

*History of Central Europe

1970s

Normalization in Czechoslovakia

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



* Gustav Husák

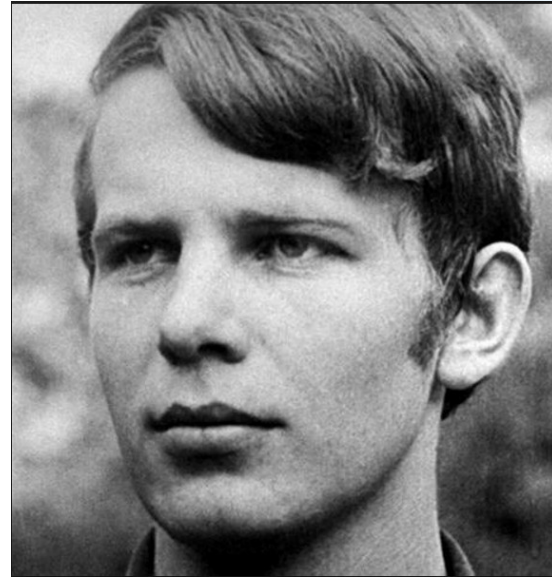
Normalization in Czechoslovakia

- **A. Dubček** - remained in office only until April 1969
- Anti - Soviet actions:
 - **Jan Palach** burned himself to protest against the regime in January 1969, † 19 January 1969 → 20 January demonstration march, 25 January – funeral
 - **Miroslav Malinka** burned himself - 22 January 1969
 - **Blanka Nacházelová** Committed suicide - gas poisoning – 22 January 1969
- **L. Breznev** – warned Czechoslovak government - events after **J. Palach's** deaths - dangerous political character
 - **Jan Zajíc** burned himself 25 February 1969 – Anniversary of February 1948
 - **Evžen Plocek** burned himself 4 April 1969

Jan Palach



Jan Zajíc





* **Evžen Plocek**

Normalization in Czechoslovakia

- Anti - Soviet actions:
 - March 1969 – **Ice Hokey World Championship** – Czechoslovakia beat USSR – DEMONSTARTION x Soviet reaction → Czechoslovakia's victory over the Soviet team in the World Ice Hockey Championships in precipitated Soviet pressures for a CP Presidium reorganization → **Gustáv Husák** was named first secretary (title changed general secretary in 1971)
- A program of "*normalization*"—the restoration of continuity with the pre-reform period was initiated; normalization entailed thoroughgoing political repression and the return to ideological conformity



* Ice Hokey World Championship,
Sweden, 1969

Normalization in Czechoslovakia

- A new purge cleansed the Czechoslovak leadership of all reformist elements (e.g. 115 members of CP Central Committee, 54 were replaced; CP party membership, which had been close to 1.7 million in January 1968, was reduced by about 500,000; top levels of government were purged)
- Publishing houses and film studios were placed under new direction and censorship was strictly imposed and a campaign of militant atheism was organized
- May 1971 Czechoslovakia and USSR signed the **Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance**; Soviet advisers supervised the functioning of the Ministry of Interior and the security apparatus
- **V. Bilak** became the most ardent advocate of Proletarian internationalism
- The purges of the first half of 1970 eliminated the reformists within CP
- Fall 1970 - ex-communist intelligentsia organized the Socialist Movement of Czechoslovak Citizens - protest movement dedicated to the goals of 1968 (47 leaders of the movement were arrested)
- Organized protest was effectively stilled

Normalization in Czechoslovakia

- Czechoslovakia had been federalized under the Constitutional Law of Federation of 27 October 1968
- 14th Party Congress 1971 **G. Husák** announced the 1968 14th CP Congress had been abrogated - "**normalization**" had been "completed" and that all the party needed to do was consolidate its gains
- Cultural life - suffered greatly from the limitations on independent thought, as did the humanities, social sciences and ultimately even natural sciences; art had to adhere to a rigid formula of socialist realism
- Government's emphasis on obedience, conformity, and the preservation of the status quo was challenged by individuals and organized groups aspiring to independent thinking and activity
- Czechoslovakia had signed UN Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1968
- 1975 The Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe's ***Final Act*** (Helsinki Accords), signed also by Czechoslovakia - also included **guarantees of human rights**

- **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

*** Human and civil rights**

- 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 – “**Charter 77**”,...

