

Juri Luzhkov

August
1991:

A Farewell
to
communism

The Mayor
of Moscow
Remembers

Moscow, Red Square. Change of guards
at the mausoleum of the Soviet state's founder, Vladimir Lenin.



ВХОДЯЩАЯ ШИФРТЕЛЕГРАММА № 36ТВ

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секретно

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В связи с введением чрезвычайного положения примите меры по участию коммунистов в содействии Государственному Комитету по Чрезвычайному Положению в СССР.

В практической деятельности руководствоваться Конституцией Союза ССР.

О пленуме ЦК и других мероприятиях сообщим дополнительно.

№ 116/Ц

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Secret cyphered cable of the Central Communist Party Committee addressed to all party organizations of the country, saying, "In connection with the introduction of the state of emergency, take measures to provide communists' assistance to the State of Emergency Committee in the USSR."



The first day of the communist putsch.
Tanks in the streets of Moscow.







Citizens of Moscow talk soldiers
out of backing the communist coup.
Fraternizing with the Army.



A Soviet Army soldier siding with the defenders of democracy.





К ГРАЖДАН РОССИИ

В ночь с 18 на 19 августа 1991 года отстранен от власти законно избранный Президент страны.

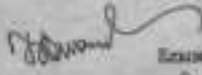
Кажется бы причетным не отрицаться это отстранение, мы знаем как с правым, реакционным, антиконституционным переворотом.

При всех трудностях и сложностях конституции, переворотом народа, демократический процесс в стране приобретает все более глубокий размах, необратимый характер. Народ России становится хозяином своей судьбы. Судебные органы беспартийные и внепартийные органы, а также граждане. Руководство России знает результаты поездки по Советскому договору, стремясь к демократии Советского Союза. В настоящее время...

The address of the Russian Federation government to the Citizens of Russia issued at 9:00 a.m. of the first day of the coup: "During the night hours of August 18-19, 1991, the legally elected President of the country was removed from power. ... We are dealing with a rightist, reactionary, anti-constitutional coup d'etat ... We call on all citizens of Russia to give a worthy response to the leaders of the putsch and demand that the country be returned onto the way of its normal constitutional development... It is, of course, necessary to ensure the possibility of the country's President, Gorbachev, to address the nation." This address, signed by Boris Yeltsin, President of Russia and head of Russia's Parliament, was circulated and distributed throughout Moscow.

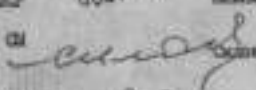
... в сомнениях, что народная свобода даст обстоятельную оценку политической ситуации правого переворота.

Президент СССР



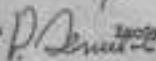
Ельцин Б.Н.

Председатель
СССР



Лукашин А.С.

Ч.О. Председатель
Высшего Совета СССР



Изrael Ю.И.

Citizens of Moscow demonstrate
their support of Boris
Yeltsin: "The people
and Yeltsin are united!"

НАРОД И ЕЛЬЦИН
ЕДИНЫ!














Twelve thousand people
near the building
of Russia's Supreme
Council, the so-called
White House.





УКАЗ

ПРЕЗИДЕНТА РОССИЙСКОЙ СОВЕТСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАТИВНОЙ СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ

Президента попытке государственного переворота
от должности Президент СССР, возмездно
ние Вооруженных Сил СССР, а также
СССР, возмездно

The August 19 Decree of Boris Yeltsin on the placement of all the USSR executive organs, including the KGB, the Interior and Defense Ministries, under the authority of the popularly elected President of the Russian Federation.

исполнения своих обязанностей и возмездно исключит выполнение
резов и распоряжений административного Комитета по чрезвычай
ному положению.

Должностные лица, выполнявшие функции указанного комитета
отстраняются от исполнения своих обязанностей в соответствии с
ституцией РСФСР. Органам Прокуратуры РСФСР немедленно принимать
меры для привлечения указанных лиц к уголовной ответственности.



Президент РСФСР Б. Ельцин

Москва, Кремль
[5 августа 1991 года]

ОБРАЩЕНИЕ МЭРА МОСКВЫ

К ГРАЖДАНАМ СТОЛИЦЫ

Дорогие москвичи!

В ночь с 18 на 19 августа 1991 года совершился государственный переворот. Отстранен от власти законный президент. Власть узурпировала группа лиц, именующая себя Государственным комитетом по чрезвычайному положению, не имея конституционных полномочий на руководство страной, представлявшая собой фантический кулуар. В ее состав вошли лица, несущие основную и непосредственную ответственность за катастрофическое положение в экономике, общественной безопасности и социальных условиях жизни граждан. Как можно серьезно относиться к обещаниям за шесть месяцев улучшить нашу жизнь, если под ними стоит подпись члена чрезвычайного комитета В.С.Павлова - администратора и организатора грабительского повышения цен.

Переворот преследует цель свернуть любые демократические преобразования и надолго оставить страну под властью реакционных сил.

Я обращаюсь ко всем гражданам Москвы - трудящимся, пенсионерам, ветеранам, военнослужащим.

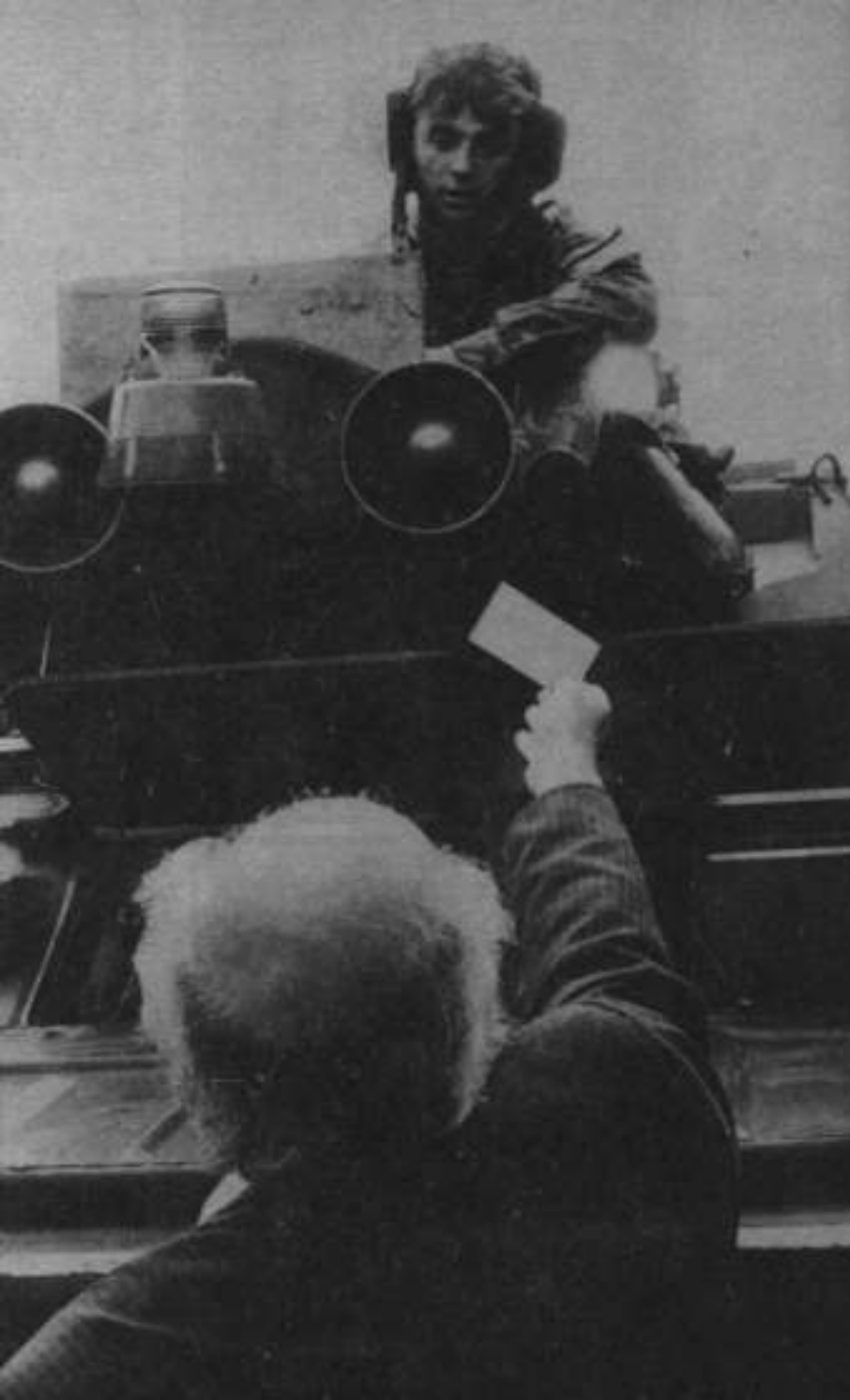
The Address of Moscow's Vice Mayor Yuri Luzhkov to the citizens of the capital, calling upon them not to carry out the orders and instructions of the putschists.

Ваша поддержка и участие в Катрнотным военнослужащих
вступит на пути мятежников и не дадут осуществиться их
антинародным замыслам.

И.о. мэра Москвы

П.М.Духов







ПРЕЗИДЕНТ

Российской Советской Федеративной Социалистической Республики

УКАЗ

Совершая государственные подморот и отстраняя насильственным путем от должности Президента СССР - Верховного Главнокомандующего Вооруженными Силами СССР,

Вице-президент СССР - Ковалев Г.И.

Премьер-министр СССР - Павлов В.С.

Председателя МГБ СССР - Яковлев А.И.

Министр Внутренних дел СССР - Яковлев А.И.

Министр Юстиции СССР - Яковлев А.И.

Президент СССР - Яковлев А.И.

Boris Yeltsin's Decree on the anti-constitutional actions of the putschists:
"Having betrayed the people, the Motherland and the Constitution, they
have placed themselves outside the law."

Президент РСФСР

Борис Ельцин Б. Ельцин

Москва, Кремль

• 14 августа 1991 года

22.1.3 Олма.





Defenders of the White House





Yuri Luzhkov

August
1991:
A Farewell
to
communism

The Mayor
of Moscow
Remembers

Moscow 1992

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Ю. Лужков
Август 1991: прощание с коммунизмом,
Воспоминания московского мэра

На английском языке

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FOREWORD BY BORIS YELTSIN, PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA

I read *August 1991: A Farewell to Communism*, written in the wake of the events, in a single sitting, and the book will forever remain in my personal library as a memento of the struggle and victory over the forces of evil.

Much is still to be recorded of August 1991 by the participants in the events themselves, journalists, political scientists and historians. However I am sure that few will rival *August 1991: A Farewell to Communism*. It is truthful in the minutest detail, with not only in-depth analysis, but also the emotional portrayal of the fears and hopes of our struggle and our elation of victory over an insidious enemy of mankind and humanity, dressed in red. I wish to believe that after this defeat it will never again raise its head in the long-suffering land of Russia. Let this book also be read by those who still hope to repeat the past, to reverse the course of history and to re-shackle the minds and hearts of men. Let it be a lesson and a stark reminder of the people's undying urge for freedom.

Russia, which combines the worlds of Europe and Asia, West and East, was ordained by Providence itself to shield the world from the diabolic experiments of history, each time leading people blindly down the road to totalitarianism. New generations need to be shown the only road, that leading to true freedom, in both thought and deed.

The Russian Bolshevik revolution of 1905 served the twentieth century the first warning, a danger signal that a practical application of communist ideas might be tried. The warning went unheeded by the Russian people and Russian intellectuals, thus unleashing the October Revolution of 1917 to usher in seven decades of outrageously inhuman communist domination. We have now seen that the end to this domination came not in 1985, which saw the beginning of Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika, but in August 1991, which saw the unleashing and

suppression of the putsch whose organizers tried to revert this huge country back to October 1917, and start everything all over again. Today's Russia, its young people and intellectuals, were able to accomplish what their predecessors, who perished in the effort, could not; they rejected communism in its totality as ideology, a policy, and a way of thinking and acting.

Decades are but fleeting moments in the eyes of eternity, but for human beings they mean a lifetime. We can now take legitimate pride in the knowledge that we have atoned for the guilt and the suffering of those before us who were so terribly sinned against. On the threshold of the third millennium we saved ourselves, our children and our grandchildren from the pillory to which merciless history fastened a country of great spirit, finally earning it the right to freedom. We shall not enter the new millennium under the scary banners of communism, for it is in our native land, not in heaven, that we want to find our happiness.

Let our bitter experience be a lesson to mankind. The world will remember the Russian August of 1991 as it remembers October of 1917, and it must know its present heroes - Moscow, the capital of Russia, and the Muscovites.

It was they who, defying fear, sacrificed themselves on the altar of freedom and repeated the glorious appeal, the cry of the heart of all people at all times, it is better to die standing than to live on our knees. The toll exacted for true progress is always enormous, and it is a great sign that during the night hours of August 20-21, the grimmest hours of struggle, with the hand of history halted in hesitation, three young Muscovites died for our freedom: a worker, an entrepreneur and an architect. These three men echoed the cries of all of the nine-million Moscow, the whole of Russia and, indeed, the world.

The imperial communist putsch began and ended, suppressed in Moscow without a chance to cast its dark mantle over the entire country. Muscovites stood in its way. The capital of Russia had the high honor of showing the world its wondrous visage.

Peer into its features, when you read this book.

TELEPHONE CALLS AT DAWN

Saturday, August 17, 1991, was a usual work day for me. On Sunday, too, I spend the evening at the Mayor's Office, looking through my business papers and drawing up a work program for the following week. On that evening, August 18, there was not even the slightest hint as to what was about to happen in the coming hours. And at that time I also had no idea that the KGB had already placed me under 24-hour surveillance.

For me everything began early on the morning of August 19. The telephone rang. My family is accustomed to untimely calls. We usually go to bed at one or two o'clock in the morning and we get up early. An early phone call came as no surprise. My wife picked up the receiver, and from her first words I understood that the caller was our officer on duty (in the Mayor's Office we had placed a 24-hour security guard).

— Maybe later? — I heard my wife's voice. — My husband is still asleep.

I understood that the caller insisted and I took the receiver myself.

— What's up?

— Comrade Luzhkov, the radio has just announced a change of power in the country.

And the man, not well versed in political niceties, immediately offered his own assessment:

— It's a coup! With the military. A coup d'etat.

I did not get anything at first and involuntarily blurted out:

— What do you mean a coup?

It was hard to grasp it. There has never been a coup

in Russia, at least during my time, and earlier no military coup had ever taken place. After all, we are not Latin America or Africa. Utter absurdity!

The security continued his report. The USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev had been announced unable to govern the country for health reasons. His office was transferred to Vice President Gennadi Yanaev. The State Committee for the State of Emergency was established.

I immediately ordered a car to go to the Mayor's Office. Vasili Shakhnovski, the Mayor's Office business manager, and Vladimir Resin, Deputy Premier and a minister of the Moscow government, were already there. The then Mayor of Moscow, Gavriil Popov, was vacationing in Kyrgyzstan, a Soviet Central Asian republic, and working to set up Moscow's economic links with that republic. He was expected to return on the evening of August 19. We keenly felt his absence on the first day of the putsch. In difficult situations Popov always acts decisively, vigorously and courageously. Regrettably, we could do nothing else but act on our own.

I immediately got down with Shakhnovski and Resin to an urgent discussion of the situation. What did really happen?

Two things immediately stood out. First, President Gorbachev, who was at that time vacationing in the government-owned dacha in the resort settlement of Foros in the Crimea, had issued no statement. Our suspicion was aroused by a strange report, broadcast by television and radio and published in morning papers, about a surprisingly abrupt change in Mikhail Gorbachev's health: from excellent (whenever he got tired, his activity was always high) to very poor which prevented him not only from governing the country but even from issuing some kind of statement. If he was so sick that he could not move a hand or use his brain, then why was there not any medical certificate to this effect, signed by his doctors?

The second thing that leaped to the eye was the striking "distinctiveness" of the people who took over and set up a mysterious emergency committee not provided for by any legislation. The reactionary, orthodox-communist views of those people were widely known in the country and elsewhere in the world.

SUSPICIOUS INDIVIDUALS FORM A PACK

I knew each of the key figures of the eight-man emergency committee very well.

On the memorable day of March 28, 1991, four of them had "steamrollered" me, demanding that I prevent massive rallies and a democratic demonstration near the Kremlin, in Moscow's Manezhnaya Square.

Immediately prior to that day, the head of the USSR Cabinet of Ministers, Valentin Pavlov, had issued a government decree banning rallies and demonstrations in Moscow. In addition, he personally warned me that criminal charges could be brought against me if anything happened during the rally; I flatly refused to rescind my permission (given on behalf of city authorities) to hold such a rally. In the meantime Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet, Anatoli Lukyanov, railroaded a decision expressly banning the rally.

On the morning of March 28, I was "brainwashed" for the last time by Boris Pugo, the USSR Interior Minister, Vladimir Kryuchkov, Chairman of the KGB, and Gennadi Yanaev, the Vice President. It was a curious occasion because by my side sat the well-known democrats Yuri Afanasiev and Arkadi Murashev.

In short, the emergency committee members were familiar to me. Judging by everything, they were by this time already flocking together.

Had I reneged on my permission, the situation would have been simple; the legal rally and demonstration in Manezhnaya Square would have automatically become illegal, with all the ensuing consequences for its participants.

I also recall that 45 minutes before the start of the rally, Gavriil Popov and I called Mikhail Gorbachev. We were told he was "busy." It was apparent that he was reluctant to talk to us. We got in touch with Yanaev. I told him: "I'm asking you to tell the President that he has one last chance not to lose face in Moscow - by getting the troops out of the city. Nobody is planning an assault. People merely wish to make their political and social views public. It is not proper to make a bogey of rallies and demonstrations in Manezhnaya Square that have already become customary for Moscow." Yanaev called back in half an hour,

15 minutes before the rally was due to start, and said that the President refused to satisfy our request.

The rest is well known. Massive rallies were held in Mayakovskaya and Arbatskaya Squares not far from Manezhnaya Square. The citizens of Moscow emerged in a very worthy light: they stood their ground.

Yes, I knew the principal members of the emergency committee having had many business meetings with them.

I had formed a personal impression of the head of the Cabinet of Ministers, Valentin Pavlov, long ago. He is not a dull man. In fact, one may say he is positively courageous, even on the adventurous side. In our circle of economic managers who associate frequently and closely, we referred to Pavlov as an adventurer. Pavlov's portrait, as a specialist, cannot be painted with one color either. He is intelligent, analytical and capable of weighing all the options in search of a solution, qualities which I quite admire in leaders. He is a good economist, albeit poorly versed in our specific economy and the economic management of ordinary life. Suffice it to mention the withdrawal from circulation of 50- and 100-ruble banknotes, the unprecedented price hike, and the introduction of Draconian customs duties that stopped imports of many badly needed goods into the domestic market. Pavlov's strong points did not make up for his weaknesses. In spirit, he was a tax inspector, and he remained one.

Gennadi Yanaev, in my view, illegally occupied the post of Vice President, for suspicions concerning his rigged election in the third straight vote at the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR, were never dispelled. But in Yanaev's situation, too, Mikhail Gorbachev made comforting excuses for himself, probably not without effective brainwashing by those whom we were to see among the emergency committee members. Again, everything was attributed to scheming of democrats who were said to be out to prevent the appointment of a fine man. And this fine man turned out to be in such excellent health on August 19. (Questioned about his health at the press-conference on that day by a foreign journalist, he answered proudly and quite seriously, "You ask my wife.")

THREATS KEEP MOUNTING FROM ALL SIDES

Though I may have tired the reader eager for a detective story, I cannot help but cite these reflections, for they clearly determined our position at the very beginning of the coup. I realize that I devoted to them more time than it took V. Resin, V. Shakhnovski and me to hold our first conversation on arrival to the Mayor's Office in the morning of August 19. We, a young democratic politician and two economic managers with a long life behind us, were unanimous that an anti-constitutional communist putsch was under way.

On our table lay the Law on the State of Emergency, which was permitted to be introduced only in the event of natural disasters, catastrophes, epidemics, epizootics and massive civil disorders. Nothing of the kind was happening in the city. This also confirmed our worst suspicions. We decided to talk to Russia's President Boris Yeltsin.

In the "White House" (a building on the bank of the Moskva river, housing Russia's Parliament and government) we were told that Yeltsin was staying in his country house. The house was equipped with a telephone for government communication which was not cut off.

Our call was answered by a woman, Yeltsin's wife or daughter. I had the feeling that they were expecting this call. Yeltsin picked up the receiver at once and said firmly, "It's a coup," and asked what we were undertaking. I told him that we were doing two things: coordinating the efforts of Muscovites to rebuff the plotters and drafting a statement.

"We already have an appeal to the people of Russia. Come over and be as careful as you can be."

We quickly got ready to go to Yeltsin's country house but were detained by a telephone call. The caller was Yuri Prokofiev, First Secretary of Moscow's Communist Party Committee. Never before, even when the committee was still omnipotent, did he employ such brazen manner of talking to me.

- I suggest that you come to me at once to get instructions.

- I don't understand the reason for your tone of voice, - I said.

- Have you heard about what happened? Everything must change. I suggest you come without delay.

- I agreed to meet with Yeltsin...

During those first hours everybody was unmindful of the need for security precautions, because it seemed that life would go on in its ordinary way, although such hopes rested on flimsy grounds.

- You needn't go to Yeltsin, or you may regret it.

He hung up. Then another call followed, this time from Vitali Prilukov, chief of the KGB department for Moscow and Moscow Region. His tone was calm and confident, without Prokofiev's brazenness. Without going into details, Prilukov only warned me:

- Go on with your work, comrade Luzhkov.

Thus he made it clear that he did not discard me as a "lost soul" and that no changes that would be taking place in the nation or in Moscow would affect me if I behaved "decently."

- We are not going to transfer power to anyone in the city, we were elected by the Muscovites, - I said.

Thus, the principal forces in the plot revealed themselves at once by their first telephone calls: the twin brothers, the party officialdom hated by the people and deprived of their support but keen on taking their revenge, and the KGB leaders who were none the wiser for all their terrible history.

Prilukov mentioned, as if in passing, the appointment of Moscow's military commandant who, in his words, was prepared to cooperate with the Mayor's Office. He raised the possibility of troops being introduced into the city. We already knew this from reports of the Mossoviet (Moscow Council) and district Soviets deputies: tanks were approaching Moscow along several routes.

We did not have to think long to understand what their first targets would be: the White House and the Mayor's Office. There was no need to take over the city's communist party committee, for its position, after our conversation with Prokofiev, left no one in doubt. Neither would there be any need to take over the Kremlin; it was there that the plotters had entrenched themselves. As to the President of the USSR, we somehow knew that he had already been taken captive.

Before going to Yeltsin, I issued a few instructions.

From that first morning and for the remainder of the

situation, there was to be calm and no panic. Businesslike attitude to work and discipline were sharply and tangibly bolstered. Endless verbiage, in which many deputies excelled, was cut short. They acted in unison and made an immense contribution to mobilizing the Moscow population for the struggle.

KGB AGENTS DRIVE FAWN-COLORED LADAS

The trip was not long; it was 30 km to Yeltsin's country house. Getting inside the car, I thought it was my duty to warn the driver, Mikhail Sharov:

- We may get into the thick of it. There may be tanks, there may be shots, we may be taken prisoner, there may be blood. If you refuse, there will be no bad blood.

Unexpectedly, I heard from him his run-of-the-mill, customary:

- Off we go. What the ...

And we roared off.

Near Yeltsin's dacha, Mikhail drew my attention to a fawn-colored Lada.

- There they are, the KGB. I see them all. They've located us.

Soon our Volga was stopped by militia with submachine guns. On the approach to the dacha, we were met by several plain-clothed men, armed with pistols and short submachine guns - the guards of the President of Russia.

The door was opened by the President's wife, calm and affable. Seeing a very clean floor I wanted to take off my shoes. She waved her arms. I passed from the entrance into the living room.

There was a big table with papers on it, and familiar faces: Ruslan Khazbulatov, acting Chairman of the Russian Parliament, Premier Ivan Silaev, Vice President Alexander Rutskoi, Minister Mikhail Poltoranin and some others. One of those present was on the hot-line phone, covering the entire country, reading the text of the Appeal to the Citizens of Russia.

The President was wearing slippers on his bare feet and a far from new, plain and simple tennis shirt, looking quite ordinary.

He pointed to the apples on the window sill.

- Try them, they're delicious. We dry them ourselves...
- Moscow is with you, - I told him.

Our conversation was brief. We spoke mainly of how to organize resistance to the mutineers in Moscow.

I felt fully confident. The months which followed the March 28 rally convinced me that the attitudes of the Muscovites were changing; democratic ideas were spreading ever wider. I recalled the powerful demonstration organized by the democrats on April 29, and, by contrast, the thin rally held on May 1 on Red Square at the bidding of the official trade unions.

I had formed the image of today's city even before August 19: democratically-minded, courageous, steadfast, and determined to achieve a better life against all difficulties. That was why I assured the Russian President of the unreserved support of the people of Moscow.

- Thank you, - he said. - Mobilize the people. All this will not just end up that simply.

Tensions mounted.

Already the guards protecting the nearest posts around Yeltsin's dacha reported that the house was being encircled; automobiles and buses kept arriving, with groups of people pouring out from them. We realized, of course, that even if we were killed, other men would be found to lead the fighters.

It was time for the leaders of Russia to move to the White House.

St. Petersburg's Mayor, Anatoli Sobchak, entered the room. He had arrived in Moscow in the morning on some business. When he realized what was happening, he joined us. We sat with him on the sofa. I advised him to get to St. Petersburg as soon as possible, using any road. He agreed. Our two cities had to be mobilized the first.

I already had in my hand a copy of the Russian leaders' Appeal to the Citizens of Russia. It was time to go back to Moscow. We decided to take different routes, although the roads from here were few. Yeltsin, still wearing slippers and tennis shirt, addressed his family:

- Ladies, could your possible find a pair of socks for the President of Russia?

We bade each other farewell, and he again warned us:

- Caution, utmost caution. Try to slip through.

The road passed through the forest. I told the driver:

- Misha, let's change the plate number.

We stopped. In the luggage van we had spare plate numbers for different emergencies, although virtually we never used them. The new number was for Interior Ministry transport vehicles. Thus, literally as we went along, we began to master the previously unknown art of security precautions, familiar to us only from books and films about the Bolshevik underground before October, 1917.

Again our car went into high gear. Through the window, we caught sight of the familiar fawn-colored Lada.

We drove out onto the highway and slipped into a line of military vehicles driving tandem, not to be conspicuous. After some three minutes, the line which we had joined, was overtaken by the same Lada driving at a furious speed. When we approached the circular highway, Moscow's outer boundary, the car was driving in the opposite direction. They were clearly looking for us. Whether they wanted to stop us, detain or engineer an accident on the highway, probably no one will ever know.

Inside the city, near Manezhnaya Square, we saw tanks but we reached the Mayor's Office without an incident.

PEOPLE WHO RULED THE COUNTRY WERE GOOD FOR NOTHING

I went up to my office, asked for Shakhnovski, and asked him to immediately make a dozen copies of the Appeal and then have each sent to be copied in turn in other places, including outside the Mayor's Office. If one or several copies were " nabbed," the Appeal would still reach the Muscovites.

Deputies and other people kept filing in, taking the Appeal with them and then going on their individual routes, covering the entire city. Muscovites saw the Appeal on house walls, fences, on tanks and armored vehicles. It was also published by newspapers which were banned but continued to be printed clandestinely, and it was broadcast by the democratic Echo of Moscow and Radio Russia.

I felt enormously relieved, not only because I returned safe and sound, but because we had accomplished a task of tremendous importance. The groundwork had been laid.

It seemed the day had passed. I looked at my watch: it was 10.30 a.m.

Reports came that Boris Yeltsin had safely made it to the White House.

At that time I did not give much thought to what was happening, but now, going over those days, I wonder why Yeltsin, all those who were with him, including myself and my driver Misha "had slipped through?" Was it sheer luck, a happy coincidence? No!

