

Views mixed on Soviet coup

Some in area are stunned, but others saw it coming

By Shirlee Rose Iden
staff writer

"It's no surprise that the coup was attempted and no surprise that it went down the tubes."

So said Professor Gilder Jackson Wednesday as the attempted coup by Soviet hard-liners and military in the U.S.S.R. seemed to have failed after three days of confrontation.

Jackson teaches contemporary international politics and other courses at Lawrence Technological University in Southfield.

He believes that the pre-Gorbachev "types" like those who attempted the takeover are out of touch with the feelings of the younger generation.

"The coup-makers overlooked the fact that the majority in the Soviet army are young people who have only known Gorbachev's rule and they don't want to go back."

Jackson said that on his latest visit in the USSR he found things changed, that there was an openness and freedom to criticize he hadn't seen previously.

Attorney Keith Braun agrees that it's almost impossible to turn back to earlier, repressive regimes.

"Once liberation is started, you can't stuff the genie back into the bottle," he said. "And that's the way it is in the Soviet Union now."

Braun, who practices law in Detroit, is a longtime Southfield resident now living in West Bloomfield.

He was one of several area resi-

dents who commented on the coup and the resistance to it.

Braun made a number of trips to the USSR before succeeding in helping to get his wife, Svetlana, the visa allowing her to emigrate here.

Currently she works in Northland Center in Southfield, and while disturbed over the crisis in the Soviet Union, she doesn't have the personal involvement she had when her family was in the USSR.

Braun said he was surprised by the timing of the attempted takeover although it was widely known that Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev was in trouble. "Actually, I think it was encouraging to see some measure of resistance by the Russian people," he said.

"At this time, Boris Yeltsin (president of the Republic of Russia) represents all the positive forces and he's the big winner."

The military and hard-liners were never at peace with Gorbachev and never were happy with his reforms, so the coup was not a shock, said Gene Lanus, employed at IBM in Southfield.

"The Baltic states were already angry and (President) Bush didn't help by going to Kiev and saying that we should support Gorbachev and that democracy is great."

Judith Granader, a Bloomfield Hills resident, visited three cities in the Soviet Union — Riga, Vilnius, and Leningrad — with four other lo-

cal travelers three years ago. Glasnost was in full blossom and Soviet Jewish activists were beginning to get exit visas.

"Now I have friends there who are holding visas to leave the Soviet Union in November and they are petrified," said Granader.

Once the coup began, Albert Valk of Southfield, tried to dial his father in the Soviet Union with no luck, sometimes 50 times a day. Valk's father was scheduled to go to the American Embassy in Moscow on Wednesday to arrange for his exit visa. "I know my father and he will go if the trains are running from Riga," Valk said.

He added that he knew something would happen but the coup was still a shock. "Gorbachev is not as popular there as in the U.S.," he said. "Now Yeltsin has proven himself a leader, which I didn't expect. I don't believe that Gorbachev organized

this coup as some say. The people are looking for food and goods."

Valk brought his wife and daughter here 18 months ago from Riga, Latvia and works as an electrical engineer. He has a brother here and other family. He said having his father here would make it perfect.

RABBI YITZIAK MISHOLOVIN of Southfield is the spiritual leader for 700 emigre families from the Soviet Union in a congregation that meets in the Jewish Community Center in Oak Park.

"I came to New York to finish rabbinical college, then came here to lead this congregation. I'm hoping everything will be good in Russia."

"On the Jewish calendar, we are waiting for the new year, 5751, a year denoted as the year of miracles. We had the miracle of the Gulf War and I'm hoping to witness more miracles to bring peace."

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Wes Ellis, 14, delivers the Observer in the Glenview subdivision. He has delivered the Observer since 1987.

The Power Middle School eighth grader's favorite subject is math.

His hobby is playing hockey. His team, Squirt Minor Hockey Players, won the state championship in 1988.

Wes plans to go to college and play pro-hockey.

Dealing with money and customers are some of the things he learned on his route.

Wes is the son of Bill and Theresa Ellis of Farmington. He has two brothers, Chad, 11 and Bronson, 21.

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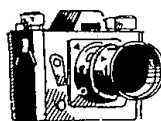
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