

The fall of communism in the Soviet Union

The fall of communism in Russia is a riddle so far unexplained, because the Soviet Union, despite being militarily and economically well behind the United States, was at that time a world power and could have remained as such for many years. The matter is more mystifying due to the fact that “the conversion of Russia” was foretold in the second Fatima secret. The statement in the secret that Russia will return to the bosom of the Church is probably one of the most extraordinary fulfilled prophecies in the history of humanity. No man could have predicted it. Nevertheless it happened and communism collapsed. What has decided it?

Situation in communist Russia

In communist Russia two systems of governing operated side by side. Officially the Supreme Council of the USSR, corresponding to a parliament chosen by citizens, was the highest authority. The Council selected the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee, which was the official government. The Government and the Council of Ministers were nominally responsible to parliament.

However the real power was exercised by the communist party. At the top of the party administration and making all important political and economic decisions was the Politburo, comprising 10-15 members, which was chaired by a General Secretary selected by the Central Committee. In fact nobody was able to control the General Secretary who had absolute power and held the office for life, as Stalin, Brezhnev and Andropov did. It was possible to remove him only by staging a coup d'état as in the case of Khrushchev.

The Central Committee, responsible for making minor decisions, consisted of about 100 persons who were chosen by the delegates during the party convention. Three to four thousand higher-ranking party members ruled at the level of republics and districts. About 30,000 persons belonged to the middle layers of party management, responsible for small towns and communes. And about 150,000 party members were in charge of local and factory party organizations.

The communist party of the Soviet Union kept all the state power in its hands. All senior positions in industry, the police, the secret police, the army, and administration were filled exclusively by party members. In this way it became

impossible to distinguish between the party and the state. It was the party, not the government that dealt with the day to day management of the country. The Politburo decided the structure of the government and formed and closed its departments, as well as appointed ministers and higher officials. The lack of boundaries between the party and the state was also visible in the official emblems. Both the flag and the anthem of the party became the symbols of the Soviet Union.

The party machine controlled not only all appointments outside the party, but inside as well. Although in theory democratic elections were meant to be held in the party, in practice ordinary members were disenfranchised and the party machine had absolute power. Candidates for the lower party offices were nominated by higher party officials, and this procedure was applied all the way up to the Central Committee. Party members had to routinely approve the proposed candidates.

Although party members filled all senior positions in government departments, a double system of control was created by establishing alongside them corresponding departments in the Central Committee. Ministers were not responsible to the government but to the Central Committee, which in practice provided detailed guidelines and plans for all government departments.

The party held the main power in the country and its members created a privileged elite³⁷. They were given apartments and dachas (summer residences), bought goods from special shops, had a separate Health Service and even took meals in segregated canteens at work and college. In practical terms, they formed a state within the state. Different rules applied to them, they could travel abroad and at work could reach the highest professional positions. They had to pay for these privileges with absolute obedience and loyalty.

No doubt, almost everyone would want to be a party member, but membership was not open to all and was by invitation only. The candidates were chosen very cautiously, and the observation and selection of potential party members was carried out at a young age in youth organizations, such as Pioneers and Komsomol. The selected candidates did not have to be gifted and good students, but they needed to desire power and be loyal and obedient. Their career depended exclusively on the support at the top, and as a result of such a selection process, for party managerial positions people without initiative were chosen, completely loyal and uncritically

carrying out party commands.

In a system in which nobody was trusted, power was centralized in the hands of top party officials to such an extent, that even simple problems had to be solved at the highest levels, which effectively crippled economic development. Management of the country was not guided by economic principles, therefore nobody knew what the true costs of manufacturing products were, and therefore it was not possible to improve production. The industry concentrated mainly on the production of weapons and it was estimated that about 80 percent of the industrial output was connected with armaments. In shops there were shortages not only of industrial goods but also of basic food products such as sugar, flour, meat and fruits, but the supply problems did not affect the party members.

The justice system was also under the full control of the party. Not a single rule of law could be introduced without the agreement of the Politburo, and all judges belonged to the party and obediently followed its orders. The Law Courts did not mete out justice, but rather punished citizens who did not conform or held other than officially accepted political views. Millions of innocent people were sent to labor camps in Siberia, from where the majority of them never came back.

