

The August Coup

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“The coup... was a shock to the rest of the world”¹ said Mr. Burns. “We began to realize it was possible that the Soviet Union might break up -- might cease to exist. It was unimaginable before that.”² These were Nicholas Burn’s remarks, the director for Soviet affairs during President H.W Bush’s administration, and the fall of the Soviet Union. The August Coup was an attempted coup by 8 hardline conservatives³ to overthrow Mikhail Gorbachev’s rule of the Soviet Union in August 1991. They were opposed to Gorbachev’s reform program of “perestroika” (meaning restructuring), were angered at the loss of control over territories in Eastern Europe and most important of all, were fearful of the New Union Treaty, which would further consolidate power from Moscow to its 15 republics.

Unfortunately for them, the coup would fail after just 4 days, due to a myriad of factors, including poor planning, poor organization, opposition from the president of the Republic of Russia Boris Yeltsin, and civilian opposition.

In many ways, the August Coup represented the end of the Soviet Union, and in turn, the Cold War. The rapid failure of the usurpation of the conservatives displayed the outstanding negative attitude already present towards these groups and the ideology it stood for, and the changing mentality of Soviet citizens and politicians were made clear, from the communist hegemon of the world to a nation accepting of a democratic form of government. This led to the successful 1991 presidential elections, which has since been labelled fairer and freer than subsequent Russian elections by political commentators.⁴ However, to truly grasp the enormity, complexity and

¹ RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, “Failed 1991 Coup Changed U.S. Diplomacy toward U.S.S.R.” RFE/RL, last modified July 18, 2016, <https://www.rferl.org/a/failed-1991-coup-changed-us-diplomatic-approach-to-ussr/27932246.html>.

² Ibid

³ Ian Bond, “The Moscow Coup(S) of 1991: Who Won and Why Does It Still Matter?” Centre for European Reform, last modified August 17, 2021, <https://www.cer.eu/insights/moscow-coups-1991-who-won-and-why- does-it-still-matter>.

⁴ Will Englund, “A Defining Moment in the Soviet Breakup.” Washington Post, last modified June 11, 2011,

symbolic nature of the coup, a solid grasp of Soviet history and communist ethos must be attained.

The Soviet Union itself was founded through a coup; the October Revolution in 1917 gave the Bolsheviks power over Russia, transferring power from the Russian Republic (which had been formed after Tsar Nicholas II's abdication) to the later-named Communist Party of Russia. It is important to note the situation of Russia at the time; a nation at war crippled with losses far into the millions, an incompetent leader in the Tsar⁵, and a population in which the majority were unhappy with the existing caste system⁶. These aspects were largely resolved by the time of 1991, and although there were also many other reasons for the Revolution, most of these had been resolved by the time of the Coup as well. A reason for the 1991 coup's failing is that there was simply not enough unrest for a revolution to take place, unlike in 1917. This will be expanded upon later in the paper.

The variant of communism installed in the Soviet Union was Marxism-Leninism⁷, and was left unchanged till its dissolution. Collectivism was an integral part of the ideology (and communism in general), which is the idea of prioritizing the group over an individual. When realizing this, another factor of the Coup's failure may also be understood. Although the rule of Mikhail Gorbachev had led the Soviet Union away from communism, the social influence of the collectivist ethos was still present. Hence, when the conspirators acted in a way which went against the majority of the people's ideals but adhered to their own⁸, they went against an idea that had been instilled into the population for the last 80 years, and unlike communism where opinions on it by the general populace was strongly divided, collectivism was a far more accepted idea. Therefore, it is no wonder that the coup was met with fierce resistance and resulted in the failure of the coup.

Now the chronology of events will be told.

The beginning of the coup can be traced back to 1985, following the decision by the Politburo (the policy-making body of the Soviet Union) to elect Gorbachev as the next General Secretary of the Soviet Union, following the death of Konstantin Chernenko. Gorbachev's election was

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/1991-the-soviet-unions-end/2011/06/08/AGnsDdOH_story.html.

⁵ Gareth Russell, "Review of The Weakness of Tsar Nicholas II", CONFESIONS of a CI-DEVANT (blog), last modified April 22, 2013. <http://garethrussellcidevant.blogspot.com/2013/04/the-weakness-of-tsar-nicholas-ii.html>.

⁶ Richard Pipes, "Review of Did the Russian Revolution Have to Happen?" *The American Scholar* 63, no. 2, 215–38. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41212239>.

⁷ Alfred B. Evans, *Soviet Marxism-Leninism : Decline of an Ideology*. Praeger, 1994.

⁸ James L. Gibson, "Mass Opposition to the Soviet Putsch of August 1991: Collective Action, Rational Choice, and Democratic Values in the Former Soviet Union." *American Political Science Review* 91, no. 3 (September): 671–84. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2952082>.

met with excitement from the general public due to his relatively young age (he was the youngest member of the Politburo) and his good health⁹. Gorbachev's reign was characterized by perestroika and glasnost (openness), policies which both heavily contributed to the fall of communism, due to their liberal nature. Hence, from 1985 to 1989, the Soviet Union underwent liberalization, which was met with acclaim from the West due to the westernization and potential for the close of the Cold War. However, within the Soviet Union, Gorbachev's reforms brought great unpopularity, with his approval rating in Moscow dropping from 78% in 1989 to just 22% in 1990¹⁰. This is because the attempted transition from a command to mixed economy resulted in economic chaos with inflation, government spending and food prices all soaring¹¹. The Soviet Union didn't recover economically for the rest of its existence, which led itself into a reason why the populous would eventually act against the conspirators in the coup; they wanted reform, especially economically, and the transition to a free market with perestroika was the most direct way in which this could occur. If the conspirators were in power, it was likely that nothing would change, and they would reverse back into the pre-Gorbachev stagnation. Although perestroika caused unrest in Soviet Russia, the transparency and encouragement of free speech that came with glasnost would have a bigger impact in 1989.

