

The End of Bipolarity

Fastrack Revision


► What was the Soviet System?

- The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) came into being after the Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917.
- The Socialist Revolution was inspired by the ideals of socialism, as opposed to capitalism and the need for an egalitarian society.
- The revolution of Russia aimed to abolish the institution of private property.
- It also wanted to design the society on the principles of equality.
- The Soviet political system centered around the Communist Party and no other political party or opposition was allowed.
- The economy was planned and controlled by the state.
- The political and economic systems of the Eastern European countries which had been liberated by the Soviet Union from the fascist forces after the Second World War came under the control of the USSR and modelled after the USSR.
- The group of countries which followed USSR was called the second world or the '**Socialist bloc**'.
- The USSR was the leader of the socialist bloc and the group was held together by a military alliance called the 'Warsaw Pact'.

► Reasons—'How did Soviet Union became a Superpower?'

The Soviet Union became a great power after the Second World War.

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 After the Second World War the economy of the Soviet Union developed rapidly along with the USA.

The reasons which made Soviet economy developed rapidly are :

- It had a complex communication network, vast energy resources including oil, iron and steel, machinery production and a transport sector that connected its remotest areas with efficiency.
- It had a domestic consumer industry that produced everything from pins to cars.
- The Soviet state ensured a minimum standard of living for all citizens and the government subsidised basic necessities including health, education, child care and other welfare schemes.
- There was no unemployment, state ownership was the dominant form of ownership; land and productive assets were owned and controlled by the Soviet states.

► Gorbachev and the Disintegration

- In 1985, Gorbachev was elected General Secretary of the Communist Party and in 1988 he became the President of the country.
- At that time, reforms were needed to keep the USSR abreast of the information and technology of the world.
- Gorbachev wanted to normalise relations with the West and democratise and reform the Soviet Union, which brought some unexpected results.
- Gorbachev initiated the policies of Glasnost (openness) and Perestroika (restructuring).
- He carried out his reforms and loosened the system.
- There were some sections of Soviet society which felt that he moved much faster and were disappointed with his methods.
- On the other hand, the members of the Communist Party felt that their power and privileges were eroding as Gorbachev was moving too quickly.
- His reforms were opposed by leaders within the Communist Party and it led to a coup in 1991.
- Boris Yeltsin emerged as a national hero in opposing this coup.
- The people of the East European countries which were part of Soviet bloc started to protest against their own government and Soviet control.
- Power began to shift from the Soviet centre to the republics. In December 1991, under the leadership of Yeltsin, three major republics of the USSR—Russia, Ukraine and Belarus declared independence from Soviet Union and Communist Party was disbanded. Capitalism and democracy were adopted as the bases of post Soviet republics.
- Russia was now accepted as the successor state of the Soviet Union. It inherited the Soviet seat in the UN Security Council.

► Democratisation of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

- It was the organisation of the newly independent countries formed post the disintegration of USSR. The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is a regional organisation established on 8 December, 1991 when Russia, Belarus and Ukraine signed a 'Creation Agreement' on the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the creation of CIS as its successor.
- They also declared that the new organisation would be open to all republics of the former Soviet Union and all other nations would share the same goals.



► Why did Soviet Union Disintegrate?

The internal weakness of Soviet Union's political and economic institutions, economic stagnation, unaccountability and unresponsive political system led to the collapse of the system.

- The Soviet system became very bureaucratic and authoritarian making life very difficult for its citizens. Lack of democracy and absence of freedom of speech stifled people.
- Economic stagnation for many years led to severe consumer shortages and a large section of the society begin to doubt and question the system.
- The Soviet economy used much of its resources in maintaining a nuclear and military arsenal and development of its satellite states in Eastern Europe and within the Soviet system. In the arms race Soviet Union managed to match the US from time-to-time, but at a great cost.
- Ordinary citizens became more knowledgeable about the economic advance of the West. They could see disparities between their system and the systems of the West. The Soviet Union lagged behind the West in technology, infrastructure and most importantly in fulfilling the political and economic aspiration of citizens.
- The Soviet Union had become stagnant in administrative and political sense as well: The Communist Party that had ruled Soviet Union for over 70 years was not accountable to the people.
- Gorbachev promised to reform the economy, catch up with the West and loosen the administrative system.
- Gorbachev lost support on all sides and divided public opinion.
- The rise of nationalism and desire for sovereignty within the various republics including Russia, the Baltic Republics, Ukraine, Georgia and other proved to be the final and most immediate cause for the disintegration of USSR.
- The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, in 1979 weakened the system even further.
- Though wages continued to grow, productivity and technology fell considerably behind the West. This led to shortages in all consumer goods. Food imports increased every year.
- The Soviet economy was faltering in the late 1970s and became stagnant.

► Consequences of Disintegration of USSR

The collapse of the second world of the Soviet Union and the socialist systems in Eastern Europe had profound consequences for world politics:

- It meant the end of the Cold War confrontations. The ideological dispute over whether the socialist system is better than the capitalist system was not an issue anymore.
- Since the Cold War had triggered a massive arms race and accumulation of nuclear weapons. The disintegration was seen as an end to this arms race and possible new peace.
- The power relations in the world politics changed and therefore, the relative influence of ideas and institutions also changed. The end of Cold War left

open only two possibilities: either the remaining superpower dominate and create a unipolar system or different countries or a group of countries become important players in international system, thereby bringing in a multi-polar system where no one power could dominate.

- As it turned out, the US became the sole superpower, the capitalist economy became the dominant economic system internationally and institutions like World Bank and International Monetary Fund became powerful advisors to all these countries.
- The end of the Soviet bloc meant the emergence of many new countries. All these countries had their own independent aspirations and choices. Some of them especially the Baltic and East European states wanted to join the European Union and become part of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

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The Central Asian countries wanted to take advantage of the geographical location and continue their close ties with Russia and also to establish ties with the West, the US, China and others.

► Shock Therapy in Post-Communist Regimes

- The collapse of Communism was followed in most of the countries by painful process of transition from an authoritarian socialist system to a democratic capitalist system.
- The model of transition in Russia, Central Asia and East Europe that was influenced by the World Bank and IMF came to be known as shock therapy.

► Features of Shock Therapy

- Each of those countries was required to make a total shift to a capitalist economy.
- It meant privatisation of state owned assets.
- Collective farms were to be replaced by private farming.
- A free trade regime and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) were to be the main engines of change.
- The transition also involved a breaking up of the existing trade alliances among the countries of the Soviet bloc.
- The Western capitalist states now became the leaders and thus guided and controlled the development of the region through various agencies and organisations.

► Consequences of Shock Therapy

- The shock therapy administered in the 1990s brought ruin to the economies and disaster upon the people of the entire region.
- In Russia, the large state-controlled industrial complex almost collapsed as about 90% of its industries were put up for sale to private individuals and companies.
- As the valuable industries were undervalued and sold at throwaway prices, this was called 'the largest garage sale in history'.
- The value of the ruble, the Russian currency declined.
- The rate of inflation was, so high that people lost all their savings.
- The collective farming system disintegrated leaving people without food security.



- The real GDP of Russia, 1999 was below what it was in 1989.
- The old system of social welfare was systematically destroyed. The withdrawal of government subsidies pushed large sections of people into poverty.
- The academic and intellectual manpower disintegrated or migrated.
- A mafia emerged in most of these countries and started controlling many economic activities.
- Privatisation lead to new economic disparities which divided Russia between rich and poor regions.

► Tensions and Conflicts in former Soviet Republics after Disintegration

- Most of the former Soviet Republics are prone to conflicts and many have/had civil war and insurgencies.
- In Russia, two republics Chechnya and Dagestan, have/had violent Secessionist Movements.
- In Central Asia, Tajikistan witnessed a Civil War that went on for 10 years till 2001.
- In Georgia the demand for independence has come from two provinces resulting in a Civil War.
- There were movements against the existing regimes in Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Georgia. The Central Asian republics are areas with vast hydrocarbon resources and have become a zone of competition between outside powers and oil companies.

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In Eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia split peacefully into two, with the Czechs and the Slovaks forming independent countries.

