

# Lecture 11

## Central Europe after WW II

### Germany

- divided into four occupation zones – French in the southwest, British in the northwest, United States in the south, and Soviet in the east, also Berlin, which was situated in the Soviet zone, was divided into four occupation zones
- all the territories that Germany had occupied (Austria, Czechoslovakia ...) were detached
- Germany lost some territories for Poland and Russia, new Polish frontiers on the Oder-Niese line
- millions of ethnic Germans expelled from Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary returned to Germany
- western powers (Great Britain, USA and France) wanted Germany to recover politically and economically and become a part of the West – ideologically, politically and economically, the Soviet union preferred neutral Germany which would be subject to Soviet pressure easily
- these two conceptions clashed in 1948 when British, French and American occupation zones connected and established so called *Trizonia*
- in spring 1948 Stalin restricted connection between Western Berlin and Trizonia because he wanted to make the western powers to negotiate about Germany's future again
- after monetary reform in Trizonia and Western Berlin the Soviet Union blockaded Berlin and **the first Berlin Crisis** started
- the blockade lasted for 14 months but was unsuccessful – the city and its inhabitants survived thanks to the supplying by the air-bridge
- finally in May 1949 the normal communication between West Berlin and Trizonia was restored

### FRG

- September, 7, 1949 – **the Federal Republic of Germany** was proclaimed (10 republics + West Berlin), parliamentary democracy, the capital city was Bonn, 1949–1963 – the Chancellor was **Konrad Adenauer**
- October, 7, 1949 – **the German Democratic Republic** was proclaimed (satellite of USSR)
- militarization of „cold war“
- Under Chancellor Adenauer West Germany declared its right to speak for the entire German nation with an exclusive mandate.
- *The Hallstein Doctrine* involved non-recognition of East Germany, and restricted (or often ceased) diplomatic relations to countries that gave East Germany the status of a sovereign state
- since 1950s – recovery of German economy (Marshall Plan), the production increased rapidly
- 1950s – rearmament of West Germany
- 1951 – Germany joined the *European Coal and Steel Community* (forerunner of the European Union)
- 1955 – the London and Paris agreements restored most of the German state's sovereignty
- 1955 – FRG entered NATO
- on May, 14, 1955 **the Warsaw Pact** was signed in the Polish capital, it was military pact of the Eastern Bloc countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, German Democratic Republic, Poland, Romania, USSR) to counteract the establishment of NATO and accepting of Germany as a member of NATO
- 1967–1968 – social unrests, started as students demonstrations
- besides main political parties (Christian-Democratic Union, Social Democratic Party, Free Democratic Party) a new political party – the Greens (environmental questions)

- 1969–1974 – the Chancellor – **Willy Brandt** - „**Ostpolitik**“ - detente and normalization of relations with all East European countries including GDR
- 1972 – an agreement between FRG and GDR (equality, respecting of sovereignty), 1973 – both German states became members of UN
- 1982 – **Helmuth Kohl** (CDU) became a Chancellor, plans for gradual unification of Germany (firstly only cooperation, later confederation and federation) but the USSR and eastern leaders were against this plan and against unification
- November 9, 1989 – *the Fall of the Berlin Wall* – launched the end of communism in Central Europe
- 1990 - the new unification plan – Foreign Minister **Hans Dietrich Genscher** – negotiations 2 + 4 (two German states – Four Power – Great Britain, France, USA and USSR – winners of WW II)
- **October, 3, 1990 – Germany was officially re-unified**
- many problems – especially economic differences

