

## II.H.9

From the Cold War to the Fall of the Berlin Wall

# Glasnost and Perestroika – Assessing Gorbachev's Reformist Policies

Ein Beitrag von Elisabeth Gentner



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Der sich verschärfende Kalte Krieg sowie die zunehmende Globalisierung stellte die Sowjetunion der 1980er-Jahre vor massive Herausforderungen. Gorbatschows Reformpolitik sollte die Sowjetunion aus der Krise führen, führte jedoch den Weg für ihren Zerfall. In dieser Reihe entdecken die Lernenden anhand von Reden, Karikaturen, Bildern und Sachtexten das Erbe des letzten sowjetischen Staatspräsidenten und diskutieren dieses kritisch.

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### KOMPETENZPROFIL

Klassenstufe: 11/12

Dauer: 7 Unterrichtsstunden

**Kompetenzen:** Ursachen und Merkmale der Krisenphänomene der Sowjetunion der 1980er-Jahre erarbeiten; Bild- und Textmaterialien multiperspektivisch analysieren, das Reformprogramm sowie seine Folgen analysieren und beurteilen

**Thematisch Bereiche:** Zusammenbruch des Ostblocks, Sowjetunion, Kalter Krieg

**Medien:** Text, Bild, Karikatur, Rede, Debatte

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## Auf einen Blick

### 1./2. Stunde

**Thema:** The Soviet Union in the 1980s: Responses to Crisis Phenomena

- M 1 **The Soviet Union in the 1980s – A Competition for Supremacy**
- M 2 **The Soviet Union – Economic Stagnation?**
- M 3 **The Soviet Union – Fallen Behind**
- M 4 **The Soviet Union – Various Challenges in the 1980s**
- M 5 **A Soviet Timeline of the 1980s**
- M 6 **Gorbachev’s Maiden Speech – A Wind of Change**

**Inhalt:** Die Lernenden setzen sich mit den Krisen der Sowjetunion der 1980er Jahre auseinander und verstehen diese als Hintergrund der Reformpolitik Gorbatschows.

### 3./4. Stunde

**Thema:** Glasnost and Perestroika: Reforming or Abolishing Socialism?

- M 7 **Mikhail Gorbachev – The New Shooting Star?**
- M 8 **Gorbachev’s Speech on Perestroika (1987)**
- M 9 **The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe – The Domino Effect**

**Inhalt:** Die Schülerinnen und Schüler vergleichen Fremd- und Selbstwahrnehmung Gorbatschows und bewerten seine Reformpolitik im Kontext des Zusammenbruchs des Ostblocks.

### 5./6. Stunde

**Thema:** Inevitable? The End of the Soviet Union – Russia Upside Down?

- M 10 **Glasnost and Perestroika – Processes Out of Control**
- M 11 **The Dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991**
- M 12 **The Rise of Russian Oligarchs**
- M 13 **Russia Turned Upside Down?**
- M 14 **Challenges in Russia After 1991**

**Inhalt:** Die Lernenden identifizieren Glasnost und Perestroika als treibende Kraft hinter dem Ende der Sowjetunion. Sie identifizieren verschiedene Probleme des postsowjetischen Russlands.

## 7. Stunde

**Thema:** Evaluating Gorbachev's Reforms

**M 15** Debate – A Revolution From Above?

**M 16** Exam – The Fall of the Soviet Empire

**M 17** Glossary

**Inhalt:** Im Rahmen einer Debatte und einer Lernerfolgskontrolle diskutieren die Schülerinnen und Schüler, wie revolutionär Gorbatschows Reformen wirklich waren.

VORANSICHT

## Mikhail Gorbachev – The New Shooting Star?

M 7

### Tasks

1. Analyze how Gorbachev is presented on the magazine covers below.
2. Make suggestions about what Gorbachev's reform policy may be like.

Cover No. 1: March 25, 1985



© Mark Hess

Cover No. 2: July 27, 1987



© Skip Liep

Cover No. 3: December 29, 1986



© Der Spiegel Nr. 1/1987

Cover No. 4: February 23, 1987



© Der Spiegel Nr. 9/1987

## M 8

## Gorbachev's Speech on Reforming Socialism (1987)

## Task

1. Outline the different challenges the Soviet Union faced in the 1980s, according to Gorbachev.
2. Compare Gorbachev's analysis of the crisis of the 1980s with your previous knowledge.
3. Explain Gorbachev's ideas on reforming the Soviet Union and overcoming the crisis as laid down in the speech.
4. Analyze the language, style and structural elements used in the speech in order to identify how Gorbachev conveys his message to his audience.