The communist putsch leaders were confident of the support of the people and the Army. They failed to realize that the past few years had taught millions of people a lot: meetings, demonstrations, reports of the democratic press gave them "higher political education." And so even from the outset, the commands handed down from the top to the military were executed without any zeal, vanishing into some kind of brittle sand altogether. Most people understood that the violations of the law and repression would not go unpunished.

The military and state security officials took varying positions, some of the bolder and more patriotic ones eventually siding with the people. So let us thank them all, both named and unnamed. Let us also thank those honest KGB officers who told Gavriil Popov and me that we were to be arrested on the night of August 20-21. Like Yazov, Kryuchkov failed to see a change in the mood of the army and the state security organs, which proved to be one reason for the putschists' undoing.

Let me stress that, by contrast, the forces of democracy had rallied together and acted in unison, with initiative and decisiveness.

That first day was very hard for me. In a way, it was also easy, for all that we said was understood and accepted even before the words were pronounced. Deputies and Mayor's Office apparatus officials, who previously felt no fondness for each other, rallied together and acted in surprising unison. You learn who your true friends are only in times of trouble. All those who took instructions from me came back to me to report execution. It was like in my good old days with the Research and Production Association, where my people dutifully reported execution.

Laying aside the most urgent business, I jotted down an outline for a Mayor's Office appeal to all Muscovites, and Oleg Orlov and Vladimir Bokser also prepared their drafts. The drafts were then given to Vladimir Shapovalov,

PRESS DIGEST

WHERE IS THE USSR PRESIDENT! HOW IS HIS HEALTH!

★

Bloodshed appears to have been planned, that is clear. It looks as if the new authorities will not stop short of using force to suppress the popular resistance. It is so far difficult to say what the new people in Moscow are hoping for: they have no concept of how to pull the country out of the quagmire.

★

CAPTIVITY IN FOROS

★

THE RUSSIAN AUTHORITIES DEMANDED THAT AN IMMEDIATE MEDICAL EXAMINATION OF GORBACHEV BE CONDUCTED WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF INDEPENDENT EXPERTS FROM THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION.

★

A sense of morality never failed Yeltsin. From the very first hours of the coup, he demanded that Gorbachev be brought back. He called for a general indefinite strike. Yeltsin went out onto a Moscow street and climbed up onto a tank.

★

**BAGHDAD ROLLS OUT THE RED CARPET
FOR YANAEV. THE IRAQI EMBASSY
IS WORKING UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE.**

★

The American CBS and CNN television companies reported that President Bush, cutting short his rest in Kinnebunkport, is hurriedly returning to Washington to meet with Secretary of State James Baker, who arrived in the capital today from a vacation in Wyoming.

★

THE WORLD IN ALARM

★

The putschists apparently are hoping that the West's response this time will be about the same as to the events in China two years before.

★

A decree they read to us
That the President is bust!
In the "Palace" there's a coup,
And dictators o'er me and you.

★

A new counting of time began for our huge country.
Thrown overboard were our plans for the future and our
attempts to join world civilization.

We were leaving behind a chance to create a normal
democratic state.

Engaged a mere two weeks ago in discussions about a
"threat of dictatorship," hardly anyone could imagine what
Day "X" would really be like.

★

a seasoned "apparatchik" who put the appeal into its final form.

The plotters' ideological credentials were minimal, borrowed from the arsenals of those who "had come out of the trenches" at the bidding of the CPSU. The junta's appeal was urgently broadcast on August 19 on radio and television. It was an empty document, containing ridiculous and patently false promises and excessive gall, poured in torrents on all the novel structures that appeared in recent years.

Now that the dust has settled, compare this senseless collection of garbled phrases, banal cliches and this chicanery of party officials to the appeals of Boris Yeltsin and Mayor's Office. You will see the chasm not only between their political and moral stands, but between their states of mind as well.

There is another reason for the putschists' failure. It is a bizarre conclusion to make, but I insist on it. People who ruled the country were actually good for nothing. We had known this before and had a chance to see it once again.

THE NATION'S PRESIDENT LOCKED AWAY IN FOROS

Perhaps the only operation which the putschists managed to pull off was taking the USSR President captive in his government dacha in Foros in the Crimea's Black Sea coast where the Soviet elite have their sanatoriums for vacationing.

The details of that captivity can be gleaned from Mikhail Gorbachev's speech and the answers he gave at the press conference held shortly after his return. Information is also available from eye-witness accounts, notably from the neuropathologist, Anatoli Liev, from a government sanatorium in Kislovodsk, the presidential aide Anatoli Chernyaev, deputies who were vacationing in the Crimea, and from a television journalist who interviewed Mrs. Gorbachev.

The junta's first statements persistently asserted that the President was sick and that his office had been taken over by Vice President Yanaev. That monstrous lie had slim plausibility at best; indeed Gorbachev had been suffering some back pain. But it in no way was a threat to his life

or in any way ever prevented him from carrying out his presidential duties.

Dr. Liev learned this from a telephone call he received from Foros. He said he would fly to the Crimea at once, but asked to contact his immediate superiors in Moscow for permission to leave. When one is summoned to the President, the arrangements usually take no more than a few minutes. No instructions came, however, either on that or any of the following days. And the people at the Foros dacha kept calling and calling, insisting that Liev fly there at once. Only on August 17 did Liev receive Moscow's clearance: "You can go."

Upon arrival at the presidential dacha the doctor was told that his patient, during a walk several days earlier, suffered an acute pain in his back and could return home only with the assistance of his family.

The experienced doctor achieved an almost instant improvement of his patient's condition and requested some medical preparations, not available in the dacha, to be brought from Moscow in time for his next visit on August 18. The doctor was encouraged by his patient's condition on the following day: Gorbachev felt much better and was, fittingly, in high spirits. He said:

- Do what you wish - take out the nerve, a vertebra, even a leg, but I must be in Moscow on the nineteenth.

The doctor knew that August 20 was the date scheduled for the signing of the Union treaty by some of the republics, and Gorbachev was expected to make a speech on that important occasion.

The necessary medications were already in the syringes, and the doctor administered them.

On the morning of the 19th, before the President would fly to Moscow, the doctor was expected to pay yet another visit. This did not happen, however.

Already during his first hours in the Crimea, Liev noticed (but did not attach any significance to it) that the Foros dacha was surrounded by more than its share of the military, militia, and people who wore their plain clothes like military uniforms. Passes were checked at every step, and the checkers would vanish into the bushes to report to someone and would ask for instructions through walkie-talkies. Off the coast, at sea, warships appeared.

On the morning of August 19 the unsuspecting doctor headed for the sanatorium beach, and decided to have a

swim before visiting the President. Suddenly he was approached by a stranger, clearly not dressed for bathing, who sat down without asking for permission and immediately engaged him in a conversation:

- I've heard that Gorbachev is either paralyzed or dead. They announced it on the radio.

Without waiting for him to continue, the doctor rushed to get things.

After mournful music, the radio began to broadcast statements of the State Committee for the State of Emergency. One can understand the feelings of the man who had administered different injections to Gorbachev the day before. The thought that Moscow might have sent wrong medicines, or deliberately replaced them, was enough to make one speechless.

The car from the presidential dacha did come after all, but Liev was not allowed even to come near. One of the arrivals, who was especially active with his elbows, said outright:

- You will not go to Foros. You have no business to be there. You are to stay in your room and we advise you not wander around. You will get your instructions later.

- You cannot help Gorbachev now, - whispered a man hanging around the car who did not seem to feel very comfortable. Back in his room, the doctor grabbed the receiver; the telephone was dead. After a few minutes of unsuccessful attempts to bring the telephone back to life, he heard a voice:

- Don't be so rough with the phone - it's cut off. Put down the receiver!

Liev's student came and showed him a cable from Boris Yeltsin, addressed to parliament deputies vacationing in the Crimea. Yeltsin urged them to make every effort to establish contact with the USSR President to find out what was happening to him.

On the evening of the same day, some deputies made the first attempt to penetrate Gorbachev's dacha. Making a show of their friendliness, the guards asked who they were and why they came, asked to see their deputy cards and in just as friendly a manner prevented them from taking even one step further, insisting that there was no possibility for the President to receive all deputies vacation-

ing in the vicinity. Bidding them farewell, the guards sounded reassuring:

– Don't worry, he is all right.

A second attempt was made in the morning of August 20. Doctor Liev was among the deputies, but again the attempt was unsuccessful.

Ranking officers "circled their bandwagons" and in another attempt to penetrate the camp. The guard, when urged to come to their senses, not to obey the criminal instructions, and to allow them to see the President, said that military personnel are expected to obey the orders of their superiors.

What was happening in the impregnable dacha at that time? According to the testimony of Anatoli Chernayev, at around 5 p.m. on August 18 he saw, out of the window of his room in an outbuilding near the presidential dacha, many limousines which was quite unusual. The unexpected visitors were Valeri Boldin, Gorbachev's Chief of Staff, Oleg Baklanov, Deputy Chairman of the Defense Council, known for his strong links to the military-industrial complex, General Valentin Varennikov, Deputy Minister of Defense and Commander of the Army, and Oleg Shenin, a Communist Party Central Committee Secretary.

They went straight to Mikhail Gorbachev while Yuri Plekhanov, Chief of the KGB Department responsible for the security of the nation's leaders, his deputy Vyacheslav Generalov who had come with the four men, and Vladimir Medvedev, the President's aide-de-camp, remained seated on the railing of the staircase.

After about an hour the four left, taking Plekhanov and Medvedev with them. It was later learned that Medvedev there and then wrote a report asking to be transferred from the President. Generalov was left behind to take charge of the presidential bodyguards.

– I was left in charge here, – he told Chernayev. – I was ordered to keep everybody here. Even if I let you go, border guards will immediately detain you. There is a triple semi-circle of guards from one seacoast to the other. The road from Sevastopol to Yalta is blocked, and there you can see warships.

Questioned whether the planned signing of the Union treaty would take place on the 20th as scheduled, he answered:

– There will be no signing. The plane that came to pick

up the President has been sent back to Moscow. Garages with his limos have also been sealed and guarded, not by my people, but by special units with machine guns. I can't even let the support staff (gardeners, cooks and cleaning women) go. I don't know where to accommodate them. I'm a military man. I have been ordered... Nobody!

Communication was effectively cut off. Even the special line Gorbachev used as Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces was dead.

- I picked up a receiver (I was working in the study) and it was dead, - Gorbachev recounted later. - I picked up a second, a third, a fourth, a fifth - all dead. I picked up the internal telephone - it was also cut off. So then, I was isolated...

What did the four discuss with the President?

Without waiting to be invited, they entered the study unceremoniously. And they immediately submitted an ultimatum: that the President turn his office over to the Vice President.

- Before I begin to answer your questions, I would like to ask who sent you? - said Gorbachev.

- The Committee, - was the answer.

- What committee?

- Well, the Committee in connection with the state of emergency in the country.

- Who established the Committee? I did not establish it. The Supreme Soviet did not establish it. Who established it?

Gorbachev was told that the Committee already had membership and that it only needed a President's decree. So he could either issue such a decree and stay in the Crimea, or hand his office to the Vice President. The country was slipping toward a catastrophe, it was necessary to introduce a state of emergency for other measures would not be effective.

- You will announce a state of emergency tomorrow. What next? You at least make a forecast for a day, four steps ahead - what next? The country will not support these measures. You want to take advantage of the difficulties, of the people being tired and ready to support any dictator. This will be your own undoing. Well, may the Devil take you, it's your business. But this will mean the undoing of the country, - the President expostulated with the unbidden guests.

He also warned against ruling by emergency decrees

which would reverse all democratic changes and lead to violence and blood.

– Then resign, – the visitors insisted.

His answer was straightforward and clear:

– You will never get this from me!

Thus, the incipient putsch (this was the evening of August 18, and the self-appointed Committee was to be announced the next day) was dealt its first bodily blow.

The plotters left for Moscow empty-handed.

Let us also get back to Moscow to resume our story of August 19.

"WHY AREN'T YOU IN YOUR PLACES?"

The city government was in session. I entered the conference hall, where we always held our meetings, and could not hide my surprise; government members sat in chairs usually reserved for invited guests, while their seats at the oblong table were vacant. I approached the table and opened the meeting in a quite unorthodox manner:

– Why aren't you in your places? I am Vice Mayor and I act as Mayor in the absence of Gavriil Popov. We continue to discharge our functions and we shall not permit anyone to disperse us. So I request the government members to immediately take their seats. Let everyone determine who he sides with in this time of trial, based on his or her views. You know Yeltsin's position and my position. We do not recognize any emergency committee or any military commandant of Moscow. The city is still governed by the Mayor's Office and its decisions are the only decisions in force, so make you no mistake about that.

The government meeting, attended by both prefects and sub-prefects of the municipal districts, had no special questions to put to me. They received my words about the illegality of the emergency committee and our refusal to comply with its orders calmly and approvingly. They agreed without debate that all of us had to get down to our economic duties, which naturally assumed a specific directedness.

Indeed, nine million Muscovites still needed bread, milk and other essentials, and we were not going to close down the metro and put city transportation on hold. Reports kept coming in, it is true, saying that in some places bread-carrying vans could not get to stores because they were

being stopped by the military. Trolleybuses and buses were not allowed into downtown Moscow.

So there was a danger of a breakdown in the city's life, heightened by panic buying of bread, salt, matches, soap, flour, and other items in heavy demand in times of danger. It was important to bring in more of these products to keep the store shelves from becoming bare and thereby triggering even more of a panic. I would like to pay tribute to the van drivers. Most of them, cursing the emergency committee out loud and to themselves, managed to defy the bans and get to the stores, so that outrageously long lines did not form anywhere. But there was another obstacle in the way of the delivery vehicles: the barricades.

Even before the Mayor's Office issued its appeal, the residents of Moscow, above all young people, spontaneously began to erect "logjams." The logic of circumstances decreed that the main developments would be played out in Krasnaya Presnya, a well-known district of Moscow, where during the revolutions of 1905 and 1917, armed battles were fought and where the White House* was now surrounded by the first barricades. Barricades then appeared on various city arteries, which, according to information that kept coming to us from unofficial sources, could be used by tanks.

In the afternoon I chaired a meeting of the city's construction and economic managers and other officials in my study. Again I repeated:

- The Mayor's Office is the only authority in the city. Only its orders have legal force.

I told my deputy, Boris Nikolski:

- Do not halt city road repairs. We want everyone to see how confident we are. One can imagine what tanks will do to the asphalt.

Roads are my nagging problem. We promised Muscovites to finally put the streets in order and lay good asphalt. The scope of work kept expanding and the results were increasingly evident. All of a sudden this ordinary problem suddenly took on a very unexpected twist.

* White House is the name given by the residents of Moscow to the white-stone building designed by architect Dmitri Chechulin for the former Russian Federation government in the 1970s. The area of the building is 33.8 thousand sq. m. On August 22, 1991, at 12.30 a.m., a Russian tricolor, 2.5 m by 4 m, was raised there, to be replaced the following day by a larger one, 3 m by 6 m.

THE PLOTTERS LOOK FOR ALLIES

I will return to the events of the morning in order to tell about Boris Nikolski. He was summoned by the first secretary of Moscow's Communist Party Committee, Prokofiev, who offered him the post of Premier of Moscow's Government, a proposal he resolutely rebuffed. On the morning of August 20, Prokofiev called him once more only to be refused again. "Don't call me any more," Nikolski cut him short.

A skillful organizer, qualified specialist and honest man, he refused to return to the party apparatus which had spent years trying to mould him into its liking: secretary of district party committee, secretary of City Party Committee, second secretary of the Central Committee of the Georgian Communist Party. After the tragedy in Tbilisi, capital of Georgia, when a peaceful demonstration resulted in the death of people at the hands of the military, his party career ended and he returned to his native city to become deputy chairman of the Moscow City Committee for Planning. Neither his long membership in the Communist Party, nor the sweeping charges brought against him for his alleged violence done to peaceful demonstrators in Tbilisi could shake my confidence in him and I readily offered him the opportunity to work with me in Moscow while the new government was being created, and defended his candidacy when it came up for approval. I am glad I was not mistaken.

In vain Prokofiev urged Nikolski to follow him along the tracks beaten by the party bigwigs. Honest people of any conviction at all rejected the communist junta outright. In those desperate hours, the zealous communist secretary who decided he was back in the saddle again saw that he no longer wielded any power over the hearts and lives of people. Nikolski was aware of the perils that his firm decision could subject him to, if the gang of party apparatchiks managed to hold on to power for a short while.

Most people refused to collaborate with the plotters. This was hastening their impending defeat.

The people who work with me are different. I do not like everyone of them, nor everyone likes me. Some have no liking for firm city leadership, which may be regarded by some as an evil, not a blessing. Still, during those days I met only allies who would approach me and say:

PRESS DIGEST

**IF GORBACHEV IS REALLY ILL, WHY
THEN ARE THEY THREATENING US!
AND WHY WITH TANKS!**

★

The first thing the plotters, who betrayed the supreme authority, did was to ban those central and Moscow newspapers which were not to their liking. Abolition of freedom of information, perestroika's most notable accomplishment, goes a long way towards explaining the meaning of the events and the goals of the putschists. No one doubted now that they were out to restore an oppressive regime in the country.

★

**IT IS ABSOLUTELY CLEAR THAT WE ARE DEALING
HERE WITH THE FORCIBLE REMOVAL OF A LEGALLY
ELECTED PRESIDENT FROM POWER AND FORCIBLY
KEEPING HIM CAPTIVE.**

★

There have appeared some unverified reports that Mikhail Gorbachev has been brought to Moscow. We got in touch with officials who might have reliable information about the President's movements. They said that they did not know anything about this.

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An opinion poll conducted by the USSR Center for Public Opinion Studies on August 20 found that 70 percent regarded the Emergency Committee as illegal and only 20 per cent supported it.

★

WE ARE NO MORE SLAVES

★

**THEY HAVE ENGINEERED
A COUP D'ETAT BUT THEIR HANDS
ARE SHAKING.**

★

The plotters, who could think only in terms of centralist ideology, appeared to sincerely believe that the elimination of Gorbachev would resolve all their problems. But this simplistic and convenient technique is effective only in a real empire.

But even in an incipient democracy there arises what Robespierre called the "hydra of federalism," i.e., a new head begins to grow in place of the old one. So, in place of Gorbachev's cut-off head, the plotters saw a head even more unpleasant for them, that of Yeltsin.

★

- I am at your complete disposal day and night, whenever you wish, now, at once.

This was how leaders and collectives felt and acted, who, with tank barrels trained on them, unequivocally declared their support of the legitimate city and Russia authority.

But on one occasion I met with a rebuff. At about 3 o'clock on the night from August 20 to 21 I called the deputy director of the Fili bus and trolleybus park (to be precise, the deputy for personnel affairs) and instructed him to bring his vehicles over to block the Kalinin bridge near the White House. He refused. I called him again and warned that he was speaking with Moscow's Vice Mayor and was expected to comply with my demands. Again he refused. Then I was asked to send an official message by telephone. I swore and began dictating. Eventually they did what we told them, but the time needed to block the bridge could have been lost. Luckily, we got there in time.

On the evening of August 19, the Congress of Compatriots was expected to open, a gathering of Russian emigres who had come from all corners of the world. It is not difficult to imagine the feelings of our guests whose ancestors, or they themselves, had escaped from communist rulers and, upon coming home, saw tanks in the streets.

We decided to draft a message of greetings to the Congress from the Mayor's Office. The message was written and read by Alexander Muzykantski, Deputy Premier of the government and prefect of the Central district.

"I entered Tchaikovski Concert Hall," he told us when he returned, "A cheerless spectacle: utter dejection. I began to read the message from the Mayor's Office. After the first lines, there were signs of awakened interest, then the most profound attention and, after saying that the Mayor's Office does not recognize the junta, that we shall win, and that democracy cannot be stopped, there came a storm of thunderous applause."

Many participants at first wished to return home as soon as possible, but our confidence deeply affected them. Few left and hundreds of compatriots went to man the barricades near their native Russia's White House. Elderly people stayed there the whole night. They brought food to the defenders and persuaded soldiers not to shoot at their fellow countrymen. Only on August 22, when the three days of the putsch were already behind us, did television

become bold enough to show all the details of that evening on the screen.

This will probably remain the brightest memory of the Congress.

IT NEEDS NO PROTECTION!

August 20 was the most desperate day of the three. By night the threat of an assault reached its highest point. The air seemed literally soaked with gasoline fumes, so a spark would suffice to set the city ablaze.

I admire the citizens of Moscow standing up to defend a rightful cause. I learn more and more facts about young people who came to the capital, to the White House, from many cities of Russia, from republics of Transcaucasia, Central Asia, the Ukraine and Byelorussia.

Force met with force. One side had weapons but no belief. The other was armed only with belief and hope, and it won. It "disabled" the troops, regarded as reliable. The people, Army soldiers, and officers stood not face to face but shoulder to shoulder with one another.

The corrupt Vremya TV news program showed in great detail the scenes of Muscovites fraternizing with soldiers, supposedly giving their full support to the Army which had, at long last, come to the capital to impose a state of emergency. Yes, there was fraternizing, there was support. But not for the plotters. The support was for legitimate authority: the President of Russia, elected by the people. This was not an election, as it was on June 12, 1991, when people voted to elect the President of the republic, the Mayor and Vice Mayor of Moscow. It was a choice. Party apparatchiks, the traitor generals and the secret KGB executioners, who decided to slip into power again by flouting law and order, found themselves, as they did on that joyous Sunday in summer during the election, utterly defeated. The people had won again.

The Army... Well, it is a subject apart.

Around 3 p.m. on August 19, I saw that the Mayor's Office building was surrounded by soldiers. Tanks had come to Tverskaya Street even earlier.

I summoned Lieutenant-General Nikolai Zimin, who was in charge here, and told him of the position taken by the President of Russia and the Mayor's Office. The substance

of our conversation is rendered by the following three remarks.

- Comrade Premier, all is clear to me.
- What is clear to you?
- I quit.

This was probably the first military victory won by the democrats during those August days.

I do not intend to ascribe the victory to myself.

The military - from soldier to general - had by that time already realized that the whole of Moscow had risen not against them but against the plotters. It is difficult to imagine what course the events would have taken and how long they would have lasted had tanks not appeared in the city. Truly, every cloud has a silver lining.

It was absolutely vital to end the continued encirclement of the Mayor's Office so that people coming to us were not turned around. On August 19, the building on Tverskaya Street became the center of practical leadership of the resistance. We all knew that our telephones were bugged, and the deputy headquarters led by Yuri Sharykin issued instructions only during personal meetings.

I will cite here details of our conversation with General Zimin; they are important for understanding the behavior of the military.

- Do you realize that all that's happened is illegal? - I asked him.

He was silent and I felt he agreed (during those days our senses had sharpened to the utmost). A few more such questions followed. He was becoming receptive.

- So you came to protect us. From whom?

- Well, what do you mean from whom? From all kinds of hooligans.

- We never needed to be protected from Muscovites, - I pressed on. - Nobody has ever attacked us or is going to. You know what is happening in the city.

It is comic today and was tragic then.

- I categorically demand that the tanks and the paratroopers leave immediately, - I said to conclude the conversation.

After forty minutes the encirclement was lifted.

HOW I LOST A BET

On the morning of August 19, as soon as the opportunity offered itself, we began to establish contacts with the military.

We began by sending Shakhnovski, business manager of the Mayor's Office, with the appeals of the President of Russia and our office to the very "lion's lair," to the leaders of the Moscow Military District.

Previously, our relations with them had not always been smooth, but they had become notably warmer in recent months. And all of a sudden everything had changed; we found ourselves on different sides of the barricades. The district's Commander, Colonel-General Kalinin, was appointed Moscow's Commandant. Previously there had been no friendship between us, although the desire for it was quite visible. Some time before Gavriil Popov and I visited the commanders of the district, we spent several hours with them and agreed on contacts and interaction. Also at that time we had meetings with Defense Minister Yazov (I will tell of these later.) Troops in the city are badly in need of our assistance, although to begin with the fact of their presence in the capital and near it in such numbers is probably unique in the civilized world. Large units, different military academies, institutions, store houses, transit bases, in short, a kind of militarization, certainly do not adorn a city. Nevertheless, the fact remains; the military needed and, I will stress, do need the assistance of Mayor's Office assistance in obtaining apartments and many other things needed for existence, which people in uniforms are frequently deprived of.

Vasili Shakhnovski came to see Kalinin and told him that the Mayor did not recognize the Commandant, the legality of the orders from the junta, or the responsibility for their execution, and demanded that the troops be ordered out of the city. I will remind you that this was on the afternoon of August 19. A nervous bustle reigned in the rooms of the Commandant's headquarters.

Judging by everything, the General was very much surprised by our confidence. I believe that that surprise, which soon developed into uncertainty, clearly affected his actions. Do not mistake it for brazenness, but on the evening of August 19 deputy Sergei Chernyak and I bet the traditional bottle of yogurt, and I lost the bet. I thought the junta would last for 7 to 10 days, while Sergei said it would be

5 or 6. The young democrat proved to be closer to the truth than I was.

The situation was indeed scary. Still, the military did not dare to touch our messenger even with a finger, though they knew him as one of the main organizers of resistance to the junta. It will be recalled that Kalinin's residence was located in the electoral district in which Shakhnovski had run for a Mossoviet seat and been elected, so he actually came to talk to his constituency.

Parting, the General promised that not a single bullet would be fired and that no blood would be spilled in Moscow.

– You have to make your choice, General, – Shakhnovski said.

The following hours revealed the nature of Kalinin's choice. Appearing before the nation on the Vremya news program he announced the imposition of a curfew in Moscow.

The lack of a personal stand, inexcusable for a man in general, and in for a man of such rank in particular, and his thoughtless execution of criminal orders led to a deep personal drama. And against this drop, how lofty was the stand of the military who opted in favor of law and democracy.

The Army had long been disunited. The putsch turned a crack into a chasm. In those three days life supplied both tragic and comic proof of this.

On the evening of August 19, Gavriil Popov returned from Kyrgyzstan. Concerned about the Mayor's safety, six cars left for Vnukovo airport: the welcoming party and accompanying guards, former officials of the KGB's department responsible for the security of Soviet leaders, who moved over to serve the Russian government. Five minutes before Popov's arrival, a plane landed with a Politburo member whose guards were waiting for him. Years of work had acquainted the two groups of young guards, and so those who had been waiting for the communist boss and knew nothing about the Mayor were glad for this timely "assistance" and inquired in a businesslike manner: "So you will accompany us?"

On the way from the airport Popov said that earlier in the day he had met with Askar Akaev, President of Kyrgyzstan. His assessment of the junta was unequivocal and soon after that Akaev had issued a resolute condemnation of the plotters.

MARSHAL YAZOV AND GENERAL KALININ MAKE THEIR CHOICE

On the night of August 20, several groups of deputies set out on a tour of Moscow, stopping by the columns of troops and talking with soldiers, and so confidence grew that the soldiers did not wish violence and would not shoot at the people.

But the army had again, like so many times before, been "set up." It was not the plotting generals who had been set up but soldiers and officers, in the hope that the bloody lessons of Tbilisi, Baku, and the Baltics, where the military had used force against the people and innocent people died, had not taught anyone anything. This was not a collusion of party apparatchiks with a handful of generals, as had already happened before. It was their plot, for which the Army bears no responsibility.

Commanders felt the troops' hesitation and the mood spread like brush fire.

One soldier told the deputies:

— They roused us at one o'clock in the morning, cancelled it, then roused us again at five in the morning, and told us to go out onto the streets, with no assignment or explanation.

For decades, soldiers and officers have been steam-rolled by political indoctrination which has corrupted their souls by insistence on thoughtless execution of the most absurd orders. Their dignity has been humiliated, and drummed into them has been a slavish psychology of subordination, not so much to commanders as to the dominant Communist Party, or rather to its leaders. No army in the civilized world is subjected to such crude and at the same time sophisticated propagandist brainwashing. This has receded into the past from civilian life in our society, but in the army not much has changed over these six years; the power of the party is still absolute there. It so happened that an ill intentioned decision made in the top echelons, which led to blood being spilled in the streets, was automatically drawing into the meat grinder rank-and-file soldiers, down to inexperienced conscripts. Blood stains all indiscriminately, and this law of the gang was foisted upon our army.

