

USSR's control over Eastern Europe - Poland : Solidarity

Polish Feelings: National feeling strong, wanted country to make its own policies The Catholic Church - strong in Poland, wanted freedom to preach Living Standards, shortage of food and other goods Freedom of speech What Happened Gomulka forced to resign (1970) and his replacement resigned (Gierek 1980) still food shortages The group Solidarity was formed, which was forced into acceptance It campaigned for independent trade unions and freedom improved standard of living and working conditions 1981 - General Jaruzelski came to power he declared Martial Law banned Solidarity and arrested supporters (army obeyed because they were frightened of USSR intervening) 1983 - Martial Law removed economy still doing badly, 1988 Jaruzelski removed subsidies February 1989 - Jaruzelski opened talks with Solidarity, and other groups. (Needed their support to tackle economic problems) April 1989 - Changes in constitution agreed Solidarity allowed to become political party Senate and Lower house of Parliament Lower house 65% of seats communist Senate freely elected Two houses chose president, who chose Prime Minister The Government agreed to: Right to strike Trade Unions allowed More freedom of speech Improved wages and working hours June 1989 - Elections, Jaruzelski narrowly won He elected Solidarity PM (Mazowiecki) Therefore mixed government Eventually communist majority in Lower House was phased out December 1990 - Lech Walesa elected PM (also leader of Solidarity) The first non-Communist leader in Eastern Europe Significance of Solidarity's achievement In Poland An authoritarian communist government was made to change by: non-violent methods Communists incapable of solving economic problems - loss of confidence of people Did not dare to use force against strikes USSR still wanted one party in Poland, but was unwilling to use force Outside Poland Started a wave of resistance movement in other Eastern European countries

About the Author

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