The Revolutions of 1989 was a period in which many countries under the influence of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe (known as the Eastern Bloc) dissolved their existing communist governments and replaced them with more democratized ones. Participants include Romania with the execution of Nicolae Ceaușescu resulting in the collapse of the Romanian Communist Party¹², Czechoslovakia and the student-led Velvet Revolution caused the resignation of Gustáv Husák¹³, then leader of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland's round table talks both culminated in the first free elections of either nation since the inception of their respective communist parties in rule^{14 15}, and Bulgaria deposed of Todor Zhivkov, the head of the Bulgarian Communist Party after his resistance to Gorbachev's ethos of perestroika was deemed to be potentially damaging to the path of the nation¹⁶, as it deviated from other

⁹ Dusko Doder, and Louise Branson. *Gorbachev: Heretic in the Kremlin*. (New York Penguin Books, 1991).

¹⁰ Delbert H. Long, "Continuity and Change in Soviet Education under Gorbachev." *American Educational Research Journal* 27, no. 3: 403–23. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1162930>.

¹¹ Barbara Maranzani, "Did Perestroika Cause the Fall of the Soviet Union?" HISTORY, last modified February 22, 2019, <https://www.history.com/news/did-perestroika-cause-the-fall-of-the-soviet-union>.

¹² The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, Romania - National Communism, Encyclopedia Britannica, Accessed October 7, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Romania/National-communism>.

¹³ Hugh Agnew, *The Czechs and the Lands of the Bohemian Crown*. (Hoover Press, 2013).

¹⁴ András Bozóki, "The Roundtable Talks of 1989: Participants, Political Visions, and Historical References ." *Hungarian Studies* 22, no. 1-2: 244. https://is.muni.cz/el/fss/podzim2019/POLb1116/um/Bozoki_The_Roundtable_Talks_of_1989.pdf.

¹⁵ Frances Millard, "The Polish Parliamentary Elections of October 1991." *Soviet Studies* 44, no. 5: 837.

¹⁶ Chuck Sudetic, "EVOLUTION in EUROPE; Bulgarian Communist Stalwart Says He'd Do It All Differently." *The New York Times*, November 28, 1990, <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/11/28/world/evolution-in-europe->

communist nations, possibly isolating the state.

Following the revolutions, it was only a matter of time until the Warsaw Pact, the political and military alliance headed by the Soviet Union consisting of other Communist nations, fell. Although still an institution, it was left virtually ineffectual¹⁷ due to the political changes in Eastern Bloc nations. Further compounding the effects of the revolution was the fact that within Ukraine and Baltic states, human chains of hundreds of thousands of citizens in each place were done to demonstrate their desires for independence. Since these were actions of rebellion against communism within Soviet republics, these events displayed instability within the Soviet Union itself, and was followed by the election of pro-independence parties in all 3 Baltic nations (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), and the presence of a pro-independent party in the main legislative body in Ukraine, both occurring in 1990¹⁸. Herein lies a major factor as to the coups beginning; the conspirators' dislike and opposition to perestroika and the effects that it had, with the independence movements in the aforementioned republics being the most prominent issue¹⁹, with all Baltic states eventually declaring independence in 1990. Although these feelings would heighten in 1991, the seeds were sown and many within the government saw the dissolution of the Soviet Union as an inevitability.

Another key event in 1990 was the Supreme Soviet election, which was the first free election into the Congress. Whilst Gorbachev and the CPSU still held an overwhelming majority of seats (920/1061²⁰), there was now a noticeable independent contingency (141 members) and in the CPSU itself there were ~350 members who have been deemed to be in the democratic bloc, posing a significant threat to communist hardliners such as the 8 conspirators.

Furthermore, Boris Yeltsin was elected as the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet's branch in the Republic of Russia. Yeltsin during this time was elected as a member of the CPSU, however would later resign from the party in the 28th Congress. His election resulting in him becoming a prominent figure in Russian politics would be a large factor in the coup's failure due to his popularity.

The 28th Congress was held on the 2nd of July 1990, and is one of the most important events

bulgarian-communist-stalwart-says-he-d-do-it-all-differently.html.

¹⁷ Office of the Historian, Milestones: 1953–1960 - Office of the Historian, State.gov, last modified 2019, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/warsaw-treaty>.

¹⁸ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, Baltic States - Soviet Republics | Britannica, Encyclopedia Britannica, last modified 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Baltic-states/Soviet-republics>.

¹⁹ Reuters, Q+A: What Was the Hardline Soviet Coup Attempt in 1991?, last modified August 16, 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-coup-qa/qa-what-was-the-hardline-soviet-coup-attempt-in-1991-idUSTRE77F2GC20110816/>.

²⁰ Григорий Белонучкин, "Съезд народных депутатов и Верховный Совет РСФСР / Российской Федерации," Politika, last modified 2002, <http://www.politika.su/gos/ndrs.html>.

regarding the August Coup. Foremost, Yeltsin's resignation was a devastating blow to the CPSU due to his leading position in Russia, and created a new faction within the Congress, with his 'Democratic Platform' opposing Gorbachev's "CPSU Central Committee Platform"²¹, further dividing Russian politics. In this meeting, the New Union Treaty was also proposed, which was one of the major catalysts to the coup. The treaty was proposed to decentralize much of the power within the USSR from Moscow, and distribute it to its constituent republics, with its primary goal being to coerce republics striving for independence to remain part of the Union through omitting all references to Socialism (implying a general shift towards capitalism) and providing more autonomy. Whilst significant concessions were made, it was deemed by some republics whose independence movements were especially strong like Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, and Moldova to not be enough, only desiring complete independence. Nevertheless, the concessions proposed were seen by the eventual conspirators of the coup to be too much and risk both the Socialist nature and the fortitude of the Union, hence reasoning their actions.

Lastly, following this Congress was the first instance in which a coup was brought up as a possibility. Alexander Yakovlev, a staunch supporter of Gorbachev's and a member of the CPSU platform continued to warn him about the possibility of a coup occurring following the events of the 28th Congress, although the 8 conspirators had yet to actually meet and plan one by this time²². The instability and tenuous nature of the Union is proven by this fact, and the importance of the 28th Congress in the fall of the Soviet Union is undermentioned as a factor.

The rest of 1990 was characterized by independence movements, with Armenia and Azerbaijan both having strong movements, and Ukraine deposing of their CPSU-associated prime minister, Vitaliy Masol, following the Revolution on Granite. Interestingly, these protestors also demanded that the New Union Treaty should not be signed like the conspirators, for the reasons that they did not simply want autonomy and instead full independence.