***Human Rights**

Charter 77

- January 1977 - **Charter 77** appeared in FDR newspapers, document was translated and reprinted throughout the world
- The original manifesto reportedly was signed by 243 people; among them were artists, former public officials, and other prominent figures - **Zdeněk Mlynář** (secretary of CP Central Committee in 1968), **Václav Slavík** (Central Committee member in 1968) and **Ludvík Vaculík** (author of "Two Thousand Words")
- **Charter 77** defined itself as "a loose, informal, and open community of people" concerned with the **protection of civil and human rights**; it denied oppositional intent and based its defense of rights on legally binding international documents signed by the Czechoslovak government and on guarantees of civil rights contained in the Czechoslovak Constitution
- **Charter 77** had over 800 signatures by the end of 1977, including workers and youth
- **G. Husák** regime - claimed that all rights derive from the state and that international covenants are subject to the internal jurisdiction of the state, responded with fury to the **Charter 77**

Charter 77 and Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Persecuted

- Text was never published in the official media; signatories were arrested and interrogated; dismissal from employment often followed; Czechoslovak press launched vicious attacks against the **Charter 77**; public was mobilized to sign either individual condemnations or various forms of "**anti-Charters**,"
- Closely associated with **Charter 77 - 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

Prohlášení CHARTY z 1. 1. 1977

Dne 13.10.1976 byly ve sbírce zákonů ČSSR /č. 126/ zveřejněny "Mezinárodní pakt o občanských a politických právech", které byly (máme naši republiku podepsány v roce 1968, sčítány v Helsinských r. 1975 a vstoupily u nás v platnost dnem 23.3.1976. Od této doby mají naši občané právo a náš stát povinnost se jimi řídit. Svoboda a práva lidí, jež tyto pakty zaručují, jsou důležitými civilizačními hodnotami, k nimž v dějinách směřovalo dříve mnoho pokrokových lidí a jejich uspokojení může významně pomoci humanitně vyvíjet naši společnost. Vidíme proto, že bezskrupulezná socialistická republika k těmto paktům přistoupila. Jejich zveřejnění nám ale zároveň s novou naléhavostí připomíná, kolik základních občanských práv platí v naší zemi - zatím boužel jen na papíře. Zele ilustrární je například právo na svobodu projevu, zaručené čl. 19 I. paktu. Každý člověk občan je znemožněno pracovat ve svém oboru jen proto, že zastává nějaký odlišný od nás zorný oficiálních. Jsou přitom často objektem nejrozumnější diskriminace a diskonové ní ze st ran v úřadů i společenských organizací, zbavení jakékoliv možnosti bránit se, stávají se prakticky obětmi apartheidu. Státnicům dalších občanů je odříznuta "svoboda od strachu" /preambula I. paktu/, protože jsou nuceni žít v trvalém nebezpečí, že projeví-li své názory, ztratí pracovní i jiné možnosti. V rozporu s čl. 13 II. paktu zasahující všem právo na vodňání, je náschytava mladým lidem bráněná ve studiu jen pro jejich ná zery, nebo dokonce pro názory je jejich rodičů. Každý občan musí žít ve strachu, že kdyby se projevil v souladu se svými předschácením, mohl by být buď zari nebo jejich děti zbaveny práva na vzdělání. Uplatnění "práva vyhledávat, přijímat a rozšiřovat informace a myšlenky všeho druhu, bez ohledu na hranice, se datují, písemně nebo jinak" či prostřednictvím umění /bod 2 čl. 19 I. paktu/ je etněně nejen mimo soudně, ale i soudně, často pod rouškou kriminálního obvinění /jakto tom svědčí mimo jiné právě probíhající procesy s mladými hudebníky/. Svoboda veřejného projevu je potlačena centrálním řízením všech sdělovacích prostředků i publikačních a kulturních zařízení. Každý politický, filozofický či vědecký názor, nebo umělecký projev jen trochu se vyznačující úzkému rámci oficiální ideologie či estetiky nemůže být zveřejněn, je znemožněna veřejná kritika vlásových společenských jevů; je vyloučena možnost veřejné obrany proti nepravdivým útokům na čest a pověst, jednoznačně zaručená čl. 17 I. paktu, v praxi neexistuje. Lidé obvinění nelze vyvrátit a smrtí je každý pokus dočasnou nepravou nebo opravou soudní cestou, v oblasti duchovní a kulturní tvorby je vyloučena otevřená diskuse. Mnoho vědeckých a kulturních pracovníků je diskriminováno jen proto, že před léty legálně zveřejňovali či otevřeně vylovovali názory, které souče s ná politická moc odsuzuje. Svobode náležitěného vyznění, důrazně zajištěné čl. 18 I. paktu je systematicky omezována mocnou svědčí, občestvozná činnost i účovnicích, nad nimiž visí trvale hrozba odepření nebo ztráty stá tního souhlasu s výkonem jejich funkce;

