

Recent political history of Central-Eastern Europe

Dr Paweł Ukielski (*Institute of Political Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences*)

Course objectives and content

The course covers political history of Central-Eastern Europe since 1918 till today. It focuses on the development of the region since the establishment of small and medium sized national countries in the CEE after fall of multinational empires. We start the course with debate on the definition of the region and its roots, and follow through very “stormy” century – the interwar period with its problems and conflicts, the Second World War, communist takeovers and the “Cold War”, till the transition, post-communism and accession to the Euro-Atlantic structures. The general arrangement of the course is chronological, with analysis of specific problems within certain periods. Relations among the CEE countries will be discussed as well as the significance of the region in global politics.

Readings are divided into three groups: first - to give background to the topic, second - for analysis and discussion (those should be read before each of classes) and third - some additional ones to broaden perspective. The list of readings might be modified.

Presented topics are not strictly related to 1,5h long classes – they define consecutive parts of material to be discussed during following meetings. The course might be modified in the process – depending on participants’ interests.

Course requirements and assessment

Active presence during classes (three absences allowed).

Preparation of 15 minutes long presentation for classes (each participant has to prepare short paper to present during class/to explain particular issue connected with the topic of the class).

Final paper (approx. 20.000 characters +/- 15%) based either on the presentation or 1-page outline prepared until January, 31, 2022.

Educational outcomes

Knowledge: understanding the history of CEE countries since 1918 in its complexity and multi-level dimension.

Skills: ability to critically judge different narrative lines and different (also contradictory) perspectives and interpretations.

Competences: analyzing documents, presenting argumentation, preparing presentations and papers.

Detailed program (with some questions to discuss) and readings:

1. **Central-Eastern Europe (CEE) - definition and territorial range.** What is Central-Eastern Europe? Is it Central-Eastern or Central Europe? When the notion appeared and when disappeared? How did it change in time?

Readings for the background: Nataliya Antonyuk, 'Central, Eastern and East-Central Europe: on the history and the current state of conceptualization and demarcation of concepts', In *Politeja* No. 6(57), 2018, pp. 7-27.

Readings for analysis and discussion: Oskar Halecki, *The Limits and Divisions of European History*, New York, 1950, chapters 5-7.

Jenő Szűcs, 'The Three Historical Regions of Europe: An outline', In *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Vol. 29, No. 2/4 (1983), pp. 131-184

2. **The roots. Shaping of the region during and after First World War. Countries, nations, borders.** How the region was organized in pre-modern era? How modern nations were shaping in 19th century in CEE? What ideas were created in 19th and beginning of 20th century? How Central-Eastern Europe "emerged" after WWI? How the Versaille-Riga order was implemented in CEE? Who was the winner and who was the loser?

Readings for the background: Wojciech Roszkowski, *East-Central Europe. A Concise History*, Warsaw 2015, chapters 4-6.

Oskar Halecki, *Borderlands of Western Civilization: A History of East Central Europe*, New York, 1952, chapter 20 (available at: <http://www.hungarianhistory.com/lib/halecki/halecki.pdf>)

Readings for analysis and discussion: T. Masaryk, *The New Europe*, (excerpts) <https://books.openedition.org/ceup/2011>

Treaty of Versaille, Part III, Sections VI-XI, https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Versailles/Part_III

Treaty of Trianon, https://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty_of_Trianon

3. **Interwar Central-Eastern Europe.** What conflicts were between CEE countries? What were the alliances? What were the ideas to "organize" CEE countries? How did those countries develop politically, economically, socially?

Readings for the background: Wojciech Roszkowski, *East-Central Europe. A Concise History*, Warsaw 2015, chapters 7-9.

Oskar Halecki, *Borderlands of Western Civilization: A History of East Central Europe*, New York, 1952, chapters 21-22.

Thomas W. Simons Jr., *Eastern Europe in the Postwar World*. New York 1991, chapter 2.

Readings for analysis and discussion: Pact of the Organization of the Little Entente Geneva, 16 February 1933, <http://www.mfa.gov.rs/en/diplomatic-tradition/historical-diplomatic-papers/1299--16-1933>

4. **The road to the Second World War.** How did the totalitarian regimes rise? What was the role of German expansionism and Soviet strive to the world revolution? What were the territorial claims in CEE? Why the appeasement policy did not succeed? Is CEE responsible for the Second World War?

Readings for the background: Wojciech Roszkowski, *East-Central Europe. A Concise History*, Warsaw 2015, chapter 7.

Robert Bideleux, Ian Jeffries, *A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis and Change*. London-New York 1998, chapter 18.

Readings for analysis and discussion: Munich Agreement, <https://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/munich1.asp#art1>

5. **Second World War in the CEE.** How did it come to the Hitler-Stalin Pact? How it was realized in CEE? What were the territorial changes in CEE in 1939-1941? What was the system of alliances and how did it change? How did the German-Soviet war change the situation of CEE?

Readings for the background: Wojciech Roszkowski, *East-Central Europe. A Concise History*, Warsaw 2015, chapter 10.