## GRD

- October, 7, 1949 – **the German Democratic Republic** was proclaimed (satellite of USSR)
- the main political party – Socialist Unity Party – S.E.D. (Social Democrats were forced to merge with the Communist Party)
- restrictions of democracy, nationalization of factories and of farms larger than 100 hectares
- communism, Soviet Control Commission, Soviet Red Army present at GDR
- Berlin had a special status as a separate area under Four Power control
- June, 1953 – the uprising in the East Berlin and in the other cities (Jena, Leipzig, Halle ...) - firstly the demonstrations of labourers against raising of production quotas, soon between 300,000 and 400,000 workers took part in the strikes
- The government responded with the force at its command and also with the help of the Soviet Occupation force
- thousands were arrested, sentenced to jail and many people were forced to leave for the West Germany
- about 250 strikers were killed, there died also about 100 policemen and 18 Soviet soldiers
- strict totalitarian regime succeeded – its symbol became Secretary General of S.E.D. **Walter Ulbricht** (till 1971) and since 1971 till 1989 **Erich Honecker**
- the second half of 1950s – many people from the Eastern Germany emigrated to the Western Germany through Berlin – there were nine border crossings between East and West Berlin, which allowed visits by West Berliners, West Germans, Western foreigners and Allied personnel into East Berlin, as well as visits by GDR citizens and citizens of other socialist countries into West Berlin, provided that they held the necessary permits, the most famous one was so called Checkpoint Charlie
- the emigrants were mostly high qualified people (doctors, scientists etc.) → destabilization of East German economy - the 3.5 million East Germans who had left by 1961 totalled approximately 20% of the entire East German population
- **The second Berlin Crisis 1960–1961**
- East Germany forced the Soviet Union to make western powers to incorporate Berlin into East Germany, the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev sent in November 1958 ultimatum to western powers
- the crisis culminated in July 1961 after ineffective negotiations between Khrushchev and US President J. F. Kennedy in Paris and in Vienna, when East German State Security (Secret Police) closed the border check-points and erected **the Berlin Wall** – this wall became a symbol of totality, West Berlin became completely cut off from East Berlin and East Germany
- the *Iron Curtain* between the West and the East (its a term – euphemism – for the ideological,

political, economical and physical boundaries between East and West and their military and economic alliances – The Council for Mutual Economical Cooperation and the Warsaw Pact in the Eastern Bloc and the European Community and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in the West)

- during the existence of the Wall, around 5,000 people successfully defected to West Berlin
- the number of people who died trying to cross the wall, or as a result of the wall's existence, has been disputed – its about 100 people
- Germany and Berlin remained divided till 1990s
- in summer 1989 – mass escapes to the West
- autumn 1989 – mass demonstrations, Honecker was suspended from his office and had left for the USSR, he was accused of the crimes of communism
- **November, 11, 1989 – the frontiers were opened and the Berlin Wall was destroyed** – the fall of the Iron Curtain – the revolutionary wave in the East-Central Europe
- October, 1, 1990 – Germany was re-united

### **Poland**

- Poland suffered heavy losses during the WW II – about 3 million Polish Jews were killed in death camps, 200,000 of casualties, 6 million dead people altogether (Poland had fourth highest losses – after USSR, China and Germany)
- before the end of the WW II German troops in Poland were defeated by Red Army and pushed out from Poland
- in Moscow, there was formed new Polish government which ignored the existence of Polish government in exile in London
- The Potsdam Agreement of 1945 ratified the westerly shift of Polish borders and approved its new territory between the Oder-Neisse and Curzon lines
- Polish German population was expelled to Germany till 1950, also the Ukrainians from Poland were moved to the USSR
- by 1946, all rightist parties had been outlawed
- on January 19, 1947, the first parliamentary elections took place
- the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) was formed in 1948 after social democrats joined the communists
- Poland became a de facto single-party state, and a satellite state of the Soviet Union and the era of sovietization and stalinization started
- in September 1948, a leader of Polish Communist Party, **Władysław Gomułka**, who opposed Stalin's direct control of the Polish party, was charged with "nationalistic tendency" and dismissed from his post of First Secretary, he was put under the house arrest
- the Soviet model of a "people's democracy" and a centrally planned socialist economy
- 1953 – Stalin died, In March 1956 Khrushchev denounced Stalin's cult of personality at the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party → the de-Stalinization of official Soviet ideology
- **The Polish summer – June 1956** – workers in the industrial city of Poznań went on strike caused by the appalling working conditions and wage fraud – the strike was violently suppressed by army (almost 80 people were killed and 300 were injured)
- but changes in the party – Władysław Gomułka returned to the political scene and became the Secretary General of the Polish United Workers' Party – for the short time it seemed that the democratization could start in Poland, the censorship was moderated for a few time and economical reforms were launched but already in 1957 democratization was stopped
- the end of 1960s – internal political crisis and difficult economic situation
- In March 1968 student demonstrations at Warsaw University broke out
- 1970 – police massacre in Gdańsk – against the workers' strike
- the attempts to solve the situation – the Secretary General **Edward Gierek** (from 1970 to 1980)

