



The fall of Mr "K" (1964)

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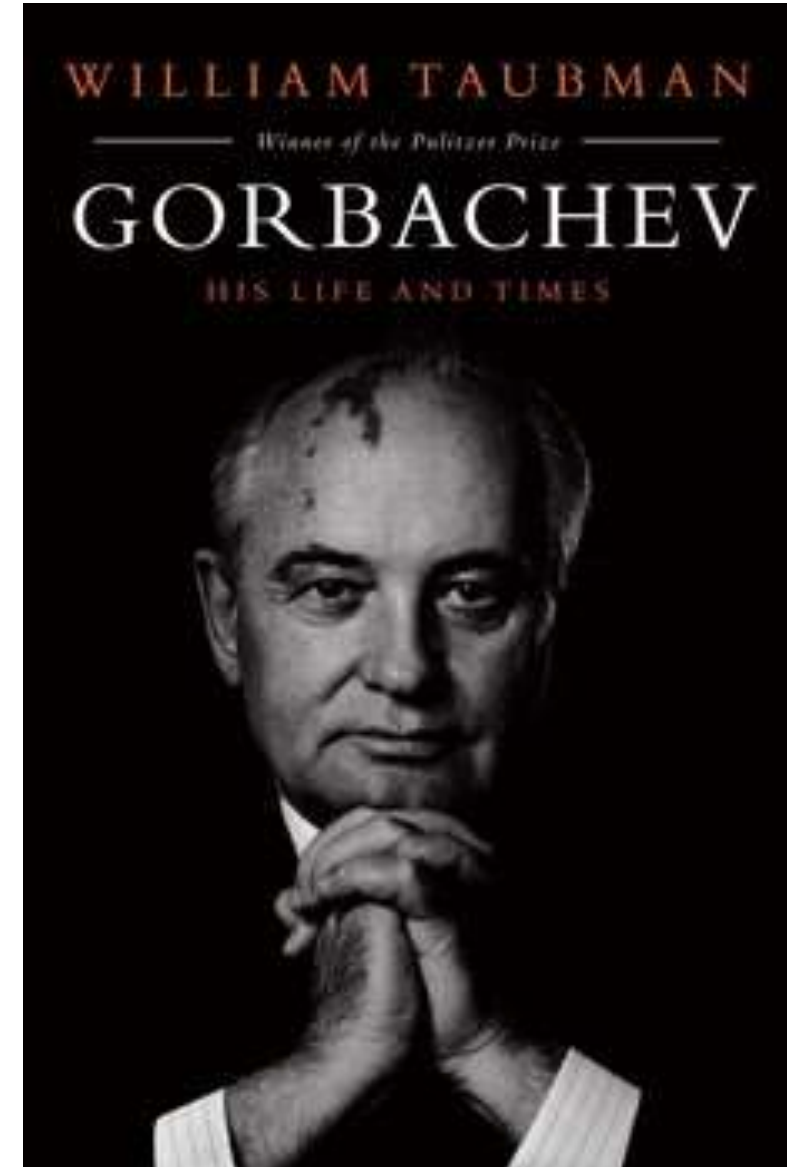
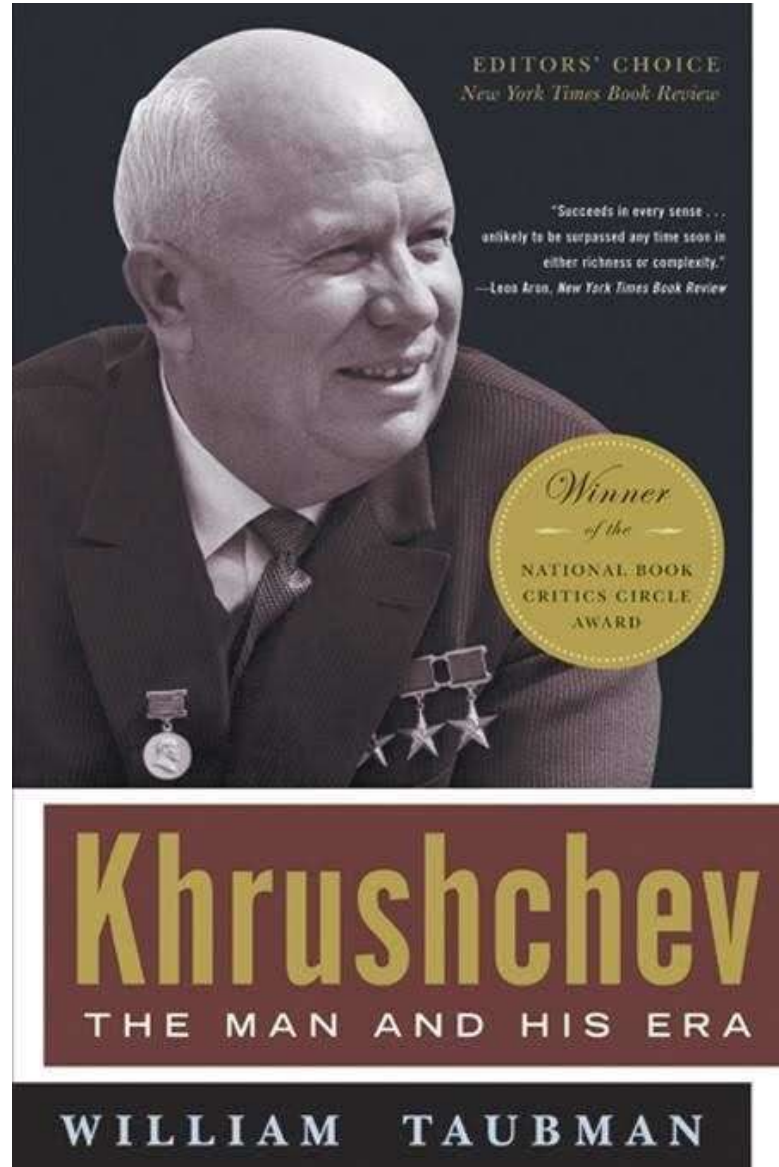
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Osvaldo Dorticos Torrado

13 October 1964

A Cuban visit 2 years following
the **Missile Crisis**

Fidel Castro upset at his Soviet
protector

Plane circling above Moscow



Where is Khrushchev?

A meeting of the **Presidium
of the Soviet Union**
(collective head of state)
under way

“It is over”

The end of the Khrushchev
years

What happened?



Nikolai Podgorny

8 years since the “Secret
Speech”

Economic reconstruction
Political stability

Khrushchev: the symbol of modernity
Stalin “cult of personality” rejected



Beria arrested and executed

Hundreds of thousands of political
prisoners freed

A new generation of Soviet
bureaucrats: the regime of terror
must NEVER return



June 1957

Khrushchev against the “old guard”

Khrushchev in Finland
A call for his destitution





Khrushchev's swift reaction

A last minute Plenary Session of
the CPSU Central Committee

300 delegates: no return to
Stalin's era

A new leadership

Khrushchev's victory

What happened to the “Old Guard”

No executions or deportations
The “Old Guard” pushed aside
peacefully: a novelty!

