

ГОРБАЧЕВ

COUNTERS (2.4.5)



Time (3.13)



People markers (2.4.3, 3.1)



Sinatra/Brezhnev (3.12, 9.5)



US President (9.4, 10.3)



Massacre (7.3)



Disaster (7.4)



Demonstrations (7.2)



(9.4.1)



(7.4.5)



Warsaw Pact Ally (9.5)



Politburo members ("Politicians")



Gorbachev (6.0, 9.1)
Ligachev (8.6)
Yeltsin (8.6)
"[x]" men (7.8)



"Vremya" (10.1.2)



"Pravda" (7.7.2, 7.9)



Asset Marker (7.5, 8.4)



KGB (9.2, 12.4)



Army "Forces" (9.4, 9.4.1)



MVD Security (7.7.1, 10.1.3)



Nukes (9.3)



Popular Vote (7.1.6.2, 7.1.8)



Uzbek Mafia (12.1)



Loyal Communists (7.1.9, 9.6)

ГОРБАЧЕВ:

THE FALL OF COMMUNISM

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[1.0] INTRODUCTION

"The demise of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century."
- Vladimir Putin

ГОРБАЧЕВ is a **solitaire** strategy game covering the collapse of the Soviet Union (1985-91), designed by R. Ben Madison and published by White Dog Games.

The game puts you in the role of a trusted and close advisor to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. You help him manage the stunning changes that rocked the foundations of Communism and the vast Soviet empire during "the decade that shook the world", when *glasnost* (candor, free speech) and *perestroika* (economic and political reform) became household words that defied decades of Cold War certainty.

This file is an abridged version of the rules for **ГОРБАЧЕВ** which is meant to "describe" the game while not being a free copy of the rules.

Blue skinny text, like this, illustrates examples of play.

Text in shaded boxes, like this, provides the voice of the game's designer, to explain a concept or idea that is not actually a rule.



[2.0] GAME EQUIPMENT

[2.1] Parts Inventory

- 1 11" x 17" Game Map (color)
- 1 8 ½ x 11" Player Aid Card (b/w)
- 1 8 ½ x 11" Game Events sheet (b/w)
- 88 game pieces (single-sided)
- 27 Event cards
- 1 Rules booklet (*you're reading it*)
- 1 6-sided die (red!)

[2.2] The Game Map: The game map depicts the western half of the Soviet Union (Russia and all 14 other Soviet Union Republics), with a set of five "Paths" laid over the map. The game's real action happens on these five Paths; the map itself is just for decoration. The five **Paths** are **Russia** (white), **Baltics** (gold), **Caucasus** (blue), **Central Asia** (green) and the **Communist Party** (red). Each Path leads to the orange "Moscow Coup" box (7.8).

Three **State Assets Tracks** on the map record the player's **Five Year Plan**, **Media & Culture**, and **Military Might** levels (7.5, 7.8, 10.2). Note that the five "Paths" that lead to Moscow are all called "Paths" while the three "Tracks" in the lower right corner are called "Tracks."

[2.3] Event Cards: The 27 cards control all game activity, and their "flavor text" teaches what happened

during the three month period of “real time” covered by the play of each card. **You keep track of each three month period on the Turn Track at the top of the map (5.0).** Cards confront you with social, political, military and economic challenges (7.0), which you must answer by playing “Efforts” (8.0). Special “★” rules on the cards also affect the game’s narrative in random or predetermined ways (7.1).

[2.3.1] The full deck of 27 cards is broken into four historical “Periods” (like an overtime hockey game). Each Period has a background color for its Headline boxes, including symbols for the color-blind: First (★ red), Second (⊕ gold), Third (● green) and Fourth (⊕ gray). The First Period represents the years 1985-86; the Second 1987-88; the Third 1989; and the Fourth 1990-91.

[2.4] **The Playing Pieces:** The square playing pieces (“counters”) represent a great variety of unit types. The counters in this game are single-sided, and always go face-up.

This includes military units, several random chits you draw from cups (such as **MASSACRE**, **DISASTER** and **DEMONSTRATION** chits).