It is time for us to proclaim, and incorporate in the Constitution, this provision; the army must not participate

in any political struggle or be used against the people. It is time once and for all to relieve all – from Marshal to Private – of the duty to obey illicit orders, and to bring criminal charges against those giving and executing such orders. This must be clearly stated in the oath of enlistment and service regulations which, incidentally, have kept the provisions about the leading role of the Communist Party intact, although the notorious article in the USSR Constitution proclaiming the party's supremacy has been abolished.

The army must not be turned into a preserve for archaic mores or be kept aloof from change. If we do not carry out resolute reforms (personnel changes are not so difficult to carry out), we shall not cleanse the army of all the scum that remains there and whose presence will continue to make itself felt without end.

I knew Marshal Yazov and I am convinced that his appointment as Minister of Defense was not accidental. According to the "apportionment" of the Politburo which continued to run the country before the putsch, best suited for the post of Defense Minister was a senile old man with decorations received in his young days for participation in WW II. He did not have to be a leader, nor did he have to be active. What sought was a naive guarantee against any unpleasant surprises from the army. Naive, because such people easily become tools in the hands of those criminally active. A sluggish and apathetic soul, Yazov may have apparently given much trouble to the plotters when they tried to draw him into their company.

Yazov did not wish to, and could not, cope with the difficulties the army was experiencing. It was being ridden with drunkenness, humiliation of the weak by the strong and the arbitrariness of the commanders. Gradually, it was turning into a boggy and mothers were afraid to send their children into the army. As economic manager, I will also say that Yazov did nothing at all to make life in the army human. He had little personal authority, which manifested itself in his relations with the financial and economic leaders who could decide to give or refuse something to the army. And the life of a soldier or an officer is a very hard one, deserving much better than what was being received.

A very apt description of Yazov is contained in the words he once pronounced on TV: "Where, pray, in what country

can an illiterate muzhik become a Defense Minister." I realize that this was a slip on his part but I cannot help remembering such an apt self-description.

I have had many meetings with Yazov. During the last one, a week before the coup, I was surprised to see him coming out of the office of Premier Pavlov. Ordinarily, the Defense Minister was not in the habit of coming here.

Gavriil Popov's and my attempts to establish contact with Yazov met with his stubborn reluctance to recognize the "new Moscow" in which the democrats had won the elections.

Prior to the putsch, we asked the Defense Minister for the army's participation in harvesting in Moscow region, and we replaced the traditional free "patronage" with good earnings. We promised to pay officers 50 roubles a day, and soldiers 25 of which fifteen would be put on their savings accounts, five used to buy food and another five used to improve life in the barracks (we promised to help them buy TV sets, tape recorders and music instruments). During two years of service the soldiers (most do not come from well-to-do families) would put aside and bring home about one and a half thousand roubles. Given the Ministry's current financial difficulties, they should have simply jumped at our proposal. But what did we hear from them? "To pay soldiers? "N-no!"

Yazov was very reluctant to permit the Mayor's Office, "those democrats," to emerge in a kind and human light in the eyes of soldiers. He also feared the establishment of friendly and affable relations between Muscovites and the troops. Yevgeni Shaposhnikov, appointed Defense Minister in the wake of the coup's failure, and the new leaders of the Ministry immediately reacted to our proposals.

Yazov had ordered the introduction of troops into the capital, and Colonel-General Kalinin executed the order. Although slow on the uptake, Kalinin is smart and composed and knows army routine well. So it is more likely, as things are, that he was just drifting upward in his career and it carried him that high. For the sake of justice I have to mention that he was dragging his feet when it came to executing orders. I believe that, by their actions, the coup leaders caused revulsion in many of the military, including people like Kalinin. But the introduction of troops, the blockade of the White House, the Mayor's Office, editorial boards of newspapers and other "targets" were, neverthe-

less, ordered by him. These are the hard facts. Kalinin was also the man who imposed a curfew.

The commander of the Moscow Military District issued his order, and the army entered the city.

Soon I was told that in the process one tank lost its caterpillar, another overturned into a road-side ditch, a third had a broken transmission shaft and a fourth self-ignited. Some of these were genuine accidents, but still some were provoked by those who had no intention to fight civilians.

It was an appalling sight whichever way you looked at it: the appearance of troops in a peace-time capital.

I had several conversations with Colonel-General Kalinin. I called him during the morning of August 19 and demanded:

- Immediately remove the troops! The Mayor's Office does not recognize any military commandant.

In the evening:

- The use of weapons must be prohibited and troops must be ordered out.

On the evening of August 20, after the imposition of curfew was announced, I was making a call from Boris Yeltsin's office in the White House. The Colonel on duty refused to connect me with the General, saying he was busy. Then I dictated a cable by telephone: that the Mayor's Office of Moscow did not recognize the curfew and regarded it as a provocation.

On the afternoon of August 20, listening to Kalinin's complaints about his inability to undertake anything and his being but an executor (he was commander of the capital's military district and his rank was Colonel-General), I retorted straight to his face:

- You have an opportunity to make your choice. You make a decision to get the troops out and end the occupation of the city. By doing so you will look a human being before all, before your children. Everyone must experience his moment of truth.

TELEVISION AND RADIO CHIEF LIKES SWAN LAKE

It is a tough test, the moment of truth. One may, of course, live a long life and avoid meeting that hardest minute when you are left all alone with yourself and your conscience to make the crucial choice. I do not rule out that in such minutes some people speak not with their conscience, but only with their self-interest. I would not take it upon myself to apply one yardstick to all.

I will not take it upon myself to pass judgements or penetrate the depths of the soul of the former chief of television and radio, Leonid Kravchenko. I will simply recount a conversation I had with him on Tuesday, August 20, when Muscovites were viewing the "Facing the City" program, in which city officials addressed them.

I begged that Popov and I be allowed to speak up, and did it in a way that, I thought, could squeeze a tear out of a stone.

- I cannot invite you into the studio, they forbade me, and you know what regime has been installed here.

- Let them come to us in the Mayor's Office and interview us here.

I was inspired by the fact that the day before, on August 19 (after the interminable repetitions of Swan Lake), Vremya quite unexpectedly showed the people before the White House, and Boris Yeltsin, who was standing on a tank, making public the Appeal to the Citizens of Russia, which urged a general strike of unspecified duration.

I bow before those who had the courage to film such a "topic" and, more importantly, to take responsibility for releasing it on television. I know that "conclusions" concerning the courageous people were drawn forthwith. So truth on the silver screen first meant the sack for the authors, and the rest depended on how blood-thirsty the junta really was. But a gulp of fresh crisp air was received by millions of people.

- I would be dismissed if I allowed you and Popov to go on the air, - Kravchenko plaintively complained.

- You will go jobless for a week, but then, when the legitimate authority is restored, your noble gesture will not be forgotten and you will return in triumph. You described

PRESS DIGEST

I AM APPEALING TO ALL THE MILITARY AND OFFICIALS OF THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR AND THE KGB. DO NOT COMMIT A FATEFUL MISTAKE. DO NOT SHED THE BLOOD OF YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS. IF YOU DO, THE MALEDICTION OF THE COUNTRY AND OF FUTURE GENERATIONS WILL BE YOUR BURDEN TO BEAR.

Boris Yeltsin

★

Unlike many politicians, ordinary Muscovites proved much more prescient of the emergency committee's plans. Already by noon of August 19 the erection of the barricades outside the White House was in full swing. At dusk, the defenders of the parliament had so solidly barricaded all approaching routes that one could get through only with their permission.

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On the evening of August 19, joyful news spread among the White House defenders; heading for the parliament building were ten of "our" tanks which took the side of Yeltsin. The tanks were greeted with flowers and applause of the people. Girls climbed the tanks and kissed the soldiers.

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REMEMBER: BY KISSING,
YOU PREVENT PUTSCHES!

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In the afternoon, signing up for self-defense units began around the White House. Doctors and paramedical personnel set up a medical facility. Potable water appeared in buckets, canisters and glass vessels.

★

**WE ARE ALIVE. WE DID NOT
DIE IN THE WAITING LINES.**

★

By seven in the evening, food and beverages were brought to the paramilitary people: hot tea and coffee, bread and butter, sausages and cheese.

During the night hours of August 19-20, the Radio Russia broadcasting station returned to the air: the station's antenna was set up on the White House roof. The transmitter was inside the building. One of the radio beams was said to be directed at America, although nobody knew whether it would reach.

★

**AT NINE O'CLOCK A PRIEST CAME FROM
THE IZMAILOVO CATHEDRAL TO ADMINISTER
THE COMMUNION FOR, AND TO BLESS, THE
PARLIAMENT DEFENDERS.**

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Several instructors from a Moscow radiotechnical school brought 240 gas masks for the people inside the parliament building. Simultaneously, thirty doctors began to distribute gauze strips to be used in the event of troops launching an attack with tear gas and poisonous substances. A prayer chanted by a group of Krishnaites provided the background for this pre-battle scenario.

It was a strange day. On the one hand, there were droves of people surrounding the White House. And on the other, there was an apparent calm on the streets, characterized by a line of people waiting to buy water melons in a sidestreet. What had happened seemed to have divided the people not only into two camps but also into two biological species: the seeing and the blind.

★

yourself as Gorbachev's man, so stay so to the end and prove your loyalty.

A TV team did come to the Mayor's Office. Popov and I spoke for a total of 31 minutes and we presented our position with utmost clarity. In the evening, we sat in Popov's study in front of the TV set, presuming that our interviews would give people an idea of the situation in Moscow and help them, including a no small number of men in leading positions, to determine their positions.

Should I say that our expectations proved to be naive? Popov and I, as many probably remember, appeared on the screen a day later, when the putsch had failed and everything was clear, including with Leonid Kravchenko himself; the all-union and all-powerful boss of television and radio was fired.

We are all human, and supermen who never feel a hesitation are exceptionally rare and rather represent a deviation from the human norm.

During those three doomsdays there was neither time nor desire to engage in a searching analysis of our personal experiences (and it would serve no useful purpose now). I did but rarely reflect on my strange state: it seemed that things were happening not to me but to someone else, while I was watching with a cold and curious stare the unfolding events and myself in their succession.

I already said that from the first hours of the coup I and my comrades in the Mayor's Office had no difficulty recognizing it for what it was, a communist plot and a brazen encroachment on legitimate authority. This position provided a firm basis for our feelings, thoughts and actions.

We were also supported by the resolve of those around us, notable of Gavriil Popov and Boris Yeltsin, the latter who had of late dramatically increased his potential as a politician (he was always a most perfect organizer, although he had come to Moscow from Sverdlovsk with a somewhat idealistic view of his potential to improve everything at one stroke).

There was no fear and there was calm confidence.

In the past, when I was general director of a large research and production association, the best time of the year for me was December. The plan was pressing me down with its unbearable weight, everything around me was boiling, the abutments of things would suddenly be-

come unstuck, and hopes and fears swept enterprises and research teams like a hurricane. Decisions had to be made swiftly and accurately. Those were the days when I loved December.

COMMODITY TRADERS GO ON STRIKE

August 19, 20 and 21.

Every day had for me a sense of its own and left its imprint in my memory.

I felt greatly relieved as soon as I learned on the evening of August 19 that Gavriil Popov had returned from Kyr-gyzstan, come to the White House and would shortly appear in the Mayor's Office on Tverskaya Street.

August 19 ended for me at 2 o'clock the following morning. My wife was anxiously waiting for me when I arrived home, and that late meeting added to the strength of both of us and to our deep-felt support of each other, which is especially precious when danger is near.

The second day in the Mayor's Office began at 7 in the morning. Gathered in my study were Deputy Premier and Prefect of the Central district Muzykantski, Business Manager Shakhnovski, head of the Mayor's Department Savostianov, and others.

We began to plan our work. Our tasks were: to prevent troops from blocking the Mayor's Office, to use all resources to build barricades near the White House and in arteries where tanks could appear, to bring food to the defenders of the barricades, to reopen the democratic Echo of Moscow radio station, to try to get to TV (I already related the outcome of the attempt) and intensify propaganda work among soldiers and officers, the overwhelming majority of whom had no idea whatsoever why they were ordered into Moscow. I will remind you that even the silenced television could not hide this; soldiers would make helpless gestures when asked by reporters about the tasks the troops were supposed to achieve. We could not allow breaks in the supply of products to the stores or in the energy or water supply or any other utility services. The appeal for strike was not meant for us. We asked builders who were busy constructing homes, schools and hospitals not to join in strike, but they were adamant.

The Moscow and Russian commodity exchanges ceased

trading. There were quite a few such stoppages but the strike did not become general in the city. That had its own explanation.

The fact is that among most Muscovites there was no illusion concerning the image and designs of the plotters. This is doubtless. They were cursed everywhere, aloud and in undertones, not only by people well versed in politics but even by ordinary citizens. Thousands upon thousands, above all young people, not confining themselves to mere talk, went to man the barricades.

Any resolute step by the junta would have caused an explosion of enormous force, and the junta understood this, which was why the situation was unsteadily poised in the balance on the second day, August 20. I do not doubt that extreme measures and terror, if tried by the junta, would have forced all of Moscow to resort to its main weapon, a general strike of unlimited duration.

I have in mind particularly the large work collectives, above all the Likhachev automaking plant, where the party committees (the city party committee still had long arms), managed to impose their will on the administration and prevent a more active stand on the side of legitimate authority.

In Moscow there are many enterprises of the military-industrial complex, which for decades were in a privileged position and had better earnings than others. Conversion of military production and the transition to civilian products in connection with disarmament did not proceed smoothly and painlessly everywhere. This generated in workers, and more so in enterprise leaders, a generally negative attitude to the innovations of perestroika and to democratic changes in society. Under the pressure of the leaders of the old school, the work collectives took a passive position of sitting on the fence during the putsch. It is a good sign that after the failure of the coup they decided to seriously think about what happened, as well as about themselves, their future and the future of their country. Like all people, they also need democracy and they are needed by democracy. This is now becoming clear to a growing number of people discarding the shackles of the past.

Let everyone understand himself and fully determine his or her position. The ordeal has not ended for all of us. Any illegal actions, even the most insignificant attempts to

limit our hard-won freedom, are bound to trigger an acute reaction from work collectives and their leaders.

The attitude of the deputy corps and the prefectures to the putsch was uniform everywhere from the very beginning; the coup was illegal. But still...

Referring to a telephone cable from the Mayor's Office which gave a political assessment of the plot and urged a strike, a chairman of a district Soviet wrote his dictatorial resolution: "Delay execution." He then said something to the effect that he did not wish to aggravate the situation. "Aggravation" of the situation in which the junta was engaged, appeared to him to be absolutely in tune with the current moment. The junta could not wish for more. If the citizens of Moscow decided "not to aggravate," everyone would have been the loser. Luckily, this did not happen. I believe that such leaders completely lost their credibility and authority.

The whole of Moscow was manning the barricades: workers with intellectuals and students, senior school children and youngsters together with senior citizens many of whom put on their decorations they received from WW II. Young Afghan veterans behaved brilliantly.

Let us pay tribute to the deputies of Mossoviet and the district Soviets, to the Moscow Association of Voters, and the Democratic Russia public movement. They were at the head of popular resistance, organized the rebuff, and courageously went to the military units to tell them how the residents of Moscow felt.

I will stress that it was in our city that the decisive battle was enacted. Now, when I meet those who come from places where things remained calm, I wonder at the infrequent misunderstanding of the events in the capital.

THEY WANT TO ARREST US

Together with Boris Yeltsin, Gavriil Popov also became the heart of Moscow's resistance.

Gavriil Popov (professor, intellectual through and through, the likes of those whom the leader of the revolution, Lenin, called rotten) was in those days the embodiment of calm courage, confidence, and business spirit. He was both a political leader and an indefatigable organizer, who effectively collaborated with Yeltsin.

From the first hours of the putsch, practically uninterrupted communication was established between the White House, with its defense committee, and the Mayor's Office. The military and civilians of that committee operated efficiently showing full understanding of the situation, and the Mayor's Office immediately complied with all their commands.

After Popov and I had received information from different sources that we were going to be arrested at 3 o'clock on the morning of the 21st, we began to discuss our different options. The discussion was without emotion.

On the evening of the 20th we were busily discussing how they could arrest us and how we were to behave. They could arrest us in the Mayor's Office or at home, together or separately. We rejected at once a home arrest, this would be much too traumatic for our families, while in some dark yard or alley, without witnesses, it was too easy to engineer an "attempted flight," with all its potential consequences; we had no illusions about the mores of the junta.

Eventually, we decided to stay in the Mayor's Office. Here arrests would take place before witnesses, and we would be taken to the notorious "voronki" (pitch-black ravens), i.e., cars in which arrested people are transported, accompanied by scores of eyes, and then be put "in the care of the junta." For some reason this instilled in us some hope, although now, with the benefit of hindsight, such comforting thoughts seem no more than self-delusion.

It was the first time we, who knew about arrests and nightly knocks on the door only from books by Solzhenitsyn, Shalamov, Ginsburg and Rybakov and stories of our elders, could distinctly hear the screeching of the Stalin machine of repression which again was being started up. It may be that nobody had ever expected that history was destined to try to repeat itself, and that it would not be our grandfathers or fathers, but us who would be faced with the stark choice; to bow or not to bow our heads to the red terror.

Incidentally, we made our choice before and proved it, when we did not defer in the stand off of March 28. This was the day of rehearsal arranged by the junta, yet invisible to the people, who during a meeting of democrats presumed to flood the city with military equipment and thousands of armed "law-enforcement people." We could not allow ourselves the luxury of turning away from the chosen path,

for this would have amounted to moral self- destruction. I am positive that it was in this way, or almost so that such a conversation was pursued with his or her conscience by everyone of us who opted in favor of active resistance.

At about 9 o'clock in the evening we received an urgent and imperative recommendation from the White House to go there immediately. The situation was sharply deteriorating. We decided to go there not in our cars, but in a small bus accompanied by a group of special-purpose militia. We made our preparations quickly, agreeing in advance with Popov that we take my wife (I would not leave her at home). "Let's take her," Popov said calmly, sort of daily manner, as if we were going to the theater.

That evening I for the first time had a close look at the special militia and I could see for myself their well-wishing attitude to us and high professionalism. The men did not budge, although they realized that the junta would not forgive them anything.

We were faced with an unexpected spectacle outside my house: a group of people was unloading a truck. It was a rather fantastic spectacle. "Workers" dressed in suits and polished shoes were bungling with bricks, although it was a late evening and as far as I knew, no construction was taking place in the yard. Hardly had our bus stopped when our body guards with submachine guns spilled out onto the street at a swoop and blocked all approaches.

My wife was waiting in the entrance, holding a food package, which came in very handy later. We dived into the bus, it started off and the "workers" (of course they were security officials that were "looking after" my home) literally de-materialized in the pitch black dark, as is the habit of the Devil, who has entrenched himself in the notorious KGB.

We stopped not far from the Zoo. We could not go any further. Even the remote approaches to the White House were blocked along the perimeter. Our guards with sub-machine guns took us in a circle and the whole procession headed for the White House at a fast pace.

Gavriil Popov was recognized on the barricades and we sort of "changed hands" to the cries of: "Popov is with us!", "Guys, Popov is coming!" and "Hurrah!". We shall remember this for a long time, indeed, for the rest of our lives, never forgetting the drama of the moment and the generous recognition and trust of the Muscovites. It so hap-

pened that I was seen at that moment by my brother (he is almost two years younger than me) who came to the barricades. I learned of this later, after several hours, when I phoned Sergei and asked him to get in touch with our mother and tell her that I was alive and well. I also asked him to go to my home and take my 18-year-old son away from the area.

- Sasha will fully remain in your charge, - I warned him. At that point he told me that he had seen me entering the White House.

- So why didn't you call me?

- Why should I have called you? You could not possibly take me with you and I was not going to leave the barricades. There certainly was no purpose in your manning them. And it was dangerous for you to linger in any one place. I think the area was swarming with provocateurs.

At the entrance to the White House our entourage took leave of us. Their names remain unknown to us.

THE LIST OF SUICIDES CONTINUES TO GROW

I now often recall with a kind word the men from the militia who accompanied us to the White House. Both then and now one can hear different things about the militia. People still argue over its position on August 19 to 21. Briefly, I define my personal opinion in this way: decent. Not worthy, but precisely decent.

Muscovites know that at one time Mossoviet deputies, the Moscow city executive committee and then the Mayor's Office fought for the militia in the city to be placed in our jurisdiction rather than in that of the USSR Interior Ministry. The latter was adamant, to the detriment of both the interests of the service and of simple common sense. It is absolutely clear: it was a purely political consideration; those who direct the militia hold the key to the city. I am convinced that this was a position not of the Ministry or of the Minister Pugo himself, but of his superiors, the top officials of the Communist Party whom he served might and main.

The Moscow militia chief, who in previous years had held two posts, was more of a deputy to the union Minister than head of a city organization, although he was rather

adept at demonstrating his commitment to Moscow. His successor, appointed not long before the putsch, a General who had passed all the stages of a militia career and was respected by those under him, tried to treat the city as a priority although he still had to serve several departments: the two ministries (union and republican), the city CPSU committee, and the KGB which held its own in the Moscow militia.

On August 19, the militia General was appointed a deputy to the Military Commandant of Moscow. Orders were thrown at him from all sides, and he preferred, to the extent that was possible, to keep a certain distance from all of them and as a result he failed to please anyone. He would carefully hear out my instructions and try to execute them as far as this was possible. But unenviable is the lot of one who fails to set his sights correctly in the hour of trial. He is doomed to fail. I feel sorry for the General. A worthy man, he felt lost under the hail of mutually exclusive instructions issued by the many-faced superiors.

Interior Minister Pugo was completely different. Born in the bowels of the Communist Party, he remained its true soldier to the very end. On the afternoon of the 20th, people who saw him at close range remember him as a man who lost all interest in what he was doing.

When Pugo was put in charge of the USSR Interior Ministry, he realized what was required of him: to obey the orders of the Communist Party. Pugo did not understand or accept the new things that have inspired our society in recent years. His communist views had become ossified forever. On March 28, he could have placed on his conscience the blood of Muscovites if the stand-off between the demonstrators and the military in the streets had reached a conflict point, and I say this with full conviction. The democrats, "the trouble makers," were and remained his personal enemies.

I do not know whether the investigators will be able to unravel the fine points of Pugo's psychological drama (for investigators do not always penetrate even the souls of living persons), but the fact that his mysterious death shortly after the failed coup was preceded by some internal drama, is quite evident.

The next day after Pugo shot himself, officials of the USSR Interior Ministry called me to ask for permission to

PRESS DIGEST

THE FATAL HOUR

★

According to the USSR Hydrometeocenter, the weather in Moscow on August 20 will be unstable, with occasional precipitation, and a storm with southwesterly gusts of wind.

★

On the embankment near the White House there are tanks. Ours, Russia's tanks, which have taken the side of the people. Tank drivers are kissed and offered tea, but dozens of steel reinforcement bars are inserted into the caterpillars, just in case. It is not a tank but a regular porcupine. A young couple is nimbly dancing the lambada next to the tank.

★

ON THAT DAY THE PUTSCHISTS WERE THINKING ABOUT TIENANMEN SQUARE, AND PEOPLE IN THE WHITE HOUSE ABOUT THE FATE OF PRESIDENT ALLENDE.

★

Under the plan of the putschists, the KGB's "Alfa" unit was assigned the task of breaking the defenders' resistance and finding the President of Russia. At three o'clock in the morning, OMON (special militia units) were to clear the crowd from the square using gas and water canons. Alfa would go into action after them from land and from air, using helicopters and grenade launchers to take over the building.

★

SEVEN BUSES AND THIRTY-SEVEN TROLLEYBUSES BLOCK THE APPROACHES TO THE WHITE HOUSE.

There was an endless, torrential rain. It was prohibited to open umbrellas, and the prohibition was being strictly enforced; an open umbrella was regarded as cold steel. Someone brought a roll of blue polyethylene and people tried to wrap themselves in it to keep dry and warm. They were dirty from building the barricades, sitting on the wet ground to rest, and from the soot of the bonfires and fuel of the tanks.

★

How shall I describe this night? Gathered here in the beleaguered White House was the cream of our and the world's press, literature and art. Bonfires were burning in the streets; hundreds of people forming human chains under the torrential rain, or sitting and sleeping in the little city gardens. The radio reports: "The storming of the parliament is expected to begin in ten minutes. The capture units have been formed..." A signal rocket is fired, and fifty thousand people stand without moving under the heavy rain...

★

**DEMOCRACY HAS TAUGHT PEOPLE
TO SPEAK UP. SO THEY ARE NO
LONGER SILENT WHEN THEIR WILL
IS VIOLATED.**

★

We are told that the tank column seems to have stopped. Military officials from the White House explain that there is cyclicity about such operations. An attack is launched every four hours. It means that the next attack will be launched at four in the morning.

★

arrange the funeral of their minister. They could not wait to disavow a man who had yet to be buried.

Probably the only person who can shed some light on Pugo's last hours is Alexi the Second, Patriarch of Moscow and of All Russia. But the Patriarch knows how to keep confession secrets. We only know that the Interior Minister, in some misplaced and ill-timed fashion, decided during the days of the coup to turn some religious artifacts confiscated from criminals over to the Russian Orthodox Church (this was shown on television, which discerning viewers had no trouble recognizing as fawning over the Patriarchate). Television did not, however, show the long conversation after the ceremony, the contents of which will most likely remain shrouded in mystery. The Minister's entourage learned only one thing: that he returned from the meeting a calm man, as if he had pierced some hitherto unfathomable depths and remained to the very end aloof from all affairs and did not issue any orders.

The death of Pugo, a dyed-in-the-wool communist, one of the putsch first leaders and also victims, was the beginning of a string of suicides. He was soon followed by Marshal Akhromeyev and the CPSU Central Committee Business Manager, Nikolai Kruchina, setting off a host of judgements and unanswered questions.

The country had no lack of "enigmas" in recent years, which, I am convinced, cannot be attributed solely to the schemes of plotters whose faces were now familiar to all of us.

The string of bloody and mysterious events had begun in Sumgait and Baku, and continued in Tbilisi and Nagorny Karabakh and the Baltics. Who made the political decisions untying the hands of the executors of illicit verdicts? Who gave the orders and then helped to cover up the traces, which led to other innocent victims? Who had the boldness to commit the heavy sin of getting our society accustomed to bloodlettings as standard operating procedures for solving political, economic, social and interethnic problems, thus beating the path to the putsch?

No lessons can be learned from the August events and our country cannot be guaranteed against repetitions of the past, without providing honest and direct answers to these and other questions which have become lost in the verbiage and wrangling of endless and impotent commissions.

Is it a coincidence, a coquetry of a professional criminal,

or something more ominous that the KGB boss Kryuchkov said in jail while facing the TV program "Before and After Midnight": "Will we still be able to work?" Who was he going to work for and how, if one takes all this seriously?

Questions, questions, questions...

Let us, however, get back to the suicides of Akhromeyev and Kruchina. Akhromeyev was no "ordinary" Marshal and was a close aide to the President. His hawkish stare was well-known at home and abroad. What military secrets did the man who hanged himself take with him, who, according to observations of those who knew him closely, was incapable of committing suicide?

This happened late on Saturday evening, August 24. Leaving his country house in the morning, he was, according to testimonies of his relatives, energetic and jovial, promising his granddaughter to take her out for a walk when he is back. In the afternoon his daughter spoke to him on the phone and his mood was the same. He did not, however, come home for that evening. And in the morning a telephone call said that Akhromeyev was dead. The corpse was discovered by a man inspecting studies in the Kremlin, who saw that the door to the Marshal's study was slightly ajar.

One of the notes written before his death (there were several of them) said that he could not live when his Motherland was dying and when things were being destroyed which he always regarded as the *raison-d'etre* of his life, and that his age and past record gave him the right to quit this life, and that he had fought to the end. The note was dated August 24.

The denouement of this drama was this: after his funeral at Troyekurovskoye cemetery, his grave was nudged, the coffin pried open, and his Marshal's uniform stolen (on the black market, foreigners are prepared to pay 10,000 dollars for a Marshal's uniform).

PEOPLE DIE FOR METAL

Nikolai Kruchina, Business Manager of the CPSU Central Committee, did not figure among the plotters either and it seemed that he had nothing to fear. His post in the party was a very high one, although he was not a shining star of the first magnitude on the political horizon.

