

= Gennady Yanayev =

Gennady Ivanovich Yanayev (Russian : ????? ? ??? ??? ? ????? ???? ? ?? ; 26 August 1937 ? 24 September 2010) was a Soviet politician who served as the first and only Vice President of the Soviet Union . Yanayev 's political career spanned the rules of Khrushchev , Brezhnev , Andropov and Chernenko , and culminated during the Gorbachev years . Yanayev was born in Perevoz , Gorky Oblast . After years in local politics , he rose to prominence as Chairman of the All @-@ Union Central Council of Trade Unions , but he also held other lesser posts such as deputy of the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries .

Due to his chairmanship of the All @-@ Union Central Council of Trade Unions he gained a seat in the 28th Politburo and Secretary of the Central Committee . Later that year , with the help of Mikhail Gorbachev , Yanayev was elected the first , and only , Vice President of the Soviet Union . Having growing doubts about where Gorbachev 's reforms were leading , Yanayev started working with , and eventually formally leading , the Gang of Eight , the group which deposed Gorbachev during the August coup of 1991 . After three days the coup collapsed due to the popularity of Boris Yeltsin , but during its brief grip of power Yanayev was made Acting President of the Soviet Union . He was then arrested for his role in the coup , but in 1994 he was pardoned by the State Duma . He spent the rest of his life working in the Russian tourism administration until his death on 24 September 2010 .

= = Early life and career = =

Yanayev was born on 26 August 1937 in the town of Perevoz , Gorky Oblast during the height of Stalinist repression in the Soviet Union . He graduated from the Gorky Institute of Agriculture in 1959 . After graduation he worked as the head of a mechanised agricultural unit and later as a chief engineer in the Gorky Oblast . He applied and officially became a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1962 . From 1963 to 1968 , he held the positions of second , and subsequently first , secretary of the Gorky Komsomol , and later became Chairman of the Committee of Youth Organisations , which he held for 12 years . From 1980 to 1986 he was Deputy Chairman of the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries . He became Secretary for International Affairs of All @-@ Union Central Council of Trade Unions in 1986 and became Deputy Chairman of the trade unions in 1989 . In April 1990 he was elected Chairman of the All @-@ Union Central Council of Trade Unions . As chairman of the trade unions , he was not able to quell the growing labour discontent in the country , but his position granted him a seat in the Politburo of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) at the 28th CPSU Congress (held in 1990) , alongside his election as Secretary of the Central Committee .

= = Vice President = =

On 27 December 1990 , Mikhail Gorbachev proposed Yanayev as Vice President of the Soviet Union . He was Gorbachev 's third choice for the post ; Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and Kazakh president Nursultan Nazarbayev had turned the offer down .

Yanayev had initially been rejected by the Supreme Soviet , but he was finally approved due to Gorbachev 's reluctance to replace him with another candidate . Since Yanayev was known to oppose glasnost and perestroika , Shevardnadze resigned from office to protest against the increasing numbers of conservatives in top political offices . At the beginning of January 1991 , Yanayev headed a committee working on the formation of a new cabinet . Later , he was sent to the Soviet city of Kuznetsk to negotiate with a newly formed independent trade union , making this the first time since 1917 that a Russian government official had negotiated with a trade union . However , after gaining the attention of the Soviet government , the unionists withdrew their plans for a strike .

= = = August Coup = = =

Shortly after taking office , Yanayev joined a group of more conservative Communist politicians who hoped to persuade Gorbachev to declare a state of emergency , led by KGB chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov .

After Gorbachev announced his proposal for a New Union Treaty to form the Union of Sovereign States , as a reorganisation of the Soviet Union into a new confederation , he went on vacation to his dacha in the Crimea . Believing that this new ? Union treaty would lead to the disintegration of the USSR , the State Committee of the State of Emergency placed Gorbachev under house arrest on 19 August , one day before the treaty was due to be signed . On that same day the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union (TASS) issued the coup plotters ' decree , which stated : " Owing to the conditions of his health , Mikhail Gorbachev is no longer capable of carrying on the duties of the President of the USSR . In accordance with article 127 , clause 7 of the USSR constitution , Vice President Gennady Yanayev has assumed the duties of the President of the USSR . " The decree made references to the growing problems facing the country such as ethnic tensions , political confrontations and chaos , which according to the coup leaders threatened the very existence of Soviet life and the territorial integrity of the USSR . Yanayev further claimed that the danger of collapse was imminent , and if the economic situation was not handled quickly , the Soviet Union would collapse . In addition , Yanayev and the rest of the state committee ordered the Cabinet of Ministers to alter the then current five @-@ year plan to relieve the housing shortage . All city @-@ dwellers were given one third of an acre each to combat winter food shortages by growing fruit and vegetables .

When asked about Gorbachev , Yanayev replied " Let me say that Mikhail Gorbachev is now on vacation . He is undergoing treatment , himself , in our country . He is very tired after these many years and he will need some time to get better . " At a press conference Yanayev 's hands were shaking rather violently , leading many journalists to focus on Yanayev 's apparent drunkenness instead of Gorbachev 's allegedly bad health . In an interview from 2008 , Yanayev said he regretted making himself acting President , further claiming that he was pressured by the more conservative members to sign the documents which declared his own presidency . He described the events of 1991 as a burden for the rest of his life . Yanayev has also admitted to being drunk when he signed the decree which made him acting President .

On 19 August , citizens of Moscow gathered around Russia 's White House and began to erect barricades around it , in which at 16 : 00 Yanayev responded by declaring a state of emergency in Moscow . Yanayev declared at the press conference at 17 : 00 that Gorbachev was " resting " . He said : " Over these years he has become very tired and needs some time to get his health back . " Yanayev said the Emergency Committee was committed to continuing his reforms . However , Yanayev 's weak posture , trembling hands and shaky expressions made his words unconvincing . According to some historians , Yanayev was the most visible and powerful member of the Emergency Committee but was not its mastermind ; Kryuchkov has been described as the " heart and soul of the conspiracy " . Yanayev only agreed to head the Emergency Committee on 20 August . Along with the other coup leaders , such as Valentin Pavlov and Boris Yeltsin for instance , Yanayev was dismissed as Vice President and later jailed for his " crimes " against the Soviet state .

= = Later life and death = =

Three years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union , Yanayev was freed by an amnesty of the Russian State Duma in 1994 . He would eventually become the head of the Department of History and International Relations of the Russian International Academy of Tourism . On 20 September 2010 , he fell ill and was hospitalised at the Central Clinical Hospital in Moscow , where he was diagnosed with lung cancer . He died on 24 September 2010 .

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF) expressed their condolences to Yanayev 's family . Gennady Zyuganov , the leader of the CPRF , said of him : " Yanayev lived an interesting , complicated and worthy life . " The CPRF officially praised him as " a highly professional specialist [...] a dear and trustworthy comrade " . In another statement made by the CPRF , this time on their official website , they claimed : " If they had acted much more

decisively , our unified country would have been preserved . " He was buried at the Troyekurovskoye Cemetery , in a ceremony attended by several prominent CPRF members . He was survived by his wife and two daughters .

= = Decorations and awards = =

Order of the Red Banner of Labour , twice

Order of the Badge of Honour , twice