A blame or an appointment to
second rate assignments



4 October 1957

The successful launch of the
Sputnik

A highly symbolic victory over the
Americans

Khrushchev's rising popularity



Sergei Korolev

Soviet rocket scientist involved in the development of the Sputnik

A victim of Stalin's purges

The message: policy of destalinization led indirectly to the triumph of Soviet technology



A positive image overseas

The triumph of Communism over Capitalism?

Complacency

=

Errors



КТО-КОГО?

"Catch up and overtake"

Praising the economic superiority
of the Marxist model

Tackling the **Soviet food problem**
(remember collectivization?)

Khrushchev's plan: tripling the
rates of meat production within
three years

загнать их также эконо
представлен вопрос
ЭЛЕКТ

The Ryazan “miracle”

Widespread lies and falsification

Comrade **Alexei Larionov** (first secretary of the Ryazan region): a “brilliant” idea!

Tens of thousands of cattle and pork bought from nearby collective farms

To what purpose?

To re-sell at low cost to the State



Success?

First year: YES!

BUT

Second year: the slaughtered cattle
could not be replaced

Spectacular collapse of the production

DISASTER!



Growing criticism

Khrushchev: the only CPSU leader
interested in agriculture (a family
of peasants from Ukraine)

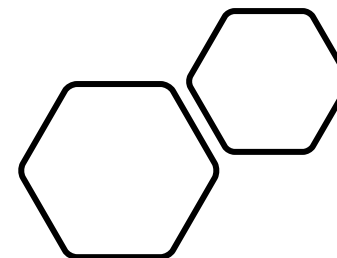
All the others: urban working class
background





A visit to the U.S. (1959)

Visiting farms in Iowa



Increasing Soviet corn production

"Like in Iowa..."

Cultivated areas doubled

Problems overlooked:

Lack of appropriate agricultural machinery

Lack of fertilizer plants

Climate either too dry or too cold





Mediocre results

Cultivated areas dedicated to corn
doubled again between 1955 &
1962

Land more appropriate for other
crops sacrificed

The result: a **disaster of epic
proportion** (1962)



The “*Virgin Lands Campaign*” (1954)

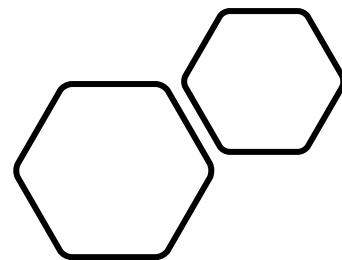
From success to disaster...

A titanic project to increase
quickly the production of wheat

Collectivization + WW2

=

Wheat production lower than in
1913





The idea

To transform huge areas of uncultivated lands ("*virgin lands*") into wheat producing areas

300 000 volunteers (Communist Youth)

Spectacular results in 1956



Подним

Disaster

Этим землям нет покоя
Больше год от года
Брать должны мы
Хлеба для наро

Some **basic concepts** in
agriculture:

Newly cleared land requires a
system of rotation every 2-3 years

Wheat: a difficult crop to
superimpose onto colder regions

Proper fertilizers & pesticides

ЦЕЛИНЫ



Soviet bureaucracy

Basic concepts **ignored**

Intensive **monoculture**

=

Destroyed, arid land

Production of wheat fell drastically

Drought (1963)

A photograph of Nikita Khrushchev, the former Premier of the Soviet Union, standing in a vast field of golden wheat. He is wearing a grey suit, a white shirt, and a dark tie. He is looking down at a small plant he is holding in his right hand. The background shows a clear blue sky with scattered white clouds.

The “*Virgin Lands Campaign*”

An economic (& political) nightmare
for Khrushchev

The Soviet Union had to import
wheat from... the U.S. (a first!)

What saved Khrushchev?

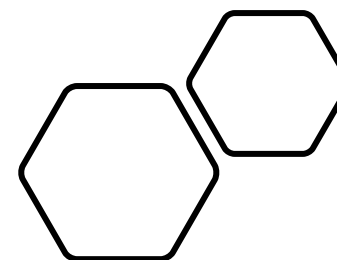
Global action still deemed positive
by the Central Committee of the
CPSU

