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Silent Herold of Collapse: The USSR in the Early 1980ies

My paper analyzes the reasons for the collapse of the Soviet Union, which began already some years before the actual end in 1991. In the early 1980ies neither scientists nor politicians would have dared to predict that the system was already quite shaky. The government seemed to be not capable to provide its citizens with the needed consumer products, which in certain "brother-countries" were more or less accessible. There was no adequate supply in the vast regions all over the country; even in Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev you had to have the right political connections to get proper medical treatment, a flat of your own, and even access to decent food was limited or very expensive, let alone the costs for the Army . At that time the Iron Curtain around the Soviet Union was still quite solid. The all-embracing control of the citizens as well as of the people who came into the country still functioned consistently. "Ordinary" Soviet citizens had no opportunity to travel to "capitalistic" countries. The newspapers, Radio and TV were mere propaganda instruments. The majority of the people seemed to be quite content, because they did not know better. But step by step bricks and mortar of propaganda started to crumble with the news of Poland's Solidarność movement, the high casualties of the Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan, and, last but not least by the intellectual opposition disseminating by samizdat inside and outside the country .