Souhlasím s Prohlášením
charty 77 z 1. 1. 1977

Václav Havel

VÁCLAV HAVEL, spisovatel,
U DEJVIČKÉHO RYBNÍČKU,
PRAHA 6

* Charter 77

Poland

- **Edward Gierek** (4th First Secretary CP)
- "**New Development Strategy**" - based on import-led growth - program faltered suddenly because of worldwide recession and increased oil prices
- **1975 Helsinki Accords**
- **E. Gierek** government's growing difficulties led also to increased dependence on USSR e.g. economic cooperation
- Constitution (amended in February 1976) - formalized the alliance with USSR and the leading role of CP → proposed changes was softened after protests by intellectuals and the Church, but the regime felt it needed additional authority given the indebtedness to the West and the deepening economic crisis → divisive issues raised helped to coalesce the emerging circles of active political opposition



* Edward Gierek

Poland

- As a result of the 1970 worker rebellion food prices remained frozen and were artificially low until 1976
- June 1976 - in an attempt to reduce consumption the government introduced a long-announced and several times delayed, but radical price increase: basic foodstuffs had their **prices raised by an average of 60%** → nationwide **wave of strikes**, with violent demonstrations, looting and labor unrest at the factory near Warsaw, Radom, Płock and other places
- The government quickly backed down and repealed the price rises, but the strike leaders were arrested and put on trial
- A series of "spontaneous" large scale public gatherings was staged by CP leadership in a number of cities, but the Soviet pressure prevented further attempts at raising prices
- **E. Gierek's** cordial in the past relations with **L. Brezhnev** were seriously damaged
- Food ration cards - introduced because of the destabilized market in August 1976, were to remain a feature of life in Poland for the duration of the People's Republic



