**Trouble in the Eastern Bloc**

Soviet Power in Eastern Europe

Poland, Bulgaria, Rumania, and Hungary were occupied by Soviets in 1945 - allowed local communist leaders to dominate politics

Bulgaria - communists dominated from the beginning

Poland:

* Because of Yalta Soviets had to give representation to non-communists
* Communists held key positions - minters of interior, police, army, justice
* First elections were controlled by communists - purges, disenfranchisement

Czechoslovakia:

* President Benes held together a democratic coalition gov’t until 1948
* Czech Communist Party, fearing defeat in the next election, seized power in February 1948 with Soviet help

Secret police and the army drove out anti-communists in all eastern European countries

Communists clashed with the Catholic church and curbed its activities

In the Eastern bloc, communists collectivized land

* 1/2 land in Bulgaria
* 1/3 land in Hungary
* Little collectivisation in Poland
* Delayed recovery of post war Eastern Europe

Five Year Plans introduced to industrialise Eastern Europe

* Emphasis on heavy industry
* Shortage of consumer goods
* Slow improvement of living standards

Repression in Eastern Europe

Anti-communist resistance was refreshed after Stalin’s death in 1953

Krushchev’s plan of “de-Stalinization” fuelled this

In 1956 open revolts broke out in Poland and Hungary

* Led by communist leaders
* Anti-soviet more than anti-communist

Poland:

* Led by communist dissident Wladyslaw Gomolka
* Relaxed central economic and political controls
* Halted collectivisation
* Repaired relations with the church
* Separated from Moscow
* Khrushchev threatened military intervention, but then backed down

Hungary:

* Gomolka’s success sparked riots in Hungary
* Reform-minded communist Imry Nagy came to power
* Decentralised politics and economics
* Released political prisoners
* More demands for democracy and separating from Moscow
* Soviets forced Hungarian Communist Party to remove Nagy
* Replaced with pro-soviet Janos Kadar who accepted Soviet intervention
* Soviet troops forcibly put down the revolt - Nagy executed, 200,000 Hungarians fled

Berlin:

* In 1961 at a summit in Vienna Khrushchev delivered an ultimatum for the western powers to leave Berlin
* Kennedy responded by increasing the size of the American military and NATO’s commitment to West Germany and Berlin
* Since 1945 3,000,000 million Germans had fled east Berlin for the more prosperous West Berlin - economic choice rather than ideological choice
* Huge economic impact on East Germany
* Summer 1961 East Germany, under Soviet direction, erected a 28 mile wall around west Berlin
* Kennedy backed West Germany, but did not intervene

Czechoslovakia - “The Prague Spring”

* Alexander Dubcek emerged as party and gov’t leader in 1968
* Dubcek curbed police repression
* Free press
* Democratised gov’t
* Legalised non-communist political parties
* In August 1968 Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev ended the Prague Spring
* Sent 250,000 troops
* Reformers imprisoned, pro-Soviet communists installed - repression returned

Soviets publicised the so-called “Brezhnev Doctrine” - they reserved the right to intervene anywhere in Eastern Europe were communism was threatened