

# HISTORY OF CENTRAL EUROPE

Anti Soviet action

# HUNGARY

- ◉ August 1949 the parliament passed the new constitution of Hungary (1949/XX.) modeled after the 1936 constitution of the Soviet Union
- ◉ The 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
- 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 at the time, was arrested in May 1949. He was accused of rather surreal crimes, such as spying for Western imperialist powers, L. Rajk was found guilty and executed.
- In the next three years, other leaders of the party 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. 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'. An estimated 2,000 people were executed and over 100,000 were imprisoned. Some 44,000 ended up in forced-labor camps, where many died due to horrible work conditions, poor food and practically no medical care. Another 15,000 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.
- ◉ These policies were opposed by some members of the Hungarian Working People's Party and around 200,000 were expelled by Rákosi from the organization

# STALINIST ERA - SHOW TRIAL

- ◉ Preparations for a show trial started in Budapest in 1953 to prove that Raoul Wallenberg had not been dragged off in 1945 to the Soviet Union 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 and Lavrentiy Beria, 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 increase the production and distribution of consumer goods and reduced the tax and quota burdens of the peasants.
- ◉ Nagy also closed forced-labor camps, released most of the political prisoners - Communists were allowed back into Party ranks
- ◉ Gábor Péter, was convicted and imprisoned in 1954
- ◉ 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, the Central Committee of the Hungarian Working People's Party condemned Nagy for "rightist deviation". Hungarian newspapers joined the attacks and 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. Nagy was even excluded from the Party
- ◉ Rákosi once again became the unchallenged leader of Hungary.
- ◉ 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 Rákosi's crimes.
- ◉ The fall of Rákosi was followed by a flurry of reform agitation both inside and outside the Party. László Rajk and his fellow victims of the showcase trial of 1949 were cleared of all charges, and on 6 October 1956, the Party authorized 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 Imre Nagy had been reinstated as a member of the party.

# 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
- ◉ 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)

# 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 was dramatically
- ◉ Even N.S. Khrushchev came to Poland, soviet tanks, demonstration in streets, ...
- ◉ Changes: soviet marshal Rokossovskij 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 satellites 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 then 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>