

THE END OF THE COLD WAR THROUGH THE PRISM OF A LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE APPROACH

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Abstract. More than thirty years have passed since the collapse of the Soviet Union, but there is still debate about why this happened. With the emergence of new states in the post-Soviet space, a geopolitical vacuum was created, which the great powers tried to fill and establish their influence in the region. Undoubtedly, the collapse of the USSR did not pass without a trace and today we have a new round of regional conflicts in Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus, and Central Asia. The socialist curtain has been replaced by the era of neoliberal capitalism, providing an impetus for many researchers and policymakers to analyse the historical developments in the post-Soviet region. The article analyses the main works of liberals, realist conservatives, and neo-Marxists who have tried to assess the events that preceded the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Keywords: international relations, USSR, liberalism, democratization, socialism, the system of capitalism, the USA, cold war.

Аңдатпа. Кеңес Одағы ыдырағаннан бері отыз жылдан астам уақыт өтті, бірақ бұл неліктен болды деген пікір әлі де бар. Посткеңестік кеңістікте жаңа мемлекеттердің пайда болуымен геосаяси вакуум қалыптасып, оны ұлы державалар толтыруға және аймақта өз ықпалын орнатуға тырысты. Әрине, КСРО-ның ыдырауы назардан тыс қалмады, бүгін де біз Еуропаның Шығыс бөлігінде, Закавказьеде және Орталық Азияда аймақтық қақтығыстардың жаңа кезеңін алдық. Неолибералдық капитализм дәуірі социалистік шымылдықтың орнына келді, осылайша көптеген зерттеушілер мен саясаткерлерге посткеңестік аймақтағы тарихи оқиғаларды алдауға серпін берді. Мақалада Кеңес Одағы ыдырағанға дейінгі оқиғаларды бағалауға тырысқан либералдардың, консервативті реалисттердің және неомарксисттердің негізгі еңбектері талданады.

Түйін сөздер: халықаралық қатынастар, КСРО, либерализм, демократияландыру, социализм, капиталистік жүйе, АҚШ, қырғи-қабақ соғыс.

Аннотация. Более тридцати лет прошло с момента распада Советского Союза, однако до сих пор не утихают споры о том, почему это случилось. С появлением новых государств на постсоветском пространстве образовался геополитический вакуум, который великие державы старались заполнить и установить свое влияние в регионе. Безусловно, распад СССР не прошёл бесследно, сегодня мы получили новый виток региональных конфликтов в Восточной части Европы, Закавказье и Центральной Азии. На смену социалистического занавеса пришла эпоха неолиберального капитализма, тем самым дав толчок для многих исследователей, политиков проанализировать исторические события в постсоветском регионе. В статье проводится анализ основных работ либералов, консерваторов-реалистов и неомарксистов, которые попытались дать оценку тем событиям, что предшествовали развалу Советского Союза.

Ключевые слова: международные отношения, СССР, либерализм, демократизация, социализм, капиталистическая система, США, холодная война.

Introduction

The USSR as a geopolitical entity no longer exists. The question arises as to why and what reasons and conditions contributed to the collapse of the once-powerful socialist

state. Nowadays there are various points of view related to ideological, political, and economic conditions. Three groups of authors are formed in this paper: conservatives-realists, liberals, and adherents of the world-system analysis. The

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first group includes conservatives, G. Kissinger and Z. Brzezinski. The group of liberal authors includes F. Fukuyama, Stephen F. Cohen, Stephen White, and Karol Sigman. Finally, the world-systems approach group includes I. Wallerstein, A. Buzgalin, A. Kolganov, B. Kagarlitsky, and T. Kraus. Each group of scientists has its own vision of the causes of the collapse of the USSR, the positions of the authors in some issues coincide, and in some fundamentally different. The main purpose and objective are to analyze the work of the three groups, identifying differences and common trends. The relevance of the work lies in the fact that even now, 30 years after the collapse of the USSR, discussions about the reasons for the collapse of the Soviet Union are still ongoing; some authors refer to external factors, while others hold the position that it happened because of internal contradictions.

