

"Salami Tactics": The Soviet Takeover of Eastern Europe



- By 1948, the Soviet Union had established communist regimes in all of the territories that they had "liberated" during World War Two.
- The Hungarian Communist **Rakosi** described this process as "**Salami Tactics**" because Stalin sliced away opposition bit by bit. Communists:
 1. **shared** power in a coalition after free elections;
 2. **forced** their opponents out of office through threats and bribery;
 3. **outlawed** all opposition parties;
 4. **executed** their opponents to leave them in total control.

| "Western Bloc" | | "Eastern Bloc" | |
|----------------|--|----------------|--|
| UK | | GDR | |
| FR | | PL | |
| BRD | | HU | |
| CH | | YU | |
| AT | | RO | |
| IT | | AL | |
| GR | | BG | |
| TR | | USSR | |

Task 1

- Using any sources available to you, prepare a PowerPoint slide outlining what happened between 1945-1948 in ONE of the countries shaded in the map.
- Different members of the class may choose research different countries and feedback to the rest of the class with their findings.
- Hungary and Czechoslovakia are particularly interesting. Yugoslavia provides a very different picture, because its leader (Tito) successfully resisted Stalin!

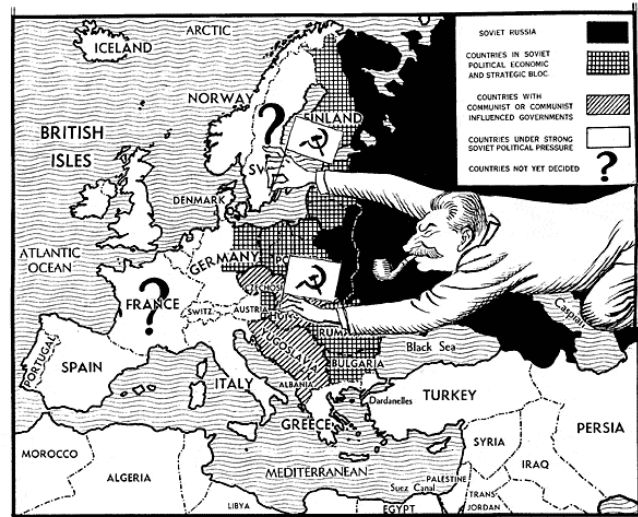
Task 2

Source A: Stalin speaking on 9th Feb. 1945

Victory means, first of all, that our Soviet social system has won... The Soviet social system has successfully stood the test in the fire of war and it has proved its complete vitality. The Soviet social system has proved to be more capable and more stable than a non-Soviet social system. The Soviet social system is a better form of society than any non-Soviet social system.

Source B: At Yalta, in February 1945, Stalin tried to explain to Churchill and Roosevelt why Poland was so important to the Soviet Union.

Mr. Churchill has said that for Great Britain the Polish question is one of honour. But for the Russians it is a question of both honour and security. Throughout history Poland has been the corridor of attack on Russia. It is not merely a question of honour for Russia, but one of life and death.



Source C: In March 1946, Stalin replied to Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech.

It should not be forgotten that the Germans invaded the USSR through Finland, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria and Hungary. The Germans were able to invade because governments hostile to the Soviet Union existed in these countries. As a result the Soviet Union had a loss of life several times greater than that of Britain and the United States put together... And so what is surprising about the fact that the Soviet Union, anxious for its future safety, is trying to see that governments loyal to the Soviet Union should exist in these countries?

a. Using these sources and notes made in your earlier www.activehistory.co.uk worksheets, identify FIVE reasons why Stalin wanted to take control of Eastern Europe.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Task 3

▪ To round off your study of this topic, produce a mindmap entitled "The Soviet Takeover of Eastern Europe".

The first branch should be "How" (use the information from Task 2 to produce this)

The second branch should be "Why" (use the information from Task 1 to produce this)

Discussion Point

Look at the cartoon on this page. What is the cartoonist's view of events? How do you know?