

What were the major reasons for the collapse of the soviet union in 1991

[History](#)



Due The Major Reasons for the Collapse of the Soviet Union Perhaps the most exciting events of the 20th century that profoundly mapped out a new course in the history of human kind, the stunning demise of the seventy year old Soviet regime in 1991 was completely unanticipated; a surprise to many, including the system's internal dissidents and/or future revolutionaries themselves. A debate with a rare magnitude that has dragged on for two decades, the very fragmentation of the union knows not unanimity, with scholars divided right in the middle over the bullets that actually precipitated the unfortunate event. As illustrated below, the factors that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union were both internally and externally instigated. To begin with, the collapse of the Soviet Union was much a consequential effect of poor managerial aspects of the political system inexistence. Established in 1922 under Vladimir Lenin, Soviet Union was built on terror upon the larger citizenry, orchestrated by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) machinery engineered by Joseph Stalin, the party's first General Secretary. Intolerant to any form of criticism, Stalin basically murdered millions opposed to his authoritarian nature of leadership; a style of leadership that would set the tone of communism for several decades, in effect, forcefully actualizing the acceptance of the Soviet Union's governance with all the ills without questioning. In addition to his firm grip on the government machinery, his policy of détente basically cut off the Soviets from the world. His leadership was one of a kind that non-would have wanted to follow. Accordingly, long before Gorbachev's assumed power in 1985, successive leadership beginning with Nikita Khrushchev-the immediate Stalin's successor, made numerous changes; gradually losing the very

fundamental facets of the Stalinist control (Dallin and Lapidise 675). As ideas from the west, spread in part by academics, begun reaching the masses, commitments to the Soviet Orthodoxy begun a fast downward trend; the exposure to the superior living standards in the west in addition to the political freedoms resulted in widespread jitters in the late seventies through to the Eighties ultimately forcing the introduction of Gorbachev's 'glasnost' (Dallin and Lapidise 681). Instead of rectifying the hitherto growing dissatisfaction, the 'glasnost' unveiled the ills of the past regimes, further bringing into question the ideals of communism and legitimacy of the regime in power then. In reality, ideologies advanced by Gorbachev and his predecessors couldn't quite survive the exposure to the outside ideas. The introduction of "glasnost," granting more space to the fundamental freedoms, especially the freedom of speech and expression, by all standards nailed the system; for it not only "ended up destroying the Communist party, but buried the legitimizing ideology that had long held the union" (Dunlop 4). With legitimacy lost in principle, Kremlin had little options other than to succumb to the wishes of the masses (Malia 435).

Adding to the discontent of the masses was the growing discontent of with a centralized system that could not quite deliver. Even though armed with authoritarian liquidation policy of all private property ownership and commerce, the "social contract" - supposedly with inbuilt guaranteed services and employment was terribly failing. As Colton notes:

"The buying habits of citizenry demanded more and better goods than in the past, and that while demands of people had significantly grown, the industry trailed along much behind them" (49).

The Union had grown too large in size to the extent that it became practically impossible for the state planners to respond effectively to the complex interests down to the local level. As a result, economic planning lost touch with reality, with managers, which were majorly party sympathizers, fudging figures to show that goals were being met.

Besides the long term internal structural weaknesses that had bombarded the Soviet system left right and center, the costly influence of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) conventionally founded on high technology; the Soviets' Afghanistan intervention, straining the vulnerable fiscal situation that was already swimming under the effects of high international oil prices; and the nationalism exhibited by the disgruntled minorities generally converged to wipe the union out of existence (Schweizer 4). The military build-up during the Reagan presidency, in particular, squeezed the Soviet's already dwindling resources into unnecessary competition.

The reasons for the disintegration of the Soviet Union were very old in the making, and that the immediate ones only added fodder towards a deterministic end. With leadership that lacked foresight to diagnose a 'building storm' under their very own eyes, the breakup couldn't have been much harder to envisage; for the system was buttressed with lies in all fronts.

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