

# HISTORY OF CENTRAL EUROPE

Period of repression and lawlessness  
and Anti Soviet action

# PERIOD OF REPRESSION AND LAWLESSNESS - ČSR

- ◉ Emigration
- ◉ manifestations of discontent (Sokol festival)
- ◉ Funeral of E. Beneš - also public protest - arrests
- ◉ Growing protest against insufficient supply
- ◉ First open conflict with the protagonists of the “third resistance”
- ◉ protection laws for Democratic People's Republic, ... - police regime
- ◉ established repressive forces of state power - national security
- ◉ persecution and extrajudicial illegal coercion - a special military unit politically unreliable young men - not weapons, they had to work hard in mines, smelters
- ◉ 1948 - 54 - forced labor camps 23,000
- ◉ State Security - goal to end the regime's opponents, help from Soviet advisors
- ◉ wave of terror similar to the Nazi regime

# POLITICAL PROCESS

- ◉ Since October 1949 - after soviet advisors arrived
- ◉ Most processes were artificially constructed, state police provocation
- ◉ on guilt and punishment did not decide judicial authorities BUT political organs of CP!!!
- ◉ First victims: enemy of the regime - political processes - people were prosecuted for crimes they did not commit!!!
- 1949 General Heliodor Pika was executed
- June 1950 process with the National Socialist MEP Milada Horaková
- ◉ Convicted 639
- ◉ Also againts dignitary, athletes, communists

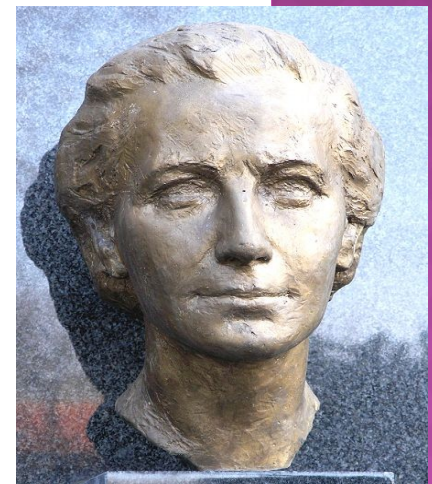


# MILADA HORÁKOVÁ

<http://www.ustrcr.cz/en/milada-horakova-en>

# DR. MILADA HORAKOVÁ

- Milada Horaková along with others were sentenced to death and despite the protests of prominent foreign figures e.g. Albert Einstein, Winston Churchill or Eleanor Roosevelt (contrived conspiracy and treason), judicial murder
- <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/special/olg-a-hruba-supporter-of-milada-horakova-and-campaigner-for-religious-freedom>
- Show trials: priest, diplomats, officers, participants of resistance, ...



# CULTURE AND EDUCATION

- ◉ socialist realism in art
- ◉ phased out outdated bourgeois literature
- ◉ Education - 1948: excluded 4,500 students and 80 professors and 27 associate professors lost their jobs
- ◉ University reform - criteria for admission to college - political awareness
- ◉ Many writers, poets... couldn't publish - emigration

# THE THIRD RESISTANCE AND CZECHOSLOVAK EXILE

- ◉ 1948 - 1951: 25,000 left
- ◉ Political exile
- ◉ Radio stations: BBC, Voice of America, Free Europe

# 1950s

- ◉ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tNMgCGahyM>
- ◉ Political p.: later also against Communists - Rudolf Slanský, some of trials - antisemitic, Gustav Husák
- ◉ Economy: central planning, tasks that had to be fulfilled were included in the five-year plans, collectivization, decline in living standards, 1953 monetary reform, president Antonín Zapotocký



# HUNGARY

- ◉ August 1949 the parliament passed the new constitution of Hungary (1949/XX.) accordingly constitution 1936 of the Soviet Union
- ◉ Name of the country changed to the People's Republic of Hungary, "the country of the workers and peasants" where "every authority is held by the working people,,
- ◉ Socialism was declared as the main goal of the nation. A new coat-of-arms was adopted with Communist symbols, such the red star, hammer and sickle