- But the most severe conflict took place in the Balkan republics of Yugoslavia, which in 1991, broke into several provinces like Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- The inter-ethnic Civil War in Yugoslavia led to NATO intervention.

► India and Post-Communist Countries

- India has maintained good relations with all the post-communist countries.
- But the strongest relations are still between Russia and India.
- Indo-Russian relations are embedded in a history of trust in common interests and are matched with popular perceptions.
- Russia and India share a vision of a multi-polar world order which means co-existence of several powers in the international system, collective security, greater regionalism, negotiated settlements of international conflicts, independent foreign policy for all countries and decision-making through bodies like UN.
- More than 80 bilateral agreements have been signed between India and Russia as part of the Indo-Russian strategic agreement of 2001.
- India stands to benefit from its relationship with Russia on issues like Kashmir, energy supplies, sharing information on international terrorism, access to Central Asia and balancing its relations with China.
- Russia stands to benefit from this relationship because India is the second largest arms market for Russia.
- The Indian military gets most of its hardware from Russia and India imports oil from it.

- India is seeking to increase its energy imports from Russia and republics of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.
- Russia is important for India's nuclear energy plants and assisted India's space industry by giving the cryogenic rocket when India needed it.

► Words that Matter

- **Soviet System:** Soviet system was introduced after Russian Revolution in 1917. It was based on the principles of egalitarian society and a planned economy controlled by the state.
- **Egalitarian Society:** This society believes that all people are equally important and should have the same rights and opportunities in life.
- **Socialist Bloc:** All the East European countries were known as socialist bloc. These countries were liberated from the fascist forces and their political and economic systems were based on this bloc only.
- **Capitalist Economy:** In this type of economy, land and productive assets are owned and controlled by the capitalists.
- **Unipolar:** All affairs at international level are dominated by only one superpower.
- **Multi-polar Systems:** At international level, all affairs cannot be dominated by one superpower only, instead a group of countries play an important role.
- **Shock Therapy:** The model of transition from authoritarian socialist system to a democratic capitalist system in Russia, Central Asia and East Europe under the influence of the World Bank and IMF.
- **Largest Garage Sale:** The undervalued of valuable industries of the USSR were sold out to throwaway prices.



Important Dateline

Date/Year	Important Events
March 1985	— Mikhail Gorbachev elected as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Boris Yeltsin was appointed as the head of the Communist Party in Moscow.
1988	— Independence movement started in Lithuania; which later spread to Estonia and Latvia.
25 Feb. 1991	— Termination of Warsaw Pact.
November 1989	— Fall of Berlin Wall.
March 1990	— Lithuania, the first republic to declare independence from the Soviet Union.
June 1990	— Russian Parliament declares its independence from the Soviet Union.
June 1991	— Boris Yeltsin declared as President of Russia.
August 1991	— A coup against Gorbachev <i>i.e.</i> , against Communist Party.
September 1991	— Three Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania became UN members.
December 1991	— Russia takes over the USSR seat in the United Nations. Russia, Belarus and Ukraine decided to establish the Commonwealth of Independent states.



Practice Exercise



Multiple Choice Questions

- Q 1. Which one of the following statements about the Berlin Wall is false?** (CBSE 2016)
- It symbolised the division between the capitalist and the communist world.
 - It was built during the Second World War.
 - It was broken by the people on 9 November, 1989.
 - It marked the disintegration of the two parts of Germany.
- Q 2. Which one of the following statements was not a feature of the Soviet system?**
- A minimum standard of living was ensured to all citizens.
 - The Soviet Government subsidised the basic necessities.
 - There was no unemployment.
 - People had the right to property.
- Q 3. Which among the following statements wrongly describes the nature of the Soviet economy?** (NCERT)
- Every aspect of the economy was planned and controlled by the state.
 - People enjoyed economic freedom.
 - State ownership/control existed over the factors of production.
 - Socialism was the dominant ideology.
- Q 4. Which one of the following was not a consequence of disintegration of the USSR?** (CBSE 2019)
- Russia emerged as a new superpower.
 - Many new states emerged.
 - The capitalist system emerged as the winner.
 - Power relations in world politics changed.
- Q 5. Identify the group of countries that had been part of the Soviet Union before its disintegration:**
- Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Armenia
 - Armenia, West Germany, Azerbaijan
 - Poland, East Germany, Norway
 - Norway, Hungary, Romania
- Q 6. Which one of the following was not an outcome of 'Shock Therapy'?** (CBSE 2019)
- The old system of social welfare got destroyed.
 - Industries were put up for sale to the private sector.
 - The value of the Russian currency, the 'Ruble' rose dramatically.
 - Russia started to import food grains.
- Q 7. Arrange the following in chronological order:**
- The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.
 - End of Civil War in Tajikistan.
 - A military coup by the Communist Party hardliners.
 - Russian Revolution. (CBSE SQP 2023-24)
- (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv)
 - (ii), (i), (iv) and (iii)
 - (iv), (i), (iii) and (ii)
 - (iii), (i), (ii) and (iv)
- Q 8. Which among the following statements about Soviet System is not true:** (CBSE SQP 2021, Term-1)
- The Soviet Union had complex communication.
 - It had a complex machinery production system and transport sector that connected its remotest areas with efficiency.
 - It had a domestic consumer industry that produced everything from pins to cars.
 - Soviet Union disintegrated in 1992.
- Q 9. The President of which Central Asian country appointed himself to power, first for ten years and extended it for another ten years?** (CBSE SQP 2023-24)
- Turkmenistan
 - Ukraine
 - Azerbaijan
 - Kyrgyzstan
- Q 10. Which among the following is not an outcome of the disintegration of the USSR?** (CBSE SQP 2021, Term-1)
- End of the Ideological war between the US and the USSR.
 - Birth of CIS.
 - Change in balance of power in the world order.
 - Crisis in the Middle East.
- Q 11. Which one of the following is not true about the Soviet system?**
- Authoritarian
 - Freedom of speech to all
 - Bureaucratic
 - Lack of democracy
- Q 12. Which of the following countries was not a part of the Soviet Union?** (CBSE 2023)
- Ukraine
 - Georgia
 - Italy
 - Estonia
- Q 13. Why did Russia become the successor of USSR?**
- Russia led the formation of CIS
 - It inherited the Soviet seat in the UN
 - It was the largest republic
 - Boris Yeltsin was more charismatic than Gorbachev
- Select the correct answer using the force given below: (CBSE SQP 2021, Term-1)
- (i) and (iii)
 - (ii) and (iii)
 - (i) and (iv)
 - (ii) and (iv)



Q 14. The statements given below are related to Shock Therapy. Choose the option that represents only the true statements.

- (i) The value of the Ruble, the Russian Currency, declined due to Shock Therapy.
- (ii) Shock therapy strengthened Communism.
- (iii) Shock therapy reduced the prices of goods.
- (iv) Shock therapy destroyed the old system of social welfare.

Choose the correct option: (CBSE 2021, Term-1)

- a. (i) and (ii)
- b. (ii) and (iii)
- c. (i), (ii) and (iii)
- d. (i) and (iv)

Q 15. Arrange the following in chronological order:

- (i) End of the Second World War
- (ii) Disintegration of the USSR
- (iii) Fall of the Berlin Wall
- (iv) Indo-Russian Strategic Agreement

Choose the correct option: (CBSE 2021, Term-1)

- a. (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv)
- b. (i), (iii), (ii) and (iv)
- c. (i), (iv), (ii) and (iii)
- d. (i), (iv), (iii) and (ii)

Q 16. The most immediate and final cause of the disintegration of the USSR is:

- a. Second World War
- b. Western developments
- c. Gorbachev's policies
- d. The rise of nationalism and the desire for sovereignty within various republics.