Spying and denunciations were widespread and became a social norm where everyone informed on everybody. Denunciation in a certain way safeguarded against arrest, because it proved the political loyalty of the informer. Believers in God were persecuted and the majority of Orthodox churches were practically deserted or closed. The Orthodox Church clergy cooperated with the security services, informing on their faithful, but non-conforming priests ended their lives in the forced-labor camps. Travelling abroad was closely controlled and available in practical terms only to trusted party members. A very strict censorship of the media was enforced, and the only available Western books and films showed the poverty and struggle of the working classes against capitalism. Programs of foreign stations in Russian, such as the BBC and Voice of America, were jammed, so society was cut off from the rest of world with a kind of "Wall of China". Internal propaganda instilled in people, particularly the young, the perception of the superiority of communism over capitalism and emphasized Soviet achievements.

Such a system guaranteed the permanence of the communist rule, because the

party absorbed in its ranks all able individuals avid for power, whereas the rest of society was deprived of any independent leadership. Universal spying and informing plus operation of the efficient secret police secured the almost total elimination of independent thinking individuals from society. Under such conditions a revolution was impossible and any rebellion was suppressed in its embryonic stage. Soviet communism could therefore function for hundreds of years without any danger of internal threat.

International position

The Soviet Union after the Second World War became a military world power. It had a multi-million army of well trained soldiers, modern aircrafts, nuclear weapons and long-range ballistic missiles. The communists in the nineties were slowly losing the arms race because the obsolete Soviet industry was not able to keep up with technical developments in the countries belonging to NATO. Therefore in theory an external military threat existed from the USA, but this danger was a fiction. In the last decades of the 20th century, the military and nuclear power of the Soviet Union, although technically outdated, was still a formidable force, large enough to scare any potential aggressor off. The USA, or rather the gigantic American armaments industry, needed the Russian threat to persuade American society to pay taxes for ever increasing new weapons contracts. American citizens would not have wanted to incur such enormous costs if they were not afraid of the exaggerated power of Russia. In 1960, before the election, J.F. Kennedy supported the “missile gap” story, which falsely claimed that the Russians had enough long range missiles to wipe out every major city in the US, while in fact the Soviet Union in May 1960 had only four intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). Soon after the election, Kennedy signed the first contract to build more ICBMs to “catch up” with Russia.

The US armaments industry needed new contracts for the development of the most modern weapons and therefore an attack on Russia and winning the war would deprive them of huge future profits. As we know you do not kill the goose that lays the golden eggs.

Looking at the internal and international position, one might say that the Soviet Union was not endangered from the inside, nor from the outside, but despite this, for completely unknown reasons, it nonetheless collapsed like a house of cards. This fall

without any doubt was initiated and caused by Mikhail Gorbachev when he became General Secretary of the Communist Party.

Mikhail Gorbachev early years

Gorbachev was born on 2nd March 1931 in the village of Privolnoye in the Stavropol Region, into a family of collective farm workers. From the age of 14, he worked on a collective farm, as did his father. In 1950 he began law studies at Moscow University and at that time he married Raisa Titorenko. In 1952 he joined the communist party. After his graduation in 1955, he returned to his homeland, where he worked as the Komsomol official and also studied agricultural economics. In 1970 he became first party secretary of the Stavropol Region. In 1971 he became a member of the Central Committee, in 1978 the agriculture secretary, and from 1980 he was a member of the Politburo. After the death, in March 1985, of the General Secretary Konstantin Chernenko, Gorbachev was chosen to be his successor.

Reforms

The economic situation in Russia in the eighties had been gradually deteriorating, but the Politburo and the general secretaries were not able to show initiative and introduce the necessary reforms. The situation in the Soviet Union changed diametrically when Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Communist Party.

