**The Reign of Stalin** *(page 637)*

World War II devastated the Soviet Union. To create a new industrial base after the war, Stalin emphasized the production of goods for export. In some respects, this led to a rapid economic recovery. By 1950, industrial production had surpassed prewar levels by 40 percent. New power plants, canals, and giant factories were built. **Heavy industry** (the manufacture of machines and equipment for factories and mines) increased, mainly for the benefit of the military. But the Soviet people did not benefit from the industrialization. The emphasis on heavy industry meant that not enough consumer goods were produced. The housing shortage was also severe. The average Russian family lived in a one-room apartment. Stalin was still the master of the Soviet Union. He did not share power and had little respect for other Communist Party leaders. His suspicions and lack of trust caused the repression in the Soviet Union to increase. In 1946, the government decreed that all literary and scientific work had to conform to the political needs of the state.

**The Khrushchev Era** *(page 638)*

Stalin died in 1953. A group of leaders succeeded him, but Nikita Khrushchev soon emerged as the chief Soviet policy maker. Khrushchev took steps to undo some of the worst features of Stalin’s regime. The process of eliminating the more ruthless policies of Stalin became known as **de-Stalinization.** Khrushchev loosened government controls on literary works. In 1962, for example, he allowed the publication of *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Alexander Solzhenitsyn. This book dealt with life in a Siberian forced-labor camp. Khrushchev also placed more emphasis on producing consumer goods. He also tried to increase farm production by growing corn and cultivating lands east of the Ural Mountains. The attempt to increase farm production failed. This failure and the increased military spending hurt the Soviet economy. Foreign policy failures also damaged Khrushchev’s reputation. After the Cuban missile crisis, he was voted out of office and forced into retirement.

**Eastern Europe: Behind the Iron Curtain** *(page 639)*

Between 1945 and 1947, Soviet-controlled Communist governments took control of East Germany, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, and Hungary. In Czechoslovakia, there was a strong tradition of democracy and a multi-party system, so the Soviets did not seize control until 1948. Albania and Yugoslavia were also Communist countries, but the Soviet Union did not control them. During the war, both countries had strong Communist movements that resisted the Nazis. After the war, local Communist parties took control. In Albania, Communists set up a Stalinist-type regime that grew more and more independent of the Soviet Union. In Yugoslavia, Josip Broz, known as Tito, had been the leader of the Communist resistance movement. After the war, he worked to create an independent Communist state in Yugoslavia. Stalin hoped to gain control of Yugoslavia, but Tito refused to give in to Stalin’s demands. Tito ruled Yugoslavia until his death in 1980. Yugoslavia had a Communist government, but it was not a Soviet satellite state. Between 1948 and 1953, the Eastern European satellite states followed the example of the Soviet Union. They had five-year plans, with emphasis on heavy industry rather than consumer goods. They began to collectivize agriculture. They eliminated all noncommunist parties and set up secret police and military forces. But communism did not develop deep roots among the peoples of Eastern Europe. The Soviets exploited Eastern Europe economically and made living conditions hard for most people.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Soviet Union made it clear that it would not allow its satellite states to become independent of Soviet control. In 1956, protests erupted in Poland. In response, the Polish Communist Party adopted a series of reforms and elected Wladyslaw Gomulka as first secretary.

Gomulka declared that Poland had the right to follow its own path. But Poland compromised. It pledged to remain loyal to the Warsaw Pact. In Hungary, economic problems and unrest led to calls for revolt. To end the rebellion, Imre Nagy, the Hungarian leader, declared that Hungary was a free nation on November 1, 1956. He also promised free elections. Three days after Nagy’s declaration, the Soviet Army attacked Budapest. The Soviets reestablished control over the country. Nagy was captured by the Soviet military and executed two years later.

In Czechoslovakia, Antonin Novotny had been placed in power in 1953 by Stalin himself. In fact, he was called “Little Stalin.” By the late 1960s, Novotny had alienated many members of his own party. Czech writers especially disliked him. A writers’ rebellion led to Novotny’s resignation in 1968. In January 1968, Alexander Dub´ cek was elected first secretary of the Communist party. He began a number of reforms, including freedom of speech and press and the freedom to travel abroad. He relaxed censorship and promised to democratize the Czechoslovakian political system. A period of euphoria broke out that became known as the “Prague Spring.” In response, the Soviet Army invaded Czechoslovakia in August 1968 and crushed the reform movement. Gustav Husák replaced Dub´ cek, did away with his reforms, and reestablished the old order.