Chapter 5: Domestic Implications of Gorbachev's German Policy

1. The Institutional Setting

The inquiry thus far has been conducted at two levels of analysis. The first has been that of Gorbachev as a political leader and has focussed on his personality and political philosophy. The second has treated the Soviet Union as a 'rational actor' in the international system and has been concerned with Moscow's problems of maintaining and then modifying its global influence in relation to the scientific-technological revolution, the mounting costs and difficulties of maintaining influence and control in the Soviet bloc. The examination in this chapter proceeds at a middle level of analysis. It is concerned with the question of what was happening *inside* the 'black box' of decision-making, that is, with the impact of institutions and elites on foreign policy. It features an analysis of the role of the Politburo of the CPSU and the Central Committee Secretariat with its various subordinate departments; the Soviet foreign ministry and its subdivisions; the defense ministry and the armed forces; the KGB; and the academic institutes specializing in international affairs. This level is particularly relevant in the Soviet imperial context, where internal party politics were typically transnational, with various leaders and groups of the CPSU maintaining manifold contacts with the communist parties of the dependencies. But it also raises the question of how the centre's institutions, with their own vested interests in confirming the legitimacy and effectiveness of their German policy, could change course so abruptly and completely.

To provide an overview of the main argument, Gorbachev came to power with the idea to reinvigorate and revitalize the party, increase its power and authority, create a strong reformist core, appoint competent and dedicated leaders at its middle echelons and use it as an instrument with which to modernize the country. By the end of the Twenty-seventh CPSU Congress in late February and early March 1986, a nucleus of reformist leaders had been formed in the Politburo and was beginning to consolidate its power. There were now twelve new members out of a total of twenty-seven in the Soviet top leadership, that is, full and candidate members of

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the Politburo and secretaries of the Central Committee.[833] However, whereas personnel changes at the top were rapid, the transmission of changes *from the top* was painfully slow. This was due to half-hearted and often ill-advised measures conceived at the highest levels of decision-making, but also to bureaucratic inertia, procrastination and resistance at the lower and middle echelons of the party.

Beginning with the January 1987 Central Committee plenum, the paradigm for change was substantially revised. Its central element came to be *demokratizatsiia*, the main purpose of which was the supplementation of change at and from the top with changes *from below*. The bloated and inefficient party apparatus was to be put under pressure not only by a reformist leadership but also by a politically conscious and socially active citizenry. Within the party, recalcitrant segments were also to be pressured by greater openness of discussion, transparency of decision-making and choice among several candidates for election to party offices. The vivid and often acrimonious exchanges at the Nineteenth Party Conference in June 1988, originally conceived of as a forum at which to effect further personnel changes, were the high point of intra-party discourse but also the beginning of a new tack decided upon by Gorbachev. This included the deliberate weakening of the central party apparat, which still constituted a formidable barrier to radical reform, and the establishment of new state and legislative bodies to assume some of the CPSU's functions. What followed was a comprehensive reorganization of the Central Committee departments at its September 1988 plenary meeting, which decreed the merger of the three departments dealing with foreign affairs and created six Central Committee Commissions. Legislative and executive powers outside the usual party channels were strengthened by Gorbachev's assuming the presidency of the Supreme Soviet and by elections to the first Congress of People's Deputies from March to May 1989. The democratic credentials of this 'outer' or supreme parliament that was to elect an 'inner' parliament, a new Supreme Soviet, were still questionable. One-third of the 2,250 deputies were to be delegates from various 'public organizations', of which the CPSU and the Trade Unions had a hundred seats each but the other two-thirds were to elected directly by territorial constituencies. The elections for the vast majority of the latter seats (73 percent according to some calculations) were multi-candidate, genuinely contested,

833 Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, p. 160.

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by secret ballot, and preceded by vigorous debate.[834] The period just before and after the first Congress was a time of euphoria.

These were the days when radical democrats thought that reform of the party was not only possible but the only route to change.[835]

The logic of comprehensive and radical transformation necessitated action in six dimensions of policy. The first was the *political* realm, with the direction of change to lead from a totalitarian one-party state to a parliamentary democracy. The second lay in the *legal* system, which had to move from arbitrary and voluntarist party rule to a system based on the rule of law. The third was in the *economic* area and provided for shifts from a command economy and state ownership of the means of production to private property and the market. The fourth concerned *defense and the military-industrial complex*, the changes in this sphere to encompass the establishment of civilian control over the armed forces, defense conversion and the curtailment of the power and influence of the military in politics, the economy and society. The fifth was the *nationality and federative* problem, the logic of change in this area being the restructuring of the unitary, centralized state and the establishment of a genuine federation with new arrangements for power sharing. The sixth concerned *foreign policy*, the transformative dynamics in this realm aiming at the replacement of imperialism and the ideology of antagonism by a cooperative mind-set and institutions attuned to interdependence and integration.

The difficulty and complexity of successfully managing this multifaceted transformation were enormous. The time frame in which it could be achieved would not be years but decades. This, Gorbachev knew perfectly well. But the interconnectedness of issues was not always clearly understood by Gorbachev and, when it was, it was often too late.[836] Most importantly for the ultimate outcome of the process, practically from the very beginning of 'radical reform', he permitted severe imbalances to develop among the various dimensions of the required transformations.

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834 Miller, *Gorbachev and the End of Soviet Power*, pp. 114-120; Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, p. 156.

835 Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb*, p. 220.

836 This interpretation is controversial in the literature. Archie Brown, in particular, has persuasively argued that Gorbachev was quite conscious of the interrelatedness of change in all dimensions and that his aim, developed through a learning process, was social democracy in the Soviet Union. The counterargument here is that, although Gorbachev used the term, he saw its content differently than, say, West German social democrats.

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These imbalances concerned a rate of change in foreign policy that was much more rapid than in the domestic sphere; in internal affairs, political change that outpaced economic transformation; and evisceration of the party apparat and its authority that failed to be matched by the establishment and consolidation of new institutions. Most importantly, in an in principle laudable but in the circumstances ill-advised attempt to build consensus, Gorbachev declined to split the party, shed the orthodox and conservative elements, form a new reform socialist or social democratic organization, and invest his power and authority with a new source of popular legitimacy. He never campaigned at the head of a new party on a platform of comprehensive and coherent political and economic reform. Until the end, his position as leader of the country derived not from popular elections but from the very institution which he was enervating – the CPSU.

This book is about the *foreign policy* dimension of change, rather than about domestic politics. But that focus requires reconstruction of a dialectic relationship between internal and external change. Its essence rests in the fact that transformative change domestically was inconceivable without repudiation of the internationalist precepts of Marxism-Leninism and the imperial legacy and, conversely, that the dismantling of empire and consent to German unification were impossible without emasculation of the institutions wedded to the old thinking. What will not be attempted here is a detailed chronological account of the changes in all dimensions of policy. Instead the major events and trends in the international dimension affecting the German problem will be highlighted.

Some explanation of the structure of this chapter may also be appropriate. The structure replicates the process of radical change in the Soviet Union under Gorbachev. *Ideas* in that process came first. They were, predictably, not generated within the party apparat but by academic specialists. The latter were first to break new ground, and in many instances were deliberately asked to do so by members of the small core of reform-minded political leaders. This had the dual advantage of testing reactions and the strength of resistance in the party apparat and the military. Once the philosophical terrain had suitably been prepared, the reformist core would publicly and authoritatively associate itself with hitherto heretical positions. Given the fact that the Soviet system was built on ideology and that power, institutions and ideology were inseparable, conceptual change was followed by the replacement of personnel, institutional changes and reallocation of resources. It is for this reason that the role of academic institutes

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and specialists will be examined first. Since the unconventional ideas were first endorsed by Shevardnadze, who was appointed foreign minister early in the reform process, in July 1985, and disseminated in the foreign ministry, his role and that of the ministry will be dealt with next. What follows is analysis of the declining influence of the major losers in the struggle for ideas and influence on policy-making, that is, the party apparat, the defense ministry and the armed forces. It is the contention of this book that, contrary to opinion firmly held by some Western observers and Russians with a predilection for conspiracy theories, the KGB did not play an important part in either promoting or resisting change. Its role will be analyzed last.

2. The Academy of Sciences: International Relations Institutes and Specialists

Except perhaps for the Kennedy administration in the United States, it is difficult to find a political system and time period in which the influence of academic specialists on foreign policy-making was as significant as in the Soviet Union under Gorbachev. This phenomenon was particularly astounding if measured against past practice. Academic specialists had previously been constrained by censorship and the narrow parameters of Marxist-Leninist ideology. Their access to the top political leadership under previous leaders, with the partial exception of Andropov, was practically non-existent. Such influence as they were able to exert was through party channels, which often diluted and distorted their input. Nevertheless, the institutes on international affairs under the USSR Academy of Sciences, with their contacts and exchanges with counterparts in Western countries, represented 'oases' of independent thinking.[837]

The biggest, most prestigious and best connected of the research institutes on international affairs was the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) at the USSR Academy of Sciences. Nikolai Inozemtsev had been its director in the 1970s and early 1980s. After his death, he was succeeded by Alexander Yakovlev in 1983, followed by Yevgeni Primakov in 1985. The institute played an important part in the

837 Arbatov, *The System*, pp. 63-93, used this metaphor to describe the role of academic specialists of various institutions, including the institutes at the USSR Academy of Sciences, on policy-making.

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conceptualization of Soviet foreign policy and was invariably involved in the preparation of the reports of the Central Committee delivered by the General Secretary to the CPSU party congresses, and it participated in the drafting of party documents and speeches by party leaders. IMEMO also spawned several specialized regional institutes, including the Institute for the Study of the USA and Canada (ISKAN) at the USSR Academy of Sciences, founded in 1967, with many of the researchers transferring from the former to the latter institute, including its first director, Georgi Arbatov.[838]

Important and influential as IMEMO may have been, the institute did not lend itself to a comprehensive reassessment of the German problem. The ideologically ordained assumption of the division of the world into two fundamentally opposed socio-economic systems, capitalism and socialism, was reflected in the separation of academic institutes. These dealt either with the politics and economics of the Western industrialized countries or with that of the socialist community. IMEMO dealt with the Western world, including *West Germany*, but it did not have many specialists on German affairs, and those whom they did have, were politically not well connected and had no influence on decision-making. This was true, for instance, for Danil Mel'nikov, affable, competent and well respected in West Germany, and Danil Proektor, a retired army officer, whose specialization were military and security issues with a focus specifically on West Germany's role in European security.[839]

East Germany fell under the purview of the Institute for the Economics of the World Socialist System (IEMSS), headed by Oleg Bogomolov. This institute dealt not only with economic but also with political affairs pertaining to socialist countries. Even well before Gorbachev's ascendancy to power it was a repository of unconventional thinking. In 1979, for instance, it issued a report advising against military intervention in

838 Arbatov had worked at IMEMO. In 1967, when he founded ISKAN, he was working for Andropov at the CC as a member of a Group of Consultants.

839 I had the opportunity to discuss German issues with both researchers – at IMEMO, at the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) and at many international conferences. Mel'nikov struck me as having a far more independent mind than Proektor. What was vexing and disappointing was the fact that the latter, in the frequent discussions, would express understanding for West German views on European security, while the articles he published subsequently lacked any of that.

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Afghanistan.[840] On its staff were also some of the most radical critics of Soviet policy on the German problem – Vyacheslav Dashichev, head of IEMSS's foreign policy section, and Alexander Tsipko, a specialist on Poland and East Germany. Their inputs to policy-making on the German problem will be discussed later.

It was not until January 1988, with Gorbachev's Common European Home firmly established as a slogan, that an Institute on Europe was founded. Vitaly Zhurkin, a specialist on U.S. and arms control matters, was its founding director and Vladimir Shenayev, an expert on German economic affairs, was its deputy director, the directing staff later to be joined by Sergei Karaganov.[841] The foundation of the institute presented the opportunity to integrate research, conferences, and policy advice on both Western Europe and Eastern Europe as well as on East and West Germany, but the opportunity was missed. The research and policy-making agenda remained focussed on Western Europe.

Independent minds could be found not only in institutes on international relations but in some of the Central Committee departments (these will be dealt with later), as well as in some newspapers and journals. For instance, the *World Marxist Review*, with its head offices in Prague, was one of the breeding grounds of non-conformist thought. Given its intended function – to spread the CPSU's interpretation of Marxism-Leninism in the international communist movement – the journal may seem even in retrospect a rather unlikely place for relative intellectual autonomy. And indeed, the articles it published were for the most part uninspiring, rehashing the CPSU's line. But, as occasionally happened in the Soviet system, the special position it enjoyed depended less on the purposes of its foundation and the institutional setting than on its personalities and *their* power and influence. In this case, its importance as an oasis of independent thought derived in large measure from Alexei Rumyantsev, its editor-in-chief, who attracted

840 Bogomolov confirmed this in conversation with this author, as did Dashichev and Tsipko. The point that the Institute of Economics of the World Socialist System advised against intervention, but that the advice was disregarded, was also made in various articles and interviews by other staff members of the institute.

841 Shenayev wrote his doctoral thesis on the West German currency reform in 1948. In contrast to Zhurkin, he harboured deft anti-American sentiments. When I visited the institute in October 1988, I had a heated exchange with him on the role of the United States in Europe. The discussion ended – abruptly – when he slammed his fist on the table and exclaimed that the United States had 'absolutely no business in Europe'.

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talented and creative writers to the journal and was not afraid to defend them.[842] Among these were Chernyaev, Shakhnazarov, and Ivan Frolov (all three were subsequently to become personal assistants to Gorbachev), and Arbatov (later, as mentioned, head of ISKAN).[843]

Perhaps even more paradoxically, another oasis in the intellectual desert under Brezhnev was the Socialist Countries Department under Andropov in the 1960s.[844] The Group of Consultants he gathered around him reads almost like a Who's Who of advocates of an improvement in Soviet relations with the West and of theoreticians of the New Thinking. They included the already mentioned Arbatov, Bogomolov and Shakhnazarov; Fyodor Burlatsky, an eminent political scientist and head of one of the sub-departments; Alexander Bovin, who later became a well known journalist writing as political commentator for *Izvestiia*; Nikolai Shishlin, a political scientist and publicist; and Gennadi Gerasimov, who later became spokesman for the foreign ministry.[845] Since Gorbachev was an Andropov protégé, it is not surprising that all of them were to play a role in one capacity or another when the former came to power.

The outlines of the New Thinking were drawn in the previous chapter. What is necessary here is to reconstruct in more detail and more precisely the major departures from old thinking, to associate them with personalities and institutions, and to identify the main institutional targets or victims of the new thinking. To emphasize the main point of this endeavor, since ideas and ideology and the Soviet system were intimately connected with power and resources, the challenge to traditional Soviet thinking on foreign policy and international security issues was bound to detract from the power and authority of the institutions that were the mainstays of empire – the party apparatus and the military.

Erosion and Collapse of Ideology. Concerning Marxist-Leninist ideology, as on all other major issues, the Gorbachev era began with modest revision, produced a chain reaction that spun out of control and ended in collapse. This process in the international dimensions of ideology began with a reinterpretation of 'peaceful coexistence'. Previous attempts at ex-

842 Arbatov, *The System*, p. 80.
843 Chernyaev was appointed advisor on foreign policy in February 1986; Shakhnazarov, to deal with Eastern Europe, in October 1988; and Ivan Frolov, to advise on ideological issues, in January 1987.
844 Andropov was head of the department from 1962 to 1967.
845 Arbatov, *The Soviet System*, p. 88.

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panding cooperative relations with capitalist states had been hampered by the dogma about 'irreconcilable contradictions between the two world systems. Even in the era of significant revision of the dogma under Khrushchev, peaceful coexistence was still regarded as a 'special form of class struggle', and this was also the main emphasis given to the concept under Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko. As the Gorbachev era progressed, it was not capitalism that was 'buried' but the very idea of class struggle. 'Marxism as such', Yakovlev claimed, 'is the understanding of *common interests* from the viewpoint of history and the perspective of the development of *all humanity* and not just certain of its countries and classes'.[846] Peace was declared to have priority over the class struggle. The indivisibility of international security was underlined, and the way to achieve security was said to be not by military-technical means but by political efforts. War in the nuclear age was proclaimed to be 'inadmissible' (*nedopustimyi*), a statement with which the theoreticians of the New Thinking made short shrift of the previously elaborate distinctions between 'just' and 'unjust' wars.

Formalized perceptions of the basic structural features of the opposed socio-economic system were also revised. The orthodox Leninist view of imperialism ('the highest stage of capitalism') as inherently and irrevocably aggressive, structurally incapable of disarming, and therefore attempting to solve its deepening systemic crisis by militarism, was first put in doubt and then abandoned. One IMEMO analyst even engaged in the time-honored practice of nonconformist analysts in the Soviet era to discredit orthodox Marxist-Leninist notions by attributing them to Western theorists. 'It is inadmissible', he wrote, 'to agree with the assertions by certain Western [sic] politicians and researchers to the effect that disarmament inevitably leads to economic decline and an increase in unemployment.' Past experience had shown that conversion of military resources was 'achieved without serious negative consequences both in socialist and in capitalist countries'.[847]

Military Power as a Questionable Means to Achieve Political Influence. On the practical issues of foreign policy, academic specialists expressed

846 Speech in Vilnius, *Pravda*, 13 August 1988 (italics mine).

847 R. A. Faramazian, *Gonka vooruzhenii v stranakh NATO*, published under the auspices of the Scientific Council for Research on Problems of Peace and Disarmament at the Institute for World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) (Moscow: Nauka, 1988), pp. 184-85.

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doubt as to both the effectiveness and the legitimacy of the use of military power for political ends, and they thereby questioned the rationale of the Soviet attempt to maintain parity in the military-strategic realm and preponderance in conventional weapons. They certainly, not least through their contacts with Western colleagues, were conscious of both the costs of empire and the 'paradox of superpower' – enormous military power but a weak and declining socio-economic base. They argued for a better balance between military and other means of exerting influence in world affairs; improvement of the Soviet record on human rights; enhancement of the Soviet Union's diplomatic, political and cultural presence in countries and organizations in which it had been underrepresented or not represented at all; participation at the international economic level in organizations such as General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF); and the construction not only of legal, organizational ties but also of *political* arrangements with the European Community. In order to reduce the costs of empire, contain the political and economic consequences of conflicts with the United States and lessen the risk of counter-intervention or counterrevolution supported by Washington, they advocated scaling down existing international involvements, above all in Afghanistan, and desisting from making new commitments in the Third World, in particular in the *military* sphere. The Soviet Union, as Primakov argued in June 1988, 'has taken the firm decision to scale down its military presence abroad'.[848]

Foreign Policy Decision-Making. In accordance with the criticism of the overemphasis on the military instrument in foreign policy, academic specialists attacked the previous predominance of military rationales. The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the decision to station SS-20 intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe and Asia were mentioned as particularly glaring examples of such a mistaken approach to international security affairs.[849] 'Overcentralisation' in foreign policy-making was assailed as one of the many 'deformations' that did 'great harm to Soviet na-

848 Yevgeni Primakov, 'USSR Policy on Regional Conflicts', *International Affairs* (Moscow), No. 6 (June 1988), p. 7.

849 A good example of this were the replies to questions from viewers by Nikolai Shishlin, deputy chief of the CPSU Central Committee's propaganda department, Moscow television service, in Russian, 26 July 1988.

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tional security interests'.[850] Decisions, as Dashichev deplored, were made by a self-declared 'elite', by a few leaders in the Politburo, the top decision-making body − by Brezhnev (party chief), Suslov (responsible for ideological matters), Gromyko (foreign minister) and Ustinov (defense minister). 'Unfortunately, the experts' voices didn't have any influence. And the public received no information at all.'[851] Concerning the INF issue, they said that the decision to produce and deploy the SS-20 missiles and to do so rapidly and in great numbers was motivated by an erroneous definition of security interests; by a false sense of needing over-insurance and superiority in numbers ('the more missiles, the more stable [Soviet] security');[852] and 'by technological advances rather than political processes'.[853]

Redefinition of Threats. The theoreticians of New Thinking also redefined the nature of threats facing the USSR. They pointed out that in the past, notably in the 'period of stagnation' under Brezhnev, a number of factors had contributed to the construction of certain stereotypes of the enemy (*obrazy vraga*). These had included the 'consideration of the differences and contradictions between the two social systems and between individual countries as an absolute given'; the adherence to 'ideological remnants of the theory of "world revolution"'; and 'clinging to secretiveness, suspicion and impenetrable "monolithism"'.[854]

They also asked whether 'our orthodox social scientists, armed with quotations, have not painted the world in extreme moralistic colours as an arena in which "good" and "evil" are struggling with each other'.[855] In their view, it was necessary to dispose of the idea that a competitor invariably had to be considered an 'enemy'. One had to embark on a 'radical departure from the traditions of the past', on a 'de-escalation of political

850 Vyacheslav Dashichev, 'Vostok–Zapad: poisk novykh otnoshenii: O prioritetakh vneshnei politiki Sovetskogo gosudarstva', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 18 May 1988; see also his interview with the West German news magazine, *Der Spiegel*, 4 July 1988, p. 124.

851 Dashichev, interview in *Der Spiegel*.

852 Igor Malaschenko, 'Warum bauen wir mehr Raketen ab?', *Neue Zeit* (Moscow), No. 7 (1988), p. 21.

853 Sergei Vybornov, Andrei Gusenkov, and Vladimir Leontiev, 'Nothing Is Simple in Europe', *International Affairs* (Moscow), No. 3 (March 1988), p. 41.

854 A. Iu. Mel'vil, '"Obraz vraga" i novoe politicheskoe myshlenie', *SShA*, No. 1 (January 1988), p. 34.

855 Ibid.

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rhetoric … and emancipation from those of its forms which are most strongly ideological and portraying matters as absolute'.[856] Zhurkin admitted that, 'you, me, us political commentators, scientists as well as the military press, we overstated the threat of war ... at a time when a rationally organized nuclear attack on the Soviet Union was impossible because a retaliatory response would have followed'.[857]

Public opinion polls were one of the important facets of glasnost and were used to support rethinking in international politics. A case in point was the publication of a survey of threat perceptions of West Germany and the Germans conducted in May 1989 (see Table 4).[858] The timing is important since this was a period before discussion about German unification had begun to affect opinion in the Soviet Union. The survey revealed a wide discrepancy between decades of hostile anti-West German propaganda and public perceptions. Only a small minority felt threatened by the Federal Republic. To the extent that threat perceptions existed, they were of a hypothetical and indirect nature, most likely derived from the idea that West Germany could be *drawn* into a war by the United States.