Q 17. Shock Therapy is a phenomenon associated with

(CBSE SQP 2021, Term-1)

- a. Central Asian conflicts in Tajikistan and Azerbaijan
- b. New international Economic Order
- c. US plans to root out communism
- d. Stabilising the Russian currency against the US dollar

Q 18. The model of transition, influenced by the World Bank and the IMF, came to be known as

- a. USSR
- b. Shock Therapy
- c. CENTO
- d. SEATO

Q 19. The result of Arab Spring was: (CBSE SQP 2021, Term-1)

- a. Autocratic dictatorship
- b. Socialist system
- c. Post cold war
- d. Capitalist system

Q 20. The currency declined after the implementation of Shock Therapy was

- a. Dollar
- b. Euro
- c. Pound
- d. Ruble

Q 21. Match the following:

Column I	Column II
A. 1988	(i) Fall of Berlin wall
B. 1991	(ii) Independence movement started in Lithuania

C. 1989	(iii) A coup against Gorbachev Le. against Communist Party
D. 1991	(iv) Termination of Warsaw Pact

Codes:

- A B C D
- a. (ii) (iv) (i) (iii)
- b. (i) (ii) (iii) (iv)
- c. (iv) (iii) (ii) (i)
- d. (iii) (i) (iv) (ii)



Assertion & Reason Type Questions

Directions (Q.Nos. 22-32): In the questions given below, there are two statements marked as Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Read the statements and choose the correct option:

- a. Both (A) and (R) are true and (R) is the correct explanation of (A).
- b. Both (A) and (R) are true, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A).
- c. (A) is true, but (R) is false.
- d. (A) is false, but (R) is true.

Q 22. Assertion (A): The Soviet Union become stagnant in an administrative and political sense as well.

Reason (R): The Soviet system was based on the Ideology of socialism. (CBSE SQP 2021, Term-1)

Q 23. Assertion (A): After the Second World War, the world was divided into Eastern Block and Western Block.

Reason (R): Western countries joined Eastern Block.

Q 24. Assertion (A): Joseph Stalin's period saw the rapid industrialisation of the USSR.

Reason (R): His period was known as the Great Terror of 1930's.

Q 25. Assertion (A): USA became the only powerful country in the world after the collapse of the USSR.

Reason (R): The Cold War came to an end with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Q 26. Assertion (A): Many Western European countries joined NATO.

Reason (R): It was a military alliance formed by the USA.

Q 27. Assertion (A): Due to shock therapy the value of Russian Ruble declined.

Reason (R): Ruble is not the currency of the USSR.

Q 28. Assertion (A): The Soviet Union and Communism collapsed in 1991.

Reason (R): The internal weakness of the Soviet political and economic institutions failed to meet the aspirations of the Soviet people.

(CBSE 2021, Term-1)

Q 29. Assertion (A): Shock therapy was the transition of communism to capitalism.

Reason (R): The collapse of communism resulted in shock therapy.

Q 30. Assertion (A): India's Relations with Russia are an important aspect of India's foreign policy.

Reason (R): India maintained good relations with all the post-communist countries.

Q 31. Assertion (A): The Soviet Union had become stagnant in an administrative and political sense as well.

Reason (R): The Soviet system was based on the ideology of socialism.

Q 32. Assertion (A): Throughout the Cold War the industrialised countries of the North tried to ensure a steady flow of resources.

Reason (R): They deployed military forces near exploitation sites. (CBSE SQP 2023-24)



Fill in the Blank Type Questions

Q 33. became general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985 and sought to reform the Soviet system.

Q 34. The Soviet political system was based on ideology.

Q 35. was the founder of the Bolshevik Communist Party and leader of the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Q 36. Mikhail Gorbachev appointed as the head of the Communist Party in Moscow.

Q 37. Party dominated the Soviet Union's political system.

Q 38. The fall of the in 1989 symbolised the fall of communism.

Q 39. The Soviet invasion of took place in 1979.

Q 40. In the Russian Parliament declares its independence from the Soviet Union.

Q 41. was the process of transition of socialist blocs to the capitalist ideology.

Q 42. The Shock Therapy took place under the influence of the and



True or False Type Questions

Q 43. The Soviet Union was more advanced in technology than the Western countries.

Q 44. After the Second World War, the Soviet economy was more developed than the rest of the world except for the US.

Q 45. In September, 1991 three Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania became UN members.

Q 46. The fall of Berlin Wall symbolised the unification of Germany.

Q 47. The Soviet system was based on capitalist ideology.



Correct and Rewrite Type Questions

Q 48. The Soviet economy was progressing in the late 1970s and became very developed.

Q 49. The Soviet political system centered around the socialist party, and all other political party and opposition was allowed.

Q 50. Russia was not accepted as the successor state of the Soviet Union. It did not inherit the Soviet seat in the UN Security Council.

Answers

1. (b) 2. (d) 3. (b) 4. (a) 5. (a)
6. (c) 7. (c) 8. (d) 9. (a) 10. (d)
11. (b) 12. (c) 13. (d) 14. (d) 15. (b)
16. (d) 17. (c) 18. (b) 19. (a) 20. (d)
21. (a) 22. (b) 23. (c) 24. (b) 25. (a)
26. (b) 27. (c) 28. (a) 29. (a) 30. (b)
31. (b) 32. (b)
33. Mikhail Gorbachev 34. Socialist
35. Vladimir Lenin 36. Boris Yeltsin
37. Communist 38. Berlin Wall
39. Afghanistan 40. 1990
41. Shock Therapy 42. World Bank, IMF
43. False 44. True
45. True 46. True
47. False
48. The Soviet economy was faltering in the late 1970s and became stagnant.
49. The Soviet political system centered around the Communist Party and no other political party or opposition was allowed.
50. Russia was now accepted as the successor state of the Soviet Union. It inherited the Soviet seat in the UN Security Council.



Passage Based Questions

Passage 1

Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate option:

A coup took place in 1991 that was encouraged by Communist Party hardliners. The people had tasted freedom by then and did not want the old-style rule of the Communist Party. Boris Yeltsin

emerged as a national hero in opposing this coup. The Russian Republic, where Yeltsin won a popular election, began to shake off centralised control. Power began to shift from the Soviet centre to the republics, especially in the more Europeanised part of the Soviet Union, which saw themselves as sovereign states. The Central Asian republics did not ask for independence and wanted to remain with the Soviet Federation. In December 1991, under the leadership of Yeltsin, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, three major republics of the USSR, declared that the Soviet Union was disbanded. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union was banned. Capitalism and democracy were adopted as the bases for the post-Soviet republics.

The declaration on the disintegration of the USSR and the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) came as a surprise to the other republics, especially to the Central Asian ones. The exclusion of these republics was an issue that was quickly solved by making them founding members of the CIS. Russia was now accepted as the successor state of the Soviet Union. It inherited the Soviet seat in the UN Security Council. Russia accepted all the international treaties and commitments of the Soviet Union. It took over as the only nuclear state of the post-Soviet space and carried out some nuclear disarmament measures with the US. The old Soviet Union was thus dead and buried.

- Q 1. The coup of 1991 was opposed by whom?**
 a. Post-Soviet republics
 b. Boris Yeltsin
 c. Mikhail Gorbachev
 d. Communist Party
- Q 2. Which were the three major republics of USSR?**
 a. Sweden, Germany, France
 b. Russia, Ukraine, Belarus
 c. Poland, Cuba, Russia
 d. Ukraine, Poland, Sweden
- Q 3. Who became the successor state of the Soviet Union?**
 a. Russia
 b. Belarus
 c. Ukraine
 d. Central Asian republics
- Q 4. The type of government adopted by the post-Soviet countries was**
 a. Communist Democratic
 b. Socialist
 c. Capitalist and Democratic
 d. None of the above

Answers

1. (b) 2. (b) 3. (a) 4. (c)

Passage 2

Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate option:

The Soviet Union had become stagnant in an administrative and political sense as well. The Communist Party that had ruled the Soviet Union for over 70 years was not accountable to the people. Ordinary people were alienated by slow and stifling administration, rampant corruption, the inability of the system to correct mistakes it had made, the unwillingness to allow more openness in government, and the centralisation of authority in a vast land. Worse still, the party bureaucrats gained more privileges than ordinary citizens. People did not identify with the system and with the rulers, and the government increasingly lost popular backing.

Gorbachev's reforms promised to deal with these problems. Gorbachev promised to reform the economy, catch up with the West, and loosen the administrative system.