Kruchina was the CPSU's "Finance Minister" and its principal economic manager. He knew all the channels through which money flowed to and from the Party.

My work brought me face to face with Kruchina several times. He was a soft-spoken, affable, intelligent person, attentive to those with whom he spoke. The last time I saw him was when I visited him together with Yuri Afanasiev, a People's Deputy of the USSR, to discuss the fate of the Russian Humanities University, of which Afanasiev was the rector. We had received the backing of Mikhail Gorbachev (which was a rare occurrence).

Our conversation was drawn out and senseless, so I stood up and in the presence of all told Yuri Afanasiev that we had come here for nothing and that we would not get anything here, except some empty promises. For his part, Kruchina tried to smooth the sharp edges, and chided me for sharp language in his soft-spoken, gentle manner.

So it was impossible to believe that this well-balanced man was capable of throwing himself out of a window.

The hard times the CPSU had fallen on did not prevent its functionaries from looking after themselves. In a short time, millions of roubles were "shoved" into different banks in an attempt to hide the party's assets. Money flowed into joint ventures which provided refuge to party officials, fleeing the ship about to sink. Kruchina's responsibility here is more moral than criminal, for a public organization can keep its money where it chooses. Kruchina knew about the personal expenses of the party leaders, and no doubt knew much more. But the dead know to keep quiet.

But the documents of the secret party archives, which were sealed after the putsch and are now gradually being made public, are beginning to talk.

One year before the putsch, on August 23, 1990, a confidential memorandum, produced by CPSU Central Committee apparatchiks, was submitted to Vladimir Ivashko, Deputy General Secretary of the party. "Things will have to be started practically from scratch," the memorandum said, "and we shall have to work in conditions, unusual for the party, adapted to the requirements of the market and competition. The party cadres, who will be charged with this activity, will immediately have to master the task of 'learning to trade.' In the process, reasonable confidentiality will have to be observed as well as the use in some cases of anonymous forms, camouflaging direct links to the

CPSU. The final goal will probably be that, alongside the 'commercialization' of the available party assets, we can progressively set in place structures of an 'invisible' party economy, in which only a very narrow circle of people will be admitted to work."

Despite the fact that many words in the memorandum, rare for the communist parlance, are gingerly bracketed (the party fundamentalists were shouting from the roof tops about the market, entrepreneurship and private property being unacceptable for the Soviet people), the message is crystal-clear. The CPSU had to use every opportunity to invest the money (the party funds were frequently mistaken for the state treasury and the treasury was effectively plundered), in order to reap profits.

The memorandum was not without consequences. Several days after, the CPSU Central Committee adopted a secret decision: "In order to preserve the party structures ... it is necessary to take measures to implement concrete projects in order to attract extra funds to the budget (the party budget, naturally!) from entrepreneurial and commercial activities."

Things got off the ground. All kinds of bigwigs with a nimbleness unusual for them, got down to laundering the party funds by channelling them into the charter funds of commercial banks, taking over some of them in the process, and into joint-stock companies whose number gradually increased to reach several hundreds.

The Moscow Committee of the Communist Party and its First Secretary, Yuri Prokofiev, without any sense of shame, were shoving money into joint ventures, small businesses and joint-stock companies. They even went as far as creating a closed joint-stock company in which the party would own half the shares.

The appetite comes with the eating. The CPSU Central Committee apparatus submitted a new draft to its leaders: "To embark without delay on drafting proposals about the use of anonymous forms masking direct links to the CPSU in unfolding the party's commercial foreign economic activities. To examine, among other things, possibilities for joining, through participation in investments, the already functioning joint ventures and international consortiums." These words did not remain on paper; the work took on a scope of unusual scale.

A month after the failure of the putsch, the Swiss De-

partment of Foreign Affairs received a note from the Soviet Embassy in Bern, requesting a checking of that country's banks for any accounts belonging to the CPSU and the Russian Communist Party and, if discovered, to freeze the assets on those accounts.

Different commissions and investigators will have to work a lot in order to find traces capable of leading to money transferred by the Communist Party outside the country. It is not hard to guess that the KGB also had a hand in those secret plots, so the search promises to be hard and long. But it may well be worth it. At stake may be hundreds of millions or even billions of dollars.

The documents cited are but few of those preserved. In the offices of the Central Committee which engaged in commercial activity, the documents found were surprisingly few in number. But then, it was immediately discovered that foreign high-performance shredding machines which turn paper to dust had worked at full capacity.

On the evening of August 26, Alexander Muzykantski spoke with Nikolai Kruchina in his study. The latter calmly and willingly discussed party property and ways of its preservation and best utilization. It is true that when conversation drifted to financial assets, Kruchina became visibly agitated. By the next day, the "financier" was dead.

Forty days after the incident, Kruchina's predecessor, 80-year-old Georgi Pavlov, was found dead on the lawn under far beneath the eighth floor window of his posh apartment.

Another suicide occurred on October 17, 1991. After watching the evening news program on television with his family, Dmitri Lisovolik, former deputy chief of the Central Committee's international department, stepped out onto the balcony of his apartment on the twelfth floor and threw himself over the railing. According to people who knew him well, he was a decent man and an efficient professional. It was established for a fact, however, that the international department had direct links to foreign communist parties funded by the Soviet Union.

So we can only say that people do, indeed, die for metal.

WHO IS GOING TO SCALE THE KREMLIN WALLS WITH HOOKS?

I am passing my judgement not as a nimble prosecutor or a kind man whom fate had thrown into the thick of the events set in motion by the plotters, the President's closest associates and his trusted people. And I would be telling less than the whole story, if I left out Mikhail Gorbachev.

The outward sketch of the communist plot appears to have been simple; the putschists acted against the President and he became their victim. Thank God he was spared the worst that inevitably goes with coups in volatile countries. And for this reason I have the full right to calmly and coldly reminisce about the alignments and movements of the figures who eventually were checkmated, who lost out not to the other political figures, but practically to the entire nation, and first and foremost to us, the citizens of Moscow.

Democracy is the power of the people, and it has won this round in Russia. Looking back over 1990 and 1991 and thinking about the changing fortunes of the President's policy, you catch yourself with a "seditious" thought: he himself, personally, brought the putschists together, removed from his entourage the honest and objective comrades-in-arms, both right and left, to say nothing about overzealous democrats, and easily bade farewell to intelligent and knowledgeable people.

What linked the President to the rest of the pack, that political riffraff? A common world outlook? I do not take it upon myself to discuss his sincerely-held views. Was it a common assessment of the situation in the country and of choices for emergency measures or a common desire to preserve the Union – the collapsing empire – by force? Rather the latter one.

Sometimes one hears the suggestion that the President wanted to protect the country against the schemes of reactionaries, allegedly supported by all and sundry. He compromised with them as a fine politician and analyst who had mastered the art of achieving the maximum possible. I do not know whether the President was trying to convince himself of that or whether he actually managed to. But during the three days in August the trump card of this "theory" was itself trumped: the people and the people's

army had the final say and followed the democrats and Yeltsin, not the Communist junta.

The alignment of forces and views in the President's immediate entourage, which finally turned out to be reactionary, did not even remotely reflect the realities of life in the country. They purely and simply turned out to be an ill intentioned caricature, liked by and profitable only to the imperial top leaders and to their faithful weapon-carriers from the KGB, the Ministries of Defense and the Interior, who were trying to save their own lives. The initiator of perestroika, the hope of millions of people in this country and elsewhere, without a word of protest allowed himself to be hoodwinked, scared by the gin he himself had let out of the bottle. "The so-called democrats" became a customary curse, in his political parlance.

The President's entourage let him have only well-filtered information profitable to them. This information painted dark schemes brewing in all corners of the country and intimidated Gorbachev with talk of "plots" and "take-overs." What state of mind was he in that he would seriously assume that Muscovites were getting ready for the rally of March 28 with iron hooks to scale the Kremlin walls. With a smart face of one initiated into the secrets of the democrats, premier Pavlov fed this schizophrenic thinking to me as well, demanding that I rescind the permission to hold the rally I gave on behalf of city authorities. How can one not help remembering the underground tunnel dug under Stalin's Kremlin by Beriya's investigators? They invented criminal cases to combat dissent and by resorting to torture obtained "frank" admissions from their innocent victims, only to kill them.

Be that as it may, the fall of 1990 saw a rapid turn to the right.

This was marked by a vociferous onslaught on the new entrepreneurs who committed themselves to helping to feed and cloth the people. Working for the CPSU, the zealous cloak-and-dagger knights from the KGB and the Interior Ministry promptly got down to sealing, searching, confiscating, and breaking. In short, they acted on the time-honored you-grab-and-hold-them-fast principle.

Sometimes things assumed the proportions of all-union absurdities, like when a well-known and successful entrepreneur began to be harassed by all the President's men for publicly suggesting that the President intended to sell

several notorious islands to Japan (which, in my view, giving our near-hopeless plight, would be worthwhile to think about). In their zeal they became oblivious to their status and different "weight categories." The country's leaders stooped to impermissible quarrel, to demonstrate all the insidiousness of present-day entrepreneur-democrats. This was not the struggle of opinions, a conflict of views normal in a civilized society. These were decisive actions by top leaders out to bury reform and launch an assault on economic dissidence.

As documents found later indicated, in March 1991, a KGB-inspired idea began making rounds in the USSR Procurator's Office to arrest Boris Yeltsin and Vitautas Landsbergis, Chairman of Lithuania's Supreme Soviet. The Procurator General of the USSR received a report, signed by one of his deputies and a department chief, which accused Landsbergis of all mortal sins, like undermining the monetary system, trade and other economic sectors, as well as state bodies and public organizations. The report concluded: "Grounds are perceived to exist to institute criminal proceedings." Imputed to Yeltsin was urging people to an armed uprising, which was also qualified as an illicit act entailing criminal responsibility. Happily, the Procurator General had enough courage to resist the pressure from the influential "informers" and append the following instructions on this wild report: "I find no grounds for instituting criminal proceedings."

The plotters, by tossing dirt at everyone and everything, got down to specifics and began to secretly lay the groundwork for the month of August when the putsch broke out.

A PUTSCH WITHOUT A LEADER IS NO PUTSCH

They tried to "normalize" the sight of troops in the streets as everyday occurrences. Imperial decrees established the patrol of large cities in which, as is known, the elections had been won by democrats. A litigation arose between the USSR Interior Ministry and Moscow's authorities: militia was taken out of our jurisdiction, mixed with the militia of Moscow region, and placed under the union ministry, which stands in an "attention" posture before the Communist Party Central Committee.

PRESS DIGEST

THE CHRONICLE OF A BLOODY NIGHT

★

On August 21, 1968, Soviet tanks killed the freedom in Prague. As if obeying some strange logic, we were to see the tanks again, this time in the streets of Moscow.

★

Where did the producers of this banal, but, alas, blood-colored spectacle, unearth this captivating scenario about turning a huge country, already populated by people, into a cattle stall?

★

The military might, which the state criminals are prepared to bring down on the Parliament of Russia, is confronted by unarmed people, men and women, young and old. They are fully aware of the danger, but they are prepared to fight to the death against the bandits. For indeed, the word "freedom" has a sweet taste.

★

THIS IS HOW THE JUNTA KILLS

★

Opposite the Arbat restaurant, there is a barricade of six trolleybuses, and a crowd of about two thousand. We see several men climb on an infantry armored vehicle. The vehicle goes into high gear to crush the trolleybuses with all its might. Two men fall directly under the caterpillars. Gory mayhem. The crowd goes mad and people rush to on-lookers from nearby homes asking for empty bottles and begin pouring into them gasoline from nearby cars. The tank is set ablaze.

★

Flashes of fire on the walls. Reverberating crashes with grating sounds: the tanks are trying to crush the barricade. One vehicle is burning. A trolleybus is also burning and then another catches fire. The tanks begin to ram the barricade manned by the defenders. Several people fall under the wheels. Then, when the people in their fury set fire to one of the vehicles, the crew members began to jump out, firing back as they run.

★

**... AND THERE WERE PUDDLES
OF BLOOD ON THE ASPHALT.**

★

Killed in Moscow on the tragic night from August 20 to 21 were:

Vladimir Usov, age 30, skull and brain trauma, run over by an infantry armored vehicle;

Dmitri Komar, age 23, skull and brain trauma, run over by an infantry armored vehicle, an Afghan war veteran;

Ilya Krichevski, age 28, skull and brain trauma and bullet wounds in the chest.

Vladimir Usov, Dmitri Komar and Ilya Krichevski never met in life. They found themselves side by side only in death.

★

**FORGIVE ME, YOUR PRESIDENT,
FOR HAVING FAILED
TO DEFEND YOUR SONS,
TO KEEP THEM FROM DEATH.**

Boris Yeltsin

★

Slowly but steadily, Premier Pavlov was bringing the people to the boiling point by his withdrawal of large banknotes, exorbitant price hikes, taxes and duties.

On March 28, the city was virtually put in a stage of siege. I frequently recall that day in 1991. It was a stand-off not between the military and the citizens of Moscow. It was a confrontation between our burgeoning democracy and die-hard conservatism, the slave and the symbol of the communist past. At that time the democrats, despite a direct provocation (the introduction of troops), did not wish to give up their principles; they continued to express their views peacefully and worthily. The reaction was not bold enough to use weapons, as it was in the Baltics. The events did not come to a head. An unstable balance ensued which could not last indefinitely.

The last bell sounded during the summer session of the USSR Supreme Soviet. The plotters Kryuchkov, Yazov and Pugo played the overture by waving the red rag of a threat of an alleged plot. Pavlov's lips issued and spread over the nation the threat of an emergency situation complete with emergency powers. Supreme Soviet Chairman Lukyanov (who was arrested after the coup) was fraternizing with the Soyuz bloc of deputies which brought together communist fundamentalists and became brazen to the limit.

Ahead lay the putsch.

We all knew and saw what I speak about; the wild ones from the Communist party and the Soyuz bloc (which actually is the same thing) had been invoking emergency committees for a long time to scare people. Still the events of August 19 came like a bolt of lightning.

Let us recall the televised press conference on the evening of the 19th, and the plotters' faces, seeming to cry over what had happened. One can only thank fate for the absence among them of a leader, a more or less attractive personality without which a putsch is no putsch. And even the cunning apparatchik Lukyanov, who kept out of the press conference was good only for manipulating the puppets by pulling the strings and demonstrating Yanaev's "division" of legislative and executive branches.

This is the only way to look at it; something intervened to separate the President of the USSR from "a group of comrades" at that fragile line separating democracy from terror. The President of the country became a hindrance to the plotters who were out to take over power. Was it

that he himself had, at long last, seen the light, scared by the chasm opened by the putsch?

Questions, questions, questions...

On August 21, after the failure of the coup, the plotters rushed not to China or Cuba, but to the cozy Crimea, to the President. These wayward comrades-in-arms rushed there to beg forgiveness. Let us not pass up such a fact known worldwide. Upon return from his arrest in the Crimea after the putsch was liquidated, the President during his first press conference hastened to tell his audience about his fidelity to the communist ideals.

But one fact I do not question. Meeting with the President in those days I clearly saw and felt the enormous change in him; his eyes were set a bit deeper.

I wish to believe that what so many said was true: that he was a different President who returned to a different country, a country which he finally got to know in reality.

The country was indeed different. It had changed long before the events.

I would very much wish to believe that its President has also changed, and that he now understands everything for what it really is.

THEY GO TO BED

We have approached the culminating point, the night from August 20 to 21, the point which might have seen a terrible and bloody outcome.

It is difficult to speak about those interminable hours we all lived through. This was a crucial time for everyone including those who did not take an active part in the resistance, but stayed at home and spent a sleepless night glued to radio.

The rifle (as in a play by the great Russian playwright Chekhov), hung on a wall by the putschists in the first act of the tragedy, was expected, at last, to produce a shot. There were many "rifles" stored up; information came that rocket launchers were also ready to strike at the White House.

It was not the barricades which could easily be swept aside by special military equipment, but rather the people who themselves shielded the house which had become the

center of Russia. People were the principal obstacle in the way of troops.

The junta had ordered the last preparations for storming the White House. It set the time for 3 o'clock in the morning of the 21st. The principal role was assigned to paratroopers, to the KGB's "Alfa" group, whose official function is to combat terrorism.

Now we know how the junta behaved that night, and I, violating the laws of the detective genre, will slightly run ahead of the events.

One should not paint in his imagination pictures befitting the tragic nature of the moment; the plotters are huddled in a bunker, the generals are reporting, and a hairy hand descends on the "launch" button. There was nothing of the kind!

The leaders of the plot dispersed, running to their country cottages and apartments. I am sure that peaceful, refreshing sleep did not come to them that night. It was political "sleep"; I do not believe that any of them wished to, or was able to have the courage to make the final decision, to utter the last word.

This executioner function - to pull the trigger - was left by them to the military whom they had driven into a trap, in an attempt to ensure safety for themselves. If the military were to fulfil the order and launch the prepared assault, the weight of responsibility for the victims would be placed on them, not on the junta. The tribunal would find scape goats swiftly. If, against the will of the plot leaders, the military failed to push the button, they would appear as traitors before the junta.

The military tried to find the emergency committee which went into hiding. "He is sleeping now," and "He is not to be waken up until 3 o'clock," these were the answers from their apartments and country cottages. The bugs were snug in their rugs. Party and Soviet bureaucrats fear responsibility like hell, and this time they "rose" to the occasion.

So even commanders loyal to the junta put their heads in their hands upon realizing who they were dealing with.

The fate of the putsch, which from the outset was suspended by a thread (already on the 19th and the 20th many generals, officers and military units refused to serve the junta and blocked its orders), was decided irreversibly by four o'clock on the morning of the 21st. The plot had failed. Generals like Shaposhnikov, Grachev, and Lebed,

who made their choice from the beginning not to raise arms against the people and legal authority, and to protect both, were joined by others.

I will recall that not long before the putsch Boris Yeltsin was in Tula where he met with a paratrooper division stationed there. We shall not fight with the people, they told him firmly then, as if they had the premonition that the division would be ordered by the junta to launch an assault. The division did not execute the order. There have been such cases. On the 19th, when the tanks had moved in on the White House, Boris Yeltsin, going out into the square, asked a tank driver: "Did you come to shoot at Yeltsin?" - "What do you mean! Never!" - the young soldier answered.

Of interest are testimonies by the generals themselves who, in the plan of the putschists, were to lead the assault on the White House. Colonel-General Pavel Grachev (after the putsch he was appointed First Deputy Defense Minister of the USSR - Chairman of the State Committee of Russia for Defense and Security) was then Commander of airborne troops. He said that on the morning of the first day of the putsch Boris Yeltsin called him and asked:

- What is going on?

The General told him what everyone knew from newspapers, TV and radio reports.

Yeltsin cursed in response and explained with conviction:

- This is provocation! Will you instruct your men to protect?

- Yes, - General Grachev answered.

Soon, paratroopers were dispatched to the White House.

The next day a meeting was held in the Defense Ministry. In attendance were General Valentin Varennikov, Commander of the Army, General Nikolai Kalinin, Commander of the Moscow Military District, General Viktor Karpukhin, Commander of the KGB "Alpha" group, as well as other leaders of the Ministry of Defense. They were informed that the Russian government resolutely spoke out against the emergency committee, that talks with the government had brought about no results and that it was necessary at any price to get the Russian leaders' recognition of the rulers newly brought to light.

The task was set: to encircle the White House. Paratroopers were ordered first to deploy themselves near the American Embassy, and the special Interior Ministry troops

on Kutuzovski Avenue. The "Alpha" group was to station itself on the bank of the Moskva River. Then, Interior Ministry troops were to push aside the Muscovites gathered around the White House so that "Alpha," taking advantage of this, could get to the parliament and storm the building.

Two hours before this, General Karpukhin called General Grachev and said:

- I am trying to get in touch with my superiors but nobody answers.

- Were are you? - Grachev asked.

- Two kilometers from the Russian parliament. I've assessed the situation and have made a decision. - The caller paused and then added: - I will not participate in the storming.

- Thank you, - Grachev answered. - My paratroopers are also not in Moscow. And I will not take another step.

Grachev also called General Boris Gromov, first deputy Interior Minister, told him about the conversation with Karpukhin and then inquired:

- What will the Interior Ministry undertake?

- We will stay put and will not go anywhere.

The conduct of KGB Major-General Victor Karpukhin, the "Alpha" commander, was later variously interpreted and there were those who questioned his position during the days of the putsch. Be that as it may, "Alpha" did not launch a military assault and so let us heed the words of its commander.

At 5 o'clock in the morning on August 19, the KGB Chief Kryuchkov ordered Karpukhin to arrest Boris Yeltsin and other Russian leaders and take them to a prepared location in Zavidovo, a settlement not far from Moscow. According to Karpukhin, he tried from the outset not to obey the orders from the KGB leaders. The General objected; the Russian leaders could not be arrested in the country house for there could be resistance and, hence, casualties. "Alpha" did, however, encircle Yeltsin's dacha but did not attempt to seize Yeltsin and his entourage. They all left the dacha without hindrance and safely arrived at the White House.

Kryuchkov summoned Karpukhin and pompously told him that the fate of the nation hinged on actions by "Alpha" and other units (a total of approximately fifteen thousand men) put under the General's orders in the evening of

August 20. This was several hours before the scheduled assault on the White House.

— The entire assault would have lasted fifteen minutes, — Karpukhin believed. — Thank God, I just could not bring myself to do that. In that situation everything depended on me. It would have been a slaughter house. I refused. And I told my men precisely that: "This is madness. We shall not take part." I called Kryuchkov, but he would not talk to me. I warned his deputy: I refuse to order the assault, I cannot kill people.

There is information to suggest that the "Alpha" men themselves murmured and refused to stage the assault, since Karpukhin and his subordinates agreed on the assessment of events.

To make the picture complete, I will also cite what was said in one of his interviews by Vadim Bakatin, who became the KGB Chairman in the wake of the putsch:

— Even before my appointment, as a member of the nation's Security Council, I dealt with the KGB's special group called "Alpha." Young people from "Alpha" would come to my home to relate their stories of the three days in August. As a result, I advised Gorbachev, before it was too late, to get the unit out of the KGB and place it under direct orders of the Kremlin's Commandant. Gorbachev responded that it was necessary to prepare such an order without delay, to dismiss the "Alpha" commander and to invite the "Alpha" men to meet him.

If we put aside the personalities, for mother History all such details are not so significant. The main thing is, however, evident; the assault on the White House did not take place. And this failure was due not to one or two individuals who played their role, but to thousands upon thousands. And so fate turned out to be on our side.

But there were casualties. It was on that night from August 20 to 21 that three young Muscovites died in a tunnel not far from the White House, near Novy Arbat. Five were wounded, including by bullets. A clash ensued there between civilians and a passing column of armored personnel carriers.

Our deputy headquarters, headed by Yuri Sharykin, kept us continuously informed about troop movements. In the ensuing chaos, movement, partly caused by total inability to operate in a large city (the technical training of the

crews and the quality of military communication were very bad), and at the barricades blocking the streets, there soon emerged something that suggested a purpose behind it. They began to withdraw troops that refused to turn arms against the people.

I was not familiar with Yevgeni Shaposhnikov, Pavel Grachev and other now known military commanders before the coup. We got to know each other later, in the last days of August, and I can confidently say that if our army has such people (of high honor, intellect, military and organizational talent and clear understanding of their duty), the revival of the army is not a remote prospect. I would add to them Vladimir Toporov, Lieutenant-General appointed commander of the Moscow Military District immediately after the coup.

Many in this new wave, capable of saving the army, have been in action in Afghanistan, serving there together with Russian Vice President Alexander Rutskoi (who was a leading organizer of the defense of the White House). During the first hours of the coup they established contacts with the Russian leadership. They made use of the telephone or sent specially trusted messengers.

Together with other Russian leaders in the White House was Yuri Skokov, First Deputy Premier of the Russian government and then a state secretary, who had previously been general director of the KVANT association, part of the military-industrial complex. He had many concerns and tasks to attend to, but late on August 20 he had been almost completely down in the trenches with the army. It was he who solved with General Pavel Grachev all the telephone and messenger communication problems.

THE LONGEST NIGHT IN MY LIFE

From the White House, through the night, I kept in touch with the Mayor's Office run by Alexander Muzykantski. On our instructions, heavy trucks blocked the Kalininski bridge to impede the movement of the Belgorod division. At the Tushino Airport, which is within the boundary of Moscow and the square opposite the central airport station, trucks were placed to block passage.

I woke Stanislav Khramenkov, head of Moscow's water supply and sewage services. I remembered that several

years before I went with him at night to the place of a major breakdown in the heat-supply line. Then the road had to be blocked to halt traffic. Now trucks were used against tanks.

I received a call from Vladimir Sister, Prefect of the North-East district, who said that people were assembled and trucks were available and asked where they should go. Construction workers used their technical arsenal boldly and with imagination.

The perennially cursed employees of dining rooms, restaurants and cafeterias needed no commands to start feeding the defenders of the barricades. Neither did cooperative cafes stay away. Women were bringing food from neighboring houses. Vyacheslav Gavrilov, a former serviceman, who was on duty in the Mayor's Office, who transmitted all commands with exceptional accuracy, will long remember that night.

As Muzykantski later recounted, at around one o'clock he saw armored vehicles coming out of Stoleshnikov Lane which is just opposite the Mayor's Office and thought the assault was underway. Nevertheless, his calm attitude and innate tact of a Russian intellectual did not betray him and his voice on the phone remained low and unhurried. Those who were with him in those days did not see even a hint of fear on his face.

The armored personnel carriers flickered by the walls of the Mayor's Office and vanished into darkness. The cowardly junta was opposed by both the Mayor's Office and the White House, a harmonious team who, I am sure, had scaled the peak of their intellectual and organizational potential.

The heavy air of the White House's grim bunker where we were staying grew thicker and more oppressive as time approached 3 a.m. The work followed its usual routine, and, as in the day time, the hours passed quickly.

We pooled the food we brought and tea appeared. We now and then cast a glance at the clock: 2:50, 3:00, 3:15, 3:30. We allowed for the military's imperfect organization, for they are ordinarily accurate to the minute, and then realized that something had gone awry there.

The threat of an assault receded.

Strange as it may seem, during those hours, when the three of us (Boris Yeltsin, Gavriil Popov and I) were left alone, we did not speak about the imminent threat. We

PRESS DIGEST

**THE JUNTA IS DONE FOR!
THIS IS NO PUTSCH,
THIS IS KITSCH!
THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE
BEHIND BARS!**

★

According to incompletely verified information, the putschists were flying in two planes.

★

THE FLIGHT TO THE CRIMEA FOR PRESIDENT GORBACHEV

"We took off from Vnukovo at approximately 5 p.m. Ahead and behind us lay uncertainty. But there was only one objective: to meet with the President and, if he agreed, to take him to Moscow."

★

We are absolutely correct when we speak about Yeltsin's courage. But we must not forget about Gorbachev's personal courage either. Just imagine, that if the putschists were able to wrench a statement from Gorbachev, the events could have taken quite a different course.

★

Gorbachev:

"I did not agree to any deals. And I firmly stated that I would not be a party to any adventurers."

Raisa Gorbachev:

"Those three days were horrible."

★

**IN CAPTIVITY, THE PRESIDENT
WAS LISTENING TO THE BBC,
RADIO LIBERTY AND
THE VOICE OF AMERICA.**

★

**ORGANIZERS OF THE MILITARY COUP WERE
ARRESTED EN ROUTE TO VNUKOVO AIRPORT.**

This has just been reported by the Reuters and France Presse news agencies, who cited a deputy who wished to remain anonymous.

★

Mikhail Sergeyevich himself stands in the center, conversing with someone. He looks very healthy and sun-tanned, but tired. His eyes are calm.

- Are you under arrest now?
- Now? No.

★

During these four days Russia has gone so far that I am not sure if Gorbachev will be able to catch up with it.

★

Mstislav Rostropovich: "Gorbachev has gone through and understood so much. I knew this from the sound of his voice. I am a musician and I have grown accustomed to detecting the nuances of sounds."

actually engaged in run-of-the-mill "peace-time" conversations even doffing our jackets, interrupted only by brief reports about the situation and by instructions.