A queue, a common sight in Poland's shortage economy in the 1970s and 1980s

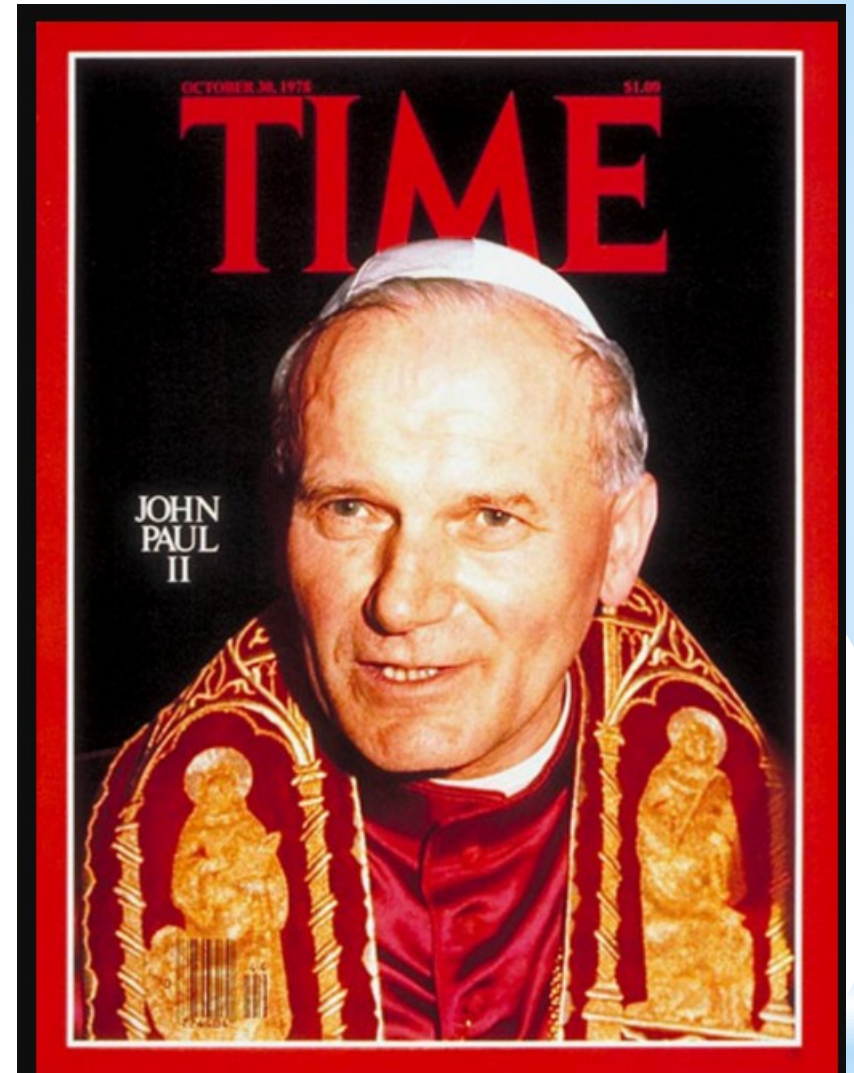
Poland

- The regime's retreat, having occurred for the second time in several years, amounted to an unprecedented defeat; within the rigid political system, the government was neither able to reform (it would lose control and power), nor to satisfy society's staple needs, because it had to sell abroad all it could to make foreign debt and interests payments → this quandary, combined with the daily reality of the lack of necessities, **facilitated the consolidation of organized opposition**
- 1976 group of intellectuals led by **Jacek Kuroń, Antoni Macierewicz, Jan Józef Lipski** and **Adam Michnik** founded and operated the **Workers' Defence Committee**
- More opposition groups indeed soon followed - Movement for Defense of Human and Civic Rights, Free Trade Unions of the Coast and the Confederation of Independent Poland
- The periodical "***The Worker***" was distributed in factories from September 1977

Poland

- The idea of independent trade unions was first raised by Gdańsk and Szczecin workers striking in 1970–71, but was later developed and promoted by **Workers' Defence Committee** and its leftist collaborators - led to the establishment in **1978 of Free Trade Unions**, the precursor of **Solidarity**
- **Confederation of Independent Poland** represented right-wing of the Polish opposition (opposition members tried to resist the regime by denouncing it for violating the Polish constitution, Polish laws and Poland's international obligations, they called for human rights movements in Soviet Bloc)
- For the rest of the 1970s, resistance to the regime grew, assuming also the forms of student groups, clandestine newspapers and publishers, importing books and newspapers, and even a "*Flying University*" (regime practiced various forms of repression against the budding reform movements)
- 16 October 1978 Cardinal **Karol Wojtyła**, the archbishop of Kraków, was elected **pope** at the Vatican - **John Paul II**

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4K_iBXbE3UI



Hungary

- 1966 Central Committee approved the "*New Economic Mechanism*" - moved away from a strictly planned economy towards a system more reminiscent of the decentralized Yugoslavian model
- Over the next two decades of relative domestic quiet
- **J. Kádár's** government responded alternately to pressures for minor political and economic reforms as well as to counter-pressures from reform opponents
- Dissidents still remained closely watched by the secret police however, particularly during the anniversaries of the 1956 uprising in 1966, 1976, and 1986

GDR

- **Walter Ulbricht's** (first secretary of CP) foreign policy from 1967 to 1971 responded to the beginning of the era of “*détente*” with the West
- 1968 East German Constitution proclaimed the victory of socialism and restated the country's commitment to unification under communist leadership
- August 1970 USSR and FDR signed the **Moscow Treaty**
- May 1971 CP Central Committee chose **Erich Honecker** as the party's first secretary
- **E. Honecker** combined loyalty to the Soviet Union with flexibility toward détente
- 8th CP Congress June 1971 - **E. Honecker** presented the political program of the new régime
- In his reformulation of GDR foreign policy: **E. Honecker** renounced the objective of a unified Germany and adopted the "defensive" position of ideological *Abgrenzung* (demarcation or separation)
- Under this program, the country defined itself as a distinct "socialist state" and emphasized its allegiance to USSR.
- *Abgrenzung* - defended GDR sovereignty, in turn contributed to the success of détente negotiations that led to the **Four Power Agreement on Berlin (Berlin Agreement)** in 1971 and the **Basic Treaty** with FGR in December 1972

GDR

- **Berlin Agreement** and **Basic Treaty** normalized relations between East Germany and West Germany (**Berlin Agreement** - effective June 1972: signed by US, GB, France, and USSR - protected trade and travel relations between West Berlin and FGR and aimed at improving communications between East Berlin and West Berlin)
- USSR - West Berlin would not be incorporated into **FGR**
- **Basic Treaty** (effective June 1973) - politically recognized two German states, two countries pledged to respect one another's sovereignty; under the terms of the treaty, diplomatic missions were to be exchanged and commercial, tourist, cultural, and communications relations established
- September 1973 **GDR** and **FGR** joined **UN**
- GDR participated in the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe in Europe in July 1975 signed the Helsinki Final Act, which was to guarantee the regime's recognition of human rights.
- The Final Act's provision for freedom of movement elicited approximately 120,000 East German applications for permission to emigrate, but the applications were rejected

*References:

