

Chapter 25

THE INTERNATIONAL REVOLT AGAINST SOVIET COMMUNISM

25.115 THE CRISIS IN THE SOVIET UNION

Study Questions

1. How well did centralized planning work in the U.S.S.R. in earlier years? Why was it unsuited for later needs? What problems did the country face in the 1980s?
2. How would you account for Gorbachev's rise to power? How did he link economic reform and political liberalization in his program?
3. What did Gorbachev do when he realized that the country's problems were more intractable than he had thought?
4. What criticisms of Soviet society were openly voiced in the Gorbachev era?
5. What political and constitutional changes did Gorbachev introduce? Discuss his economic reforms. What did they fail to achieve? What criticisms were expressed?
6. How did the relaxation of controls unleash ethnic unrest? What did this unrest reveal about the nature of the U.S.S.R.?
7. In what way was Gorbachev's foreign policy linked to his domestic program? How did this lead to a new kind of détente and to the end of the Cold War?

Key Discussion Sentences

1. Some of the basic structures of Soviet communism, as they had evolved since the Russian Revolution of 1917, began to come apart in the 1980s.
2. For his economic restructuring to succeed, Gorbachev had to have the support of the country, which he hoped to win through political change.
3. Even if *glasnost* had a more limited objective, it took on a dynamic of its own and led to a

sweeping transformation of Soviet life and society. Gorbachev was bent on saving communism by reforming it.

4. Gorbachev changed the image of the Soviet Union as a military threat and promoter of world revolution.
5. The country remained divided in 1991 between an old guard which resisted reform and democratic reformers who believed that Gorbachev had not gone far enough.
6. Gorbachev's support for détente went hand in hand with his plans for domestic economic reform.

Identifications

Andropov
Andrei Sakharov
Glasnost

Gulag Archipelago
Long-range nuclear missile
Congress of People's Deputies

Perestroika
Strategic arms treaty

25.116 THE COLLAPSE OF COMMUNISM IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Study Questions

1. How did central and eastern Europe change in the years of détente? What criticisms were heard in these countries about their economies and their political systems? What were the effects of Gorbachev's reforms in the Soviet Union?
2. What role did Solidarity play in Poland? How did the Polish government react? What other forms of resistance to the regime emerged?
3. Describe the origins, course, and outcome of the revolutions of 1989 in (a) Poland, (b) Hungary, (c) the German Democratic Republic, (d) Czechoslovakia, (e) Romania, and (f) Bulgaria.
4. What characteristics did the revolutions of 1989 in central and eastern Europe share? What problems did the new regimes face?
5. What role did Gorbachev play in initiating the chain of revolutionary events in Europe?
6. Discuss the steps that led to German reunification. What international issues did it raise?

How were those issues resolved?

7. What do the illustrations on pp. 995 and 998 suggest about the fall of communism in central and eastern Europe?

Key Discussion Sentences

1. Cracks and fissures had begun to appear in the satellite states before Gorbachev's reforms.
2. Gorbachev's example in the Soviet Union and his encouragement reinforced east European reform movements.
3. The masses of people demonstrating in central and eastern Europe voiced common grievances.
4. The authoritarian walls in eastern Europe was first breached in Poland.
5. The ruling elites, without Soviet support, lost the will to govern under a system that had lost legitimacy and credibility.
6. Once the German Democratic Republic was no longer a Communist state, pressure for reunification mounted.
7. On November 9, 1989, when the government opened up the hated symbol of confinement itself, the Berlin Wall, excited Berliners on both sides of the barrier tore it down. The exodus to West Germany continued.
8. In Czechoslovakia it was said: "'89 is '68 upside down.'
9. The revolution, except in Romania, was carried out for the most part peacefully.

