

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — The Western powers are partly to blame for the downfall of President Mikhail Gorbachev by letting him lose his **credibility** among his own people, Prime Minister Datuk **Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** said today.

He said the West should have helped Mr Gorbachev by providing full aid to the Soviet Union rather than preoccupy themselves with imposing their brand of democracy.

"To a certain extent they (the western powers) are to be blamed because they were intent on **democracy** rather than **helping** the Soviet Union get the benefit of a free market system.

"When Mr Gorbachev humbled himself to the West for help, the West failed him. They were only bent on coming up with their own pace and legislation to get rid of the old system (of **communism**).

"When this happened, Mr. Gorbachev lost his credibility among his own people. His people could not accept his approaches when no help was **forthcoming**.

"They took action and this can be seen now," he said.

Dr Mahathir was **speaking** to newsmen after launching the national farmers, breeders and fishermen's day at the Sri **Cahaya** Agricultural Park in Shah **Alam**.

Dr Mahathir said the West should have seen Mr Gorbachev's boldness in wanting to dismantle communism. They should have given him the **assistance** he greatly needed.

He said all of Mr Gorbachev's efforts had now gone to waste because of this.

PM: Part of blame rests with the West

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"It is not easy for the Soviet Union to achieve a free market system **especially** after being under communist rule for the last 70 years.

"They needed **managerial** and entrepreneurial skills, and capital to do this."

Dr Mahathir **said** the Soviet problem was parallel to Malaysia's own **experience**.

"In our country, the Malays being backward needed help to compete economically with other races.

"They needed to **produce** the same things the Soviets needed like skilled managers, **entrepreneurial** expertise and capital. But in our case, the help came from **the** Government.

"But in the Soviets' case nobody wanted to help them. Everybody was bent on getting the most from them.

"And **because** their economy has failed under the present system, it has given room and reason for the conservatives and hardliners to mount a comeback."

Asked what policy **direction** **Malaysia** would **take now** that the Soviet Union was led by hardliners, he said Malaysia would monitor the **situation** there (**See** Page **3**).