

Muscovites Are Split On a Single Union Or 15 Free Republics

PARIS, Aug. 28 (Reuters) — Muscovites are evenly split over whether the Soviet Union should be maintained or its 15 republics should become independent, an opinion poll to be published on Thursday says.

The poll was taken by the French B.V.A. institute in two separate surveys — after the failure of a hard-line Communist coup and after President Mikhail S. Gorbachev resigned as General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party.

About 1,200 people were interviewed in the Soviet capital, B.V.A. said. The poll is to be published in the weekly magazine Paris Match.

The poll indicated that 46 percent of Muscovites wanted to keep the Soviet Union as a single entity, while 46 percent favored independence for all republics.

President Boris N. Yeltsin of the Russian federated republic was the big winner in the first poll, which was carried out on Aug. 23, two days after the coup failed. In that sampling, 79 percent of those questioned said they had a favorable opinion of Mr. Yeltsin, with 35 percent saying they had a good opinion of Mr. Gorbachev.

After Mr. Gorbachev called for the dissolution of the Communist Party's Central Committee, 22 percent of those questioned said they had a good opinion of him, but only 2 percent of people said he held the keys to power.

Sixty-one percent said they believed Mr. Gorbachev was either aware of, implicated in or planned the coup that dislodged him for three days.

Two institutions, the K.G.B. and the Communist Party, fare worse than Gorbachev. Only 2 percent of interviewees had a good opinion of the party and 3 percent had a good opinion of the K.G.B.