Gorbachev was chosen because the conviction in the country and in the party had been growing that it was necessary to break the economic stagnation prevailing from the times of the leadership of Brezhnev. Because the majority of the Politburo members were well into their seventies, he was regarded as the only candidate in his prime likely to be able to conduct reforms. Immediately after assuming the leadership, Gorbachev began a fight against corruption and alcoholism in Russia, as well as removing many conservative members from the Central Committee, introducing his own supporters in their place. He planned reforms of the economic management, but his concepts encountered a hostile reception from the party administration, which was afraid of losing power and its privileged position. Therefore at the party convention in 1986, Gorbachev initiated the policies of perestroika

(reconstruction) and glasnost (openness), which promoted limited economic and political liberalization and toned down censorship. Gorbachev tried to implement a democratic process of electing party officials in order to involve new, uncorrupted and able candidates, and in this way to renovate the power of the party.

He expected that by appealing directly to the party members and society and bypassing the party machine, which was fighting to hang on to power, he would manage to implement economic reforms. But the changes had to be introduced by middle rank party officials and factory managers, who without exception were party members. Unfortunately the party administration, although obedient, did not welcome changes, even though they were very limited, and as a result the reforms were implemented ineptly. The economic situation in Russia further deteriorated and in 1988 the plenum of the Central Committee removed the three main opponents of the reforms from the Politburo. The Supreme Council appointed Gorbachev to the top government position, corresponding to that of Prime Minister. In December 1988 the Supreme Council was replaced by the Congress of Representatives, which was the first parliament in the history of the USSR. In March 1989 almost free elections were held, in which many voters dared to delete names of communists from the list. Party members still managed to win 87 percent of the places, and out of 2,250 members of the Congress of Representatives, only about 300 truly backed the reforms, and Boris Yeltsin led the opposition. The article of the constitution on the dominating role of the party was removed in February 1990 and Gorbachev took up the post of president of the Soviet Union, holding in his hands all the top jobs.

The fall of Gorbachev

The reforms of Gorbachev, even though intended in theory to help the economy, in practice caused economic chaos. For the Russians, the proposed decentralization of the management was a huge step forward, but in reality the majority of the reforms were half measures. The state still set the prices of basic products and as a result of this many companies went bankrupt. The ruble was still a non-convertible currency, hindering international trade. In 1990, the government lost control of the economy, state income drastically decreased because the companies going bankrupt required subsidies. Upsetting the stability of the fossilized economic system, managed for

many years by a top-down method, caused more and more shortages of essential goods, which increased the dissatisfaction of the citizens. The government was forced to ration food, and the workers started strikes. It was the beginning of the end.

In June 1991 Boris Yeltsin won the election for the President of the Russian Federation. During the night of 18th to 19th August 1991, old style communists opposing reforms staged a coup d'état, arrested Gorbachev, who was staying in the Crimea, and formed the State of Emergency National Committee. The Committee introduced a state of emergency practically throughout the entire Soviet Union, simultaneously censoring the media and banning demonstrations and strikes. Yeltsin denounced the action of the Committee as illegal, and called on people to protest and boycott the orders. On 21 August the Moscow putsch collapsed, thanks to the army which refused to shoot at the citizens. In the course of the events Latvia and Estonia proclaimed independence, soon followed by the Ukraine and Belarus. On 29 August the activities of the Communist Party were suspended. The putsch, against the hopes of its organizers, precipitated the ultimate disintegration of the USSR which took place in December 1991.

The role of Gorbachev

How could it happen that a vast empire, which was feared by the entire world, had broken down within a few years? Without a doubt it was the work of Gorbachev who alone initiated changes in Russia. Therefore we must look more closely at certain aspects of his character and his career. Gorbachev, although an idealist and uncorrupted party member, was able to climb slowly up the rungs of the party ladder thanks to his own abilities and hard work and at the age of 39 became a party secretary of the Stavropol Region. This unremarkable land is situated close to the Caucasus, in the south-west of Russia. Gorbachev belonged to a group of a few thousand party high officials and nothing indicated that he would reach the peak of power, but he did. The turning point in his career was a meeting with Yuri Andropov, the KGB boss, who help him to his meteoric career. The KGB boss who knew "everything about everyone" valued Gorbachev for his hard work, loyalty and incorruptibility. Andropov knew that Gorbachev would want to implement necessary economic reforms and he would not be short of courage or energy. Therefore the

KGB chief groomed him for the highest position in the country. Although it might seem odd, it was the KGB which, having a true picture of the situation in the Soviet Union, first realized the necessity for reforms and later supported perestroika and glasnost.