December 1990 is when the planning of the coup begins. Although the KGB, the main security agency of the CPSU had been considering one since September, on the 11th of December, the Chairman of the KGB Vladimir Kryuchkov went onto the Moscow Programme (a now defunct TV station) and proclaimed his desire for a call to order following the tumultuous year. Throughout the course of the next year, Kryuchkov brought together the Gang of Eight, and

²¹Antony Kalashikov, "Interpellation in the Late Soviet Period: Contesting the De-Ideologization Narrative." *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 58, no. 1 (January): 23–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00085006.2015.1127513>.

²²John B Dunlop, *The Rise of Russia and the Fall of the Soviet Empire*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

hence the beginning of the August Coup²³.

Although throughout this paper the motives for the Gang of Eight has been stated, it is necessary to revisit and fully explain their thought process. Many different perspectives exist; however, one agreed-upon fact is that the conspirators generally disliked Gorbachev's ideology of perestroika and glasnost; the process of democratization in a state where it and capitalism had been used as negative terms when portraying western states in earlier years was certainly polarizing, especially due to the hard-line and high-ranking nature of the conspirators. The diversion in opinion largely emits from the distinction as to whether the Eight aimed to re-integrate authoritarian control of the CPSU (which had been significantly weakened through Gorbachev) or the more nationalistic view in which they aimed to prevent the fall of the Union and to protect people from the "terrible experiment" of Gorbachev's glasnost, perestroika and demokratizatsiya²⁴. The distinction here is largely meaningless as in both circumstances the general populace, Yeltsin and Gorbachev would've still vehemently disagreed and acted against the conspirators in either stance, nevertheless it is an interesting distinction.

To gain an understanding of the Gang of Eight's perspective, it is also necessary to provide background information on each of the members.

The aforementioned chairman of the KGB, Vladimir Kryuchkov, brought together the Gang of Eight and in the opinion of this paper has been seen as the leader of the coup. Although when the conspirators eventually took over the government it was not him, but Yanayev that was installed as the new Chairman of the Soviet Union, this is possibly just due to Yanayev's prominence as the Vice President of the Soviet Union, and nothing to do with his role within the conspirers. Furthermore, the large role of the KGB in the coup furthers the notion of Kryuchkov's initiative and proactivity in the coup, and hence his leading position. A staunch Stalinist, Kryuchkov believed that Gorbachev's role in the undermining of Stalin's many institutions and ideals coupled with his democratization and ending of the Cold War made him a poor leader²⁵. Ironically, Kryuchkov became head of the KGB in 1988, and was chosen by Gorbachev himself to be an apt head, with him still being a supporter of Gorbachev during this time, showing that his change in opinion arose from the disastrous events of 1989 & 1990. According to Amy Knight, one of the most recognized KGB historians in the world, Kryuchkov was:

...after all, a diehard Communist, who wanted, at all costs, to preserve the Soviet state and the

²³ FREELANCE BUREAU, Заключение по материалам расследования роли и участия должностных лиц КГБ СССР в событиях 19-21 августа 1991 года, last modified November 2, 2000, <https://flb.ru/material.phtml?id=3632>.

²⁴ Voice of America, What Motives Lay Behind the 1991 Soviet Coup?, VOA, last modified 2009, <https://www.voanews.com/a/a-13-a-2001-08-16-6-what-66263117/539180.html>.

²⁵ Archie Brown, "Obituary: Vladimir Kryuchkov." The Guardian, last modified November 30, 2007, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2007/nov/30/guardianobituaries.russia>.

rule of the Communist Party.²⁶

Krychukov's healthy yet two-faced relationship with Gorbachev allowed for him to get close to him whilst plan the coup, further accentuating his prominent and important position in the coup.

Dmitry Yazov was the Minister of Defence in the Soviet Union leading up to the coup. With a detailed military career including roles in World War II, Cuba, Crimea, and Czechoslovakia, he was also able to get the admiration of Gorbachev and was elected to his role in 1987. His role in the coup and early alignment with Pavlov, Krychukov and Pugo dictate a strong opposition towards Gorbachev's reformation²⁷, however direct information on his beliefs is scarce. Nevertheless, his role as the Minister of Defence resulted in Yazov having a crucial role in the coup, as the military present in Moscow were meant to protect the conspirers during the coup, as they represented the government. However, Yazov's poor management and inability to overcome the influence of the general populace towards the military meant that this responsibility would be poorly undertaken.

Another conspirer was Boris Pugo, another man viewed favorably by Gorbachev as indicated by his appointment as the Minister of the Interior in late 1990. Pugo's reasoning for disposing of Gorbachev was primarily economical, as he believed that the liberalization of Soviet markets spearheaded by Gorbachev was at fault for the poor domestic situation²⁸.

Valentin Pavlov was one of the most well-known conspirers, due to his nearly 35 year long run as a prominent Soviet economist. Once again, he reached the apex of his powers in January 1991 during Gorbachev's reign, as he became the Prime Minister of the Soviet Union. The head of the now divided government, Pavlov eventually found out in June 1991 that Gorbachev aimed to depose of him, as the poor economic state of the Union at this time was blamed on large part due to his reforms²⁹. Later that month, Pavlov would request extraordinary powers from Gorbachev, which was supported by other conspirators such as Pugo, Krychukov and Yazov, however failed to pass³⁰. Although failing on a monumental scale (262-24 votes) it nevertheless exhibited the desire of Pavlov to shift away from Gorbachev by allying with the hard-liners.

²⁶ Amy Knight, "The KGB, Perestroika, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 5, no. 1 (January 2003): 67–93. <https://doi.org/10.1162/152039703320996722>.

²⁷ John W. R. Lepingwell, "Soviet Civil-Military Relations and the August Coup." *World Politics* 44, no. 4 (July 1992): 539–72. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2010487>.

²⁸ T.E. Hitchings, "Top Soviet Hard-liners Attempt to Oust Gorbachev; Coup Fails as Yeltsin Leads Resistance," *Facts On File* 51 (1991): 621-627.