Reconsideration of the Content and Importance of the '*Correlation of Forces'.* Another important change in thinking on security matters was the strong emphasis on economic components in the 'correlation of forces'. Views were expressed to the effect that 'in our contemporary world the parameters of world power are determined first and foremost by economic, scientific, and technical indicators';[859] that after the advent of mutual deterrence the imperialist countries, notably the United States and its Defense Department, had changed tack and devised a new strategy aimed at 'economically exhausting the USSR through a lengthy arms race' and formulating

856 Ibid., pp. 30 and 39.

857 In a discussion on Soviet television with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Vladimir Petrovsky and V. S. Zorin, political observer of Soviet TV and moderator of the discussion, 30 July 1988, *FBIS*-SOV-88-148, 2 August 1988.

858 'Obraz nemtsa i FRG v SSSR', *Moskovskie novosti*, No. 25, 18 June 1989, p. 7. The poll was conducted by telephone between 12 and 14 May 1989. There were 851 respondents.

859 Vitaly Zhurkin, Sergei Karaganov and Andrei Kortunov, 'Vyzovy bezopasnosti – starye i novye', *Kommunist*, No. 1 (January 1988), pp. 47-48; see also their 'O razumnoi dostatochnosti', *SShA*, No. 12 (December 1987), pp. 13-14.

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Table 4: Threat Perceptions of Germany

1. Do you personally feel that the USSR is threatened by West Germany?	
Yes, strongly	3
Theoretically there is a threat, but for all practical purposes it does not exist	20
No, I don't feel that it is	54
There is no threat whatsoever	17
2. Do you think that war with West Germany in this century is possible?	
Practically impossible	66
Not very probable but I don't exclude such a possibility	29
The possibility of war with the FRG is quite high	1
3. From which country or region do you feel the USSR is threatened most?	
USA	19
FRG	3
Near East	2
Asian Countries	2
Britain, France	0.6
Don't feel threatened by any country	54

military programs, 'to which an effective Soviet response would be substantially more costly than these programmes,[860] so that what was needed were 'real results from perestroika and in particular the creation of a balance between [the application of] military and nonmilitary means in international affairs'.[861] Since the end of the 1970s, the military had warned that modern, technologically sophisticated armed forces could only be maintained on the basis of a modern, efficient economy. They had also asserted that it was the aim of NATO to redirect the arms race into the technological sphere and thereby impoverish and defeat the Warsaw Pact countries.[862] But academic specialists and the military had different views as to how the Soviet Union should cope with such a challenge. The idea of the civilian specialists was to reform and modernize the economy rather than to continue pouring resources into the military-industrial sector. Gor-

860 Zhurkin et al., 'Vyzovy bezopasnosti', pp. 47-48.

861 Vladimir Lukin in discussion with Alexander Bovin, 'Na poroge novogo veka', *MEMO*, No. 12 (December 1987), p. 53.

862 For a statement to that effect see, for instance, the Warsaw Pact commander in chief, Marshal V. G. Kulikov, *Doktrina zashchity mira i sotsializma. O voennoi doktrine gosudarstvuchastnikov Varshavskogo Dogovora* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1988), p. 83.

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bachev and the foreign ministry under Shevardnadze agreed with the civilian rather than the military viewpoint.[863]

Military Doctrine. The challenge of academic specialists was extended to one of the most sensitive and most jealously guarded preserve of the military – military doctrine. Military parity in the past had been measured against the sum total of the military capabilities of all the major potential adversaries combined, that is, the USA, Western Europe, Japan, and China. Military strategy had to meet the criterion of the armed forces' ability successfully to conduct *offensive* operations and to inflict 'annihilating blows' on the enemy. Civilian analysts explicitly attacked such wide definitions of security requirements as militarily unnecessary and economically damaging and advocated instead the construction of military forces that would meet the requirement of 'reasonable sufficiency' (*razumnaia dostatochnost'*).[864] They ventured into the history of warfare and tried to show that strategic conventional *defense* often proved superior to offense.[865] Vitali Shlykov, a free-lance journalist, engaged in a particularly scathing and uncompromising attack on military incompetence and the military's predilection for quantitative superiority. He chastised as obsolete the 'prenuclear thinking' of the military that tanks were a 'kind of universal equivalent of military power' that could make up for the lack of combat skill.[866] The reinterpretation of military history justified force reductions and emphasis on quality rather than quantity. It also posited as an important aim in conventional arms control negotiations the restructuring of the armed forces of NATO and the Warsaw Pact so that they would have a mutual 'structural inability' to launch an attack, and in particular a sur-

863 See, for instance, Gorbachev's speeches at a meeting in Vladivostok on 28 July 1986, *Pravda*, 29 July 1986, and at the Eighteenth congress of the Soviet trade unions on February 25, 1987, *Pravda*, 26 February 1987. The MFA's support of these views was expressed by Deputy Foreign Minister Petrovsky in a discussion on Soviet television on 30 July 1988, *FBIS*-SOV-88-148, 2 August 1988.

864 See V. Zhurkin, S. Karaganov and A. Kortunov, 'Vyzovy bezopasnosti' and id., 'O razumnoi dostatochnosti'.

865 Andrei A. Kokoshin and V. Larionov, 'Kurskaia bitva v svete sovremennoi oboronitel'noi doktriny', *MEMO*, No. 8 (August 1987), pp. 32-40; id., 'Protivostoianie sil obshchego naznacheniia v kontekste obespecheniia strategicheskoi stabil'nosti', *MEMO*, No. l6 (June 1988), pp. 23-31.

866 Vitalii Shlykov, '"Strong Is the Armor": Tank Asymmetry and Real Security', *International Affairs* (Moscow), No. 12 (1988), p. 39.

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prise attack.[867] Movement towards such objectives was clearly reflected in Gorbachev's announcement of December 1988, as summarized above, to withdraw six tank divisions and other forces and equipment from Eastern Europe.[868]

To return to the question of why it was possible to put the New Thinking to political practice and how it was possible to ignore and overrule the most powerful vested interests in the Soviet national security bureaucracy, the communist party and the military, it is useful to refer to the decision-making process in Moscow resulting in the December 1987 Washington INF treaty. Policy-making concerning this issue was one of the earliest examples of the effective interplay between academic specialists and the foreign ministry. It set a pattern that was to be repeated on several important foreign policy and international security issues, including the German problem. Alexei Arbatov, at the time of the INF negotiations head of IMEMO's arms control and disarmament section and member of an advisory group on arms control at the foreign ministry, aptly summed up the pattern. An initial negotiating position would be formulated by an interagency commission consisting of the Defense Ministry, as represented by the General Staff; the Central Committee's Department for Defense; the Military-Industrial Commission (VPK); the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and the KGB. The first three institutions formed a powerful coalition whose positions were coordinated from the very beginning and were not easily reversible by the top party leadership. Indeed, when presented with a consensus decision by this or other important commissions, Gorbachev would usually approve it. How, then, was it possible to overcome military opposition? The answer that Arbatov gives to this question is the close cooperation between the academic institutes and the foreign ministry and their 'back-channelling'.

> Shevardnadze very often used the tactic if he could not [openly] oppose the opinion of other agencies. Being in a minority of one, he would accept [their opinion] for some time, even knowing that it would not be accepted at the negotiations. Then he would get reactions from the West, and then he would bring those reactions back to Gorbachev, and give him his consideration. Shevardnadze was not permanently at the negotiations and he brought these reactions, and arguments and counterarguments, to the attention of Gorbachev and Yakovlev. In this process, the Academy of Sciences, with its conferences,

867 Kokoshin and Larionov, 'Kurskaia bitva'.
868 See pp. 339-40.

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> which were regularly – actually permanently – going on, either between East and West or between Americans and Soviets on a bilateral basis, was very active. In particular, there were two institutes at the Academy, the Institute on the Study of the USA and Canada and the Institute on World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) ... which very closely cooperated with the Foreign Ministry. I would even venture to say that the Foreign Ministry on its own would not have been capable of withstanding the pressure of all the other agencies in the establishment.[869]

The portrayal reveals that the practice of decision-making by a small circle of leaders, a practice decried so much by the academic specialists, was *not* broken. However, the previous small circle of leaders, such as Brezhnev, Suslov, Ustinov and Gromyko, was replaced by another, consisting of Gorbachev and his personal assistants, Yakovlev and Shevardnadze. There were two more differences. In contrast to the preceding period, civilian institutions – the MFA and the academic institutes – were being involved more prominently in international security affairs, and the content of policy was different. Obviously, not all radical advice was deemed acceptable or practical. Not all academic specialists were equally influential or had equal access to the top decision-makers. But almost invariably their input had *some* impact. This applies even to some of the most controversial advice on one of the most sensitive topics – the German problem.

An example of this is the role of Dashichev. In January 1987, in his capacity as head of a research unit (*sektor*) at IEMSS, he wrote a highly critical analysis of Soviet foreign policy in the 1970s and early 1980s.[870] He radically attacked the whole conceptual basis of Soviet policy and, in particular, decried the expansion of the Soviet sphere of influence by military means; the pretension to be militarily equal to all other powers; the build-up of a blue-water navy that exceeded any reasonable definition of security needs; the deployment of the SS-20 intermediate-range nuclear missiles; overemphasis on the 'peace movement' in Western Europe; and

869 'Policy Formation in the USSR on the INF Treaty: An Interview with Alexei Arbatov', Nuclear History Program (NHP), Oral History Transcript, Center for International Security Studies at Maryland School of Public Affairs, University of Maryland, NHP Transcript No. 3 [n.d]. Alexei Arbatov is the son of ISKAN Director Georgi Arbatov.

870 Dashichev's analytical report or memorandum was dated 4 January 1987. The text was published in German translation in *Osteuropa* (May 1993), pp. 485-90. The subsequent portrayal of how Shevardnadze and the MFA bureaucracy treated the report is based on Wjatscheslaw Daschitschew, 'Wie das Umdenken in der sowjetischen Außenpolitik begann', *Osteuropa* (May 1993), pp. 482-83.

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risky guarantees to shaky Third World regimes. He also made some policy recommendations, suggesting democratic legitimation and parliamentary control of foreign policy and the establishment of foreign affairs committees that would have both controlling and advisory functions in relation to the foreign ministry.

The report was forwarded by IEMSS director Bogomolov to Shevardnadze. In contrast to the state of affairs under the *ancien régime*, the report elicited a positive response. In March 1987, Dashichev was appointed chairman of the Scientific Advisory Council at the MFA's socialist countries' department, a body founded to contribute to the solution of foreign policy problems and, after Shevardnadze's appointment, to promote the New Thinking in the foreign ministry. Upon Dashichev's initiative, on 27 November 1987 – for the first time since the 1950s! – the Council dealt with the German problem. Various options for change in intra-German relations were being discussed, including the possibility and desirability of German unification. Dashichev argued that the division of Germany harmed Soviet national interests and that it was necessary to change Soviet policy on the German problem and direct it towards closer relations between the two Germanys and eventual reunification. This heretical idea was rejected by the participants in the meeting but a taboo was broken.[871]

One of the questions that has puzzled Western scholars is Dashichev's putative impact on Soviet thinking or, more precisely, that of Gorbachev, Yakovlev and Shevardnadze. Addressing this issue, Karaganov has explained that in the Soviet foreign policy establishment there were four schools of thought on the German problem.[872] The first was that of *No Change and Don't Touch It*. The second could be described as *Let's Appear Flexible but Adhere to the Status Quo*, its rationale being that such a stance would provide the Soviet Union with leverage over West German and East German policies. The third could be labelled *Let's Be Flexible and Keep an Open Mind*. This openness extended to the possibility of

871 Ibid.

872 Karaganov in conversation with the author (Moscow, May 1990). For the four schools of thought in the context of four stages in the evolution of Soviet policy on the German problem, see Sergei Karaganov, 'Implications of German Unification for the Former Soviet Union', in Paul B. Stares, ed., *The New Germany in the New Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1992), pp. 331-64. The labels of convenience used here for the schools of thought are my own, not Karaganov's.

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eventual German reunification. The fourth was that of *Take the Initiative Now* and actively work towards German unification rather than be faced with unplanned and unmanageable conditions later. Adherents for the first position could be found in the foreign ministry and the party apparatus. Majority opinion was that of schools two and three. The last school, according to Karaganov, had only *one* advocate – Dashichev.

Kvitsinsky has dryly remarked that Dashichev 'elevated himself to the role of an advisor to Gorbachev, which was untrue but was not refuted by anyone'.[873] It was refuted. When German unification was on the international agenda, but its status in European security undecided, MFA spokesman Yuri Gremitskikh asserted that 'Professor Dashichev and his political allies are not members of the expert community participating in working out Soviet policies.'[874] Similarly, Tsipko has confirmed that Dashichev 'supported the idea of the German unification and united Germany's membership in NATO' but he called the idea that he (Dashichev) may have had significant influence on Soviet policy-making on the German problem a 'myth'.[875] But he has also made an observation that may shed some light on why it is that so many of Dashichev's contemporaries have deprecated his role. Tsipko has stated that, in the period until the fall of 1989, he read many documents compiled by various institutes at the Academy of Sciences advocating the idea that we need to support closer relations between the two German states. 'However, none of these documents considered the possibility of German unification and NATO membership. That was lacking.'[876] Dashichev, in contrast, *had* considered this possibility and supported turning it into reality. He had, thereby, committed an offense, serious even in the era of New Thinking. He was right – but too early.

But why was there no comprehensive reconsideration and implementation of change in Soviet policy on the German problem in 1985-89? The reasons for this failure, to be explored further in the following sections, are not that Gorbachev and his associates were frustrated in any attempt to embark on new initiatives by a determined party and military opposition, and not that any advice to depart from previous approaches was lacking. They themselves *and* the majority of academic specialists thought it expe-

873 Kwizinskij, *Vor dem Sturm*, p. 13.
874 TASS, 4 April 1990.
875 Interview with Tsipko.
876 Ibid.

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dient to stay the traditional course and were not to be deflected from it by counsel provided by a minority of one. This interim conclusion can be confirmed by an analysis of the role of the foreign ministry in policy-making on the German problem.

3. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs

In the period of Soviet imperial construction and decline the role of the foreign ministry in the Soviet Union, in comparison to that in other communist systems, was an anomaly. Its influence on policy-making was far greater in Moscow than in other communist capitals. Although the Soviet Constitution allocated to the CPSU the 'leading role' in politics and society, including in foreign policy, in practice, in the era of Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko, the foreign ministry held a preeminent position in its functional realm. This was due in large measure to the authority and power that Gromyko had acquired in his almost forty years as foreign minister. Chernyaev has even characterized Gromyko as having exercised a 'monopoly' in foreign policy.[877] This was to some extent the result of the specific features of his career. Gromyko was appointed chief of the American desk at the foreign ministry in 1939. He participated in his capacity as embassy counsellor and then as ambassador to Washington in the war-time conferences in Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam, and he headed the ministry starting in 1957. In these various capacities, he had dealt with each and every American president from Roosevelt to Reagan. Given the fact that Soviet-American relations had been a central concern of Soviet diplomacy in the Cold War and that Gromyko embodied the institutional memory of the ministry, he had an important competitive advantage in domestic power struggles over foreign policy. This is indicated, for instance, by his promotion to full membership in the Politburo in 1973, whereas another long-serving head of a rival party institution, chief of the Central Committee's International Department (ID) Boris Ponomarev, was able to advance only in 1971 to the position of candidate member. His advancement was blocked by Gromyko so that he remained 'perennially first among the second'.[878]

877 Chernyaev, *Shest' let s Gorbachevym*, p. 49.
878 Ibid.

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New thinking or new policies were hardly to be expected from Gromyko. This was true most of all with regard to the German problem. He was thoroughly preoccupied with Soviet-American relations and preferred to deal with European affairs over the heads of the Europeans. The rising international influence of West Germany he regarded with as much suspicion and irritation as Honecker's policy of making political concessions in exchange for West German credits.[879] But it was Gromyko's conservative attitudes and policies in general, not his central focus on the United States or his stance on the German problem, that induced Gorbachev in June 1985 to appoint a new head of the foreign ministry. To almost everyone's surprise, the person to succeed him was not one of the senior professional diplomats – Georgi Kornienko, Anatoly Dobrynin or Yuli Vorontsov – but Eduard Shevardnadze, an 'outsider'.[880] Gromyko 'initially almost seemed shocked'.[881] Shevardnadze, too, was unprepared: 'To say that I was surprised would be an understatement', he has written about the telephone call in which Gorbachev asked him to take the MFA position. The party leader notes in his memoirs that the appointment 'nationally and internationally was met with immeasurable astonishment' and goes on to say: 'Many people expressed incomprehension and disapproval because a non-Russian was given responsibility for this extraordinarily important function'.[882]

The ethnic factor, however, was neither a salient criterion for Shevardnadze's appointment nor the primary reason for the consternation and con-

879 Some of the evidence presented here of Gromyko's uncompromising attitudes on the German problem and his annoyance and irritation with both West German and East German policies has included his attempt to force Honecker to inform his Politburo colleagues about Soviet-East German differences; his criticism of Honecker on the debt and dependency issue; his hard line towards Bonn on the stationing of intermediate-range nuclear missiles; his stance in the August 1984 emergency meeting in Moscow on all major issues of both East German and West German foreign policy; and the catalogue of complaints and grievances handed to visiting West German president von Weizsäcker in July 1987.

880 Chernyaev, *Shest' let s Gorbachevym*, pp. 48-49; Chernyaev also puts Chervonenko on the list of possible replacements for Gromyko. Kornienko, Vorontsov, and Dobrynin were specifically mentioned by Gromyko when he and Gorbachev discussed the issue in a Politburo meeting at the beginning of July 1985. The meeting included Shevardnadze, who had been asked to attend; Gorbachev, *Zhizn'*, Vol. 1, p. 288.

881 Ibid.

882 Ibid.

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cern among MFA officials. Gorbachev justified his choice by claiming that the *party* should be in charge of foreign relations.[883] After the October revolution, Soviet foreign ministers had belonged to one of two categories. In one group were those, like Chicherin, Litvinov, and, at the time of his appointment, Gromyko, all of whom had relatively little political power but were chosen for their professional skill. In the second category were those, notably Trotsky, Molotov, and to some extent Dmitri Shepilov, who enjoyed a certain stature in the party or had close personal ties to the party leader. Shevardnadze clearly belonged to the second group.[884] In choosing an outsider as foreign minister and having the Central Committee elect him as a full member to the Politburo, Gorbachev was applying the same logic that he would later, in 1989, apply to the CPSU: that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for an institution and its personnel with vested interests to embark on fundamental organizational and conceptual change.

There were other reasons for Gorbachev to opt for Shevardnadze: 'He successfully contended with difficult circumstances in Georgia; he is courageous, has a sense of what is new and [is able to] develop new approaches.'[885] Discussing his plans with KGB chief Viktor Chebrikov and party secretary Yegor Ligachev, he also argued: 'The future [foreign] minister should, in my opinion, be an eminent political personality.'[886] Experience in foreign affairs was not a criterion for his choice. This he clarified in conversation with Shevardnadze. 'No experience? Well, perhaps that's a good thing. Our foreign policy needs a fresh eye, courage, dynamism and innovative approaches'.[887]

Gorbachev had developed a favourable opinion of Shevardnadze through contacts with him dating back to the December 1956 plenary meeting of the Committee of the Komsomol when he was first secretary of the Central Committee of the Komsomol in Georgia and Gorbachev first

883 Chernyaev, *Shest' let s Gorbachevym*, p. 49.

884 This categorization was suggested by John Van Oudenaren, *The Role of Shevardnadze and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Making of Soviet Defense and Arms Control Policy*, Rand Research Report R-3898-USDP, Prepared for the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, July 1990, p. 4.

885 As quoted by Chernyaev, *Shest' let s Gorbachevym*, pp. 48-49.

886 Gorbachev, *Zhizn'*, Vol. I, p. 288. In his memoirs (ibid., pp. 287-289), Gorbachev fails to emphasize the aspect of party affiliation and control as a criterion for choosing Gromyko's successor.

887 Shevardnadze, *Moi vybor*, p. 81.

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Komsomol secretary in Stavropol.[888] 'At that time', as he writes in his memoirs, Shevardnadze 'did not yet speak Russian fluently'. He was also 'not a "pace setter for youth", as it was then called', and he didn't seem to possess many leadership qualities. But there was something in his psychological and political make-up that Gorbachev found appealing. A relationship of trust was established and confirmed subsequently when they were party secretaries in neighbouring Georgia and Stavropol' *krai* respectively, and when Gorbachev advanced to the position of secretary of the CPSU Central Committee.[889] They met frequently, not only on official party business but also privately, at Gorbachev's *dacha* at the Black Sea resort town of Pitsunda, in Abkhazia.

Despite their similarity in outlook, foreign observers have commented on salient differences in the personality of Gorbachev and Shevardnadze. Based on his many meetings with both leaders, Secretary of State James Baker described Gorbachev as always beaming with energy and confidence, as someone who had an actor's gift to fill a stage with his presence, who exuded an upbeat attitude and optimism, and who was invariably positive. While the task the reformers faced was daunting, it was not hard to feel – Baker thought – that Gorbachev's confidence alone might carry perestroika to success. Less kind critics, particularly in the Soviet Union, were to go one step further and chastise the Soviet leader for naiveté. Shevardnadze, in contrast, according to Baker,

> carried an aura of wisdom and insight into just how difficult the task was before them. Sometimes it seemed such wisdom carried a psychological cost. As reform became more difficult, his shoulders seemed to carry the burdens of the world, his grandfatherly hair made him look older than he was, and the patches under his eyes seemed to darken and lengthen, reflecting, it seemed, the true tragedy of Soviet history. The more I would work with these two men, the more I would see this difference – and the more I came to believe that Shevardnadze was perhaps the more realistic of the two.[890]

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888 There is a minor discrepancy here between Shevardnadze's and Gorbachev's account. Gorbachev (*Zhizn'*, Vol. 1, pp. 287-88) writes that he met Shevardnadze for the first time at the Twelfth Congress of the Komsomol in March 1954. Shevardnadze (*Moi vybor*, p. 58) states that they met at a Komsomol Central Committee plenary meeting in Moscow in December 1956.

