

## Ecological Perils in Erstwhile USSR: Some Facts and Figures

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**KEYWORDS** Pollution. Socialist Economy. Socialist Planning. Ecological Disaster

**ABSTRACT** Until recently, researches on Soviet Socialist economy were carried out to measure gross production and productivity (its increase or decline) both in industrial and agricultural sectors over short and long spans of time period, and these were compared with capitalist countries like USA. But in a more recent period, the researches on the Soviet socialist economy have also started to take into consideration the relationship (in terms of rate and volume) of the Soviet, or for that matter, socialist economy with environmental pollution and degradation. The aim of this paper is to present a preliminary review of some recent literature on Soviet environmental situation in the context of a socialist economy. The researcher's reading of the literature shows that rapid environmental pollution had taken place in the former Soviet Russia and the major information on this aspect of the socialist USSR have come from the Soviet source itself, during the period of glasnost and perestroika. At another level, it has been found that the Socialist Soviet Russia not only had increased its energy use (example, fossil fuels) at a very high rate but sometimes higher than that of capitalist countries like USA. The same story runs in case of Soviet agriculture and it is illustrated with a specific case of cotton production vis-à-vis desertification of the Aral Lake in Soviet Central Russia. All these can be explained by the centralized nature of Soviet planning which according to some recent ecological theory is 'ecologically unsound' as it tried to control everything from a single centre.