²⁹ Gerald Nadler, "Is Pavlov a Marked Man in a Gorbachev Housecleaning? - UPI Archives." UPI, last modified June 27, 1991. <https://www.upi.com/Archives/1991/06/27/Is-Pavlov-a-marked-man-in-a-Gorbachev-housecleaning/7530677995200/>

³⁰ John B. Dunlop, "The August 1991 Coup and Its Impact on Soviet Politics." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 5, no. 1 (January 2003): 94–127. <https://doi.org/10.1162/152039703320996731>.

Oleg Baklanov was the deputy head of the USSR's defense council and had a minor role in the conspiracy. Whilst his powerful role was respected and noticeable, it was ultimately Yazov who held the responsibility for the military, leaving Baklanov to merely be a powerful conservative supporter of the coup. Another motive for Baklanov was the effects of arm treaties and the poor economy, which had negative impacts on the defense industries that he represented, ultimately frustrating him³¹.

Another minor member, Vasily Starodubtsev was the Chairman of the Peasants Union in the USSR and took part in the coup due to his belief that the peasants had suffered more under perestroika and Gorbachev's reforms than any other social class within the Union and felt required to act and stop the liberalization³².

Alexander Tizyakov was the president of State Enterprises in the USSR. Unfortunately, extremely little is known about his role in the coup, and it appears that he didn't take much action. He took part as he was a loyalist to the CPSU³³.

Lastly, we have the leader of the coup from an outward perspective, Gennady Yanayev. Although, as previously mentioned Krychukov was the leader of the coup within the group, Yanayev was elected to be the President of the Soviet Union for the 3 days that the conspirators were in charge and was previously the Vice President of the Union. Although he was Gorbachev's third choice coupled with the fact that it took two votes in the Supreme Soviet to approve his position³⁴ (the first had been rejected) exhibiting an unpopular candidate, he was nevertheless the most well-known and respected man out of the conspirators. Yanayev would eventually fail his role as he appeared as a "weak man, almost pathetic³⁵", failing to convince the peoples and wider world of the conspirators' ideals and righteousness.

Back to the chronology. 1991 would be the last year of the existence of the Soviet Union and would also be the year of the coup. The 1991 January Events in Lithuania which was a series of struggles between pro-independent Lithuanians against the Soviet Union prompted the conspirators to eventually form the State Committee on the State of Emergency (GKChP)³⁶, which would later become the political body that the conspirators utilized during the events of the coup.

³¹ B. Keller, "The Three Day Fiasco: Anatomy of a Failed Strike at the State." *New York Times*, August 25, 1991.

³² D. Atta, "Profile of Coup Leader Vasilii Starodubstev," *Report on the USSR* 3, (1991): 5-8.

³³ Hitchens, Top Soviet Hard-liners.

³⁴ Michael Dobbs, "GORBACHEV CHOICE WINS VOTE." *Washington Post*, last modified December 28, 1990. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1990/12/28/gorbachev-choice-wins-vote/a26d094e-b4c8-4ff2-bdab-af01ce8400c5/>.

³⁵ Dunlop, The August 1991 Coup, p.115.

³⁶ David E. Hoffman, *The Dead Hand : The Untold Story of the Cold War Arms Race and Its Dangerous Legacy*. 1st ed. Vol. 8. (New York: Doubleday, 2009).

In March, the referendum on the New Union Treaty was carried out. The question asked was “Do you consider it necessary to preserve the USSR as a renewed federation of equal sovereign republics, which will be fully ensured of human rights and freedoms of any nationality?³⁷”, and this was put forward towards every republic in the Union. Boycotted in the Baltic republics, Armenia, Georgia, and Moldova because independence was not an option, in all other republics the referendum was passed overwhelmingly, with 77.85% of votes that were cast supporting the legislation³⁸. This meant that within the Soviet Union, people understood the weakened and unstable nature of the nation, realising that further decentralisation would be for the best. This would later become to be a key point, as the conspirators’ belief was the opposite to this, and would contribute massively to their action.

Later, on the 23rd of April Gorbachev signed the 9+1 agreement, with the 6 republics that boycotted the referendum also boycotting this meeting. Luckily for them, in this meeting the 9 republics would acknowledge the independence of these republics from the Soviet Union and called for national elections 6 months following the signing³⁹. This was attended by a small group of leaders and angered the Supreme Soviet due to the disregard of the body, as their terms would be cut short due to the new elections, and that they had little say in the agreement itself⁴⁰. The Supreme Soviet did not have the power to overturn the Treaty⁴¹, and this resulted in the Soyuz faction (a conservative faction within the government) pushing for an emergency meeting, in which Gorbachev would resign and martial law would be implemented⁴². It failed; however, this once again shows that the conservative discontent was definite and clear.

The first actions of the conspirators date to June 1991, when on the 12th Yeltsin was elected as the President of the Russian Republic, much to the dismay of Gorbachev and communist proponents as Yeltsin now ran as an Independent advocating for democracy to be installed, possibly dismantling the CPSU’s power in Russia⁴³. Angered that Gorbachev would allow for such an outcome to occur, Valentin Pavlov along with the support from Krychukov, Pugo and Yazov requested for some power to be transferred from Gorbachev to his current Prime Minister role on the 17th. Within the Supreme Soviet members of the Soyuz denounced perestroika

³⁷ Dieter Nohlen, Florian Grotz, and Christof Hartmann. *Elections in Asia and the Pacific : A Data Handbook. Vol. I, the Middle East, Central Asia and South Asia.* Vol. 1. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

³⁸ Adam B. Ulam, *Understanding the Cold War.* (Leopolis Pages: 2017), 353.

³⁹ Joseph Howard Herbert, “The Soviet Coup: A Command, Control and Communications Analysis.” (Masters Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterrey, 1992), 24, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/tr/pdf/ADA253068.pdf>.

⁴⁰ Ibid, p.25.

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² D. Mann, ““An Abortive Constitutional Coup D’Etat?”” *Report on the USSR* 3 (July 5, 1991): 1–6.

⁴³ Michael E. Urban, “Boris El’tsin, Democratic Russia and the Campaign for the Russian Presidency.” *Soviet Studies* 44, no. 2 (January 1, 1992): 187–207. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668139208412008>.

heavily, however Gorbachev's thirty-minute response was enough for the motion to not be passed. Ironically, following the events Gorbachev stated that "the coup is over"⁴⁴, unknowingly predicting the future.