# STALINIST ERA (1949-1956)

- Mátyás Rákosi, Hungarian Working People's Party, was de facto the leader of Hungary, possessed practically unlimited power
- His main rivals in the party were the 'Hungarian' Communists who led the illegal party during the war in Hungary, and were considerably more popular within party ranks.
- Their most influential leader, László Rajk, who was minister of Foreign Affairs, was arrested in May 1949. He was accused of the crimes, such as spying for Western imperialist powers, L. Rajk was found guilty and executed.
- In the next three years, other leaders of CP deemed untrustworthy, like former Social Democrats or other Hungarian illegal Communists such as János Kádár, were also arrested and imprisoned on trumped-up charges

# STALINIST ERA (1949-1956)

- ◉ The showcase trial of L. Rajk
- ◉ Mátyás Rákosi now attempted to impose totalitarian rule on Hungary. The centrally orchestrated personality cult focused on him and Joseph V. Stalin soon reached unprecedented proportions. M. Rákosi's images and busts were everywhere, all public speakers were required to glorify his wisdom and leadership.
- ◉ Secret police persecuted all “class enemies” and “enemies of the people”. Many people were executed and over imprisoned. Some ended up in forced-labor camps, where many died due to horrible conditions, poor food and practically no medical care. Another people, mostly former aristocrats, industrialists, military generals and other upper-class people were deported from the capital and other cities to countryside villages where they were forced to do hard agricultural labor.
- ◉ around 200,000 were expelled by M. Rákosi from CP

# STALINIST ERA - SHOW TRIAL

- ◉ Preparations for a show trial started in Budapest in 1953 to prove that Raoul Wallenberg had not been dragged off to the Soviet Union (1945) but was the victim of cosmopolitan Zionists
- ◉ For the purposes of this show trial, three Jewish leaders as well as two would-be "eyewitnesses" were arrested and interrogated by torture. The show trial was initiated in Moscow, following Stalin's anti-Zionist campaign.
- ◉ After the death of Stalin the preparations for the trial were stopped and the arrested persons were released.

# IMRE NAGY AND REFORMS

- ◉ As Hungary's new Prime Minister, Imre Nagy slightly relaxed state control over the economy and the mass media and encouraged public discussion on political and economic reform.
- ◉ In order to improve the general supply, he increased the production and distribution of consumer goods and reduced the tax and quota burdens of the peasants.
- ◉ I. Nagy also closed forced-labor camps, released most of the political prisoners - Communists were allowed back into Party ranks
- ◉ All these rather moderate reforms earned him widespread popularity in the country, especially among the peasantry and the left-wing intellectuals.

# RÁKOSI'S SECOND REIGN

- ◉ 1955 Central Committee of the Hungarian Working People's Party condemned I. Nagy for "rightist deviation". Hungarian newspapers joined the attacks and I. Nagy was accused of being responsible for the country's economic problems and on 18 April he was dismissed from his post by a unanimous vote of the National Assembly. I. Nagy was even excluded from the Party
- ◉ M. Rákosi once again became the unchallenged leader
- ◉ M. Rákosi's power was undermined by a speech made by Nikita Khrushchev in February 1956, in which he denounced the policies of Joseph Stalin and his followers in eastern Europe and the cult of personality
- ◉ Ernő Gerő, as his successor, who was unpopular and shared responsibility for most of M. Rákosi's crimes.
- ◉ The fall of M. Rákosi was followed by a flurry of reform agitation both inside and outside the Party. L. Rajk and his fellow victims of the showcase trial of 1949 were cleared of all charges, and on 6 October 1956, CP organized a reburial, which was attended by tens of thousands of people and became a silent demonstration against the crimes of the regime. On 13 October it was announced that I. Nagy had been reinstated as a member of CP

# POLAND

- ◉ After WWII - most powerful Polish Workers' Party (*Polska Partia Robotnicza*; PPR) under Władysław Gomułka and Bolesław Bierut
- ◉ 1946 a national plebiscite, known as the "3 times YES" referendum, was held first, instead of the parliamentary elections
- ◉ The Communists consolidated power by gradually whittling away the rights of their non-Communist foes, particularly by suppressing the leading opposition party - Mikołajczyk's Polish People's Party (PSL)

