

Far Left in Eastern Europe

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CDS 441 Far Right and Left Parties

Marxism-leninism



- paradigm of exploitation/Class-struggle/opressed ones proletariat (peasants) vs. Bourgeoisie (kulaks)
- Leading to proletariat revolution
- Goal: socialist state
- revolutionaries, an organic part of the working class
- "dictatorship of the proletariat", is primarily or exclusively governed by the party of the revolutionary vanguard through the process of democratic centralism
- from each according to his ability, to each according to his need
- Many different marxist branches

Communist parties

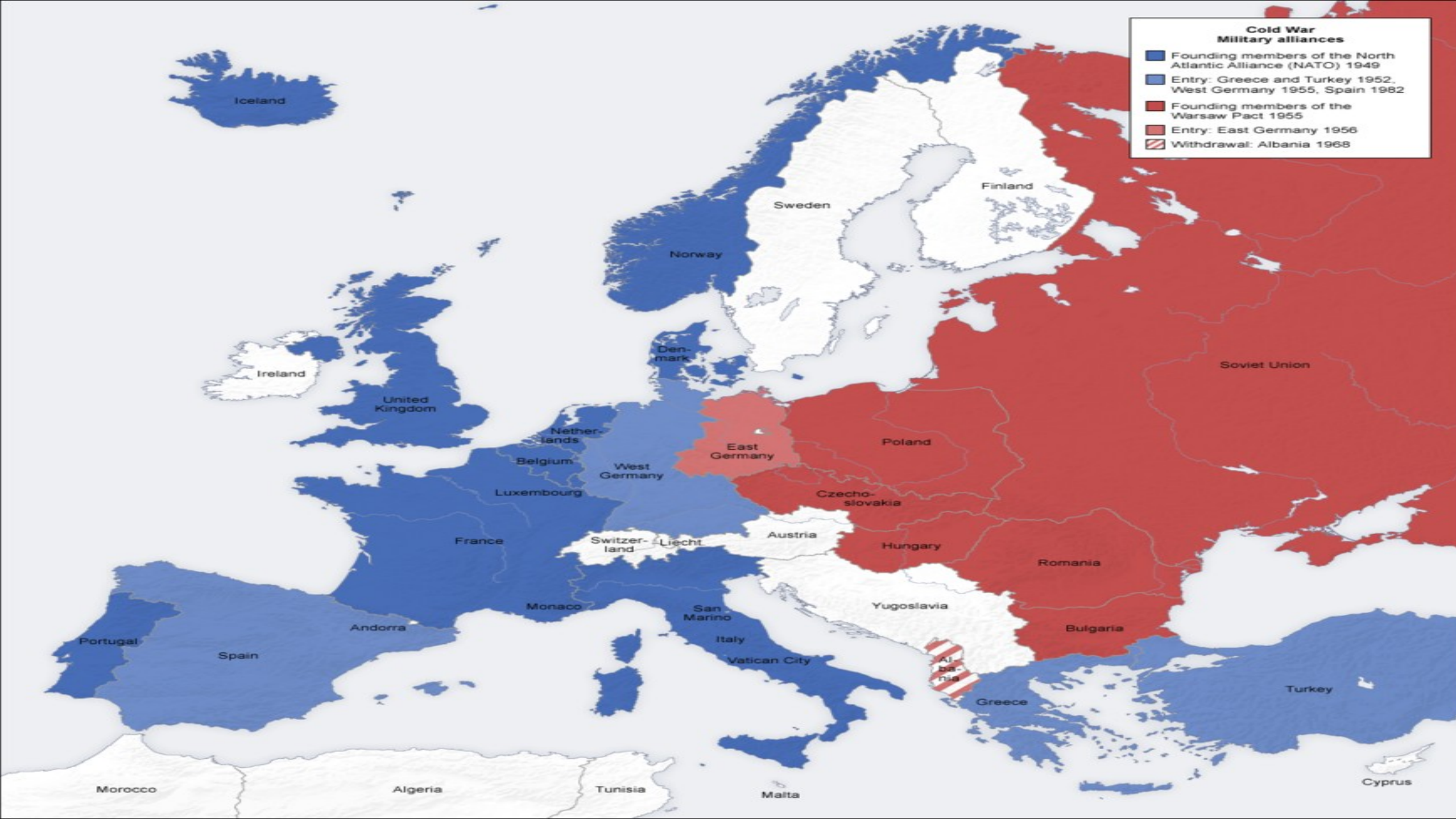
- a political party that advocates the application of the social and economic principles of communism through state policy.
- communist parties are illegal in Estonia, Indonesia, Iran, Latvia, Lithuania, Myanmar, Poland, Romania, South Korea, Georgia, Hungary