If it couldn't get any more ridiculous, several days later after Pavlov's failure Moscow mayor Gavriil Popov told the US ambassador to the Soviet Union Jack Matlock that there was a coup brewing against Gorbachev. When Matlock relayed this information to Gorbachev, he falsely understood the message as the populace plotting a coup against him, not members within the Supreme Soviet. Hence, he downplayed Matlock's warning and disregarded it⁴⁵.

Even then, the then President of the USA George H. W. Bush called Gorbachev, yet still denied the possibility⁴⁶.

Yeltsin probably anticipated something occurring around this time, as on the 29th of July he and the Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev discussed the possibility of replacing hardliners including Pugo, Krychukov, Pavlov and Yazov, with Nazarbayev taking up Pavlov's post as Prime Minister of the Soviet Union⁴⁷. Astonishingly, Krychukov was able to find out what was being discussed through a bug placed by one of Gorbachev's bodyguards⁴⁸, who was a member of the KGB. Yeltsin also prepared for a coup during this time by making a restricted defence committee and organising a reserve government.

On the 4th of August 1991 Gorbachev left for his Crimean holiday house, intending to return on the 20th to sign the New Union Treaty⁴⁹. On the 6th, final planning for the coup was done and this was clear to many, with Yakovlev, the man that first warned Gorbachev about a coup, resigning from the CPSU. On the 15th the draft for the New Union Treaty was finished⁵⁰, and for the conspirators' action needed to be taken before their positions were under significant threat. The Gang of Eight met on the 17th and read through the draft of the Treaty, and clarified the details of what would happen over the next 2 days.

The plan was to institute a state of emergency within the Soviet Union, with the reasoning being the instability in the nation. They were going to follow this up with the formal institution of the

⁴⁴ Keller, The Three Day Fiasco.

⁴⁵ Hoffman, The dead hand.

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Artem Krechnikov, "Хроника путча." RuBo@Rd, last modified August 19 2006, <https://web.archive.org/web/20071127115224/http://archive.rusbg.com/viewtopic.php?p=183469&sid=ab7f23384901f822938fcbc1b4e31240>.

⁴⁸ Dunlop, The rise of Russia

⁴⁹ Krechnikov, Хроника путча.

⁵⁰ Harry G. Kyriakodis, "The 1991 Soviet and 1917 Bolshevk Coups Compared: Causes, Consequences and Legality." *Russian History* 18, no. 1-4 (1991): 280. <https://doi.org/10.1163/187633191x00137>.

GKChP as the provisional government after forcing Gorbachev to sign decrees transferring power over to Yanayev, with plans to hold him under house arrest in his holiday house in Crimea⁵¹. This plan would be adhered to; however, they didn't have a plan if Gorbachev refused to comply, which is some foreshadowing.

The plan was carried out on the 18th of August. At 4:32pm, the conspirators were able to cut communication lines to Gorbachev's holiday house, and the nuclear command system⁵². Just eight minutes later, a KGB head allowed for 5 hardliners who sympathised with the GKChP to come into the house and begin talks with Gorbachev. Their role was to get Gorbachev to institute a state of emergency or transfer his powers to Yanayev⁵³. Already, this is where the first failure in the coup begins, as Gorbachev staunchly refused to comply with any of their demands. This was unexpected and, as previously mentioned, unplanned for. This is evident by reports that the 5 hardliners were seen to be visibly distraught following the meeting⁵⁴.

Following this, Gorbachev was placed under house arrest, with the delegation flying back to Moscow to report on what happened.

The fact that the plan had gone awry before the Eight had even taken control of the Soviet Union is representative of just how poorly planned the coup was. Nobody can predict what will happen in a coup, and to plan for only one set of events to occur shows a high level of incompetence on the conspirators' part.

When they returned, the Gang of Eight planned the details of the paperwork regarding the institution of the GKChP and decided to proclaim Gorbachev to be ill as their justification for taking power. Later that night at 11:25pm, Yanayev signed a decree that gave himself presidential powers⁵⁵. It is important to note that Yanayev himself has stated being drunk when signing the decree, along with Pavlov⁵⁶. This poor selfcare would later come to significantly harm Yanayev & the GKChP's public image and accelerate the downfall.

During the same night, Krychukov doubled the pay of all KGB agents to prevent desertion.

At 4:00AM on the 19th of August the state of emergency was declared throughout the Soviet

⁵¹ Krechnikov, Хроника путча.

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Hoffman, The dead hand.

⁵⁴ "ГКЧП: ПРОЦЕСС, КОТОРЫЙ НЕ ПОШЕЛ." *Novaya Gazeta*, last modified August 20, 2001. <https://web.archive.org/web/20070929122150/http://2001.novayagazeta.ru/nomer/2001/59n/n59n-s16.shtml>.

⁵⁵ Krechnikov, Хроника путча.

⁵⁶ David Remnick, "ALCOHOL SAID to FUEL COUP by GANG of 8." *Washington Post*, last modified August 30, 1991. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1991/08/30/alcohol-said-to-fuel-coup-by-gang-of-8/85b145f4-2f96-4b1e-9d8e-7b04a57b7758/>.

Union by Yanayev⁵⁷, and was meant to last 6 months after it's signing. This also transferred power to the conspirators and the GKChP.

Whilst the conspirators had taken care of Gorbachev as he was stuck in his house in Crimea, they also had to consider the influence of Boris Yeltsin. Yeltsin remained in Moscow and could significantly affect the success of the operation due to his influence and anti- communist agenda, so at 9:00AM tanks were driven close to the Russian parliament building where Yeltsin was located. However, this was too late. Yeltsin was aware of the conspirators' fixation by 5:00AM⁵⁸ and gathered senior members of the Russian parliament by 7:00AM to discuss how to rectify the situation.

At 10:40AM, the conspirators announced their first legislative action named "Resolution No. 1", and included actions such as the banning of strikes, demonstrations, uncensored press, and rallies⁵⁹. These actions would call upon Pugo, Yazov and Krychukov especially, as their jobs would be to ensure these resolutions were adhered to by the populace.