# POLAND

- In some widely-publicized cases, their perceived enemies were being sentenced to death on trumped up charges – among them Witold Pilecki, the organizer of the Auschwitz resistance; and numerous leaders of Armia Krajowa and the Council of National Unity. Many resistance fighters were murdered extrajudicially, or forced to exile



# POLAND

- ◉ 1946, all rightist parties had been outlawed, and a new pro-government Front of National Unity was formed which included only Communist Polish United Workers' Party and its leftist allies.
- ◉ January 19, 1947, the first parliamentary elections took place; opposition already powerless due to government control. Results were adjusted by J. V. Stalin Communists candidates gained 417 of 434 seats in parliament (*Sejm*), effectively ending the multi-party system in politics.
- ◉ Many opposition members, including Mikołajczyk left the country.
- ◉ Western governments did not protest - led free-spirited Poles to speak about continued "Western betrayal" regarding Central Europe. In the same year, the new Legislative Sejm created the Small Constitution of 1947.
- ◉ Over the next two years, the Communists monopolized their political power in Poland

# POLAND

- ◉ In 1948, Communists and Jozéf Cyrankiewicz's own faction joined - Polish United Workers' Party in power for the next four decades.
- ◉ Poland became a *de facto* single-party state, and a satellite state of the Soviet Union.
- ◉ Only two other parties were allowed to exist legally, a small one for the farmers (United People's Party) and one for the intelligentsia, called the Democratic Party
- ◉ A period of Sovietization and Stalinism started

# STALINIST ERA (1948-1956)

## POLAND

- 1948 September Communist leader Władysław Gomułka, who opposed Stalin's direct control of the Polish party, was charged with "nationalistic tendency" and dismissed from his posts of First Secretary. He was arrested by the Ministry of Public Security.
- W. Gomułka was put under house arrest without typical show trial, and released unharmed a few years later, in 1954 or 1955.
- B. Bierut replaced him as party leader until his own sudden death
- The new government was controlled by Polish Communists supported by Ministry of Public Security, and the Soviet "advisors" who were placed in every arm of the government as guarantee of the pro-Soviet policy of the state

# STALINIST ERA (1948-1956)

- ◉ October 1949, with the establishment of a fully Communist government under Bolesław Bierut - Konstantin Rokossovsky, on Stalin's orders, became the Polish Minister of National Defense, with the additional title of Marshal of Poland. Together with Rokossovsky, several thousand Soviet officers were put in charge of almost all Polish military units, either as commanding officers or as their advisors
- ◉ Soviet-style secret police 32,000 agents in 1953 (one agent : 800 Polish citizens).
- ◉ **Ministry of Public Security of Poland** was a Polish communist secret police, intelligence and counter-espionage service operating from 1945 to 1954) ministry was also in charge of Internal Security Corps, the Civil Militia, Border guard, prison staff and paramilitary police used for special actions (with 125,000 members).
- ◉ public prosecutors and judges as well as functionaries of MBP murdered (recognized by international law as crimes against humanity and crimes against peace, such as the torture and execution) seven members of 4th Headquarters of anti-Communist organization in the Mokotów Prison in Warsaw. All executed members took active part in anti-Nazi resistance during World War II.
- ◉ Postwar Polish Army, intelligence and police - many of Soviet NKVD officers who stationed in Poland with the Northern Group of Forces until 1956.
- ◉ Mass arrests continued during the early 50's – in October 1950: 5,000 people were arrested during one night, in so called "Operation K"; in 1952 over 21,000 people were arrested . According to official data, there were 49,500 political prisoners in 1952

# STALINIST ERA (1948-1956)

## POLAND

- ◉ The government control over art and artists
- ◉ Soviet-style Socialist Realism became the only formula accepted by the authorities after 1949. Most works of art and literature presented to the public had to be in line with the voice of CP
- ◉ persecuting the Catholic Church
- ◉ "PAX Association" created in 1947 worked to undermine support from Roman Catholicism and attempted to create a Communism-friendly Church
- ◉ 1953 the Cardinal Primate of Poland Stefan Wyszyński, was placed under house arrest, willing to make compromises with the government
- ◉ In the early 1950s, the war against religion by Secret police led to and torture of hundreds of Polish religious representatives, culminating in the Stalinist show trial of the Kraków Curia.

