Gorbachev's Democratization
From the beginning of his leadership, Gorbachev began his policies of Demokratizatsiya, Perestroika, and Glasnost to democratize the USSR. These policies were intended to liberalize politics, economics, and media in the USSR.

Shock Therapy Begins
Boris Yeltsin instituted numerous measures to transform the command economy of the USSR into a market economy at all costs. These measures compounded throughout Yeltsin's presidency.

Yeltsin's Constitution Passes
The constitution gave outsized power to the executive branch and strengthens the presidency. The legislative and judicial branches were stripped of power without the ability to check or balance the executive, who can issue decrees and legislation with impunity.

Russia's transition from a communist bureaucracy to an authoritarian free-market economy demonstrates that authoritarianism and democracy are not mutually exclusive, and a shift towards democracy can be used to justify a concurrent shift towards authoritarianism based on a rejection of less supposedly democratic liberal forms of government like parliamentarianism.

Recommended Readings