We discussed the new principles of managing Moscow, its status, the work of the construction complex, the situation with food supplies, building a settlement of two hundred houses in Bryansk region for the victims of the Chernobyl disaster, and analyzed the actions of the Moscow CPSU Committee. (A friend of mine later told me that during a conversation in the committee building with Prokofiev who, on August 19, summoned many economic managers, the First Secretary received a sudden telephone call after which he hastened to interrupt the conversation and headed for an emergency committee meeting.)

The events of 20 to 21 were drawing to a close. Reluctantly, as if yet incredulous of the victory of light over darkness, the sun rose behind the heavy, dank fog.

The three of us continued the conversation we began before the "H" hour, now known to the whole world; the assault on the White House was set for 3 a.m. The deadline passed and it became clear that the "H" hour was behind us, but our conversation went on and on, with no befitting jubilation. Much in our lives occurs in a pedestrian manner, without a bang or a whimper.

BORIS YELTSIN ENTERS INTO HISTORY

History will give its due to Boris Yeltsin who symbolized triumph of democracy in August 1991. It will also pay tribute to Moscow, the capital of Russia, which boldly accepted the challenge of the putsch and stood its ground.

Whatever roads will be taken by the peoples of the republics of the former Soviet Union, which are still painted red on geographical maps, the month of August has bequeathed to all of them to keep the grateful memory of the Russian President and Russia's capital. They received the blow and protected the country and the world from communist putschists. Almost half a century ago, during WW II, the fascism of Hitler's Germany was stopped and for the first time soundly defeated near

the walls of Moscow. This time fascism was defeated within its walls.

Boris Yeltsin is a man of strong character, a real man. He is short on expressions of cordial attachments and, in my view, does not need or await a grateful recognition of his accomplishments. Neither do Moscow and its citizens need or await it. Without much ado, and in as manly a fashion, they risked everything they had to give — their lives — on that terrible game, the coup organized by the junta. They risked everything and won, proving their commitment to democratic ideals not in an election, at meetings or demonstrations, but at the barricades.

On the night from August 20 to 21, three Muscovites died in the tunnel under Novy Arbat. They say that death does no choosing, but there is some terrible symbolism in that. Of these three, one was a worker, another entrepreneur and the third an architect: two Russians and one Jew. All of Moscow rose to defend the White House that night.

From the first hours of the putsch, from the morning of August 19, when I came to Yeltsin's country house, up to the night of the expected assault, the Russian President did not lose even for a minute his firm belief that the capital would be with him to the last, that Moscow and Russia are inseparable. We did not give each other any assurances or oaths. Everything was clear without words for any words would have been out of place.

A mere few years link Boris Yeltsin with Moscow. He has not long been with it through thick and thin, but still he managed to become a Muscovite. Unlike most party and economic officials of the Brezhnev and Gorbachev periods, who flooded to Moscow in droves to "manage" but who did not understand or love it, Yeltsin immediately opened his heart to the city that was new to him.

He displayed a resolute manner when replacing cadres in the apparatus of the city Committee of the Communist Party and in the Executive Committee of the Moscow Soviet. For that he was labored first on the quiet, until the principal party bosses unseated him as First Secretary of the Moscow Committee of the Communist Party, and then, after his banishment, continued to condemn him in loud and extensive public campaigns. Yeltsin's resolve to change his entourage did not stem from his cold hostility

to people as his foes strove to prove. His resolve stemmed from a burning, although unrealistic, desire to change everything for the better more rapidly. Yeltsin, a man of action, forged his main entourage out of specialists – industrial and construction engineers. Chief of the technical department of a ministry, I also came on his invitation to the executive committee of the Moscow Soviet to become first deputy chairman there.

Eighteen months is a short time for one man to impact a city the size of Moscow, with numerous problems tied into a knot which in other cities do not manifest themselves so acutely. Yeltsin became capable of getting things done here.

Many will remember how he was persecuted for allegedly violating the party cover-up and for coming out openly against the communist bigwigs. He was forced to take leave of the city to which he had been able to develop a difficult and dramatic attachment.

On November 7, 1988, I met Yeltsin in Red Square during a military parade and the official demonstration marking another anniversary of the October Revolution.

On holidays, by the Mausoleum where Lenin rests, they would arrange a wooden reviewing stand, cover it by a likeness of a carpet, and here would assemble people with ranks below those of the leaders of the country and the communist party, towering on the main festive podium. Boris Yeltsin cut a dreary figure on that stand all alone. A leader, ostracized from a high party post and sent to lead a construction department, was not good enough for the company present. I had the courage to break the bureaucratic etiquette, came up to him and we spoke for the whole two hours without a break.

He bombarded me with questions about the state of affairs in Moscow and was interested in every minor detail. When he learned that the citizens of Moscow had ceased to tolerate heavy and unpaid servitude – working in vegetable storehouses, sorting out, packing and loading potatoes, cabbages, onions and carrots to be sold in stores – he asked me for more details, for this intolerance began under him. "If everything works out the way we planned, I will be very glad as if I were working with you now..."

The same interest in Moscow, sincere and heartfelt, was felt by Gavriil Popov and me on that memorable

night in the White House. Now that the danger is behind us, when I visit Yeltsin on business, he treats our city problems with an understanding and desire to shoulder part of them.

The morning of August 21 came, the last day of the putsch and the first day of Victory. Flanked by two guards, my wife and I were walking to the zoo where a car waited for us. Tired after a second sleepless night, people were still at the barricades, fires still burning. Packages with food and vacuum flasks were being passed around. Tensions subsided and many, like myself, felt a growing confidence that the end of the ordeal was near.

We reached home without incident. Leaving my wife there and telling her not to open the door under any circumstances, I went to the Mayor's Office, which I had left a mere ten hours before.

Thus ended the longest night of my life.

At 8 o'clock in the morning of August 21, Muzykantski, Shakhnovski, Savostianov, Sharykin and others gathered in my study. Together, we drew up a plan of action for the day. The first and main item of our plan was to have the troops immediately withdrawn from Moscow.

TANKS ARE LEAVING MOSCOW

At 10 o'clock on August 21, I addressed a meeting in the Mayor's Office with the following words (quoted from the records):

— We have gathered here to examine the question of an immediate removal of troops from Moscow.

The meeting was attended by Lieutenant-General L. Zolotov, Chief of Staff of the Moscow Military District, and Colonel-General V. Kuznetsov, Chief of the corps of engineers of the USSR Defense Ministry.

Our task was to do our utmost to have troops out of the city by the middle of the day. They could not possibly be left in the city in the evening, and especially at night; some of the junta members might consider using them to take revenge. That the attempt would fail was beyond doubt, but blood could be spilt. Those who have nothing to lose are capable of anything.

Zolotov: — The last soldier and the last vehicles will be withdrawn from the city by tomorrow morning. Why by

the morning? It is because there will be a small withdrawal during the day. The bulk of the troops will be leaving at night, if you do not object. If you allow a planned withdrawal during the daytime with the corresponding security measures, we shall complete the withdrawal earlier. Very few troops remain. I am prepared to report on every company. Still remaining are about 20-22 units of equipment. The withdrawal itineraries are: Profsoyuznaya Street, Leninski Avenue, and Minskoye and then Kievskoye highways.

The General was moving his finger on the map he brought with him and I was about to boil with indignation: a score of machines do not need twenty-four hours to get out.

Zolotov: - If it is necessary to halt traffic in daytime, what will you do?

- We'll halt it, - I said.

Zolotov: - The main thing now is to specify who goes where. Then, when we concentrate them here (he points on the map) there will be no questions. Then they will provide us with an exit route to Minskoye highway, and Tamanskaya and Kantemirovskaya divisions will go out.

Musykantski: - Then means when?

Zolotov: - After twenty hours.

- We shall not adopt such a plan, - I objected. - Let's determine the number of traffic police cars necessary to escort them.

Zolotov: - It is 10:30 now. Can we do it at 11:30?

I called the traffic police leaders and we agreed on 45 escort cars, judging by the number of tank units which are in the city.

Zolotov: - Reaching the assembly points at 12:30, and the start of withdrawal at 13:30.

- And at 4 p.m. we vacate the city, - I sum up the conversation. - Any questions?

Muzykantski: - The troops must be fed right where they are.

- The military commandants of the prefectures must leave the city with the troops, - I warned.

Shakhnovski: - And the issuance of night passes must be stopped immediately. The curfew is illegal as is the state of emergency.

Zolotov: - We'll stop that with pleasure.

I address Kuznetsov: - I agree with Yazov that you will use your equipment to dismantle all the logjams and all barricades erected to resist the "beloved Army."

Kuznetsov: - I now have in Moscow five engineer vehicles for obstacle-removal. Truck-mounted cranes are few - only six. We must organize this effort. The situation there is not clear yet. It is clear only to us.

"There" meant at the barricades manned by the resistance, and in some cases they did not allow the military to touch anything. Even after the troops left the city by 4 p.m., many did not believe that they could send the all-clear signal, for the tensions of the past days would take time to subside.

It was interesting to watch the two Generals whose names have been recorded for history by the verbatim reports. They conducted themselves with dignity and discussed things knowledgeably, but behind their appearances one could detect another side: a sense of bitterness and shame for the Army and its officers drawn into an ominous and at the same time humiliating adventure. People who had devoted their lives to executing a soldier's duty and serving honestly, suddenly found themselves in a most shameful situation. Whenever we mentioned the emergency committee, the state of emergency, curfew or illegal orders, they became quiet and fidgety. Finally, they agreed with us that the shame - troops in Moscow streets - must be taken out as soon as possible. Hardly did the meeting end after achieving the agreement, when I received a call from General Kalinin. He called to tell me that the schedule had been calculated incorrectly and that the troops would leave the city only 24 hours later. It was a tough conversation, and before hanging up, I tried one last argument:

- Do not delude yourself, General, about our position and the firmness of our demands. If even one tank remains in the city by 4 p.m., we shall set it ablaze.

I do not know what had the greatest effect - my resolute tone, or the Commander's realization that the battle was lost and that, playing with fire, he could again face the people of Moscow. The troops left by 4 p.m.

The appearance of the Generals in the Mayor's Office was preceded in the morning by two telephone conversations, one with Yazov and the other with Kryuchkov. Yazov immediately took the receiver of the government telephone,

as if he was waiting for my call or, most likely, some other more important one.

- The Muscovites are indignant at the continued presence of troops in the city, - I told him. - We cannot contain the anger of the young people who are prepared to use any means at their disposal to engage the tanks in combat. I expected a burst of anger and obscenities, but instead I heard an unusually trusting tone and even notes of apology:

- Perhaps you are right. It is time to address the question. We ordered the troops in to protect the city from plunder and pogroms.

I could not contain myself:

- What kind of pogroms?! What plunder and pogroms were there before the introduction of troops? What are you talking about? You wanted to intimidate the people, to force them to bow to the emergency committee which we do not recognize.

Yazov did not object.

- Yes, perhaps it's time to adopt a decision, - he said. - I will send you two Generals, Kalinin and Kuznetsov. When would you like to meet with them?

- At once! - I said, for I hardly expected such generosity. Instead of the Commander of the District came the Chief of Staff. It appears that Kalinin, the hapless Military Commandant of Moscow, who did not dare to show up in the Mayor's Office during his brief command, did not have the courage to come this time either.

At that time I did not, of course, know that the collegium of the USSR Ministry of Defense had a meeting in the morning. It is most likely that our conversation with Yazov took place at about that time; the meeting began at 9 o'clock in the morning.

According to Marshal Yevgeni Shaposhnikov, the new Defense Minister, Yazov described the situation in an uncharacteristically winded and garbled manner. He made unflattering references to Vice President Yanaev and Prime Minister Pavlov, members of the emergency committee, as drunkards who had drawn the Defense Minister into their schemes. But the minister had under him generals who were followed by soldiers manning tanks. It was a shame for the army. And the minister asked those present to voice their opinion.

In accordance with the old Russian army tradition, the

floor was given to Shaposhnikov, the youngest of the Collegium members. He proposed that, in the name of preserving the authority of the armed forces, an order be issued to withdraw the troops from Moscow. He was supported by practically all members of the Collegium.

Yazov said that he understood the opinion of those present. Although the emergency committee was in session, he would not attend but would, probably, order the troops to withdraw. He added that he would not quit the emergency committee; he could not be a traitor once again and would carry his cross to the end.

Harking back to the first day of the putsch, Shaposhnikov believed that even then Yazov did not wish to go to the end and so would not order to open fire. He told the Collegium about the introduction of a state of emergency, putting the troops in high combat readiness and of the entry of troops into Moscow but at the same time warned:

— Make sure you don't do anything foolish. Among the people there may be some who would throw themselves under tanks or set them on fire. I wouldn't like blood to be spilt.

THE KGB BOSS FLEES TO THE CRIMEA

In addition to defense ministry troops, there were also KGB units in the city, of which we learned about the ubiquitous deputies.

Inspired by the first success, I picked up the receiver to talk to Kryuchkov. This conversation was totally different. I told him about my agreement with Yazov and demanded the withdrawal of the KGB troops. Kryuchkov was cagey:

— We have nothing and no one in Moscow. Why do you think such things about us?

I then began to list the units, and Kryuchkov became silent. It was, of course, a hopeless undertaking to obtain a clear-cut commitment from him. He is a secretive, sly man, with the face of a gullible hillbilly; he appears to be straightforward and sincere, but has an analytical and vicious mind. I am uncomfortable in the presence of such people, and I am glad that they do not exit within Moscow government, although ours is a very motley collection.

There were among the putschists, in my view, three principal organizers. While Prokofiev provided the ideological backup, and Lukianov the legislative camouflage, it was Kryuchkov who looked after the practical execution.

The conversation with Kryuchkov ended in nothing. I pressed him and he wriggled, promising to find out and to get matters straightened out.

We spoke a second time a little later. Kryuchkov was in a terrible hurry to go someplace and he only had time to say that all instructions had been issued and that the troops would be leaving the city. I did not know at that time that a plane was waiting for him and his accomplices to fly them to Foros where Gorbachev was being held captive.

Early in the morning of August 21, the last day of the putsch, very dangerous attempts were made to lure the Russian President to Foros. I learned this from one of numerous conversations with Yeltsin with whom we were permanently in touch.

- Maybe I should go there? - he said half-questioningly and half-affirmatively.

- I think you should not do that, - I rejected the idea at once.

Boris Yeltsin blazed up:

- Are you all in collusion?

Judging by everything, I was not the only one who feared for his life.

Later I found out that the whole White House was against the idea. Eventually, Yeltsin decided to stay in Moscow.

EVERYBODY HUNTS FOR THE BLACK BAG WITH THE "NUCLEAR KEY"

Scores of long-range bombers, hundreds of intercontinental ballistic missiles installed in underground shafts and in submarines - thousands of nuclear warheads live a life of their own like predators waiting to be unleashed from their "kennels."

Especially trusted officers always stood near the nation's President keeping custody of a special bag with the "nuclear key," triggering an encoded nuclear go-ahead. On orders

from the President, a "turn" of the key would immediately clear all the hurdles of ingenious blocking systems, switch on the communication hubs and put the nuclear arsenals in the highest combat readiness, and when the last word, "launch," comes through, Hell would break loose on the Earth. When on Sunday evening of August 18 the plotters took the President captive and left for Moscow to continue their black deeds, the officers with the Bag also disappeared from Foros.

I am profoundly convinced that the vicissitudes suffered by the Black Bag, the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the wake of the putsch and the claims laid by some republics for the nuclear weapons to be deployed on their own territory prompted U.S. President Bush to come up with his unexpected proposal concerning significant cuts in tactical nuclear weapons (the proposal was immediately supported by this country). But all this was to come later. And at that time...

The top brass in the Defense Ministry, occupied with troop movements following the introduction of a state of emergency, could not fully attend to the matter. But it was haunted by gnawing questions about the Bag and the communication hubs installed on the presidential jet which was grounded in an airfield near a Crimean village several miles away from Foros.

The military suspected that the "neighboring firm," the KGB, might have a hand in the disappearance of the Black Bag. The KGB's military counterpart, the Main Intelligence Department of the General Staff, had to act without delay. Indeed, if the putsch failed, some of its leaders could conceive the crazy desire to "slam the door" and insert the "nuclear key" into the nuclear "locks" of a special communication hub to send an encoded message to missile launchers and long-range bombers.

In the meantime, reports reaching from the Crimea were increasingly contradictory and terrifying. A group of military dispatched on the morning of August 19 to the Crimean communication hub met KGB officials there. The group failed to dismantle the hub by the appointed hour and was getting late for the take-off of the presidential jet. The airfield guards were getting tired after long hours of waiting for an attack from either of the sides.

Only in the evening, when the plane took aboard the

PRESS DIGEST

THE FLOOD OVER ONE SIXTH OF THE EARTH HAS BEEN LIQUIDATED.

★

So far the barricades are not being dismantled, pending a special decision by the Government of Russia. The people who defended the White House have no intention of dispersing, and defense has been strengthened with ammunition and fortifications. It appears, however, that the last night of the putsch is well behind.

★

In the meantime, the meeting outside the White House continues throughout the day. Several thousand defenders decided to continue guarding the parliament at night. The barricades have begun to be dismantled, but it was decided to leave one of them intact to serve as a symbol of the Muscovites' steadfastness.

★

A SIGH OF RELIEF IN THE WORLD

★

George Bush: "The putschists underestimated the people's might."

John Major: "It is necessary to believe in people."
Xinhua news agency: no commentaries.

★

They taught us to squeeze out the slave from ourselves, drop by drop. And then they put us under a giant press.

★

Mstislav Rostropovich: "I can say thanks to you for two of the happiest days in my life."

★

**THOSE WERE THE BEST DAYS.
AND LET THEM NEVER BE REPEATED.**

★

I still have difficulty comprehending what the whole thing was. An endless ordeal, a mirage or life in some nether world. We were living our best days, when we wept, threw up tantrums, formed human chains and gave nightly interviews. We lived. We sampled the taste of life. We had been cattle. And then we became a people. Oh, Lord, give us the strength to remain human.

★

**THE SQUARE NEAR
THE WHITE HOUSE WILL BE CALLED
THE SQUARE OF FREE RUSSIA.**

★

Let us not forget those who did not get scared. Recently, we have been saying to ourselves so many times, like an invocation, "We are no longer afraid, no longer afraid..." But in our heart of hearts we did not know whether that was true. Today we know; this is true.

★

sweating signals officers with the communication equipment, it took off for Moscow.

This time the world was spared the nuclear threat, although, as many tend to assert, it did not exist in those days at all. But I can only express my agreement with the U.S. Defense Secretary who described the August saga of the Black Bag as a potentially explosive topic.

FORTY OFFICERS PRESENT ARMS

Seventy-two hours, the time allowed for the putsch, was drawing to a close. Mikhail Gorbachev and his family in Foros had only a short time left to wait. This is how the President himself described the three days he spent there after the plotters flew to Moscow on the evening of August 18, having obtained no support from him.

The dacha was surrounded by troops and totally isolated from the world. Psychological pressure began — watching the President's every step in order to break him and to achieve their ends. Gorbachev realized exactly what was happening when word came about the press conference given by the members of the State Committee for the State of Emergency. They not only discussed his poor health and consequent inability to discharge his duties, but also promised to present a medical certificate to this effect. As this did not in any way reflect reality, it was only logical to assume that attempts to break him physically and psychologically could not be ruled out.

Staying with the President were 32 bodyguards who remained loyal to him. They decided to stay to the end and divided among themselves the sectors of operation to protect the President and his family: wife, daughter, son-in-law and two granddaughters. The family agreed not to eat food brought to them and, as Gorbachev said, to live on what they already had with them. No heinous act from plotters could be ruled out.

As far as it was possible under the circumstances, the President acted vigorously; he kept up demands that communication be restored, that the Presidential jet be sent for him, and that a denial of the official report about his poor health be published. But his was a voice crying in the wilderness.

The President's son-in-law filmed his statement on video

cassette and repeated it four times. Then the film was cut into four parts and they began looking for ways to get them out. One film was subsequently showed by the popular television program, *Vzglyad*, banned several months before the putsch but which re-appeared on television after its failure. A statement of several points was also drafted in which the President made an addition in his own handwriting, to certify the statement's authenticity.

— Seventy-two hours of complete isolation and struggle. I think that everything was attempted in an effort to break the President. It was hard, Gorbachev recalled upon return to Moscow.

On the evening of August 21, black government limos suddenly entered the compound. The Presidential guards with submachine guns rushed to meet them.

— Halt! — the guys shouted.

The cars stopped. Negotiations ensued, and finally a messenger returned from the dacha. The cars started and soon stopped again. Out stepped Anatoli Lukyanov, Supreme Soviet Chairman (he would also be arrested several days after the arrests of the emergency committee members and some of the military putschists), Vladimir Ivashko, Communist Party deputy leader, as well as Oleg Baklanov, chief of the military-industrial complex, Dmitri Yazov, Defense Minister, and Vladimir Kryuchkov, KGB Chairman. As eyewitnesses recalled, they wore a crest-fallen look. Mikhail Gorbachev received only Lukyanov and Ivashko.

— I did not receive the plotters, did not see them and do not wish to see them, — the President said.

Foros telephones came back to life. The President immediately ordered all communications of the plotters to be cut: in their Moscow offices as well as in their cars.

Then he had several telephone conversations: with leaders of the republics, and with those of some foreign countries, including U.S. President George Bush. Already during the press conference in Moscow, speaking about the calls from political figures, Gorbachev joked:

— In short, all, except Kaddafi, Hussein and Rubiks.

Rubiks is a Communist Party leader in the Baltics who supported the putschists. The Russian Vice President Rutskoi, Premier Ivan Silaev, Vadim Bakatin, who was appointed KGB Chairman after the putsch, and Yevgeni Primakov, Academician who became chief of Soviet foreign

intelligence after the putsch, flew to Foros the same evening.

It was decided to fly to Moscow not on the Presidential jet, which the plotters used to get to the Crimea, but on another one, that of the Russian leaders. When Mikhail Gorbachev approached the plane, forty ranking officers stood there ready with submachine guns. The Foros captivity was over.

A VICTORY HAS MANY PARENTS, BUT A DEFEAT IS ALWAYS AN ORPHAN

The last barricades – burned out trolleybus carcasses, battered construction machines and concrete slabs – were removed from the streets by August 31.

The logjam in Sadovoye Ring, where three boys met their death, began to be cleared nine days after their death. The traffic jams which arose because of the still "steadfast" obstacle, and the resulting need for long detours did not elicit a word of protest. Nobody dared to touch the place. On the 9th day, red asphalt patches were laid to signify the blood which had been spilt.

Truly, nothing is valued so highly and paid for so dearly by humankind as freedom.

People long have known that a victory has many parents and only a defeat is always an orphan. Every day was bringing new parents of the democratic victory, and these growing "reinforcements" were getting louder, making up for a long history of inactivity. Already August 19, the first day of the putsch, divided citizens of Moscow into three quite unequal groups.

The first made an immediate and irreversible assessment of the plot, made their choice and remained true to it in the most difficult minutes. These people fought for victory and won it. They were opposed by the putschists and their supporters. This second group also acted but suffered a crushing defeat.

The most numerous and diverse was the third group. Some contemplated the events being enacted with indifference, absorbed in their every-day drudgery and discussing the details seen or heard in undertones. Others, brimming with sympathy for the fighters at the barricades, avidly heeded the underground radio voices – our Echo of Moscow

and Radio of Russia, or foreign. In that huge mass of Moscow people one could see people young and old, "ordinary" and of rank. Not all had immediately realized what was going on during those three days. It is this last group that keeps producing increasing numbers of "victors" and "enemies," the latter becoming victims of persecutions on an increasingly terrifying scale.

Moscow and the nation now faced the threat of an investigation fever. All types of commissions were formed, interrogations staged, and testimonies provided by witnesses who, instead of manning the barricades, were manning corridors and smoking rooms trying to hear the "real" story. Written and verbal reports, alleging others' unreliability and disloyalty to the sacred throne of democracy, flowed like a vast river. Old and new accounts were being settled, attempts to compromise immediate and higher superiors were made by dishonest people coveting somebody else's place.

This bacchanalia of vindictive slanders, lies, investigations and the new fear had to be stopped immediately. We know all too well that this is how the red terror starts. To protect its moral health, society must, finally, learn to oppose this creeping evil, as it learned, judging by the three days in August, to block the road to the tanks of reaction.

The military, militia, and security officials must be protected; all who did not become direct accomplices of the plotters. Their service is dedicated to orders, rules and the oath, and by far not all of them had sold their souls to the plotters. Let each of them become a judge unto himself and his actions.

If we fail to put our society together again, if we do not finally put an end to our universal strife and do not come to a reciprocal consensus, then we shall inevitably hand over the democrats' victory to the adventurists of tomorrow, who will exploit the people's hardships and difficulties which we have in so much abundance.

It is extremely important to cure and constantly keep in good political and moral health the law-enforcement system which has now added Kryuchkov to the criminal company of Stalin's butchers - Yagoda, Yezhov and Beriia.

On a proposal from the Mayor's Office, civilians were placed in the leadership of the capital's law-enforcement

organs. These are profoundly decent people, intellectuals with sharp minds and broad outlooks – the young fosterlings of the democratic movement. By not blindly obeying orders, they will not allow "the man with the rifle" to be drawn into an illicit game. And the very appearance of such orders will be prevented because the entire law-enforcement system of the nation and of the republics is undergoing decisive change.

They say that if the putsch had not happened, it ought to have been invented. Only those can "joke" in this manner who have not stared the danger straight in the face. The cleansing storm was arranged not by the junta but by the young democracy which for the first time in the long history of Russia was able to withstand the onslaught of reaction.

Fate has so far spared our long-suffering fatherland the horrors of a civil war into which the plotters could have plunged it. The painful boil was pierced without general blood-letting, and a country breathed a sigh of relief with full chest.

Strange as it may seem, there began to surface dangers emanating from the crowd of the false parents of the August victory, who were ready to ruthlessly tear it to pieces for immediate gain.

Of course, no society can develop without fundamental disagreements, without overcoming obstacles and resolving conflicts. But there are conflicts and then there are conflicts, and we shall not change significantly our present self if we do not begin to learn from our own mistakes.

WE CANNOT LIVE ON RUINS

August broke the backbone of the Communist Party, the Soviet imperialist military, as well as that of its twin brother, the ubiquitous law-enforcement system which protected a rotten regime and its leaders from the people. Together with the sinful union government, which "nominated" its "elite" into the junta, the economic Center seized to exist, never again to reappear as general manager and distributor of all goods.

The events in Moscow sent waves across the entire country.

Justifiably shaken by the junta, which had its sights set beyond Russia, nearly all the republics fled the Union for their lives, even those which had previously proclaimed their statehood quietly and cautiously. A once mighty empire collapsed for good.

But living on the ruins, and even more so running on them, is not a comfortable exercise. Indeed, it is dangerous. That is why the fleers soon began to cry "Hallo!" in the hope that someone in the vicinity would hear and help. The scientific name for it is "a single economic space."

Immediately after the putsch, a provisional committee was formed for operational management of the national economy of the USSR. The decision to establish the provisional committee was adopted at a meeting with the President on August 24; I was appointed deputy chairman of the committee.

Soon changes could be seen on the horizon. Representatives of the republics began to attend the committee meetings with great willingness, and nobody shouted about independence. And the Balts, who quite recently slammed the door behind them with a bang, who separated and formed independent states, behaved in a businesslike and even friendly manner.

Surprising though it may be, danger caught up with us from an unexpected quarter.

It is possible, although undesirable if we want to live in a civilized society, to topple Sverdlov, Kalinin and other monuments to the politicians of the October Revolution. To "topple" the vestiges of the central bodies of the USSR only to install in their place something similar but now in the colors of the Russian flag is a danger for all, including Russia itself. This will be the bitterest fruit of democracy's victory over the junta. Yes, Russia and Moscow are the parents of victory, but they had a huge country behind them. And it still stands there. Let us remember this.

