V4 – History Mirrored:

Your hero, my enemy, my victory, your loss

Case study of historical burden

Martin Ehl, Krakow 2013
Let's make a long history short

1000 years of European history
20th century in detail – what you know and what you never heard of: selection of events

- 1918
- 1919
- 1920
- 1938
- 1943
- 1944
1918

- Break up of Austro-Hungarian empire as result of the First World War
- Tens of thousands fighting in exile for independence in **Legions** (CZ, PL) BUT Hundreds of thousands fighting on the other side – 2014 will be 100 years anniversary: who will commemorate whom?
- Creation of independent states (supported mainly by the USA): Poland, Czechoslovakia on the side of winners
- Hungary on the side of losers
1919

- Czechoslovakia (Eastern Slovakia) + Hungary: communist uprisings and short-lived communist republics
- CZ/PL war over Silesian border region (important as industrial base)
- Law and order restored: in CZ through democratic means; in HU through authoritarian regime of admiral Miklos Horthy
1920

- Trianon treaty: Day of definitive Hungarian defeat; Hungarian kingdom under regent Horthy stripped of 2/3 of its territory and 1/3 of inhabitants
- CZ, PL consolidation of powers: CZ first elections
1938

- CZ was the last democracy in the region, all over were authoritarian regimes
- Betrayed by Western allies, CZ had to cease a big chunks of its territory to neighbours
- PL, HU got back big parts of formerly disputed regions
- SK became in 1939 Nazi satellite state, but for the first time in history Slovaks had their own sovereign state
- In Sept 1939 Slovak troops participated in attack on Poland
1943

- The end of Stalingrad battle: SK, HU troops among defeated
- CZ treaty with the USSR on cooperation, creation of CZ unit in the USSR and its first battle of Sokolovo
- PL units formed from refugees in the USSR in Persia and moved to the West
- News about Katyn massacre
1944

- Pro-communist PL troops started to liberate Poland, puppet government created
- SK anti-Nazi uprising, which overshadowed all previous military cooperation with Nazi
- Horthy's regime overthrown by radical antisemite and pro-Nazi Arrow Crosses movement, very active participation in holocaust
We could continue...

… almost indefinitely this way (CZ, PL on the winners side in 1945; Hungary (again) on the losers side)

- V4 history is full of such contradictions through which we see history (and not just recent one) very differently
Overburdened with history

- Timothy Snyder: Bloodlands – Europe between Hitler and Stalin

Table to commemorate victims of different regimes in church of Krasnystaw, Eastern Poland
My Hero, Your Enemy

- Conference of historians in 2011
- Other part of common history with different explanations and evaluations of the role of important personalities

- **Examples: What do you know about?**
  - Edvard Beneš
  - Józef Pilsudski
  - Jozef Tiso
  - János Esterházy
  - Gustáv Husák
  - Miklós Horthy
Edvard Beneš

CZ: Hero, who won the war / The one who sold CZ to Soviet Union / Beneš as Austrian (very average person without any vision) – in last years revision of his role

HU, GER: Enemy, who expelled us from our home
János Esterházy

HU: Hero, who defended our rights and nation against Czechoslovak and later Soviet regime; the only HU deputy voting against anti-Jewish laws

CZ/SK: Influential politician who undermined Czechoslovak security and territorial integrity
Józef Piłsudski

PL: One of the most important Poles in the history, founder of modern Polish state

- CZ/SK: Polish dictator, who undermined democracy in Central Europe between the wars, as result Poland participated in occupation of CZ in 1938 (he died in 1935)
Jozef Tiso

SK: *Patriot*, who founded first ever Slovak independent state, unfortunately as Nazi satelite

CZ, PL: *War criminal*, who collaborated with Hitler to break up Czechoslovakia and sent troops to attack Poland in 1939
Miklós Horthy

HU: **Savior** in 1919, stable regime after Trianon tragedy, defender of Jews against Nazi, revision after 2010 to more positive picture

CZ/SK/PL: **Dictator**, who allied with Hitler, who was not able to defend Jews, who participated in CZ occupation in 1938
**Gustáv Husák**

**SK:**
The most powerful Slovak in Czechoslovakia, during his times prosperity and investment and influence.

**CZ:** Opportunist who only wanted power and pacted with Soviet occupants in 1968; too much privileges for Slovaks in federation.
Other views on history

The Soviet Story

- Film about history from different angle
- Baltic countries have special view of history
- Latvian director Edvins Snore has made a very unusual view on the history of Central Europe in 20\textsuperscript{th} century
- Example: How Germany and Soviet Union cooperated in attack on Poland (time 30,00)
Any questions?

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