

'The Role of Conscience and Dissent in Bringing About the Fall of
the Berlin Wall (and Raising of the Iron Curtain) in and around
1989'

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Title:

*'Political Economy Perspectives: Manifestations of Revitalized Conscience
and Dissent in the Former Soviet Union and its Sphere of Influence'*

Abstract:

The paper presents the argument that Soviet narratives and ideas were used to legitimise state policies to suppress freedom, expression, opinion and most importantly religion. Since the time of Stalin the former USSR crushed dissent and tried to erase all conscience in the society. The objective of eliminating religion and its replacement with 'universal atheism' was both misguided and ideologically weak. It argues how repressive policies employed against religions, both Christianity and Islam, in the Soviet Union and its sphere of influence lead to revitalization of conscience and promoted dissent. Dissent and conscience built up over the years since 1945 and is evident from the events such the East Germany Uprising 1953, Hungarian Uprising 1956, Prague Spring 1968 and the Islamic dissent in Central Asian Republics. One of the pinnacles of this conscience was witnessed in 1979 during the visit of Pope John Paul II to Poland. These signify a gradual build up of conscience and dissent over decades rather than a quick process in the 1980s. It investigates and argues that the events of 1989 and 1991 manifested due to the political and economic policies designed to degenerate religion, promote atheism and engineer socio-political outlook of societies. These insights are supplemented by a quantitative historic analysis of violence, democratic indicators and government controls in a range of former Soviet republics.