Andropov chose Gorbachev to be his successor because he differed completely from the other members of the party elite. He was an idealist and true communist. For Gorbachev winning power and prestige did not constitute the main purpose in his life. He wanted above all to improve the economy and to increase the power of Russia. But he also wanted to improve the lives of people, to increase their standard of living, to give them more personal freedom, to eliminate their terror of the secret security services. He wanted to change the system and the people, and this effectively is what caused his downfall. He did not understand the deep-rooted mistrust and the passivity of Russian society.

The most important feature of his character was his reluctance to use force in internal and international conflicts. In 1988 he withdrew Russian forces from Afghanistan, and then announced the policy of non-intervention, called jokingly “the Sinatra doctrine”, enabling other states of the communist bloc “to go their own way”. This allowed for the political changes which took place in Poland and for the fall of the Berlin wall. When in 1991 some Baltic republics decided to separate from the USSR, he did not try to dispatch troops there in order to restore order. Even when the situation in Russia was out of his control, he never considered using force against his own people. His consciousness and respect for the value of human life contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Yuri Andropov

One could say that Andropov’s promoting and supporting Gorbachev also contributed to the fall of the USSR. Everything indicates that Andropov, like Gorbachev, belonged to people believing in communist ideas very sincerely. His father, a tsarist railway official, came from a Don Cossacks noble family, and his mother was a daughter of a wealthy Moscow businessman of German origin. In 1961 he was elected to the Central Committee and in 1967 he was appointed head of the KGB. Andropov having such bourgeois roots, in order to survive Stalin’s purges and

to reach the highest positions, had to be an unblemished communist. He also saw the need to reform the USSR, and when in May 1982 he became the General Secretary of the Communist Party, he immediately started energetic reforms and during the 15 months of his rule he dismissed 18 ministers and 37 regional first party secretaries, and started criminal investigations against many party dignitaries. Gorbachev writes about Andropov in his memoirs: “Andropov was a brilliant and large personality, generously endowed with gifts by nature, and a true intellectual. He resolutely denounced all the features commonly associated with Brezhnevism, that is, protectionism, in-fighting and intrigues, corruption, moral turpitude, bureaucracy, disorganization and laxity”. Therefore Andropov, thanks to his outstanding abilities, was able to recognize similar features in Gorbachev and therefore selected him to be his heir.

Mystery of the collapse

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union the question: Why did Gorbachev let the USSR disintegrate? is still unexplained. Without a doubt he was a true communist and a sincere patriot wanting Russia to remain a global power, but in some inexplicable way, his activity resulted in a completely unpredictable for him outcome.

On this subject dozens of books appeared and hundreds of articles were published attempting to answer this question, but the explanations included in them are not convincing and can be summarized as follows: Gorbachev did not realize that reforms would lead to the fall of the Soviet Union. It is difficult to imagine that such a man of outstanding intelligence and knowledge, an experienced politician, was not able to foresee that any deeper reforms must end in disintegration of the system. Gorbachev knew very well about the far more restricted earlier reforms of Khrushchev in 1956 and of Kosygin in 1965, which ended in rout. He should have understood that 70 years of communist power and terror had changed the mentality of the nation which in turn caused the system to be beyond repair, but still he decided on radical changes.

The reforms could not repair the communist system and had to lead to its fall. It was not so difficult to predict and documents revealed from this period demonstrate that the CIA – two years before the disintegration of the USSR – considered how to react

in case of the fall of Gorbachev. Gorbachev had better information than the CIA, a better understanding of the situation in Russia, and yet he did not realize that his reforms could lead to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

I believe that the causes of the collapse of the Soviet Union have to be found somewhere else, but before we provide a solution to this puzzle, let's consider the Soviet threat to the world and humanity.