889 Gorbachev, *Zhizn'*, Vol. 1, pp. 287-88. Similary, Shevardnadze (*Moi vybor*, pp. 59-60) speaks about 'three decades of friendship' and a relationship of 'trust' that existed between them.

890 James A. Baker, III, with Thomas M. Defrank, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War and Peace, 1989-1992* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1995), p. 79.

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It was Shevardnadze's status as an outsider that was a source of irritation and annoyance at the MFA. The mentality pervading this institution was aptly summed up in its strident slogan of *MID dlia midovskikh*, or the 'MFA [is] for foreign ministry officials [only]'.[891] His political background and the reputation that preceded him before his arrival at the ministry was for them a cause of apprehension. In Georgia, from 1965 to 1968, Shevardnadze had been minister of the interior and, starting in 1972, first secretary of the party. In both capacities, he had made valiant and, considering the firmly rooted racketeering and protection networks and free-wheeling black market activities in that southern republic, futile attempts to weed out corruption. (These were presumably the 'difficult circumstances in Georgia' to which Gorbachev had referred.) The form that the attempts had taken were extensive personnel changes and prosecution for illegal activities. No wonder that the MFA expected Shevardnadze uncompromisingly to wield the broom to clean up the ministry's Augean stables. Kvitsinsky has vividly described such concerns:

> At the foreign ministry in Moscow there was an atmosphere of tense expectation. Hardly anyone of the foreign ministry officials knew Shevardnadze. No one was able to say anything specific about his foreign policy concepts. Rumours persisted stubbornly to the effect that he would turn the whole foreign ministry upside down and fundamentally reorganize it. Such prospects initially terrified and paralyzed the foreign ministry.[892]

There are different interpretations of the extent to which Shevardnadze, in his position as first party secretary in Georgia, can be considered to have steered a 'liberal' or 'reformist' course. In the party apparat in Moscow, there were many who looked at him merely as a 'tough policeman, not as a man of ideas and certainly not of liberal ideas; some officials made unkind allusions to Stalin and Beria as also having been Georgian, and rumour abounded that after the war he had been a commandant of a Stalinist labour camp'.[893] Other observers, mostly Western, regarded him as having been an 'unusually successful first secretary in Georgia, improving the republic's agriculture and industry while conducting a quiet but effective liberalization campaign to loosen political controls'.[894] The truth lies probably somewhere in the middle. Shevardnadze, at the time of his appoint-

891 Interviews with Grigoriev.
892 Kwizinskij, *Vor dem Sturm*, p. 371.
893 Interviews with Grigoriev.
894 Kaiser, *Why Gorbachev Happened*, p. 105.

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ment to the foreign ministry, was in all likelihood someone who looked at the Soviet system essentially through the same lenses as Andropov and Gorbachev, and probably would have agreed very much with what the latter once explicitly asserted, that 'only 20 percent of the potential of the socialist order is being effectively utilized at present in the areas of the economy, politics, science and culture'.[895] In that view, the Soviet Union could be transformed into a modern country by setting a personal example of self-discipline, hard work, honesty and flexibility and conducting a sound personnel policy to elevate like-minded leaders to responsible positions. Gorbachev was convinced that he and Shevardnadze were like-minded. By bringing the latter into the foreign ministry and the Politburo, he acted on the idea of creating a strong reformist centre in the party and of having someone at his side whom he could trust and on whom he could rely in the domestic power struggle.

Looking at Shevardnadze's tenure as foreign minister from June 1985 to December 1990, how justified was the MFA officials' anxiety about large-scale personnel changes? [896] For the most part, it turned out to be unwarranted. There were some transfers and institutional changes. New departments and sections were created. New concepts and ideas were implemented in accordance with the New Thinking. However, the vast majority of foreign ministry officials emerged from the ordeal perhaps scarred but essentially intact. As in many other institutions, the inertia of the system was to triumph.[897]

Institutional impediments to change were particularly strong in the MFA departments dealing with Eastern Europe and East Germany. In his memoirs, Shevardnadze laments the mentality of the officials responsible for this area at MFA headquarters and the type and quality of the ambassadors posted there. He deplores interference of the party in the ministry's affairs and decries the congruence of outlook of both party officials and MFA personnel.

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895 Transcript of the conversation between Honecker and Gorbachev on 20 April 1986 in East Berlin, SED, Central Archives, Büro Honecker, 41666 (indirect speech).

896 Shevardnadze returned briefly to his position as foreign minister in November 1991 but resigned with Gorbachev in the following month when the Soviet Union was formally dissolved.

897 Interview with Tarasenko.

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> Fed on the dogma of the division of the world into 'coexisting systems', our party officials and diplomats could not conceive of any major changes. Practically speaking, the party official and the diplomat spoke as one person because the ideological and political 'kinship' of party-state hierarchies in the countries of the former socialist community presupposed unquestioning subordination of diplomats to the nomenklatura.[898]

He also regrets a specific feature of Soviet-East European relations: 'Top *party officials* were appointed to ambassadorial posts in Eastern Europe, and those appointments were made exclusively by the Politburo.'[899] The officials chosen were often first secretaries of important *oblasts*. This practice betrayed a *deeply rooted imperial mind-set*. It indicated that the working assumption of the Politburo and the message accordingly conveyed to local potentates was that Moscow considered the countries in which its ambassadors would be stationed not as independent and sovereign states but as *administrative* entities of the same order as those existing in the Soviet Union itself.

But this practice had its costs. Communist party transnationalism severely undercut diplomacy.

> The subordination [of diplomats to the nomenklatura] determined the way decisions were made. Former party officials appealed to higher party levels in all questions, bypassing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. And in the countries where they were posted they would often act in a similar way, going directly to the top and ignoring the foreign ministries of the host country.[900]

Transnationalism also worked in the opposite direction. After having established relations of trust with the new reformist foreign ministers in Eastern Europe, Shevardnadze was told by them that 'a number of influential people in our countries critically inclined toward perestroika find allies among your emissaries who come from Moscow or work in your embassies'.[901] Confirming the point made here about the paucity of personnel changes during his tenure in office, Shevardnadze acknowledges that the way of doing things could not be changed immediately. Ambassadors of a 'new type and calibre' were appointed beginning only in 1989, after the

898 Shevardnadze, *Moi vybor*, p. 194 (italics mine).
899 Ibid.
900 Ibid.
901 Ibid., pp. 197-98.

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creation of parliamentary structures in the Soviet Union and the onset of the East European revolutions.[902]

The subordination of diplomacy to transnational party interests was also standard practice in Soviet-East German relations. In 1971-75, Pyotr Abrasimov was Soviet ambassador in East Berlin.[903] But since he had been, inappropriately from the centre's perspective, too closely involved in Ulbricht's removal from office and too closely associated with the ascendancy of his successor and was therefore regarded as unsuitable to assert unquestioningly and unconditionally the centre's interests in the periphery, he was replaced by Mikhail Yefremov. By making this decision, however, the Politburo was merely exchanging one problem for another. Yefremov had been first party secretary of the Saratov *oblast'*. In that position, according to Kvitsinsky, he had acted according to the axiom, advantageous for his relations with the centre, that in his own area of competence everything was in order.[904] Transferring this *modus operandi* to East Berlin, he didn't report a word about Honecker's deviations from the Moscow's line. In reply to concerned inquiries from Moscow, he only said that he had close contact with Erich, and that there was full mutual understanding. However, as Kvitsinsky continues,

> East Berlin was not Saratov. Yefremov did not take into consideration that, apart from him, there were still many other Soviet 'scribes', through whom Moscow would find out what was actually happening in the GDR. Among such 'scribes' were members of the GDR's leadership, who reported to Moscow via their channels that Honecker practically wrapped our ambassador around his finger. Since Honecker knew only too well that the people in Moscow were not enthusiastic about his high-handedness and criticized his German policy, he performed a clever move by sending Paul Markowski, the head of the Department for International Liaison at the Central Committee of the SED, to Moscow as an intermediary. In one of those evenings of convivial drinking with members of the CPSU Central Committee, Markowski lamented that the Soviet ambassador was not very helpful to Honecker regarding

902 Ibid., p. 195.

903 Although Abrasimov had been first secretary of the Smolensk *oblast*' in 1961-62, his career was associated more with state than with party institutions. Positions in the former included, at the beginning of his career, the vice-chairmanship of the Belorussian Council of Ministers (government), 1948-50 and 1952-55. The latter part of his career was spent primarily in the foreign ministry, with ambassadorial assignments in Poland (1957-61) and France (1971-73), and as head of the MFA's Department for Liaison with CP's of Socialist Countries (1973-75).

904 Kwizinskij, *Vor dem Sturm*, p. 263.

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> German policy. He repeated [this charge] the next day, in a sober state, and asked urgently for the replacement of the ambassador.[905]

Yefremov was duly replaced and the Politburo now adopted a new line of reasoning. Precisely because his predecessor Abrasimov seemed to have Honecker's confidence perhaps *he* would be able to persuade the recalcitrant East German leader to heed Moscow's advice. Predictably, as has amply been documented here, nothing changed. As Soviet-East German relations deteriorated, and with it the relationship between Abrasimov and Honecker, the East German leader in 1983 demanded the ambassador's recall.[906]

Vyacheslav Kochemasov, appointed by Andropov, became the new ambassador. He proved equally unable to assert the centre's interests but was able to remain in this post until the collapse of the GDR.[907] The continuing ineffectiveness of the relationship between the MFA and the Soviet party leadership on the one hand, and between Moscow and the embassy in East Berlin on the other, is indicated by Chernyaev's reaction to a telegram sent by Kochemasov in preparation for Gorbachev's participation in the Eleventh Congress of the SED held on 17-21 April 1986. Chernyaev told Gorbachev: 'The ambassador expresses suspicion and enumerates and exaggerates the dangers of "German-German" relations. But he doesn't have a single idea as to how shape the long-term development and how we should conduct our policy.'[908] But the strained relations between the ambassador and the East German party leader also undercut the effectiveness of Soviet policy on the German problem.

To take one of the many examples, in 1989 Soviet embassy official Mikhail Loginov was called to the propaganda department of the SED Central Committee and, based on the allegation that he had been in West Berlin and talked to members of the CDU leadership, was charged by party officials with 'interference in the internal affairs of the GDR'. In a tense exchange with the Kochemasov, Honecker repeated and amplified the ac-

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905 Ibid., pp. 263-64.

906 Kotschemassow, *Meine letzte Mission*, pp. 57-58.

907 Prior to his appointment to the Soviet embassy in East Berlin, Kochemasov's career, unlike that of most other ambassadors in Eastern Europe, had been entirely with state institutions. After various MFA appointments, including counsellor in the embassy to the GDR (1955-60), he had been deputy chairman of the presidium of the RSFSR Council of Ministers (1962-83).

908 Chernyaev, *Shest' let s Gorbachevym*, p. 83.

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cusation, stating that the official in question had 'criticized the policy of the SED'. Unmoved by Kochemasov's explanations that there had been a mix-up, that it had not been M. Loginov but O. Loginov, third secretary in the embassy, who had been on perfectly legitimate business in the western part of the city, and that one should try to 'discuss the nature of the question calmly and objectively', Honecker threatened in allusion to Yefremov's recall: 'I would like to tell you frankly that the same question can arise as in the case of your predecessor.'[909]

To return to the evolution of events at the centre, in his criticism of Shevardnadze's stance on the German problem, Kornienko refers to one of his former chief's many interviews on the topic. He quotes him as having predicted as early as 1986 that the problem of German unification would very quickly be put on the international agenda.[910] Kornienko then proceeds to challenge this assertion. He explains that throughout the post-war period, the department dealing with German affairs at the MFA was one of the most important. After the formation of two separate Germanys, all questions concerning bilateral relations with the two states as well as the German problem as a whole were dealt with in a single branch of the ministry – the Third European Department. In addition to the two Germanys, its sphere of responsibility included West Berlin and Austria. The department's experts, according to Kornienko, held many different opinions on the directions the two German states were taking but 'none of the professional diplomats doubted that the German question as such was still far from being closed and that it demanded a complex approach'.[911] This was also the 'rationale behind maintaining a single department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dealing with the FRG, the GDR, and West Berlin'.[912]

What about the new foreign minister? Did he use the opportunity presented by the existing institutional structure and its apparent underlying rationale and link up the common home for German affairs at the MFA with Gorbachev's concept of the Common House of Europe? On the con-

909 Kotschemassow, *Meine letzte Mission*, pp. 57-58.

910 *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 10 April 1991, as quoted by Kornienko in [Marshal] Sergei F. Akhromeev and Georgi M. Kornienko, *Glazami marshala i diplomata* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 1992), p. 262. Kornienko was first deputy foreign minister from 1977 to 1986.

911 Ibid., p. 263.

912 Ibid. It is doubtful that this was the rationale. The continued existence of all the German entities under one roof at the MFA was in all likelihood one of the many examples of bureaucratic inertia.

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trary, to continue with Kornienko's account, 'Shevardnadze found it perplexing that the same department that dealt with the capitalist FRG also dealt with the questions pertaining to the communist GDR. He decided to clean up this "mess"'.[913] At the beginning of 1986, he removed the GDR and West Berlin from the jurisdiction of the Third European Department and allocated them to a new Department for European Socialist Countries (analogously, he also established a new department for the socialist countries of Asia). Alexander Bondarenko, a veteran of the Great Patriotic war and head of the Third European Department since 1971, remained chief of the truncated department. Gorald Gorinovich became head of the new department of European socialist countries.[914] Kornienko scathingly comments:

> It is not surprising, perhaps, that he [Shevardnadze] himself did not have at that time (contrary to what he says now) an understanding of the entire complexity and gravity of the German problem. What is unforgivable is that even in this case he exhibited a complete disregard for the professional knowledge and opinions of those people who had spent decades studying the German problem. They – with the exception of those who are always ready to be the 'yes men' to any leadership – to a man were against the 'division' of the two German states into different branches at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
> The Minister did not even listen to questions such as how, if this measure were adopted, one would deal with West Berlin. To leave it in the department dealing with West Germany politically would not have addressed the goals which concerned us, since this would have watered down the quadripartite agreement on Berlin, according to which West Berlin was not to be a part of West Germany and not to be administered by it. To move West Berlin along with East Germany to the department dealing with the European socialist states was also inadequate; the professionals immediately recognized that, in a practical sense, with regard to questions of West Berlin, Western representatives would not deal with this department.[915]

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913 Ibid.

914 Interview with Bykov.

915 Kornienko in Akhromeev and Kornienko, *Glazami marshala i diplomata*, pp. 263-264. Other former and current Soviet foreign ministry officials have confirmed that there was considerable opposition in the MFA to the proposed organizational changes. These include Kvitsinsky and Bykov (in interviews conducted by the author) and Kochemasov. The latter wrote: 'I twice voiced opposition when this question was being decided by the new minister, who called me twice in [East] Berlin. I told him that this would be artificially "tearing apart" the whole German question. One would lose sight of the interconnectedness [of issues] and lose specialists.' Kotschemassow, *Meine letzte Mission*, p. 23.

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Germany was finally 'divided' in the foreign ministry. Problems pertaining to relations with East and West Germany were allocated to different departments. West Berlin was transferred first, along with East Germany, to the directorate dealing with Eastern Europe. Since this seemed to be a symbolic gesture of West Berlin's incorporation in the Soviet bloc, 'it evidently made the Western states unhappy'. But then, in the summer of the same year, West Berlin was 'tacked on to West Germany, as a gift of sorts to Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who was coming to Moscow for a visit'.[916] It was only much later, *after* the transformation of the socio-economic systems in Central and Eastern Europe and the disappearance of one country after another from the department's roster of socialist European states, that the division at the foreign ministry finally gave way to a 'common house': the Third (FRG, West Berlin and Austria) and the Fourth (Poland and Czechoslovakia) European departments were merged to form one single entity.[917]

The consequences and lessons to be derived from this Quixotic, almost Khrushchevian, administrative reorganization are perhaps fourfold. First, Shevardnadze at that time was still insensitive to the rationale of treating Germany as a whole, most likely because he, too, assumed that German unity was a thing of the past and that the German problem would *not* very soon be put on any international agenda. Second, the reorganization demonstrated that Shevardnadze was conscious of the need for change in the foreign ministry but did not really know how to go about implementing it. Third, the reorganization changed nothing in substance. The two department heads dealing with the German problem – Bondarenko and Gorinovich – were impediments to rather than agents of change; they both subscribed to conservative positions and were to establish a good working relationship on that basis.[918] Fourth, the 1986 reorganization points to a larger problem: the organizational changes were, in essence, *not* followed by a comprehensive personnel *revirement*. As if in a modified game of musical chairs, a known set of participants was simply rotating among various positions but staying in the game.[919] Bondarenko, for instance, not only survived the MFA's reorganizations and *revirements* but, his conservative

916 Kornienko in Akhromeev and Kornienko, *Glazami marshala i diplomata*, p. 264.
917 Interview with Bykov, former section head in the Fourth and then the reorganized Third Eastern Europe Department.
918 Interviews with Kvitsinsky and Bykov.
919 Interview with Tarasenko.

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views on Germany and political differences with Shevardnadze notwithstanding, was to represent the Soviet position in the Two Plus Four negotiations in 1990.[920]

But what about Gorbachev? How sensitive was *he* to the issues of MFA reorganization? Was he even aware of the strange administrative gyrations and contortions on German affairs? There is direct testimony to the effect that he not only knew about but *approved* of the changes. In remarks to a closed session of first and general secretaries, who had gathered for the Warsaw Pact's summit meeting in Budapest in June 1986, he reported, evidently with some enthusiasm, that a conference had taken place recently in the Soviet foreign ministry that was 'unprecedented in the history of Soviet diplomacy'. The CPSU had recognized that in the foreign policy sphere 'a greater degree of party control' and 'stronger party spirit' were necessary. He himself had spoken for two and a half hours at that meeting, and an open and very thorough discussion had taken place. Musing about the background for the meeting, he stated that the 'main problem' with the foreign ministry had been the fact that there was 'still a lot of inertia and old thinking' in the ministry and that Soviet diplomacy was 'insufficiently paying attention to the challenges of the current dynamic developments'. Decisions had consequently been taken to 'modernize' this sphere of activity.[921] As part of this modernisation, what had come to pass was a 'reorganization of the structure of the foreign ministry and of all the territorial directions of foreign policy'. That had applied *'in particular to the European direction, for which a specific structural entity has been created'*. New entities had been also been set up for the 'Warsaw Pact, CMEA and scientific-technological cooperation'. He deplored that there was still 'no organic link between the foreign ministry' and the various institutions 'responsible for economic cooperation'. However, the functional divisions in the foreign ministry had been overhauled. A department for arms control and disarmament had been created because this was an area that 'requires professionals with expert knowledge'. New departments concerned with

920 This may have been due in part to the fact that Shevardnadze personally respected and liked Bondarenko; interview with Tarasenko.

921 Gorbachev's remarks to a closed session of first party secretaries at the June 1986 Budapest summit conference; see the protocol on the restricted meeting of the party chiefs of the Warsaw Pact member countries, SED Politburo, *Arbeitsprotokolle*, Central Party Archives, J IV 2/2A/ 2896.

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nuclear energy, space, international economic relations, and human rights had also been established.[922]

To return to Kornienko and his criticism of Shevardnadze and, by implication, of Gorbachev. He is almost charitable in his concluding assessment. From the point of view of the subsequent more far-reaching changes which were to take place in Germany, the episodes he had mentioned seemed to him almost 'inconsequential'. What he decries more than the ill-advised organizational changes is that 'this kind of unprofessionalism and improvisation by Shevardnadze on German affairs, as on many others, became apparent later on as well, when the German question became a truly critical aspect for our government'.[923] The reader might ask, as indeed Kornienko realizes, why he and his co-author 'did not come out earlier with public criticism of those serious miscalculations in our German policies [committed then, at the beginning of 1986,] at the end of 1989 and the beginning of 1990'. His reply is that

> It is not easy to answer this question. Much can be explained here, first, that in many cases we as well as others were faced with *faits accomplis* for, as time went by, the development of foreign policy became ever more secretive. Second, we understood the futility of criticism; as in previous times, the leadership paid little attention to anyone's opinion if that opinion differed from its own.[924]

These observations are valid only up to point. They accurately reflect the evolution of decision-making but are self-serving as to its rationale. The rapid and unforeseen events in 1989-90 required the very qualities which were almost entirely lacking in the MFA – new approaches, new thinking, flexibility and, indeed, improvisation. Similarly, whereas there is merit in the criticism that the 1986 reorganization of the departments dealing with the German problem was ill-advised and can serve to refute Shevardnadze's assertion that he had known from the very beginning that the German problem would soon be put on the international agenda, if he had listened to the 'professionals' in 1989-90 he would certainly have been locked into conservative policies, obstructionism, procrastination and delay. Nothing would have changed. It is for this reason that the 'professionals' were simply ignored and bypassed, and that two major developments took place as a consequence. (1) The head of the institution would choose

922 Ibid.(italics mine).
923 Kornienko in Akhromeev and Kornienko, *Glazami marshala i diplomata*, p. 264.
924 Ibid.

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a team of trusted, competent and, in his own understanding of the term, 'professional' *personal assistants*. In the case of Shevardnadze and the MFA, this process is mirrored by the remarks he made to his two chief aides, Sergei Tarasenko and Teymuraz Stepanov: 'I expect you to tell me the truth. No one else will.'[925] (2) Decision-making on important issues shifted to a small circle of leaders *outside* the established institution who would act independently and according to their best judgment. The estrangement of the top leader from his institutional base and the transfer of decision-making away from the institution traditionally empowered to deal with issues under its purview to outsiders happened not only in the MFA. It also occurred, and even more so, in the various branches and organs of the Communist Party.

