

# **A History of Consequences: The Collapse of the Soviet Bloc and Other Dictatorships**

*July 24, 2020, | By Jin Yan(Minghui.org)*

Although the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) survived the Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989 to continue its totalitarian rule, many communist regimes in Eastern Europe did not, as their one-party rule collapsed in one country after another. The Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein met a similar fate. In these cases, it wasn't only the top culprits who were put on trial and punished; officials, collaborators, and even the social elites like judges, scientists, and academics also suffered consequences for their disgraceful conduct.

This upheaval first appeared in Poland and later expanded to the former Warsaw Pact countries such as East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania, culminating in the disintegration of the Soviet Communist Party and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Below are some examples.

## **The Sudden Downfall of Ceausescu and the Romanian Communist Party**

During this anti-communist wave in Eastern Europe, all the countries chose to end the turbulence with a free election and a peaceful transfer of power from the Communist Party.

The majority of high-ranking Communist Party officials in these countries willingly gave up their power because they could see what the people were truly striving for and that the Communist Party had lost its ground. They knew that the best outcome was to go with the flow.

Romania, however, was the notable exception to this pattern of peace.

Nicolae Ceausescu established a dictatorship shortly after taking office and started sending secret police to monitor the people, which effectively deprived the people of their freedom of speech and basic human rights.

In the 1980s, he went so far as to enact the infamous “Great Romanian Typewriter Act,” under which every Romanian citizen, business, institution, and school that owned a typewriter had to seek and receive permission from the police and obtain a license for its use. To become a typist, one must go through the same procedure and report to the

police samples of what he or she would type; if a typewriter needed to be repaired, both the user and the machine would have to have their licenses renewed. The setup aimed to ensure that any contraband literature that was ever typed could be traced back to its source.

Ceausescu was also highly nepotistic when appointing people to important positions. While at the helm as the General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, he appointed his wife to be the Deputy Prime Minister; his children, relatives, and friends were also put in charge of important government departments. Their luxurious lifestyle was far beyond what ordinary Romanians of the time could ever imagine.

On December 21, 1989, Ceausescu held a mass rally in the capital city of Bucharest. During his speech, a voice shouting “Down with Ceausescu!” was suddenly heard in the crowd, followed by yells of “Death to the criminal!” here and there. Armed policemen wearing helmets were sent out to cordon off the nearby streets, and officers shouted at the crowd to disperse.

Romania’s defense minister at the time, Vasile Milea, was said to have ordered his army to “shoot only blanks.” But the mayor of Bucharest passed a different order from

Ceausescu to the soldiers on the front line: “You can shoot [live rounds]. Shoot towards the sky as a warning first; if that doesn't work, shoot them in the leg!”

Milea was later found dead in his office, the result of an alleged suicide.

On the morning of December 22, the army formerly loyal to Ceausescu changed sides and started to retreat from the city center. The police alone could no longer stop the protesting crowds. Later, protesters broke into the Party's Central Committee and defenestrated Ceausescu's writings, official portraits, and propaganda books.

In a great panic, Ceausescu and his wife fled from the roof via helicopter to a northern suburb of Bucharest, but they were captured that afternoon by the Romanian National Salvation Front. Three days later on December 25, the couple was put on trial at a drumhead court-martial for the genocide of 60,000 Romanian citizens, the embezzlement of over one billion U.S. dollars, sabotage of governance, and damage to the national economy.

The couple was found guilty and summarily executed outside the courtroom, marking the end of the Romanian Communist Party.

## **Settling Accounts for Crimes against Humanity**

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in November of 1989, the East German government (GDR) decided to embrace the concept of liberalization. The next year, it dissolved itself and became a fully sovereign state of the Federal Republic of Germany.

However, the crimes committed by the former communist regime did not escape punishment. Eight years later, the Germans began to settle accounts with the former East German communist regime for their crimes against humanity.

Egon Krenz, former leader of the Free German Youth and the last General Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), was summoned to court in Berlin for trial. Two other former SED Politburo members also appeared in court. The trial of Krenz and two of his followers was the most significant lawsuit concerning East Germany.

The court sentenced Krenz to six and a half years in prison for killing people who tried to flee East Germany. In 1997, Günther Kleiber, former SED Politburo member, and economist, and Günter Schabowski, former First Secretary

of the SED, were both sentenced to three years in prison on the same charges.

