

## Cruz Rico

**Prompt: 2007** - Considering the period 1953 to 1991, analyze the problems within the Soviet Union that contributed to the eventual collapse of the Soviet system.

# De-Stalinization & Reform

## (1953-1964)

### A A new leader (Nikita Khrushchev ~ led:1955-1964)

- Stalin's death brought the question of how to run the dictatorship that he had started
- Reforms had to be made because of the intense hatred and fear of Stalin's political terrorism
- Nikita Khrushchev was on the side of reform, as opposed to conservatives.



- a He became the new ruler of the Communist party in 1955
  - b Stated that “peaceful coexistence” with capitalism was possible, something which Stalin would have never allowed.
  - c Due to his more ‘lax’ ruling methods, when compared to Stalin, the Eastern European satellite states of the Soviet Bloc tended to be more rebellious.
- 1 The satellites sought more liberty and national independence, something they never would have dared to do under Stalin's rule.

d Built the Berlin Wall

- 1 His success with the building of the wall encouraged him to attempt to change military power decisively.



e The Cuban Fiasco

- 1 Ordered nuclear warheads to be installed in communist Cuba, which was under Fidel Castro
- 2 John F. Kennedy intervened with a naval blockade
- 3 Khrushchev withdrew the missiles from being delivered so long as Americans stayed out of Castro's regime
- 4 End result: Khrushchev looked like an idiot and lost control of the Union.

# End of Reform

B A new new leader (Leonid Brezhnev ~ led: 1964-1982)

- The new leader, Leonid Brezhnev, led the Soviet Union into a time of “re-Stalinization”

a During Khrushchev’s leadership, his colleagues saw de-Stalinization as a danger to the dictatorial authority of the party. This is why Khrushchev had to go.

b The Invasion of Czechoslovakia (1968)

1 The invasion started because Czechoslovakia intimidated the Eastern bloc countries with the intent to build “socialism with a human face”

Liberalizing the communist regime

Russian and Eastern European troops occupied Czechoslovakia in an act of intimidation to try to stop their reformation of socialism

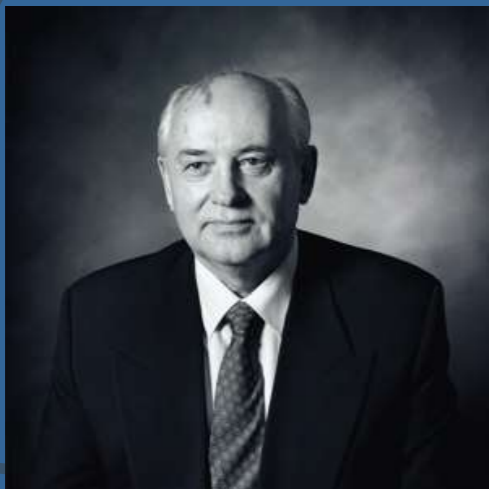
c Brezhnev Doctrine - “The Soviet Union and its allies had the right to intervene in any socialist country whenever they saw the need”



# The Decline of the Soviet Union

C Mikhail Gorbachev

- Transformed Soviet culture and politics with his reformations
- Reduced cold war tension
- Despite his attempts to save Communism, he could not. It continued its decline as a functioning system throughout the Soviet bloc.



- a The Communist party suffered a great defeat in elections in Soviet Russia
- b Gorbachev was fighting a losing battle against democrats and anticommunists.
- Gorbachev's attempts to keep the Soviet Union together:
  - a Put an embargo on Lithuania in an attempt to keep it in the Soviet Union.
  - b Had the Soviet citizens ratify a new constitution, formally abolishing the Communist party's monopoly of political power, and expanding the power of the congress of People's Deputies

- c Proposed a new treaty which would link the member republics in a looser, freely accepted confederation
- 1 This proposal was shut down by 6/15 Soviet republics.