The five “People” markers (Russia, Central Asia, CPSU, Baltics and Caucasus) represent **public opinion** in various regions of the USSR (in the case of the **CPSU** marker, in the **Communist Party of the Soviet Union** itself).

There are also **State Asset** markers (**Five Year Plan**, **Media & Culture**, and **Military Might**) that show how mighty and effective the Soviet state is in resisting internal foes.

[3.0] SETUP

This is your standard game setup list that tells you what counters start on the map. It also instructs you on separating the game’s cards into four periods based on colors and symbols.

[4.0] SEQUENCE OF PLAY

In the game of **ГОРБАЧЕВ**, the play of a single card constitutes one “Turn”. Each card lists a number of items, which are to be played in strict order, from top to bottom. See the Sequence of Play on the Player Aid Card for an outline.

Important: Only do things that a card actually tells you to do. For instance, Step #7 on the Sequence of Play tells you to draw a “**DISASTER**” chit – *only do this when the card itself actually instructs you to do so!*

A complete game continues until a Coup occurs (7.8) or until all cards have been revealed and played, at which point the level of victory is determined (see 11.0).

[5.0] TIME FORWARD PHASE

DRAW THE TOP CARD.

A new Turn begins! This rules section explains the instructions found on each event card, including moving the turn markers to the next turn, and some special rules for the year 1989 which really start the collapse of Communism.



[6.0] GORBYMANIA PHASE

This rules section addresses the use of the “Gorbachev” unit himself; he is usually available to provide you with “Efforts” (action points), but, sadly, he often goes on vacation to one of his many dachas (such a man of the people!) or goes abroad to visit his adoring fans around the world. If that happens, you get fewer action points (but you do get to break up anti-government protests, as Gorby’s deputy has fewer scruples than he does about using force).

[7.0] EVENTS

Now you proceed to any Events which may appear on the card. Any references below to “▼” or “▲” refer to the down or up movement of People markers or State Assets as explained in Rule 7.5.

There are also **Special ★ Events** on the cards, which force specific historical events to occur. These will include:

Stinger Missiles turning the tide against you in Afghanistan;

Ligachev the Communist hard liner causing you trouble;

Yeltsin the pro-Capitalist radical causing you even more trouble;

The Nina Andreyeva Affair where an obscure Leningrad schoolteacher moved the entire Communist Party to be more critical of Gorbachev in a harshly worded newspaper article;

Presidential Powers where Gorby tried to use force to influence public opinion and failed miserably (a die roll is involved, you might do better than he did);

Power Struggles can occur, where either Ligachev or Yeltsin finally makes his key move against you;

The Warsaw Pact may collapse; and finally,

Loyal Communists in Central Asia may provide you with key support in this restive Muslim area of the USSR.



Other events, like **DEMONSTRATIONS**, **MASSACRES** or **DISASTERS** can occur at this time. Each of these has some political, military or economic fallout that you have to deal with. The Massacres and Disasters reflect actual historical events like the sinking of the soviet cruise liner Admiral Nakhimov; the Chernobyl nuclear accident; the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the Armenian earthquake. *All of these events are accompanied by historian's notes.*

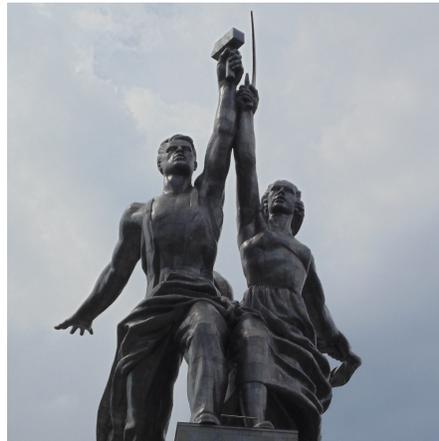
Moving People and State Assets is a huge part of the game. Most cards will list one or more of the People markers and/or State Asset markers, along with a ▼. This means that you move the marker "down" one box.

For **People** units, this means move the marker one box closer to (or into) the Moscow Coup box.

For **State Asset** markers, it means move the marker one box to the **left**. *In the game, ▼ is always bad for you!*

Managing State Assets can be just as important as battling public opinion! Ignore State Assets at your peril.

