlava at that time.

The thesis is based on a number of archival sources, the recollections of the narrators, and literature. The period of May-August 1945 was distinguished by the lack of relative archival sources, which the author managed to connect by combining previously unpublished sources (not only of the regional origin, but also nation-wide documentations on the subject, investigation files, ego-documents or, for example, personal files of individuals). This Czech-German relations study of post-war history period on the territory of the former Jihlava language island is focusing on post-war evacuation of German citizens from the language island of Jihlava/Iglau and its neighbourhood in years 1945–1947.

The author has also tried to trace the interaction of local history with national and general history. She focused on general development trends and their manifestations in specific local conditions. Also, the author's decision to focus on the actors and leading figures of Czech ethnicity from Jihlava and its surroundings proved in retrospect to be a prudent decision, since recently in Germany, projects have been created that specialise on the guards in the various camps, and historians' interest has turned away from the victims in a new direction.