Fate had ordained it so: the Russians united around themselves many neighboring peoples and created a single state which, not meant to offend others, outside its boundaries was also called Russia. Today, with the second millennium about to expire, fate has again called upon Russia to make history. After inflicting defeat on Napoleon in 1812 and on Hitler's fascism during WW

II, Moscow and Russia have now routed the imperial communist putsch in the name of its own freedom and freedom for all the peoples of our still great country. Only a political profligate or, at best, a blind person, would take it upon himself to assert that the warmest recognition from a far flung George Bush would have saved the Baltics from an invasion of a pack of victorious kryuchkovs, yazovs and lukyanovs.

The August victory has marked the end of both the Communist Party and the Russian empire. At this crossroads of global importance, Russia has again been assigned the first role: to let go in peace and press the hand of those wishing to go and stretch out its arm to those wishing to leave, while reaching out its own hand to those willing to walk the same path together.

For countless centuries Russia remained the principal force and the symbol of vastness extending from the Baltics to the Pacific. Let us remain great in the modern, post-August sense; let us not pull the blanket over our eyes and allow a revival of the great-empire chauvinism cloaked in democracy.

The communist putsch and the subsequent fall of Pavlov's Union government, ready to obey the self-appointed emergency committee, forced the Russian President Boris Yeltsin to adopt an extreme measure. He issued decrees obligating the Union departments to operate under the direction of the republican, Russian bodies, or even to obey them unreservedly. This was a perfectly correct move, for otherwise the reins of directing the country could slip away (upon his return, the President of the USSR approved these decrees). But this could not and ought not to have continued forever.

Also necessary and appropriate was the creation of a provisional committee for the management of the national economy, to be chaired by the Russian Premier and then the conclusion of the Treaty on the Economic Community, signed by a number of republics.

Probably for the first time in the history of the Russian State, and of the USSR, the Center ceased to rule and distribute. Rather, it got down to organizing interaction and mutual assistance. At that point the Russian government should have drawn a line between what is its own and what belongs to others, and should have revoked some of the already inoperable emergency decrees of the

Russian President. Somehow, this failed to be done all at once.

Important matters sometimes degenerated into ridiculously puny details. For instance, while creating their own department for material and technical supply (badly needed by the entire country), they quickly fired five deputies to the Union minister of material resources and put in their place the leading supply people from the Russian State Committee for Material and Technical Supplies. As might be expected, at that time one did not have to wait long for the elimination of this and most other Union departments (the death of the Union government did not mean their automatic demise). However, it is hardly behooving to overtake events without seeking the consensus of the republics or creating anything to replace what is being destroyed. The other republics glared with surprise and fear at what was going on.

It is not an overstatement to say that the future of the union largely depends on how the young democracy of Russia consumes the fruits of August. Our conversations with Yeltsin have not ignored an issue as important as these problems. He understands everything down to the finest detail. Regrettably, the same cannot be said about his closest aides.

ONE CAN SEE THIS ONLY IN A NIGHTMARISH DREAM

For reasons incomprehensible to me, (perhaps after three days, home-grown analysts have crept out from under their beds to start whitewashing themselves and their kind), the ominous plot is being passed off as an innocent operetta. The troops allegedly entered Moscow simply to sit there (but why did they bring in ammunition?). The putschists were mere boys who decided to play a "war game." Some went so far as to attribute the victory to Soviet and foreign radio voices which, following a cunning plan, dramatically reported the excitement on the streets of Moscow, scaring the putschists into defeat.

A lie will be a lie and blasphemy will be blasphemy, their origins notwithstanding. Were they operetta barricades and operetta tanks with operetta actors confronting them?

PRESS DIGEST

**THE RADIOSTATION
ECHO OF MOSCOW
IS ON THE AIR AGAIN.**

★

We have to be very cautious. We have been through a terrible night, a night of acute anxiety, a night of the spilt blood of Muscovites who defended democracy, our common freedom and the lawful President of the country. The night could end in darkness, a pitch-black darkness of fascist dictatorship. Instead, the night became the moment of truth for every one of us. It tested people for a sense of decency, loyalty to democracy and fidelity to freedom.

★

**AUGUST 1991:
HOW ONE SHOULD NOT
GO ABOUT PULLING
THROUGH A COUP D'ETAT**

★

Of course everybody knew that, with us, nothing is made humanlike. But not to such an incredible degree! You get a sanitary technician or a driver from his bed at night and tell him to organize a coup d'etat, and he will do everything much better. I believe that a sanitary technician would hold on for no less than a week.

★

THE PUTSCH WAS ORGANIZED BY DRUNKARDS.

★

When asked, "How did the State Committee for the State of Emergency come into being?" Marshal Yazov answered, "We were sitting at Pavlov's, and Yansev was there. At that time, Yanaev was already quite drunk..."

★

WHAT CAN BE BETTER THAN A BAD PUTSCH?

★

The crime rate dropped sharply during these days. Compared to the normal level of 115-120 crimes per day, on August 19 there were 105, on August 20, eighty-six, and on August 21, seventy.

★

Yuri Luzhkov roughly estimated the damage inflicted on the capital by the coup at 67.87 billion roubles. The authorities of Moscow suggested to present this fact to the court and make the putschists compensate for the damage.

★

And was the tragic night when blood was spilt in the tunnel under Novy Arbat an operetta scene?

An enemy needs no justification. Let's leave that to the courts. Moscow, which had risen for the struggle, does not need to be defended. It inscribed itself into one of the finest pages of its millennia-long history.

Let us leave operetta rationalizations to the consciences of their authors. Try also to visualize the image of our society at the close of 1991, had the putschists won. This image can only appear to haunt you in a nightmarish dream. Universal uniformity of thought would have been immediately revived, but without the faces we know from Solzhenitsyn's GULAG Archipelago. We would have found ourselves short of many newspapers (and newspapermen, too). An end would have been put to entrepreneurship and, with it, to hopes for economic improvement. Our television would continuously show Swan Lake, as they did almost all of August 19. The arms race (guns instead of butter) would have returned and the threat of war would have been on the rise again. The "operetta putsch" would have become a lurid tragedy in the lives of millions of countrymen, of the state and of the whole world.

I am not alarmed by the operetta discussions in the newspapers some of which I respect. People themselves will realize what is what. I am alarmed, indeed concerned that, lulled by the thoughtless and happy-go-lucky operetta trills, we may be caught unaware by new perils which surely lie in wait for us ahead.

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV BIDS FAREWELL TO COMMUNISM

On Saturday, August 24, the third day after the failure of the putsch, Popov and I were invited to visit Gorbachev, who was back from his captivity in the Crimea. This was our first meeting with him since the end of the failed coup. The meeting, which was to discuss the state of the Union, was long and covered a broad range of issues. It preceded Gorbachev's announcement of his resigning as General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee. This was one of the first consequences of the Communist putsch.

Losing its authority month after month and effectively disintegrating, the Communist Party became, as people were wont to say in its halcyon days under the guidance of Stalin, the inspirer and organizer of this illegal, anti-constitutional and extremely dangerous coup d'etat. Inspiration and organization was, of course, provided not by the millions of rank-and-file communists, who had long broken any real links with the party, but by the bureaucratic top leaders. The party had within it many bureaucratic leaders, from the influential bigwigs down to secretaries of the party committees of large enterprises and organizations.

We now know of coded cables sent by the CPSU CC Secretariat and by the central committees of the republican Communist Parties to district, territorial and regional committees. One, dispatched around 11 a.m. on August 19, demanded the adoption of "measures to provide communists' assistance to the State Committee for the State of Emergency in the USSR."

I had a chance during the days of the putsch to watch some of the "leading comrades" from the CPSU. They could not hide their jubilation. They were fully confident of victory, of the revival of the party and of its power over people and the nation. Any democratic verbiage and pettifogging were thrown to the winds to reveal the predatory grin of the "helmsmen" ready to put the country on its former road of doom. It is not difficult to guess what hand guided the pen that wrote the emergency committee's appeal to the Soviet people. Its reactionary substance (excluding unrealistic promises of a better life) put it close to the well-known reactionary "Communist Manifesto" by Nina Andreyeva, published by Sovetskaya Rossia in the spring of 1988, which caused a storm of protest from the nation's democratic public. Imagine our surprise, when we heard the first statements by the USSR President after his captivity. Just after stepping down on the tarmac he expressed his love for the party of which he still regarded himself to be General Secretary.

At the meeting on Saturday, i.e. three days later, everything "communist" had already receded into the past, although the faces in the President's immediate entourage (minus the arrested putschists) were still the former, familiar faces. One would like to explain this

simply as an impossibility to change all the trusted aides at one stroke.

I know that some people hastened to report to the President that after March 28, when troops were introduced into Moscow that as a democratic demonstration was being denied access to Manezhnaya Square, I removed the big portrait of the General Secretary from my study. This did not add warmth to our relationship, which had not been known for its friendliness. Now, on August 24, the President, so it seemed to me, was able to brush this aside as well. His attitude changed not so much to me personally as it did to the new, democratic Moscow where his fate as a statesman and a human being was decided during the three days in August. And the very fact of Popov's and my invitation to the President said a lot.

The text of the "abdication," which was soon published by newspapers, was discussed and disputed in a business-like manner, without any bias. We suggested more radical formulations. Gorbachev opted for other, more mild ones, which still left the substance intact. It was to be his personal statement after all, and he had the right to chose the words. The phrasing of the "abdication" notwithstanding, it marked the end of a century-long history of the Communist party in the Soviet Union.

The party stepped down from the political arena. Gone was a system to which millions of communists and non-party members alike, indeed an entire nation, had for years obediently bowed in submission.

Will the Communist party be resurrected with a new face? I would not take it upon myself to hazard a guess, especially when recalling the words of the great Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdayev, who spoke about the sources and essence of Russian Communism. I do know one thing for sure. The Communist leaders must be punished for their direct assistance to the plotters. However, not a hair should fall off the heads of rank-and-file party members even if (I dare say) in their hearts they sympathized with the emergency "ideals" but did not collaborate.

Let people preaching communist beliefs organize for themselves a new party, a parliamentary one operating within the framework of the law and fighting for votes in elections rather than laying a claim to eternal power and engineering plots and putsches to achieve their ends. One cannot persecute and punish for ideas. Moreover, in my

judgement, part of the defunct CPSU's assets should be turned over to law-abiding movements which have branched out from it or have become newly formed entities.

A society which discriminates against minorities (few, I am sure, will now rally under communist banners) will sooner or later find itself in shackles from top to bottom.

THE LAST DAY OF THE "IRON FELIX"

A modern city is ill-suited for revolutions. All its structures are designed for a peaceful life. Spontaneous rallies, demonstrations, to say nothing of more drastic displays of political passions, are a headache which disrupts this peaceful existence and citizens' everyday lives.

So on August 22, when the victory over the putschists grew into an uprising against the fallen regime, the city authority found itself in an ambiguous situation. On the one hand, it had to act swiftly to restore order and organize the work of municipal services, making many important decisions in order to bring life in the capital back to normalcy. On the other hand, it had to show understanding for the justified sentiments of Muscovites unwilling to abandon the carnival mood of popular victory. We shared those sentiments and were willing to do our best to help turn the political event into a national holiday by providing people with an opportunity to powerfully, colorfully, and publicly display their attitude to the fallen regime and share in the popular jubilation.

But when you take on such two conflicting tasks, you have to have strong nerves. I felt this when the telephone rang in my office. The caller said that a crowd was gathering outside the KGB building, intending to pull down the monument to Felix Dzerzhinski*, the first Soviet Cheka chief.

Some mountaineer had already climbed the monument. A steel-rope lasso had already been thrown over the neck of the sinister statue. The people had commandeered a truck and tied the end of the rope to it. And now they were pulling the statue...

* The monument to the country's number one security guard, Felix Dzerzhinski ("Iron Felix"), by architect Yevgeni Vuchetich, was erected on the square opposite the KGB headquarters on December 20, 1958.

I became frightened. Not for Dzerzhinski: the "Iron Felix" had long been the target of universal hatred, a symbol of the purges which still send shudders across the length and breadth of our land. But it weighed 87 tons. Any rash move could spell disaster. Firstly, nobody knew in which direction it would fall and whether or not it would kill anyone. Secondly, the excited crowd had no idea of what lay underneath the square; underground there were urban communications and collector tunnels. If the hideous monster crashed through the square, it would take a fresh toll of human lives just by its own demise.

We rushed to the square. On reaching it, we thanked God that the monument was still standing. It wouldn't move even when pulled by a huge truck. In Soviet years, monuments were indeed erected "to stand for centuries."

A spontaneous meeting was in progress in the square. Speakers succeeding one another at the microphone included Mstislav Rostropovich, the Moscow News editor Yegor Yakovlev and the popular actor Gennadi Khazanov. In short, all were "ours," the same people who had been near the White House. They were making passionate speeches, trying to keep the crowd from becoming violent. To some extent, they were successful. But nobody could tell how long this would last.

Alexander Muzykantski, Prefect of the Central district, took the loudspeaker. He announced on behalf of Moscow's Mayor's Office and Government that the decision had been made to remove the monument, that the hideous monster would be pulled down without delay and, in fact that very day, three powerful cranes were already on their way and that it was necessary only to wait a little.

And at that point I saw that the huge crowd immediately made its own decision. It was amazing: the crowd lived as one organism. Despite all its apparent aggressiveness (in gestures, slogans and expressions), it was not a reckless milling throng, but a single-minded being which had set itself a clear-cut goal and was determined to achieve it there and then. It demanded powerful and tough action. But it also listened to us. The city authority was at one with the crowd and it trusted us.

The event of course was not without its share of incidents. A group of young people who were in the part of the square adjoining the "big house" of the KGB decided to break into the building. They began to storm

the doors. I do not know what the building's insiders felt at that moment. I imagine they were impressed by the might of the huge human mass outside. But the people inside were professionals who knew how to act. When the pressure of the young men became too resolute, the door opened just for an instant and a spurt of nerve gas was sprayed into an attacker's face and the door was shut again. The gas was probably "Cheryomukha" ("bird cherry"), for the young man's face became immediately swollen. We sent him to the hospital. Nobody attempted to emulate his feat.

THE HEART OF THE COMMUNIST EMPIRE IS STOPPED

After convincing myself that the crowd had calmed down, I headed for the Mayor's Office where I found that I had to again go out, this time not to the KGB but to the seat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, where some of the crowd were heading. As the alarmed deputies explained on the phone, it was impossible to stop them.

Here I have to explain what the "CPSU Central Committee" means. It is a whole block of buildings (fifteen, to be exact, with a total area of 170 thousand square meters), which was essentially a fortress and an information maze, filled with classified data on the doings and decisions of the top party elite. The secret policy of the empire was decided there. The nomenklatura inside this country and the communist parties abroad received their guidance from there. The block of the Central Committee buildings had been renovated several times since the 1930s, probably in order to enhance the secrecy and efficiency of covert communication links. Nobody had any idea as to where and how the information was hidden and what documents and computers contained the coded information about the party's financial accounts and secret operations. To let the crowd roam the corridors and offices now (and under such conditions the guards were hardly in a position to put up any resistance) meant placing in jeopardy any future investigation into the CPSU activities, to say nothing about possible marauding and hooliganism.

Something had to be done at once. But what? Already

on the eve of the events described we took the first steps, when some of our deputies reported suspicious activities: some closed vehicles were leaving the Central Committee complex. Nobody knew what they were taking out – documents, equipment, maybe some sort of valuables. I then instructed GAI (the traffic police) not to let the loaded trucks out of the yard. Deputies were put on duty outside the gate. This was the extent of our authority. The Mayor's Office did not seem to be authorized to take more resolute measures. It would be the next day, August 23, when Gorbachev would write his courageous resolution, "I agree," on the note from Russian State Secretary Gennadi Burbulis which warned that, "Destruction of documents in the CPSU Central Committee proceeds at a fast pace. Urgent instruction is necessary from the General Secretary to temporarily stop activity in the building."

Still, we decided to act. The decision was formulated and made within minutes. Not a second could be lost. When I approached the building, I saw broken signboards and windows. The crowd was different from the one at the Dzerzhinski monument. It was a concentration of hatred, bitterness, all possible negative emotions. I knew there was no love lost between the people and the communists, but I never expected that the Russians could feel such hatred for the fallen. Hanging heavily in the air was one desire – to bring the target of hatred to utter defeat. It seemed impossible to stop a crowd in that frame of mind.

I climbed a portable ladder provided by a correspondent and read the decision of the Mayor's Office and government over the loudspeaker. The order was to seal off all entrances to the building and to cut off electricity, the water supply and all supply systems. And, sensing the tension of the huge crowd, I added my own words: "Except the sewer, in case those in the building feel like wetting their pants."

This caused laughter and somewhat defused the tension. The militia got down to sealing the doors while the crowd watched. The people began to calm down. It seemed that the danger had been averted this time.

DZERZHINSKI, SVERDLOV, KALININ - WHO NEXT?

On our way back to the Mayor's Office we stopped by the Dzerzhinski monument. The peak of excitement had clearly passed there, but the people were waiting. We repeated our promise that the hated monument would be removed by evening at the latest. "We shall be waiting!" was the answer.

Indeed, when, finally, powerful construction vehicles with a team of riggers arrived on the scene at about eleven in the evening, many an expectant eye was fixed on them. The city service demonstrated high professionalism. The fastenings were swiftly removed and, to the loud shouts of joy (never before did a team of riggers have to perform before so many eyes fixed on it), the "Iron Felix" was majestically hoisted aloft and carefully placed on a platform. The crowd was in jubilation. Pictures of the occasion were printed in all newspapers. It was not clear, though, where the monument could be taken.

The next morning, it found itself on the lawn outside the Artists' House; we decided to turn this lawn into a totalitarian sculpture museum. It had long been my dream to collect all the bronze and granite Soviet leaders, heroes and collective farmers in one place, and build a fence around it for the children to play inside. When the children grew up, they would think about what kind of an epoch it was that a "people's" power tried "to immortalize" itself in the memory of posterity by erecting such monsters.

In the meantime, the people were not satisfied with "toppling" only Dzerzhinski. I was approached by a group of young people who called themselves "White House defenders." They demanded to be given equipment to remove the monuments to Sverdlov and Kalinin. I agreed. So an hour after midnight we set out for Sverdlov Square to remove the monument to a man who had ordered the execution of the tsar's family. During the same night, I also went to Kalininski Avenue to witness the toppling of another idol - the "all-union elder" who, in his day, had probably signed more decrees on executions and arrests than any other man in human history.

There were less people there and the atmosphere was

quite businesslike. They finished with Kalinin rather quickly: the removers were getting faster with experience.

Who was next? It was Lenin. The giant monument in the Oktyabrskaya Square.

On arriving there, however, we found out that the urge to topple monuments had fizzled out. The crowd was small and its mood seemed less than drastic. So I decided to forgo the removal. And thus, Lenin stands there still.

Whatever the feelings I experience each time I drive past the monument, I remain convinced that we did the right thing. Indeed, these monsters are part of our history. Of course, they have no business being in the city. But this was also how the Parisians felt when pulling down the Column Vendome, or the Petrograders when removing the Alexander the Third monument. I regard it as axiomatic that monuments belong to history, not to us, although many people think differently.

I am against re-writing history. No matter how hard it was, it should remain with us. It may be that Muscovites will remove some of the monuments. Other will fall into decay. But I am convinced that the process should obey the decree of history rather than orders from the rulers. Be that as it may, Moscow's authorities decided not to issue any general commanding instructions on this issue.

I WORK IN THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

"August 27, 5 p.m., at Gorbachev's," says my appointment schedule. And now I sit in the presidential office, amazed at the change it has undergone. A huge study has suddenly become hollow, resonant, like a house deserted by its owner. Gone is the charged atmosphere and the "energetics of statesmanship" which is the principal lure for people infected with politics.

I peer into the face of the host (it is my first opportunity to see him during these last several days) and wonder at the change. Gone is his self-assurance and artistry. Gone also is his beguilingly demonic gaiety which lent to every phrase of his a vagueness which suppressed his interlocu-

tor's urge to object. A languishing look. Everything costs him an effort. He is not a president anymore, I thought.

And for some reason I recalled not the expression of suppressed fear we had seen on the Foros film, in which Gorbachev was delivering his foreboding message to all of us fighting for him here. I recalled his other expression when, under Yeltsin's pressure and against his own will, he read before a jubilant Russian parliament the minutes of a meeting of the union government, during which ministers, one after another, disavowed their President in favor of the emergency committee. It is humiliation, I thought, that left its mark on the face of the President. Now his resignation was only a matter of time.

Our conversation centered precisely on this situation with the Cabinet of Ministers. The country was left without a government. The situation was serious. The republics felt they were the victors over the empire. The union treaty remained unsigned. The desire for secession and rupture of links could trigger a domino effect, with everything crumbling like a house of cards. It was necessary to form a temporary structure of executive authority without delay. So it was decided to establish a Committee of Operational Administration as a legal successor to the government. Chairmanship of the Committee was offered to the Russian Premier Ivan Silaev and the post of his deputy, to me.

At first, I refused to accept. Not because I was afraid I would not be able to handle it. From my contacts with the government in previous years I had a very good idea about the job. It was something else that seemed to deter me: I was accustomed to working with people whom I liked.

Our differences with Silaev had surfaced a year before the putsch (only a mere year ago, but it seemed like ages!), when in the same White House I raised objections which led him into an extreme state of agitation. At issue then was the establishment of new market mechanisms. As Russian Premier, Silaev decided to transform his ministries into some so-called "concerns," creating, I remember, sixteen concerns in only one day. They were giant monsters whose purpose was to perpetuate the power of bureaucracy by imitating market forces. Essentially, they remained the self-same ministries in which nothing changed, except salaries and labels. I could not under-

stand whether he was engaging in deception, talking about transition to a market economy, or whether he had any idea of what "freedom of the producer" meant. Considering that the ministries were in the territory of Moscow, I wrote the Council of Ministers that Moscow did not regard the creation of such "plaster casts" to be correct and asked to take them out of the city. I went even further at a meeting specially convened to discuss the issue: if the deception continued, we would take measures within the jurisdiction of the municipal authority. "We will not conclude leasing agreements..." While I was speaking, I noticed how the Premier's face was changing. It then became purple and he got up and began to shout that he would not allow such arbitrariness and would rescind all of Moscow's "lower-level" decisions. I continued very calmly (although something demonic swells in some people in such cases): we will cut off electricity and water. Moscow will not play host to such pseudo-entities. This is no market, this is downright deception.

I do not know how the entire scene looked from the sidelines. But the external violation of ministerial etiquette demonstrated the "unmarriageable" character of the two reform strategies: the imitation variety and the radical one. Aware of this, I realized I would not be able to work long with Silaev.

He was a man of the old structure and it was inevitable that we would be locked in a fight. This indeed happened, but it was later.

In the meantime, I began to work on the Committee with great enthusiasm. The situation was extremely grave: everybody was predicting hunger in the country. The newspapers were saying we would not survive the winter. Experts spoke of frightening prospects of strikes and hunger riots.

My task was to set in place a single system of food supply in a country infected with the desire for regionalism. No republic, region, district, city or village wished to share or sell anything in expectation of price explosions. Nobody was willing to conclude any treaties because no one trusted anyone else. The situation was becoming absurd.

I met with leaders of all levels, persuading and expostulating, trying to convince them of mutual benefits. I offered them a plan and a mechanism of collective mutual assistance, price regulation and reciprocal supply

volumes. These were even eventually quantified. The supplies became the subject of negotiations in the European Parliament and in Britain, Belgium and Poland. And now I cannot deny myself the pleasure of saying that if, despite everything, there is no hunger in the country, the credit for this in no small measure goes to our energetic Committee.

But in the process of this work, we made an amazing discovery: all too frequently, the political ambitions of our republican leaders conflicted with considerations of economic advantage. The ruling elite was not satisfied with the external attributes of sovereignty. The idea of creating a single economic, monetary and information space was coming under strong opposition from different political groups. In some cases, it was the pressure of nationalistic forces (as in Ukraine), in others – the pressure of the state bureaucracy (as in certain Central Asian republics), and in still others – some curious combinations of both plus the emerging business elite. And there was also political pressure from Mafia groups. Plus God knows what else. There was everything, except a reasonable economic approach, which was practically relegated to last place. Although we went out of our way to convince all sides that it would be easier to survive together during the difficult period that lay ahead, the trend of political regionalization was inexorably leading to economic exclusiveness, thus quickening an early disintegration of the Union.

Incidentally, it was Grigori Yavlinski, leading a different team within the Committee, who had to deal with the problem much more directly than I did. (The third man was Arkadi Volski, but his is a separate story.)

Grigori Alexeyevich Yavlinski is quite an outstanding personality. He came into prominence under the Ryzhkov government, when he began to draft the famous "500 days" program (under the protection of academician Stanislav Shatalin). This was a spectacular plan for a lightning-speed transition to a market economy. It is not for me to judge how realistic the plan was. But it did instill in all "democrats" hope, because under the plan, the speed of privatization was to outpace liberalization of prices. At the beginning, Gorbachev supported the "500 days" plan. But then, in keeping with his usual way of doing things, he decided to find the "resultant force" between the

PRESS DIGEST

THE LAST DAY OF FELIX

Around eight o'clock in the evening three construction cranes approached the monument to Felix Dzerzhinski, the number one Cheka man. The people greeted the cranes with approving whistles and cheers of jubilation. Preparations for dismantling took three hours. At last, at eleven thirty, the idol was toppled to the deafening shouts of "Hurrah!" In its place, a tricolor Russian flag was hoisted aloft on the pedestal.

★

VIGOR WAS SPENT ON THE MONUMENTS, AND GRAIN SHALL BE BOUGHT ABROAD?

★

The inscription on the pedestal of the Dzerzhinski monument: "People! Do not destroy what has been created by our ancestors: the granite foundation is the 18th century work. This is history! This is our memory!"

★

According to the Mayor's Office report, the total damage done to trolleybuses is estimated at 1.3 million roubles.

★

Today, Revolution museum employees placed next to the 1917 armored vehicle **a trolleybus, the vehicle of the modern revolution**, which "manned" the barricades and prevented the progress of tanks.

★

There is appearing a huge temptation to form some kind of professional corps of revolutionaries who would raze monuments to the ground, break into buildings, conduct inspections and decide who is right and who is wrong.

★

Referring to the current campaign of monument-toppling, Sergei Stankevich, adviser to the Russian President, said he shared the feelings of people eager to bring down the symbols of the totalitarian epoch. He said, however, that he would not wish to see the victory being turned into a barbaric "feast of the victors," complete with the rampages of the mob.

★

"marketeters" and the party and administrative nomenklatura who did not wish to relinquish control of the privatization process, being concerned, as it were, not with the difficulties of transition to a market economy but only with how to appropriate public property. They wished to become "the new class" of the rich. Yavlinski's program aimed at depriving them of this opportunity. When the program was rejected, Yavlinski went to the government of Russia but the same story repeated itself there.

Within our Committee, Yavlinski was charged with preparing a draft Union treaty. He drafted a document which spelled out in substantive detail a system for the interaction of sovereign republics within a single economic space. The draft was provided for associate-membership status of republics within this common economic space and even for the printing of national currencies.

I was delighted by the report Yavlinski made before all the republican presidents at a meeting of the State Council. His ability to think in terms of economics, i.e., to view society as a system whose structure is determined by the prospects for, and conditions of, the economy, contrasted with everything those politicians had witnessed before. Indeed, they were accustomed to treating the economy as a cinderella who could be ordered to do any chore, dictated by political ambition. They forgot the times when our state was healthy and strong and its prestige was determined not only by rockets and cosmonauts but also by the Demidovs and the Morozovs, business people who determined the society's standard of living and demonstrated Russia's successes at world exhibitions. I was sure that Yavlinski's simplicity, clarity and logic would not fail to convince our politicians, but I proved to be wrong.

I also gave a report that day. Mine was the first, not by its priority but rather for its acuity. The problem of food supply was of concern to all. I laid out a program of interaction between the republics, complete with figures and mutual delivery schedules. I presented a way out of the food crisis. The response of the presidents was benevolent. Questions were aimed at clarifying points. It seemed I should have been pleased.

But the presidents' failure to understand Yavlinski's report (their responses did not concern the substance of the report and their interventions were in the spirit of old-time political intrigues), to be honest, simply traumatized me.

I saw that these people would not budge an inch, that they talked of the market not because they believed this was the correct and only good way of life but because they were promised that perestroika would yield political dividends. The old system of priorities remained unchanged. This meant that the Committee for Operational Administration was becoming utterly irrelevant. It simply had nothing to guide or administer.