A few ▲ green triangles point up; this means you move the indicated marker "up" one box (away from Moscow, or to the right). *In the game, ▲ is always good for you!*



Blocking: Some of those moves can be "blocked" by the presence of **MVD Security** units (riot police) or a **ПРАВДА** ("Pravda" – 'the Truth' in Russian) marker that represents the use of the state-controlled Soviet press to bamboozle the population and keep them loyal to you.

If a People marker manages to move all the way to the center of the board and enters the "Moscow Coup" box, then a **Coup in Moscow** can occur. This requires a die roll; the coup may fail or it may succeed.

- If the Coup **succeeds**, the game is over and you lose. *This is the historical result; the August 1991 coup collapsed due to the staggering incompetence of the coupsters, but it did render Gorbachev irrelevant.*
- If the Coup **fizzles**, retreat the offending People marker into the lowest numbered box of its Path (or the Asset marker into its **1** box) and then **(this is important!)** move one or more "[x]" Politician(s) from the Support box to the Opposition box,

gaining an immediate Effort for **each** Politician so moved. If **no** Politicians are in the Support box (*lucky you for surviving the Coup!*), one available KGB must be **discarded** (with no effect); if no KGB are available, the Coup succeeds after all (you lose).

If a coup 'fizzles', it means it didn't get off the ground this time; but each time you allow the situation to get that bad, one more Politburo member joins the Opposition and makes your life that much more unpleasant.

[8.0] EFFORTS

All these random events that act against you can be countered by you expending "Efforts" (action points). Each card gives you a certain number of Efforts marked with a flash symbol, e.g. ⚡ 4 Efforts. You can use these to move People markers away from Moscow, or to move State Asset markers to the right (which improves your economic and political system).

If the **Yeltsin** or **Ligachev** units are on a particular Path, they may block your ability to use Efforts. This shows their impact on public opinion in the region in question (or inside the Communist Party).

[9.0] EARN MORE EFFORTS

"From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!" – Karl Marx

This is the USSR. There are always going to be shortages. There is a shortage of Efforts too.

Fortunately, there are ways to earn additional Efforts during the play of an Event Card. Unfortunately, some of them have important costs and

drawbacks. You can do these in any order, or none at all. Some are done mostly out of desperation, as they will cost you victory points at the end of the game (11.3).



You earn more Efforts by using **Gorbachev** to make a rousing speech (but only if he isn't on vacation!). You can also **send in the KGB** and expend a KGB marker to earn a free Effort. Another way to earn Efforts is through **Arms Control** treaties with the USA; by bargaining away your army units or your "Nuke" units, you improve trade and diplomatic ties with the West which gives you more political prestige and the power to use more Efforts. The exact result of each such concession may be random, or it can depend on who the President of the United States is at the time you make the concession.

Military Might penalty is tied to the U.S. President because the more 'hardline' he is, the more guff you get from the Soviet marshals when you weaken the Motherland in the face of 'capitalist aggression.'

You can even **Throw your Warsaw Pact Allies to the Wolves**; *The game allows you to give your Eastern European satellite states the green light to abandon Communism and go whichever way their people want to*

go. This will hurt your economy and make you unpopular at home, but it will earn you goodwill from the West in the form of trade, financial aid, and good press.

Your ability to make these sorts of concessions is limited if the **Brezhnev Doctrine** is still in effect; your system is still laboring under the Cold War dogmas laid down by former leader Leonid Brezhnev. But, if Gorbachev can manage to enforce enough enlightenment on his sclerotic political establishment, the Brezhnev Doctrine can be replaced by the **Sinatra Doctrine**. (This is what they actually called it; under the Sinatra Doctrine each Warsaw Pact satellite was now free to do things "its way".)



[10.0] TURN END PHASE

"A revolution is only worth something if it knows how to defend itself." - Lenin

This phase occurs at the end of every turn and is marked on each Card with **X**. Leave the Event Card in the discard pile and you'll follow the procedures summarized below.