# STALINIST ERA (1948-1956)

## POLAND

- Polish Constitution of 1952 officially established Poland as a People's Republic, ruled by the Polish United Workers' Party, which since the absorption of the left wing of the Socialist Party in 1948 - Communist Party's official name.
- The post of President of Poland was abolished, and B. Bierut, the First Secretary of the Communist Party, became the effective leader of Poland

# STALIN'S DEATH

- ◉ J. V. Stalin died in 1953.
- ◉ Nikita Khrushchev outmaneuvered his rivals and achieved power in the Soviet Union.
- ◉ 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 - left Poland's Stalinist in a difficult position
- ◉ desire for reform and change among both intellectuals and workers was beginning to surface throughout the Eastern Bloc and the death of B. Bierut in March 1956 exacerbated an existing split in the PZPR.
- ◉ B. Bierut was succeeded by Edward Ochab as First Secretary of the PZPR, and by Jozéf Cyrankiewicz, back as Prime Minister

# WARSAW PACT 1955 - 1991

- ◉ The Warsaw Treaty Organization of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance - Warsaw Pact: mutual defense treaty btw eight communist states of Eastern Europe
- ◉ Treaty was established under the initiative of the Soviet Union on 14 May 1955 Warsaw
- ◉ The Warsaw Pact military complement to the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CoMEcon), regional economic organization for the communist states of Eastern Europe  
The Warsaw Pact was a Soviet military reaction to the integration of West Germany into NATO in 1955



# FIRST CRISES IN SOVIET BLOCK

- ◉ After J.V. Stalin death 1953 - hope for change
- ◉ Growing dissatisfaction in with the low standard of living, cultural decay and cases of brutal political repression - Czechoslovakia and the GDR
- ◉ Demonstration: raise (salary), enough food, trouble-free supply
- ◉ Slowly began to manifest itself incidents of political dissent
- ◉ These conflicts were compounded by fighting Stalin's followers (after his death in Soviet Union) 1953 Stalin`s death - hope
- ◉ rise to dissatisfaction
- ◉ First signs of dissatisfaction with the low standard of living, cultural decay and cases of brutal political repression - Czechoslovakia and the GDR
- ◉ May 1953 - monetary reform -depreciation savings, increased food prices and other goods - a crisis of confidence of still loyal population
- ◉ June 17 1953 - strike of construction workers in Berlin

# CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND GDR

- First signs of dissatisfaction with the low standard of living, cultural bankruptcies and brutal case of political persecution
- Czechoslovakia: monetary reform 30<sup>th</sup> May 1953 - devaluation savings, increased food prices, clothing, and other goods and also meant a crisis of confidence the population
- GDR: expression of discontent among Berlin construction workers - 17<sup>th</sup> June 1953 - strike - riots spread
- Workers' uprising was stopped by Soviet tanks and state of emergency

- ◉ Walter Ulbricht - General Secretary and President of the National Council- repressive measures → continuous flow of refugees to the West
- ◉ 1949 - 1961 from GDR to West - 2, 700, 000
- ◉ Mainly very good educated - top experts from all sectors
- ◉ August 1961 - construction on Berlin Wall - as prevention

# BERLIN WALL



# POLISH OCTOBER 1956

- another crisis communist regime after the XX Congress - February 1956 - revealed of the bloodiest sides of Stalinist regime brought in all the countries of the Soviet bloc profound moral and ideological crisis
- Poland: assassinated of polish communist leaders in soviet prison (before War) - strengthening opposition (center: catholic church) and weakened Communist regime and hatred from WWII for Soviet War crimes in Poland