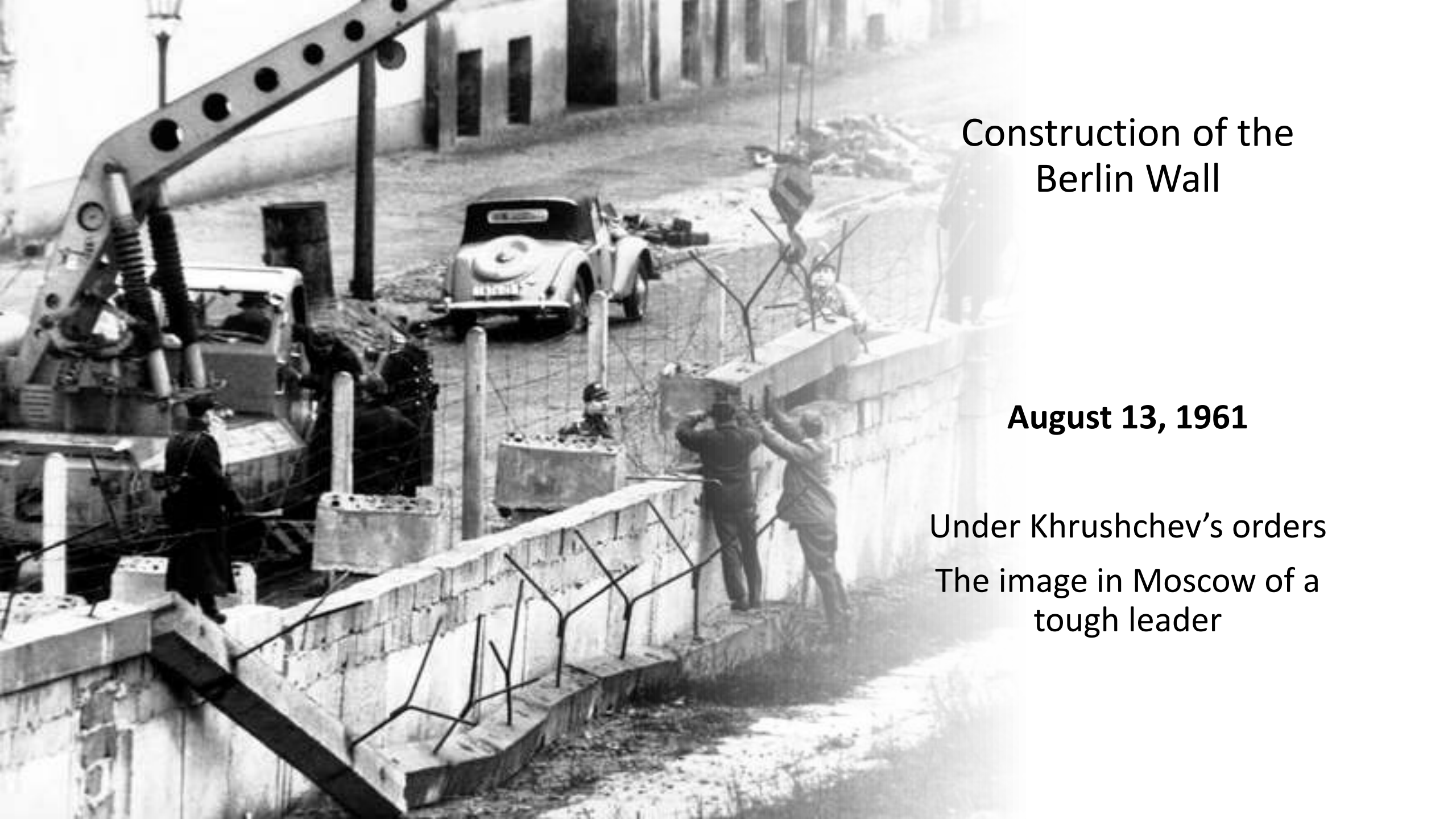


The Space Race

Yuri Gagarin: the first human
to journey in outer space
(April 1961)







Construction of the Berlin Wall

August 13, 1961

Under Khrushchev's orders
The image in Moscow of a
tough leader

Khrushchev's foreign trips

A boost to the image of the
Soviet Union in the world







A silent political
opposition

His political move and victory
against the “old guard”
remembered

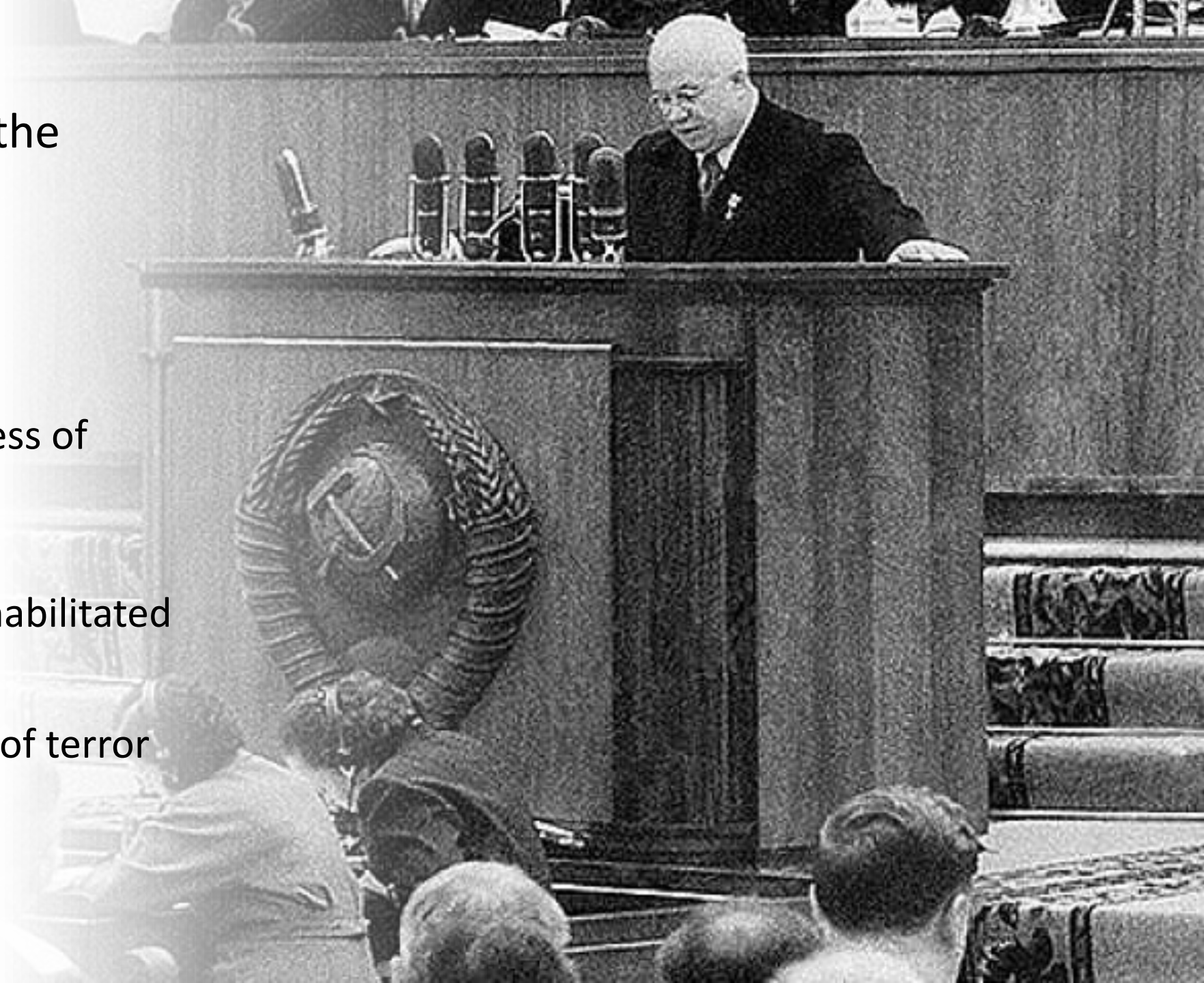
Khrushchev untouchable?

22nd Congress of the
CPSU
(Fall 1961)