4. The CPSU: Politburo, Secretariat, and Central Committee Departments

The role of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in both domestic and foreign policy changed radically between 1985 and 1989. When Gorbachev became General Secretary, the party was the dominant institution of the country. Both the Soviet Constitution adopted in 1977 and the party rules of 1986 described the CPSU not only as the 'leading and guiding force of Soviet society' but also the 'nucleus of the political system of Soviet society, the state and public organizations'. The party, with the Politburo at its apex and 'armed with Marxist-Leninist theory', was responsible for 'determining a general perspective on the development of the country, including the domestic and foreign policy of the USSR'.[926] Until the September 1988 Central Committee plenary meeting and in the absence of serious efforts to reorganize the central party apparat, Gorbachev's approach to party affairs involved mainly personnel changes at the top.

In the period from Gorbachev's election as General Secretary until the September 1988 reorganization of the party apparat, five full members had been dismissed from the Politburo and eight new leaders appointed – the

925 Interview with Tarasenko, conducted by Lis Bernstein, Russian Research Center, Harvard University.

926 'Kommunisticheskaia Partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza', in Vadim Zagladin and Gennadi Kiselov, eds., *Politicheskie partii: Spravochnik* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1986), p. 21.

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majority of the total membership of thirteen in that body.[927] In the Secretariat, six of the nine members in March 1985 had left and ten had been newly appointed. More importantly, eight of the thirteen secretaries had been elected since the Twenty-seventh party congress. By no means could it be argued, however, that the majority of the new appointees to the Politburo were committed to radical reform. They can most appropriately be called 'Andropovian' in outlook. They included two leaders, Mikhail Solomentsev and Vitali Vorotnikov, who were promoted to the Politburo during the brief tenure of Andropov as General Secretary between November 1982 and February 1984, but also several others who, while reaching Politburo status later, had their main promotion during the same period. These were Yegor Ligachev, appointed chief of the party cadres' department and secretary in 1983; Nikolai Ryzhkov, chief of government under Gorbachev and selected by Andropov in 1983 to become party secretary in charge of the economy; Nikolai Slyunkov, promoted in 1983 to become party chief in Belorussia; Lev Zaikov, secretary in charge of defense industry under Gorbachev, chosen by Andropov in 1983 to replace Romanov in Leningrad; and Victor Chebrikov, appointed KGB chairman in 1982. Two holdovers from the Brezhnev era were also still in the Politburo – Andrei Gromyko, president of the Soviet Union, and Vladimir Shcherbitsky, the party chief of Ukraine.

There were, therefore, *only three supporters of radical reform* in the Politburo in September 1988 – Alexander Yakovlev, Secretary of the Central Committee and head of its propaganda department; foreign minister Shevardnadze; and Alexander Nikonov, the party secretary in charge of agriculture. Other leaders then considered supporters held important jobs but were not full Politburo members. These included defense minister Dmitri Yazov; party secretary Anatoli Lukyanov; and first deputy prime minister Vselovod Murakhovsky. Before his dismissal as alternate Politburo member and first secretary of the Moscow party organization, Boris Yeltsin had also belonged to this group. Thus the personnel basis of radical reform had remained slim. Considering Yazov's and Lukyanov's participation in the August 1991 coup attempt, the review of personnel changes at the top also demonstrates that, with the exception of Yakovlev

927 This summary of personnel changes in the Kremlin leadership is based on *The Gorbachev Challenge and European Security*, Report by the European Strategy Group (ESG), (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1988), pp. 85-89. Michel Tatu was the author of the report's section on Soviet domestic developments.

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and Shevardnadze, it was difficult to ascertain who would be prepared and to what degree to support the reform process. The Andreeva affair in March 1988 had, alarmingly for Gorbachev, underlined this very fact.[928]

This state of affairs had several consequences.[929] *First*, the revamping of personnel at the higher and middle levels of the party adversely affected the expectations and behaviour of the party officials and led to the gradual erosion of the General Secretary's authority in that institution. Confronted with uncertainty and concerned about possible demotion or transfer, many party executives continued to dispatch distorted information about their performance to the centre. The internal cohesiveness and effectiveness of work was disrupted by the practice of the new appointees to bring their own protégés into the Central Committee Secretariat and departments.

Second, Gorbachev's growing disappointment with the performance of the central party apparat induced him, until the publication of the Andreyeva letter, to rely on Ligachev to remedy the lagging performance of the apparat. As informal 'second party secretary', Ligachev was in charge of the day-to-day operations of the Central Committee's Secretariat, and in that capacity he maintained close contact with the heads of the various CC departments and the republican and regional party secretaries. As Andrei Grachev observed, until the reorganization in autumn 1988, Ligachev 'remained an unchallenged authority for the whole of the gigantic party apparat, and Gorbachev wanted to believe that, as long as Yegor Kuz'mich [Ligachev] was with him, he need not be afraid of an organized Fronde or Vendée'.[930] Yakovlev confirmed that 'Gorbachev still needed Ligachev.

928 The reference is to a letter by an until then unknown lecturer at a Leningrad chemical institute, Nina Andreeva, and professionally rewritten as an article by a *Sovetskaia Rossiia* journalist in consultation with officials in the Central Committee apparat under the heading of 'I Cannot Waive Principles' (*Ne mogu postupat'sia printsipami*). The letter appeared in that newspaper on 13 March 1988. It amounted to a vicious attack on the reform process. In subsequent Politburo discussion, it was in varying degrees supported by full or candidate Politburo members Ligachev, Gromyko, Chebrikov, Lukyanov, Nikonov, Solomentsev and Vorotnikov. The PB members who criticized the letter were Yakovlev, Shevardnadze, Ryzhkov and Medvedev.

929 The discussion of the consequences of the slim personnel basis for radical reform is based on Sergei Grigoriev, 'The International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Gorbachev's Attempts to Reform the Party Apparat: A Case Study of Disintegration of Authority', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Tufts University, May 1996, pp. 235-39.

930 Andrei Grachev, *Kremliovskaia khronika* (Moscow: EKSMO, 1994), p. 120.

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He thought that Ligachev was compensating for the lack of a "strong hand"'.[931]

Third, Gorbachev came to put ever more trust in a small circle of associates and personal assistants in order to advance the cause of radical reform. One of his close associates was Shevardnadze, whose role has already been mentioned. Another was Yakovlev. His background and importance for perestroika will be dealt with immediately below. Gorbachev's personal assistants were Anatoli Chernyaev, who was appointed foreign policy advisor in February 1986; Georgi Shakhnazarov, who in October 1988 became advisor on Eastern Europe and from autumn 1989 also on domestic political and legal reform; and Ivan Frolov, who starting from early 1987 dealt with ideology and had the unenviable task of trying to reconcile Marxism-Leninism with the New Thinking. The effect of Gorbachev's reliance on a small circle of aides and associates was a policy-making process that not only cut across traditional institutional lines but undercut the authority of bureaucracies and their leaders. *Ad hoc* policy-making groups were being formed to deal with urgent business as it arose. This, as will be argued *infra*, included the German problem when it became acute.

Fourth, disappointed with the lagging performance of the party apparat and the persisting conservatism at all its levels, but also faced with deteriorating economic conditions and an erosion of his support in the country, Gorbachev turned to foreign policy as an area in which tangible success could be demonstrated. The seeds of this development were sown as early as June 1984, when he visited Italy to participate in the funeral celebrations for Italian communist leader Enrico Berlinguer.[932] As Gorbachev acknowledged, the visit made 'a deep and lasting impression on us'.[933] He was warmly received by the Italian Communist Party leadership and enthusiastically welcomed by huge crowds. At one point, when he went out on the balcony together with CPI leader Giancarlo Paetta, thousands of people exuberantly shouted 'Gorbachev! Gorbachev!' and '*Viva* Gorbachev!'[934] Such demonstrative expressions of support for him personally

931 Yakovlev, manuscript (unplished) for *Gor'kaia chasha*, p. 8.
932 Interview with Zagladin, who was a member of the CPSU delegation to Italy.
933 Gorbachev, *Zhizn'*, Vol. 1, p. 255.
934 Chernyaev, *Shest' let s Gorbachevym*, p. 15, based on what Gorbachev told him personally at the airport after his return from Italy and on conversations with Zagladin.

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and the policies he came to represent were to be repeated when he was General Secretary and visited other countries in Western and Eastern Europe and the United States and established close personal contacts in the plethora of meetings with Western political leaders.

Fifth, the difficulties and disappointments with the party apparat finally persuaded Gorbachev to reorganize it and weaken its influence on policy-making. The measures taken in the pursuit of this purpose had a profound impact on how, institutionally, the imperial legacy in Eastern Europe and the German problem would be dealt with. The two departments of the party apparat that were most closely and directly involved with foreign policy-making were the Central Committee's International Department (ID) and the Department for Liaison with Communist and Workers' Parties of the Socialist Countries. They therefore deserve close scrutiny. Since Yakovlev was one of the main architects of their reorganization, was involved in determining important personnel changes in the process and was one of its main beneficiaries, it is appropriate to examine his personality, political philosophy and relationship with Gorbachev.

Yakovlev and the Party Apparat

Alexander Yakovlev was born in 1923 in the village of Korolyovo, near Yaroslavl. In the Second World War, he was a marine attached to the Baltic fleet command, was badly wounded in a battle near Leningrad and since then had to struggle with the effects of his injuries. After the war, he became a Komsomol leader and journalist, graduated from Higher Party School and held a succession of party posts. In 1959, he attended Columbia University as a mature student, an experience that provided a basis for a better understanding of the United States but did not transform him into an ardent admirer of the American way of life and culture.[935]

The first harbingers of a non-conformist political philosophy in the *Soviet* environment became public in the early 1970s, when he was acting head of the Central Committee's Propaganda Department. At a time when Brezhnev was tolerating or encouraging Soviet and Russian Great Power tendencies he wrote an article attacking Russian nationalist writers for

935 Conversation with Columbia University alumni who knew Yakovlev when he was a student there. This author attended Columbia in 1970-73 and received his Ph.D. from that institution in 1977.

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chauvinism, thereby incurring the wrath not only of Russian nationalists but also of communist party officials.[936] In light of this, he asked for an ambassadorial posting to an English-speaking country and in 1973 was sent to Canada.[937]

In the Soviet political context at the time, the ambassadorial appointment amounted to a dignified demotion which, however, was to have important consequences. It marked the beginning of a relationship of trust between Gorbachev and Yakovlev when the former visited Canada for seven days in 1983, with ample opportunity provided to exchange views.[938] Yakovlev recalls: 'We were telling each other that the system was so rotten that it would be difficult to save it; that the party stagnated; and that something had to be done, and done urgently.'[939] It was also during the Canadian trip that Chernyaev and Yakovlev, as the former averred, realized that they 'were of the same kind' (*rodnye dushi*), and that they became 'good friends'.[940] In the same year Yakovlev, with Gorbachev's help, was brought back from 'exile' by party chief Andropov, who placed him in the position of head of the Institute for World Economy and International Relations.[941] From then on, his contacts with Gorbachev were continu-

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936 Brown (*The Gorbachev Factor*, p. 74) credits Yakovlev with 'vigorous opposition' to the often chauvinistic views of Russian nationalists. This may be somewhat of an overstatement.

937 Ibid.

938 In his memoirs (*Zhizn'*, Vol. 1, pp. 237-39), Gorbachev does not specifically mention that a close relationship with Yakovlev was established during his trip to Canada. He does, however, write favourably about the Canadian trip and its having been 'thoroughly prepared' by Yakovlev. Chernyaev (*Shest' let s Gorbachevym*, p. 26) has confirmed that it was in Canada that Yakovlev 'became friends with Gorbachev'.

939 Yakovlev, *Gor'kaia chasha*, pp. 4-5. It is doubtful that Gorbachev at that time would have agreed with Yakovlev that the system was so rotten that it would be difficult to save it. Such a view is in stark contrast to Gorbachev's conviction, expressed three years later (as quoted in the previous section), that only 20 percent of the potential of the socialist order was effectively being utilized.

940 Chernyaev, *Shest' let s Gorbachevym*, p. 26.

941 I first came to know Yakovlev or, more appropriately, one aspect of his political personality, when I participated in the April 1984 Moscow conference between IMEMO and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik. The meetings were co-chaired by Yakovlev and DGAP director Karl Kaiser. The former demonstrated on that occasion that he was perfectly able uncompromisingly to represent the official party and government line of the day. That line was rabidly anti-American – so much so, in fact, that one of the senior German participants,

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ous, the latter in his capacity as party leader coming to rely increasingly on Yakovlev's theoretical abilities and practical organizational skills.

In July 1985, when Shevardnadze was appointed foreign minister, Gorbachev elevated Yakovlev to a more influential position. He was transferred from IMEMO to head the Central Committee's Agitation and Propaganda Department. In March 1986, he became a member and Secretary of the Central Committee, and began playing an active role in broadening Soviet information policy, reinvigorating cultural life, enlightening the party with the New Thinking, disseminating new ideas in the apparat, and making sure that they were being implemented in the party's foreign relations. He also became involved in the management of a crucial issue where internal and international dimensions of policy intersected – the nationality problems of the Soviet Union. New Thinking also required addressing the 'blank' or – more appropriately – *dark* spots in Soviet history, foremost among them the secret protocols of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, the forcible incorporation of the Baltic states and the 'liquidation' of thousands of Polish military officers at Katyn, Kharkov, Kalinin and other locations. This raised sensitive moral and political issues directly impinging on the legitimacy of the Soviet internal and external empire and Moscow's relations with Eastern Europe and the Baltic Union republics. At the same time, Yakovlev's responsibilities in this area produced an important feature of the Gorbachev era. The three closest and most influential associates and advisors of the General Secretary – Shevardnadze, Yakovlev and Chernyaev – were all primarily concerned with *foreign policy*. To the

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at the end of the first day, exclaimed in dismay that, as a social scientist, he had kept track of the proceedings and could confidently assert that more than 80 percent of what he had heard from the Soviet side had been anti-American innuendo and slander. Apart from the content, the emphasis on Soviet-American relations was in complete disregard of the agenda, which was concerned with Soviet-*German* relations. If the following day were to begin on the same anti-American note, his suitcase was packed and he would leave instantly for Sheremetevo airport to take the next available flight to Frankfurt. When I confidentially asked a senior IMEMO researcher whether he had not been embarrassed by Yakovlev's performance and the new head was not doing IMEMO a disservice by engaging in cheap party propaganda, the reply was that privately Yakovlev was quite different; that he was only doing what was required of him; and that it was much more important for IMEMO's role in policy-making to have someone as a director who had good party connections than someone who was able to make a good impression on foreign visitors.

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extent that differences existed among them, they were less severe than those that separated the three aides from other competitors.

In 1986, Yakovlev's formal position had still lagged behind his political influence. This was to change rapidly. In January 1987, he was made a candidate member of the Politburo and in June 1987 a full member. After the September 1988 reorganization of the party apparat he replaced Ligachev in his role as *kurator* for the departments dealing with the party's foreign relations and thus became responsible in the Politburo for all foreign policy issues. By that time, however, the powerful role of the Politburo and the party apparat, including that of the Central Committee Secretariat and Departments, had already been eviscerated, and Yakovlev was exerting influence on policy-making primarily through his direct association with Gorbachev.

A first telling indication of Yakovlev's unconventional views on the German problem came in January 1989, when he visited West Germany on the invitation of the minuscule German Communist Party (DKP) to attend its Ninth Party Congress. The main purpose of his having accepted the invitation, it would seem, had not been any inclination to lend support to the party but to get a better grasp of the German problem and to establish contact with mainstream political forces in West Germany. In fact, he had scarcely arrived at Frankfurt airport when he treated his ostensible hosts with a dose of irony and sarcasm. Ignoring, knowingly in all likelihood, the stubborn refusal of the SPD to align itself in any way with the DKP, Yakovlev claimed that things had much changed for the better since he had last visited West Germany in 1970 and that this concerned in particular the improvement of cooperation between the German Communists and Social Democrats in the struggle for peace and democratic transformation.

As a tribute to his stature and his influence on Soviet policy-making, and quite in contrast to previous heads of CPSU party delegations attending DKP congresses, Yakovlev was received by the German chancellor. He told Kohl that the Soviet leadership wished speedy and comprehensive negotiations on the realization of the projects that were discussed during the latter's visit to Moscow in October 1988. All agreements reached at that time were valid 'in their full scope'. In a lecture at the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik (DGAP) in Bonn, he addressed the German problem. He spoke of the political, territorial and historical reality of the existence of two German states. The New Thinking could not abolish this reality but it could help people to live better with the conditions it

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imposed. As for the future, he repeated the Gorbachev dictum that history would decide. But most importantly, he distanced himself from the East German regime and from the Berlin wall and even denied Soviet responsibility for its construction. In private, he asked ambassador Kvitsinksy whether the wall was really necessary.[942] Publicly, when he was asked whether 'restructuring' Europe could be effective despite the wall and the East German standing orders to shoot at would-be border crossers, Yakovlev replied: *'I do not represent a German state, but the Soviet Union.'*[943] Even more strongly, on West German television, he said that *the wall* '*was not built by us. That's not our wall.'* The Soviet Union had to '*liberate itself from the illusion of blind allegiance'* to East Germany.[944]

After this portrayal of Yakovlev, his political philosophy and importance for perestroika, it is now appropriate to focus on the decline, in 1985-89, of the role of the two main Central Committee Departments directly involved in the policy-making process on European affairs.

The Central Committee Departments and Commissions

At the Central Committee, the party had organized a twentieth century surrealist version of Rudyard Kipling's 'East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet'. In contrast to the MFA's Third Department until 1986, the division of Europe was replicated organizationally at Central Committee headquarters at the Old Square. After reorganization of the International Department in the wake of the 1956 Hungarian revolution, all matters pertaining to Eastern Europe, including East Germany, were dealt with in the Department for Liaison with Communist and Workers' Parties of the Socialist Countries; subject matter concerning Western Europe remained under the ID's auspices.[945] There was practically no cooperation between the two departments on the German problem – an absurd state of affairs that *de facto* did not change for almost a year even after the

942 Kwizinskij, *Vor dem Sturm*, p. 13. Kvitsinsky replied that the existence of the wall was, of course, unpleasant but that to remove it would mean the end of the GDR.

943 In the question and answer part at the end of his lecture to the DGAP, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 10 January 1989 (italics mine).

944 Yakovlev interview with ARD (West German television), *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 10 January 1989 (italics mine).

945 Medvedev, *Raspad*, p. 20.

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merger of the departments in September 1988. It was only in preparation for Gorbachev's visit to East Berlin in October 1989 to participate in the celebrations for the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the GDR that specialists on the two Germanys cooperated.[946]

The nature of the functions, the type of official and the organizational ethos in the two departments were quite different. In the late Brezhnev era, as CC secretary and head of the socialist countries' liaison department from March 1986 to September 1988 stated, the functions of that arm of the party were to observe and to control the countries under its purview. Its internal organization was not problem-oriented but country-specific: a special section existed practically for each and every country. 'It was therefore not surprising', in his view, 'that its character was shaped by stalwart *apparatchiki* and that efforts by independently thinking people were unwelcome.'[947] As described earlier, first deputy head Oleg Rakhmanin was one of those stalwarts who remained stuck in the orthodox and dogmatic mold.[948] The same applied to Martynov, the head of the section that dealt with East Germany. Since the majority of the party leaderships in Eastern Europe, including the Czechoslovak leadership after 1968, had a neo-Stalinist outlook, the department officials received hardly any impulse in their contacts and exchanges so that they would adapt their political philosophy to the challenges of the modern world.[949] And since communist parties were in power in Eastern Europe that claimed the same 'leading role' in politics and society as the CPSU, the interaction between them and the socialist countries' department in Moscow essentially had the quality of *state-to-state* relations. Indeed, as Shevardnadze pointed out in retrospect, from the perspective of the MFA the functions of Soviet diplomats and Soviet party officials in Eastern Europe were practically interchangeable.[950]

The beginning of a shift in the balance between orthodox and more innovative officials in Moscow began in 1986 when Shakhnazarov was promoted from deputy to first deputy department head and when, in November of the same year, Alexander Tsipko was made *konsultant* on questions

946 Interview with Tsipko.
947 Medvedev, *Raspad*, p. 20. The former department head conveys the dubious notion that things were different before the late Brezhnev era .
948 See above, p. 200.
949 Interview with Shakhnazarov.
950 Shevardnadze, *Moi vybor*, p. 194.

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relating to East Germany and Poland.[951] Since the latter's appointment was characteristic for the process of personnel changes under Gorbachev and his attempt to transmit new impulses to the established Central Committee departments, the circumstances of the appointment shall be recounted briefly.

Tsipko, an expert on Marxism-Leninism and political philosophy, had shifted emphasis in the Institute of Economics of the World Socialist System to concentrate on Poland after the eruption of the Solidarity crisis in 1980. In July-August 1985 and January 1986, he had visited the GDR, commissioned by the All-Union Society for Relations with Foreign Countries, and lectured on the beginning of perestroika and political developments in the USSR. To his surprise, SED officials and members of the GDR-USSR Friendship Society openly told him about the existence of an ideological crisis in the GDR. On the basis of questions asked at his lectures and subsequent conversations, he concluded that this was indeed the case. 'I came to understand that the idea that the GDR was the most reliable member of the world socialist system was a myth and that its citizens lived in two entirely different worlds – mentally in West Germany and physically in East Germany. In my report, I predicted that this bubble [GDR] would soon burst.'[952] The report made a strong impression on Shakhnazarov and provoked Martynov's ire.[953] But since it was issued by the Institute for Economics of the World Socialist System and duly signed by Oleg Bogomolov, the institute's head, it was forwarded to Gorbachev. Furthermore, Shakhnazarov suggested that Tsipko be made *konsultant* to deal with East Germany.

Differentiation of outlook and opinion was greater in the Central Committee's International Department.[954] This was in part due to the fact that

951 The position of *konsultant* was by no means unimportant. Consultants dealt with all the main documents and compiled analytical reports relating to the country concerned, and they prepared memoranda for talks with foreign officials visiting Moscow and speeches for party leaders going on trips abroad. They were also authorized to see all telegrams about the situation in the country concerned, including secret reports by the embassy, KGB, and GRU. Only the telegrams destined for Politburo members were unavailable to consultants.

