

In some countries, small political parties have joined forces to work together to form a government. This is called a **coalition government**.

New Economies Under Soviet rule, Eastern Europe struggled economically and its people's freedoms were severely restricted. Although Eastern Europeans gained their freedom, they also faced problems such as inflation and unemployment.

Eastern Europe's countries are changing from command economies to free-market economies. Some countries, such as Slovakia, made this change slowly. Others, such as Poland, reformed their economic system and achieved economic success.

Many former Soviet republics, which did not quickly reform their economic systems, are in bad economic shape. Some of these nations are terribly poor. Struggles for power have led to violence and sometimes civil war. Pollution from the Soviet era threatens people's health. Still, some republics, including Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, are making progress as independent nations.

Defense After the breakup of the Soviet Union, Eastern European nations no longer looked to the Soviet government to defend them. Many wanted to become members of NATO. Belonging to NATO would help assure them of protection in case of invasion.

Spotlight on CULTURE

Easter in Ukraine In Ukraine, most Christians belong to the Orthodox Church. These Ukrainians are known for the special way in which they celebrate the Easter holiday. They create beautiful Easter eggs, which are dyed bright colors and covered with intricate designs. These eggs are so beautiful that people around the world collect them.

Ukrainians also bake a special bread for Easter. They decorate it with designs made from pieces of dough. Families bring the bread and other foods to church to be blessed on Easter. Then they eat the foods for the holiday feast.

THINKING CRITICALLY

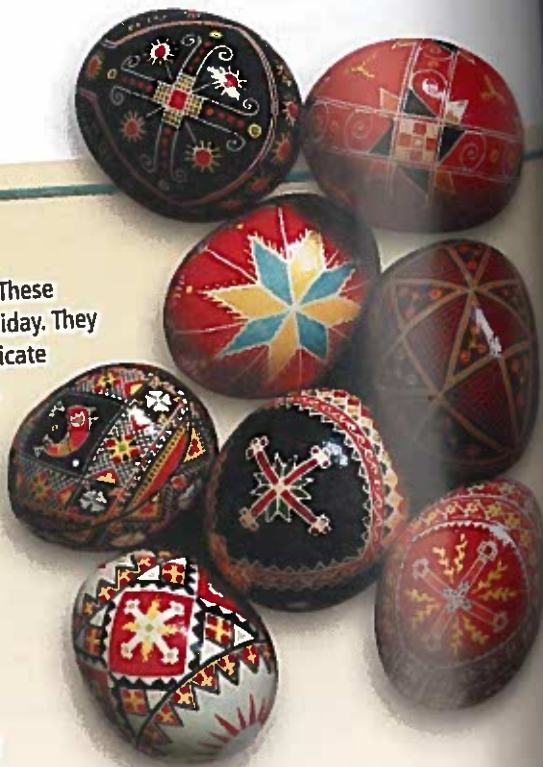
1. Analyzing Issues

Why were Ukrainian Easter eggs not common during the Soviet era?

2. Comparing

How do your family's holiday customs compare with Ukrainian customs?

For more on Easter in Ukraine, go to



Vocabulary

Baltic states: Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—former Soviet republics that are on the Baltic Sea

Reading Social Studies

A. Comparing
Compare a command economy with a free-market economy.

BACKGROUND

By 1991 Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina had gained independence from Yugoslavia. Only Serbia and Montenegro were still part of the Yugoslavian federation.

War in the Balkan Peninsula

Since the late 1980s, much of Eastern Europe has been a place of turmoil and struggle. Yugoslavia, one of the countries located on Europe's Balkan Peninsula, has experienced terrible wars, extreme hardships, and great change.

Under Tito After World War II, Yugoslavia came under Marshal Tito's (TEE-toh) dictatorship. Tito controlled all the country's many different ethnic groups, which included Serbs, Croats, and Muslims. His rule continued until his death in 1980. Slobodan Milošević (sloh-boh-DON muh-LAW-shuh-vich) became Yugoslavia's president in 1989, after years of political turmoil.

Milosevic Slobodan Milošević, a Serb, wanted the Serbs to rule Yugoslavia. The Serbs in Bosnia began fighting the Croats and Muslims living there. The Bosnian Serbs murdered many Muslims so that Serbs would be in the majority. The Serbs called these killings of members of minority ethnic groups **ethnic cleansing**. Finally, NATO attacked the Bosnian Serbs and ended the war.

In 1999 three new members joined NATO: Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. In 2001 Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the Baltic states were also working to become NATO members.

Connections to Science

Pollution Soviet leaders thought that industry would improve life for everyone. Developing industry was so important that the Soviet government did not worry about pollution. Few laws were passed to protect the environment.

In the 1970s and 1980s there was not enough money to modernize industry or to reduce pollution. Some areas also could not afford proper sewage systems or recycling plants. Today, Eastern Europe has some of the worst pollution problems on the continent.



The Balkan States, 1991 and 2001

GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting a Map

- Location** • Which Balkan state borders Greece?
- Region** • How many countries developed from Yugoslavia?