Officially ruling communist parties

- China
- Cuba
- Laos
- Vietnam
- North Korea

Communist parties in multi-party systems as part of ruling coalitions

- Bangladesh
- Chile
- Ecuador
- Nepal
- Greece
- Palestine
- Portugal
- South Africa
- Uruguay
- Venezuela



Soviet Union

- Marxism leninism
- Role of the individual as a member of the collective (not stress the individual as such)
- individuals had only the right to freedom of expression if it safeguarded the interests of the collective
- Centralized planned economy
- Dictatorship of the proletariat
- Anti-imperialism
- Combat capitalism
- Gulags
- mass deportations of entire nationalities to uninhabited regions of the country - Soviet nationalism equals Russian nationalism
- State atheism - no place for religion
- Repression of kulaks
- *"It's not the people who vote that count. It's the people who count the votes.,,*
- Stalin and destalinization , cult of personality
- Marx - revolution will be led by proletariat
- Lenin - revolution will be led by the oppressed class therefore peasants in case of Russia
- Gorbatshev and perestroika

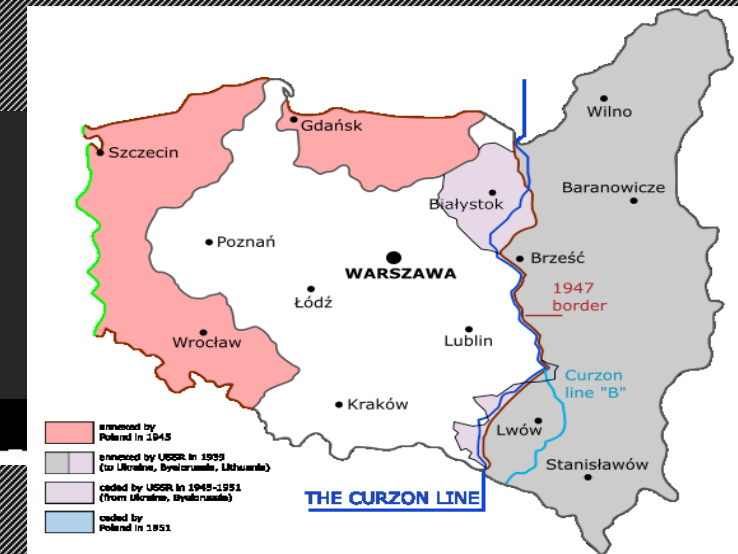
Czechoslovakia

- Elections 1946
- Communist coup 1948
- Collectivisation
- 1968 Prague Spring - democratisation, federalisation
- Warsaw Pact intervention
- Jan Palach set himself on fire 1969
- Normalization
- Dissent - Charter 77
- Velvet Revolution 1989



Poland

- Katyń massacre
- Shift of the borders, expulsion of Germans,
- Destruction of Jewish community, resettlement of Ukrainians
- Ethnically homogenous state
- 1956 protests and pragmatic relations with Soviet Union
- Initial relief and then move back on the promises
- Regime under Gomułka one of the most „liberal“ in EE
- 1978 John Paul II
- 1980 Gdansk strike
- round table with Solidarity