## Analyzing a Speech – A Guideline:

- Look at the overall structure of the text: introduction, main part, conclusion, line of argument.
- Focus on the purpose of the speech: Is it meant to inform, to explain something, to persuade, to mobilize, to entertain etc.? Is the audience even asked to take certain steps of action?
- Identify the key words or recurring expressions in the speech.
- Analyze the language that is used in the speech:
  - formal vs. informal language
  - use of words with a positive or a negative connotation
  - use of stylistic devices, e. g. contrasts, repetitions, enumerations, alliterations, metaphors, use of rhetorical questions
  - Which effects are created?
- Show how the audience is addressed and how it becomes involved.

## Excerpts from Gorbachev's Speech on November 2, 1987

It is 70 years since the unforgettable days of October 1917, those legendary days that started the count of the new epoch of social progress of the real history of mankind. The October Revolution is truly the shining hope of humanity, its radiant dawn<sup>1</sup>. [...]

The gap between word and deed had widened [in the 1980s]. Negative processes in the economy were gathering momentum and had, in effect, created a pre-crisis situation. Many aberrations<sup>2</sup> had arisen in the social, spiritual and moral spheres, and they were distorting and deforming the principles of socialist justice, undermining the people's faith in it, and giving rise to social alienation and immorality in various forms. The growing discrepancy between the lofty<sup>3</sup> principles of socialism and the everyday realities of life was becoming intolerable.

The healthy forces in the party and in society as a whole were becoming more and more acutely aware of the pressing need to overcome negative phenomena, to reverse the course of events, to ensure an acceleration of the country's socio-economic development, and to bring about a moral purification and renewal of socialism.

It was in response to this extremely acute social need that the April 1985 plenary meeting of the Central Committee put forward the concept and strategy of accelerating the country's socio-economic development, and the course aimed at a renewal of socialism. [...]

The changes taking place in the country today probably constitute the biggest step in developing socialist democracy since the October Revolution. In reorganizing our economic and political

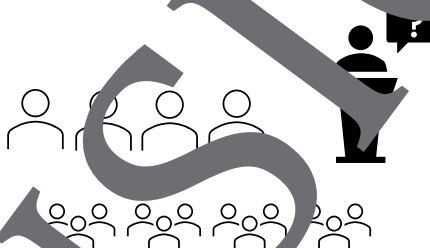
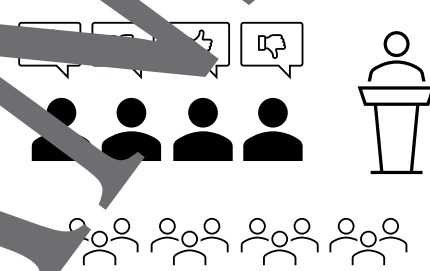
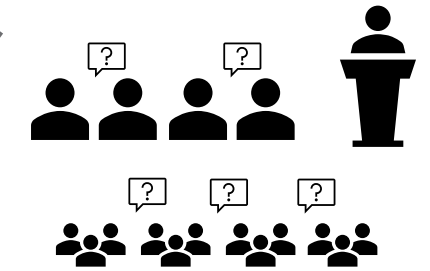
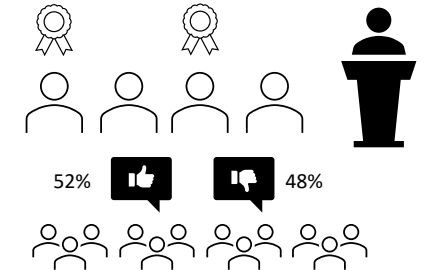


## Debate – A Revolution From Above?

M 15

### Task

1. Divide the class into two groups.
2. As a group, prepare arguments for both sides for the following motion:  
"Gorbachev's policy of glasnost and perestroika was a revolution from above."
3. Decide which group argues *for* and which group *against* the motion.
4. Select two main speakers for each group and one person that will moderate the debate.

How to debate	
<p>A debate is a formalized discussion following certain rules. It is a contest between speakers for and against a statement, which ends in a vote.</p>	
<p>At the beginning, the moderator of the debate introduces the issue and presents the statement (also called 'motion') which is about to be discussed.</p>	
<p>In a first phase of the debate, the four main speakers each present their argument, switching of between pro and con side. The audience (also called the 'floor') listens to the main speakers but does not ask questions.</p>	
<p>In the second phase, the main speakers open to discuss the motion. They may now react to each other's arguments and introduce further arguments. The floor may participate as well by commenting and asking questions. The moderator regulates the discussion.</p>	
<p>At the end of the debate, the positions are briefly summarized by the moderator. After a moment of consideration, the floor votes whether they agree or disagree with the motion. The moderator presents the results and declares the winner of the debate.</p>	

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