Oskar Halecki, *Borderlands of Western Civilization: A History of East Central Europe*, New York, 1952, chapter 23.

Thomas W. Simons Jr., *Eastern Europe in the Postwar World*. New York 1991, chapters 2-3.

Readings for analysis and discussion: Norman Davies, *Europe at War 1939-1945: No Simple Victory*, London 2007, part I, chapter "The political context".

6. **The end of WWII and the beginning of the Cold War. Communist takeovers in CEE.** What were the results of Teheran and Yalta conferences? What was the new territorial arrangement in CEE? Who, when and how declared the "Cold War"? How did the communists take the power in the CEE countries and how were they sovietised? Why Tito was able to impose "national communism"? Why Germany were divided?

Readings for the background: Wojciech Roszkowski, *East-Central Europe. A Concise History*, Warsaw 2015, chapter 11.

Oskar Halecki, *Borderlands of Western Civilization: A History of East Central Europe*, New York, 1952, chapter 24.

Anne Applebaum, *Iron Curtain. The Crushing of Eastern Europe 1944-1956*, New York 2013.

Readings for analysis and discussion: George Kennan's 'Long Telegram', February 22, 1946, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116178.pdf>

7. **CEE in the bipolar world. Warsaw Pact and Comecon.** How did the rivalry of two blocks look like? What was the real meaning of the Comecon and the Warsaw Pact and how were they organized? How did the “arms race” become the last nail to the Soviet coffin?

Readings for the background: Wojciech Roszkowski, *East-Central Europe. A Concise History*, Warsaw 2015, chapters 12-13.

Robert Bideleux, Ian Jeffries, *A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis and Change*. London-New York 1998, part V.

Leszek Jerzy Jasiński, *Poland's economic development and Central & Eastern Europe in the twentieth century and its global aspects*, subchapters: 5-9, in: Przemysław Weingartner [ed.], *Poland in Central and Eastern Europe in the 20th Century: Economic Aspects*

Readings for analysis and discussion: Khrushchev Secret Speech (On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences), available at: <https://archive.org/details/TheCrimesOfTheStalinEraSpecialReportToThe20thCongressOfTheCommunistPartyOfTheSovietUnion./page/n35/mode/2up>

8. **Crises in the communist “external empire”.** Berlin Uprising of 1953, Hungarian Uprising of 1956, Polish June and October 1956, Prague Spring 1968, “Solidarity” and martial law in Poland. Why crises appeared in the system? How did the centre in Moscow cope with them? What was the meaning of the Helsinki Act?

Readings for the background: Wojciech Roszkowski, *East-Central Europe. A Concise History*, Warsaw 2015, chapter 12.

Robert Bideleux, Ian Jeffries, *A History of Eastern Europe: Crisis and Change*. London-New York 1998, part V.

Readings for analysis and discussion: CSCE Final Act, Helsinki 1975, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/5/c/39501.pdf>

Václav Havel, ‘The Power of the Powerless’, transl. by P. Wilson, in J. Vladislav (ed.) *Václav Havel or Living in Truth: Twenty-Two Essays*, London-Boston 1986, pp. 36-122. (available also:

https://web.archive.org/web/20120107141633/http://www.vaclavhavel.cz/showtrans.php?cat=clanky&val=72_aj_clanky.html&typ=HTML)

9. **Perestroika and glasnost.** What was the Soviet bloc's situation in the beginning of 1980's? How did Gorbachev gain the power? Why the perestroika and glasnost were introduced? How CEE countries did react? Did Gorbachev want to dismantle communism?

Readings for the background: Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*. Oxford - New York, 1996.

Readings for analysis and discussion: Milan Kundera, *The Tragedy of Central Europe*, available at: https://www.bisla.sk/english/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Kundera_tragedy_of_Central_Europe.pdf

Paweł Kowal, "The five rings of empire" *New Eastern Europe*, No. 2 (XXVI) (2017), 51-59, available at: <https://neweasterneurope.eu/2017/03/23/the-five-rings-of-the-empire/>

10. **The Autumn of Nations 1989.** What were the reasons of fall of communism in CEE? What were the milestones for the fall of communism? How did it happen? Was it revolution, reform or something in between? Why did the Soviet Union collapse? Was it "the end of history"?

Readings for the background: Adam Burakowski, Aleksander Gubrynowicz, Paweł Ukielski, *1989 – The Autumn of Nations*, <https://enrs.eu/publication/1989-the-autumn-of-nations>

Robin Okey, *The Demise of Communist East Europe. 1989 in context*, London 2004

Leslie Holmes, *Post-Communism. An Introduction*, Cambridge 1997, part I, chapter 2.

Readings for analysis and discussion: Paweł Ukielski, *1989. A counterrevolution* (manuscript)

11. **Transition after 1989.** How did CEE countries transform their economies? What were the differences between the "shock therapy" and "gradualism"? How the legal frameworks were changed? What were the political reforms? What was the social impact of transition? When did the transition end (if it did)?