The public's initial reaction to the coup was one of indifference⁶⁰. Initially, protests only consisted of ~200 people, however it slowly grew as Yeltsin took a stance and stated his opposition. Later, when the military arrived to suppress the people, they didn't take any action in order to prevent death as requested by Yazov, which was a cause of the coups rapid failure as the public were able to easily get their voice heard.

Yeltsin, through a CNN broadcast was able to get his voice heard at 10:45AM. Yeltsin denounced the coup due to its illegitimacy and pandered towards the new, liberalised nature of many Russians and said that the government should 'never to be removed by anyone but the people of Russia'⁶¹. In this same broadcast, he encouraged the public to protest in the name of democracy, and to push for the reinstatement of Gorbachev. Following his electronic edict, he also ventured outside of the Parliament in Moscow where ~3000 people were protesting, and conveyed the same notion as he did in the broadcast whilst also delivering some orders. Most notably, he ordered all KGB members in the coup to stand down, something which was cleverly counteracted by Krychukov's action of doubling their pay.

Furthermore, he also stated that he was going to take control of the Russian republic as of that

⁵⁷ Herbert, *The Soviet Coup*, p.44.

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ Ibid p.45.

⁶⁰ J. Trimble and P. Vassiliev, "Three Days That Shook The World". *U.S. News and World Report*, November 18, 1991.

⁶¹ E. Teague, S. Wise, and S. Girnius. "Record of Events in the Week of the Coup." *Report on the USSR* 3, (August 1991): 30.

day⁶² (19th August). Yeltsin's foreign minister, Andrei Kozyrev was also hard at work when he held a press conference for the rest of the world. In this, he was able to garner the West's support for Yeltsin, which would come to have little effect on the outcome⁶³.

At 12:00AM, tanks were now present at the Kremlin and Red Square which coincided with more protestors arriving at the Parliament building to support Yeltsin. 2 hours later, US President George H.W Bush condemned the coup, labelling it as illegitimate and misguided⁶⁴.

The institution of Resolution No. 1 at 10:00AM had been a failure. Strikes and demonstrations were rife especially within Moscow, and the inaction of the military led by Yazov had a large role to play. Due to this, the Gang decided to place a military general, Nikolai Kalinin as the head of Moscow in order to rectify the situation.

5:00PM was the time of the now infamous press conference. This press conference would demonstrate the weakness and fragility of the GKChP and would also severely undermine Yanayev's credibility as a leader. As aforementioned, Yanayev was drunk the previous night, and it clearly affected him as he was visibly nervous⁶⁵. Wendy Varney, from her journal article "Lessons from the 1991 Soviet Coup" wrote about his effect in the press conference;

At the same press conference Yanayev's hands were shaking. Soviet television broadcast this, thereby encouraging the inference that the Emergency Committee lacked complete confidence in the outcome of its own attempts. This may have contributed to expectations that the coup would fail, an encouraging sign for those who wanted to join the resistance but were anxious about possible retaliation.⁶⁶

The conference largely entailed the explanation as to why Gorbachev was not present (stating that he was ill) and their motives for usurping power, with the notion being that the Union had become ungovernable⁶⁷ due to the liberalisation and policies of perestroika, which the conspirators aimed to undo largely in the coming years, and glasnost which was already in the process of being destroyed through Resolution No. 1.

Unfortunately for the Gang of Eight, the widely-broadcast press conference had a strong negative

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ Dunlop, The rise of Russia.

⁶⁴ Andrew Rosenthal, "THE SOVIET CRISIS; Bush Condemns Soviet Coup and Calls for Its Reversal," *The New York Times*, August 20, 1991, <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/08/20/world/the-soviet-crisis-bush-condemns-soviet-coup-and-calls-for-its-reversal.html>.

⁶⁵ Wendy Varney and Brian Martin, "LESSONS FROM THE 1991 SOVIET COUP." *Peace Research*, vol. 32, no. 1, (2000): 55., <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23607685>.

⁶⁶ Ibid

⁶⁷ Herbert, The Soviet Coup, p.46.

impact. It only aided Yeltsin and Gorbachev's cause, even without lifting a finger due to Yanayev's weak and feeble persona, which would ultimately be a cause for the coup's failure. Whilst other members of the GKChP were indeed present, it would be Yanayev doing all the speaking. This combined with the fact that at some point orders to shoot demonstrating civilians were being ignored and disobeyed meant that senior military officials largely believed that the coup attempt was poorly supported and managed⁶⁸, which resulted in the defection of many, including the Tamanskaya elite tank force, supporting Yelstin by adopting a defensive position near the Russian parliament at 9:00PM against the existing GKChP units stationed there⁶⁹.

It is clear that after the first day, the coup was a failure. Large demonstrations, defecting soldiers and entire units, politicians having little backing and the poor leadership and management of the GKChP (primarily Yanayev) resulted in a government that anybody could see not lasting, especially with the opposition from President Bush's office. Furthermore, with the explosion of Yelstin's popularity through his defiance of the GKChP, the Russian peoples had found a leader to support and back. As to whether conspirators felt this level of precarity by the first night is uncertain, however by the next day they certainly did.

By the morning of Tuesday the 20th of August, tens of thousands of people were now protesting near the Russian Parliament building. They built up a defensive position as the GKChP aimed to attack the building in order to capture Yeltsin and other opposing officials, and also for symbolism as it was the government building.

On this day, many geopolitical events occurred. The heads of the republics of Kazakhstan, Moldova and Ukraine all condemned the coup throughout the day, and the European Community halted all \$1 billion of aid (barring humanitarian) to the Soviet Union in the afternoon, with the coup being labelled as a 'flagrant violation' of the Union's pledges to move towards democracy⁷⁰. Also, at 11:10pm that night Estonia formally declared independence, with it labelling the coup as threatening the democratic processes currently being undertaken in the Republic⁷¹. This realises an ironic fact; that although the Gang's primary goal was to prevent the dissolution of the Union, in just 1 day after their usurpation of power they had failed miserably.

Internally, it only got worse for the GKChP. Kalinin in the morning announced a curfew for

⁶⁸ Lepingwell, *Soviet Civil-Military Relations*, p.563.