All this might not have led to the collapse of the Soviet Union but for another development that surprised most observers and indeed many insiders. The rise of nationalism and the desire for sovereignty within various republics including Russia and the Baltic Republics (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), Ukraine, Georgia, and others proved to be the final and most immediate cause for the disintegration of the USSR. Here, again there are differing views.

- Q 1. How long did the Communist Party ruled Soviet Union?**
 a. For 70 years
 b. For 50 years
 c. For 68 years
 d. For 82 years
- Q 2. Why did the Soviet system got abandoned by its people?**
 a. Because of its extreme bureaucratic nature
 b. Because of its failure in Second World War
 c. Because people did not identify with the system
 d. All of the above
- Q 3. What did Gorbachev promise to do?**
 a. Provide employment and pensions to elder citizens.
 b. To reform the economy, catch up with the West, and loosen the administrative system.
 c. Back the people in war and international tensions.
 d. To defeat West and become the sole superpower.
- Q 4. What was most immediate cause for the disintegration of Soviet Union?**
 a. The rise of capitalism and the desire for democratic government within various republics including Russia and the Baltic Republics, Ukraine, Georgia and others.

- b. The rise of extremism and the desire for privatisation within various republics including Russia and the Baltic Republics, Ukraine, Georgia and others.
- c. The rise of nationalism and the desire for sovereignty within various republics including Russia and the Baltic Republics, Ukraine, Georgia and others.
- d. All of the above

Answers

1. (a) 2. (a) 3. (b) 4. (c)

Passage 3

Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow by choosing the most appropriate option:

"The collapse of communism was followed in most of these countries by a painful process of transition from an authoritarian socialist system to a democratic capitalist system. The model of transition in Russia, Central Asia and east Europe that was influenced by the World Bank and IMF came to be known as 'shock therapy'. Shock therapy varied in intensity and speed amongst the Second World countries, but its direction and features were quite similar."

Q 1. Which of the following incidents has been quoted as the 'Collapse of Communism'?

- a. Gorbachev's failure to get the desired results through his reforms.
- b. Disintegration of the Soviet Union
- c. The Soviet Union had become stagnant in administration
- d. People were not satisfied with the Soviet system and government lost popular backing.

Q 2. Which one of the following countries was popular for its democratic capitalist system?

- a. United States of America
- b. Russia
- c. Cuba
- d. East Germany

Q 3. Which group of two countries belonged to the 'Second World' countries?

- a. India and Pakistan b. Germany and Italy
- c. Russia and Ukraine d. China and Japan

Q 4. Which one of the following was not a consequence of 'Shock Therapy'?

- a. The rate of inflation got high.
- b. The value of 'Ruble', the Russian currency declined.
- c. The collective farm system got strengthened and food security was ensured.
- d. The old system of social welfare was systematically destroyed.

Answers

1. (b) 2. (a) 3. (c) 4. (c)

Passage 4

Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow:

Each of these countries was required to make a total shift to a capitalist economy, which meant rooting out completely any structures evolved during the Soviet period. Above all, it meant that private ownership was to be the dominant pattern of ownership of property. Privatisation of state assets and corporate ownership patterns were to be immediately brought in. Collective farms were to be replaced by private farming and capitalism in agriculture. This transition ruled out any alternate or 'third way', other than state-controlled socialism or capitalism. (CBSE 2016)

Q 1. Name any two countries which were required to make a total shift.

Ans. Russia and Kazakhstan.

Q 2. Why were collective farms replaced by private farming?

Ans. The collective farms were replaced by private farming for making private ownership as a dominant pattern of ownership of property.

Q 3. What were the two ways of controlling the economy?

Ans. Capitalist economy and 'Shock Therapy' were the two ways of controlling the economy.

Passage 5

Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow:

The value of the ruble, the Russian currency, declined dramatically. The rate of inflation was so high that people lost all their savings. There was also no subsidies provided to the people. The collective farm system disintegrated leaving people without food security, and Russia started to import food. The real GDP of Russia in 1999 was below what it was in 1989. The old trading structure broke down with no alternative in its place. (CBSE 2016)

Q 1. What is meant by subsidy?

Ans. A sum of money granted by the state or a public body to help an industry, individual or business to give economic benefits.

Q 2. How did the disintegration of collective farm system resulted in the loss of food security?

Ans. The disintegration of collective farm system led to capitalism in agriculture which left people without food security because state sponsored subsidies, were ended on food grains.

Q 3. Which country is being referred in the passage and why did the government start importing food?

Ans. 'Russia' is being referred in the passage. The government started importing food to meet the shortage of food.

Passage 6

Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow:

The collapse of communism was followed in most of these countries by a painful process of transition from an authoritarian socialist system to a democratic capitalist system. Privatisation of state assets and corporate ownership patterns were to be immediately brought in. (CBSE 2015)

Q 1. Why was process of transition described as painful?

Ans. As it underlined the collapse of communism which was followed by a shift from an authoritarian socialist system to a democratic system.

Q 2. Which political system was replaced and also mention the system existed before the transition?

Ans. An authoritarian political system crystallised by the socialist model of development had existed before the transition. It was replaced by democratic capitalist system.

Q 3. What is privatisation?

Ans. Privatisation means a reduction in state resorts to disinvestment and encourages private ownership of property and means of production.

Passage 7

Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow:

The Berlin Wall symbolised the division between the Capitalist and the Communist world. Built in 1961 to separate East Berlin from West Berlin, this more than 150 kilometre long wall stood for 28 years and was finally broken by the people on 9 November, 1989. This marked the unification of the two parts of Germany and the beginning of the end of the Communist bloc.

Q 1. When and where the Berlin Wall was build?

Ans. The Berlin Wall was build in 1961 In Berlin (Germany).

Q 2. What did the Berlin Wall symbolise?

Ans. It symbolised the deep political division that split Europe between the Capitalist West and the Communist East.

Q 3. What did the fall of Berlin Wall signify?

Ans. The fall of Berlin Wall marked the unification of the two parts of Germany and the beginning of the end of the Communist bloc and the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Passage 8

Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow:

The end of the Soviet bloc meant the emergence of many new countries. All these countries had their own independent aspirations and choices. Some of them, especially the Baltic and East European states, wanted to join the European Union and become part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). The Central Asian countries wanted to take advantage of their geographical location and continue their close ties with Russia and also to establish ties with the West, the US, China and others. Thus, the international system saw many new players emerge, each with its own identity, interests, and economic and political difficulties.

Q 1. What did the end of the Soviet bloc signify?

Ans. It signifies the emergence of the many new countries.

Q 2. What was decided by the Central Asian countries?

Ans. Baltic and East European states, wanted to join the European Union and become part of the NATO. The Central Asian countries wanted to take advantage of their geographical location and continue their close ties with Russia.

Q 3. What behaviour did the newly formed countries show?

Ans. All the newly formed countries had their own independent aspirations. Thus, the international system saw many new players emerge. Each with its own identity, interests, and economic and political difficulties.

Passage 9

Read the passage given below carefully and answer the questions that follow:

India has maintained good relations with all the post-Communist countries. But the strongest relations are still those between Russia and India. India's relations with Russia are an important aspect of India's foreign policy. Indo-Russian relations are embedded in a history of trust and common interests and are matched by popular perceptions. Indian actors from Raj Kapoor to Amitabh Bachchan are household names in Russia and many post-Soviet countries. One can hear Hindi film songs all over the region, and India is part of the popular memory.

Q 1. Which country emerged as an important partner of Russia?

Ans. India emerged as an important trading partner of Russia.

Q 2. Give any two reasons showing strong relations between India and Russia.

- Ans.** (i) Their relations are embedded in a history of trust and common interests.
(ii) Russia and India have collaborated on various scientific and industrial projects. Both the countries have been sharing a multi-dimensional relationship.

Q 3. Give any two examples of Indo-Russian relations to show the history of trust and friendship.

Ans. The examples of Indo-Russian relations are as follows:

- (i) Their relations are enriched by the popular perceptions for example, Indian actors from Raj Kapoor to Amitabh Bachchan are household names in Russia and many post Soviet countries.
(ii) More than 80 bilateral friendship agreements have been signed between India and Russia as part of the Indo-Russian strategic agreement of 2001.