- Congdon, L.: 1956: the Hungarian revolution and war for independence. Boulder, 2006:
- Diefendorf, J.-M.: In the wake of war: the reconstruction of the German cities after World War II. New York, 1993.
- Haynes, R. – Rady, M.: In the shadow of Hitler: personalities of the right in Central and Eastern Europe. London 2011.
- Hett, B. – C.: Crossing Hitler: the man who put the Nazis on the witness stand. New York, 2008.
- Hihnala, P. – Vehvilainen, O.: Hungary 1956. Tampere, 1995.
- Kőrösi, Z. – Molnár, A.: Carrying a secret in my heart: children of the victims of the reprisals after the Hungarian Revolution in 1956: an oral history. Budapest, 2003.
- Plesch, D.: America, Hitler and the UN [electronic resource]: how the Allies won World War II and forged a peace . London 2011.
- Průcha, V.: The system of centrally planned economies in central-eastern and south-eastern Europe after world war II and the causes of its decay. Prague, 1994.
- Snyder, T.: Bloodlands : Europe between Hitler and Stalin. New York, 2010.
- Stedman, A.: Alternatives to appeasement: Neville Chamberlain and Hitler's Germany. London 2011.

- **History of Central Europe**

1980s

● Soviet block 1980s

- **Leonid Brezhnev** (leading USSR 1964 – 1982): Brezhnev Stagnation
- Growing economical crises over all Soviet Bloc
- Growing prices: Hungary and Poland x keeping low prices USSR and Romania – but no any goods
- No technological development, focus on heavy industry
- x REFORMS of **Mikhail Gorbachev**
- Spread fear of war - in 1983 nuclear rockets were deployed and USSR spread information of possible attacks
- 1982 † **Leonid Brezhnev**, successor **Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov** (General Secretary of CP of USSR, he held a position until his death February 1984), **Konstantin Ustinovich Chernenko** (led USSR until his death March 1985)
- Since 1985 **Mikhail Gorbachev** – General Secretary of CP of USSR

● Mikhail Gorbachev

- **M. Gorbachev's** positions within CP created opportunities to travel abroad: **1972** he headed a Soviet delegation to Belgium; **1975** he led a delegation to West Germany; in **1983** he headed a delegation to Canada to meet with Prime Minister **Pierre Trudeau**; in **1984** he met in GB. Prime Minister **Margaret Thatcher**
- **Y. V. Andropov** died in 1984, and indicated that he **wanted M. Gorbachev** to succeed him as general secretary x **Konstantin Chernenko** took power; after **K. Chernenko's** death the following year, it became clear to the party hierarchy that younger leadership was needed
- **M. Gorbachev** was elected General Secretary by the Politburo on 11 March 1985

Identity cards of the general
secretary Central Committee of the
Communist Party of the Soviet
Union

General Secretary: M. Gorbachev



- **M. Gorbachev**

• Mikhail Gorbachev - reforms

• *Perestroika*

- **M. Gorbachev** initiated his new policy of "*perestroika*" (literally "*restructuring*" in Russian) and its attendant radical reforms in 1986; they were sketched, but not fully spelled out
- 17th CP Congress in February – March 1986
- The "*reconstruction*" was proposed: attempt to overcome the economic stagnation by creating a dependable and effective mechanism for accelerating economic and social progress
- **M. Gorbachev** was aware of the complicated economic situation of USSR and its lag behind the advanced "capitalist world"; only in the area of technology related to the armaments and aerospace industries similar level
- Economic and Political Reforms of **M. Gorbachev** certainly did not intend to dismantle the Eastern Bloc, but on the contrary, to strengthen and "restore" the socialist system
- He did not regret having a strong inspiration for his policy: the reforms of the Czechoslovak Prague Spring of 1968 (**Democratic Socialism with the Human Faces**)

• **Mikhail Gorbachev - reforms**

• *Glasnost*

- 1988 **M. Gorbachev's** introduced “*glasnost*” - Soviet people got freedoms – never before, e.g. greater freedom of speech
- Press became far less controlled
- Thousands of political prisoners and many dissidents were released
- **M. Gorbachev's** goal in undertaking “*glasnost*” was to pressure conservatives within the CP who opposed his policies of economic restructuring, and he also hoped that through different ranges of openness, debate and participation
- Political release - abandoning so-called **Brezhnev's doctrine** - had evoked within the USSR and its satellites (mainly Poland and Hungary), which had been hardly possible to keep without using force solutions (army, security forces) – new chances for changes
- Eastern block in the form in which it had been constituted after World War II - on the basis of Yalta and Potsdam agreements – slow collapse