Methodology

This article attempts to consider the collapse of the USSR through the prism of the works of the authors of the three main areas of international relations: the authors of the liberal persuasion, the authors – realists, and followers of the Marxist approach. It should be noted that the article provides a brief analysis of the main works. The study of the works of the liberal and conservative persuasion, and comparing them with each other, serve to achieve a scientific and objective analysis of the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is certainly difficult to give an accurate assessment and name the true reasons for the collapse of the USSR, nevertheless, trying to collect different interpretations from political experts will allow us to look at this historical event.

Discussion

The liberal approach

The authors of the liberal approach in their works highlight the changes in the tendencies of the mass consciousness of people after Stalin's death. In his work "The End of History and the last man", Fukuyama analyses the conflict between the two ideologies "liberal" and "communist". Liberalism identifies technological progress, and improvement of material well-being, which is possible only with the economy with

a form of capitalism, in the political sphere it is free elections and multiparty, in other words, a democratic form of government. Fukuyama defines Soviet-type communism as a totalitarian form of government because of Stalin's harsh domestic policies, including repression, collectivization, and other elements which, according to the author, violated the democratic principles of human existence. However, it is worth noting that Fukuyama recognizes that authoritarian dictatorships of all kinds, right-wing and left-wing, have collapsed (Fukuyama F., 2006). In some cases they have been replaced by thriving and stable democracies; in others by instability or another form of dictatorship (Fukuyama F., 2006). Liberals note that the process of "democratization" began after Stalin's death. Parallel to the growing economic prosperity under Khrushchev, a process of 'anti-Stalinism' was launched. Stalin's policies were severely criticized, significant changes were made in foreign policy, namely towards the Third World, and the degree of persecution on political grounds was also eased. The power struggle between the three key figures of N. Khrushchev, L. Beria, and G. Malenkov provided the impetus for a course of "liberalization". The phenomenon of "Destalinization" was a shock of sorts for the Soviet people, leading to a change in the system of values in the public consciousness. The denial of the personality cult of Stalin resonated in the countries of Eastern Europe, in addition to domestic economic contradictions. In the GDR and Hungary, there were mass anti-communist demonstrations against the incumbent cabinet governments, marking the beginning of a flywheel of democratic processes and a gradual retreat of Eastern Europe towards the West.

In some works, liberals explore the transformation of communist ideology in different countries. For example, Stephen White in "Communism and its Collapse" provides a comparative analysis of the collapse of communist ideology in the USSR and Eastern Europe and asks the question – why did Eastern European countries abandon communism earlier? One interesting idea is that Eastern European countries were ideologically and mentally dominated by the legacy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire rather than the Russian

Empire. Countries such as Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the Baltic states have institutions based on Roman law, which in turn are balanced by law and obligation. Hungary had a multi-party system and free media even before the First World War. The countries of Western and Eastern Europe, moreover, experienced the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, and religious dogma put individual conscience over subordination in the first place. Eastern European countries found it difficult to accept Communist ideology, but in the post-war period, they had no choice. Stephen White notes that Gorbachev refused to continue the Brezhnev Doctrine of foreign policy toward Eastern Europe, leaving them to decide their own fate. Gorbachev tried to replace "Stalinist socialism" with socialism that is more "democratic and humane" (White St., 2001). According to the author, the main problem was a bureaucratized apparatus that was a monopolist in all spheres of public political life, there was no space for political "pluralism" (White St., 2001). The main emphasis was on developing defense, and heavy industry, there was no alternative to diverse forms of ownership, and Lenin and Marx's ideas were not relevant at that time.