Former Yugoslavian president Slobodan Milosevic was also tried for his dictatorial actions.

In 2001, Milosevic was extradited to the International Criminal Court (ICC), an international tribunal in The Hague, and charged with 66 crimes during the three wars in Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo, including genocide; complicity in genocide; deportation; murder; persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds; inhumane acts and forcible transfer; extermination; imprisonment; torture; and willful killing.

He died in March 2006 in his cell at the ICC's detention center in The Hague before his trial could be concluded.

The execution of Saddam Hussein provides another telling case.

In 2003, Saddam Hussein, who was the leader of Iraq's repressive dictatorship from 1979 to 2003, was arrested by the U.S. military during the war launched by a coalition seeking to depose him. He was later handed over to the interim Iraqi government to stand trial along with 11 other

senior leaders of his administration for crimes against humanity and other offenses.

Even though Saddam insisted on his innocence and denied all charges made against him, he was convicted by the Iraqi Special Tribunal with crimes against humanity and sentenced to death by hanging on November 5, 2006. The execution was carried out on December 30 the same year.

The above cases show that even heads of state who commit crimes against humanity will be brought to justice.

## **Lustration in Poland**

Poland adopted a new Constitution at its National Assembly on April 2, 1997, which abrogated all political parties and organizations with programs based upon totalitarian methods, such as those of Nazism, Fascism, and Communism.

The National Assembly also passed a lustration statute, viewed as a process of reckoning with the past. It required people who hold or are candidates for public positions in the state to make a statement about their collaboration with the secret police under the former communist regime. As it only targeted people in government agencies and those with

high social status, the statute pertained to no more than 30,000 people, leaving most former informants for the secret police service unidentified.

In 2006, after the twin brothers Jaroslaw and Lech Kaczynski from the Law and Justice Party took the positions of President and Prime Minister of Poland, respectively, they called for a more thorough and transparent investigation of communist-era Poland.

The Kaczynski brothers believed that the “grey networks” formed by former Communist Party members, corrupt economists, and informants of the secret police were still in control of the country, causing chaos in Polish society. Therefore, it was necessary to continue their investigation into the past.

A new lustration law with additional articles was enacted in Poland on March 15, 2007, which aimed to expose those government officials who had collaborated with the secret police in the former communist regime before 1989. The law requires politicians, government officials, lawyers, school leaders, academics, journalists, and state company executives to state in writing whether they had cooperated with the communist secret police. The government

entrusted the Institute of National Remembrance to collect and keep all the statements for records and investigation.

Under this law, around 700,000 Poles would have to confess and explain any disgraceful conduct they committed in collaboration with the secret police, as well as their spies and informants. Anyone who refused to fill in the declaration form or lied about facts would be suspended for ten years.

In 2008, the Polish Parliament passed a law to significantly reduce the pensions of former secret police and Communist Party officials involved in suppressing dissidents and opposition parties. Supporters of this law believe that the ex-secret police's preferential pension violates the principles of social justice laid down in the Polish Constitution. This law was fiercely criticized by the Polish left, which appealed to the Constitutional Court to have the law canceled. Their request was rejected.

After the law was enacted in January 2010, pensions of up to 40,000 former Communist Party officials, secret police officers, border guards, and prison wardens were reportedly reduced by an average of more than 50% for human rights violations.

## **The Stasi Records Act in Germany**

In Germany, the “Act Regarding The Records of The State Security Service of the Former German Democratic Republic” (also known as the “Stasi Records Act”) was passed in the German federal parliament in December of 1991. Under this act, Germany committed huge financial resources to the restoration of destroyed archival records and carried out intensive investigations on around 3.1 million individuals who served the former East German government.

The results were quite shocking: In addition to 90,000 secret police, East Germany hired as many as 180 informants; around 6 million people (more than a third of the total population of 17 million at the time) had secret archives filed against them; and 78,000 citizens were sentenced to jail by the communist government, accused of “endangering national security.”

As a result of the investigations, 20,000 of 180,000 teachers were dismissed from their employment, nearly half of the judges and prosecutors in what was formerly East Germany were fired, and a number of top SED officials and high-ranking secret police members were prosecuted and convicted.

The implementation of such laws not only reminds people of what happened in history but also serves as a warning for all government officials who side with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) today.