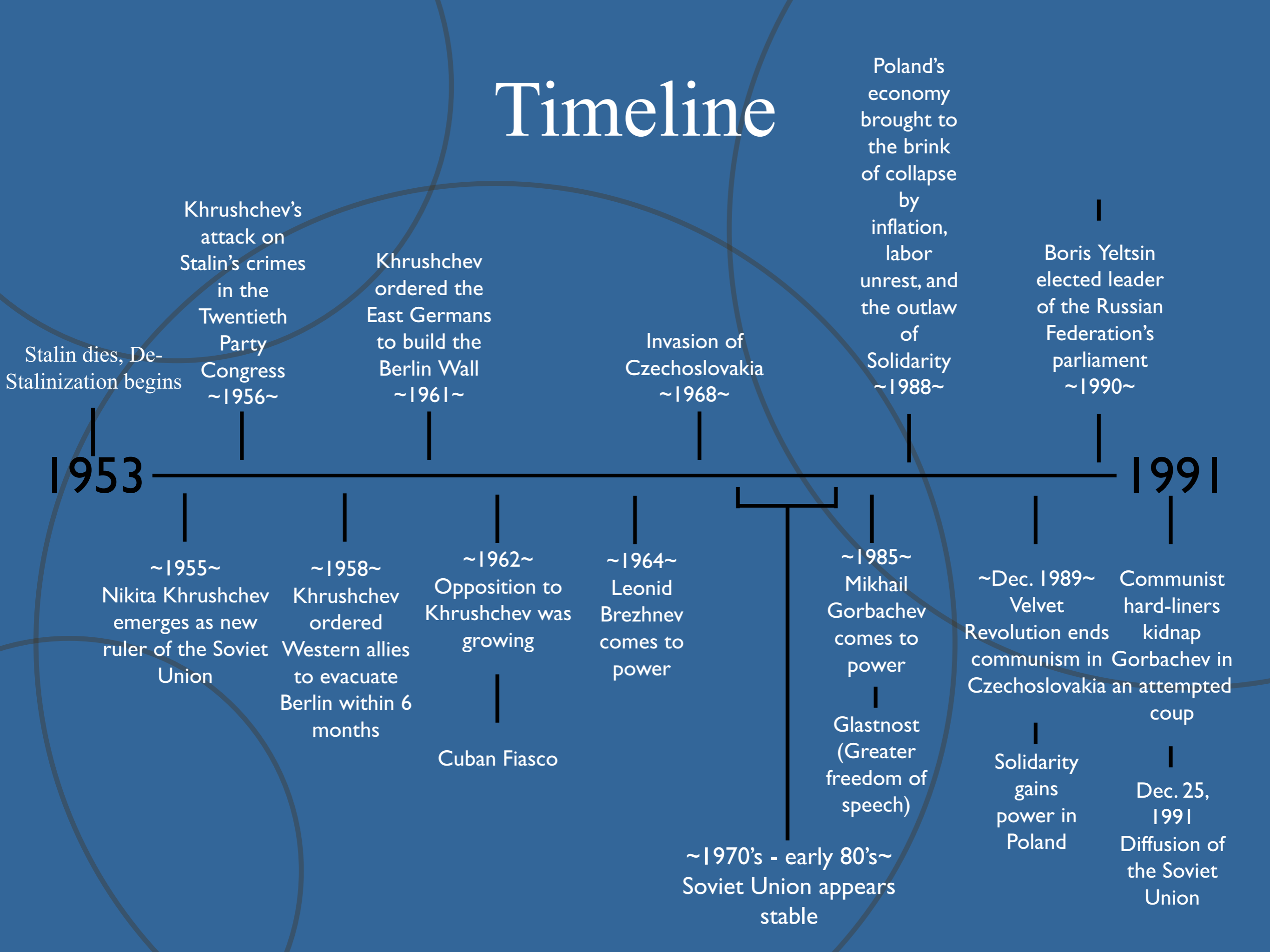
## C Boris Yeltsin

- He was a radical reform Communist
- Embraced the democratic movement in the Soviet Union
- He was elected leader of the Russian Federation's parliament
- Declared that Russia would declare independence from the Soviet Union
- He was a great challenge for Gorbachev and his mission to maintain the Soviet Union



- a Die-hard Communists attempted a coup, but the support for Yeltsin was too great.
- b Yeltsin declared Russia's independence from the Soviet Union. After this, all other Soviet republics the same.
- c December 25, 1991: With no supporters, the Soviet Union ceased to exist

# Timeline



Stalin dies, De-Stalinization begins

Khrushchev's attack on Stalin's crimes in the Twentieth Party Congress ~1956~

Khrushchev ordered the East Germans to build the Berlin Wall ~1961~

Invasion of Czechoslovakia ~1968~

Poland's economy brought to the brink of collapse by inflation, labor unrest, and the outlaw of Solidarity ~1988~

Boris Yeltsin elected leader of the Russian Federation's parliament ~1990~

1953

1991

~1955~  
Nikita Khrushchev emerges as new ruler of the Soviet Union

~1958~  
Khrushchev ordered Western allies to evacuate Berlin within 6 months

~1962~  
Opposition to Khrushchev was growing

Cuban Fiasco

~1964~  
Leonid Brezhnev comes to power

~1970's - early 80's~  
Soviet Union appears stable

~1985~  
Mikhail Gorbachev comes to power  
Glasnost (Greater freedom of speech)

~Dec. 1989~  
Velvet Revolution ends communism in Czechoslovakia

Solidarity gains power in Poland

Communist hard-liners kidnap Gorbachev in an attempted coup

Dec. 25, 1991  
Diffusion of the Soviet Union