- ◉ June 1956 - Poznan - Workers' uprising, violent suppression, 50 people died
- ◉ All over country: formed Workers' councils
- ◉ Crises in Communist Party: neo-Stalinist x reformists
- ◉ Confrontation culminated - October 1956
- ◉ Leader of Polish united Workers party after 8 years of prison - Wladyslaw Gomulka
- ◉ Situation - drama
- ◉ Even N.S. Khrushchev came to Poland, soviet tanks, demonstration in streets, ...
- ◉ Changes: soviet marshal K. Rokossovski left Polish army, some Catholic priests were released, relaxation of censorship

- ◉ Economical changes: small private business, agricultural cooperatives - canceled, 87% of farmland - private again
- ◉ 1957 - restoration of censorship and artistic and scientific life again under strict control of Communist Party and Workers' councils were closed
- ◉ W. Gomulka disappointed hopes of his followers, was unable to resist Soviet pressure
- ◉ Only: countryside - farmland private and Catholic church remained a privileged position
- ◉ Democratization process failed

[HTTP://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=UBM6ANOUZBQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBM6ANOUZBQ)







# UPRISING IN HUNGARY

- ◉ Tension btw neo - Stalinist and reformists since 1953
- ◉ After J. V. Stalin died - M. Rakosi was able to keep his power, March 1955 M. Rakosi accused Imre Nagy (reformist) of right-wing opportunism
- ◉ M. Rakosi - oriented to Moscow - help from Moscow against opposition
- ◉ Fear from similar event as happened in Poland - N. S. Khrushchev removed M. Rakosi from his post
- ◉ Hungarian society was not satisfied

- ◉ Polish Uprising - information about events in Poland led to a wave of discontent
- ◉ 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1956 - Budapest - manifestation of solidarity with the Polish workers - more than 200, 000 people came, requirements: Imre Nagy - Prime Minister, departure of Soviet troops from the country and punishment of all who participated in the Stalinist processes and lawlessness
- ◉ Riots spread, new leader of CP Erno Gero and his speech in Hungarian radio on 23<sup>rd</sup> October evening - huge impulse for public anger
- ◉ People started to occupy the public buildings
- ◉ Demonstrations escalated into a popular uprising

- Head of new government Imre Nagy
- Soviet troops (In response to requests for assistance) entered to Budapest on 24<sup>th</sup> October 1956 and Soviet tanks occupied militarily significant points
- 25<sup>th</sup> October - peaceful demonstration in front of the Parliament - Soviet army was attacked by machine-gun salute and they responded and more then 60 demonstrators died  shooting before Parliament was obviously a provocation from the side of members of the Political police
-  from this moment uprising in Budapest - bloody character and anti - soviet as well

- ◉ Similar situation in other place
- ◉ Real power in the hands of revolutionary or national councils
- ◉ General strike - main motto: immediate withdrawal of the Soviet Army
- ◉ E. Gero we replaced by Janos Kadar
- ◉ N.S. Khrushchev - only military intervention is the solution
- ◉ 1<sup>st</sup> November 1956 neutrality of Hungary and leaving from Warsaw Pact - even better reason for Soviet bloc to intervene - it is not possible in such times of to leave the Pact and weaken the strength (NATO could abuse the situation)

- ◉ All satellite states gave their agreement to military intervention
- ◉ Soviets learnt that USA and NATO will not react - confirmed by J. F. Dulles and even D. Eisenhower
- ◉ France and G. Britain - interested in Suez Crises
- ◉ Hungarian uprising was supported just by Radio Free Europe and Austria - possibility to cross the boards for refugees
- ◉ 4<sup>th</sup> November 1956 - soviet attack - soviet tanks in Budapest
- ◉ Fights took more than 1 week in Budapest, some place even more

- ⦿ Hungarian resistance was broken, massive exodus to Austria more than 200, 000
- ⦿ Imre Nagy asked UN to help - only formal answer - Hungary stayed ALONE, western democracies confirmed their agreement with Soviet intervention
- ⦿ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVdQ9PK9Q5o>

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