To complete the process of
destalinization

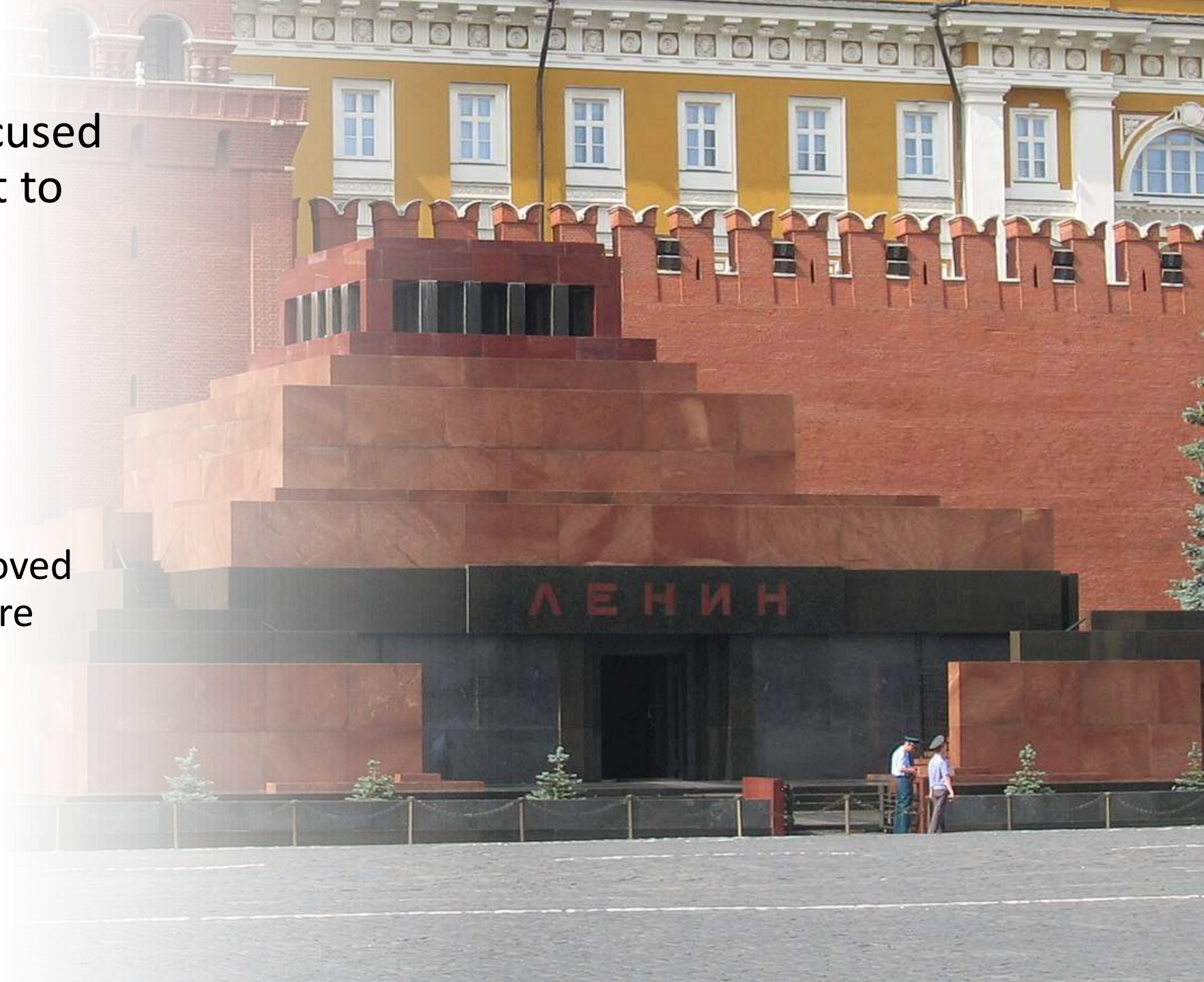
Former gulag prisoners rehabilitated

The message: Stalin's era of terror
never to return



The “old guard” accused
of being complicit to
Stalin’s terror

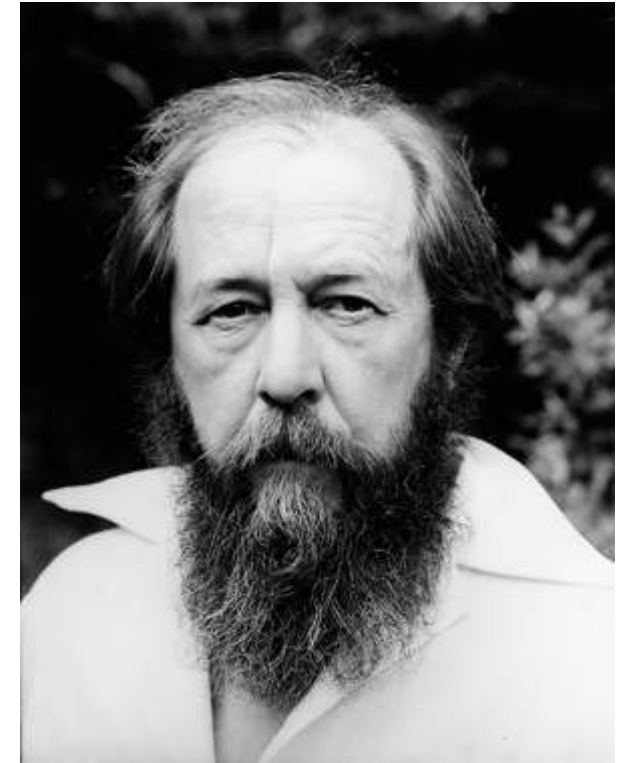
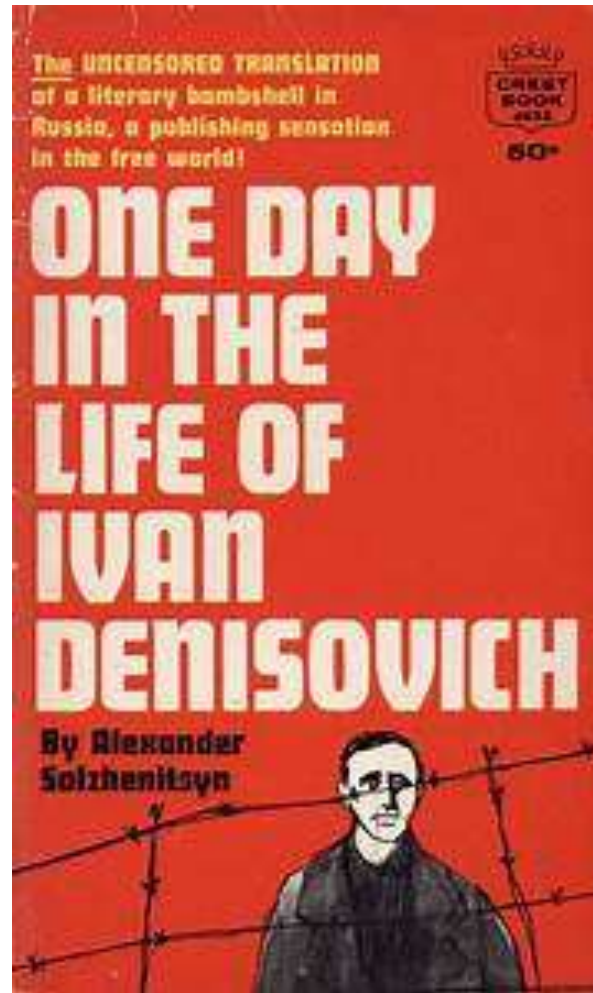
Stalin’s remains removed
from the Red Square
Mausoleum



Growing criticism

The Conservatives furious:
Khrushchev is going too far!

How to get rid of him?



A black and white portrait of Leonid Brezhnev, a Soviet leader. He is shown from the chest up, seated, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a dark tie with white polka dots. He has several medals pinned to his left breast pocket. The background is a light, textured wall.

