


# HISTORY OF CENTRAL EUROPE

## 2 BLOCKS: NEED TO COEXISTENCE

- ◉ Since 2<sup>nd</sup> half 1950s new relation btw 2 blocks - out of the question - political rapprochement, but emergency of objective need of crises management on international scale - fear of nuclear weapons
- ◉ Need of coexistence: both blocks in fact needed each other - economical interests: Soviet Block - technical and technologically backwardness x USA: possibility of new market - Eastern Europe
- ◉ 1962: after Caribbean Crisis - beginning of beginning of the negotiations on the control of nuclear danger

- BUT basic objectives of both superpower remained incompatible
- USA: balance bwt 2 blocks x Soviet Union: aim to spread the power
-  alternating periods of negotiations, conflict, tension and loosening (end 1989)
- 1<sup>st</sup> phases lasted until end of 1960s : quite successful solution: Indo-China and Austria x lasting issue - Germany - 2<sup>nd</sup> Berlin Crises 1961 and August 1968 in Czechoslovakia

## 2<sup>ND</sup> BERLIN CRISES

- One of the most sensitive question - Germany - conflicts of interest
- Hallstein doctrine
- Economical miracle
- Control of west Berlin - N. S. Khrushchev - neutral or part of GDR - pressure Paris conference 1960 - not successful
- J.F. Kennedy
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjHcNhc ahv4>
- August 1961 - Berlin Wall

# BERLIN WALL

- ◉ [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_vXsdaUmG8s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_vXsdaUmG8s)



# CZECHOSLOVAKIA



- ◉ 1960 - new constitution and new name Czechoslovak socialist republic and new state symbol
- ◉ President A. Zapotocky - ex fist secretary of KP, 1957
- ◉ Drastically decline of Czechoslovak Economy
- ◉ Need of Economical reform - the most - radical one in Soviet Block - showed that democratization and liberalization of the economy is not possible without changes in policy
- ◉ Liberalization: 1<sup>st</sup> phases of liberalization of the political regime

- First time criticism of dogmatism and the aim go back to “Young or authentically Marx”
- Not only democratization but also democracy: main tension between culture and political power



- Artists - requirement of creative freedom
- Czechoslovak film: Miloš Forman, Ivan Passer, Jan Němec, Vojtěch Jasný, Jiří Menzel, Věra Chytilová...
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WM3lrSc0Tp4>
- Writers: Milan Kundera, Ivan Klíma, Ludvík Vaculík, Josef Škvorecký, Bohumil Hrabal, Arnošt Lustig,...
- 4<sup>th</sup> congress of writers 1967 - open criticism of political conditions - cruel punishment - cancel: Literární noviny and movement against liberalism



# 1968 IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

- requirements: demission of the President, economical reform and liberalization of life BUT all changes should be done under the control of CP
- Head of CP Alexander Dubček



# JANUARY PLENUM

- ⦿ = beginning of the democratization of the Czechoslovak society
- ⦿ End of censorship
- ⦿ law to the Federation
- ⦿ Prague Spring

# REFORM: SOCIALISM WITH HUMAN FACE, PRAGUE SPRING

- ⊙ against: bureaucratic-totalitarian model of socialism
- ⊙ Requirement: more democratic, more economical and more social regime
- ⊙ Idea of political pluralism
- ⊙ Catholic Church
- ⊙ Action program - April 1968 - principles of market economy, facilitate political freedoms and citizens' rights, did not guarantee political pluralism and creation of democratic regime of standard mode

- Effort to restore the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party
- Since May 1968 - growing tension - reform in deep crises
- June 27<sup>th</sup> 1968 - Manifesto “2000 words”, <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/curreaffrs/the-two-thousand-words-that-started-the-prague-spring>

# OCCUPATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

- ◉ Conservative part of CP supported by Soviet Union - preparation of the coup d etat
- ◉ August 18, 1968 Moscow - adopted a resolution on military intervention
- ◉ At night August 20, 1968 - Soviet troops, Hungarian, GDR s, Polish and Bulgarian crossed the boards
- ◉ Czechoslovak government adopted resolution - occupation is against the will of Czechoslovak citizens, international law

- 21<sup>st</sup> August 1968 - troops of 5 states entered
- Against occupiers - citizens unarmed resistance
- Moscow Protocol - was signed - Soviet troops can stay in Czechoslovakia



# OCCUPATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA



# TIME OF NORMALIZATION

- ◉ Moscow Protocol - Moscow Protocol demanded normalization = no reformators in CP
- ◉ Normalization = also period from August 1968 - November 1989
- ◉ Important function - People loyal to the Soviet Union
- ◉ Slovakia - leader of CP Gustav Husák guarantees at least of some reforms
- ◉ Soviet leading - back to period before Prague Spring



- People connected with Prague Spring - out of public life
- Jan Palach burned himself to protest against the regime in January 1969



- ◉ March 1969 - Ice Hockey World Championship - Czechoslovakia beat Soviet Union - DEMONSTRATION x Soviet protest
- ◉ April 1969 - A. Dubček was replaced by Gustav Husák = strict censorship, no protest; „review“ in CP
- ◉ All society = apathy
- ◉ Emigration
- ◉ Economy = since 1968 back to Central planning
- ◉ 1975 G. Husák - president
- ◉ Conferences in Helsinki - Soviet Block agreed on Respect for Human Rights

- Ex CP members, intellectuals, artists, church - fellowship, which was to monitor respect for human rights „Charta 77“ - Jan Patočka, Václav Havel and Jiří Hájek - members were persecuted
- 1978 - Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted
- Dissidents repeatedly jailed
- Release after 1985 - M. S. Gorbachev - As de facto ruler of the USSR, he tried to reform the stagnating Party and the state economy by introducing *glasnost* ("openness"), *perestroika* ("restructuring"), *demokratizatsiya* ("democratization"), and *uskoreniye* ("acceleration" of economic development), which were launched at the 27th Congress of the CPSU in February 1986

# HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS AND THE DISINTEGRATION OF SOVIET BLOCK

- 1975 Conference in Helsinki - Final Act - signed the declaration in an attempt to improve relations between the Communist bloc and the West
  - Sovereign equality, respect for the rights inherent in sovereignty
  - Refraining from the threat or use of force
  - Inviolability of frontiers
  - Territorial integrity of States
  - Peaceful settlement of disputes
  - Non-intervention in internal affairs
  - Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief
  - Equal rights and self-determination of peoples
  - Co-operation among States
  - Fulfillment in good faith of obligations under international law

- The document was seen both as a significant step toward reducing Cold War tensions and as a major diplomatic boost for the Soviet Union at the time, due to its clauses on the inviolability of national frontiers and respect for territorial integrity, which were seen to consolidate the USSR's territorial gains in Eastern Europe following the Second World War
- 1976 Soviet Block signed pact of UN - human rights
- Reflection of Helsinki - “Charta 77”,...
- 1988 -89:Vienna meeting - „Human dimension“ - better human rights protection

# SOVIET BLOCK 1980'S

- ◉ Leonid Brezhnev - Neo-Stalinism
- ◉ Growing economical crises over all Soviet Bloc
- ◉ Growing prices - Hungary, Poland x keeping low prices USSR and Romania - but no any goods
- ◉ No technological development, focus on heavy industry

X REFORMS of Mikhail Gorbachev

# 1989 IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

- ◉ first manifestations of discontent - January - anniversary of Jan Palach's death
- ◉ November 17th 1989 - police suppressed a student demonstration → beginning of the fall of communism



⦿ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vh3r8tULh1A>



- The Velvet Revolution was a non-violent revolution in Czechoslovakia November 17 to December 29 1989
- Dominated by student and other popular demonstrations against the single-party government of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia - led to the collapse of the party's control of the country, conversion to a parliamentary republic
- November 17 1989 - police suppressed student demonstration in Prague -sparked a series of popular demonstrations from November 19 to late December
- number of protesters ,two-hour general strike involving all citizens of Czechoslovakia was held on November 27

- Czechoslovakia announced on November 28 that it would relinquish power and dismantle the single-party state
- December 10, President Gustáv Husák appointed the first largely non-communist government in Czechoslovakia since 1948, and resigned
- Alexander Dubček was elected speaker of the federal parliament on December 28 and Václav Havel the President of Czechoslovakia on December 29, 1989.