The Soviet threat

The Communist system in Russia was one of the most dangerous totalitarian systems in the world and during almost 75 years of its existence it drastically changed the lives of all people who were under its control. It controlled not only the material life of its citizens, but destroyed their mental and spiritual development by removing religion from their life. The study of many philosophical and scientific subjects, such as Freud and Jung psychology, which would have enabled people to understand the absurdity of the communist system, was forbidden. Russian society was atomized, which means that everyone was solely concerned with his own life and did not participate in public life. People became passive and waited obediently for orders from above. The state took control over the upbringing of children and young people, who were indoctrinated with new ideology and were subjected to psychological brainwashing. As a result of this process the consciousness of society was decreasing. In a certain way, it is possible to compare the lives of people in the Soviet Union to the lives of those living in the theocratic civilizations of Sumer and Egypt, before the consciousness of the people there was developed. Changes implemented by the communists were slowly consolidating into society, obliterating achievements of thousands of years of the development of man.

The Soviet Union constituted a considerable risk for peace in the world, because its aim was to introduce communism to all countries in the world. The communist influences reached far beyond the borders of Russia and spread all over the world. This was visible during the Cuban crisis in 1962, when Russia applying nuclear blackmail won concessions from the United States.

The political situation in the world was becoming more and more dangerous, because the slowly declining Soviet Union could trigger European conflict, before

losing its military advantage on the ground. It is not improbable that the United States, if threatened with a nuclear war, would have surrendered Europe to Russia without a single shot being fired. In such a case the communist system would have spread not only on the old continent, but also to many countries in the world. Already a large part of Asia, including China, Vietnam and Korea, had fallen under communist influences, and similar attempts were made in Latin America and Africa.

Intervention in Russia

I believe that, as in the case of Nazism in Germany, the situation in Russia required intervention because there was a need to remove the communist regime. In this case intervention would be very difficult because the extraterrestrial beings can influence the beliefs of individual persons, however they cannot affect activities of large groups of people who strongly believe in certain ideas. Therefore it is easier for them to achieve the necessary results in states ruled by a dictator than in democratic countries, because it would be sufficient to change the convictions of only one person. However the main problem is how to secure that the right man comes to power. Usually dictators are men avid for power and glory, ruthless and merciless, dishonest and distrustful, often having psychopathic traits. Such persons are not susceptible to influences by the extraterrestrial beings, and they would never implement changes aimed at improving the lives of other people. The extraterrestrial beings can influence beliefs of impressionable persons, but cannot modify their character, which means that they cannot change evil people into good ones.

Since in the communist party, the General Secretary was the absolute master, for the intervention to succeed, an intelligent, honest, idealistic person, who would want to change the situation in the country, was therefore needed for this position. This description is a complete antithesis of a typical, orthodox and dogmatic Soviet leader. Mikhail Gorbachev was probably the only person in the high strata of the party meeting these conditions. In order to fulfill the extraterrestrial beings' objectives, he had to reach the position of General Secretary, but this could only be done with support of a man at the highest levels of power, and Andropov was such a person.

It might seem incredible that the KGB boss could become a tool in a plan aimed at

the destruction of communism. However, the ideological beliefs of the people drawn into this plan were irrelevant. What counted was how to reach the ultimate objective in the most effective way. At the moment when Gorbachev would become General Secretary and reach absolute power, he would be able to start the process leading to the fall of the Soviet Union.

Of course Gorbachev was not aware that he was a tool in the hands of the extraterrestrial beings. He was born with certain features which determined his character and directed him towards certain types of activities. He believed that what he did was right and necessary, and nothing would dissuade him from doing it.

How was this intervention carried out? Gorbachev confirmed in many interviews for the press, as well as in his books, that he did not realize that the effects of his activities would result in the fall of communism. Somehow understanding the consequences of the planned changes in Russian society, which were obviously visible to many people, were disregarded by him. It looks as if a “blockade” was applied to his mind, which was sufficient to push him on the course of reforms.

As we know, the “conversion” of Russia predicted in Fatima took place and, thanks to this, the lives of hundreds of millions of people changed, not necessarily becoming easier, but certainly becoming more human. The threat to world peace disappeared and the threat of nuclear war was removed. Most importantly, people became free and could choose their own way of living and personal development.