- high loans from the West, "Consumer Communism", based on present global economic conditions, raised Polish living standards and expectations, but the program faltered suddenly in the early 1970s because of worldwide recession and increased oil prices
- 1978 – The Archbishop of Kraków, Karol Wojtyła, was elected Pope, taking the name John Paul II, in 1979 – he visited Poland – overnight he became the most important personality in Poland
- 1980s – severe economical problems
- 1980 – strikes of shipyard workers in Gdańsk and other ports along the Baltic coast - among the leaders of this strike was an electrician **Lech Wałęsa**
- Wałęsa signed *the Gdańsk Agreement* with Mieczysław Jagielski, a member of the PZPR Politburo. The Agreement acknowledged the right of Poles to associate in free trade unions, abolished censorship, abolished weekend work, increased the minimum wage, increased and extended welfare and pensions, and abolished Party supervision of industrial enterprises
- Party rule was significantly weakened – a first step toward dismantling the Party's monopoly of power
- 1980 – the independent trade union **Solidarity** was found – Wałęsa became a leader
- 1981–1985 – the Prime Minister was **General Wojciech Jaruzelski** – the martial law was declared (Jaruzelski presented it as saving Poland from the civil war), the union was suspended and most of its leaders were temporarily imprisoned – so called normalization
- the economic depression succeeded, new wave of strikes in 1988
- negotiations between the government and the Solidarity leaders
- On 4 April 1989, Solidarity was again legalized and allowed to participate in semi-free elections on 4 June 1989 which won – the first non-communist Prime Minister became **Tadeusz Mazowiecki**
- **1989** – Poland became democratic republic
- The Polish United Workers' Party (the Communists) dissolved in 1990, transforming into Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland
- On 27 October 1991 the first entirely free Polish parliamentary elections since the 1920s took place
- 1990 – 1995 – **Lech Wałęsa** was President of Poland

## Hungary

- after WW II Hungary lost all the territories which had annexed since 1938
- Hungary became a republic again (it was a monarchy before WW II)
- November 1945 – the elections – the winner was Independent Smallholders' Party but the Soviets present in Hungary enforced Hungarian communists to the government
- the Hungarian Working People's Party (formed by a merger of the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party) became the largest single party and the winner of the elections in 1947
- the communists gradually gained control of the government by 1948
- 1949 – the Parliament passed the constitution modelled after the Soviet Constitution from 1936 – The Peoples Republic of Hungary – the leader **Mátyás Rákosi**
- Rákosi's main rival for power was **László Rajk** but he was executed after the show trial
- Rákosi became a dictator imitating Stalin's political and economical programme
- harsh repressions against leaders of opposition but also against members of his own political party
- Rákosi's power was undermined by a speech made by Nikita Khrushchev in February 1956 (de-stalinization)
- June 1956 – the new Prime Minister became **Imre Nagy** – an attempt at democratization of the party and the state in general but Rákosi was strictly against attempts like this
- **October 1956 – an uprising in Budapest** – the citizens and the army against the regime
- suppressed by Red Army – the Soviet tanks entered Hungary

- Nagy proclaimed neutrality of Hungary and asked the UN for protection but in vain
- about 4,000 of Hungarian citizens died in the streets of Budapest during the fights against Red Army
- the new PM became **Janos Kádár** – a short period of terror – about 300 people including Nagy executed
- since 1960 – liberalization of the regime and economy – Hungary became the most liberal state of Eastern Bloc
- February 1989 – plurality of political parties
- October 1989 – Hungarian communists resigned on leading role in the state
- March 1990 – first free elections in Hungary – Hungarian Democratic Forum won