Hungary

- 1956 uprising and the Soviet army invasion
- 20,000 Hungarians killed other 20 000 imprisoned, 250 000 fled the country as the borders were briefly open
- Goulash communism - introduced free market elements
- Less restricted travel rights, less censored media



GDR

- 1949 DDR
- 1953 uprising suppressed
- 1989 refugees from GDR in the West German embassy in Prague, Hungarian embassy
- 3 October 1990



Communism in Albania

- Cultural and ideological revolution
- Abolition of religion
- Isolation (fear of the outside world)
- Repression of clan system and clan leaders
- Radical change in the status of Albanian women
- Stalinism, enverism, titoists (traitors)
- Repression (Sigurimi)
- Technological backwardness



Communism in Romania

- **independent foreign policy** (protested against the invasion of Warsaw pact into Czechoslovakia)
- brutality of the régime, secret police, censorship, massive relocations
- influenced by the **Juche philosophy of North Korean President Kim Il Sung**.
- **food rationing** was introduced on a wide scale (the government promoted it as "a means to reduce obesity" and "rational eating"). Bread, milk, butter, cooking oil, sugar, pork, beef, chicken, and in some places even potatoes were rationed in most of Romania by 1989
- all public spaces had to be kept to a temperature of no more **than 16 degrees Celsius**
- ban on contraception and abortion on demand
- policies to increase birth rate and fertility rate - **special tax for childless after the age of twenty-five, whether married or single**.
- it was decreed that a marriage could be dissolved only in exceptional cases.
- **child abandonment**
- **AIDS** epidemic in the late 1980s - created by the regime's refusal to acknowledge the existence of the disease
- pervasive **personality cult**

Yugoslavia

- Tito
- Socialist but neutral ? - relations with anti-communist governments (Pinochet under Chile, Paraguay under Stroessner..)
- Market socialism
- Liberal travel policy
- Goli otok
- Non-alignment movement



Bulgaria



- Balkan federation?
- subsequent macedonisation of the people and demacedonisation
- Soviet Union most loyal ally
- Proposal to be part of USSR



Contemporary Communist Parties in Eastern Europe

- Communist Party of Slovakia (marginal)
- Union of Slovak Workers (marginal)
- Socialist Party of Latvia (marginal, ethnic Russians)
- Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (2013 - almost 15% of the vote)
- Communist Party of Moldova - until 2009 majority in parliament, since then in opposition 2014 : 21 out of 101 seats
- Communist Party of Bulgaria (marginal)
- Communist Party of Serbia (marginal)

KSČM



- Politically isolated for a long time as being extremist
- Did not drop „communist“ from the name
- After 2012 accepted as ally in regional elections with social democrats
- Against quotas, sovereignty not Brussel dictate
- Dissolution of NATO



Communist Party of Moldova

• Vladimir Voronin and one man show

- Not really democratic
- Electoral frauds, nepotism, clientelism, OC
- 2009 protest against the conduct of elections - coup d'état organised by "a handful of fascists drunk with anger", r President Voronin accused Romania of being the force behind the riots in Chişinău - quarrel with Romania and harsher prerequisites for the Romanian citizenship
- Though adopting free market policies, privatization
- Success story - leading party the whole „transition“
- Moldovan project - strongly opposing unification of Romania and Moldova
- Transnistria issue
- Brain drain and country of ghosts
- Europe's poorest country : nearly 17% of the population live below the poverty line, average wage of about \$129 per month, the lowest standard of living in Europe.
- Unification with Romania seen as solution to poverty



Seminar

- Film Four months, three weeks, two days (Romanian film)
- BBC document about Ceausescu
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2wH6PokPmXY>
- Book Guzel Yakhina's : Zuleikha Opens Her Eyes
(<http://www.elkost.com/authors/yakhina/books/1837-zuleikha-opens-her-eyes>)

Communism in Eastern Europe

- <http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989/exhibits/humor-as-resistance/essay>
- George Orwell: "Every joke is a tiny revolution,,."
- Jokes /defamation of politics/cult of personality