⁶⁹ Herbert, *The Soviet Coup*, p.47.

⁷⁰ Steven Greenhouse, "THE SOVIET CRISIS; European Community Halts Economic Aid to Moscow." *New York Times*, August 21, 1991. <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/08/21/world/the-soviet-crisis-european-community-halts-economic-aid-to-moscow.html>.

⁷¹ Supreme Council, *Eesti Riiklikust Iseseisvusest–Riigi Teataja*, last modified August 20, 1991. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/13071519>.

Moscow between 11pm and 5am⁷². This essentially told everybody that the attack on the Parliament building that day was bound to happen, and it was meant to that afternoon when an attack was supported by 7 of the 8 conspirators (Pavlov was absent due to his drunkenness). Unfortunately for them, the area surrounding the Parliament was scouted and an attack was deemed to be too violent and result in too much bloodshed, hence it was postponed to that night when the imposed curfew would prevent civilian deaths⁷³.

Here we see the effect of the popularity of Yeltsin & perestroika truly come into play. The only counter to the protestors outside the Parliament were soldiers ordered to contain them (with some still defecting), with no civilian demonstrations in support of the GKChP. Due to this, Yeltsin was able to essentially control the masses, and could mitigate the authority of the 8. This, combined with the fact that earlier that day he released an edict that he would take control of all military units in the Russia Republic⁷⁴ led him to have overwhelming support⁷⁴ by the end of the 20th.

As parenthesised, Pavlov was absent in Moscow due to his drunkenness. This was not self-imposed; he was sent to his own holiday house by other members of the GKChP and was essentially removed from the Committee. He would take no further role in the coup. This was also not helped by the fact that before the attack on the Parliament was undertaken, Yazov also resigned for “health reasons” although it is more likely that he foresaw the situation and wanted a way to get out. The loss of a man of Yazov’s importance would’ve been a massive blow to the conspirators, as their only method of control was the utilisation of the military, and hence caused a significant loss of authority over units.

That night, the attack on the Parliament was scheduled to happen at 2:00AM, now Wednesday the 21st of August. If this attack did not achieve its goal of capturing Yeltsin, the leader of the opposition, the already fragmented coup would reach its conclusion quick.

Following the curfew at 11:00PM, tanks were driven to the Parliament Building. However, this was not met without resistance. Civilians were making barricades to prevent tanks arriving to their destination, and at 1:00AM a tank group commanded by Sergey Surovkin⁷⁵ (who would later become commander of Russian forces in the 2022 Russo-Ukrainian War) got involved in a skirmish against rebelling citizens. In this, 3 citizens were killed, including one Soviet-Afghan war veteran. They all posthumously received the highest distinction in the nation, the Hero of the

⁷² ГКЧП: ПРОЦЕСС, КОТОРЫЙ НЕ ПОШЕЛ, Novaya Gazeta.

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Herbert, *The Soviet Coup*, p.48.

⁷⁵ Р. И. А. Новости, “Сергей Владимирович Суrowикин. Биографическая справка.” РИА Новости, last modified 2011. <https://ria.ru/20110707/398468102.html>.

Soviet Union. These deaths had a large role in the attack; journalist Sergey Parkhomenko later acknowledged the deaths as playing “a crucial role: both sides were so horrified that it brought a halt to everything.”⁷⁶ Due to this incident, the attack on the Parliament was cancelled, and the conspirators had finally accepted defeat. Joseph Herbert, in his thesis *The Soviet Coup: A Command, Control and Communications Analysis* talks about the importance of the failed attack in the downfall of the conspirators:

The failure to assault the Russian parliament marked the decisive turning point of the coup. The [GKChP] would not, or could not, use violence to control the population and, therefore, could not enforce their will and were doomed to failure.⁷⁷

The 21st was a humiliating day for the Gang. At 8:00AM military units left Moscow at the behest of military officials, who sent Yazov an ultimatum to condemn the coup and remove units from Moscow. When refused, the officials simply overruled him and gave the order to evacuate⁷⁸. At the same time the GKChP, including Yazov met to discuss what should be done to protect themselves after the loss of military and popular support. They thought the best course of action would be to send Krychukov, Yazov, Baklanov and Tizyakov to Crimea to negotiate with Gorbachev⁷⁹. If it wasn't clear already, the GKChP was essentially over.

At 10:00AM some could say business returned to normal, as a session of the Supreme Soviet occurred with Yeltsin speaking in the Parliament Building⁸⁰. 3 hours later, the 4 conspirators made their way to Crimea to negotiate. Ironically, they were delayed by tank divisions they ordered to retreat⁸¹. At 2:30PM Pugo signs the last order of the GKChP, calling regional departments to strengthen media security, further suppressing the glasnost Gorbachev instilled.

At 5:00PM, the coup was over. The 4 conspirators reached Gorbachev's holiday house and instead of meeting with him they were all arrested. Furthermore, at the same time Yanayev signed a decree labelling all actions taken by the GKChP to be invalid and dissolving the Committee⁸².

Over the next few days, all conspirators (including Pavlov) would be arrested and eventually

⁷⁶ Anna Kachurovskaya and Mikhail Fishman, “Russia’s Brightest Moment: The 1991 Coup That Failed.” The Moscow Times, last modified August 19, 2016. <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/08/19/the-forgotten-coup-a55030>.

⁷⁷ Herbert, *The Soviet Coup*, p.49.

⁷⁸ Trimble, *Three Days*, p.67.

⁷⁹ Krechnikov, *Хроника пугча*.

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ Ibid

⁸² Павел Коробов, “Геннадий Янаев: Горбачева никто не арестовывал.” *kommersant.ru*, last modified August 18, 2001. <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/278983>.

tried, barring Boris Pugo. Pugo and his wife committed suicide on the 22nd of August following a demand by the Russian Republic to inquire about the coup⁸³. The conspirators were all tried in 1993 and were all astonishingly granted amnesty. This was because the State Duma, the newly created lower house that replaced the Supreme Soviet, was dominated by left-leaning parties including the CPRF (Communist Party of the Russian Federation) which sympathised with them and let them go⁸⁴. The conspirators lived the rest of their lives normally, with Starodubtsev even eventually being part of the State Duma in 2007.