• **Mikhail Gorbachev – foreign policy**

- April 1985 - suspension of the deployment of SS-20s in Europe as a move towards resolving intermediate-range nuclear weapons
- September 1985 – proposition: Soviets and Americans both cut their nuclear arsenals in half
- October 1985 - he went to France: his first trip abroad as Soviet leader
- November 1985 - Geneva Summit - **Mikhail Gorbachev** and **Ronald Reagan** (no concrete agreement was made, M. Gorbachev and R. Reagan struck a personal relationship and decided to hold further meetings)
- January 1986 often referred to as the '*January Proposal*' - **M. Gorbachev** announced his proposal for the **elimination** of intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe and his strategy for eliminating all of the Soviet nuclear arsenal by the year 2000
- July 1986 **M. Gorbachev** began the process of withdrawing troops from **Afghanistan** and **Mongolia**

• **Mikhail Gorbachev – foreign policy**

- October 1986 **M. Gorbachev** and **R. Reagan** met in Reykjavík to discuss reducing intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe - agreed in principle to removing INF systems from Europe and to equal global limits of 100 INF missile warheads; agreed in principle to eliminate all nuclear weapons in 10 years (by 1996), instead of by the year 2000
- **R. Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative** meant that the summit is often regarded as a failure - no concrete agreement - leading to a staged elimination of nuclear weapons x in the long term this would culminate in the signing of the **Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty** in 1987



- **M. Gorbachev and R. Reagan**

• **Mikhail Gorbachev – foreign policy**

- February 1988 - announced the full withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan (withdrawal was completed the following year)
- 1988 **M. Gorbachev** announced: abandonment of the **Brezhnev Doctrine** and allow the Eastern bloc nations to freely determine their own internal affairs (abandonment of the Brezhnev Doctrine allowed the rise of popular upheavals in Eastern Europe 1989, in which Communism was overthrown)
- June 1989 elections in Poland and the communist government had been deposed
- 6 July 1989 speech arguing for a "*Common European Home*"; Council of Europe in Strasbourg – **M. Gorbachev** declared: "*The social and political order in some countries changed in the past, and it can change in the future too, but this is entirely a matter for each people to decide. Any interference in the internal affairs, or any attempt to limit the sovereignty of another state, friend, ally, or another, would be inadmissible.* "
- Lost of Soviet hegemony over Eastern Europe effectively ended the **Cold War** – **M. Gorbachev** was awarded the Otto Hahn Peace Medal in Gold in 1989 and the Nobel Peace Prize on 15 October 1990

Czechoslovakia

- Persecution of the opposition continued - against **Charter 77**
- State security carries out the action "*Asanace*" - inconvenient opponents of the opposition persuaded to emigrated, bullied, tortured, lost of citizenship; leaders remained

Petruška Šustrová

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D8eJ-C5--NI>



Plastic People of the Universe

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jYlKwvGkRy0>



- Czechoslovak dissent

• Czechoslovakia – Catholic Opposition

- Clergymen were required to be licensed; in attempting to manipulate the number of clergy, the state even sponsored a pro-government organization of Catholic priests- Association of Catholic Clergy *Pacem in Terris*
- 1984 *František Cardinal Tomášek* the Czech primate invited the *Pope* to come to Czechoslovakia; Pope accepted, but the trip was blocked by the government
- The cardinal's invitation and the pope's acceptance were widely circulated in samizdat. A petition requesting the government to permit the papal visit had 17,000 signatories
- The Catholic Church did have a massive commemoration of the 1,100th anniversary in 1985

• Czechoslovakia

- Demonstrations - **August 1988, Spring and Summer 1989** (fear of the failed reform of the USSR, fears of the debt of the CSSR - caused by the modernization of the economy - and dissatisfaction with lack of democratization)
- So-called **samizdatas** (a prohibited, often described on typewriters smuggled from the Western countries), **Charter 77** itself issued a samizdat magazine from 1978 called *Information on Charter 77*
- May 1980 **G. Husák** re-elected – President
- April 1981 – 16th Congress of CP: indications of noncompliance with the plan set for growth of the economy
- Czechoslovakia – fear of situation in Poland (martial law)
- 1985 **M. Gorbachev** and his reforms x Czechoslovak normalizers had shown little willingness to reflect this new course of **M. Gorbachev**

• Czechoslovakia – demonstrations 1988

- 21st August 1988 - Wenceslas Square made the first major anti-regime demonstrations since 1969
- 28th October 1988 - the 70th anniversary of the birth of Czechoslovakia – suppressed by security forces
- 10th December 1988 (Škroupovo Square in Prague) the first official permitted demonstration - Human Rights Day
- November 1988 **Czechoslovak Helsinki Committee** was established, other organizations observing disrespecting of human rights
- The anti-Communist opposition mainly Charter 77 had been perceived on the international scene: official **breakfast with eight representatives of Czechoslovak dissent (Václav Havel, Jiří Dienstbier, Václav Malý,...)** was organized by French President **Francois Mitterand** on the occasion of his visit on 9th December 1988 at French Embassy in Prague