One of the brightest representatives of the liberal approach, Karol Sigman, in his book "Political Clubs and Perestroika in Russia: Opposition without Dissent" provides an interesting treatment of the political struggle between official representatives of the authorities and informal movements. Informal clubs are a form of opposition, but they do not behave quite like the classical opposition. The active civil society was divided into several groups in the 1980s, including dissident movements and informal political clubs, which were initially out of politics, but later adopted a radical oppositionist position. The author reveals the reasons for the emergence of informal movements and their integration into the political field. Although the informal groups did not stage a "grassroots revolution", they accelerated the process of disintegration of the party and the system (Sigman K., 2014). The enlargement of the movement's ranks is linked to three points: 1) The 19th Party Conference in the summer of 1988; it discusses Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) reforms and new electoral

rules. Informal clubs are replenished during rallies on Pushkin Square. 2) The first election campaign was in 1989 before the elections to the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR (January-May 1989). The voter clubs which emerged then, as well as the party clubs, become the main entry channels to the movement. The adoption in March 1990 of an amendment to the USSR Constitution which abolished the CPSU's monopoly on power and permitted multiparty. The emergence of the party was not a watershed in the development of the democratic movement, as most of them were formed within the framework of the first period or party clubs. They became a new form of organization and a new recruitment channel for the movement (Sigman K., 2014). Informal political movements emerged because of intra-party contradictions, which later developed into power struggles. Reform advocates helped to form clubs of active youth and intellectuals. Such clubs were mainly formed in academic institutions, which held various debates on internal political processes. With the reformers' support, some informal political clubs gained "micro-autonomy" from the CPSU. For example, there were such clubs as Perestroika or the Social Initiatives Club. Beginning in 1989, the informal movements gradually moved into the democratic category. Which eventually amounted to massive support for Boris Yeltsin.

It is worth noting the American liberal author Stephen F. Cohen, who in his work "Soviet fate and lost alternatives" describes the Soviet political system with communist ideology as a failure, bloody in every sense of the word. He also assesses the political struggle between M. Gorbachev and B. Yeltsin, leading the latter to victory in the Russian presidential elections. Gorbachev's role was hailed as the "Messiah" of democratic reform, but the whole problem was the "system" itself. After Gorbachev's appointment as General Secretary, the country's foreign policy course changed to improve relations with the West. The image of the Secretary-General was perceived positively by Western states, and it is worth noting that it was Mrs. Thatcher who played an important role in establishing relations between Gorbachev and then US President R. Reagan.

In general, liberals focus their research on the ideological sphere, namely on the “modernization” of communism and how democratic ideas embraced first Gorbachev and later the masses, which ultimately had a direct or indirect impact on the collapse of the totalitarian socialist system.

The realist analyzing

A group of American conservative thinkers often stood at the origins of US foreign policy, moreover, they contributed to American foreign policy strategy towards the Soviet Union. The position of G. Kissinger and Z. Brzezinski on the issue of the collapse of the Soviet Union is similar, both authors focus in their works on the US foreign policy superiority over the USSR during the Cold War. Kissinger, in his book “World Order”, describes in detail the Cold War period, the role of the US on the world stage, and the position of the US administration towards the Soviet Union and communism in general. Conservatives have unanimously admitted that a bipolar world is much better than a multipolar system. The principle of the division of spheres of influence between the two powers allowed them to control the situation in the regions and to prevent a repeat of the war in Europe. Kissinger defines this phenomenon as a “Balance of Power”. The US interests included Western Europe, South Korea, and Japan; for the USSR, it included Eastern Europe and North Korea. Later, the Euro-Atlantic bloc NATO, led by the US, and the Soviet Union led the WP (Warsaw Pact Organization), and a new world order was established. The balance of the world order was established between powers with powerful nuclear capabilities. “The main conflict thus arises in Europe between the interests of the Atlantic maritime power, which demands the maintenance of an active and independent political life on the European peninsula, and the interests of the jealous Eurasian land power, which must always strive to expand westwards and for which there is never a safe frontier, from its point of view, apart from the Atlantic Ocean, where it can stop” (Kissinger H., 2015).