Political initiatives
without consultation

Growing hostility amongst Party
leaders

November 1962: regional
committees of CPSU to be divided
into 2 structures: industry and
agriculture

Unpopular amongst Soviet
bureaucrats

Leonid Brezhnev



Private criticism

Fedor Kulakov

The new boss of a young
Mikhail Gorbachev

A black and white photograph of Nikolai Podgorniy, a Soviet official, speaking at a podium. He is wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and light-colored tie. He is gesturing with his right hand, pointing upwards. In front of him are several microphones. Behind him is a large, ornate circular emblem, likely the coat of arms of the Soviet Union. The image is partially faded on the right side where the text is overlaid.

1964: a reform of the
Soviet Constitution?

Panic within the Party
membership

No to change: increased
control over members

The end of “special” stores

A black and white portrait of Leonid Brezhnev, a Soviet leader. He is shown from the chest up, wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a dark tie with white polka dots. He has several medals pinned to his left breast pocket. The background is a light, textured curtain.

A conspiracy to remove
Khrushchev from power

Informal conversations

Khrushchev praised by all at his 70th
birthday celebration (17 April 1964)

Emotional speech delivered by...
Leonid Brezhnev

Process to eliminate Khrushchev
politically already initiated

Leonid Brezhnev



The conspirators

Mikhail Suslov: a pure product of Stalin's era

Khrushchev's unlikely successor



Alexander Shelepin

Head of the KGB (expert in propaganda)

A return to Stalin's methods?

Another unlikely successor

Then WHO?



Leonid Brezhnev

A spectacular rise thanks to... Khrushchev!

**Second Secretary of the Central
Committee**

**Chairman of the Presidium of the
Supreme Soviet** (nominal head of state)

A trusted companion... or maybe not!





Summer 1964

Khrushchev vacationing in
Pitsunda

Rumors of conspiracy
Khrushchev: *"Impossible,
those men are incapable of
working together"*



Meanwhile in Moscow...

Extraordinary session of the CPSU Central
Committee

Agreement (12 October): time to oust
Khrushchev



Leonid Brezhnev

Khrushchev “invited” to
return to Moscow

13 October: Khrushchev back in
Moscow

No greeting committee

At the Kremlin: Khrushchev informed
that his “resignation” has been
accepted

Official reasons: “poor health”



“Developed Socialism”

“With Stalin, our people was afraid of repressions, with Khrushchev, they were afraid of reorganizations and restructuration... With us, the Soviet people is finally going to live and work peacefully” (1965)

The message: the system does not reforming





The final coup

How a few Conservatives managed
to precipitate the collapse of the
Soviet Union



18 August 1991

Mikhail & Raisa Gorbachev
vacationing in Crimea

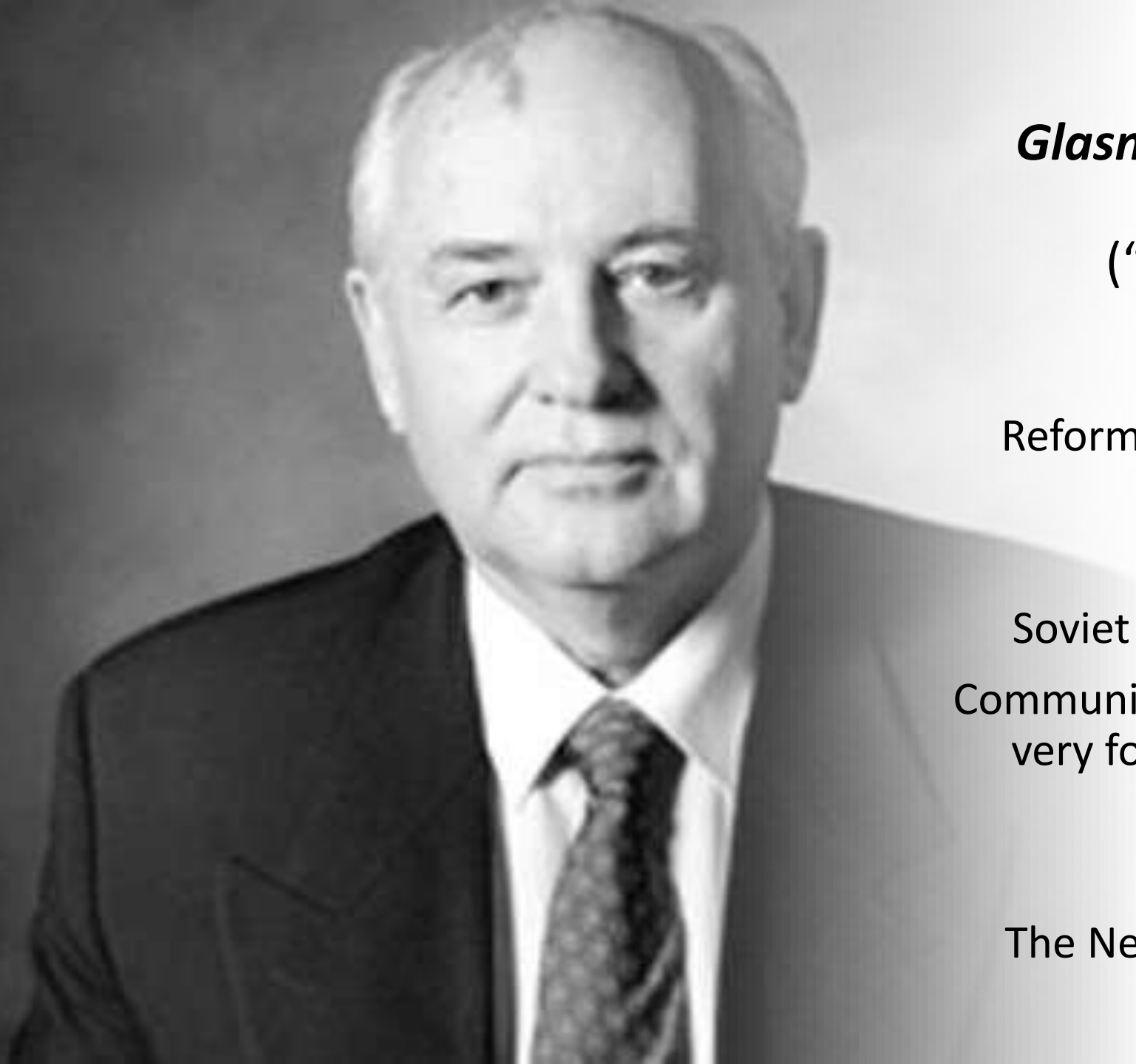
Mikhail working on an important
speech



A New Union Treaty

The Soviet Union to become a
federation of independent republics
(common president, foreign policy &
military)

