

# Communism in Central and Eastern Europe

## RUSSIA:

- Russian Revolution: October (7th November) 1917
- civil war
- Stalinism (1930s, 1940s, early 1950s)

# Communism in Central and Eastern Europe

## MARXISM:

- religion: the ideology justifies what the state does
- economic principles
- dialectics
- inexorability of history
- „different world“ (See Jochen Hellbeck) [Jochen Hellbeck](#)

# Communism in Central and Eastern Europe

## RUSSIA:

- Stalin dies in 1953
- Khrushchev's secret speech 1956, denouncing Stalin's crimes
- mild liberalisation (mid 1950s-early 1960s)  
„The Thaw“ / (Solzhenitsyn)

# Communism in Central and Eastern Europe

## RUSSIA:

- from late 1960s: Brezhnev: „really existing socialism“ (authoritarian retrenchment)
- 1970s – „det ente“ (rapprochement with the West, on the basis of what each side has, will retain)

# Communism in Central and Eastern Europe

## RUSSIA:

- early 1980s: stagnation, decomposition of the system: geriatric leaders Andropov, Chernenko.
- Gorbachev: „We can't live like this.“

# Communism in Central and Eastern Europe

## RUSSIA:

- from mid-1980s Gorbachov's „glasnost“, „perestroika“
- 1990s: Yeltsin's years of chaos, free rein given to Western ideologues and companies
- Putin years: some retrenchment towards authoritarianism, but still much freer than under communism

# Communism in Central and Eastern Europe

## CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE:

- Rumania, Bulgaria, Albania, Poland – taken over immediately: smooth transfer from Nazism to Communism
- Austria occupied by the Russian army until 1956
- Czechoslovakia „free“ until Feb. 1948

# Communism in Central and Eastern Europe

## STALINISM IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE:

- Also arbitrary arrests, labour camps
- Stalin's death in 1953, hence stagnation, attempts at liberalisation (East Germany 1953, Poland, Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968)



# Communism in Central and Eastern Europe

„Fall of communism“ in November – December 1989:

- Western intelligence agencies failed to predict this!
- No one knows why it happened – Gorbachev stopped controlling Eastern Europe

# Communism in Central and Eastern Europe

## POST-COMMUNISM:

- Eastern Europe: various countries of the former Soviet Union reverted to blatant authoritarianism (Belorussia)
- Others, including Central Europe – different degrees of „post-communism“

# Communism in Central and Eastern Europe

WHAT I MEAN BY POST-COMMUNISM:

- the communist regime discredited all systems of moral values
- extreme cynicism and individualism
- lack of pluralism, tribalism, ideological slavery

# Communism in Central and Eastern Europe

WHAT I MEAN BY POST-COMMUNISM:

- International issues acquire (comic), totally misinterpreted local meaning:

See the anti-missile system controversy in the Czech Republic 2006-2009

[The Czech Peace](#)