952 Interview with Tsipko.

953 Interview with Shakhnazarov.

954 On the role of the International Department see Grigoriev, 'The International Department: A Case Study'; id., 'The International Department of the CPSU Central Committee: Its Functions and Role in Soviet Foreign Policy-Making and Its Rise

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the department's contacts were with the non-ruling Western communist, socialist, social democratic and labour parties, so-called 'progressive movements' in Western Europe and the United States as well as with the communist parties and the 'national-liberation movements' in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Yet in 1985, the institutional ethos was still shaped to a large extent by Ponomarev, who after several decades at the Comintern and at the helm of the ID since 1949 (!) could hardly be expected to introduce new thinking and practices in that organization. Perhaps to a lesser extent, this applied also to Vadim Zagladin, first deputy head since 1975.

An initial attempt to revamp the organization was made by Gorbachev in March 1986, when he appointed Anatoly Dobrynin Central Committee secretary and head of the International Department. The appointment produced as much consternation in the ID as Shevardnadze's elevation to the MFA in the preceding year. (President Reagan was surprised, too. 'Is he really a communist?' he asked when he was told that Dobrynin was leaving Washington for his new position.)[955] Several mutually reinforcing reasons can be adduced for Dobrynin's transfer. *First*, Gorbachev applied a logic similar to the one that had pertained to Shevardnadze's appointment to the MFA: that an outsider would feel less constrained by institutional pressures to effect changes in personnel and policy. *Second*, given Dobrynin's background as a career diplomat and his more than twenty years of experience as Soviet ambassador to the United States, the appointment held the promise of greater professionalism in the ID and improved cooperation between the department and the MFA. *Third*, the ID would not only be strengthened by professional expertise and induced to cooperate with the MFA but also to compete with it by assuming tasks previously in the exclusive preserve of the foreign ministry. These purposes would also be served by another transfer from the foreign ministry – first deputy foreign

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and Fall Following the Major Reorganization of the Central Party Apparatus under Gorbachev', Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project, Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government, December 1995; Mark Kramer, 'The CPSU International Department: Comments and Observations', ibid., pp. 99-122; id., 'The Role of the CPSU International Department in Soviet Foreign Relations and National Security Policy', *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (July 1990), pp. 429-48; and Robert W. Kitrinos, 'The International Department of the CPSU', *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 33 (September-October 1984), pp. 47-76.

955 Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, p. 594. Reagan was informed of the transfer by Secretary of State Shultz.

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minister Georgi Kornienko, who was made Dobrynin's first deputy head at the ID. (The latter's expertise was in arms control, and he had good contacts with the military and a long-standing friendship with the head of the General Staff, Marshal Sergei F. Akhromeev.)[956] *Fourth*, Yakovlev had supported Dobrynin's nomination. One of the reasons for this lay in the fact that in the ten years that they were ambassadors to Canada and the United States respectively they had forged good contacts and come to respect each other. With Dobrynin as head of the ID, Yakovlev was hoping to continue their mutually beneficial cooperation and play a more important role in foreign policy-making.[957]

Dobrynin did introduce some changes. He pioneered the practice of including public figures – eminent scientists, journalists, writers, and artists – in summit delegations. Some staff changes were also made. Two new sections were added to the ID in November 1986, the section for military-political problems, headed by Lt. Gen. Victor P. Starodubov, and the section for international economic cooperation, chaired by Mikhail Pankin.[958] In essence, however, Dobrynin was unable to meet the high expectations placed on him. This was in part due to the very lack of familiarity with the organization and its tasks. He failed to take into account that the ID was integrated in a complicated network of the CC CPSU apparatus where different mechanisms of interaction obtained, and he ignored the basic functions of the agencies run by the department.[959] He also, as Chernyaev has observed, 'continued to behave like an ambassador'.[960] These deficiencies coincided with Gorbachev's general disappointment with the performance of the party apparatus and the shift in the main repository of foreign policy-making to the Shevardnadze-Yakovlev-Chernyaev axis. The reorganization of the ID in September 1988, therefore, was not only to be more

956 This was part of abolishing, as Chernyaev put it, the 'monopoly' of the MFA in foreign policy-making that had evolved under Gromyko; Chernyaev, *Shest' let s Gorbachevym*, pp. 35-36. As Grigoriev has pointed out, there may have been a supplementary purpose for the transfer – to separate Shevardnadze from Kornienko with his deep roots in the MFA and facilitate the new foreign minister's tasks in the MFA; interview with Grigoriev.

957 Ivan Frolov had made this point confidentially (Grigoriev, 'The International Department: A Case Study', p. 243).

958 Kramer ('The Role of the International Department', p. 454) aptly calls it the 'arms control section'.

959 Interview with Grigoriev.

960 Interview with Chernyaev.

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fundamental than previous efforts but it was also to form part of an overall design to enervate rather than invigorate the apparat and its components.

Comprehensive Reorganization of the Party Apparat

The decision to reorganize the party apparatus was taken at a session of the Politburo on 8 September 1988.[961] At the meeting, the Kremlin leadership approved a draft that Gorbachev had presented in a special note on 24 August. The decision of the Politburo was not disclosed to the public until the special Central Committee plenum on 30 September. No communiqué was published about the Politburo meeting – an indication of the fact that only some of its members were present when the decision was made and that the reorganization plan had been opposed by some members of the leadership. In his note of 24 August, Gorbachev complained about the latter:

> To be frank, we started to think about how to solve these problems [restructuring of the party organs] immediately after the April 1985 plenum of the Central Committee in connection with preparations for the Twenty-seventh Party Congress. We formulated a unanimous standpoint on these issues, which was outlined as a set of principles on the eve of the Nineteenth All-Union Party Conference and presented to the conference in a Central Committee report. These questions were a central theme of discussion in the party and in society. Nevertheless, it turns out, as we now come to the practical implementation of this task, that *there are certain differences about the approach to the reorganization of the party apparatus. I see this from the notes by some of the comrades on this question*.[962]

The 'certain differences' about party restructuring caused a serious clash in the Politburo that was resolved in Gorbachev's favor. At the plenum in September 1988, Gorbachev removed Gromyko and Solomentsev from the Politburo and stripped Ligachev of his position as supervisor of the party apparatus. The departure of Gromyko and Solomentsev and the de-

961 According to material published in the first issue of *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 'Zapiska t. Gorbacheva, M.S., "O reorganizatsii partiinogo apparata" ot 24 avgusta 1988 goda', and 'Postanovlenie Politburo TsK KPSS ot 8 sentriabria 1988 goda', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, No. 1 (1989), pp. 81-86. Analysis of the origins and consequences of the reorganization of the party apparat here is based on Alexander Rahr, 'Who Is in Charge of the Party Apparatus?', *Report on the USSR* (RFE/RL, Munich), 14 April 1989.

962 *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, No. 1, 1989, p. 83 (italics mine).

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motion of Ligachev – the 'hard core' of the Soviet leaders who had initially backed Gorbachev's election as General Secretary but later lost enthusiasm for reform – smoothed the way for the restructuring of the apparatus.

In line with Gorbachev's proposal, the Politburo decided to set up nine CPSU Central Committee departments with the following hierarchical order – party work and cadres policy; ideology; socioeconomic policy; agriculture; defense; state and legal policy; international relations; general affairs; and administrative matters. Gorbachev stressed that the main object of the changes was to stop the Secretariat and the CC departments from interfering in government business.[963] He also said that the decision to retain the agrarian and defense departments was necessary at the current stage of reform but that these departments might easily be dissolved in the future. Gorbachev's note indicated that the creation of the Commission for Agriculture was intended as a temporary measure and that the days of Ligachev, the party secretary for agriculture, were numbered.

Close scrutiny of the work of the party apparatus after its reorganization suggests that the changes were not aimed primarily at streamlining its structure. It seems more likely that Gorbachev's main goal was to deprive the Secretariat of much of its tremendous power. As mentioned earlier, the Secretariat had, in fact, been run by Ligachev rather than by the General Secretary.[964] By the summer of 1988, Ligachev, as the real master of the party machine, was said to have become a threat to his nominal chief. Consequently, Gorbachev took away the power of the Secretariat and restricted the influence of Central Committee secretaries to specifically defined areas by appointing them chairmen of new Central Committee Commissions. In the past, Central Committee secretaries virtually ruled the

963 In an otherwise uninspiring account of the reorganization, Gorbachev writes in his memoirs that, for him, the 'most important' purpose of the reorganization was not to 'deprive Ligachev of his power' but to 'change the function[s] of the organ [Secretariat], which had duplicated the function[s] of the Politburo and the government'; Gorbachev, *Zhizn'*, Vol. 1, p. 410. Interestingly, the German version of his memoirs is much more assertive and more to the point. Far more important than the 'neutralization of Ligachev, for me ...,' he writes, 'was the [purpose] of *finally putting an end to [the practice of] the Secretariat undercutting the competency of the Politburo and the government'*, Gorbatschow, *Erinnerungen*, p. 399 (italics mine).

964 This was confirmed by the stenographic record of the October 1987 Central Committee plenum, *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, No. 2 (1989), p. 239. – On the role of Ligachev see p. 395.

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country through the Central Committee departments, and the central party apparatus was completely subordinated to them. After the September 1988 reorganization, however, Central Committee secretaries were placed under the control of the Politburo and, in theory, became answerable to the members of the Commissions they headed. However, the work of the commissions failed to be organized in such a way as to make them an effective substitute for the Secretariat in supervising the party machine.[965]

How, then, did the comprehensive reorganization of the apparat affect the party's international activities? The Politburo decision of 8 September 1988 had stated that 'at present, there are three departments at the CC of the CPSU concerned with international affairs [International Department, Socialist Countries Department and the Department for Travel and Cadres Abroad]. ... *The preservation of such a structure is inappropriate and has to be changed by the creation of a single International Department, within which sub-departments should be created to deal with the major directions of its activities*.'[966] This decision was put into effect, and Valentin Falin was appointed head of the new ID.[967]

Several new sections were also created, including a section for contacts with parties and international organizations of non-communist orientation, such as the Socialist International and the Liberal International. This section was headed by Rykin who had played an active role as head of the Central European section, comprising the German speaking non-commu-

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965 This was quite contrary to what Gorbachev had promised the Central Committee members when he set up the new *Commissions*. The resolution of the November 1988 plenum that established the commissions had stated that one of their purposes was 'to facilitate the involvement of Central Committee members and candidate members in active work on major directions of domestic and foreign policy' and that they should meet 'when required but not less often than once every three months'; *Pravda*, 29 November 1988.

966 'Postanovlenie Politburo TsK KPSS', *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, No. 1 (1989), p. 85 (italics mine). − Karen Brutents, Rafael Fyodorov and Viacheslav Morozov became first deputy department heads, responsible respectively for the non-communist world, the socialist countries, and trips abroad.

967 Gorbachev's memoirs utterly confuse the issues of reorganization of the foreign policy activities of the party apparatus. He writes that 'the question arose whom to appoint [head of] the International Department (*mezhdunarodnyi otdel*) – Dobrynin, Yakovlev, Medvedev? I then decided on Yakovlev'; Gorbachev, *Zhizn'*, Vol. 1, p. 409. Falin is never mentioned in this context. Later, when he discusses the establishment of the Commissions (p. 410), he states that Yakovlev became responsible for the 'international direction'.

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nist countries and entities in Europe – West Germany, West Berlin and Austria. Rykin's removal from the 'German direction' was largely viewed in the ID as an expression of Falin's professional jealousy. Rykin, as described above, had known Gorbachev since the mid-1970s, had close contacts with Chernyaev and was a personal friend of Willy Brandt and other German social democratic leaders and thus a strong competitor to Falin.[968] But Rykin's job was given to his former subordinate and protégé, Igor Shmatov, who, like Rykin, had started his career as an interpreter at the International Department. Thus, unofficially, through his connections with Shmatov, Rykin continued to play a role in German affairs.[969]

Another part of the restructuring of the party's apparat in foreign policy-making was the creation of Central Committee Commissions. The resolution that established the six commissions had stated that one of their purposes was 'to facilitate the involvement of Central Committee members and candidate members in active work on major directions of domestic and foreign policy'.[970] Their purposes appear to have been the dilution of the party's dominant role in decision making and revitalization of the party's activities by the inclusion of leading non-party experts and non-party groups in the decision-making process.[971] In the foreign policy area, a Commission on International Policy (CIP) was formed. Its chairman was Yakovlev. Its twenty-four members were leading experts in foreign and foreign economic policy.

There was also an important change at the pinnacle of the party structure. Yakovlev was elevated to the position of Politburo member responsible for the party's international activities (*kurator*) and thus, in addition to being chairman of the Commission on International Policy, was empowered to supervise Falin and the International Department.

What about the impact of the restructuring of the CPSU's foreign policy? If the purpose of the changes had been enervation of the party's dominant role in foreign policy-making, as has been argued here, the objective was certainly achieved. As almost any reorganization of a large bureaucracy, the revamping of the ID, with the creation of new sub-departments and sections, and the replacement or and transfer of personnel to operate new cogs in the party machine, led to uncertainties and inefficiencies. The reor-

968 On Rykin's connection with Gorbachev, see above, p. 262.
969 Interviews with Rykin and Grigoriev.
970 *Pravda*, 29 November 1988.
971 Grigoriev, 'The International Department: A Case Study', p. 301.

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ganization also carried with it substantial cuts in staff. The number of employees in the three sub-departments was to be reduced within a year and not to exceed 300, which meant fewer functionaries than in the old ID alone. Yakovlev, in his position as Politburo *kurator*, adopted a dual role. On the one hand, presumably in the interest of enhancing his own power and strengthening the analytical potential of the ID, he promoted or transferred several officials. But, on the other, he failed to involve himself actively in its affairs. Only twice, in March and June 1990, did he address the new department's employees.

In theory, the merger of the Central Committee's three foreign affairs departments permitted a more comprehensive view of and policy towards the outside world. One could also argue that, to some extent, there was advance unification on German affairs since the relations with East Germany's SED were now put under the same roof as those with the political parties and movements in West Germany.[972] In practice, however, there was little change. Now it was the *sub*-departments and their heads who jealously guarded their turf.

What about the Commission on International Policy? The list of its members had been approved at the CC's November 1988 plenum but its first meeting was to take place only in March 1989.[973] Altogether, in 1989-90, only four meetings of the CIP were held. The scarcity of meetings was matched by their lack of importance. In contrast to CC Secretariat decisions, CIP resolutions were non-binding. Analytical reports failed to reach the leaders at the apex of power, with little harm done, since the rapid pace of events in Central and Eastern Europe between 1988 and 1990 quickly rendered the reports obsolete.

To reflect on the restructuring of the foreign policy components of the party machine, analysts have debated whether its purpose was to eviscerate the apparat or to make it more effective.[974] It is unclear, however, why

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972 Interview with Zagladin.

973 *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, No. 9 (1990), p. 24.

974 The two positions have aptly been argued by Sergei Grigoriev and Mark Kramer in the former's monograph, 'The International Department of the CPSU Central Committee: Its Functions and Role in Soviet Foreign Policy-Making and its Rise and Fall Following the Major Reorganization of the Central Party Apparatus under Gorbachev', Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project, Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government, December 1995. In Grigoriev's view, Gorbachev 'did not have a secret plan to destroy the CC CPSU apparatus from the inside'. The ID could have been 'transformed into a viable structure'

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one objective should contradict the other, or why, for that matter, the two aims should exclude still others. Restructuring was in all likelihood designed to achieve four interrelated purposes: (1) to weaken the apparat by organizational changes and staff reductions; (2) to make a smaller entity more effective by the elimination of bureaucratic overlap, retirement of aging officials, and appointment of new functionaries; (3) to subordinate it more closely to the reformist core in the Politburo and its foreign policy *kurator*; and (4) to make the party more responsive to an informed public by the inclusion of non-party experts.

It might seem that Falin's appointment to the position of head of the new ID was both an auspicious and fortuitous move directly related to his credentials as a German expert, occurring precisely at a time when the latent German problem was beginning to become acute. This, however, was not the case. In fact, his views and intention to play a determining role on the German problem were one of the reasons why the ID, in the policy-making process on that issue, *failed* to be more directly involved in 1989-90 than one might have expected at the time of the ID's reorganization. It is appropriate, therefore, to focus more closely on Falin's role in foreign policy-making, in particular on the German issue, and his relationship with the reformist inner core of the Politburo.

Falin's Role in Policy-Making

One of the main formative experiences in Falin's life, as he writes in his memoirs, was the German attack against the Soviet Union in June 1941, which occurred when he was fifteen years old.[975] The war struck his family with full force and in all its brutality. His grandmother and his father's sister and her five children were its victims, as well as three of the four children of his other sister, their husbands, and near and remote relatives

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comparable to the U.S. National Security Council. He regards the fact that this transformation did not come about as a 'failure', for which Gorbachev and his top aides must bear 'their share of responsibility' (p. 87). Contrary to that, Kramer argues (on p. 118) that, by autumn 1988, 'Gorbachev had come to believe that a radical restructuring of Soviet society would be impossible unless he weakened and even undermined the central party apparatus, which had been such a formidable barrier to reform. ... The old system had to be weakened and, eventually, dismantled'.

975 Falin, *Politische Erinnerungen*, p. 21.

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on his mother's side who lived in Leningrad and its suburbs. The war not only shaped his emotions but also his educational and career preferences. He found it almost incomprehensible that a nation that had been regarded in Russia as a model of culture, organization, and order and had produced eminent philosophers, scientists, writers and composers could create such 'an ocean of evil and suffering'.[976] The urge to comprehend the German national character, whether it was shaped by 'philosophy or the iron studded boot', also determined his choice of university. In 1946 he enrolled in the Moscow State Institute for International Relations (MGIMO) with a concentration on German language, history, culture, politics and economics. After his graduation in 1950, he was posted to the Soviet Control Commission in Berlin, which, after the foundation of the GDR, was the successor institution of the Soviet Military Administration in Germany. His responsibilities were to collect and analyze information pertaining to developments in West Germany. In that capacity, he also forged contacts with officials of the emerging political parties, trade union representatives, and businessmen in both East and West Germany.[977]

Typically for career patterns of officials in the Soviet period, Falin alternated between state and party jobs. After his return to Moscow in 1951, he was posted to the Committee on Information at the foreign ministry and the CC's Information Department. For a number of years thereafter, he held executive posts in the foreign ministry. In 1961, after the summit meeting between Khrushchev and Kennedy in Vienna, he was transferred to the prime minister's office to act for Khrushchev as adviser and speech writer on German affairs but he also continued to cooperate closely with foreign minister Gromyko. Their working relationship deepened in 1965, when he advanced to the position of head of the Group of Advisers at the foreign ministry. One of his tasks was to analyze information reaching the ministry and twice daily to report to Gromyko. He also was entrusted to write speeches for him.[978]

In August 1968, at the time of the Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia, he was made head of the Third European Department. In that capacity and as Soviet ambassador to West Germany in 1971-1978, he became one of the main advocates of Soviet-West German rapprochement. In 1978, he was transferred to the party apparat to become first deputy

976 Ibid.
977 Ibid., pp. 25-29.
978 Ibid., pp. 29-37.

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head of the Central Committee's International Information Department and served under , Chernenko and Andropov. But in 1983, his until then smooth career was severely set back. His stepson, a Soviet diplomat who had served in Vienna, had chosen not to return to the Soviet Union. A cloak of secrecy was thrown over the defection because of the father's prominence. But moralist and disciplinarian Andropov apparently held the father accountable for the sins of the son. What also did not help Falin's career was the fact that he married his own secretary, a woman from Soviet Central Asia, several decades younger than he. It was his third marriage. In October 1983, he was demoted to the humble position of *Izvestiia* political analyst or 'observer' (*obozryvatel'*).[979]

His fortunes improved after Gorbachev's ascent to power. In December 1985, Shevardnadze offered him the post of planning chief at the foreign ministry, which he declined. He did agree, however, to Yakovlev's request to become part of a team of writers, including Arbatov and Anatoli Kovalev (a writer turned deputy foreign minister), to participate in drafting Gorbachev's speech to the Twenty-seventh Party Congress. At that congress, he was elected alternate member of the CPSU Central Committee and shortly thereafter, in March 1986, appointed chief of Novosti, the official Soviet information agency. In October 1988, he was named chief of the CC's International Department and, finally, in July 1990, at the last CPSU congress – the Twenty-eighth – appointed to the once powerful Secretariat of the Central Committee.

What about Falin's standing in the foreign policy establishment, his political philosophy and his attitudes towards the German problem? There is no evidence that his life-long interest in German affairs and his experience in Berlin and Bonn had elicited much empathy with or sympathy for Germany, East or West.[980] Perhaps as a reflection of this but more likely as a

979 In his memoirs, Falin makes no reference to these two possible reasons for his demotion – the defection, which had occurred in 1981, and his unconventional marriage. In his version, he fell victim to 'intrigues' by Leonid Zamyatin, his chief at the CC's International Information Department. Zamyatin's maneuvers supposedly 'created my conflict with Yuri Andropov, who in the meantime had become General Secretary'; Falin, *Politische Erinnerungen*, p. 38.

980 This is not contradicted by the fact that he went to Hamburg after German unification to live and teach there, a move facilitated by Egon Bahr. His *de facto* emigration was in all likelihood not because of a special fondness for Germans and Germany but the result of what he considered humiliating treatment by Gorbachev and lack of career opportunities in the new Russia.

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result of his active involvement in Soviet- German relations in the 1970s, he remained wedded to the idea of the continued division of Germany. If unification of Germany should ever occur ('in a hundred years'?), it would have to be under socialist auspices.[981] As one of the chief architects of the August 1970 Moscow Treaty and the September 1971 Quadripartite Treaty on Berlin, he viewed the arrangements and the *modus vivendi* reached between West Germany and the Soviet Union, and between the two German states, as the main pillars of European security. He clearly had a vested interest in the continuation of the conceptual and practical approach he had developed on the German problem. As his voluminous memoirs underline, his views essentially did not deviate from those held by Gromyko, except on a rather more theoretical than practical matter. He severely criticizes Gromyko for having, in conversation with him, 'put the cards on the table' and expressly 'abandoned the perspective of a united socialist Germany'.[982] As his clinging to an unrealistic policy goal demonstrates, Falin, although times have changed, has been unable or unwilling to change with them.