Very Short Answer Type Questions

Q 1. Identify any two fields in which the Soviet Union lagged behind the West. (CBSE 2020)

- Ans.** (i) Technology
(ii) Fulfilling aspirations of citizens.

Q 2. What do you understand by socialist bloc?

Ans. The socialist bloc was the group of the East European countries which emerged after the Second World War and followed socialist ideology.

Q 3. What does the word Arab Spring signify?

Ans. The word Arab Spring signifies the emergence of new developments for democracies and democratisation in West Asian countries.

Q 4. Highlight any one feature of the multi-polar world as visualised by both Russia and India. (CBSE 2017)

Ans. A multi-polar world is characterised by the co-existence of multiple power centres in the international system. e.g., USA, Russia, China, Japan, etc.

Q 5. Explain 'Bipolarity'. (CBSE 2015)

Ans. Bipolarity can be defined as a system of world order in which the majority of global economic, military and cultural influence is held between two states.

Q 6. Highlight any one major distinction between the Soviet economy and the capitalist economy.

(CBSE 2015)

Ans. The Soviet economy was based on the principles of equality and planned economy controlled by the state. Whereas in capitalist economy, private ownership is dominant. Land and productive assets are owned and controlled by the capitalist.

Q 7. Mention any one consequence of 'Shock Therapy'.

(CBSE 2015)

Ans. The Shock Therapy ruined the economy and people of the entire region. The large state controlled industrial complex almost collapsed as about 90 per cent of its industries were put for sale.

Q 8. How was the US benefitted by the Soviet disintegration? (CBSE 2015)

Ans. The US benefitted by the Soviet disintegration due to economic crisis of the USSR. The Soviet Union used much of its resources in maintaining a nuclear and military arsenal and the development of its satellite states in Eastern Europe and within the Soviet system.

COMMON ERROR

Students usually think that the Soviet Union was not concerned about equal distribution of resources.



TIP

Students must remember that the Soviet Union focused on egalitarian society.

Q 9. For how many years did the Civil War continue in Tajikistan? When did it come to an end?

Ans. The Civil War in Tajikistan continued for 10 years. It came to an end in 2001.

Q 10. Which two republics of the USSR have had violent secessionist movements at the time of its disintegration?

Ans. Chechnya and Dagestan were the two republics of the USSR which have violent secessionist movements at the time of its disintegration.

Q 11. Highlight any one democratic value which the bureaucratic and authoritarian Soviet system lacked. (CBSE 2019)

Ans. The Soviet system became extremely bureaucratic and authoritarian making life very difficult for its citizens. There was a lack of freedom of speech and expression. Russia also dominated over the people from other regions who felt neglected and suppressed.

Q 12. Explain the term 'capitalism'. (CBSE 2019)

Ans. Capitalism is a system where:
(i) the economy is not controlled by the Government.
(ii) it is based on privatisation.
(iii) it is based on free-market forces.



TIP

Sometimes students consider communism and capitalism to be the same but in capitalism the system is democratic and the properties are privately owned. Whereas in Communism the system and property is under the control of the state.



Q 13. Why is it said that the fall of Berlin Wall signified the end of Bipolarity?

Ans. The fall of Berlin Wall marked the unification of the two parts of Germany and the beginning of the end of the Communist bloc and the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

Q 14. After the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union, why was the process of transition called a painful one? (CBSE 2020)

Ans. The process of transition called a painful one because:

- (i) The value of ruble declined dramatically and the inflation rate was so high that people lost their savings.
- (ii) The Russian old system of social welfare was systematically destroyed and the withdrawal of government subsidies pushed large sections of the people into poverty.

Short Answer Type Questions

Q 1. Mention any two characteristics of the Soviet economy during the Cold War days.

Ans. Two characteristics of the Soviet economy during the Cold War days were as follows:

- (i) It had a complex communication network, vast energy resources including oil, iron and steel.
- (ii) It had a domestic consumer industry that produced everything from plns to cars.

Q 2. Why is it said that the collapse of Berlin Wall signified the collapse of the bipolar world?

Ans. The Berlin Wall was the hallmark of the Cold War. It symbolised the division between the capitalist and the Communist world, a bipolar world. The German people on 9th November, 1989 broke the wall, marking it as a symbol of unification of the East and West Germany into a single country with Berlin as its capital. The fall of Berlin Wall was then followed by a line of events which marked the end of Cold War.

Q 3. Why did the Soviet Union disintegrate? Highlight any two arguments in support of your answer.

Ans. The USSR disintegrated because:

- (i) The Soviet political and economic institutions had developed internal weakness which defied people's aspiration and needs.
- (ii) Complimenting the administrative stagnation, there was an economic stagnation which cut short the consumer demand and paved way for the market failure.

Q 4. In what way Soviet Union lagged behind the West? (CBSE 2020)

Ans. The Soviet Union lagged behind the West in:

- (i) technology
- (ii) infrastructure i.e., transport, power
- (iii) fulfilling the political and economic aspirations of citizens.

(iv) productivity and technology fell that led to shortages in all consumer goods.

Q 5. What was the final and most immediate cause for the disintegration of the USSR?

Ans. The rise of nationalism and desire for sovereignty within various republics including Russia and the Baltic Republics like Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, Ukraine, Georgia and others proved to be the final and most immediate cause for the disintegration of the USSR.

Q 6. What is meant by the Shock Therapy?

Ans. The Shock Therapy was the state of affairs which signifies the collapse of Communism followed by a painful process of transition from an authoritarian socialist system to a democratic capitalist system.

Q 7. What was the largest garage sale in history?

(CBSE 2018)

Ans. The largest garage sale in history signifies the ruin and collapse of industrial complex in Russia. In the largest garage sale, valuable industries were undervalued and sold at throw away prices.

Q 8. List out the features of Soviet Society. (CBSE 2019)

Ans. Features of the Soviet Society were:

- (i) "Soviet Society" gave primacy to the state around the Communist Party.
- (ii) The Soviet political system centred around the Communist Party and no other political party or opposition was allowed.
- (iii) In Soviet Society, the economy was planned and controlled by the state. In Soviet Society, there was focus on the social welfare system for the social and economic equality and equal distribution of income.

Hence, Soviet Society became a powerful society after the Second World War.

Q 9. How did Communist regime collapse one after another?

Ans. Mikhail Gorbachev's decision to normalise relations with the West and democratise the Soviet system had several negative effects that neither he nor any one else intended or anticipated.

- (i) The people in the East European countries which were part of the Soviet Bloc started protest against their own governments and Soviet control.
- (ii) Unlike in the past, the Soviet Union under Gorbachev did not intervene when the disturbances occurred and the Communist regimes collapsed one after another.
- (iii) These developments were accompanied by a rapidly escalating crisis with the USSR that hastened its disintegration. Gorbachev's reforms itself were opposed by leaders within the Communist Party.

Q 10. Write a note on the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Ans. With the disintegration of the USSR the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) was established in 1991 when Russia, Belarus and Ukraine decided to annul the 1922 Treaty on the creation of the USSR.

- (i) The formation of Commonwealth of Independent States come as a surprise to the other republics, especially to the Central Asian ones.
- (ii) The exclusion of Central Asian Republics was an issue that was quickly solved by making them founding members of the CIS.
- (iii) Russia was now accepted as the successor state of the Soviet Union. It inherited the Soviet seat in the UN security council. Russia accepted all the international treaties and commitments of the Soviet Union.

Q 11. How has the Soviet Union become stagnant in an administrative and political sense?

Ans. During the Cold War era gradually the Soviet Union became stagnant in an administrative and political sense due to various factors like:

- (i) The communist party that had ruled the Soviet Union for over 70 years was not accountable to the people.
- (ii) Ordinary people were alienated by slow stifling administration, rampant corruption, the inability of the system to correct mistakes it had made, the unwillingness to allow more openness in government and the centralisation of authority in a vast land.
- (iii) Worst still, the party bureaucrats gained more privileges than ordinary citizens.
- (iv) People did not identify with the system and with rulers and the government increasingly lost popular backing.

All these factors were responsible for the stagnant administrative and political structure or for the disintegration of the USSR.