Identifications

Dissidents	János Kádár	Vaclav Havel
Gomulka	Erich Honecker	Ceausescu
Gierek	Berlin Wall	Helmut Kohl
Lech Walesa	Charter '77	The "German question"
General Jaruzelski	Civil society	Federal Republic of Germany
Solidarity	Velvet revolution	Imre Nagy

25.117 THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

Study Questions

1. What attitude did Gorbachev take toward further reforms in the Soviet Union in 1990? Which reforms did the old guard most resent? What changes did the democratic reformers and the constituent republics want?
2. What did the democratic reformers mean by a “creeping coup d’ État”?
3. Describe the rise of Boris N. Yeltsin. What was his power base?
4. Describe the attempted coup of August 1991. How did Gorbachev and Yeltsin react? How did these events lead to the collapse of the Soviet Union?
5. Describe the nature and membership of the Commonwealth of Independent States.
6. Why should Gorbachev be considered as one of the greatest reformers in history?

Key Discussion Sentences

1. Gorbachev vacillated between the reformers and hard-line conservatives.
2. The old guard was embittered by the loss of Soviet control over eastern Europe.
3. For the hard-liners the “union treaty” for the Soviet republics was the final straw.
4. The plotters of August 1991 turned out to be feckless and irresolute bunglers.
5. The collapse of the Communist regime was the culmination of the six-year Gorbachev reform era. But the dissolution of the party-state regime at Yeltsin’s hands was the revolution.
6. The tragedy of Gorbachev was that he failed to build a new system to replace the system that he had undermined.
7. The “Gorbachev factor,” as it has been called, made an immeasurable difference.
8. When the U.S.S.R. dissolved in 1991 into its component republics, Russia re-emerged.

Identifications

500-Day plan	The August coup	Federation council
Union treaty	Ukraine	Boris N. Yeltsin
CIS	Belarus	St. Petersburg

25.118 AFTER COMMUNISM

Study Questions

1. What was the status of Marxist-Leninist ideology and communism after the collapse of the Soviet Union?
2. What problems were created by the revolutionary changes in central and eastern Europe in 1989? Why were the years that followed a period of transition?
3. Discuss the major problems after 1991 confronting (a) Russia and (b) the other former Soviet republics. What arrangements were made about Soviet nuclear weapons?
4. Why was it difficult for Yeltsin to cope with the economy? What kinds of economic programs did he try? What were the results of these programs?
5. What led to Yeltsin's struggle with the legislature? What form did it take in 1993?
6. How would you assess Yeltsin's two terms in office? What role did the Chechen revolt play in these years?
7. Explain the background to the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the accompanying wars. How were the conflicts precipitated? How did the international community react?
8. Describe the course of events in other parts of central and eastern Europe after the revolutionary changes of 1989. What observations may be made about the new regimes in (a) Poland, (b) Hungary, (c) the Czech Republic, and (d) the Baltic states?
9. How do the photographs on pp. 1009, 1014, and 1017 illustrate the role of popular demonstrations in the political upheavals in the former Soviet Union and eastern Europe?
10. What policies fueled the growing opposition to Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic?

Key Discussion Sentences

1. The revolutionary changes of 1989–1991 made possible but did not guarantee democratic and pluralist societies.
2. Russia, even if in desperate economic straits, was still a significant world power.
3. The new Russia, like the old Soviet Union, faced secessionist threats; although only in Chechnya did that threat become a reality.
4. In domestic affairs Yeltsin was challenged by severe economic problems.
5. Yeltsin disappointed his western European sympathizers and democratic reformers within Russia, yet he left the country with an intact constitutional system.
6. Of all the explosive issues that confronted Europe after the downfall of communism, ethnic nationalism proved to be the most intractable.
7. When Yugoslavia's Communist reformers loosened the regime's authoritarian grip, separatist pressures exploded.
8. Former Communist leaders in Serbia and Croatia, seeing power slip away, placed themselves at the head of nationalist crusades.
9. A shocked world could not believe that the atrocities in Bosnia were occurring in civilized Europe at the close of the twentieth century.
10. Many of the post-Communist societies experienced a repetition of the greed and rapaciousness of early Western capitalism.

