



**Otázka:** Turning points in world history

**Jazyk:** Angličtina

**Přidal(a):** Kůra

### 1492 - the “discovery” of America

- it's a common misconception that America was discovered by **Christopher Columbus** (who was actually looking for a shorter route to India) – he was preceded in the 11th century by **Leif Eriksson**, a Viking explorer from Iceland
- even though Christopher Columbus was not the first person to discover the New World, his discovery is one of the most important milestones in the history of the world:
  - **cross continental interchange of plants + animals:**
    - **brought to Europe:** potatoes, corn, peanuts, tomatoes, peppers, cocoa, turkey
    - **brought to America:** coffee beans, honeybees, onion, crops – wheat + rice + oats, livestock – cattle + sheep + pigs + horses
  - European settlers left Europe for America looking for more freedom and opportunities
  - on the downside: bloody conquest – **atrocities committed against the native inhabitants** + the remaining **Indians eventually adopted the European traditions and languages** + the
  - European settlers brought new **diseases** the Indians were completely unimmune to (influenza, smallpox, typhus, measles, malaria, tuberculosis)

### 1648 - the end of the 30 years war

- the last religious conflict in Europe
- initiated by the **Third Defenestration of Prague** – in protest against the absolute rule of **Ferdinand II.**, the Czech nobility hired people to throw his representatives out of a window at Prague Castle in 1618 → the beginning of the **Bohemian Revolt** – ended by the defeat in the **Battle of White Mountain** → **Old Town Square Execution of 27 Bohemian noblemen**
- **Catholics** (Holy Roman Empire, Spain) x **Protestants** (protestant German states, Denmark, Sweden)
- soon the war turned into an **economic conflict**
- **Prague plundered by the Swedes** before the end of the war + **in some areas as much as 2/3 of the soldiers and civilians died in the war, of hunger and disease** (the Czech population declined by a third)

### 1918 - the end of the WW1

- **one of the most deadly conflicts in the history**, the **unofficial end of the 19th century** – the **beginning of a new era** (establishment of nation states, modern artistic movements, emancipation of women...)
- initiated by the **assassination of Franz Ferdinand** in Sarajevo by a Bosnian – successor to the throne → **Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia**
- **Central Powers** (Austria-Hungary + Germany + Ottoman Empire + Bulgaria) x **Allies** (Serbia + France + British Empire + Russia + Italy + US)
- German troops entered France through neutral **Belgium** → Britain declared war on Germany → advanced weapons introduced – **trench-warfare on the Western front** (lengthy, millions of soldiers died of hunger, exhaustion, disease, struck by gunfire/grenades/war gases) → **American intervention in 1917** (Woodrow Wilson) → Central Powers defeated + surrendered on the 11th of November 1918 → **Treaty of Versailles** – the Allies dictated **harsh terms of peace** → cause of **economic + political turmoil in postwar Germany** → WW2

### 1968 - the Prague Spring and Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia

- **a period of political liberalization** (loosening of restrictions on the media, speech and travel) after **Alexander Dubček** was elected **First Secretary** of the

Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

- the reforms were not received well by the Soviets → on the **21st of August** the **Soviet Union + Warsaw Pact members invaded CSR** (people were switching street signs to confuse the invading armies)
- **massive wave of emmigration** (80,000 people) – Karel Kryl, Miloš Forman...
- **Jan Palach** committed protest suicide by **self-immolation** to provoke mass uprising (1969)
- 70s – the period of **normalization** in which new leaders attempted to restore the communist values – **Gustáv Husák** replaced Dubček as First Secretary and also became president

### 1989 – the Velvet Revolution

- a non-violent transition of power – started with **student demonstrations on 17th November** suppressed by the police → the number of protesters was growing → in December Gustáv Husák was forced to nominate the **first non-communist government since 1948** + he resigned → at the end of the year, **Václav Havel** – **former dissident** + leader of the **Civic Forum** – was **elected president** of CSR
- preceded by the **fall of the Berlin Wall** (a symbol of the Cold War) + revolutions in Poland and Hungary
- the **Chernobyl nuclear accident** might have been the real cause of the **collapse of the Eastern Bloc** according to **Mikhail Gorbachev** – the Soviet Union proved to be dysfunctional – the failed cover-up exposed the hypocrisy of the regime

### 9/11 2001

- **a series of terrorist attacks by the Islamic terrorist group Al-Qaeda against the United States** – planes hijacked and used as suicide weapons
- outcome: the **Twin Towers in NY destroyed** + **almost 3000 casualties** + **strict airport security checks**