Q 12. Which two possibilities were left open in the changed scenario of the world politics after the disintegration of USSR?

Ans. With the disintegration of USSR and the end of the Cold War there left open only two possibilities like either the remaining superpower would dominate and create a 'Unipolar System' Else.

Different countries or groups of countries could become important players in the international system, thereby bringing in a 'Multi-polar system' where no one power could dominate.

Q 13. How did the end of the Soviet Bloc lead to the emergence of many new countries?

Ans. The end of the 'Soviet Bloc' meant the emergence of many new countries because at the dawn of the disintegration of USSR it got divided in 15 independent countries.

All these countries had their own independent aspirations and choices.

- (i) Some of them, especially the Baltic and East European states wanted to join the European Union and become part of 'North Atlantic Treaty Organisation'.
- (ii) The Central Asian countries wanted to take advantage of their geographical location and continue their close ties with Russia and also to establish ties with the West, the US, China and others.

Thus, the international system saw many new players emerge, each with its own identity, interests and economic and political difficulties.

Q 14. In what ways Shock Therapy brought about ruin to the economic system of Soviet Region? (CBSE 2020)

Ans. The 'Shock Therapy' administered in the 1990s did not lead to the people into the promised utopia of mass consumption. Generally, it brought ruin to the economies and disaster upon the people of the entire region.

- (i) Russia, the large state controlled industrial complex almost collapsed as 'about 90 per cent of its industries' were put up for sale to private individuals and companies.
- (ii) Since, the economic activities was carried out through market forces and not by government directed industrial policies, it led to the virtual disappearance of entire industries. This was called the largest sale in history as valuable industries were undervalued and sold at throwaway prices.

Q 15. How did Shock Therapy destroy social welfare system of Russia? (CBSE 2020)

Ans. Under the influence of Shock Therapy the cold system of social welfare was systematically destroyed.

- (i) The withdrawal of government subsidies pushed large sections of the people into poverty.
- (ii) The middle classes were pushed to the periphery of society and the academic and intellectual manpower disintegrated or migrated.
- (iii) A mafia emerged in most of these countries and started controlling many economic activities.
- (iv) Privatisation led to new disparities. Post-Soviet states, especially Russia were divided in rich and poor regions.

Hence, in the post Cold War era unlike the earlier system, there was now great economic inequality between people.

Q 16. Mention any two effects on the East European countries that the Soviet army had liberated from the fascist forces after the Second World War.

(CBSE 2019)

Ans. Impact that the Soviet Union had on the East European countries were:

- (i) They came under the control of the USSR.



- (ii) The political and economic system of all these countries were modeled after that of the USSR. This was known as the 'Socialist Bloc'.
- (iii) The Warsaw Pact, a military alliance, held them together under the leadership of the USSR.

Q 17. Describe any four consequences of 'Shock Therapy'.
(CBSE 2017)

Ans. The term 'Shock Therapy' meant the transitional model from being a socialist country to a capitalist country influenced by the World Bank and the IMF.

Four consequences of 'Shock Therapy' were:

- (i) 'Shock Therapy' proved to be a real challenge for the Soviet economy. It brought ruin to the Communist economies and the people of the region.
- (ii) It led to the collapse of the state controlled industrial units and high scale privatisation of the government enterprises and subsequent auctioning of the state owned industries which was called the 'largest garage sale' in world history.
- (iii) The value of Russian currency, Ruble declined dramatically with soaring rate of inflation pushing people into poverty.
- (iv) The old system of social welfare was pushed to ashes with government withdrawing subsidies.
- (v) It widened the gap between rich and poor.

Q 18. Explain the reasons for the disintegration of the USSR.

OR

Discuss the developments that escalated the crisis within the USSR that hastened its disintegration.

(CBSE SQP 2023-24)

Ans. Factors responsible for the disintegration of the Soviet Union were:

- (i) The most important factor for the fall of the Soviet Union was lack of proper leadership. There was no clear cut line between the party and government as there was one political party that controlled all the power.
- (ii) Mikhail Gorbachev's policies of 'Perestroika' and 'Glasnost' proved to be disastrous for the economic health of the USSR.
- (iii) Anti-communist forces of Soviet Union had the support of USA and Western European countries. Gorbachev due to his liberal policies did not try to uproot these forces.
- (iv) No effort was ever made to provide freedom and rights to the people of the nation.

Q 19. Describe any four consequences of the disintegration of Soviet Union.

OR

Analyse any three consequences of the disintegration of the USSR?

(CBSE 2023)

Ans. The consequences of the disintegration of Soviet Union were:

- (i) The disintegration of Soviet Union meant the end of the Cold War because Cold War was the ideological rivalry between the USA and the USSR. Thus, Cold War confrontations were put to an end.
- (ii) The dissolution of the Soviet Union led to a dramatic change and upheaval in the power relations which had implications for the world politics. The disintegration left open the world space to be dominated by the sole superpower called the USA or to have the dominance of several powers.
- (iii) The Bretton Woods institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund became active players in the wake of developmental needs of the Second World countries as they were borrowing money from World Bank and IMF.
- (iv) The world saw the emergence of many new countries with their own independent aspirations.
- (v) The Baltic states named Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia joined the European Union and subsequently became members of the NATO.
- (vi) Undoubtedly the significant consequence of the withering away of the USSR was the inauguration of the period of US hegemony in which capitalism was pronounced as the winner because socialism had been defeated.



TIP

According to the students, the exposure to Western ideas and world was the reason for the disintegration of the USSR but there are many reasons like lack of transparency, corruption, etc. which led to the disintegration of the USSR.

Q 20 . What was Soviet System? Assess any four features of Soviet system.

Ans. A system constituted in the USSR after the Russian revolution of 1917 is known as the Soviet system. It was based on the principles of equality and planned economy controlled by the state.

The features of Soviet system were follows:

- (i) Soviet system gave primary importance to the state and the institution of the party.
- (ii) The political system was centered around only one political party that was the Communist Party and no other opposition was allowed.
- (iii) The economic system of Soviet system was planned and under the control of the state.
- (iv) Besides, another important feature was that in Soviet system state ensured a minimum standard of living for all citizens and government subsidised the basic necessities.

Q 21. In what way protest started against Gorbachev's reform policy? Who emerged as the national hero in the protest move?

Ans. The way protest started against Gorbachev's reform policy were:

- (i) The protest against Gorbachev's reform policy was started by leaders within the Communist Party. The people in the East European countries which were part of the Soviet bloc started to protest against their own governments and Soviet control.
- (ii) A coup took place in 1991 that was encouraged by Communist Party hard-liners.
- (iii) Boris Yeltsin emerged as a 'national hero' in opposing this coup. The Russian republic where Yeltsin won a popular election began to shake off centralised authority.
- (iv) Power began to shift from the Soviet centre to the republics, especially in more Europeanised part of the Soviet Union, which saw themselves as sovereign states.
- (v) In December 1991, under the leadership of Yeltsin, Russia, Ukraine and Belarus three major republics of the USSR declared that the Soviet Union was disbanded.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union was banned. Capitalism and democracy were adopted as the bases for the post-Soviet republics.

Q 22. Why the Soviet Union collapsed in spite of Gorbachev's accurate diagnosis of the problem?

OR

Analyse any three happenings during the Gorbachev period that led to the disintegration of the Soviet Union. (CBSE 2023)

Ans. The main reason behind the Soviet Union collapse in spite of Gorbachev's accurate diagnosis of the problem were:

- (i) When Gorbachev carried out his reforms and loosened the system, he set in motion forces and expectations that few could have predicted and became virtually impossible to control.
- (ii) Some sections of Soviet society felt that Gorbachev should have moved much faster and were disappointed and impatient with him.
- (iii) The members of Communist Party felt that their power and privileges were eroding and Gorbachev was moving too quickly.
- (iv) In this tug of war, Gorbachev lost support on all sides and divided public opinion with the disillusionment of inadequate dependence.