[10.1] **Earn State Asset Bonuses:** If a **rotated** State Asset marker is in its top (6) box at this time, it earns you a special Bonus. You can 'unrotate' the marker in the 6 box to "cash it in" for the corresponding bonus.

[10.1.1] **Five Year Plan Bonus:** If the **rotated** Five Year Plan marker is in its 6 ("Bonus") box, the economy is chugging along and the people love you. You may "cash in" your marker to place a pro-government demonstration on the map.

[10.1.2] **Media & Culture Bonus:** If the **rotated** Media & Culture marker is in its 6 ("Bonus") box, it means the USSR's cultural life is vibrant (it's churning out ballerinas and historical atlases) and your propaganda is working. You may "cash in" your rotated marker to place a "Время" ('Vremya') TV News marker, with a TV set on it, on any one of the five Paths. This gives you the power to change **any** one die roll just made on that Path by one pip (higher **or** lower).

Example: The CPSU chit attempts to move into a box containing the ПРАВДА [4] marker. Rolling a  would normally succeed in removing ПРАВДА and moving down, but you can "spend" a "Время" chit (if available on the CPSU Path) to change the die roll to a  and block the CPSU movement (preserving the Pravda marker).

[10.1.3] **Military Might Bonus:** If the **rotated** Military Might marker is in its 6 ("Bonus") box, then the prestige of the Soviet military is at a post-war high. You may "cash in" the marker for one "MVD Security" marker; place the MVD in any player-controlled box that does not contain a ПРАВДА marker (not on the CPSU Path, or in Moscow). You can have more than 1 MVD Security marker in any legal box. An MVD unit "blocks" a **▼** move by a People marker (7.7.1).

"MVD Security" units depict paramilitary security troops. In the game, these units are very powerful (we call them the "Magic Police").

[10.2] **Factionalism** may occur, if public opinion is dead-set against you on any Path. This can propel members of the Politburo to shift from supporting to opposing you.

[10.3] **US Election of 1988:** At this point in the Turn, *but only on the Autumn, 1988 Turn, marked with the matching American seals on the Turn track*, roll a die to see who wins the 1988 Presidential Election. On a roll of 1-3, Michael Dukakis is elected; on any other roll, George H.W. Bush is elected instead.

[10.4] **The Turn is Over:** Go back to rule 5.0 and draw the next Card – or, if there are no cards left, the game is over and you determine your level of victory.

[11.0] VICTORY AND DEFEAT

This is your standard ‘count up your victory points and calculate your level of victory’ rule. You win the game by avoiding a Coup and getting the people on your side; in narrative terms, you’re able to sign a “Union Treaty” with the various Soviet Republics and keep the USSR together as a global superpower in one form or another.

Victory points result from where your People markers are (a marker further away from the Moscow Coup box means you’re more popular); where the State Asset Track markers are (further to the right means your economy, military and media are riding high); and finally, you get points from various assets on the map like keeping Warsaw Pact allies loyal and maintaining a military presence in Afghanistan and Eastern Europe.

[12.0] ADVANCED RULES

The game has a set of Advanced Rules which you must either use as a package or not at all. These include the use of the **Uzbek Mafia** (organized crime in Central Asia), more flexible use of **Gorbachev as Party Leader** (he can be used to influence the Communist Party), a number of various different ways to employ the **KGB units** (instead of spending them on Efforts, you can now use them to target anti-government demonstrations, gather intelligence by examining the next card in the deck, and even modifying a future die roll (through subterfuge and intimidation of the die).

These advantages are balanced by a rule that strengthens the anti-Gorbachev Politburo faction and makes a “sudden death” end of the game more likely.

OTHER STUFF

The game includes a variety of examples of play, and a lengthy set of Designer’s Notes which relies on Ben Madison’s M.A. work in the field of Soviet Studies (he graduated in 1989 – just in time for the Berlin Wall to come down and his degree to become useless!). The notes also show the pedigree of this particular game and what makes it distinct from other games of this type. All of that is illustrated with photographs from Ben’s 1986 tour of the USSR, which was almost called off after the Chernobyl nuclear accident.

Game credits and a lengthy bibliography round out the 16 page rulebook.