- ◉ June 1990 first democratic elections
- ◉ The term *Velvet Revolution* was coined by Rita Klímová, dissidents, translator and ambassador to the United States
- ◉ The term was used internationally to describe the revolution
- ◉ After the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1993, Slovakia used the term *Gentle Revolution*, the term that Slovaks used for the revolution from the beginning. The Czech Republic continues to refer to the event as the *Velvet Revolution*.

# POLAND

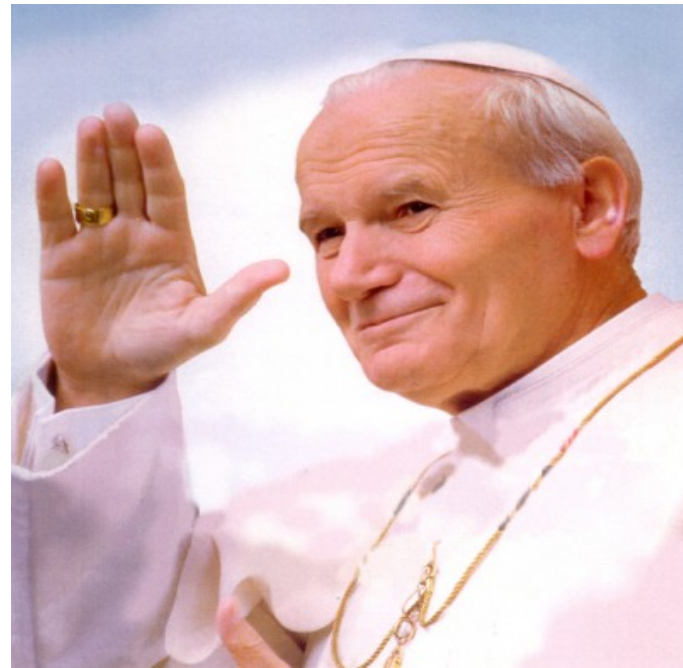
- ◉ By the mid-1960s increasing economic and political difficulties
- ◉ December 1970, a price hike led to a wave of strikes
- ◉ Government introduced a new economic program based on large-scale borrowing from the West - resulted in an immediate rise in living standards x program failed because of the 1973 oil crisis
- ◉ late 1970s the government of Edward Gierek was finally forced to raise prices - led to another wave of public protests

# POLAND

- ◉ 1978 - Karol Wojtyła - pope - supporting communistic opposition
- ◉ 1980 - wave of strikes led to founding of trade union - movements Solidarity: Polish trade union federation that emerged on 31 August 1980 at the Gdańsk Shipyard under the leadership of Lech Wałęsa
- ◉ Requirements: economical, Democratic civil rights
- ◉ Soviet Union - supported the military coup
- ◉ 1981 - government of Wojciech Jaruzelski to declared martial law, 1983, Solidarity cancelled

- ◉ reforms of Mikhail Gorbachev in USSR and increasing pressure from the West - Communists were forced to negotiate with the oppositions
- ◉ 1989 Round Table Talks led to Solidarity's participation in the elections of 1989
- ◉ Solidarity candidates' won
- ◉ In 1990 Wojciech Jaruzelski resigned as the President of the Republic of Poland and was succeeded by Lech Wałęsa after the December 1990 elections

- ◉ L. Wałęsa's inauguration as president in December, 1990 - formal end of the Communist People's Republic of Poland and the beginning of the modern Republic of Poland.
- ◉ communist Polish United Workers' Party dissolved in 1990 - transformed into Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland
- ◉ The Warsaw Pact was dissolved in the summer of 1991
- ◉ Soviet troops left in 1993
- ◉ 27 October 1991 the first entirely free Polish parliamentary elections since the 1920s took place. This completed Poland's transition from Communist Party rule to a Western-style liberal democratic political system.