I QUIT

The immediate reason for my leaving, however, was not my "inappropriate reflections," as described above, but, predictably, a clash with Silaev. Information about our differences got into the press. Few people, however, know the true nature of our differences.

In that euphoric atmosphere of victory – and it should not be forgotten that the putschists were defeated by Russia's authorities – Silaev had made a series of decisions whose thrust boiled down to this: the property of the former union ministries was declared as Russian property. The republican officials lost no time in taking over union offices, departments, institutions and computer centers. It was almost a storm-and-drag operation. I did not agree with this policy.

Indeed, at issue was not the property of the communist party, for it was clear what should be done with it. It remained "unattached" and sort of "left to its own devices." But union property did have an owner. It had been created by all the Republics. And it was my firmly held conviction that property had to be distributed amongst all those who created it, in a civilized and intelligent manner and based on thoughtfully-elaborated concepts and publicly-scrutinized accounts.

There were two considerations of principle involved in this. On the one hand, I tended to see those "grabbing reflexes" as manifestations of the hated Bolshevik psychology which ruined the strong Russian economy in the wake of the October coup. This was effectively a psychology of plundering. Whatever thoughts the communist ideologists might have had about the goals of their utopia (and many of them, I believe, were honest people), they effectively foisted a criminal ideology on the people. And let us not

forget that this went on for seventy years. In this situation, one could speak about restoring private property and a market economy only after re-instilling in the minds of people a sense of the sacredness of property as such, regardless of whose property it is and of the attitude to the owner of the property. If we perceive ourselves as the government of a convalescing country, I thought, then we must set a precedent of a civilized attitude toward union property by deciding its fate openly and legally.

On the other hand, it seemed to me that, by substituting the principle of takeover, based on the territorial criterion, for that of fair division, we were substantially complicating the prospects for economic integration in the future. Why can U.S. enterprises function in South Korea and Japanese enterprises in the U.S.? Why can't our sovereign republics-states co-own enterprises located in each others' territories? If we calculate (even just in terms of hard-currency inputs) how much has been contributed by each republic into such unique projects as the Baikonur cosmodrome or the Kama truck factory, it would be agreed that all should be the co-owners. This could take place in the form of stockholdings.

Silaev did not wish to heed such reasoning. Remaining, in his soul, a Russian premier, he applied only one principle: everything in my territory belongs to me. This was the beginning of a decision-making philosophy which was to generate many clashes and disputes between the republics. I do not know whether Russia has profited from such decisions, but I am in no doubt that they are responsible for generating the same "grabbing reflex" in the others. We set the example of uncivilized attitude to common property and sowed the seeds of many subsequent disputes, of which the one over the Black Sea Naval Fleet is clearly not the last.

I submitted to Silaev a note concerning the illegality of the takeover of former union ministries. I raised the question in the Committee and said that, without demonstrating a civilized approach to distribution of common property, we (Russia included) stood more to lose than gain. I said that what was going on seemed to me a vulgar and essentially Bolshevik way of doing things. Committee members actively supported me. Silaev attempted to downplay and soft-pedal the issue.

Then I submitted my resignation. Gorbachev was very

angry. He reproached and shamed me, saying that I was unwilling to help in the hour of need.

In addition to all else, I thought it was hard for him to imagine how a man, invited over from some "lower," "city" level, could suddenly decide to spurn the privileges that go with supreme power. He simply could not see that which had become absolutely clear to me through my work on the Committee, namely that in a matter of months all that "supreme power," the Committee, and he, Gorbachev himself, would become momentarily irrelevant.

"THE SECOND RUSSIAN REVOLUTION"

This was the title of a BBC serial which ended with the victory of the putsch.

Without in any way doubting the *raison-d'être* of such a recount of the August events, I would still enter a caveat concerning a certain peculiar nature of the perception of history through television. Tanks in the streets, popular rallies, stains of blood on the asphalt tend to rivet the attention of people around the world. But when a revolution becomes less of a spectacle by moving to the level of daily routine, it ceases to be the object of societal mythology. In the meantime, however, it is precisely in the daily, seemingly pedestrian and obscure events that a genuine revolutionary drama is played out. For a revolution is a change in the societal structure. And "societal structure" differs from abstract scientific notions in that it passes through the souls of men.

Leaving the job in the union government and returning "to the city level" made me glad for two reasons. Firstly, I was to work with Gavriil Popov, who is not only a prominent economist but also a man with a strong will and the sophisticated intellect of a chess grandmaster, capable of calculating the most remote consequences of the decisions made. I was confident that, with him, we would bring to fruition what had been started. Secondly, in the spirit of Russian tradition, it was the capital that had to lead the restructuring of Soviet society. Indeed, the victory of the putsch had only created prerequisites for changing that society. The victory liquidated the top party nomenklatura. It undermined the imperial center, which relied on armed force. But the entire thickness of socialism as a system

based on state property had remained intact. And so far nobody knew how to remake it.

That was why privatization became the chief item of our program. The "first" Russian revolution had taken property from man and handed it over to the state. The task now was to return it to back to man.

It seemed that, after the August event, there would be no problem doing that, for the requisite laws had been passed. All decision-making posts belonged to the "democrats." All meetings discussing privatization were characterized by amazing unanimity. But no practical results seemed to be realized. There was not a single application, not from a store, a dry cleaner or a shoe-repair shop.

It was a strange situation, which required patience and self-control. I called a meeting with trade leaders: "Why are you reluctant to go private?" "We are not!" they would answer. "So what's the hitch?" We conclude that nothing is standing in the way, except some minor formalities which can be easily eliminated. We reach agreement. We part. And again, nothing happens.

I summon Vladimir Karnaukhov, Moscow's Trade Minister: "Listen, what hampers you? You agreed on the need for privatization. You've visited the West and have seen that a private owner works more effectively." The answer: "I have seen and I know this. But the city is not yet prepared. There are no farmers and there are no wholesale markets. How will I supply the stores? While they are still state-run, I can at least supply them with some things."

Again we discuss and agree on the urgent need to establish wholesale markets. We allocate space for them. Work starts and then dies down. And again I wonder why.

And then something transpired, quite unsuspected by us. We were accustomed "to fight" at the level of programs, persuasion and slogans. We were schooled in meeting an adversary in an open struggle for votes. Only this time we faced not ideological "conservatives" or party bigwigs but "ordinary" Soviet people. A foodstore director, corrupted by socialism, earned, by stealing, more than a private store owner (and did not want this devilish property which would force him to get up in the wee hours of the morning to look for fresh products and go out of his way to please the consumer). There was the director of a beauty salon

which was dirty and, for some reason, always full of cockroaches. And there was a big-time "captain of trade," who was accustomed to the rationing system and totally unprepared for managing trade in an atmosphere of free competition.

These people were not ideological adversaries. They may even have voted for "the market." Theoretically, none of them liked or wanted socialism. But having defeated the old communist and imperial structures, the "second Russian revolution" turned on these very people.

It was time for resolute action. The method we opted for was simple in the extreme. We warned all directors of foodstores, beauty salons and laundries that if they failed to submit privatization applications before December 5, their enterprises would be sold at an auction under the current law.

The result was phenomenal: by December 5 we had received eight and a half thousand applications!

We realized that it was not classical privatization. The owner in this case would still be a socialist "worker collective," not a private individual. And the incentive to buy out the enterprise was not the desire to win in competition but the fear of becoming unemployed.

Nevertheless, the Moscow government decided basically to support this form of privatization. Our reasoning was tactical: Moscow's dressmaking and tailoring establishments, workshops and foodstores employed some one and half million people. The prospect of selling the enterprises through auctions made the threat of unemployment all too real. The prospect of a conflict between the employees and the new owners was all but inevitable. And who would be the likely new owner in today's conditions? He would be someone who had managed to make a lot of money under socialism, i.e., as a rule, by unlawful means. It could be that, with his business qualities, he was precisely the man we needed. But in potential conflicts with the "worker collective," moral forces would not be on his side. One can imagine how many protests, picketings and even hunger strikes we could have caused by resorting to auctions as the only form of privatization. How many journalist investigations and judicial inquiries we could have caused and how many accusations we could have brought on the government. This could only delay the whole process.

At the same time, by giving off an enterprise as property to the collective, we established a mechanism for its further evolution. Let new private owners emerge from among the current co-owners. Let some individual, with great initiative and enterprising spirit, buy out the fixed assets from his colleagues. And if no individual of this kind were found among them, let them look for an entrepreneur themselves. In conditions of competition they could not do without one anyway. The collective would simply not survive. And no one would subsidize it any more.

The Moscow government made its decision along these lines, and the Committee on Privatization went ahead full steam. The work was directed by Larissa Piasheva, an economist known for her extremely radical views. Publicists quickly coined the term "overhang privatization" to describe her tactics. They wrote that such methods were too reminiscent of the collectivization drive of the 1930s, that Moscow was goading people into accepting private property in the same way that Stalin drove people onto collective farms in his day. Such charges were not totally groundless.

I criticized Piasheva's methods several times. I suggested that people be treated with greater tact and be persuaded of the would-be benefits of privatization rather than frightened into it by muscle-flexing. For in buying out an enterprise, people were inevitably going to experience difficulties and sustain losses of income. And this was a painful prospect, given the current inflated prices. It was necessary to give help and guidance rather than pressure and threaten people with auction sales. Indeed, our task was to improve the quality of services rather than to demoralize the employees.

The dispute spilled over into the press and television. The media began to discuss "accelerated" versus "overhang" approaches to privatization. The eventual choice was in favor of the former: we decided during 1992 to privatize 91% of trade enterprises, 97% of catering establishments, and 97.5% of dressmaking and tailoring establishments, beauty salons and repair shops. Simultaneously, the plan provided for the establishment of a network of wholesale facilities and trading-intermediary firms to keep them supplied.

Small and average industrial enterprises, city transport, gas stations and the hotel industry were next in line.

YESTERDAY, THE CAPITAL OF SOCIALISM, AND TOMORROW, A CENTER OF WORLD BUSINESS

"So where's the revolution?" exclaimed an elderly gentleman when I became carried away by my story about such unusual affairs.

We sat in a London pub which he had kindly offered to show me. We were conversing as colleagues and professionals. And suddenly, from the perspective of that remote island, the "paltriness" of my problems dawned upon me.

My colleague had never seen a non-private pub. He was aware of privatization issues and had participated in parliamentary debates on the problem. At issue in the British context, however, were large entities such as state-run airlines, TV channels and defense factories. But it was totally beyond his power to try to imagine the task of privatizing a beauty salon, for in the world where he grew up, all such establishments had always been in private hands.

So the gentleman was convinced that our "revolution" was not a revolution but only a slow (too slow) return to normalcy. He simply could not imagine that the past seventy years produced a totally different civilization in the USSR and that the changes that had taken place affected not only the level of deliberate policy decisions but also penetrated individual instincts and social habits and shaped the mentality of already a third generation. So that now the return to a "normal civilization" meant simultaneously leaving another, abnormal civilization in which you could not get good hotel accommodation or rent a decent office, obtain basic information, buy an airplane ticket, get your phone call answered or find legal protection if needed.

With time, these problems will begin to be solved. But in order for them to begin to be solved, the presence of foreign business is necessary, for the presence of foreigners is *sine qua non* for these abnormalities to begin to be perceived as problems. Amongst themselves, the Soviets have long ceased to notice them.

And this means that, inviting foreign partners to Moscow, the municipal authorities have to face not only business but also, so to say, "civilizational" difficulties. A business-

man comes to another country but very soon he discovers that he has been invited to a different galaxy.

It is beyond his power of comprehension that "Soviet civilization" managed to produce people for whom the sacred feeling does not start or end with private property. One result of this is that the parliament is totally unable to decide on such an elementary legal norm as the purchase of a piece of land on which to build an enterprise (for otherwise where is the investment guarantee?).

He is utterly baffled by the existence of a civilization in which nothing is guaranteed: there are no laws defining the status of investments, no norms regulating the settlement of conflicts, no ways to hedge your investments, and no ethics of compliance with contractual provisions or of sacredness of the "rules of the game."

Planning on a visit here, a businessman prepares himself for many things. But, naturally, he does not bargain for finding himself confronted with an utterly frustrating and baffling law-making process. He is simply amazed to find himself in a country where parliament and government members are, as if they have entered into collusion, passing one normative act after another without giving the least thought to the people who would be using them or to how what they would feel. It is because those law-makers were raised in a system which has never acknowledged man's right to self-determination in society.

In this situation it is only the personality that somehow makes up for the flaws of the system. Let us say that the authority of Gavriil Popov, Moscow's Mayor, achieves what must be achieved by a healthy system of laws and norms. Business people find him to be a man of firm ideas which transform their routine money-making chores into a sacred activity in the service of progress and order on earth. In this way, as I see it, Popov revives in them ideals somewhat forgotten in developed countries themselves – the ideals of the great thinkers of the epoch in the development of capitalism, the atmosphere of which they sense in this country today.

If one is to talk of Moscow's practical accomplishments in the matter of cooperation with world business, they do not look too unimpressive as first steps. The city plays host to 625 joint ventures, which is roughly 40% of all JVs registered in Russia. The firm Mc Donald's is a successful example of doing business in the Russian capital,

a long-term agreement with the Coca-Cola company has been signed, and so on.

Gaining increasing popularity are projects 100% financed with foreign capital. Agreements have been signed (based on long-term leasing arrangements) with Japan's Seije Corporation and Switzerland's HOPF.

But the principal goal of our efforts is the early creation of an infrastructure for international entrepreneurial activity. A Moscow international tenders center is being organized and an investment-insurance fund is being set up in the city. Additional financial, tax and other incentives are being devised for companies assisting the city in tackling its priority tasks. A Chamber of Commerce and Industry was established in the city to accelerate the setting up of an industrial, commercial and financial infrastructure. A "Moscow-City" project will soon be ready for implementation, which will permit the commissioning of several million square meters of office and hotel space. There are impressive plans of cooperation with foreign firms in the construction of hotels, as, according to some estimates, some 20 million people visit Moscow every year. But while London's hotels offer over ten thousand quality rooms, Moscow today can offer only approximately two thousand, with the same number to be added by 1994.

We will build a high-speed monorail, which will link the international airport with the city, and we will remodel railway stations and river ports to make them up-to-date and comfortable. In short, we want to turn the Russian capital into a scientific, technical, financial and cultural center of world importance, which will provide a high quality of life and occupy a worthy place among the world's capitals.

YOUR HOUSE IS YOUR CASTLE

The idea to privatize housing became a top priority in the program of Gavriil Popov. He placed special emphasis on it. He explained that so long as the Soviet man possessed no property, he could not be expected to engage in productive business and labor activity. The communists "succeeded" in many things. But their principal accomplishment was to have killed in people the natural desire to acquire and increase property; the sense

PRESS DIGEST

THE "HAVE-BEENS" ARE LEAVING STARAYA PLOSHAD.

★

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union occupied 15 buildings, with an area of 170 thousand square meters, in Staraya Square in downtown Moscow.

★

Vice Mayor Luzhkov did not have enough time even to enumerate the Communist Party's material and financial assets in the territory of Moscow alone and to get an idea of all the organizations that decided to join the coup d'etat.

★

The putsch has failed. We must not feel euphoric, however, for the structures and systems which made it possible have remained. I believe that the first step which must be taken is complete nationalization of the property of the Communist Party.

★

NO WITCH-HUNT IS EXPECTED.

★

The chief task now is to punish the criminals: to clean the head and remove the pus, for it can poison the whole organism.

★

THE COMMUNIST PARTY LEFT NO WILL. THE HEIRS ARE SHOCKED.

★

The premises of the KGB officials, who looked after the safety of the party nomenklatura, presented a horrible sight. Abandoning their posts in a hurry, the KGB officials took out everything they had time to - upholstered furniture, table lamps and even wall-decoration panels that were torn off the walls. Of all the decorations, only the portrait of Lenin remained.

★

PUGO IS BURIED BUT THE MYSTERY REMAINS

According to information received by the Russian Information Agency from reliable sources, the USSR Interior Minister, Boris Pugo, one of the members of the so-called State Emergency Committee, took his own life. He shot himself with his own gun.

★

A prominent Bolshevik said in 1917 that if they did not win, they would slam the door so that the whole world would shudder. The present-day plotters, worthy inheritors of their predecessors, also wished to "slam" the door with a vengeance. But they failed dismally, thank God. They were left without a door to slam. Muscovites used the doors for the barricades. So there was nothing to do the slamming with.

★

of dignity in being the owner; and the desire to see to it that some things are saved, increased and handed down to posterity. The communists tried to do something which even the most zealous medieval ideologists did not dare to do. They wanted to create a "new man"; but the man turned out to possess no initiative or responsibility, and he preferred not to earn a living but to live on handouts from the state. And until we have restored in him the concept of private ownership, we cannot expect him to show understanding of our tasks.

This was about the way the Moscow Mayor's Office and government presented their case when we tried to convince the parliament to pass the law on housing privatization at an early date. Soviet families live in state-owned or cooperative flats. A formal change in their ownership title already meant changing people's psychology.

The Mossoviet, which is the name of Moscow's parliament, was basically in agreement. There were almost no objections. But then differences began to surface quickly concerning privatization laws and procedures. Why will one Muscovite receive a big apartment and another small? Why will this person get it downtown and that person in the suburbs? Why will one person receive an apartment in a good house and another in a bad one? There were all the valid grounds for such questions. It was no secret that, during the last seventy years, many party and state officials - those who had brought the country to total ruin - had moved to Moscow to settle in huge apartments downtown. At the same time, "ordinary" Muscovites (including native-born) were being resettled into small and poor-quality flats in remote districts and are now waiting for their flats to be repaired by official services.

Debates were without end. Countless meetings of deputies were convened. Overly complex estimation methodologies were being devised. Proposals were made that occupants should pay for "extra" space (beyond the minimal norm), for "extra conveniences" and for "well-located districts." The longer the argument lasted, the clearer it became that we were losing precious time. The privatization process threatened to lengthen into several years.

Here I must say a few general words about our representative authority. It is quite different from that in

the West. We refer to Soviets as parliaments, while in effect this is a metaphor. "Genetically," they are rather more like the Bolshevik Soviets (that gave the name to the old regime), than the elected bodies of Western countries. Moscow's deputies today number roughly four thousand (compared to sixty in New York). Such huge numbers were conceived by Gorbachev or, maybe, by his entourage, when they decided "to implant" party nomenklatura into the deputy corps. Reviving Lenin's slogan of "All Power to the Soviets!", the architects of perestroika thus wanted to retain the party's monopoly on power. Through sheer inertia, some communists weathered the elections quite well, but the majority of the electorate in Moscow, St. Petersburg and other large cities voted for democrats. This undermined the CPSU's influence in the cities' parliaments, but the cumbersome structure, devised by Gorbachev, remained.

Politicized Soviets, composed in part of communists and other bosses and in part of populists who could only harangue crowds, quickly demonstrated their incapacity for routine, purposeful, normal activity. They applied egalitarianist logic to things requiring the understanding of the most complex mechanisms of democracy. They demonstrated irrevocable commitment to the habitual stereotypes of the state monopoly when at issue were entrepreneurship and a free market. And when it came to discussing a branch of economy, science or culture, they had almost nothing of value to contribute, leading support to Parkinson's "law" of professional incompetence.

But it was the principle of separation of the branches of powers that proved for the new parliaments the hardest to swallow. Theoretically, they were all in agreement with the separation. They had heard or read that it provided the basis for the entire mechanism of democracy. But the principle was one thing, while its implementation was quite another. Here one needs not theory but many years of development. In the presence of lingering totalitarian habits, the authorities' separation mechanism is perceived as an invitation for "a tug of war." The procedure is very simple. The parliament creates a jealousy toward the President and the government and issues claims to review their functions. In other words, claims to absolute power.

This was observed not only in the Mossoviet. It was

soon to repeat itself in the Supreme Soviet. When the Russian government embarked on radical reforms and the deputies realized they were losing control, they launched a rather tough attempt to abort the reforms. The cabinet of ministers threatened to resign. The Moscow government backed the cabinet. Questioned by a correspondent whether a compromise was possible, Parliament speaker Khazbulatov gave, I remember, this answer: "The government must strictly and unequivocally obey parliament and this is what the compromise is about." I recall this now in order to demonstrate the non-accidental character of the situation in which Moscow's executive authority found itself.

But before I continue the subject, I would like to finish the story about the privatization of housing. On that issue, the Mayor displayed a firmness which came as a surprise even to me. He overpowered the Moscow parliament. He rejected all the ingeniously-contrived methodologies for extracting extra payments. He stood firm on the simplest solution: everyone owns the place he lives in. And there was no need to complicate the matter.

The matter, it is true, did not end in the Moscow parliament: the next hurdle the Mayor had to clear was the Moscow government apparatus. The officials simply could not imagine how apartments would be given away without a complex formal procedure. Let every Muscovite, they argued, first submit an "application." Then he would get a clearance from technical, fire-fighting, sanitation and other services. Then let him pass through a commission specifically established for this purpose. Then let him get his papers certified by a notary. Then ...

All this was also categorically rejected by Popov, who imposed the simplest solution: an application to the house-manager and a month's deadline. "How, without a commission?" asked officials of the Mayor's Office. "Without a notary, without a technical inspection?" Yes, Popov explained, without this and without that. Only faster. If we fail to create in this society a powerful layer of entrepreneurs, owners and people of vigorous business activity, any basis for change will be lost. There is no time to lose.

POPOV SUBMITS HIS RESIGNATION

A few years before, when I did not know Gavriil Popov personally, I stumbled on his article in *Znanye - Sila*, a popular science magazine. The article was about the history of reforms in Russia and was written by a professional economist. But suddenly I was struck by a lyrical note. The author wrote about people who doomed themselves to combatting the Russian bureaucracy in the nineteenth century. All ended in failure, as a rule. They became victims of the inconsistency of the national authorities. They were used up and thrown away. None was allowed to bring to fruition what had been started.

I am no mystic, but I know that a man may have premonitions about the course of his fate. So when on an early November morning Popov summoned me to tell me "All this is useless. It's time to go," his article came vividly to my mind. Indeed, the wheel had come full circle.

The press painted the emotional background. Having found itself in a grey area, with no more censorship, but within a system which had yet to devise democratic forms of criminal responsibility for libel, the press was rife with gossip and unsubstantiated charges. A journalist could write that Moscow officials take bribes, without taking the trouble to verify facts. A phrase like "The capital's government is the most corrupt in the world" could spout through the lips of a TV commentator and he would not have to offer a single bit of proof. When I was invited to participate in a TV program broadcast live, I asked the commentator whether he relied on solid proof in making his statements and he was forced to apologize twice. But how could I always be there to defeat their accusations?

The leaders of such authority-baiting were, of course, the former communist party newspapers, our former sworn enemies. Soon, however, they began to be joined by the democratic press. For the city authority is the immediate and closest authority. They asked for a building to house their exchange and did not get it. They asked the city for preferential treatment and received none. So resentment piled up. How that resentment would manifest itself was not important. It might do so in allegations that the Moscow authorities were "remote from the ordinary people" or in

charges of "they are selling Russia to foreigners." The important thing was to have a good supply of pitch-black paint. I am "thick-skinned," and therefore practically immune to these things. But Popov proved to be more sensitive. A real intellectual in the Russian sense.

Another cause of his frustration was the impenetrable opposition put up by the officials. They simply did not understand what he wanted them to do. I have already cited examples of clashes over privatization of stores and housing. Now imagine such things occurring at every step. You tell them something, they make promises, you turn the other way, and everything remains unchanged. One must have unusual strength to resist this.

The third level of confrontation was the Moscow parliament. Basically progressive and democratic, it nevertheless was totally reluctant to transfer executive powers to the Mayor and the government. We were all on the same side of the barricades during the putsch. But when five hundred people get together, feeling the presence of eight million Muscovites behind them, they do not understand why they should attend exclusively to laws, taxation issues and budget items, and leave the day-to-day running of Moscow's affairs to somebody else. Essentially, this was a relapse of the unitarian power approach, fostered by decades of totalitarianism.

And finally, there was the Mayor's disagreements with the Russian parliament. The latter thought that Moscow had no right to outpace the rest. Why not go in step with everyone else? Why rush ahead of decisions adopted for all of Russia? Popov objected, persuaded, provided proof. He said that Moscow had already begun many stages of general reform. It could forge ahead. It was accumulating precious experience, which, if successful, could be applied throughout Russia. If not, it could forewarn the nation against taking any potentially wrong steps. These arguments fell on deaf ears. The idea of granting Moscow special status for the pursuit of reforms met with no understanding. On the contrary, Russian parliamentarians began to develop the notion that "Moscow is being capricious," "is too independent," "overly self-reliant," and "interprets the laws incorrectly."

THE ROAD TO REFORMS IS OPEN

So, Popov decided to resign and made a statement to this effect at a Moscow government meeting. His speech was hindered by agitation. He looked extremely tired and unhealthy.

I cannot say whether or not he expected the rebuttal he received from his government, whose ministers, speaking one after another, categorically opposed his resignation. They came very close to accusing him of cowardice. They said that he was betraying the cause which had united them all and that his departure would weaken executive authority. They felt that his leaving would undermine the course of reforms and that it would deal a blow to the democratic wing in the Mossoviet. I was the last to speak, and I said the same things, only, perhaps, more harshly or, rather, too harshly.

I said this was an absolutely wrong decision. Popov could submit his resignation only after taking all necessary steps. He had yet to meet with the President. If Yeltsin refused to support our reforms, then his resignation would be in order. But then all of us sitting here would resign, for we were all working for the idea and the course of reform, not for our ministerial seats.

I called Yeltsin that same evening. I asked him to receive the Moscow government. I said we would speak of our response to the Mayor's submission of resignation. The President agreed to receive us on the following day.

The meeting became a landmark event which determined the subsequent course of developments in Moscow.

The President listened with great attention and asked questions. Much of our interpretation of the situation was novel to him. He said he had an inadequate grasp of our problems because our meetings had been too infrequent. He also said our demands were objective rather than subjective and promised to resolve the issues. And indeed, soon after the meeting, he passed a number of decrees which enabled Moscow to proceed faster (compared to other regions of Russia) in the implementation of reforms.

The situation changed on that day. The reasons that compelled Popov to submit his resignation disappeared and he withdrew his statement. And since we had finally ob-

tained the much sought authority, it was now time for radical decisions.

At that point I made a totally unexpected proposal: "The Moscow government should resign!" We would establish a new structure of executive authority, a government of reforms. And for the first time in the history of our state there occurred something which is so customary in the traditional democracies of the West.

According to the rules of good form, the Moscow government submitted its resignation to the Mayor.

The Mayor accepted it and instructed the Premier to form a new government, one without the old bureaucratic structures and without the cumbersome apparatus of "departments" and "divisions" which only held up the reforms.

The "radical changes" began to gather momentum.

OBEYING THE LAWS OF THE GENRE

Here I could end the book on the second Russian revolution (in its Moscow version), but, having looked through the manuscript, I was surprised to discover that the book's plot is structured like a fairy-tale with a happy end. An evil dragon, the emergency committee, attacked the city; the gallant knight Yeltsin stepped forward, dealt one blow that swished off the head of the dragon, and another blow that undid the empire... All this looked good only for an animated cartoon. And even then, not quite good.

I don't know whether it's due to my natural optimism or to the laws of the literary genre, but something came not quite right. I mean not like in real life.

In real life - I am finishing the book in May 1992, working in great hurry, even burning midnight oil. In daytime, life flings fresh things at me. They are not trivial, simple or alarming. Now it is a strike by school teachers, now a stoppage threatened by physicians. The day before, for instance, it was a rally in defence of the emergency committee! You don't believe it? Maybe, I'll tell, then. It seems worth it. Not only to set the literary narrative straight...

The rally took place outside the prison in which the putschists are kept, awaiting trial.

It was organized by the "Reds", a new political force which announced itself early this year, when, having re-

covered from the blow dealt by the August revolution, former communists (the communist party was officially banned) took to the streets with posters accusing the new authorities of all deadly sins and of causing the collapse of a great power.