Q 23. Examine the political consequences of Shock Therapy. (CBSE 2019)

Ans. The Shock Therapy did not pay much attention towards the political transition like economic transformation:

- (i) The formation of democratic institutions was not given due attention and preference to the demands of economic transformation was there.
- (ii) The constitutions of all the Russian regions were drafted in a hurry. Russia had a strong executive president with the widest possible powers that rendered elected parliament relatively weak.
- (iii) In Central Asia also, the presidents had great powers and several of them became very authoritarian. They never allowed any dissent or opposition.
- (iv) Besides, there was the absence of judicial culture and independence of judiciary was yet to be established in most of the Russian and Soviet regions.

Q 24. How has Central Asia become a zone of competition between outside powers?

Ans. The Central Asian Republics have become a zone of competition because of the following reasons:

- (i) They are the areas with vast hydrocarbon resources, which have brought them economic benefit followed by economic development.
- (ii) 'Central Asian Republics' have also become an open zone of competition between outside powers and oil companies.
- (iii) After 11 September, 2001 the US also wanted military bases in the region and to allow airplanes to fly over their territory during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.
- (iv) Russia also wanted these states under its influence because Central Asian Republics are its immediate neighbours.

Q 25. Examine the features of Gorbachev reform policies.

Ans. Mikhail Gorbachev was the last leader of the Soviet Union. He introduced economic and political reform policies of perestroika and glasnost. The main features of his reform are as follows.

Restructuring and openness:

- (i) Reform policies were based on the restructuring of administrative system and openness of economic affairs.
- (ii) Reform policy also aimed at keeping information and technological development in the USSR and keep in pace with the information and technological revolutions taking place in the West.
- (iii) Democratisation of Soviet Union: Gorbachev introduced the policy with the aim to normalise relations with the West and democratise the Soviet Union in order to have free economic affairs in world area.

In this way, Gorbachev's reforms promised to deal with the existing problem of economic stagnation and administrative system.

Long Answer Type Questions ↘

Q 1. Explain six factors which helped Soviet Union becoming superpower after Second World War.

Ans. The Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) came into existence after the socialist revolution in Russia in 1917. Slowly and gradually it became superpower after the Second World War in 1945. Following factors helped the USSR becoming superpower like:

- (i) After the Second World War Soviet army liberated many East European countries from fascist forces. These countries later became the part of Soviet alliance.
- (ii) The group of this alliance was called the Eastern alliance and the second world or socialist bloc. Their economic and political system were modelled like the USSR system.
- (iii) Its economy became the developed and it came on second rank after the US. Its complex communication network, vast energy resources including oil, iron, steel and machinery production made it the second superpower of the world.
- (iv) USSR became self-sufficient in consumer goods as its domestic consumer industry produced everything from pins to cars.
- (v) Beside, Soviet state also ensured minimum standard of living for all citizens and the government subsidised basic necessities including health, education child care and other welfare schemes which was at par with the US.
- (vi) Another factor which added to its strong position in the world was that there was no unemployment and its transport sector connected its remotest areas with efficiency.

Q 2. How did the Soviet Union suddenly disintegrate? Explain any four reasons. (CBSE 2016)

Ans. 'The sudden disintegration of Soviet Union', the second world power was the matter of shock or surprise to the world. The causes and reasons for the collapse were very much inherent in the Soviet system and the Soviet socialist bloc. Undoubtedly it is said that the internal weakness of Soviet political and economic institutions, which failed to meet the aspirations of the people, were responsible for the collapse of the system.

Thus, the causes of the disintegration of Soviet Union can be analysed as under:

- Weak system and economic stagnation.
- Political and administration causes.
- Gorbachev's reform policies.

- Rise of nationalism and desire for sovereignty within various republics.
- (i) 'Economic stagnation' for many years led to severe consumer shortages and a large section of Soviet Society began to doubt and question the system and to do so openly.
- (ii) During the Cold War era gradually the Soviet Union became stagnant in an administrative and political sense due to various factors.
 - (a) Factors like the Communist Party that had ruled the Soviet Union for over 70 years was not accountable to the people.
 - (b) Ordinary people were alienated by slow and stifling administration, rampant corruption, the inability of the system to correct mistakes it had made, the unwillingness to allow more openness in government and the centralisation of authority in a vast land.
 - (c) Worse still, the party bureaucrats gained more privileges than ordinary citizens.
 - (d) People did not identify with the system and with rulers and the government increasingly lost popular backing.

All these factors are responsible for the stagnant administrative and political structure.

- (iii) Mikhail Gorbachev was the last leader of the Soviet Union. He introduced economic and political reform policies of perestroika. These policies proved to be a backlash for the unity of the USSR as people started to demand more robust reforms.
- (iv) The rise of nationalism and desire for sovereignty in various republics, (like-Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), Ukraine, Georgia and others proved to be the final and most immediate cause for the disintegration of the USSR. Nationalist urges and feelings were very much of work throughout the history of the Soviet Union.

Q 3. Trace out the tensions and conflicts in Soviet Republics. (CBSE 2020)

Ans. The conflicts and tensions among the Soviet Republics were very much practical and perceived under the due effects/impact of disintegration process and Shock Therapy. Most of the former Soviet Republics are prone to conflicts, and many have had Civil Wars and Insurgencies.

The tensions and conflicts can be traced in the three major regions like:

- In Russian Regions
- In Central Asia
- In Eastern Europe



(i) **Conflict in Russian Regions:** In Russia, two republics, Chechnya and Dagestan have had violent secessionist movements. Moscow tried its best to curb the movements through strong methods including indiscriminate military bombings but it failed to check or deter the aspirations for independence.

(ii) **Tensions and Conflicts in Central Asia:** In Central Asia, Tajikistan witnessed a Civil War that went on for ten years till 2001.

(a) In reality the region as a whole has many sectarian conflicts like in Azerbaijan's province of Nagorno-Karabakh, some local Armenians want to secede and join Armenia.

(b) In Georgia, the demand for independence has come from two provinces resulting in a Civil War.

(c) Besides movements also started against the existing regimes in Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Georgia.

(d) There was river water sharing disputes among the countries and provinces.

Thus, this civil war of Central Asia led to political instability and made the life of ordinary people difficult.

(iii) **Conflict in Eastern Europe:** After the disintegration of USSR in Eastern Europe there were ethnic conflicts among the regions like:

(a) Czechoslovakia split peacefully into two provinces-i.e., Czechs and the Slovaks formed independent countries.

(b) Balkan republics of Yugoslavia witnessed most severe conflict. After 1991, it broke apart with several provinces like Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina declaring independence.

(c) Ethnic Serbs opposed this, and a massacre of non-Serb Bosnians followed.

(d) Apart from this, there was inter-ethnic civil war in the Eastern Europe with the interventions of NATO and bombing of Yugoslavia.

Q 4. State the features of Indo-Russian friendship.

(CBSE 2017)

Ans. During the Cold War era India and the USSR enjoyed a multi-dimensional relationship. The relation between the two can be analysed under four arenas like:

(i) Economic (ii) Political

(iii) Military (iv) Culture

(i) **Economic:** In the economic arena Soviet Union provided extraordinary assistance to India's technical and economic developments like:

(a) The Soviet Union assisted India's public sector companies and gave aid and technical assistance for steel plant like Bhilai, Bokaro,

Visakhapatnam and machinery plants like Bharat Heavy Electrical Ltd.

(b) The Soviet Union kept positive attitude towards India when India was suffering from financial crisis like shortage of foreign exchange. The Soviet Union accepted Indian currency for trade.

(ii) **Political:** In the political sphere Soviet Union supported India's position on the Kashmir issue in the UN.

It also supported India during the war with Pakistan in 1971.

To reciprocate India too supported Soviet foreign policy in some crucial but indirect ways.

(iii) **Military:** In military sphere also India got a very friendly support from Soviet Union. It received most of its military hardware from Soviet Union and got the technological knowledge regarding military arsenals.

India and Soviet Union also set up a joint venture to produce military equipment.

(iv) **Cultural:** India and Soviet Union has cultural ties to the promotion and enrichment of India's culture. Hindi films and Indian culture were very popular in the Soviet Union. Indian actors from Raj Kapoor to Amitabh Bachchan are household names in Russia and many post-Soviet countries.

Beside, Hindi film songs are famous all over the Soviet region and India is part of the popular memory.