# HUNGARY

- Hungary achieved some lasting economic reforms and limited political liberalization during the 1980s (major reforms only occurred following the replacement of János Kádár General Secretary of the Communist Party in 1988)
- 1988 Parliament adopted a "democracy package" included trade union pluralism, freedom of association, assembly, and the press, new electoral law, radical revision of the constitution,...
- Imre Nagy whom communists had executed decades ago was rehabilitated

- August 1989 Pan-European Picnic was a peace demonstration held on the Austrian-Hungarian border - important event in led to the fall of the Iron Curtain
- In October 1989 Communist Party convened its last congress and re-established itself as the Hungarian Socialist Party
- October 1989 parliament adopted legislation providing for multi-party parliamentary elections and a direct presidential election
- The legislation transformed Hungary from a People's Republic into the Republic of Hungary, guaranteed human and civil rights, separation of powers among the judicial, legislative, and executive branches of government

- 1<sup>st</sup> free parliamentary election - May 1990
- Democratic Forum (MDF) winning 43% of the vote and the Free Democrats (SZDSZ) capturing 24%.
- Prime Minister József Antall - MDF formed a center-right coalition government with the Independent Smallholders' Party (FKGP) and the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) to command a 60% majority in the parliament. Parliamentary opposition parties included SZDSZ, the Socialists (MSZP), and the Alliance of Young Democrats (Fidesz)

# END OF SOVIET OCCUPATION

- ◉ March 1990 - June 1991 Soviet troops left Hungary
- ◉ The total number of Soviet military and civilian personnel stationed in Hungary was around 100,000

# GDR

- ◉ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snsdDb7KDkg>
- ◉ 1989 public anger over the faking of results of local government elections - people applied for exit visas or left the country contrary to DDR laws
- ◉ August 1989 Hungary removed its border restrictions and unsealed its border - 13,000 people left East Germany by crossing the "green" border via Czechoslovakia into Hungary and then on to Austria and West Germany

- Many others demonstrated against the ruling party - Leipzig
- Kurt Masur, conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, led local negotiations with the government and held town meetings in the concert hall
- The demonstrations eventually led Erich Honecker to resign in October, and he was replaced by a slightly more moderate communist - Egon Krenz
- November 1989 - few sections of the Berlin Wall were opened, resulting in thousands of East Germans crossing into West Berlin and West Germany
- Egon Krenz resigned a few days later

- ◉ GDR held its last elections in March 1990 - winner was a coalition headed by the East German branch of West Germany's Christian Democratic Union which advocated speedy reunification
- ◉ After 2+4 Talks - were held involving the two German states and the former Allied Powers which led to agreement on the conditions for German unification.
- ◉ The five original East German states that had been abolished in 1952 were recreated
- ◉ October 1990 five states officially joined the Federal Republic

# CAUSES DISINTEGRATION OF THE SOVIET BLOC

- ◉ economic depression
- ◉ Deep economic, political, social and moral crisis



## REFERENCES

- ◉ Bárta, M.: Victims of the occupation: the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia: 21 August - 31 December 1968. Prague 2008.
- ◉ Brown, A.: The rise and fall of communism. London 2009.
- ◉ Fowkes, B.: The rise and fall of communism in Eastern Europe. Basingstoke 1995.
- ◉ Shepherd, Robin H. E.: Czechoslovakia : the velvet revolution and beyond. Basingstoke 2000.
- ◉ Cirtautas, A. - M.: The Polish solidarity movement: revolution, democracy and natural rights. London - New York 1997.