• 1989 in Czechoslovakia

- First manifestations of discontent of 1989 – January – 20th Anniversary of **Jan Palach's** death - lasted from 15th to 22nd January , known as **Palach's week**
- June 1989 - **Manifesto Several Sentences** (Demanding an accelerated democratization, freedom of speech, the release of political prisoners)
- 21st August 1989 - demonstration in Prague, this time also with the participation of foreign Activists from Hungary and Poland – suppressed by the police
- 28th September 1989 (Day St. Wenceslas) and a particularly massive demonstration on 28 October (Anniversary of the emergence Czechoslovakia)
- Since the end of September 1989, citizens of GDR begun to flow to Czechoslovakia - they applied for asylum; other GDR citizens headed to Germany via Hungary, which in June 1989 opened the border with Austria (the first country of the Eastern Bloc, which destroyed the so-called Iron Curtain - Border barriers)
- 9th November 1989 – **Fall of Berlin Wall** - **supported the impression of unsustainability of the system in Czechoslovakia**
- 17th November 1989 - 60th anniversary of the closing Czech universities by Nazi and commemorated: **Jan Opletal in Prague started** permitted student demonstration. Narodní třída conflict with the security forces (they wanted to prevent to continue the march towards Wenceslas Square), many students were injured; brutality towards students had caused a violent reaction - high school students have entered the strike; protests "uncontrollably" spread all over the country

• Velvet Revolution/Gentle Revolution

- Was a non-violent transition of power in Czechoslovakia, occurring from 17th November 1989 to 29th December 1989
- Popular demonstrations against the one-party government of CP combined students and older dissidents and others...
- Result was the end of 41 years of one-party rule in Czechoslovakia, and the subsequent dismantling of the planned economy and conversion to a parliamentary republic
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vh3r8tULh1A>;
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJBSApaQRn8>



- **Velvet Revolution** was a non-violent revolution in Czechoslovakia: 17th November – 29th December 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 17th 1989 - police suppressed student demonstration in Prague - sparked a series of popular demonstrations from 19th November to late December
- Number of protesters, two-hour general strike involving all citizens of Czechoslovakia was held on 27th November

• **Czechoslovakia**

- Czechoslovakia announced on 28th November - that it would relinquish power and dismantle the single-party state
- 10th December 1989 - 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 28th December and **Václav Havel** the President of Czechoslovakia on 29th December 1989

● Poland

- By the mid-1960s increasing economic and political difficulties
- December 1970 - high price 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
- 1978 – **Karol Wojtyla** – pope **John Paul II** – supporting communistic opposition

• **Poland**

- 1980s - Strikes and protests followed, but were not nearly as widespread as those of August 1980: last mass street demonstration that **Solidarity** was able to muster occurred on 31st August 1982, the second anniversary of the **Gdańsk agreements** (accord reached as a result of the strikes that took place in Gdańsk; workers went on strike in August 1980 in support of the 21 demands of **Interfactory Strike Committee** which eventually led to the creation of **Solidarity**)
- 1981 – government of **Wojciech Jaruzelski** to declared martial law (from December 13, 1981 to July 22, 1983) - authoritarian communist government drastically restricted normal life by introducing martial law in an attempt to crush political opposition
- "***Military Council of National Salvation***" banned **Solidarity** officially on 8 October 1982
- Leader of **Solidarity** **Lech Wałęsa**
- Requirements: economical, Democratic civil rights
- Soviet Union - supported the military coup
- 1983 **Solidarity** cancelled