In 1988-90, Falin's approach towards emerging German unification was distinctly more conservative than that of Gorbachev, Yakovlev, Shevardnadze and Chernyaev. This, among other factors, was connected with his close ties to the leadership of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), whose attitudes towards German unification were different from those held by chancellor Kohl and the ruling coalition. His ties became 'institutionalized' when he assumed the office as head of the International Department. In this capacity he had to deal with the complaints and pressures generated by the embattled SED and its successor party, the PDS. As the German problem moved from the 'hundred years' horizon to the current agenda, Shevardnadze and Chernyaev, in contrast, had to cope with the practicalities of its solution in cooperation with the Kohl government. From their institutional perspective, they felt that they could not afford the luxury of theoretical discussion with opposition parties and forces.

Anti-American tendencies also played a certain role in Falin's conservative approach to the German issue. Talking to executives in the ID, he often characterized Americans as 'pushy, arrogant and over-confident', criticized the Soviet preoccupation with American affairs and demanded

981 Interviews with Kvitsinsky, Maksimychev and Bykov.
982 Falin, *Politische Erinnerungen*, p. 239.

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that equal attention be paid to relations with European and Asian countries.[983] Since a viable NATO depended on the continued presence of American forces in Europe, he also strongly opposed membership of Germany in NATO, remarking scathingly in his book that 'somehow, one would not have suspected that "all-human values" are identical with Atlanticism'.[984]

Conservatism on the German problem did not extend to all political issues. As Chairman of APN, the Novosti news agency, he had been instrumental in the foundation of the progressive *Moscow News*, which continued to be financed by the agency until 1989. Yakovlev acknowledged that he was impressed by Falin's opposition to Ligachev's demands to shut down *Moscow News*. This was probably also one of the reasons why Yakovlev strongly supported Dobrynin's replacement by Falin as head of the ID.[985] In his position of Chairman of APN, which engaged in foreign policy propaganda, Falin had closely cooperated with Yakovlev, who was then in charge of the CC CPSU Agitation and Propaganda Department. The two officials also shared disrespect, if not disdain, for certain leaders of communist countries – for Ceaușescu, first and foremost, but also for Honecker and Zhivkov. Finally, they derided the idea that it was necessary or useful to maintain contact with and finance even the most minute and uninfluential parties in the international communist movement.[986]

To summarize, given the emergence, *nolens volens,* of the German issue on the Soviet foreign policy agenda, Falin's appointment as head of a reorganized International Department seemed both an auspicious and fortuitous move. Theoretically, the most eminent expert on Germany was elevated to a position which would permit effective management of a complex issue. Falin was certainly prepared to assume such a role. In practice, however, his intention to play the first fiddle did not coincide with the score and composition of the orchestra as determined by conductor Yakovlev. His appointment to the position of department head, while he was not even a full member of the Central Committee, let alone CC Secretary, meant that he was expected to play a less prominent role.[987] Falin

983 Personal notes by Grigoriev.
984 Falin, *Politische Erinnerungen*, p. 497.
985 Interview with Grigoriev.
986 Interview with Zagladin.
987 Unlike Ponomarev and Dobrynin, who had held the position of head of the ID before him, Falin did not become CPSU CC Secretary upon appointment. He was

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was not prepared to reconcile himself with a more modest position. This in itself was bound to lead to conflict between him and Yakovlev. But the struggle over power and influence became intertwined with both differences over policy and a clash of personalities. Whereas Falin's intellect may be incisive, his bearing was detached and impersonal. These traits stood in marked contrast to those of Gorbachev, Shevardnadze, Yakovlev, and Chernyaev. From 1988 to 1990, therefore, differences of personality and conflict over power and policy combined not only to deny the foremost German expert centre stage in the resolution of the German problem but progressively to relegate him to an isolated position.

As amply demonstrated here, Falin's subordinate role in foreign policy-making was intimately connected with the decline in the power of the party and its apparat. A similar development occurred in the role played by one of the mainstays of the Soviet empire – the Soviet armed forces.

5. The Ministry of Defense and the Armed Forces

In the comparative history of imperial collapse the Soviet empire represents an anomaly. The Roman empire, the nineteenth and early twentieth century Czarist, Ottoman and German as well as twentieth century British, French and Portuguese colonial empires came to an end only after military convulsions – a series of uprisings, local or regional wars, or a world conflagration, or a combination of internal and external conflict. Typically, the ruling elite, with the assistance of the security apparatus and the armed forces on which it depended, made determined efforts to prevent or postpone imperial decline and collapse. Furthermore, in several cases, military governors on the periphery, on their own or in cooperation with factions in the centre, took matters in hand and actively resisted imperial devolution. None of these phenomena could be observed in the Soviet case. The Soviet empire did not disintegrate as a result of catastrophic war. No resolute action was taken by the institutions of imperial power – the party apparat, the armed forces and the internal security services – to resist the demise. The August 1991 coup attempt, with all the power institutions represented in the Emergency Committee, occurred only *after* the external empire had

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elected to that position only after Yakovlev had announced in July 1990 that he did not want any leading role in the CPSU hierarchy.

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already collapsed and was also a less than determined effort to keep the *internal* empire intact.

To summarize the main arguments of this section, the Soviet military grudgingly and resentfully but, in the final analysis, without open resistance accepted imperial decline and disintegration. This was due to a combination of factors. Foremost among them were (1) the lack of a Bonapartist tradition in the armed forces; (2) strict subordination to and control by the CPSU; and (3) a precipitous decrease in the party's power and influence. An inner logic linked the last two factors. Since the party had penetrated and was in control of the armed forces, the erosion of the CPSU's power and authority was bound to erode the military's equally prominent and privileged position. In fact, the defense ministry, the armed forces, and the 'military-industrial complex' essentially suffered the same fate as the party apparatus, that is, significantly reduced access to, if not exclusion from, policy-making on central issues. Within a very short time, they had to adjust to the progressive devolution of empire, including the withdrawal of forces from Eastern Europe; a severe decline of their role in economic affairs; deep cuts in forces and expenditure; shifts in resource allocation from military to civilian uses; fundamental change in military doctrine and security concepts; increased access of civilians to hitherto closely guarded secrets; and a significant drop in prestige and social status. Presentation of some detail is necessary in order to appreciate the enormity of these developments, which in their impact went beyond the Gorbachev era to affect deeply Russia's conduct in world affairs under Yeltsin.[988]

As in other dimensions of policy under Gorbachev, change in military affairs was gradual at first, became more radical and eventually led to the abandonment imperial thinking and policies. This process can be divided into three major phases. The first phase extended from Gorbachev's election as party chief in March 1985 to the January 1987 Central Committee plenum. In this period, there was little criticism of the military, some personnel and no institutional change, and an economic development strategy that seemed to serve both civilian and military requirements. One might have thought initially that the armed forces were to be exempted from re-

988 For a more extensive description and analysis see Hannes Adomeit, 'Der Machtverlust der Sowjetarmee', in Martin Malek and Anna Tscho-Tschudnowskaja, eds., Der Zerfall der Sowjetunion: Ursachen, Begleiterscheinungen, Hintergründe (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2013, pp. 187-202.

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structuring. A second period lasted from the January 1987 CC plenum to the 'Rust affair' in May of the same year. This short time interval is characterized by a more vigorous advocacy of restructuring, not solely in the economy and society, but also in politics and military affairs. The third phase began with the Rust incident and included the ouster of the defense minister, extensive personnel transfers and demotions in the defense ministry and the armed forces, revisions of international security concepts and military doctrine, and a greater role than hitherto for the foreign ministry and academic institutes and specialists in security decision-making.[989]

Perestroika, Democratization, and Glasnost in the Armed Forces

The three-stage process of change was facilitated by developments prior to Gorbachev's election as General Secretary but after he had already acquired an important role in policy-making. Beginning in the fall of 1984, the military was subordinated more strongly to party control, as evident in the removal of Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, a strong advocate of modernisation and increased resource allocation to the military, from his posts as Chief of the General Staff and First Deputy Defense Minister.[990] Curtailment of the military's influence on policy-making continued after defense minister Ustinov's death in December 1984 and the appointment of Sergei Sokolov as his replacement. The important role of the military had been based to a considerable extent on the influence Ustinov had exerted on Brezhnev and the top ruling circle.[991] His successor, Sokolov, was bound to be in a weaker position not only because of his 73 years of age but also

989 The ordering of phases draws on Marion Recktenwald, 'Perestrojka in den sowjetischen Streitkräften', *Research Report*, Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien (Cologne), No. 10 (1987), p. 27; see also Dale R. Herspring, 'On Perestroika: Gorbachev, Yazov, and the Military', *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (July-August 1987), pp. 99-107.

990 Ogarkov's dismissal was in all likelihood connected with disagreements between him and the top party leadership about the level of resources to be allocated to defense; see Azrael, *The Soviet Civilian Leadership and the Military High Command*, The RAND Corporation, R-3521-AF, June 1987, and Dale R. Herspring, 'Nikolay Ogarkov and the Scientific-Technical Revolution in Soviet Military Affairs', *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (January 1987), pp. 29-59.

991 Testimony to Ustinov's influence has been provided, for instance, by Khrushchev's son, Sergei, in his memoirs, published in a four-part series, 'Pensioner soiuznogo znacheniia', *Ogonek*, Nos. 40-43 (October 1988).

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his rather uninspiring, colourless personality. Furthermore, in contrast to his predecessor, he was not a full member of the Politburo.[992]

The turnover of top military officers and party officials concerned with defense issues gained momentum after Gorbachev's accession to power. In the first two phases of change, this process included the removal in July 1985 of Grigori Romanov, one of Gorbachev's main rivals, from his posts as full member of the Politburo and CC secretary responsible for the arms industry; the replacement of Sergei Gorshkov (Navy), Vladimir Tolubko (Strategic Rocket Forces), Vasili Petrov (Ground Forces), Alexander Altunin (Civil Defense), Pavel Kutakhov (Air Force), Ivan Shkadov (Cadres), and Alexei Yepishev (Main Political Administration).

Several measures that Gorbachev adopted in the military sphere had a symbolic and demonstrative character. In May 1985, conservative forces had wanted to use the fortieth anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory and the renewal of the Warsaw Treaty as an occasion for patriotic mobilization in grand style but both were celebrated on a more modest scale. On such occasions in Red Square, the military under party leaders Brezhnev and Andropov had prominently been placed atop the Lenin mausoleum at the right hand side of the General Secretary, and they had taken up half the rostrum. Starting with Chernenko's funeral in February 1985, the senior military figures were shunted to a less prominent position. By 1986 only four senior officers were allowed on the rostrum, and only at some distance from the top political leader.[993]

Nevertheless, in the first two phases of perestroika in the armed forces, there were several demands for change with which the military was able to agree, or at least with which it was unable to disagree. Such demands included the rejuvenation of cadres, the more careful utilization of economic resources, eradication of corruption, the encouragement of initiative, greater combat effectiveness and the more rapid and effective introduction

992 Sokolov was elected candidate member of the Politburo in April 1985.

993 See the corresponding photographs, *Pravda*, 14 November 1985, and ibid., 8 November 1986. The demonstrative diminution of the military's standing has been described in detail by Hans-Henning Schröder, 'Gorbatschow und die Generäle: Militärdoktrin, Rüstungspolitik und öffentliche Meinung in der Perestrojka', Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien (Cologne), *Research Report*, No. 45 (1987), and Astrid von Borcke, 'Militär und Politik in der Sowjetunion: Zur Rolle des Militärs im politischen Entscheidungsprozess', in Hannes Adomeit et al., *Die Sowjetunion als Militärmacht* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1987), pp. 73-89.

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of science and technology in the armed forces.[994] The military was to have greater problems only with the pressures generated in the next phase of change, which aimed at democratization and openness in the armed forces.

The third phase of restructuring in military affairs was ushered in by the landing of Mathias Rust, a young West German pilot, with a single-engine Cessna aircraft in Red Square, at the end of May 1987. Given that Gorbachev was embarking on more radical reform in domestic politics, the Cessna's landing was almost literally a gift from Heaven. The demonstration of gross ineptitude by the Soviet air defense forces in tracking and failing to force the intruding aircraft to land was used by the party leader to oust Marshal Sokolov, replace the chief of the Air Defense Forces and demote and expel from the party's ranks several other air defense officers. In replacing the defense minister, Gorbachev bypassed the more senior military contenders – Akhromeev, Lushev, Kulikov and Ogarkov – and appointed Dmitri Yazov, a general almost unknown in the West. Changes in the top military leadership in 1987, as Table 5 shows, were especially numerous.[995]

Another major departure from traditional approaches was the attempt to introduce democratic principles in the armed forces. This was an aspect of military reform which, under the heading of *innere Führung*, had formed a central part in the foundation of the West German Bundeswehr and which was now, like the Prussian military reforms after the Napoleonic wars, used by civilian experts in the Soviet Union as a model for change. Predictably, given centuries of harsh authoritarianism in both the Imperial Russian and the Soviet army, the military establishment failed to understand how 'civilian' principles, such as of voluntary participation, due process and criticism could be brought in line with the 'military' requirements of subordination, discipline, and command and control. 'How can democracy be reconciled with one-man command (*edinonachalie*)?' was the question which the editors of *Krasnaia zvezda* allowed readers to ask in

994 Agreement with several of these demands was expressed, for instance, at a meeting of party activists in the armed forces, 'Perestroika – delo kazhdogo. Sobranie partiinogo aktiva Ministerstva oborony SSSR', *Krasnaia zvezda*, 18 March 1987.

995 Adapted from Naomi Koizumi, 'Perestroika in the Soviet Military', Paper Prepared for the European-Japanese Symposium on Soviet Perestroika: Security and Foreign Policy Dimensions, London, RIIA, 14-16 December 1988.

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letters to the editor.[996] The new defense minister did his duty to explain that the two principles were not mutually exclusive but *complementary*.[997] But such explanations never found practical support and application in the services.

Table 5: Personnel Changes in the Military Leadership, 1985-88

Year	Defense Min.	Cs-in-C of Forces	MPA	General Staff	Mil. Distr.	GF	Navy	ThF
	15[a]	5[b]	4[c]	8[d]	16[e]	4[f]	4[g]	4[h]
1985	2	2	2	0	3	1	2	0
1986	2	0	0	1	1	0	1	1
1987	4	1	0	3	7	3	1	1
1988	1	0	1	2	3	0	0	1
Total	9	3	3	6	14	4	4	3
Percent	60	60	75	75	88	100	100	75

Notes

a Ministry of Defense: defense minister, 3 first deputies, and 11 deputies.
b Commanders in Chief of the five services of the armed forces.
c Main Political Administration: chief, 1 first deputy, and 2 deputies.
d General Staff: chief, 3 first deputies, and 4 deputies.
e Heads of the Military Districts.
f Chiefs of the Group of Forces.
g Commanders of the four fleets.
h Chiefs of the Theatre Forces.

Another reform attempt in security affairs was glasnost in defense expenditures. In August 1987, deputy foreign minister Vladimir Petrovsky had laid the groundwork for more realistic provision and international comparison of data when he acknowledged that outlays for research, development, testing and procurement were not included in the official Soviet de-

996 'Demokratizatsiia i Vooruzhennye Sily. Kandidat v chleny Politburo TsK KPSS, ministr oborony SSSR general armii D. T. Yazov, otvechaet na voprosy chitatelei "Krasnoi zvezdy"', *Krasnaia zvezda*, 18 November 1988.

997 The examples which Yazov used to demonstrate the complementarity of the two principles were rather limited. They included constructive criticism within the appropriate party and other channels, greater participation in the evaluation of training exercises, and more reporting of accidents, corruption, and other forms of dereliction of duty.

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fense budget.[998] One month later, Gorbachev suggested that the major powers should provide each other with reliable figures on military expenditures.[999] The intention was laudable but the results disappointing. The Soviet budgets for 1988 and 1989 still contained the unrealistic official figures. Petrovsky and academic specialists regretted that the publication of more detailed data on defense outlays had to await implementation of a comprehensive price reform envisaged under the next (1991-95) five-year plan.[1000] U.S. defense secretary Frank Carlucci was informed in August 1988 that the Soviet government was unable for technical reasons to provide exact data because Soviet military expenditures were scattered across several different government departments, making it difficult to produce a budget breakdown resembling that of the Washington's defense budget.[1001] However, the West German defense minister, in talks with his Soviet counterpart in Moscow in October 1988, was told that figures on the Soviet military effort *did* exist but that the ministry was against publication of such figures at present.[1002]

Legislative control of international security policy and the armed forces was yet another intended reform measure. According to the draft provisions for the reform of the constitution, as outlined by Gorbachev at the June 1988 Nineteenth Party Conference and endorsed by the Supreme Soviet in November 1988, the legislative organs (Soviets) at all levels of government were to receive greater powers. At the national (all-Union) level, a newly constituted Supreme Soviet, with the help of a standing committee, was to exert control over all the main bodies involved in military and military-industrial activity. As explained by Shevardnadze at the foreign ministry's All-Union Scientific-Practical Conference in July 1988,

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998 'Razoruzhenie i razvitie. Na mezhdunarodnoi konferentsii v N'iu-Iorke', *Pravda*, 27 August 1987; on the need for political and planning purposes to provide more credible figures on military expenditures, see, for instance, G. Khanin and V. Seliunin, 'Statistika znaet vse', *Novyi mir*, No. 12 (1987), p. 257.

999 In an important article on problems of world security that departed from many other traditional Soviet approaches, *Pravda*, 17 September 1987.

1000 Petrovsky at a press conference in Moscow, as quoted by *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 20 August 1988.

1001 On a visit to Moscow, *Wall Street Journal*, 31 August 1988, p. 6. Marshal Akhromeev had made similar statements during his visit to Washington in July 1988; see *Time*, 8 August 1988, p. 6.

1002 Interview with the West German defense minister, Rupert Scholz, on the *Zeitspiegel* program of the *Bayern 3* television channel, 2 November 1988.

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legislative control was to extend to 'questions concerning the use of military force across the national borders of the country, the plans for defense construction, and transparency of the military budgets and their connection with the problem of national security'.[1003]

Finally, the changes that had the greatest impact on European security and that most profoundly affected Moscow's policy on the German problem concerned nuclear and conventional arms control as well as armed forces reductions. Gorbachev's initiative of January 1986 that had called for the abolition of *nuclear weapons* and the October 1986 Reykjavik summit meeting, at which the abolition of nuclear arms had been discussed, had raised concern among the military. But then, to their relief, no agreement had been concluded. The negotiations on intermediate-range nuclear missiles, however, were an entirely different matter. They *did* produce an agreement, and one that was resented by the military establishment. MFA officials and academic specialists felt constrained to justify themselves and explain to the military the rationale of asymmetrical cuts. This Shevardnadze did at the July 1988 conference and on many later occasions with the argument that the asymmetry of cuts created an asymmetry of advantages.[1004] The treaty, he explained,

> removed from our borders American rockets which literally in a few minutes could be fired and reach vitally important facilities on the territory of the USSR. What difference does it make if it happens that we destroy more rockets than the Americans? We put more of them in place, so let us remove more of them. The main thing is that we are better off.[1005]

Even more damaging and devastating to military thinking was the whole process of first unilateral and then asymmetrical cuts in *conventional weapons* begun by Gorbachev's announcement at the United Nations General Assembly in December 1988 of plans to cut the overall size of the So-

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1003 Speech by Member of the Politburo of the CC of the CPSU, Minister of Foreign Affairs, E. A. Shevardnadze, at the Scientific-Practical Conference of the MFA of the USSR, 25 July 1988, *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'*, No. 9 (September 1988), p. 20.

1004 At the July 1988 conference he said that it was one of most basic interests of the Soviet Union 'to have the military activity of all countries confined to their national boundaries' and that, as regards INF, it 'took into account that these missiles are of different value from the standpoint of Soviet and American security. ... Thanks to it, the American nuclear presence has been moved away from our borders'; *International Affairs* (Moscow), No. 10 (1988), p. 19.

1005 Shevardnadze, interview with *Argumenty i fakty*, No. 18 (1989).

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viet armed forces by 500,000 officers and men and to withdraw troops from Eastern Europe. According to Western estimates, the Soviet armed forces at that time consisted of 3.5 million officers and men, of which 800,000 were stationed abroad.[1006] Military leaders had stringently warned against downsizing *per se* but especially against unilateral and asymmetrical reductions. For instance, Gen. Ivan Tretiak, commander of the Soviet air defense forces, had called Khrushchev's troop reductions a 'hasty step' and 'a terrible blow to our defense capacity' and now demanded that unilateral cuts be examined 'a thousand times over'.[1007] Defense minister Yazov, Soviet chief of staff Akhromeev, and Warsaw Pact forces chief of staff Anatoli Gribkov had all, with minor variations, made the point that 'the limits of sufficiency are defined not by us but by the actions of the United States and NATO'.[1008] Akhromeev also opposed unilateral downsizing; in fact, his resignation was made public on the very day on which Gorbachev announced the military cuts and withdrawals.[1009] There was also considerable anxiety in the military industry, in particular among the more highly paid production engineers and managers, to the effect that defense expenditure and troop cuts would jeopardize their jobs and privileges. As one of them exclaimed in exasperation after the signing of the Washington INF agreement: 'May God [sic] save us from further disarma-

1006 See Robert E. Harkavy, *Bases Abroad: The Global Military Presence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 114-15. At a press conference at the United Nations in December 1989, Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir F. Petrovsky disclosed that the Soviet Union still had a total of 627,000 troops stationed abroad and that the Soviet aim was to bring 'all our troops stationed abroad back by the year 2000'; Reuters, 15 December 1989.

1007 TASS, 17 February 1988.

1008 D. T. Yazov, 'O voennom balanse sil i raktno-iadernom paritete', *Pravda*, 9 February 1988; S. F. Akhromeev, 'Shto kroetsia za briussel'skim zaiavleniem NATO?', *Krasnaia zvezda*, 20 March 1988; A. I. Gribkov, 'Doktrina sokhraneniia mira', ibid., 25 September 1987.

1009 The timing of his announcement to coincide with Gorbachev's speech may not have been deliberate. Akhromeev reports in his memoirs that he asked Yazov in September 1988 to report his resignation request to Gorbachev. At the end of October 1988 he was told that his request would be accepted. At the beginning of November Gorbachev called him to the Kremlin office, where he confirmed the acceptance of his resignation but asked him to stay on as military adviser; Akhromeev and Kornienko, *Glazami marshala i diplomata*, pp. 215-216. For further detail on the reasons for his resignation, see below, pp. 425-26.

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ment measures.'[1010] The appeals to divine intervention, however, were to no avail.