## **The Viciousness of Today's CCP**

Since the CCP took power in China in 1949, it has ruled China and its people with an iron fist, and tens of millions of Chinese people have died of unnatural causes as a result of its repressive policies and political purges. The CCP has completely destroyed China's 5,000-year-old civilization and moral values via coercive brainwashing of the entire population with atheist fallacies and communist doctrines; it has also crushed all spiritual beliefs outside the scope of its communist theories.

Its hands are awash in blood in its systematic persecutions of house Christians, underground Catholic church members, Tibetan Buddhists, Uyghurs in Xinjiang, and most brutally, the tens of millions of Falun Gong practitioners who believe in the principles of Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance.

The CCP strongly believes that the most effective way to sustain its power over China is by brainwashing the Chinese people and keeping them from the truth. To achieve this, it spent billions building the “Great Firewall” to impose internet censorship and block “unfriendly” foreign websites, internet tools, and mobile apps.

At the same time, the CCP organized a massive army of Internet commenters who constantly make postings on social media to manipulate public discourse in favor of the CCP and attack its “enemies.”

The CCP appears to be quite successful in controlling the minds of Chinese people. For example, to this day, a large proportion of Chinese do not know about the bloody slaughter of thousands of young students at Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989.

The CCP's desire for power does not seem to be limited to China. Its tentacles have now stretched around the world, infiltrating in a wide range of social and economic sectors through projects such as the “One Belt, One Road” initiative, “Made-in-China 2025,” Confucius Institutes, the militarization of man-made islets in the South China Sea, and so on. The CCP's ultimate goal, in its own words, is to

achieve global supremacy economically, militarily, and ideologically.

But in the face of such serious threats to socioeconomic stability and world peace, many politicians and leaders in business and other fields have regrettably failed to see the dangers of the CCP. They still hold on to wishful thinking that the CCP would change for the better and be a reliable business partner.

## **The International Community Awakens**

The CCP's intentional cover-up of the onset of the coronavirus infection led directly to the devastating pandemic around the world. Its lyings and shifting blame to others have awakened many people in the international community, who have begun to see the CCP for what it is.

Calls for independent investigations into the origin of the coronavirus and holding the CCP accountable for damages incurred from the pandemic have been echoed in the international community.

“The Chinese Communist Party lied. People died” is a phrase that White House Advisor Peter Navarro has used repeatedly when referring to the pandemic. It sends a

simple but powerful message that the CCP must be held accountable for all the pain and suffering experienced by the world's people.

The recent Hong Kong National Security Law pushed through by the CCP has served as another wakeup call to the world's people who hold freedom and human rights in high esteem.

“China has chosen to break their promises to the people of Hong Kong and go against their obligations to the international community. The UK will not turn our backs on the commitments we have made to the people of Hong Kong,” Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab wrote on Twitter.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo described the legislation as “draconian” that would “end free Hong Kong” in a tweet on June 30, 2020.

“The purpose of this brutal, sweeping law is to frighten, intimidate and suppress Hongkongers who are peacefully demanding the freedoms that were promised,” said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

“This law risks seriously undermining the high degree of autonomy of Hong Kong and having a detrimental effect on

the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law," said European Council President Charles Michel. "We deplore this decision."

"Australia is troubled by the law's implications for Hong Kong's judicial independence, and on the rights and freedoms enjoyed by the people of Hong Kong, both of which underpin the city's success," said Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne.

Twenty-seven countries made a joint statement at the United Nations Human Rights Council and expressed their "deep and growing concerns" over the new security law.

"Imposing the law without the direct participation of Hong Kong's people, legislature or judiciary 'undermines' the 'One Country, Two Systems' principle guaranteeing Hong Kong a high degree of autonomy, rights and freedoms," said the signatories, which included Britain, Japan, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Switzerland and 15 European Union states including France, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden.

There is a saying in Chinese: "He who repeatedly commits wrongdoing will come to no good end." The CCP is doing just that, and it may not be long before it disintegrates like

the communist parties of Eastern Europe. When that happens, those who have collaborated with the CCP and willingly aided its crimes would also be held accountable. Breaking away from the CCP is thus the best choice to ensure oneself a bright future.

*<https://en.minghui.org/html/articles/2020/7/24/186005.html>*