

# Plots Against Russia: Conspiracy and Fantasy After Socialism



## Plots against Russia: Conspiracy and Fantasy after Socialism by Eliot Borenstein

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After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia was thrust into a new era of uncertainty and instability. The collapse of the communist system left a void that was quickly filled by a variety of competing ideologies and factions. This period of upheaval also saw the rise of numerous conspiracy theories and plots, which continue to shape Russian society today.

## Historical Context

The roots of contemporary Russian conspiracy theories can be traced back to the Cold War era. During this time, the Soviet Union and the United States engaged in a bitter ideological and geopolitical struggle. Both sides accused the other of plotting to undermine their respective systems. The KGB, the Soviet secret police, was particularly active in spreading disinformation and propaganda, which sowed seeds of distrust and suspicion among the Russian people.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the KGB was disbanded, but its legacy lived on. Many former KGB officers went on to work in the private security sector, where they continued to spread conspiracy theories about the West. These theories found a receptive audience among many Russians, who were disillusioned with the post-Soviet economic crisis and the perceived weakness of the new Russian government.

## **Motivations**

There are a variety of reasons why people believe in conspiracy theories. Some people are drawn to them because they offer simple explanations for complex events. Others find comfort in the idea that there is a hidden order to the world, even if it is malevolent. And still others may use conspiracy theories to justify their own prejudices or hatreds.

In Russia, conspiracy theories have been used to explain a wide range of events, from the assassination of President Boris Yeltsin to the 2014 annexation of Crimea. These theories often portray Russia as the victim of a hostile foreign powers, particularly the United States. They also serve to reinforce the idea that Russia is a unique and exceptional country with a special destiny.

## **Impact**

Conspiracy theories can have a significant impact on society. They can lead to distrust of authority, fear of the unknown, and social division. In Russia, conspiracy theories have been used to justify political repression, economic inequality, and even violence. They have also made it more difficult for the Russian people to come to terms with the challenges of the post-Soviet era.

Conspiracy theories are a complex and pervasive phenomenon in Russian society. They are rooted in the country's history, culture, and political environment. While conspiracy theories can provide comfort and meaning to some people, they can also be harmful to individuals and society as a whole. It is important to be aware of the dangers of conspiracy theories and to be critical of the information that we consume.



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