The authors of the conservative approach define the Cold War as a confrontation to the exhaustion of the rival, through economic potential and technological advances in the military

industry (arms race). If one compares Kissinger’s and Brzezinski’s work, one can see that the latter complements the former’s picture in detail. Brzezinski notes in “The Game Plan. Geostrategic Structure of Struggle between the US and the USSR”, the key regions of confrontation between the USSR and the US are Western Europe (Poland and West Germany), the Far Eastern Front (South Korea, the Philippines) and South-West Asia (Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan). The author also emphasizes that all communist regimes in Eastern Europe are in power due to the “police control” Soviet Union. This is characterized by the lack of social or cultural pull of the dominant power, which makes each region an increasingly less reliable imperial domain (Brzezinski Z., 1986). This view coincides with that of liberal authors. The aim of American universalist foreign policy was to create the conditions for “prosperity, security, economic interaction, and the formation of humanitarian principles”. Accordingly, the US was threatened by communists, who generated doctrines that rejected American conceptions of domestic and international order (Kissinger H., 2015). Nevertheless, the authors rightly point out the principle of “double standards” of American foreign policy, but do not reveal the true reasons. Speaking of the reasons for American interference in all intra-regional and intra-state conflicts, we can trace in I. Wallerstein’s works from the perspective of the global world system. Wallerstein is the founder of the world-system analysis, in his book “World-System Analysis. Introduction” the main idea is about colonial market expansion in the geographical space and qualitative technical rationalization of operations of accumulation which ensure the success of capitalism (Wallerstein I., 2006). In other words, geographic and economic expansion is important for the big capitalists to accumulate capital. Drawing a parallel in the principles of American foreign policy, we can see the true objectives, namely the lobbying of American big capital interests in Congress. After all, the reason for American intervention in other countries or imposing its position on an issue (domestic or foreign) is not to build any democratic institutions, or liberalize the economy, but to establish its “protectorate” in this or that country in order to control major

geographic-strategic trade routes, rich deposits of natural resources, etc.

It is important to understand that none of the followers of realism considered a scenario that would lead to the collapse of the Soviet Union. The events of 1991 shocked the Western community. Certainly, within the framework of the Cold War before Gorbachev came, realists predicted an escalation of the conflict between the US and the USSR. The arms race required large financial investments, nuclear capabilities were improving, moreover, a 'space wars' scenario was being seriously considered. After the collapse of the USSR, realists concluded that the planned economy could not withstand the arms race, the military operation in Afghanistan, and the financing of communist parties in Latin America and South-East Asia.

The world-systems approach

What do the authors of the world-systems approach have in common? In their work, the authors provide an in-depth analysis of the economy of the Soviet Union, the reforms, and the new policies of M. Gorbachev with his "perestroika" and "glasnost". Followers of the world-systems approach pay special attention to economic issues, state management, internal political contradictions, and political struggle within the nomenclature itself. It is worth examining the area of state ownership and how the excrement of state, public and collective property played a cruel joke, ultimately leading to the collapse of the USSR. One of the key ideas within the world-systems approach is to increase peacetime consumer demand. Against the background of the high growth rates of the Soviet economy in the 1960s and 1970s, the communist administration began to experience certain economic difficulties. The process of industrialization seemed to have been completed, an agreement on the nuclear issue and the arms race with the USA was reached, the level of education of the population rose considerably, space exploration was launched, and science thrived. However, the Soviet Union became a victim of its own success (Kagarlitsky B., 2009). The increased demand for goods became more difficult to meet with each passing year, which would later develop into

shortages by the 1980s and later into a shadow economy. The ideology of socialism and communism was questioned, and the bloated bureaucratic apparatus hindered development rather than taking effective decisions on economic problems, moreover, clan groups interested in their own profit and gain began to emerge within the bureaucracy and the level of corruption within the nomenklatura grew.