Since Marshal Akhromeev can be considered representative of the moderately conservative, professionally competent and politically loyal type of military officer in the Soviet armed forces, his views are of particular importance. In his memoirs, he gave the following interpretation of the 1988 reorganization of the party apparatus and its consequences, including for the armed forces. 'The Soviet people', he said,

> will yet have to analyze this historic period [the end of 1988]. Precisely at this time, there started a carefully planned attack of the antisocialist forces and the party's own defectors on the communist party. Their aim was to discredit and destroy the party. As a communist veteran, I had a hard time watching what was happening to the country. It was especially hard for me until I finally realized that we were dealing with real ideological opponents. We should have fought them without making any concessions or compromises.[1011]

He then explains why he resigned. He turned 65 in 1988, and at such an age he found it 'appropriate for a prominent military leader to leave his post. ... Certainly, one can still work productively and apply the richness of one's experience.' However, he thought, 'it becomes difficult to maintain one's creativity at its peak, to develop new initiatives and to control a large staff. No one can fight his age.' He also had to think about his worsening state of health: His war-time wounds had started to bother him again. Most important in the present context, he was tired of the many differences with the political leadership, notably 'my frequent fights with Shevardnadze ... about his independent moves during the negotiations on conventional and nuclear arms reductions.' He deplored that

> my positions and views were almost certainly misrepresented or amended with certain comments. This resulted in two or three quite poignant talks with the General Secretary of the CPSU [Gorbachev]. He reprimanded me and I in turn tried to justify my position, which was not appreciated by the leadership. I was never shy to express my unflattering observations on the work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the intra-departmental circles. I knew at that

1010 The head of a weapons laboratory, as quoted in a letter sent by a 25-year old engineer, identified as Sergei Sukharev, to *Literaturnaia gazeta*; see 'Ne dai bog, poteriaem nomenklaturu', ibid., 4 May 1988, p. 14.

1011 Akhromeev in Akhromeev and Kornienko, *Glazami marshala i diplomata*, p. 214.

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> time that this would be reported to the leadership. I wouldn't characterize the situation around me as tense but found it uncomfortable.[1012]

A final reason for his resignation was acute concern about developments in the Warsaw Pact.

> The Soviet Union started to experience very difficult relations with many of the [Warsaw Pact] countries. I saw all this happening but couldn't help it. This deeply frustrated me. Some readers perhaps don't understand this but I found it impossible to participate myself in destroying the alliance that had been created by the efforts of Zhukov, Konev and Rokossovsky, and by the efforts of officers, generals and admirals of several generations.[1013]

Akhromeev's request to be relieved of his duties as chief of staff was accepted, but Gorbachev asked him to act as his military adviser, 'to prepare suggestions on major military issues, especially on negotiations on nuclear and conventional arms'.[1014]

Akhromeev's account is of some importance not only because it sheds light on the circumstances of his resignation and – after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the August 1991 coup attempt – his suicide. It is valuable also because it corroborates the existence of sharp disagreements between the MOD and the MFA over security and the military's rejection of the former's point of view on practically all of the contentious issues of Soviet security policy. The account also poses both an important and intriguing question: who was primarily responsible for the major departures from traditional Soviet approaches to security affairs and foreign policy, including on the German problem – Gorbachev, Yakovlev or Shevardnadze? Institutionally, was it the party chief and president with his personal assistants and staff, or the MFA? Akhromeev's scathing description of the MFA's work and his acceptance of the offer to become military advisor to Gorbachev clearly point in the direction that he, at least, thought *Shevardnadze* to have been the main agent of change and the chief culprit in the demise of the Soviet empire.

1012 Ibid., p. 215. He also mentions controversies 'with the chiefs of other services in relation to the Afghan problem'. Although Akhromeev speaks of these controversies and those with Shevardnadze over arms control issues as 'rumours' (*slukhi*), it is clear from the context that these rumours were well-founded but, in his view, misrepresented to Gorbachev.

1013 Ibid., pp. 215-16.

1014 Ibid., p. 216.

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After having highlighted the curtailment of influence of the military establishment in the centre of the Soviet empire and Akhromeev's answer to the perennial Russian question of Who is to Blame? (*kto vinovat?*), the following sub-section seeks to illuminate the role played by the military establishment at the periphery of empire, the Soviet armed forces in East Germany.

The Soviet Forces in the German Democratic Republic

On 10 June 1945, the Red Army units stationed on the territory of the Soviet Occupation zone in Germany were transformed into the Group of Soviet Occupation Forces in Germany.[1015] According to the Declaration Regarding the Defeat of Germany and the Assumption of Supreme Authority with Respect to Germany of 5 June 1945, supreme authority in the country was assumed by the Four Powers. The Soviet armed forces that had conquered Berlin (largely consisting of the First Belorussian Front) became an occupation force under the Soviet Military Administration and Marshal Zhukov, its commander in chief. Its headquarters were originally in Potsdam but later moved to Wünsdorf, south of Berlin. When the occupation regime was formally terminated in 1949, Moscow changed the name of its forces to Group of Soviet Forces in Germany; it denied East Germany's request to substitute the 'Germany' by 'German Democratic Republic'.[1016] In fact, retention of the original term for the forces was one of the tangible signs that Stalin insisted on maintaining Soviet rights and responsibilities with respect to Germany as a whole and that, unlike Ulbricht, he refused to regard the German question as settled. On 29 June 1989, only a few months before the East German regime collapsed, a new designation was

1015 The following four paragraphs of this section on the Soviet forces in East Germany are a revised and shortened but essentially *verbatim* summary of the comprehensive analysis by Ulrich Brandenburg, 'The "Friends" Are Leaving: Soviet and Post-Soviet Troops in Germany after Unification', Bundesinstitut für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien (Cologne), *Research Report*, No. 33 (1992). For a less comprehensive treatment, see Claus J. Duisberg, 'Der Abzug der russischen Truppen aus Deutschland: Eine politische Erfolgsbilanz'" *Europa-Archiv*, No. 16 (1994), pp. 461-469.

1016 The other Groups of Forces in the European theatre were the Northern Group (NGF) of forces based in Poland, the Central Group (CGF) in Czechoslovakia, and the Southern Group (SGF) in Hungary.

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introduced: the Western Group of Forces (WGF). The statement issued on this occasion clarified that this alteration again did not affect Soviet post-war rights and responsibilities.[1017]

Before the unilateral reductions announced by Gorbachev in his speech at the UN General Assembly in December 1988, the Soviet ground forces in Germany consisted of the 2nd Guards Army (with headquarters in Fürstenberg), the 3rd Assault Army (Magdeburg), the 8th Guards Army (Weimar) and the 20th Guards Army (Eberswalde, surrounding Berlin) with 4 divisions each, plus the 1st Guards Armored Army (Dresden), with 3 divisions. The Soviet Air Force embraced the 16th Front Air Army with a network of air bases throughout the former GDR. Except for a small support unit (not under GSFG/WGF command) there was no Soviet naval presence in the territory. The 1,026 Soviet military installations covered 243,015 hectares (about 2.25 percent of the GDR territory) and included 110 airfields and helicopter bases, 100 training and firing ranges, 70 radar and radio transmitter stations, 8 ammunition depots (the largest of which covered nearly 3.5 square kilometres), and 400 barracks and housing compounds. The full extent of the Soviet military presence and the area covered by the GSFG/WGF installations were not disclosed even to the East German authorities until a few months before unification.[1018]

At the time when Gorbachev announced impending troop and equipment cuts in December 1988, the Soviet military presence in East Germany amounted to more than 400,000 servicemen with about 200,000 dependents and civilian employees. After the cuts in 1989 there were still about 550,000 persons associated with the renamed Western Group of Forces (WGF), including 337,000 servicemen and 200,000 dependents and civilian employees. In conjunction with East Germany's National People's Army (NVA), the Polish and Czechoslovak armed forces, and Soviet units based in the western military districts of the Soviet Union, the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany formed the Warsaw Pact's 1st Strategic

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1017 Details on this and other issues of the presence and status of the GSFG/WGF can also be found in Karl-Wilhelm Fricke, 'Okkupanten oder Waffenbrüder? Die Gruppe der Sowjetischen Streitkräfte in Deutschland', *Deutschland-Archiv*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (March 1982), pp. 269-76; Christian Raap, 'Truppenstationierung in Deutschland nach der Wiedervereinigung', *Monatsschrift für Deutsches Recht*, No. 12 (1991), and id., 'Die Stationierung von Streitkräften in fremden Staaten unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Deutschlands', *Archiv des Völkerrechts*, Nos. 1-2 (1991), pp. 53-84.

1018 *Der Spiegel*, 13 May 1991.

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Group. All of the GSFG/WGF units were classified as category A, with 90 percent of personnel at wartime strength. Service in East Germany was considered prestigious because it appeared to be an indispensible rung on the career ladder. Most of the commanders in chief of the GSFG became commanders in chief of the Warsaw Pact armed forces, six were appointed Marshal of the Soviet Union, and two – Zhukov and Grechko – Minister of Defense.

Both the Declaration on Sovereignty of the German Democratic Republic, issued by the Soviet government on 25 March 1954, and the Treaty on Relations between the GDR and the USSR of 20 September 1955, considered the presence of Soviet troops on East German territory to be temporary. But neither of the two treaties nor the Agreement on Questions Related to the Temporary Stationing of Soviet Armed Forces of 11 April 1957 provided a legal basis for the presence of the Soviet forces other than that they had a right to be there as an occupation force until the conclusion of a German peace treaty. Article 18 of the 1957 agreement stipulated that, 'in case of a threat to the security of the Soviet forces', the Supreme Command of the GSFG upon consultation with the GDR government had the unrestricted right to take measures in order to 'eliminate such a threat'.[1019] In June 1953, the Soviet military had asserted such a right when it cracked down on the popular revolt in East Germany and East Berlin.

Furthermore, in the 1957 agreement, the Soviet Union had reserved for its forces a large measure of extraterritoriality. Military personnel, civilian employees and family members travelled in and out of the country effectively without East German control. Soviet troops enjoyed essentially unfettered freedom of movement, indifference of the GDR authorities to the violation of environmental regulations, almost complete absence of restrictions on low-level flights by military aircraft and training unhampered by GDR civilian interference. Military officers had access to special hunting preserves. Contacts between Soviet soldiers and their East German counterparts, let alone the civilian population, were not allowed to develop other than in a carefully staged setting.

Some contact, however, did exist at higher military levels. In his memoirs, Marshal Akhromeev remembers large-scale military manoeuvres that were held in East Germany in 1988, and he reflects in that context on So-

1019 The agreement as published in *Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, Part 1, No. 28 (1957).

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viet-East German political and military relations.[1020] In the course of the exercises he met with the defense minister, Army General Hans Kessler.

> We were old friends. For a long time, he had occupied the post of chief of the general staff of the National People's Army of the GDR, and during this time we had frequently worked together. This was a person of true honesty. I believed him wholly. We were of the same age. He was born and raised in a family of communists. In the years of his youth, fascism had ruled Germany. In July 1941, in the most difficult time for us, as a soldier of the *Wehrmacht*, he had crossed the line of the German-Soviet front and immediately joined us in the battle against the fascists. After victory, as a member of the Communist Party and later the SED, he diligently and wholeheartedly worked for the benefit of the German people. Hans Kessler was a real friend and ally. He was one of those people who fought for communist ideals to the end. I never believed and don't believe even now that he was capable of committing any kind of inappropriate deeds or the abuses of which he was accused during the fall of Erich Honecker and the establishment of the new regime. [...] I just want to say that we owe a debt to people like him.[1021]

The Chief of the General Staff of the National People's Army, Col. Gen. Fritz Strelitz, was also present at the training exercises. Akhromeev knew him well, too, and had also 'developed a friendly rapport' with him. However, despite the friendships he had forged, he writes, he was 'leaving the GDR with a heavy heart, with a feeling of alarm and uneasiness'. Kessler and Strelitz

> had expressed concern and a lack of understanding of certain aspects of our foreign policy as well as the relations between the Soviet Union and the GDR. They openly told me that certain Soviet newspapers and magazines were writing articles that could undermine socialism in East Germany. I was forced, in turn, to tell them that we did not understand Erich Honecker's conservatism. Couldn't they see that the pressures within the GDR were mounting, the people were demanding change and that it was impossible to ignore this? *But it was impossible to have a truly honest discussion with my German friends* since both they and I were constrained by the positions of our respective political structures and therefore had to maintain loyalty and correctness first and foremost with regard to our leaders.[1022]

Such a mind-set of self-imposed constraints obviously did not lend itself to independent action by the Soviet armed forces in Germany. Nor was there any proclivity in Moscow to involve the WGF in the stabilization of

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1020 Akhromeev and Kornienko, *Glazami marshala i diplomata*, p. 182.
1021 Ibid.
1022 Ibid. (italics mine).

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the Honecker regime. To the extent that controversy over the role of the Soviet armed forces exists, it concerns the question as to whether they 'intervened' in order to *dissuade* the East German regime and its security apparatus from using force to prevent political change. This problem will be examined next.

The Controversy Over the Use of Force

Several occasions for violent confrontation and intervention presented themselves. On 6 and 7 October 1989 unauthorized demonstrations were planned in Berlin to counter the official celebrations for the fortieth anniversary of the foundation of the GDR. Other demonstrations were scheduled for 9 October, when the customary manifestations against presumed fraud committed on that day of the month in the May 1989 local elections, were to be held in Berlin and other East German cities.[1023] Since this date fell on a Monday, the by then equally traditional demonstrations in Leipzig – the *Montagsdemonstrationen* – were also going to take place on that day.

Rumours about an impending violent crackdown abounded. Their origin, in part, lay in the SED's Chinese connection. The East German leadership had reacted with a mixture of equanimity and approval to the merciless repression of the student demonstrations at Tiananmen Square in June 1989. A parliamentary resolution, for instance, the draft of which Honecker had personally signed, noted that the efforts

> steadfastly pursued by the party and state leadership of the People's Republic of China at achieving a political solution of domestic problems have been thwarted due to violent, bloody riots by anti-constitutional elements. As a result, the people's power was forced to restore order and security by the use of the armed forces. In that context, unfortunately, numerous people suffered injury, and deaths also occurred.[1024]

1023 According to the GDR's electoral commission chaired by Egon Krenz, 98.77 percent of the electorate had exercised their right to vote; 98.85 percent of the votes had been cast for the candidates of the National Unity Front.

1024 Draft Declaration of the Volkskammer of the GDR Concerning the Current Events in the People's Republic of China, personally approved by Honecker in his own handwriting on 8 June 1989; SED Politburo, *Arbeitsprotokolle*, Central Party Archives, J IV 2/2A/3221.

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The terse statement also considered 'the events in Beijing exclusively a [Chinese] domestic affair' and opposed 'any foreign interference'.[1025]

Furthermore, Krenz had returned on 2 October from an official visit to China, and Yao Yilin, a high-ranking Chinese Politburo and Communist Party member, was scheduled to attend the anniversary celebrations in East Berlin. Krenz was later to deny any support or understanding for the Chinese crackdown. However, the internal Politburo record on his meeting with the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party on 26 September 1989 notes that Jiang Zemin was 'grateful' for the solidarity which the SED had extended to the party 'in the complicated situation of a counterrevolutionary uprising'.[1026] Krenz was apparently proud of this solidarity, and certainly uncritical, when he replied that 'for communists such class solidarity [is] a matter of class honour and class obligations. Whoever, like the People's Republic of China and the GDR, is pursuing the same social goals in the interest of the people is also facing the same adversary on the barricades of socialist revolution.'[1027] Krenz also did not object to Jiang Zemin's apodictic statement that with increasing distance from the 'June events' there was ever more clarity about the 'intentions that the imperialist circles are pursuing with their concept of so-called peaceful change'. Instead, they had an 'aggressive programme for undermining socialism'.[1028] In talks with Chinese Politburo member Qiao Shi-he, Krenz went so as far as to say that the East German support was based on the communist principle that 'wherever the power of the people has achieved victory, no one will be allowed to touch this power'.[1029] Widespread concern in East Germany and East Berlin that the SED leadership was planning a *chinesische Lösung* – a Chinese-style solution – to its problems, therefore, cannot said to have been unfounded.

The security services of the party certainly were meticulously watching developments and keeping the top echelons informed. The Leipzig regional party office, for instance, sent a detailed report on the *Montagsgebet*

1025 Ibid.

1026 Notes on the talks between Krenz and Jiang Zemin on 26 September 1989 in Beijing, attachment 1 for agenda item 5, Politburo session of 17 October 1989, SED Politburo, *Arbeitsprotokolle*, Central Party Archives, J IV 2/2A/3247.

1027 Ibid.

1028 Ibid.

1029 Notes on the talks between Krenz and Qiao Shi on 25 September 1989 in Beijing, attachment 2 for agenda item 5, Politburo session of 17 October 1989, SED Politburo, *Arbeitsprotokolle*, Central Party Archives, J IV 2/2A/3247.

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(Monday prayer) in Nikolai church and the subsequent demonstrations to Honecker. Krenz, too, read the report and summarized it for the party. Honecker, who took careful note of the number of participants (6,000-8,000), had both Krenz's summary and the full report from Leipzig distributed to the members of the Politburo.[1030] The report had referred to the peaceful demonstrations as a 'provocation' and attacked the church as the 'starting point of all of these hostile activities' and a 'hotbed of anti-socialist and hooligan elements'. It concluded by expressing support for the 'readiness of the communists and [their] demand to act more decisively and to take action against the hostile elements'.[1031]

Rumour was rampant also in West Berlin. Its mayor, Walter Momper, had told Falin in conversation that he had heard that demonstrators from Leipzig were planning a massive breach of the borders, presumably in Berlin. Falin considered this information important enough to report it to the head of the communist party of West Berlin (SEW), who relayed it to SED Politburo member Hermann Axen, who in turn lost no time in informing Honecker.[1032] The message Falin wanted to convey to the SED leadership was that, in view of the 'wide international attention' which the anniversary celebrations would command, the East German leadership should 'think carefully about how to react' to possible demonstrations.[1033]

If Falin had implied that the GDR authorities should exercise restraint, his advice fell on deaf ears. On 27 September, Honecker issued a directive which proceeded from the assumption that 'certain circles in the FRG and West Berlin as well as groups supported by them' in East Germany were intent on using the fortieth anniversary celebrations for a 'slanderous cam-

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1030 Report by the Leipzig Regional Party Office to Honecker and Internal Central Committee Note by Egon Krenz to Erich Honecker, both dated 3 October 1989, read and forwarded by Honecker (marked with his own handwriting) to the Politburo, SED Politburo, Central Party Archives, IV 2/2039, 317. Krenz's note to Honecker also refers to a telephone conversation in the evening of 2 October in which he had informed Honecker about developments in Leipzig.

1031 Leipzig report, ibid.

1032 Hermann Axen to Erich Honecker, Internal Central Committee Memorandum, Secret, Eyes Only, 3 October 1989, Central Party Archives, Büro Axen, IV 2/2035.

1033 From a report on a conversation between Falin and the head of the SEW, Dietmar Ahrens, Hermann Axen to Erich Honecker, Internal Central Committee Memorandum, Secret, Eyes Only, 3 October 1989, Central Party Archives, Büro Axen, 2/2035.

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paign against the socialist order and social conditions' and the 'disruption of normal life in the GDR', and that measures had to be taken to maintain law and order.[1034] Kochemasov, the Soviet ambassador to East Berlin, claims to have seen this or perhaps another directive signed by Honecker to use force against the demonstrators.[1035]

It is doubtful that such a directive would have been specific as to implementation. It is an incontrovertible fact, however, that the state security service, in Leipzig and Berlin did use excessive force against demonstrators on 7 and 8 October. This included the merciless beating of unarmed demonstrators with truncheons and the arrest of more than one thousand people, many of whom subjected to police brutality while in detention. All this was considered shocking enough later to lead to an official investigation by the East Berlin city parliament which concluded that 'certain forces [had] wanted an escalation' so as to justify 'the total use of all the available combat means and force potential against the demonstrators'.[1036] The police brutality substantially increased anxiety among members of the opposition movement and heightened their fear as to what would happen on Monday, 9 October, when even larger demonstrations were scheduled to take place in Leipzig. To their relief there was no repetition of the violence of the preceding days. But plans and instructions for the demonstrative use of force had undoubtedly existed. The problem is only to decide at what *level* such plans were made, *who* was to be in charge of implementation and under what *circumstances*, and whether the *Soviet armed forces* had any role in staying the arm of the GDR's internal security services.

One of the accounts purporting to shed light on this problem is a report by Rainer Wiegand, a former director of East German counterintelligence, who has said that the ministry of state security had been told to use all the force necessary short of shooting to stamp out dissidence, and he attributed to Krenz an order to 'shatter counterrevolutionary structures in the GDR'.[1037] But Krenz and Schabowski strictly deny such allegations; the

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1034 According to an official investigative report by the city parliament of East Berlin, '"Chinesische Lösung": Wollten Stasi-Leute ein Blutbad unter Demonstranten provozieren?', *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg), 18 December 1989.

1035 As quoted by Stanislav Kondrashov, 'Nashe mesto v mire', *Izvestiia*, 29 April 1990.

1036 Excerpts from the city parliament's investigative commission report, as quoted in '"Chinesische Lösung"', *Der Spiegel*, 18 December 1989.

