

Abstract

Liberec played an important role in Czech-German relations since 1918, when the province Deutsch Böhmen was created. Its importance grew even further during World War II as it became the capital of the Liberec Sudeten and it was also highly known as the birthplace of Konrad Henlein. In the city, there lived an estimated 80% of the German population at the end of the war, and this fact influenced the course of both liberation and the subsequent expatriation actions. Liberation was not expected with enthusiasm at all, as was the case in inland cities. It was rather characterized by confusion, uncertainty and fear of the Soviet Army, which was getting revenge for Germans of war injustice. The liberation meant the end of nearly seven years of German oppression, however, it was not celebrated. Many Germans were leaving the city during the war, including a large part of the Nazi leadership. Conversely, three main groups of people were coming back to the city: the returnees came here from the war, people who moved after the occupation to inland and also people who had nothing to do here and just wanted to start a new life. The situation at the time was very confusing and literature often presents population and its ethnic composition differently. Considering the large number of German population, the post-war expulsion was extremely large, but there were no massacres in comparison with example of the "death march" in Brno. It is also interesting to watch what aspects led to the fact that these two cities approached the same issue in very different ways.