The Collapse of the Soviet Block
1950-1991

How did Gorbachev improve relations with the US?
- 1985, Gorbachev & Reagan met at Geneva to discuss arms reduction
- 1987, Gorbachev & Reagan signed Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces treaty
- SALT developed into START
  (Strategic Arms Reduction Talks)

How did Gorbachev reform the USSR?
- Identified key problems:
  - Communist bureaucracy
  - low industrial output
  - high inflation
  - human rights
- Perestroika – free market economics
- Glasnost – openness in govt
- Political prisoners released
  (e.g. Andrei Sakharov)
Poland

- First to fall under direct control of USSR
  - "Free Elections" in 1947
- Polish Communists Protested after
  - "Khruschev's Secret Speech" – De-Stalinization
- 1960s & 70s – Economic Conditions declined
- 80 – Spike in food prices – caused new resistance

Poland – “Solidarity & Lech Walesa”

- 1980 – Workers formed “Solidarity”
  - Labour Movement – Supported by John Paul II
  - United All Workers & Challenged Communist Authority
- Red Army Suppressed but Economics worsened
- Gliastnots – Allowed a resurgent Solidarity Movement
- Lech Walesa elected - ’89 – Free Elections
- Poland was an example for other Eastern Countries
East Germany
- 1950-60 – The DDR became very oppressive.
- The Stasi (secret Police) was infamous
- Berlin Wall – ’61 – A physical barrier divided Berlin.
  - Soviets “Wall was to keep out Capitalist corruption”
- Kennedy’s Speech – “Ich Bin ein Berliner” - 1963
- Relations between BRD & DDR improved in 60s & 70s – Ostpolitik- Improved economic relationship.

East Germany & Fall of the Wall
- Erich Honecker – Oppressive Communist Leader ’71-’89
- Demonstrations spurred by Gorbachev Visit
- Gorb to Honecker that it is his decision
- Honecker forced to agree to reforms
- Nov 1989, Berlin Wall pulled down

Czechoslovakia & Prague Spring ‘68
- Alexander Dubček – Communist Leader
- “Socialism with a human face”
  - Greater freedom of speech
  - Freedom to travel
  - More economic freedom
- Red Army Tanks roll in
- Dubček replaced by a “hardliner” form Moscow.
Czechoslovakia & Velvet Revolution
- 24 November 1989, massive anti-Communist demo in Prague
- Vaclav Havel (playwright) rallied support of crowds
- December 1989, Communist leader resigned & replaced by Havel
- 1990 - free elections held

Hungary - 1956
- Communist leader, Imre Nagy tried to reform
- He promised free elections & withdrew from Warsaw Pact
- Red Army tanks rolled in
- Imre Nagy was hung for treason.

Hungary, 1989
- Communist leader, Imre Pozsgay accepted need for reform
- Ban on opposition parties lifted
- Communist Party renamed Socialist Party
- 1990, free elections held
Romania 1956-89
- Nicolae Ceaușescu –Began as a moderate creating realtionships with the west
- 1970’s became an extreme Soviet “Hardliner”
- Developed Cult like behaviours
- Ousted in a Military Coup
- Ceaușescu & wife Elena were shot after a 2 hr televised Kangaroo Court.

Bulgaria, 1989
- November 1989 Communist leader resigned
- Legislative body moved to become more capitalistic and demo.
- 1990 free elections
- Peaceful transition

Independence Inside USSR? Baltic States, 1990
- 1990, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia declared independence from USSR
- Singing Revolution – 87-90
  - Several choirs and mass of peoples sang in the streets to protest Soviets
- Baltic Way – 23 Aug. 896 million people joined hands forming a chain 370 m long across the Baltics
- Aug 31 Baltic Leaders asked UN for help.
- Soviet leaders softened and backed down.
**USSR - 1991**

- Communists criticised Gorby for allowing collapse of USSR
- Reformers wanted complete abolition of Communism
- Feb. 1990, anti-Communist demo in Moscow
- May Day 1990, Gorby booed

**USSR to CIS** *(Commonwealth of Independent States)*

- 1991-Gorby was arrest by hard-line Communists
- Boris Yeltsin, an advocate of market economy & reform, gathered support from Russians to resist the coup
- Coup showed unpop. of Com & pop. reformers
- Boris Yeltsin new Russian president