• **Poland**

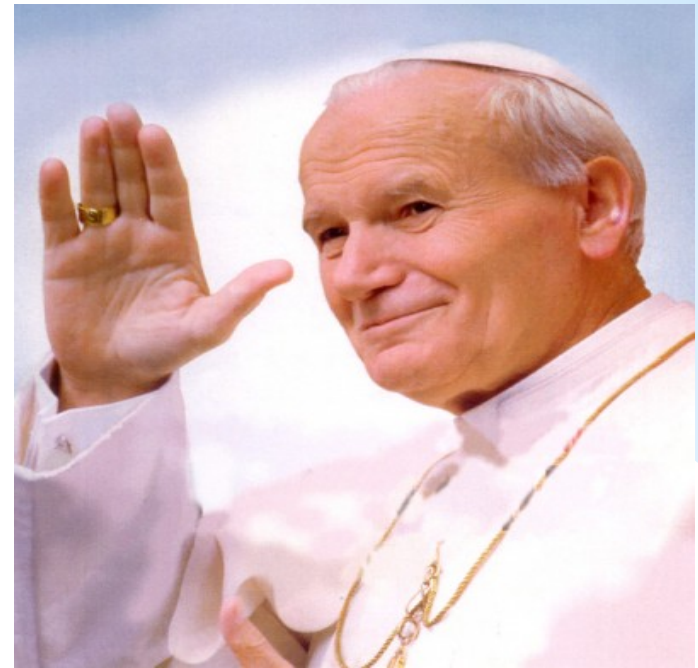
- September 1986 - government declared a general amnesty and prepared some reforms
- **L. Wałęsa** was urged to reconvene the National Commission but he refused, preferring to deal with the circle of Solidarity's Expert Commission advisers
- National Executive Commission led by **L. Wałęsa** was established in October 1987
- Other opposition groups such: **Fighting Solidarity, Federation of Fighting Youth, Freedom and Peace Movement and Orange Alternative** organized street protests in form of colorful happenings that assembled thousands of participants
- Nationwide strikes broke out in the spring and summer of 1988 weaker than the strikes of 1980 and were discontinued after the intervention by **L. Wałęsa** (secured the regime's commitment to begin negotiations with the opposition).
- The strikes were the last act of active political involvement of the workers, not connected to **Solidarity** veterans and opposed to socially harmful consequences of the economic restructuring in progress

• **Poland**

- During CP plenary session of January 1989, **W. Jaruzelski** and his ruling formation overcame the Central Committee's resistance by threatening to resign and CP decided to allow re-legalization of Solidarity and to approach its leaders for formal talks
- From 6 February to 4 April 1989 - 94 sessions of talks between 13 working groups, which became known as the "***Round Table Talks***" resulted in political and economic compromise reforms
- Talks resulted in the **Round Table Agreement**, by which political power was to be vested in a newly created bicameral legislature and president who would be the chief executive
- By 4 April 1989 numerous reforms and freedoms were agreed and **Solidarity**, now in existence as the Solidarity Citizens' Committee - was again to be legalized as a trade union and allowed to participate in semi-free elections

• **Poland**

- Semi-free elections - Polish legislative elections of 4 June 1989 - the results of the voting were released, a political earthquake followed
- Solidarity candidates captured all the seats they were allowed to compete for in the Sejm, while in the newly established Senate they captured 99 out of the 100 available seats
- The communists suffered a catastrophic blow to their legitimacy
- December 1989 changes to the Polish constitution were made, officially eliminating the "socialist" order: Marxist references were removed and the name of the country was changed back to the Polish Republic
- 1990 **W. Jaruzelski** resigned as Poland's president and was succeeded by **L. Wałęsa** - won the 1990 presidential elections
- CP dissolved itself in 1990 and transformed into the Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland
- Warsaw Pact was formally dissolved on 1st July 1991 and the last Soviet troops left Poland in September 1993
- 27th October 1991 - first entirely free Polish parliamentary elections since the 1920s took place



● 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 CP 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** - a peace demonstration held on the Austrian-Hungarian border - 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
- 1st free parliamentary election - May 1990: Democratic Forum (MDF) winning 43% and Free Democrats (SZDSZ) capturing 24%.
- Prime Minister **József Antall**
- March 1990 - June 1991 Soviet troops left Hungary, total number of Soviet military and civilian personnel stationed in Hungary was around 100,000

• **Hungary**

• 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
- 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 demonstrations against CP - 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 – **E. Honecker** to resign in October, and he was replaced by a slightly more moderate communist - **Egon Krenz**

- November 1989 - a few sections of the **Berlin Wall** were opened, resulting in thousands of East Germans crossing freely into West Berlin and West Germany
- East Germany held its last elections in March 1990, winner was coalition headed by the East German branch of **West Germany's Christian Democratic Union**
- 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
-

- **2+4 Talks** → **Treaty on the Final Settlement With Respect to Germany**/the **Two Plus Four Agreement** was negotiated in 1990 between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic ("Two"), and the Four Powers which occupied Germany at the end of World War II in Europe: France, USSR, GB and US
- In the treaty the Four Powers renounced all rights they held in Germany, allowing a united Germany to become fully sovereign (1991)
- October **1990** five states officially joined the Federal Republic of Germany and East and West Berlin united as a city-state



- **Fall of Berlin Wall**

● 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.