Ceremony scheduled for August 20,
1991

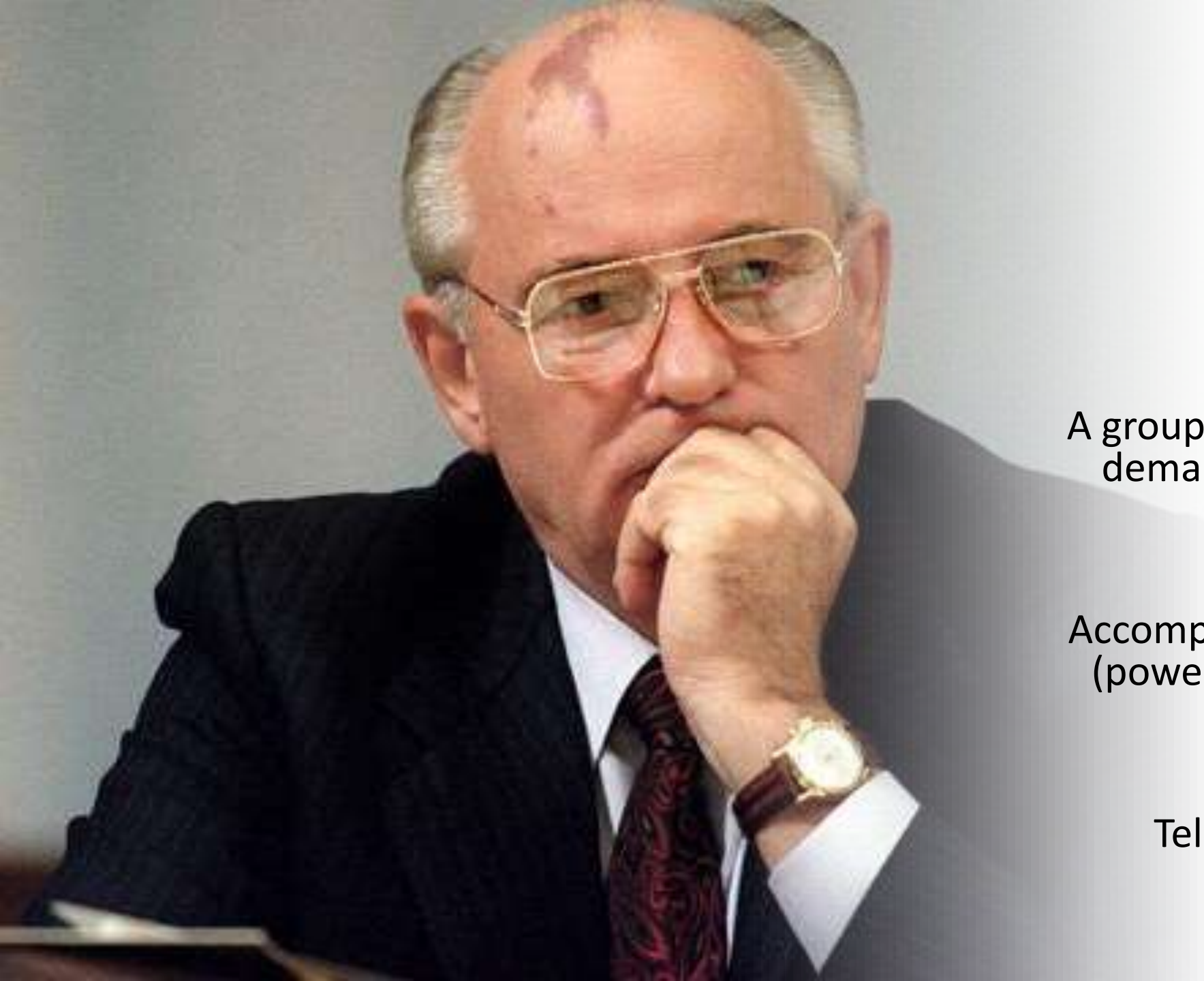


Glasnost (“openness”) &
perestroika
 (“restructuring”)

Reforming the system without
destroying it

Soviet economy disorganized
Communist Party marginalized (the
very foundation of the Soviet
regime)

The New Union: a crucial step



4.50pm

A group of visitors from Moscow
demanded to be received by
Gorbachev

Accompanied by **Yuri Plekhanov**
(powerful head of the KGB 9th
Directorate)

Telephone lines cut off

“Go to hell!”

A First Deputy Chairman of the
Defense Council

A general

A close collaborator



Oleg Baklanov



Valentin Varennikov

“Who is sending you?”

“The Committee”

“What Committee?”

*“The Committee on the State
of Emergency”*

“What is that Committee?”



The “State Committee on the State of Emergency”

The “Gang of Eight”: a group of 8 high-ranking Soviet officials (Soviet government, CPSU and KGB)

Gorbachev “invited” to sign the decree proclaiming the state of emergency and confirming the creation of the Committee

“Go to hell! I have nothing to say to you”



Vladimir Kryuchkov: the initiator

Head of the KGB

What to do next?





Gennady Yanayev

First (and only) Vice President of the
Soviet Union



Gorbachev is "*Seriously ill*"



Boris Pugo (Soviet interior minister)

Dmitri Lazov (Soviet minister of defence)