### **Czechoslovakia**

- 1945–1948 – The Third Czechoslovak Republic, democracy – but was restricted
- till October 1945 – there was no parliament – the country was administered by President's Decrees – the President became again **Edvard Beneš** (till 1948)
- the Germans and the Hungarians were expelled, their property was nationalized and then sold
- according to the decrees also punishing of Nazis, collaborators and traiters (some of them sentenced to death – e.g. Reichsprotektor K. H. Frank, Slovak President Jozef Tiso ...)
- rising influence of Communist Party but there were still also other political parties
- May 1946 – parliamentary elections – the Communists won (38 %) and got the most important ministries but there still were non-communist Ministers, e.g. **Jan Masaryk** served as Foreign Minister – he died in March 1948 (probably killed by Soviet agents)
- economic problems – depression but Czechoslovakia was forced by the USSR to refuse the Marshall Plan offered by USA to European countries
- governmental crisis – demission of non-communist ministers, they expected that Beneš would refuse the demission or establish caretaker government and the communist would have to negotiate but Beneš was under the pressure – the communists organized mass demonstrations
- **February, 25, 1948 – communist coup d'état**
- nationalization of economy, liquidation of private sector (smallholders, craftsmen, shoppers)
- May 1948 – non democratic elections – communists won
- Beneš abdicated and died in September 1948
- the new President became communist leader **Klement Gottwald**, Prime Minister **Antonín Zápotocký**
- persecution of opposition and all of the opponents to the regime
- also persecution of people connected with non-communist resistance movement during the WW II and with contacts in the West (working camps, show trials – General Heliodor Píka, Member of Parliament Milada Horáková – she was a prominent member of Czechoslovak National Socialist Party, member of non-communist resistance movement during the WW II, many famous people, notably Albert Einstein, Winston Churchill and Eleanor Roosevelt, petitioned for her life, but in spite of this the sentence was confirmed and she was hanged in Pankrác Prison on 27 June 1950)
- soon the communists started to find the enemies in their own party – spectacular was the Slánský trial against KSČ first secretary **Rudolf Slánský** and thirteen other prominent Communist personalities in November and December 1952. Slánský and ten other defendants were executed, while three were sentenced to life imprisonment
- planned economy
- many people emigrated to the West (intellectuals, members of western resistance movement etc.)
- the frontiers were closed, censorship, secret police, no freedom of expression, persecution of families of Prisoners of State (their children were not allowed to attend high schools or universities, the opponents to the regime were given a notice and were forced to do second-rate

jobs etc.)

- 1960 – the new constitution – **Czechoslovak socialist republic**
- still economic problems – reforms were necessary
- wave of destalinization after 1956
- two wings in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – reformists X conservatives
- January 1968 – the new Secretary General became pro-reform **Alexander Dubček**
- so called **Prague Spring** – program of democratic reforms, so called democratic socialism
- censorship was cancelled, electoral system were to be democratized, and Czechoslovakia was to be federalized, freedom of assembly and expression would be guaranteed in constitutional law
- **August, 21, 1968 – Warsaw Pact Intervention**
- the end of Prague Spring
- The outcome was the Brezhnev Doctrine of limited sovereignty of socialist countries and the right to intervene in case of „endangering of socialism“
- people in Czechoslovakia were frustrated – on 19 January 1969, student Jan Palach set himself on fire in Prague's Wenceslas Square to protest the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union in 1968 and later died in the hospital, he became a symbol of protest against the regime
- „normalization“ for next 20 years – many opposition members were arrested, many people left Czechoslovakia, strict communist regime again
- dissent (underground movement – against the regime – politicians, intellectuals ...) the leader – **Vaclav Havel** (Czech playwright, essayist, poet, dissident and politician)
- samizdat – illegal literature – underground (very often foreign writers or Czech writers who were not allowed to public their books)
- 1977 – **Charter 77** – Charter 77 defined itself as "a loose, informal, and open community of people" concerned with the protection of civil and human rights
- the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted was formed in 1978 with the specific goal of documenting individual cases of government persecution and human rights violations
- 1987 – the new Secretary General became Milouš Jakeš – all the reform attempts were suppressed but communism has already been weakening in the whole Eastern Bloc
- January 1989 - 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Jan Palach's burning to death – student demonstrations, activation of anti-communist movement
- June 1989 – a petition called *Several Sentences* organized by **Vaclav Havel** – demanding of democratization
- November, 17, 1989 - a mass demonstration to commemorate International Students Day, and the fiftieth anniversary of the murder of students by the Nazi government was organized, was brutally suppressed by communist government
- January, 1, 1993 – dissolution of Czechoslovakia → Czech Republic and Slovak Republic

## **Austria**

- The second Austrian republic since 1945, the first President became **Karl Renner** (died in 1950)
- Austria used Marshall Plan
- after the war Austria was divided into British, French, Soviet and American zones and governed by the Allied Commission for Austria, Vienna was also divided into four zones and was surrounded by the Soviet zone
- the occupation of Austria lasted till 1955 – Austrian State Treaty with the four Occupying Powers → fully independent state
- Austria declared its neutrality
- most important political parties – Social Democrats and Austrian People's Party
- 1995 – Austria entered European Union