Q 5. Examine any six factors which led to the disintegration of the former Soviet Union.

Ans. Following were the six factors that led to the disintegration of the USSR:

(i) **Leadership Crisis:** It was the most important cause for the disintegration of the Soviet Union. There was no clear cut line between the party and government as there was one political party which was wielding power.

The leader of the Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU) was placed at the helm of affairs of the government/state. The CPSU managed to impress people for a substantial period.

However, later on, the leadership of the CPSU lost its sheen owing to corruption and simultaneously lost people's confidence.

(ii) **Gorbachev's Policies:** Mikhail Gorbachev's policies of Perestroika and Glasnost proved to be disastrous for the economic health of the USSR. He did not create conducive conditions for the implementation of the twin policies.

Gorbachev ignored the presence of anti-Communist forces and did not try to uproot them from the Soviet Union.

- (iii) **Anti-Communist Elements had Reached as its Peak:** Gorbachev's ignorance and his liberal outlook in turn strengthened the anti-communal forces in Eastern Europe. Consequently, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria and East Germany witnessed the downfall of the Communist regimes. These sudden developments paved way for the disintegration of the USSR.
- (iv) **Economic Stagnation:** The Soviet economy remained stagnant for many years which led to severe consumer shortages. Much of the resources were used in maintaining a nuclear and military arsenal and the development of its satellite states.
- (v) **Stagnant Administration:** The administration and political system of Soviet Union became stagnant. The Communist Party that ruled the Soviet Union for over 70 years was not accountable to the people. Rampant corruption, unwillingness to allow more openness in government led to the collapse of the system.
- (vi) **Rise of Nationalism and Desires:** The final and the most immediate cause for the disintegration of the USSR was the rise of nationalism and the desire for sovereignty within various republics including Russia and the Baltic Republics.

Q 6. Describe the role of Gorbachev to reform the Soviet system and the effects of these reforms on the USSR. (CBSE 2015)

Ans. Mikhail Gorbachev was the general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1985. He initiated reforms in the Soviet system and tried to normalise relations with the West. He also tried to democratise and reform the Soviet Union.

Some of the reform initiated by Gorbachev are:

- (i) He introduced economic and political reform policies of 'Perestroika' (restructuring) and 'Glasnost' (openness).
- (ii) He stopped the arms race with the US by signing a pact to establish control over nuclear weapons.
- (iii) He withdrew Soviet troops from Afghanistan and Eastern Europe.
- (iv) He helped in the unification of Germany.

The reforms initiated by Gorbachev had following effects on the USSR:

- (i) Common people became impatient to bring openness and restructuring of system more faster than these were scheduled in the policy of Perestroika and Glasnost.
- (ii) Bureaucrats and Communist hardliners did not want to adopt these policies, they felt their powers and luxuries would reduce.
- (iii) As a result, Gorbachev had to suffer and subsequently he resigned and a coup took place in 1991. In which Communist Party hardliners

were on one side and the staunch supporter of restructuring on the other.

- (iv) Gorbachev's reform policy geared up nationalistic feelings and the desire for sovereignty within various republics including Russia and Baltic republics.
- (v) People preferred capitalist economy over the centralised economy under which they were suffering.

Q 7. Describe the factors that make most of the former Soviet republics prone to the conflicts and threats.

(CBSE 2015)

Ans. The present day conflicts which the post-Soviet republics are confronted can be traced to the old days when the USSR had existed. With the downfall of the USSR, Russia has experienced high levels of ethnic conflicts pertaining to exit claims by former satellite states that rose against the idea of federation. Exit claims antagonised the state leading to a clash between the interest of the centre and the constituent states resulting in massive human right violations in Chechnya and in other regions. The three factors that make most of the former Soviet republics prone to conflicts and threats are:

- (i) **Chechnya Conflict:** Chechnya conflict which began in 1994 has led to the demand for independence. It has been the bone of contention between separatists and the Government of Russia for decades. Russia has been criticised for its actions which led to mass killing of the people in Chechnya.
- (ii) **Tajikistan Conflict:** Tajikistan also experienced a decade long Civil War fuelled primarily by a clash between ethnic groups. It ended in 2001. The cause of the Civil War lies in the period after the end of the Cold War where legitimacy crisis erupted after presidential elections in Tajikistan. It took the form of a Civil War.
- (iii) **Georgia Conflict:** Like the other post Soviet states, Georgia also fell prey to the internal conflicts and instability which had accumulated since the days of the Soviet Union. Declaring independence, Georgia witnessed two gruesome conflicts in the country. These conflicts proved to be painful for the country as it created divided societies following divergent interests.

Q 8. Why are India's relations with Russia considered an important aspect of India's foreign policy? Explain.

Ans. India has maintained good relations with all the Post-Communist countries but it has a strongest relation with Russia which continues till date. Following are some arguments to support the statement:

- (i) Indo-Russian relation is an important segment of India's foreign policy. The relations between these two countries are embedded in a history of trust and common interests and are matched by popular perceptions. Famous Bollywood personalities are common names in Russia.



- (ii) Both the countries share a vision of a multi-polar world order. A multi-polar world is the co-existence of several powers in the international system, collective security, greater regionalism, negotiated settlements of international conflicts, an independent foreign policy for all countries and decision-making through bodies like the UN.
- (iii) From this relationship India gets benefits on issue like Kashmir, energy supplies, sharing information on international terrorism, access to Central Asia and balancing its relations with China. On the other hand, Russia stands to benefit from this relationship because India is the second

- largest arms market for Russia. The Indian military gets most of its hardware from Russia.
- (iv) Russia is vital for India as it has repeatedly come to the assistance of India during its oil crisis. India is trying to increase its energy imports from Russia and the republics of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.
- (v) Apart from this, Russia is important for India's nuclear energy plants and assisted India's space industry. For example, Russia has provided the cryogenic rocket when India needed it.
- Due to the above reasons, Russia is considered an important aspect of India's foreign policy.



Chapter Test

Multiple Choice Questions

- Q 1. Which one of the following was not given primacy by the maker of the Soviet Union?
- Abolition of Private property
 - Society based on the principle of equality
 - No opposition party to be allowed
 - No state control over the economy.
- Q 2. In which year Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Communist Party of USSR?
- 1990
 - 1989
 - 1987
 - 1985

Fill in the Blank Type Questions

- Q 3. The Soviet political system was based on Ideology.
- Q 4. In the Russian Parliament declares its independence from the Soviet Union.

Assertion and Reason Type Question

- Q 5. In the question given below, there are two statements marked as Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Read the statements and choose the correct option:
- Assertion (A):** The Soviet Union become stagnant in an administrative and political sense as well.
- Reason (R):** The Soviet system was based on the ideology of socialism.
- Both (A) and (R) are true and (R) is the correct explanation of (A).
 - Both (A) and (R) are true, but (R) is not the correct explanation of (A).
 - (A) is true, but (R) is false.
 - (A) is false, but (R) is true.

Passage Based Questions

- Q 6. Read the passage given below and answer the questions that follow:
- In Eastern Europe, Czechoslovakia split peacefully into two, with the Czechs and the Slovaks forming independent countries. But the most severe conflict took place in the Balkan republics of Yugoslavia. After 1991, it broke apart with several provinces like Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina declaring independence. Ethnic Serbs opposed this, and a massacre of non-Serb Bosnians followed. The NATO intervention and the bombing of Yugoslavia followed inter ethnic Civil War.
- In Eastern Europe which republic split into two ?
 - Name the republic/place where severe conflict took place.
 - Which incidents resulted into inter-ethnic Civil War?

Very Short Answer Type Questions

- Q 7. What was the immediate cause of disintegration of USSR?
- Q 8. Highlight any one consequence of 'Shock Therapy'.

Short Answer Type Questions

- Q 9. Why is it said that collapse of Berlin Wall signified the collapse of bipolar world?
- Q 10. "The Soviet Union lagged behind the West". Comment.
- Q 11. Describe any four consequences of the disintegration of Soviet Union.

Long Answer Type Question

- Q 12. Discuss the factors responsible to have forced Gorbachev to initiate reforms in Soviet Union.