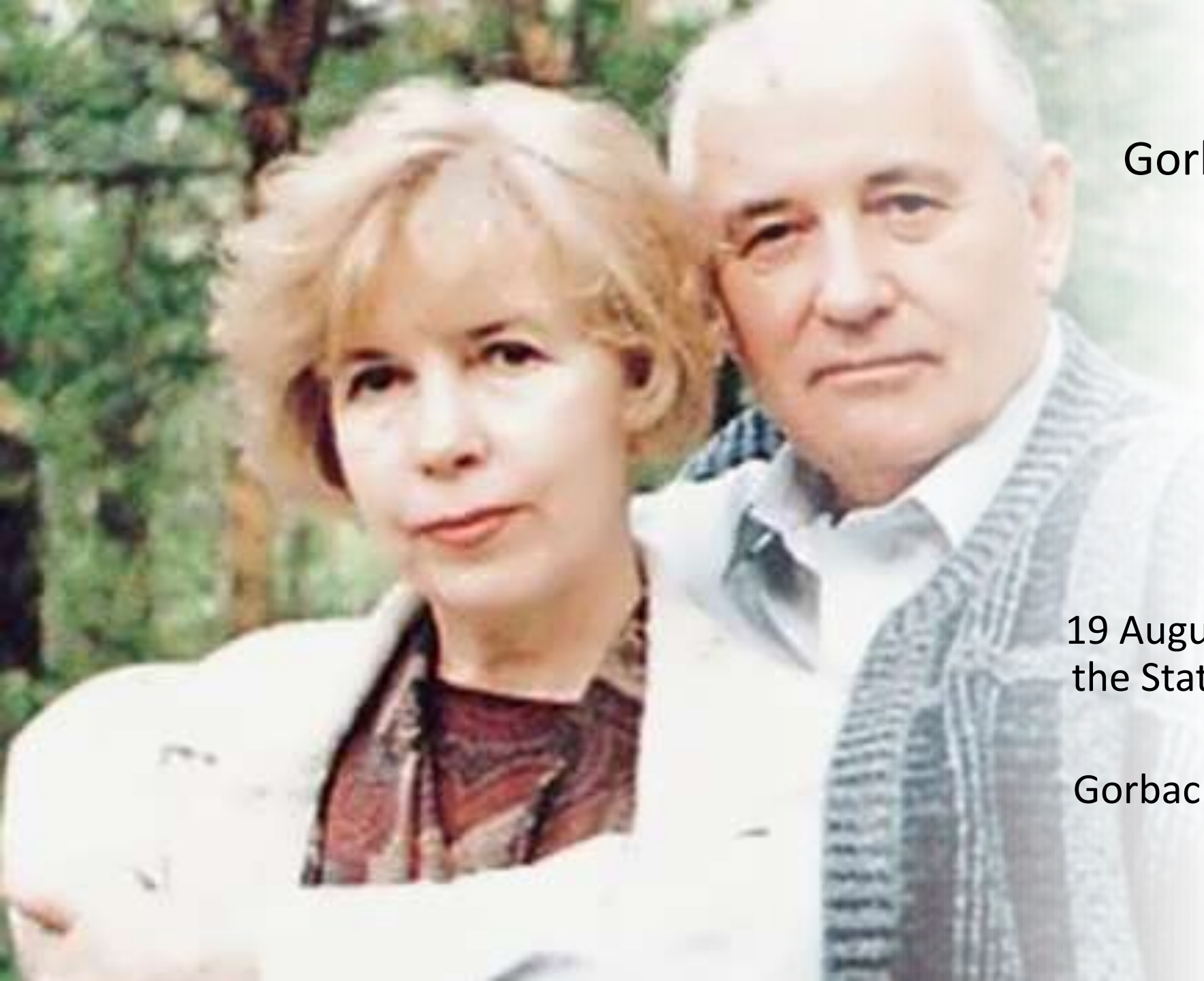
Anatoli Lukyanov

Chairman of the Supreme
Soviet

A close friend of Gorbachev

A manipulator and a traitor

Highly critical of the New
Union Treaty



Gorbachev & family in
house arrest

Complete isolation

19 August: the State Committee for
the State of Emergency officially in
power

Gorbachev no longer president for
“health reasons”



Meanwhile near Moscow...

Boris Yeltsin (President of the Russian Federation) awakened at 6am

Radio announcement: Gorbachev replaced by **Gennady Yanayev**

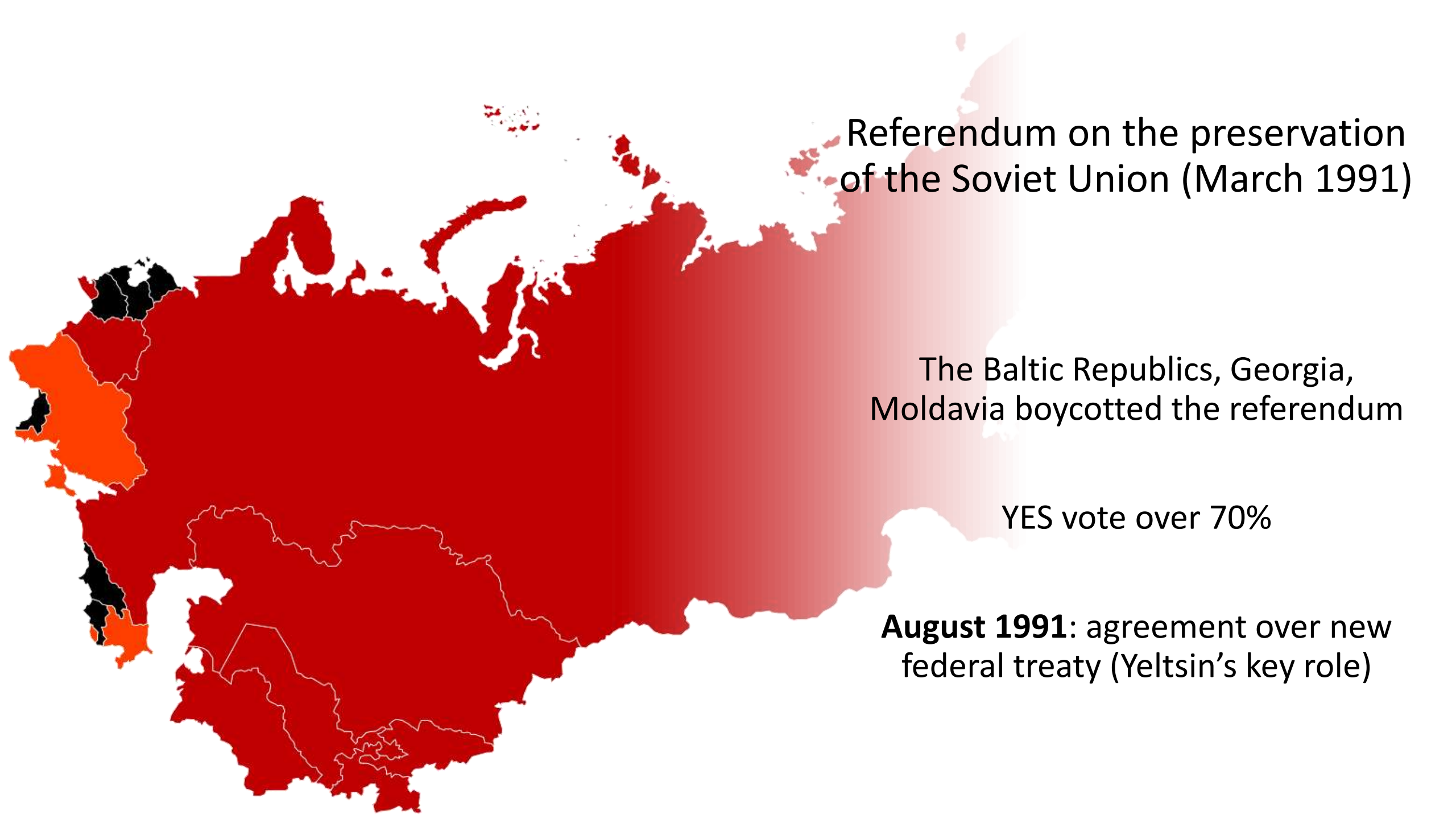
State of emergency to last 6 months



The legislative elections of 1990

March 1990: all 15 Soviet Republics able to held free elections to elect their own parliament

The creation of a new role:
president of the Russian
Federation

A map of the Soviet Union with regions colored to show referendum results. Most of the landmass is colored red, indicating a 'YES' vote over 70%. A large, semi-transparent red rectangle is overlaid on the eastern part of the map. In the northwest, several regions are colored orange, and a few small regions are colored black. The Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) are black. Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan are orange. Moldova is black. The rest of the Soviet Union, including the vast majority of Russia, is red.