Readings for the background: Jan Kofman, Wojciech Roszkowski, *Economic Transformation*, In: Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, Piotr Dutkiewicz, with the support of Agnieszka Orzelska (eds.), *New Europe. The Impact of the First Decade*. Vol. I: *Trends and Perspectives*, Warsaw 2006, pp. 139-176.

Leslie Holmes, *Post-Communism. An Introduction*, Cambridge 1997, part III.

Greame Gill, *Democracy and Post-communism: Political Change in the Post-communist World*. London and New York, 2002.

Readings for analysis and discussion: Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History?*, In "The National Interest", No 16, Summer 1989, pp. 3-18.

Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations?*, In "Foreign Affairs", vol. 72, No. 3, 1993, pp. 22-49.

12. **Road to the European Union and NATO.** How did the fall of communism change the possibilities of expanding Euro-Atlantic structures? What were the reasons to join for the CEE countries? How did the road to the EU and NATO for CEE countries look like?

Readings for the background: Ronald Asmus, *Opening NATO's Door: How the Alliance Remade Itself for a New Era*, Columbia University Press.

13. **Visegrad and CEFTA. Other regional groupings of 1990's.** How did the CEE cooperate after 1989? Why was it an important step on their way to Euro-Atlantic integration? What were the strengths and weaknesses of the regional cooperation? What did survive and what did not?

Readings for the background: Paweł Ukielski, *Central Europe in the Polish political thought after 1989*, in: Przemysław Weingartner [ed.], *Poland towards its Southern Neighbours*, Berlin 2020.

Readings for analysis and discussion: Visegrad Declaration 1991, <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/visegrad-declarations/visegrad-declaration-110412>

Visegrad Declaration 2004, <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/visegrad-declarations/visegrad-declaration-110412-1>

14. **CEE in the EU.** How CEE countries found their place in the EU? How did it influence the EU itself? What were the division lines between the "old" and the "new" Europe? What is the significance of the Eastern Partnership?

15. **Security policy in CEE. CEE countries in NATO.** What are security priorities of the CEE countries? How did they found their place in NATO? How do they operate in the "Eastern flank" and the Bucharest 9?

16. **The Three Seas Initiative.** What are its historical antecedents? How did the idea evolve? Why did the USA support it from the beginning and Germany did not? What are the pillars of the cooperation? Why the infrastructure turned to be a binder for CEE cooperation?

Readings for the background: Paweł Ukielski, *Central Europe in the Polish political thought after 1989*, in: Przemysław Weingartner [ed.], *Poland towards its Southern Neighbours*, Berlin 2020.

Readings for analysis and discussion: M. Dahl, *Evolution of Germany's Stance Regarding the Three Seas Initiative*, In „Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej” 17 (2019), z. 3, https://ies.lublin.pl/pub/2020-01/RIESW_2019-3-04.pdf

A. Chojan, *The United States on the Three Seas Initiative*, In „Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej” 17 (2019), z. 3, https://ies.lublin.pl/pub/2020-01/RIESW_2019-3-05.pdf

T. Stępniewski, G. Soroka, *The Three Seas Initiative: Geopolitical Determinants and Polish Interests*, „Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej” 17 (2019), z. 3, https://ies.lublin.pl/pub/2020-01/RIESW_2019-3-02.pdf

17. **World War II – living memory.** How the WWII history is remembered in the CEE countries? Why does it raise still such controversies? Where is the importance of the topic?

Readings for analysis and discussion: Vladimir Putin: The Real Lessons of the 75th Anniversary of World War II, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/vladimir-putin-real-lessons-75th-anniversary-world-war-ii-162982?page=0%2C4>

European Parliament resolution of 19 September 2019 on the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2019-0021_EN.html

18. **Dealing with the communist past. Remembrance, public debate, legal solutions.** How did CEE countries change their public space? What is the role of the vetting system in particular countries? What is the attitude of societies to the communist past? What is the role of post-communists on the political scenes. What institutions deal with the communist past and how?

Readings for analysis and discussion: Adam Hradilek, Petr Třešňák, ‘Milan Kundera’s Denunciation’, Respekt, 13.10.2008, <https://www.respekt.cz/respekt-in-english/milan-kundera-s-denunciation>

Additional readings:

R. J. Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century - and After*. London-New York, 2007.

Ralf Dahrendorf, *After 1989. Morals, Revolution and Civil Society*. London, 1997.

Francis Furet, *The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the Twentieth Century*, translated by Deborah Furet, University of Chicago Press, 1999

John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History*. New York, 2005

Robin Okey, *Eastern Europe 1740-1980: Feudalism to Communism*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1985.

Jean-Louis Panné, Andrzej Paczkowski, Karel Bartosek, Jean-Louis Margolin, Nicolas Werth, Stéphane Courtois, *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression*, Harvard University Press, 1999

Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, *Reluctant Clones. Moscow and the "Socialist Commonwealth"*. Warszawa 2014.

Wojciech Roszkowski, *Cultural Heritage of East Central Europe*, Warsaw 2015.

Jadwiga Staniszkis, *Post-Communism. The Emerging Enigma*. Warsaw 1999.