

The Collapse of Soviet Union, 1989 - 1991 (Double-sided)

Economic Collapse	Social Collapse	Political Collapse
<p>-USSR focused industrial development on military production and NOT consumer or domestic goods</p> <p>-Following the death of Stalin, the economic growth of the USSR became very sluggish (diminished significantly)</p> <p>-1/3 of all USSR income went to supporting their ARMS RACE with the United States</p> <p>*Severe reduction in consumer good development</p> <p>*The central planning (central gov't.) was very corrupt and spent USSR money on corrupt firms that did not produce needed materials</p> <p>-Mikhail Gorbachev (Soviet Premier / President) attempted reforms. Gorbachev's beliefs / goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. He believed that the economy should tell producers what to make (supply & demand) not the central planning of the government 2. Wanted to allow for SOME private ownership and less central control of agriculture and industry <p>Attempted reforms = PERESTROIKA (1987) which means "restructuring"</p> <p>*Restructured the Soviet economy to be competitive with global markets</p> <p>*Allowed some individual, private ownership in both agriculture and industry</p> <p>*Limited the influence of the central government to attempt to eliminate corruption</p> <p>*Wanted major reduction in military spending and force to allocate more funds to the general consumer production BUT this did not happen to the degree needed</p> <p>RESULTS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perestroika was NOT the answer Gorbachev was hoping that it would be BUT the "restructuring" plan did show the USSR and the world the magnitude of the problems in the USSR. 2. By 1990, a proposed economic restructuring package was given to the Soviet Government. It would've allowed for private ownership of property, allow individual USSR Republics (states) to decide their economic future AND allow for the breaking up of monopolies. 3. TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE. The Soviet economy is ruined and beyond repair. 	<p>-Due to the stagnation of the economy after the death of Stalin, citizens began to resent Communist Party officials because of their lavish lifestyles (this is against Communism and the ideals of Lenin).</p> <p>-Resentment against the Communist Party grows significantly under Premier Brezhnev in the 1970's.</p> <p>-Laborers were less motivated to work under Communism because there was no reward system (more work did NOT equal more privileges). Huge increase in alcoholism, death rates and suicides.</p> <p>-Citizens become aware of the environmental damage the military / industrial economy is doing to their country. DISEASES as a result of environmental abuse concerned citizens.</p> <p>-Introduction of Western tourism opened the eyes of Soviets as to the alternatives to their government/economy/way of life.</p> <p>-Riots begin to commence in Soviet occupied areas due to housing, land and food shortages (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are first to demonstrate their discontent).</p> <p>-NATIONALISM / SEPARATISM BEGAN TO ARISE IN SOVIET REPUBLICS -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Warsaw Pact countries (Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia) wanted to separate from the USSR for econ., soc., and polt. Reasons 2. Non-Russian (Asian) Soviet Republics gain a strong sense of nationalism and have wanted to separate since being included in the USSR. Resentment over <i>Russification</i> becomes very strong. 3. Russians themselves feel a sense of social loss. Their culture and heritage had been manipulated by the Soviet government to suit the needs of central planning. It has been negatively altered to assist in central planning but not to assist the preservation of Russian culture. <p>-The promises of Communism were not being honored. Instead, the doctrine is constantly revised and altered to suit the needs of the central government.</p> <p>-Sense of nationalism would give rise to national anxieties within the borders of the Non-Russian Soviet Republics and result in bloodshed in areas like Armenia & Ukraine where a homogenous culture/society had been forced on the people.</p>	<p>-Stagnation of the political system (no positive change) grows during the 1970's under Brezhnev's regime.</p> <p>-Gorbachev is reform-minded and barely gains support of the Politburo (the main Communist political organization in USSR) -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Many of the conservative Politburo members are scared of the reforms that Gorbachev will propose (it threatens the security of the jobs/lifestyles of the Politburo members) 2. Implementation of GLASNOST (which means "openness" in Russian) to allow for the critique of the government by the people. Loosening of restrictions on political speech and action on the people (still in place, but loosened). 3. Perestroika ("restructuring") was implemented later in an attempt to restructure the economy but it was a failure (too little, too late). 4. Gorbachev continually wavered between complete reform and the conservative nature of the strict Politburo. His wavering did not lead to effective reform. 5. Warsaw Pact countries begin to disengage from the Soviet Union and create their own political and economic systems. The dissent in these nations spreads to the Soviet Republics and allows for the power needed to break away from the Soviet government. <p>-New Constitution of 1988: New parliament formed. Introduction of democratic reforms. BORIS YELTSIN gains prestige and power as a democratic reformer.</p> <p>-Gorbachev tries to gain power (1990) by having himself popularly elected (by the people). He is elected, but his power dwindles quickly.</p> <p>-Failed coup to recapture power by loyal, conservative followers of Gorbachev in 1991.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coup attempts take-over while Gorbachev is away on vacation (they don't even have their leader around) 2. Failure of coup is a reaction by the general population against Communism 3. Gorbachev understands the loss of his power base and the growing discontent. 4. Yeltsin elected AND Commonwealth of Independent States (temporary organization of old Soviet States) is formed - but fails soon thereafter. 5. Dec. 8, 1991 - Gorbachev resigns and disbands the Soviet/Communist Central Committee. USSR = done.

Significance of the collapse of the USSR -

1. This is the official end of the Cold War order. No longer is there a BI-POLAR world of USA vs. USSR.
2. 25,000,000 (+) Russians are displaced from the former Soviet states where they were living. The rise in nationalism in the newly-free countries leads to the forcing out of Russians who were living there (they were often FORCED to live there by the Soviet government).
3. Eastern Europe begins integration into the western European political (NATO) and economic spheres (European Economic Union).
4. Increased destabilization of Russian government and economy during the period of transition.
5. Ethnic republics battle with minority populations within their borders (ex. Ukraine).
6. Ex-Soviet and former Russian republics suffer economically as they attempt capitalism. Once dependent upon one another, now they cannot rely on each others failing economies. There is no -
 - a. Economic growth
 - b. Economic coordination / sharing or production or responsibility
 - c. THERE IS ethnic conflict that causes economic problems
7. China becomes the only major Communist country that is also a viable economic and military contender (Cuba is a non-issue).
8. UNSAFE DIFFUSION OF SOVIET TECHNOLOGY -
 - a. Nuclear power plants are not maintained or governed properly. They stay in the newly freed countries, but continue to run without funding or maintenance. This leads to severe environmental disasters (Chernobyl disaster is one example).
 - b. Nuclear weaponry becomes the "property" of the freed Soviet states. Unable to maintain safety OR funding, these new governments are tempted (and often do) to sell their weapons.
 - c. Nuclear proliferation. Countries that did not have the financial or technological resources during the Cold War to develop their own nuclear power can now BUY IT from the struggling countries that were once part of the USSR.
9. United States becomes a hegemonic (solo) world power by default.
10. Economic / Social "void" created in USSR as the upstart democracies attempt to provide for their people without the resources of the former command economy. New, staggering levels of poverty, alcoholism, homelessness, starvation, drug use and spreading of disease are seen across the former Soviet Union. (becomes a WORLD ISSUE, the HEALTH of world citizens).