On the issue of the bloated bureaucracy, A. Buzgalin and A. Kolganov in their book "The USSR: An Optimistic Tragedy" provide a detailed analysis of the nomenklatura (the ruling party-state bureaucracy), which under a rigid hierarchical system would become the privileged power elite. Scholars explain the definition of Soviet-type socialism as "mutant socialism". According to the authors, "mutant socialism" was formed under Stalin, who built an exceptional system. In this system, several layers of society stand out: a layer of socially disenfranchised people (repressed, deported, etc.), semi-subordinate peasantry (the population of the villages had no passports and had no right to leave their place of work, being in a relationship of personal dependence), workers and intellectuals who were employed by the state-bureaucracy, a detached and caste-locked layer of nomenclature - this was the mutation of the "unbreakable union of the working class and the peasantry" (Buzgalin A., 2018). The authors' main idea is that under such a system, the very idea of socialism changes, and the ruling party-state bureaucracy will become more and more estranged from the people, uncontrollable, and sooner or later, the nomenclature will become interested in exchanging bureaucratic power for capital, while the common working class will become petty bourgeois (Buzgalin A., 2018). Because of the manifestation of bourgeois elements, the class consciousness of the Soviet working class is changing in parallel, i.e. the socialist ideas of Lenin or Marx are losing their appeal in the eyes of the Soviet man. As the level of prosperity rose, society was sinking more and more into an interest in the market-bourgeois restoration. The planned economy could not cope with the increasing demand for goods. At the CPSU Congresses, the question of the status of state property arose; the communists realized that reforms were

needed which would have a positive effect on economic growth. One option for transforming the planned economy was to use some elements of capitalism. It is worth noting that the Soviet Union had previously experimented with a "mixed economy". Collectivization and industrialization, carried out simultaneously and with equal rapidity, had two objectives (driven by political considerations): 1) to destroy traces of the "spontaneous capitalist restoration" and its adherents, i.e., to strengthen and expand Soviet power in the countryside; 2) to squeeze capital out of agriculture as much as possible and concentrate it to serve the needs of industrial production (Kraus T., 2020).

This all served to introduce the command of a planned economy. The dictatorship of the party was established, and the collective farms, old and new industries, factories, plants, and other economically liquid elements were concentrated in the hands of the party bureaucracy. The destruction of the private and collective property thus gave complete freedom of action in the economy to the centralized bureaucracy. When discussions on the status of state property at the congresses in the 1980s included several important questions: "how to make a proper redistribution of state property?", "should the collective property be legalized, and later should the process of privatization be launched, thereby allowing the existence of private property?".

Within the CPSU there were three separate but interrelated debates. The first was the admissibility of the inclusion of widespread private property in a "socialist market economy". Second: whether privatization and redistribution of property would lead to greater independence of the republic's elites, erosion of central power, and, ultimately, destruction of the Soviet Union. Finally, third: for the Soviet leadership, the main concern regarding changing forms of ownership was the future social and economic status of top state and party officials (Kraus T., 2020). A serious question on all of the above was "would the nomenklatura be able to resist the temptation of privatizing state property? At one time Trotsky warned back in 1936 that a "class" of privileged state bureaucrats, feeling their power threatened, would not hesitate to

convert state property, i.e. workers' property, into hereditary private property (Kraus T., 2020). Gorbachev's "perestroika" contained economic reforms that were supposed to improve the economic situation, but in the end, the opposite came out. Another important event that took place under Gorbachev was the Vienna meeting of the CSCE. During this meeting, one of the key documents, the Declaration of Principles and other CSCE commitments, was signed. By endorsing this document, the Soviet Union for the first time formally accepted the principle of the priority of international law over domestic law in the USSR (Bogaturov A., 2009). In doing so, Gorbachev launched the domestic dissemination of European standards of individual human freedoms. Human rights were a sore subject for the USSR, and dissident movements became active in the 1980s under Gorbachev, accordingly, after the adoption of the CSCE Declaration, an anti-communist movement was formed that criticized Gorbachev's policies. Moreover, Gorbachev was losing support among his conservative supporters, plus a bloc of liberals led by Boris Yeltsin was formed.