Although the conspirators suffered no major punishment and the August Coup subsequently affected them little apart from infamy, for the nation the effect was staggering. Foremost, the New Union Treaty was unable to be signed due to the events, with there being no direct replacement until the Belavezha Accords in December, which was more radical.

As the GKChP still represented the CPSU, the same party as Gorbachev, he still aimed to defend the party through its notion of wanting the best for the nation⁸⁵. This was a failure, and he eventually resigned as Chairman of the party on the 24th of August 1991⁸⁶, whilst still maintaining his position as General Secretary of the Soviet Union. The CPSU would eventually be banned by Yeltsin in November.

Just one day after Gorbachev's resignation from the CPSU, Belarus declared its independence from the Union, and other republics followed suit. On the 27th Moldova did the same, followed by Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan on the 30th and 31st respectively. On the 6th of September, an action thought to be previously incomprehensible to the Western world occurred when the Soviet Union recognised the independence of all 3 Baltic states. Over the course of the next few months, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Armenia, and Ukraine all declared their independence.

December was the last month of the Union's existence. The 8th saw the Belovezha accords signed, where it stated that the Soviet Union did not exist 'as a subject of international law and geopolitical reality'⁸⁷, and established the Commonwealth of Independent States with coveting former Union republics.

On Christmas Day in 1991, Santa gave the US a very pleasant surprise. Gorbachev announced his resignation as General Secretary of the Soviet Union, and on that night the famous flag

⁸³ Ron Synovitz, "What Happened to the August 1991 Soviet Coup Plotters?" RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, last modified August 19, 2016. <https://www.rferl.org/a/what-happened-to-the-august-1991-coup-plotters/27933729.html>.

⁸⁴ Krechnikov, Хроника путча.

⁸⁵ Hoffman, The dead hand.

⁸⁶ Krechnikov, Хроника путча.

⁸⁷ Dina Newman, "How Three Men Signed the USSR's Death Warrant." BBC News, last modified December 24, 2016, <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-38416657>.

replacement occurred, in which the Soviet Flag atop the Kremlin was replaced with the current Russian one. The next day, the Soviet of Republics voted to dissolve the Soviet Union, and its 69 yearlong existences, filled with drama, conflict, advancement, suppression, and controversies came to an end.

Yeltsin's involvement in the coup and prominence gained would come to pay off largely. His presidency in the Russian Republic would carry over to him being president of the newly sovereign Russian Federation, and significantly liberalised the nation's economy. Although initially popular, his office was plagued by crises, and left the office in 1999 unpopular.

Vladimir Putin was elected as his successor in 2000.

The analysis of the coup has been investigated thoroughly due to foreign nations seeking an insight into the collapse of Communist support in the Soviet Union. Foremost, it must be noted that the coup failed the moment Gorbachev refused to give up command to Yanayev on the first day, with the conspirators now having no plan, as they planned around Gorbachev ceding power. This would be fine as Yanayev then (illegally) pronounced himself and the GKChP as head of the Soviet Union, however they significantly underestimated the power and influence of Boris Yeltsin, and although they did send tanks around the Parliament Building where he was situated, they did little else, and Yeltsin was still able to go outside and give speeches to protestors⁸⁸, becoming a figurehead for the resistance movement against the Gang. Furthermore, this combined with the GKChP misunderstanding the civilian populace and their stance on communism led to widespread disapproval, to the point where military intervention was needed. The GKChP did admittedly recognise this through Yazov's action to send tanks and implement curfews, however they had such a bad image to the point where their own divisions were deserting, and this was the nail in the coffin to the coup.

The coups effect, as aforementioned allowed Yeltsin to rocket up in popularity, however Gorbachev's popularity fell significantly too. The popular notion was that his own party had formed a coup against him, and hence he had lost power within it and was weakening. This was obvious to Gorbachev, as it was perpetuated by the people (where glasnost enabled them) and his resignation from the party and eventually general secretary was caused from this⁸⁹.

Whether the coup caused the fall of the Soviet Union is another question. The rise in popularity of Yelstin and Gorbachev can certainly be linked to it, however the Union's collapse is more ambiguous, as it could have been labelled as inevitable regarding the Union's circumstances.

⁸⁸ David Boaz, "Remembering Boris Yeltsin's Finest Moment." Cato.org, last modified August 19, 2016, <https://www.cato.org/blog/remembering-boris-yeltsins-finest-moment>.

⁸⁹ Hoffman, The dead hand.

Within Russia, Gorbachev is portrayed as have being directly responsible for the collapse⁹⁰, largely ignoring the fact that the Union essentially required it due to their stagnating economy before Gorbachev's instalment as General Secretary. Outside of Russia there isn't one clear causation, however Brezhnev's decision to utilise two decades of oil money on an arms race on the US rather than investing in the nation is also seen as the beginning of the end⁹¹. There is also the idea that their policy of sticking to Socialism rather than liberalising their economy like China (which still exists prosperously) caused their downfall, however all of these arguments essentially point to the coup being an accelerator of the demise rather than the cause, which is the idea common today.

The August Coup was an extremely interesting event in history; a coup made by just 8 men and a few more, able to overthrow one of the strongest countries in the world. Albeit poorly,

they were still able to strike fear in Russian civilians, prompting them to protest in a manner that was impossible for the last 70 under previous governments. Although it is seen nowadays as a unique tidbit in history, reserved to a 'did you know' section in an infobook, at the time it had the potential to change the world and reverse all the progress the West had made in ending the cold war; if succeeded with capable leaders, we would still be living in fear much like people did 50 years ago.

I believe that the lessons of [the coup] are relevant today. To defend the principles of democracy and the rule of law, to exclude any possibility of usurpation of power, adventuristic actions - this should always be the concern of society and the state⁹². – M. Gorbachev

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⁹⁰Adam Janos, “Was the Soviet Union's Collapse Inevitable?” HISTORY, last modified April 17, 2018. <https://www.history.com/news/why-did-soviet-union-fall>.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Mikhail Gorbachev, “Заявление М.С.Горбачева в связи с 30-й годовщиной августовского путча 1991 года.” Горбачев Фонд, last modified August 18, 2021. https://www.gorby.ru/presscenter/news/show_30278/.

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