Referendum on the preservation of the Soviet Union (March 1991)

The Baltic Republics, Georgia,
Moldavia boycotted the referendum

YES vote over 70%

August 1991: agreement over new
federal treaty (Yeltsin's key role)



Anatoli Sobchak

First democratically elected mayor of Saint Petersburg

Sobchak to colonel of Special Forces (ministry of interior): *“prevent them from seizing TV headquarters and city hall”*

Sobchak to Yeltsin: *“You must return to Moscow at once”*



A “Call to the Citizens of Russia”

The coup denounced
Call for civil disobedience

Not a military coup – KGB is leading
the way



Military deployment in
Moscow

To intimidate the population



Meanwhile at the
Kremlin...

Meeting of the “Gang of Eight”
(10am)

Military forces in alert

The next step: a meeting of the
Soviet Supreme to confirm
decisions of the State Committee

A peaceful transition?



A letter from “President” Gennady Yanayev

To reassure world leaders
The State Committee to continue
reforms

Russia’s “international commitments”
to be respected



Vladimir Kryuchkov: the initiator

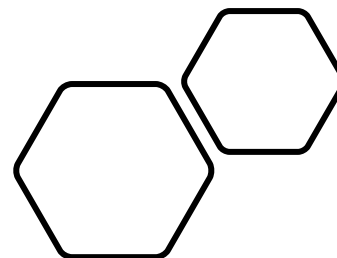
Belief a coup can be peaceful

A list of 67 officials to arrest

No order given



CRISIS IN MOSCOW





A press conference

The New Union Treaty “*anti- constitutional*”

The conspirators: total lack of charisma

The image of a group of mediocre
conspirators

Rumors and **disinformation**: Gorbachev
behind the coup?



The “White House”

The heart of resistance

Reading the *Call to the Citizens of Russia*

What will the Army do? What will the KGB do?

How long can Yeltsin resist?



Growing tension

A curfew?

The coup to succeed only if
the White House seized and
Yeltsin neutralized

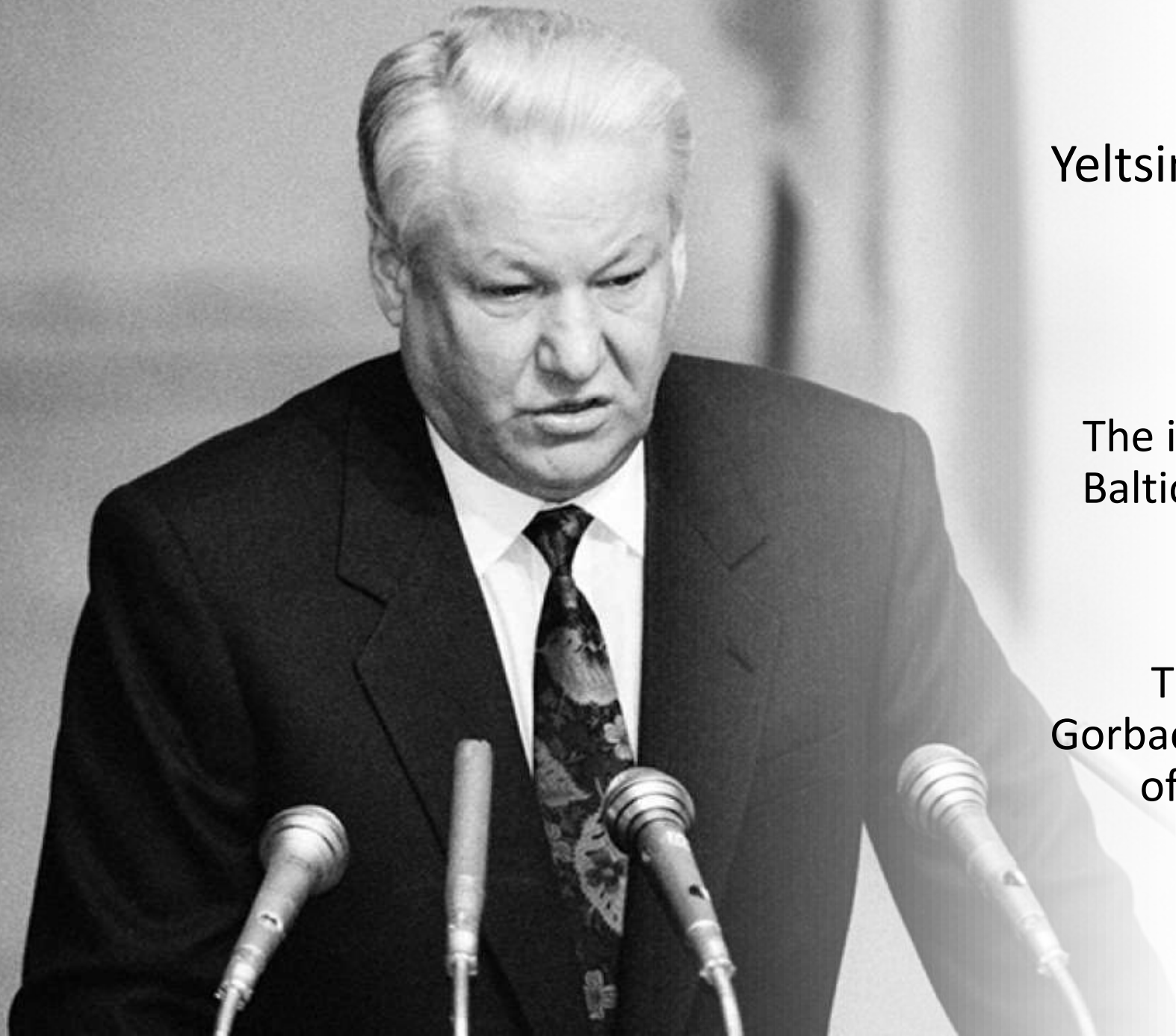
Hesitation amongst the
“Gang of Eight”: a military
intervention? At what cost?





The return of Gorbachev

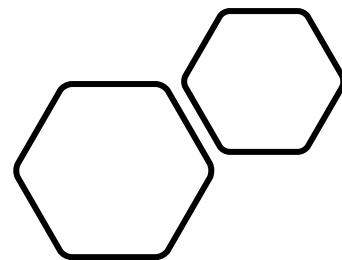
The Gang of Eight indicted



Yeltsin banned the CPSU

The independence of the
Baltic Republics, Ukraine,
Kazakhstan

The resignation of
Gorbachev & the dissolution
of the Soviet Union



How a group of mediocre
conspirators accelerated the
demise of the Soviet Union

The most pitiful coup in modern
history