I am a depoliticized man, as is the whole of the Moscow government, and I take a neutral attitude to any political manifestations. No matter how monstrous seems to me the idea of a forcible restoration of the imperial past and the socialist "order," I am prepared to do everything to allow its adepts to freely express themselves.

So when the Mayor's Office received from the "Reds" an application to hold a rally, I was the first to offer them a prestigious place, the square outside the gate to the Central city park. They agreed. We discussed the procedure for holding the rally. They agreed with the rules. Then came January 9, 1992. And it became clear that they had no intention to abide by the agreement reached. No sooner had they gathered and worked themselves up into a fever of excitement by shouts, than they headed for downtown Moscow. We had agreed to a meeting but now it was demonstration. Unprepared. Unguarded. Illegal. Fraught with incidents and surprises.

Moscow had not seen anything like this. It had seen "leftists," "rightists," "greens," and "browns," and had heard tough speeches and radical demands. But from the very time when it all became habitual, there was not a single case of violation of the original agreement, not a single instance of violent behavior, a clash with militia or a broken shopwindow. But now the "Reds" were demonstrating completely new behavior. They were announcing the appearance of a public movement which did not recognize the existing system or the democratically elected authority.

Streaming to the center along a heavy-traffic street, they waited for militia to respond. There was no response. Arkadi Murashev, chief of Moscow's Interior Ministry department, ordered the traffic to stop to allow the demonstration to pass freely.

Afterwards, we argued much in the government about what militia had to do. Murashev, a man of principle and consistency, took a stand opposite to mine. He proceeded on the theoretically correct assumption that memories of a dictatorship as a way to protect a revolution were too painful

and would cause aversion to any scene involving violence. As a true democrat, he believed that dialogue and political consensus were more in line with democratic principles than tough law-enforcement measures. I like all this as an abstract theory. In practice, however, such position, in my view, suffers from an inherent flaw: Murashev treated the "Reds" as if they were democrats. They showed to him that he was wrong. Let's again recall January 9.

So, I had a different viewpoint. I saw the demonstration as setting a dangerous trend which could lead to serious incidents and even bloodshed. Unlike Murashev, I knew the "Reds" very well. They are total strangers to law and morality who would interpret a laissez-faire treatment only as a sign of weakness. They substituted party discipline for law and the cult of force, for morality. Brought up on the idea of forcible seizure of power, they relied on one method - provoking instability. They know how to do this. They were doing this in different parts of the globe for seventy years. Their leaders have accumulated vast experience. So the only way to stop them was a strict enforcement of law which protects not only the freedom of expressing political views but also the interests of those who might find themselves victims of that freedom.

This was the Moscow government's point of view. Murashev and his subordinates were reprimanded for their position. And this circumstance in part determined the next episode of the story.

February 23, 1992. It was the Army and Navy Day, a day to glorify military exploits, pay tribute to the memory of dead soldiers and meet war-veteran friends.

The city authority had received four requests to hold rallies on that day. All in one place. An impossible situation, if one considered the incompatibility of political views of the demonstrators.

So, to avoid charges of bias, the Moscow government decided to let no one into Manezhnaya Square except the war veterans, who had always gathered there, and assign the rallies to different locations. The "Reds" were offered Suvorovski Boulevard. They agreed but immediately began playing the same game.

Already on the eve of the holiday, Mayor's Office officials learned that, secretly, without notifying the authorities, the rally organizers called all the participants and told them to gather in Mayakovskaya Square from which they

would head for Manezhnaya Square. Inspired by their previous ploy, they assumed that nobody would stop them.

This time, however, they proved to be wrong. The decision of the Mayor's Office was firm and unequivocal: different measures would be employed against those who showed no respect for the law.

In the morning Mayakovskaya Square was cordoned off by militia units. Realizing that they would not be allowed into the square, the "Reds" tried to break through. They did not hesitate to use some methods which nobody would expect.

They got hold of a Lada car and tried to use it to ram a corridor in the militia cordon. They broke flagstaves and used the sharp-edged poles in fights. They broke kiosks, dismantled construction fences and tried to use all objects they laid their hands on as cold steel. To get to the square, they attempted to use construction scaffolding which began to give way, for it was not intended to withstand such loads.

It is hard to describe what I experienced during that day. The risk of accidental fatalities was too great. The operation was directed from my office. I was in constant contact with the mobile militia headquarters. My orders were recorded so that later they could be assessed from the viewpoint of their compliance with the law. There are laws, however, and there are accidents. The "Reds" later tried to pin on us even the death of an old war veteran (who had died of a heart attack even before the events started).

Even before the rallies, we had agreed with militia that they would not use any combat weapons, except the shields. I feel admiration for their patience and courage: indeed, it is hard to keep your temper when they try to stick a sharp-ended pole into your face.

It was this display of courageous resolve, that, for the first time since the August events, demonstrated to the communists the calm strength of democracy. They saw that the new authority could both abide by the law and defend it. So, at their next rally on May 1, 1992, they were much more disciplined. The rally was held in Red Square which, during the seventy years of communist rule, regularly clad itself in red cloth and saw huge demonstrations streaming through. This time round, the Square was far from full. A group of people shouted stale slogans.

PRESS DIGEST

**YESTERDAY WE DEFENDED
OURSELVES.
TODAY LET'S START THINKING.**

★

The putsch set in motion two processes. First, the Communist Party collapsed. Second, the Soviet Union disintegrated as a structure of which the Communist Party was the cementing force. So one could safely assume that, after the party's functions were abolished, the Union could not be preserved in the form in which it had existed.

★

**WE APPEAR TO HAVE
LIBERATED OURSELVES FROM
THE TOTALITARIAN REGIME.
WHAT NEXT?**

★

**COWS BRING MILK WITH
THE APPEARANCE OF HAY,
NOT TANKS.**

★

★

Yelena Bonner: "Don't feel nostalgic about order, that order which is 'ordnung', the favorite word of the SS men. Order is freedom and democracy."

★

WHAT TO BUILD INSTEAD OF COMMUNISM?

★

However, Dostoyevski's Devils, it seems to me, have the knack for implanting themselves in the winners, passing as a reward from the past victors to the present. That is why I dread the final victory. For some reason, the winners are thought to be above suspicion. Although, perhaps, they ought to be the first to go on trial.

★

Everything went according to the laws of the genre; the rifle did fire. It fired right on time, not a minute later. The skill of the producer proved to be rather high. But if this was a production, we do not know the name of the producer. And what if it was not? If it was not a scenic production, THEN WHAT WAS IT?

★

In the evening we saw on TV how few they were. In the city of nine million they had gathered under thirty thousand for their May 1 celebration.

This symbolic scene might have been the last in this story, were it not for the determined consistency displayed by Arkadi Murashev. He just had to prove it to all, me included, that a dialogue with the "Reds" was possible.

Yesterday it was May 9, the Victory Day. It is a sacred day for all who survived WW II, whose hardships and losses boggle the mind.

Resorting to their standard propaganda ploy, the "Reds" decided to link the V-day with their struggle for the freedom of the putschists. They invited the veterans for a rally outside the prison walls.

Unexpectedly, Murashev made his appearance among the crowd and was recognized. He boldly entered into a dialogue. I do not know what he told them, but in response he received such a hail of "arguments" that our long standing dispute resolved itself there and then.

He was spat at, literally, all over, from head to foot. They drove him by this "technique" for three hundred meters to his car.

When he got inside, his face, hair and suit were grey with spittle. This was not, however, the end of the ordeal. The crowd began to kick the car with their feet, deforming it beyond recognition.

It was an oppressive, obscene sight. It turned into a psychological trauma for Murashev and a shame for Moscow, for never before, the nature or acuity of the situation notwithstanding, nobody dared to express their attitude to the head of the city militia in such a humiliating manner. Interior Ministry authorities could always defend their dignity. Even in a crowd.

The incident did not end there. When Murashev left, the "Reds" again started for Manezhnaya Square, putting veterans in the front line. In their progress, they tore off the Russian Federation flags. They hated all and everything. By their vulgar, crude and heavy-handed manner they wanted to demonstrate that there is a force of the past, which lives, fights and is eager to recruit the like-minded. It does not recognize the existing system and the legally elected authority. It will not reconcile itself to the defeat or repent its sins. It is out to restore its dominance.

This force has few supporters, but this is cold comfort. For its methods are not an open and honest struggle for votes. Taking advantages of the difficulties of the transitional period, they stake on provoking instability which can arouse huge masses of people and draw them into a maelstrom of madness.

They are looking for allies and joining forces with fascists, nationalists and all those eager to repeat the terrible experience of 1917, when their party, much weaker than other political entities, seized power and held it, through terror and murder, for seventy years.

EPILOGUE BUT NOT THE END OF THE STORY

Once, while strolling outside the city on a day off from work (which does not happen frequently), I found myself before an impenetrable and high fence. Rising above the fence was a mansion whose size and appearance made it look like a suburban palace of a nineteenth-century dignitary.

- Who lives there? - I asked.

- Slyunkov, - answered my friend. - The one from the Central Committee.

I do not know whether the reader will understand my sensation, but I clearly felt the bitter taste of absinth in my mouth. It may be that, if the former Politburo member had not been so unpleasant and dull and had not done so much harm, I would not have felt so disappointed. There was no mistake that the owner of this former "state dacha" clearly continues to draw subsidies from the state to keep his servants and guards and that there is still some inconspicuous budget item under which the money continues to be allocated. I recalled Chesterton's words that in history these had been no revolutions, only counter-revolutions.

In fact, was it this that we had promised the White House defenders? Why should the pro-communist Pravda, which had lost most of its subscribers, continue to be funded by the new authorities? And who funded the costly Revolution Museum which was almost always devoid of visitors? And who paid for the diabolically complex Lenin Mausoleum

which continued to gobble up millions while children's hospitals received no funds from the budget.

The question was not how I would resolve all these issues. But in August, to inspire the defenders of the new authorities, we promised them that there would be no secrets from them. In the meantime, however, the secrets kept multiplying and becoming increasingly sophisticated.

In the past, we worked to support the party nomenklatura – so who were we supporting now? We used to spend the bulk of the budget on the state apparatus – and on whom now? We used to give the grinding mediocrities full control over state administration – and who were we giving it to now?

Was it possible that, once again, we underestimated the Soviet system's tenacity of life? We were accustomed to thinking of it as something opposed to Western democracy. And so now, like in a science-fiction movie in which an evil spirit transplants itself from one human body into another, the people of the system were doffing their totalitarian masks and beginning to imitate parliamentary democracy. But what kind of a parliament was this, with no ruling party or opposition, with only a bizarre mass of people whose voting, even on questions of principle, was uncertain and represented no political orientation?

Consideration here that 205 million rubles was being allocated from Moscow's municipal budget for maintenance of the city parliament and you will understand why I am asking these questions. The old Soviets used to work gratis. But then we had to support the party nomenklatura. There is no party nomenklatura now, but the new Soviets are fighting with increasing vigor for the deputies' privileges. And if the spirit of nomenklatura is transplanted into the Soviets, the only problem will be to learn to manage them.

At the time of Harold Wilson, there was a majority of three labor votes in the British parliament. The whole of Britain knew this. Other forces had to wait until the three fell ill in order to steer a draft law through parliament. So far, our parliament has been a mechanism for passing accidental, ill-advised and vague decisions. But the Russians' national mentality does not accept futile debate which creates in people a sense of insecurity and anxiety. Deputies know this. And if their instinct of self-preservation prevails (and how can it fail to in people suborned by privileges?),

we will see a new form of unitarian system develop which will begin to somehow merge with the presidential structure to produce a kind of monopoly. For the current face-off is clearly abnormal. It apparently amounts to no more than a protest against the idea of separation of the branches of power, so alien to the Russian tradition. This is one possible scenario of the evolution of a Western form of social system under Russian conditions. Others are also possible and they are being discussed. I will not repeat them.

Sometimes, however, (especially on a day off like this) it seems to me that pondering over such scenarios is nothing but an intellectual exercise for political writers. They all proceed from the assumption that the bizarre features of our revolution can be rationally comprehended, systematized, and, consequently, streamlined or prevented. In reality, however, the more models you construct, the more bizarre features you discover "off screen." The features multiply, defy comprehension and boggle the mind. So maybe we should just admit that the emerging system is at odds with rational, logical thinking and that our revolution has released some unknown social forces into whose diabolical play we have now been drawn.

Happily, I don't like to reason in such terms. I am a specialist on management and not a scholar of demonology. I am accustomed to believing in the rational mind and the triumph of reason and good. But I know that if we let people become disappointed with the revolution, which is developing in so strange a fashion, there will be no hope of pulling the country out of the crisis.

Perhaps with the exception of professional fortune-tellers or wise astrologers, I do not know who would take it upon himself to predict, even for the short term, the course of events in the vast expanse of the former USSR or even in Russia alone. Not counting myself among these or among political scientists, I would describe what follows as thinking aloud or talking to myself, rather than as a strictly logical, almost mathematical assessment, for the changes now at work in this country are qualitative, not quantitative in character. We are at a sharp turning-point, a watershed, and I would entrust the assessment of the moment and its consequences to a loving heart rather than cold reason.

The first and main question I ask myself is sinister: is

a new putsch possible, similar to the one we experienced in August 1991? I am deeply convinced that this is a matter of concern to both my countrymen and the world. So, is it possible? No, no, and once again no!

History teaches us that attempts to take a people, a country into the past – happy or tragic – end in failure. The Kremlin putschists of the 1991 vintage were slaves of their past and they lost out. Their program (if helpless bleating may be described as a program), which was made public in the newspapers and on TV screens on August 19, was merely a collection of empty words. As they say in the East, you can pour out of a jug only what it contains: there were no credible promises attractive to the majority of the people and no captivating slogans. The next question: is there a threat of a new putsch under a different banner, above all a fascist one, the most dangerous of all? I would not be sincere if I casually dismissed that threat.

Changes, including the most drastic ones, in a civilized and well-fed society ordinarily occur within the bounds of common sense, involve minimal losses and, at any rate, never lead to bloodshed. We are hungry and politically and economically uncivilized, and all the old things in this country are crumbling, spawning chaos and anarchy everywhere. History contains "writings on the wall" in blood about what may happen in such circumstances. Suffice it to recall two putsches: the communist, Bolshevik one in Russia in 1917, and Hitler's fascist putsch in the early 1930s in Germany. What these putsches brought their countries and the world is common knowledge.

In the USSR, in 1991, the first signal of such danger came during the Russian presidential election. One of Boris Yeltsin's competitors received six million votes, won, as guileless intellectuals are wont to believe, by the candidate's schizophrenic and funny chicanery. But the chicanery struck a chord in the hearts of those millions, including many young people. Simple and swift solutions to burning problems are quite appealing for all massive segments of a population, for all malcontents blinded by hatred, for primitive minds. As supplies of food decline, enterprises reduce their output, people lose their jobs, the army undergoes drastic cuts, inter-ethnic conflicts escalate, and liberated prices skyrocket during transition to a market economy, new millions may be

added to the six. Voices calling for strikes and street demonstrations are already heard here and there. When an intelligent and unscrupulous leader is found, capable of cashing in on all this, a fascist putsch will become a genuine threat.

The last door through which fascism could possibly enter Russia and the rest of the states will be opened by both our politicians and, I will emphatically stress, foreign political figures, if they continue to engage in internecine squabbles.

I am also inclined to heed the voices of those who tend to link the August putsch with Mikhail Gorbachev's meeting in London with G7 not long before the coup, which ended with almost no results to speak of for the Soviet Union, then still in existence.

So far we have no fascist fuehrer, but the people who may lend him a helping hand are there. So I will repeat that it depends on them and foreign politicians whether these dark forces will grow stronger or lose strength, ally with Orthodoxy or Islam or part company with reactionary nationalism, chauvinism and religious fanaticism. The fallen communist idol has left a vacuum behind it, and the Russians, it is said, cannot live without an icon.

It would also be naive to dismiss the many-faced communist threat before it is actually buried. Communist fundamentalists are hurrying to don democratic mantles with the colors of national flags and are calling for social justice, equality, and the protection of the interests of ordinary people who will be subjected by the latter-day capitalists to merciless exploitation during transition to a market economy. In villages and small towns nimble functionaries escaped just in time from the sinking communist ship and settled in various government institutions, and this pack, having circled their bandwagons, continues to dictate its will to the people, waiting for a chance for revenge. So they are bosses again and people are again afraid to contradict them.

There is yet another serious danger - to be buried under the debris of the fallen Soviet empire if a Yugoslav-type tragedy plays itself out in this country, immeasurably amplified by the sheer physical size of it. Europe, indeed the world, will shudder from this "apocalyptic blow" of nationalism.

Fifty million people, half of them Russian, now live in

the territories of other states, whose borders were traced by Stalin's pencil at his whim. The mines planted by that arbitrariness have already taken their bloody toll in the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorny Karabakh. I am confident that some day these people, who have lived together for centuries, will re-establish their ties of friendship. The most important thing now is to live gracefully through the divorce period.

It is, of course, hard to climb out of the abyss all by oneself, and if it is possible to preserve some economic links either through a multilateral agreement on an economic community of the states or through bilateral arrangements, all will be better off.

The journey of Russia and the other entities of the former Soviet Union into their third millennium will be determined by a countless multitude of causes and effects. It would seem that it is beyond the power of an ordinary man to draw up a plan for our universal security and future well-being. This is a task for outstanding politicians of a planetary scale and, hoping for their advent, I will take it upon myself to try to assess those that we have.

Our fledgling democracy has so far been feeling its way forward, and the separation of the branches of power, which is so necessary and customary for most democracies, is all but non-existent. Representative and executive authorities at all levels are in a state of unceasing confrontation, while the judiciary is glancing warily sideways and has already begun to receive "guiding instructions" from the new deputies. It is true that these deputies have won the elections under democratic slogans, but they are beginning to act in accordance with the familiar and habitual stereotypes of our common schizophrenic past and to copy communist rulers.

Confrontation between representative and executive authority is a normal thing in a normal society. In this country, however, the absence of elementary political culture, the unchecked play of all kinds of ambitions and the unbridled struggle for all kinds of "commanding heights," tend to paralyze any reasonable action and disrupt the pursuit of economic and social reforms. This accounts for the people's growing desire to have a strong executive authority, which, by its very nature, is expected to act boldly and resolutely and is prepared to do so. But we have to draw a clear line of distinction between a strong executive

authority and a dictatorship, a propensity for which Boris Yeltsin is sometimes accused.

I cannot agree with such accusations, although, as I have already remarked, he is a strong and impulsive personality, a "maverick" of the party apparatus which fostered him and put him at the pinnacle of power. Yeltsin now is a popular hero, a revolutionary leader. And the vast territory of Russia needs a rigidly-structured vertical executive authority, accountable to the President, who is at the top of the pyramid.

After August, when days and weeks followed one another, Yeltsin began to be criticized for dallying with reform, for losing time, and even for suddenly leaving Moscow for a vacation in Sochi. I am sure that no time was lost, nor was there any loss in the momentum which was created by the August victory.

AFTERWORD BY GAVRIIL POPOV, EX-MAYOR OF MOSCOW

History cannot be stopped and it progresses along unbeaten tracks. Every people add to world history pages which determine its own fate and that of mankind and attest to its unquenchable desire for freedom and independence. We know well that any people can be fooled and deceived for years, even decades, but sooner or later the spirit of freedom and thirst for happiness tear away all the dirt and rot and breathe new life into the human soul. The peoples whose countries are still marked in geographic maps with common red color have entered such golden time.

In August we realized that we can prize freedom and fight for it.

After August we must prove to ourselves and the world that we can cherish it and use its fruits for the benefit of all and everyone, for August has opened a way which may prove incredibly long.

We are prepared to accept any benevolent assistance from any country or individual from West or East; at the same time we are perfectly aware that none but ourselves can relieve the country from the cursed totalitarian past, which is still in and around us.

We have, by overcoming fear of economic freedom and related hardships, to return to whence we set out after the successful communist putsch of October 1917, and recall earlier times to find the sources of Russia's might and well-being and draw strength from them.

We need, for the first time in the history of our native land, to win genuine political freedom by banishing anarchy and chaos, to create a civic society, to foster democracy, diverse political parties and civilized political leaders and not to make idols out of them again.

We have to reach world standards in our respect for human

dignity, defying in the process decades of communist villenage
and centuries of serfdom.

An arduous road to follow . . .

We shall traverse the whole of the road. August 1991 sustains
us in this hope.

The meeting of journalists
at the foot of the monument
to Felix Dzerzhinski,
the founder of the Soviet
repressive organ,
first the Extraordinary
Commission (Cheka)
and later the KGB.
The inscription says:
"Freedom Cannot Be Strangled!"
It's a Different Time Now."



СВОБОДУ СЛОВА
НЕ ЗАДУШИТЬ
СВОБОДУ СЛОВА







Streets of Moscow during the coup.
Tanks "captured" by citizens of Moscow.
Soldiers side with democrats.



The decisive night of August 21-22. People at barricades.



Priest blesses
the defenders.



В ЦК КПСС идёт
форсированное уничтожение
документов срочное
Надо Распоряжением сн сфера -
- временно приостановить
деятельность здания

Лушков отключил электроэнергию
Сила для выполнения распоряжения
Президента СССР - Генсека у
~~сил~~ Лушкова есть

Бурбулис

Note by the State Secretary Gennadi Burbulis reading, "Destruction of documents in the CPSU Central Committee proceeds at a fast pace. Urgent instruction is necessary from the General Secretary to temporarily stop activity in the building." (italics by Burbulis). Gorbachev's resolution across the note says, "Agree. M. Gorbachev. Aug. 23, 1991"

Mayor of Moscow's order:
"...to suspend from August 22,
1991, the activity of the Moscow
CPSU Committee..."

МОСКВА

МЭР

РАСПОРЯЖЕНИЕ

22 августа 1991 г. № 125рм

О приостановлении деятельности
организаций КПСС и АДПСС
г. Москвы, оказавших содействие
путчистам в организации государственного переворота

Учитывая участие ряда руководителей Московского городского комитета КПСС и его районных организаций, а также организаций АДПСС в противоправной, антиконституционной деятельности, способствовавшей путчистам в организации государственного переворота, в соответствии с решением сессии Московского Совета от 22.08.91 г.:

1. Временно, впредь до окончания расследования с участием Комиссии, образованной Московским Советом, степени участия организаций КПСС и АДПСС в осуществлении путчистами государственного переворота 19 августа 1991 года приостановить 22 августа деятельность Московского городского комитета КПСС (с 16 часов 30 минут), районных организаций КПСС (с 17 часов 30 минут) и организаций АДПСС (с 17 часов 30 минут).

2. ГУВД (т. Мариков Н.С.) произвести опечатывание всех служебных зданий и помещений, занимаемых Московским городским комитетом КПСС, районными КПСС, а также организациями АДПСС и взять их под охрану.

3. Московской городской телефонной сети (т. Комаров В.И.) отключить 22 августа 1991 года с 17 часов телефонные аппараты, а Комитету по энергетике (т. Реки В.А.) - электроосвещение в помещениях административных зданий МКК КПСС, райкомов КПСС и организаций АДПСС.

4. Предложить руководству КГБ СССР отключить с 22 августа 1991 года с 17.00 правительственную связь АТС-1 и АТС-2, установленную в помещениях административных зданий МКК КПСС и райкомов КПСС.

5. Просить московского транспортного прокурора т. Сварцова Г.И. дать правовую оценку деятельности начальника Мосметрополитена т. Дубченко, символично измененного режим работы метрополитена 20 августа 1991 года.

И.п. Мер Москвы _____, Попов



Напечатано: тт. Попову Г.Х., Духову В.И., Гончару Н.И., Шавырасову В.С.,
1700-40 экз., префектура административных округов,
Моск. гор. телефонной сети, № 5 СССР.



Kafis Orestisbenai dismantled. The inscriptions on the monument read:
"To be..." "To be Pulled Down."



ПАЛА

ПОД

СНО

ПОД

Somebody drew a swastika on the memorial plaque commemorating the building where Yuri Andropov, a former KGB chief worked.





ΕΡΜΗΝΕΥΣ 1892 ΚΩΔΗ

ΛΑΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ

ΕΚΤΕ

ΠΡΟΣ

ΟΡΓΑΝΟΝ

ΕΚΔΟΣΕΩΣ

ΕΤΕΡΩΝ

ΕΡΜΗΝΕΥΣ

ΕΤΕΡΩΝ

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ΕΡΜΗΝΕΥΣ






БЛАГОРИВИ
ЗАЩИТИТЕ
ПРЕЗИДЕНТА

КЪРВОБА,
КТО ЧЕСТЕ
ВСТАВА
ИМА ДЪНОСТЕ

0/2
ТУ







Head of Moscow command
Yuri Zhukovskiy, who supported
the putsch, leaves
the premises
of the Moscow Communist
Party Committee
Command headquarters
sealed on the order
of the Mayor of Moscow





The place where
three young men died.

Flowers laid
at the place of bloodshed.





At the place of tragedy.
The poster reads:
"This bandage is stained with the blood
of one of the slain boys."



Citizens of Moscow rejoicing.







**АРГУМЕНТЫ
И ФАКТЫ**

Коммерсантъ

**КОМСОМОЛЬСКАЯ
ПРАВДА**

КУРАНТЫ

MEGAPOLIS
EXPRESS

ИЗВЕСТИЯ *М* **МОСКВЫ**

МОСКОВСКИЙ
КОМСОМОЛЕЦ

НЕЗАВИСИМАЯ
ПРАВДА

РОССИЙСКАЯ ГАЗЕТА

РОССИЙСКИЕ
ВЕСТИ

СТОЛИЦА



Дорогие

«Общая газета»,
была выпущена со
напечатана в Моск
Она распространя
какой-то объектив

Сейчас, - когда
порядок, наши и
работы - все о
решили еще раз
отпечатать «Общ
последней ночи

Periodicals Argumenty i fakty, Kommersant, Komsomolskaya pravda, Kuranty, Megapolis Express, Moscow News, Independent Newspaper, Rossiyskaya gazeta, Rossiyskie vesti and Stolitsa were outlawed by the putschists. Against the ban, the journalists united their efforts and put out a Joint Newspaper. "Dear friends,

"The Joint Newspaper that you have in your hands was put out as a united effort of many journalists and printed in Moscow and Leningrad on copy machines and rotaprints. It was distributed at places where people waiting for true information on the events gathered.

"Now that constitutional order has been restored in the country, our editions will return to their normal schedules and the next issues will be put out in time. But we decided to put out one more issue of the Joint Newspaper and print it under normal conditions, in a print-house, and supplement it with reports on the last night of the coup and its fiasco."

В Общая газета

Зарегистрирована специальным решением
Министерства печати и информации России
20 августа 1991 года. Рег. № 1054

Друзья, друзья!

Эту газету вы держите в руках, в дни мятежа
сильными усилиями многих журналистов и
в Ленинграде на ксероксах и ротапронтах.
Вам, где собирались люди, ждущие хоть
какую-нибудь информацию о происходящем.

Сейчас уже восстановлен конституционный
режим и мы возвращаемся к обычному режиму
публикации. Следующие номера выйдут в срок. Но мы
уже в нормальной типографии —
«Весту», дополнив ее сообщениями о



In August 1991, Yuri Luzhkov was 54. The son of a skilled carpenter, he started his career in a way, traditional for a graduate of a Moscow higher technical education establishment. For three decades, he was ascending the steps of an engineer's career to become general director of a large research and production association. In that job, he caught the attention of the Moscow administration which invited him to head the city's executive branch.

Not long before the August events, Muscovites elected Luzhkov their Vice Mayor and a year after, when this book was already in the printing house, he became Moscow's Mayor.

Luzhkov is a man of great tenacity and purpose. In the Mayor's Office football team he always plays as No.9, a forward. And this is how the Muscovites think of him – a symbol, the force behind, and guarantor of, democratic changes in the Russian capital.

In the days of the August coup d'etat, Luzhkov was in the epicenter of developments. The first chapters of his book *August 1991: A Farewell to Communism* were printed in those days by the *Vechernyaya Moskva* newspaper and were avidly read by the Muscovites.

Boris YELTSIN, President of Russia:

"I read *August 1991: A Farewell to Communism*, written in the wake of the events, in a single sitting, and the book will forever remain in my personal library."