

Czech-German Seminar in Prague: „The Czech-German Borderlands after 1945 in the memory of Czechs and Germans: analyzing oral history interviews“ (14-15.06.2012)

(Report by Natali Freidl)

The graduate seminar „Taking Oral History Online – Creating a Homepage of the Czech-German Borderlands“, which was offered by the chair of Geschichte Südost- und Osteuropas during the summer term 2012, enabled students to take part in not only one, but two excursions. Having been the host to our guests from Prague back in May, it was now time for us to visit the Czech capital. After our arrival and a first few impressions of the city, we met at the historic buildings of Charles University. Our groupwork, in which we reported each other our research result gathered over the last couple of weeks, was followed by a highly interesting and substantiated talk by Dr. Adrian von Arburg about the topic „Resettlement in the Czech-German Borderlands after 1945“. The new insights helped us to further develop our ideas on our own research topics in a much more differentiated and critical way. We finally ended the day with a pleasant get-together at a typical Czech restaurant. The next morning our focus was mainly on our individual research area, among others „Stereotypes of the Roma in the Czech Borderlands“, „Settlers from the East“ and „Building Socialism in the Borderlands“. Each group presented its results, in which the interview-sequences were of course in the centre of attention, and through the feedback of all students it was possible to get new ideas and revise one’s research topic. After lunch a Czech fellow student guided us through his hometown. We visited historic places like the Jewish quarter, Charles Bridge and the castle and were able to get a good impression of this charming city which is so steeped in history. During this excursion – and also during the one to Regensburg – it was possible for us students to gain new experiences and to gain a deeper understanding of the complex history of the „Czech-German Borderlands“ and the meaning of „Oral History“ to approach this history. Furthermore, we were able to acquaint with our very friendly Czech fellow students, for which reason we would like to thank Dr. Kind-Kovács and Dr. Spurný who have made this possible.