Identifications

Russian Federation	Vladimir V. Putin	Kazakhstan
Crony capitalism	Slobodan Milosevic	Duma
Franjo Tudjman	Slovenia	Croatia
Economic shock therapy	Sarajevo	Srebrenica
Kosovo	Chechen Republic	Congress of People's Deputies

Map Exercises

1. Study the map on p. 1008, The Russian Federation in 2000, in your text. What does it tell

you about Russia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991? Which states remained within the federation after the fall of communism? How did ethnic nationalism contribute to separatist movements in areas that had formerly belonged to the U.S.S.R.?

2. Study the map on p. 1013 in your text, Nationalities in Central and Eastern Europe at the end of the Twentieth Century. What do they tell you about nationalities in central and south-eastern Europe? What political changes have taken place since 1989 in this part of Europe?

GENERAL ESSAY QUESTIONS FOR CHAPTER 25

1. Describe and compare the relationship between government and people in (a) Russia in the early twentieth century, (b) the Soviet Union, 1917–1991, and (c) Russia since 1991.
2. Describe the experiences of the countries of central and eastern Europe (a) in the interwar years, (b) in the years 1945–1985, and (c) in the years since 1985.
3. What brought about the collapse of communism in the U.S.S.R.? What was the “Gorbachev factor”?
4. What do historians mean by the “German question”? How was it revived by events in 1989? Discuss the problems that the Federal Republic of Germany has confronted since reunification?
5. Why did most of the communist regimes of central and eastern Europe collapse peacefully? What kinds of governments replaced them? How successful were these governments in overcoming some of the problems that had weakened the communist regimes?
6. Why did the end of communism bring questions of ethnic nationalism back to the surface? Where did these issues lead to violence? How were these problems resolved, if at all?

GENERAL DISCUSSION PASSAGES FOR CHAPTER 25

1. The upheavals of 1989–1991 reasserted political ideals that were revolutionary when proclaimed in America in 1776, in France in 1789, throughout Europe in 1848, and in many of the anticolonial movements after 1919 or 1945—ideals that were now called human rights and the principles of a democratic civil society. (p. 987)
2. For many of the wartime Allies the prospect of a reunified Germany of close to 80 million

people, possessing one of the world's most powerful economies stirred grim ghosts of the past. (p. 996)

3. There was hesitation, especially in France and Britain, but it was difficult, as the Americans argued, to deny the German people the right to self-determination 45 years after the end of the war. Despite the unspeakable crimes of the Nazi era, it seemed unreasonable to insist upon unalterable traits of national character or punish future generations for atrocities in the past. (p. 996)
4. The ideals and policies of democratic socialism, though only marginal in the United States, still had considerable appeal in much of western and eastern Europe. (p. 1006)
5. Marxism, born in the mid-nineteenth century in response to the instability and inequities of industrial capitalism, would survive as a scholarly and analytical tool; but it held little or no popular appeal as a political philosophy and program of political action. (p. 1005)
6. The revolutionary changes of 1989–1991 released many ugly currents, ominous for the future—anti-Semitism, xenophobia chauvinistic nationalism, irredentism—all easily mobilized when discontented people sought scapegoats for their frustrations. (p. 1005 – 1006)
7. Meanwhile all countries with capitalist market economies and democratic political systems, in western Europe and elsewhere, were challenged to create societies that could overcome economic instability, individual insecurity, unemployment, and gross social and economic injustices. (p. 1006)
8. That more was not accomplished in Russian economic and political life after the disappearance of the Soviet Union had to be balanced against the seven decades of twentieth-century dictatorship. (p.1011)
9. Some observers judged the “revolution” of 1989 harshly, arguing that despite its significance in overthrowing a failed system and casting off foreign domination, the new regimes were bent mainly on emulating the material successes of western European consumer societies. (p. 1018)
10. Despite persistent problems, the overall economic balance sheets showed progress throughout the central and eastern Europe. (p. 1018)