In addition to ineffective economic and foreign policy decisions, followers of the world-system analysis point to several flawed laws in the sphere of jurisprudence. During the political confrontation between Gorbachev and Yeltsin, several constitutional amendments on sovereignty were adopted. On 12 June 1990, the "Declaration on the State Sovereignty of the RSFSR" declared the priority of local republican laws over the laws of the federation (Kraus T.) This paved the way for the Soviet republics to gain independence, thereby destroying the Union. The Russian "declaration of independence" loudly heralded the collapse of the Soviet Union and affirmed that its separation along national lines would facilitate integration into the global economy (Kraus T., 2020). The political struggle ended sadly for Gorbachev, even the imposed presidency of the USSR and the all-union referendum on the preservation of the USSR that was held in 1991 - did not help Gorbachev to stay in power and preserve the Union.

The position of followers of microsystems analysis or neo-Marxists is based on the fact that Gorbachev's domestic

policy was not implemented consistently. Playing with democracy and liberal economic reforms in a planned economy did not produce positive results. Moreover, the ideology of communism, with all the basic needs of Soviet society realized, was no longer as relevant as under Stalin's regime. The bloated bureaucracy was more interested in maintaining its own power. This can be seen in the implementation of the partial privatization of collective property. Certainly, the law passed in 1990 "Declaration of State Sovereignty of the RSFSR" was the final step in the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Conclusion

All of the above approaches (liberal, conservative, and world-systemic) have certain views on the collapse of the Soviet Union. The main disadvantage of liberals and conservatives is that they do not provide a detailed analysis of the reasons for the failure of Gorbachev's reforms, and there is no detailed study of the economy. They mainly describe the ideological superiority of democracy/liberalism over communism and the superiority of US foreign policy over Soviet policy. The liberals attribute one of the main causes of the collapse of the USSR to falling energy prices in the 1980s, the arms race, which led to a misallocation of financial resources, eventually leading to a decline in productivity and on-time delivery of goods and later to shortages. All this affected the mood of the population, nationalist conflicts erupted, the Chernobyl disaster, the earthquake in Armenia, unemployment growth, and protest movements against the incumbent government became more frequent. Moreover, the internal political confrontation between Yeltsin and Gorbachev contributed to the collapse of the

USSR. All the above-mentioned reasons made up the whole set of problems that led to the collapse of the Great Power.

Nevertheless, neo-Marxists provide a more accurate analysis of what has been happening since Gorbachev's arrival. It cannot be argued that this is the final truth, but the application of microsystem analysis to this issue is a more complete analysis. A detailed analysis of economic reforms, the introduction of partial privatization of collective property, and the adoption of laws in the RSFSR which gave it more sovereignty - all these processes are analyzed in microsystem analysis. The disadvantage of the neo-Marxists is that there is no detailed analysis of Soviet foreign policy during the 1970s and 1980s. There is no answer to the question of what the role of confrontation with the US in the Cold War was.

However, it is important to understand - how the collapse of the Great Power affected the Soviet people. During the period of the existence of the USSR, a type of new man - the "Soviet Man" - was formed, which reflected the whole essence of the "communist" regime. Through the prism of historical events, we will see the experience of the revolution, civil war, famine, repression, collectivization, and the horrors of World War II in the eyes of Soviet man. All these events left a particular imprint on the Soviet man, not forgetting the ideological upbringing, starting from the school benches of the "pioneer movement", the Komsomol, and ending with the Communist Party (Kraus T., 2020). The stereotype that the ruler or party (in this case the Communist Party) always makes the right decisions played a cruel joke on Soviet citizens. This explains the "political apathy" or inaction of the Soviet people when it came to the question of preserving the Soviet Union as a state and an actor in international relations.

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ЛИБЕРАЛДЫҚ ЖӘНЕ КОНСЕРВАТИВТІ КӨЗҚАРАСТЫ ТҮСІНДІРУДЕГІ ҚЫРҒИ-ҚАБАҚ СОҒЫСТЫҢ АЯҚТАЛУЫ

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ОКОНЧАНИЕ ХОЛОДНОЙ ВОЙНЫ В ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИИ ЛИБЕРАЛЬНОГО И КОНСЕРВАТИВНОГО ПОДХОДА

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