1037 In a ten-part series in *Die Welt* (Hamburg), 21 May to 13 June 1990; see also '"Chinesische Lösung"'; see also Elizabeth Pond, 'A Wall Destroyed: The Dy-

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former even contends that there was no contingency planning for 9 October. 'It is an error to assume', he stated,

> that the demonstrations scheduled for Monday, 9 October 1989, had – in a timely fashion and for a long time – been the centre of attention of the leaders of party and state of the GDR. Neither the leadership of the GDR nor that of the USSR was at that point fully conscious of the fundamental nature of the processes taking place in the GDR. The loss of a sense of reality among the SED Politburo members close to Erich Honecker was so profound that such large-scale political demonstrations as would occur in Leipzig so shortly after the fortieth anniversary of the GDR were deemed not to be possible. The leadership of the GDR, for that reason, also had no prepared political concept as to how to react to an internal crisis in the country.[1038]

Both former East German leaders even contend that they had not heard anything about the police brutality on that evening – and not even on the morning of 8 October, when they met at Stasi headquarters with the minister of the interior, the minister and several generals of state security, and the chief of police. Mielke, the Stasi chief, is said to have reported on this occasion that the provocateurs had not achieved their goals. They had been dispersed. This had been done without major complications. However, one had to count on further demonstrations for which it was necessary to keep the security forces in a state of readiness.[1039]

Since Krenz and Schabowski were determined to bring about reformist change in the GDR, if need be without Honecker, any bloodshed in the streets would have been counterproductive. Contrary to all the verbal support he gave to the Chinese, it is credible that Krenz told Schabowski after his return from the visit to China: 'Whatever may have happened at Tiananmen Square, nowhere should we act with military force against demonstrators. That would be the political and moral end for us.'[1040] It is also believable that the demonstrations in Leipzig came to be the central focus of attention of the SED leadership only in the morning of 9 October; that Krenz was informed only on that day by the director of the Leipzig Youth Research Institute about 'measures taken by the security organs, anxieties among the population and the possibility of clashes during the

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namics of German Unification in the GDR', *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Fall 1990), pp. 42-43.

1038 Krenz, 'Anmerkungen zur Öffnung der Mauer', p. 366.

1039 Schabowski, *Das Politbüro*, pp. 78-79; id., *Der Absturz*, p. 237; Schabowski is paraphrasing here, not quoting directly.

1040 Schabowski, *Der Absturz*, pp. 236-37.

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demonstrations'; and that he was concerned enough not to leave security matters to the specialists but to intervene and to make sure that the 'authorities in Leipzig and the security ministries issue orders to avoid violence at any price'.[1041] All of this does not exclude the possibility that local officials and institutions in Leipzig and Dresden also acted to stave off the blows prepared by security officials.[1042]

What about the role of the Soviet Union and the Soviet armed forces? Shevardnadze asserted in an interview that the danger of Soviet military intervention existed, 'for instance, during the demonstrations in East Germany in 1989'.[1043] If such danger existed, it was extremely remote and lessened even further by political action. According to Soviet embassy sources in East Berlin, the increasing instability of East Germany in the summer of 1989 had prompted the Soviet leadership through various channels to impress upon the party leaders in East Berlin that it regarded any 'interference in the affairs of other parties and states' as 'unacceptable' and ruled out 'the use of military force under any circumstance'.[1044] On 8 October, in anticipation of a confrontation between the security forces and the opposition on the streets of Leipzig on the following day, Ambassador Kochemasov ordered General Boris Snetkov, the Commander in Chief of the Western Group of the Soviet Forces, 'under no circumstances to intervene in the events'. The troops under his command were to 'remain in their barracks, not to engage in any military exercises' and 'not

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1041 Ibid. (italics mine). In essence, Krenz's account is confirmed by Schabowski, *Das Politbüro*, p. 80. Markus Wolf, too, was 'convinced' that the 'Beijing variant did not correspond to his [Krenz's] preconceptions'; Wolf, *In eigenem Auftrag*, p. 195.

1042 Hans Modrow, for instance, in his then capacity as first party secretary of Dresden, in conjunction with mayor Wolfgang Berghofer has taken a large part of the credit for successfully persuading both sides, the chiefs of police and the demonstrators, to refrain from violence; Hans Modrow, *Aufbruch und Ende* (Hamburg: Konkret Literatur Verlag, 1991), pp. 14-15.

1043 Shevardnadze interview in *Der Spiegel*, No. 22 (1991), p. 166.

1044 I. Maksimychev and P. Menshikov, 'Edinoe germanskoe gosudarstvo?', *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn*', No. 6 (1990), p. 45. Both authors were officials in the Soviet embassy in East Berlin. Maksimychev confirmed the point about the warnings to this author, personal interview in Moscow, 2 June 1993; similarly Soviet ambassador Kochemasov in his interview in *Tribüne* (East Berlin), 8 May 1990, as quoted by Gerhard Wettig, 'Die sowjetische Rolle beim Umsturz in der DDR und bei der Einleitung des deutschen Einigungsprozesses', in *Der Umbruch in Osteuropa* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1993), p. 41.

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to leave their military compounds'.[1045] According to Kochemasov, he had acted upon his own initiative. On the following day, he claims, Moscow – presumably the defense ministry – sent corresponding instructions to the WGF command.[1046]

Krenz is emphatic that the Soviet side was not included by the SED leadership in decision-making on that issue, and not even consulted. Any possible or potential assistance to be extended by the Western Group of the Soviet Armed Forces 'was not considered at any point in the fall of 1989'.[1047] As for any specific Soviet order not to intervene, he asserts that he had had many meetings with Kochemasov and Snetkov. But an order not to intervene

> never became known to the political leadership of the GDR. Had it been given, Army General Snetkov would certainly have informed me about it. Our long-standing personal acquaintance prohibits me from doubting the honesty and candour of the former commander in chief. An order from Moscow to the Soviet armed forces to stay out of the internal conflicts of the GDR would have required that 'somebody' thought it possible that the Soviet army would intervene. I do not know of anyone who would have made such a suggestion to the [Soviet] army command in Wünsdorf.[1048]

The facts of the matter may very well be that neither the Soviet embassy nor the WSG command discussed the intricacies of how to react to the East German demonstrations, but that they *did* discuss how to react to another event that touched their interests much more directly: the opening of the Berlin wall on 9-10 November.[1049]

Rainer Eppelmann, a former Protestant clergyman appointed East German minister for defense and disarmament after the collapse of the GDR, asserted in an interview that on 11 November his predecessor, Kessler, had ordered an army division into action to close the borders but that this order

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1045 As quoted by Stanislav Kondrashov, 'Nashe mesto v mire', *Izvestiia*, 29 April 1990; this version of events was confirmed by Kochemasov (*Meine letzte Mission*, p. 169); see also Oldenburg, 'Sowjetische Europa-Politik', p. 758.

1046 Kotschemassow, *Meine letzte Mission*, p. 169.

1047 Krenz, 'Anmerkungen zur Öffnung der Mauer', p. 366.

1048 Ibid.

1049 Given the fact that Kochemasov is not always reliable on dates and often fails to indicate any dates at all for the information he provides, it is probable that the telephone conversation between him and Snetkov did not take place on 8 October but on 10 November. The latter date for the conversation is provided by *Der Spiegel*, 2 October 1995.

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had been refused.[1050] Assuming that there is some truth to this and that the order was really an order and not part of some contingency planning, one could further assume that Kessler had backing in Moscow for this move. Shevardnadze's frequently expressed dark allusions to the military's opposition against German unification could be cited in support of such backing.[1051] However, Shevardnadze's statements have always been of a general nature. He never described any specific contingency in response to which troops were to be dispatched, nor has he provided evidence as to which military leaders or units were allegedly involved at which time. It would seem, therefore, that intentions or plans to undo the opening of the wall by military force existed neither at the political nor at the military level and neither in Moscow nor at Soviet military headquarters in Wünsdorf.[1052] What in all likelihood did exist, however, was concern that matters could get out of hand and *nolens volens* involve the Soviet armed forces. Unless one chooses to dismiss Kochemasov's account as a fabrication, his telephone conversation with Snetkov as well as instructions by the Soviet defense ministry to the WSG command are most appropriately placed in the context of over-insurance, that is, to make absolutely sure that neither active intervention nor inadvertent involvement would occur. This conclusion is not necessarily contradicted by Krenz's assertion that he had not been informed. Had he asked, he might have been told.

6. The KGB

According to popular preconceptions, internal security and foreign intelligence services – the guardians of the *arcana imperii* – are behind everything important that is happening in the world. Such perceptions often spring from fairly simple minds with a predilection for conspiracy theories. Given the closed nature of the Soviet system and the vast size of the KGB, or Committee for State Security, Western (and Russian) public opinion has particularly been prone to suspect that the agency exerted significant influence on Soviet politics. Western analysts have proclaimed that,

1050 Rainer Eppelmann interview, *Die Welt*, 10 July 1990.
1051 For instance, in an interview with Fyodor Burlatsky in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 10 April 1991.
1052 This conclusion coincides with the analysis by Wettig, 'Die sowjetische Rolle beim Umsturz in der DDR', pp. 55-56.

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because of the organization's unrestricted access to open and secret information, the KGB 'enjoyed the best insight into the real situation at home and in the Soviet empire'.[1053] In its dealings with the outside world, the agency has been regarded as having been 'even more omnipresent than in Soviet domestic life' and the 'primary executor in foreign policy'.[1054] The officers of the First Chief Directorate (FCD), responsible for Soviet clandestine activities abroad, have been portrayed as having been particularly effective, as 'highly skilled professionals and members of an elite cadre'[1055] and as 'the Soviet regime's most urbane, cosmopolitan and educated officials'.[1056] Liberal inclinations, too, have often been imputed to them, first and foremost to Andropov, and to officers at the organization's middle and lower echelons. Concerning the role of the KGB in the Soviet empire and German unification, perceptions of the ubiquitous presence and effective activities of the KGB have unequivocally been expressed in a book with the catchy title of *Conspiracy: How German Unity Was Really Achieved*.[1057] 'I am certain', writes Yevgenia Albats, 'that the KGB was behind the overthrow of Honecker in East Germany.'[1058]

However, to summarize the main argument of this section, the author confesses to be impressed less by the KGB's analytical foresight, efficient organization and effective operations than with its parochialism and preposterous pretensions, and the many instances of bungling and blundering. To be rejected is the notion that Andropov was some sort of closet liberal

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1053 Astrid von Borcke, 'The KGB and Perestroika', in Federal Institute on Soviet and International Studies, ed., *The Soviet Union 1988-1989* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1990), p. 64. To avoid misunderstanding, except for some overstatements of the kind quoted, von Borcke's work is scholarly and her conclusions balanced. This applies in particular to her book *KGB: Die Macht im Untergrund* (Stuttgart: Hänssler, 1987).

1054 John Barron, *KGB: The Secret Work of Soviet Secret Agents*, A Corgi Book (London: Transworld, 1974), p. 23.

1055 Rose E. Goettemoeller and Paul F. Langer, *Foreign Area Studies in the USSR: Training and Employment of Specialists*, The Rand Corporation, R-2967-RC, January 1983, p. 99.

1056 Astrid von Borcke, 'KGB International: The Role of the Secret Service in Soviet Foreign and Security Policy', in Federal Institute on Soviet and International Studies, ed., *The Soviet Union 1986-1987* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1989), p. 313.

1057 Ralf Georg Reuth and Andreas Bönte, *Das Komplott: Wie es wirklich zur deutschen Einheit* kam (Munich: Piper, 1993).

1058 Albats, *The State within a State*, p. 199.

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and that he and the KGB put Gorbachev in power and engineered perestroika.[1059] The agency from 1985 to 1989 did not, either at the senior or middle-echelons of power, suddenly burst in full bloom with reformist zeal. The Chekists, as KGB officers often refer to themselves, certainly sought to convey the impression that they were fully in tune with the new spirit of the time, but essentially they did not deviate from the agency's more nationalist than ideological, and authoritarian, repressive, xenophobic, anti-Semitic and anti-Western institutional ethos.[1060] Whereas every other institution forming an integral part of the *ancien régime*, notably the party and the armed forces, as we have seen, had to accept in the course of the radicalization of reforms extensive personnel changes and had to suffer through revelations of internal mismanagement, corruption and past crimes, the KGB was largely exempted from such ignominies. The vast majority of its officials remained unreconstructed, unrepentant, and unavailable for comment. The few exceptions – whistleblowers and defectors – were shunned and reviled by the organization.

The agency, then, was not in the forefront of reformist change. But until 1990 it also did not actively conspire to turn back the transformation processes in the internal empire. In the external empire, notwithstanding the agency's special powers and privileges, its pervasive network of informers at home and missions (*rezidentury*) abroad, and the secret activities of the myriad of officers thinly disguised as diplomats, foreign trade representatives and journalists, the KGB was unprepared to act in a determined fashion to try to prevent the collapse. It was included in decision-making on the central issues of internal and external empire but more as a matter of bureaucratic routine and political reassurance than as a competent actor whose counsel was deliberately elicited. To return to the metaphor of the decision-making orchestra used above, the clandestine fiddle played by

1059 This is not contradicted by the above-mentioned fact that Andropov in his position as head of the Central Committee's Socialist Countries Department, after having left the KGB, cultivated relations with eminent academic specialists and protected them from KGB and party harassment and persecution. This benevolent intervention would seem to have been predicated less on any liberal inclinations on Andropov's part than on his proclivity to seek the best available expertise in the interest of perfecting and modernizing the Soviet system.

1060 Cheka is short for *Vserossiiskaia cherezvychainaia komissiia*, or All-Russian Extraordinary Commission, the name for the secret police founded by Felix Dzerzhinsky in 1917.

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the KGB was only of *secondary* importance. The following sub-sections seek to substantiate these assertions.

The Impotence of Omnipotence

Considering its tremendous material and personnel resources, the inability of the KGB to control the course of events is nevertheless astounding. Organized into four Chief Directorates (foreign operations, internal security and counterintelligence, communications and cryptography, and command of the border troops) and nine Directorates (military counterintelligence, ideological counterintelligence and dissidents, economic counterintelligence, security of government installations, government security, communications interceptions and signal intelligence, surveillance, transport, and military construction), the KGB combined the functions of both the CIA and the FBI.[1061] But it exceeded both American agencies in the number of employees and the scale and type of operations, and it differed from them in the nature of its tasks. As for its size, when Gorbachev was elected party chief, the KGB was estimated to have 25,000 officers and some 40,000 administrative personnel on its central staff in Moscow, in the provinces about 50,000 to 100,000 officials and a vast network of informers, some 300,000 to 350,000 border troops, and up to 30,000 agents abroad, who cooperated to varying degree with 100,000 members of the 'allied' services in Eastern Europe.[1062] Former KGB Maj.-Gen. Oleg Kalugin has claimed that more people worked in the KGB than in all the security agencies of Europe put together.[1063] Albats places the total number of KGB

1061 Albats, *The State within a State*, pp. 26-27. The Fifth Directorate, which had monitored dissent, was dissolved in October 1989. Its responsibilities were reabsorbed by the Second Chief Directorate and a new Directorate for the Defense of the Soviet Constitutional System.

1062 Von Borcke, 'The Role of the Secret Police', p. 56. The figure of 65,000 officers in KGB headquarters is identical with that provided by former KGB Col. Oleg Gordievsky; see his interview with Natalya Gevorkian, *Moskovskie novosti*, 3 March 1991. Yevgenia Albats says that she was 'able to glean a more exact figure of 89,000 Chekists in the capital'; Albats, *The State within a State*, p. 24.

1063 In an interview with Yevgenia Albats and Natalya Gevorkian, *Moskovskie novosti*, 3 March 1991; see also Kalugin, 'Ne perekhodit' na lichnosti', *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 3 July 1990. Kalugin was a specialist in foreign intelligence and, as an exchange student at Columbia University, had become acquainted with Yakovlev. In the agency, he rose to the position of chief of foreign counter-

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employees prior to the August 1991 coup attempt at 720,000 people, or one Chekist for 428 Soviet citizens.[1064] (In comparison, the CIA in the 1980s was said to have about 15,000 employees on its payroll and the FBI about 21,000 agents.)[1065]

The KGB's main function was also quite different from that of Western intelligence agencies. As the 'sword and shield' of the revolution, it was extensively used by the communist party to establish, consolidate and expand Soviet power. In performing these tasks, it left a wide trail of blood and human misery. Robert Conquest estimates the number of victims of the Great Purges alone at 15 million;[1066] Alexei Myagkov speaks of a total of 20 million KGB casualties;[1067] Roy Medvedev cited 40 million victims;[1068] and Alexander Solzhenitsyn holds the organization responsible for the death of 60 million people.[1069] Medvedev, whose estimates lie in the middle range, included the following victims in his count:

– One million imprisoned or exiled from 1927 to 1929, falsely accused of being saboteurs or members of opposition parties.
– Nine to eleven million of the more prosperous peasants driven from their lands and another two to three million arrested or exiled in the early 1930's forced collectivization campaign, many of whom believed to have been killed.

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intelligence. He broke with the KGB in 1987, when he wrote a letter to Gorbachev warning him that the KGB was out of control.

1064 Albats, *The State within a State*, p. 23. 'The total number of people it employs', she cautions, 'is the KGB's most closely guarded secret. And for good reason, since if they were to answer the question truthfully, they would immediately be faced with the far more challenging question: What exactly does this vast army of people *do*?'

1065 Christopher Dobson and Ronald Payne, *The Dictionary of Espionage* (London: Harrap, 1984), p. 21; Albats, *The State within a State*, p. 24.

1066 Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror* (London: Macmillan, 1968), p. 533.

1067 Aleksei Myagkov, *Inside the KGB* (New York: Ballantine, 1983), p. 29.

1068 In articles in *Moskovskie novosti* in November 1988 and *Argumenty i fakty* in February 1989, as quoted by Bill Keller, 'Major Soviet Paper Says 20 Million Died as Victims of Stalin', *New York Times*, 4 February 1989. The term 'victims' is broader, covering those people who did and those who did not survive arrest, deportation, imprisonment, and forced labour (40 million in Medvedev's accounting).

1069 Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Oak and the Calf* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), p. 536. In his speech on the seventieth anniversary of the 1917 revolution, the reader may remember, Gorbachev had spoken only of 'thousands and thousands of party members and non-party people'; see above, p. 237-38.

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- Six to seven million killed in the punitive famine inflicted on peasants in 1932 and 1933.
- One million exiled from Moscow and Leningrad in 1935 for belonging to families of former aristocrats, merchants, capitalists, and government officials.
- About one million executed in the Great Terror of 1937-38, and another four to six million sent to forced labour camps from which most did not return.
- Two to three million sent to camps for violating absurdly strict labour laws imposed in 1940.
- At least ten to twelve million 'repressed' in World War II, including millions of Soviet Germans and other ethnic minorities forcibly relocated.
- More than one million arrested on political grounds from 1946 to Stalin's death in 1953.

It would, of course, be unfair to taint every KGB officer with the brush of collective guilt for the immense human misery caused by that institution. In particular, it would be inappropriate not to draw a distinction between officers engaged in analytical work and those responsible for *mokrye dela*, the wet or bloody affairs. One may want to differentiate between officers involved in the task of maintaining a repressive system in the Soviet Union itself and those active in foreign intelligence, the latter as a rule being relatively more sophisticated and engaged in more analytical work than the former. And one may also find differences in the personality profile and world view of KGB career officers and those *komitetchiki* who had begun their career in other Soviet institutions, e.g., the party or the diplomatic service, and were then transferred to the agency. Nevertheless, in order to make it in the KGB it was useful to be or at least appear dedicated to the organization, indifferent to its sordid past and impervious to moral issues.

To turn to the role of the KGB in the Gorbachev era, some analysts have considered the secret service not only as the 'sword and shield' of perestroika but also as the 'power behind the throne'. They argue that Andropov as party chief had remained loyal to the agency. He had promoted Gorbachev to the number two position in the party hierarchy during his tenure in office, and after his (Andropov's) death the organization had continued its support for the heir apparent. Under the assumption that Gorbachev would provide the discipline and dynamism necessary to modernize the Soviet economy and improve the country's defense capabilities, the

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KGB threw its support behind him in the Kremlin succession struggle. For instance, the First Chief Directorate for foreign intelligence, headed at that time by Vladimir Kryuchkov, in close cooperation with the *rezidentura* in Britain took great pains to make sure that Gorbachev's visit to London in December 1984 would be a success and enhance his foreign policy credentials.[1070] In some versions of the argument, an 'unholy trinity – the KGB, the CPSU, and the MIC [military-industrial complex] – cooked up the plan for perestroika'[1071] and in another the KGB had stopped believing in Marxism-Leninism and conspired to replace it by nationalism.[1072] Whereas Gorbachev's election as party chief was not due entirely or even mainly to support from the KGB, the agency nonetheless saw the election as a major victory.[1073] Gorbachev, the argument continues, repaid the KGB for its support. He agreed to an expansion of the retaliatory powers of the security forces to expel foreign representatives in response to expulsions of Soviet spies, consented to a substantial increase in KGB representation in the party organs at the Twenty-seventh Party Congress and exempted the agency from the rigors of perestroika. He made Victor Che-

1070 Interview with Grigoriev; Christopher Andrew and Oleg Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story of Its Foreign Operations from Lenin to Gorbachev* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1990), p. 606. Gordievsky was a KGB foreign intelligence officer recruited in 1974 as a double agent by the British secret service. In 1982-85 he was the KGB's deputy *resident* in London.

1071 Albats, *The State within a State*, p. 197. It is unclear in her chapter entitled 'Who Was Behind Perestroika?' whether she identifies with this argument or is simply telling a 'fascinating story' (p. 202) for effect. At the end of the chapter she cautions against 'over-simplification' by saying: 'The story is more complex than that: it's about subtle timing and overlapping interests.'

1072 This version is expounded by Victor Yasmann, 'Red Religion: An Ideology of Neo-Messianic Russian Fundamentalism', *Demokratizatsiya*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1993), pp. 20-39.

1073 Ibid., p. 608. The more outlandish statements about the KGB being behind Gorbachev's appointment and perestroika typically come from Russians living and writing in the West, including Albats, Gordievsky, and Yasmann; similarly, Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, *Ot Andropova k Gorbachevu: dela i dni Kremlia* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1986). In the jointly authored book by Andrew and Gordievsky it would seem that the Western scholar was valiantly attempting to tone down some of the more radical assertions of his Russian co-author. For instance, it is incorrect to quote the book to the effect that 'the KGB had stage-managed perestroika' (Albats, *The State within a State*, p. 168). Andrew and Gordievsky write (p. 608) that Gorbachev's election 'was not, of course, due wholly or even mainly to support from the KGB'.

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brikov a full member of the Politburo in April 1985 and also conferred this status on his successor Kryuchkov as head of the KGB in October 1988.[1074]

This interpretation does have some validity. However, it ignores Gorbachev's ambiguous attitude towards the KGB and fails sufficiently to take into account the fact that perestroika was a dynamic process with distinct phases of development as described in previous sections. Ample evidence has been presented here to confirm that Gorbachev shared some of Andropov's beliefs and continued some of his policies in the 'modernisation' and 'acceleration' phase of his tenure in office. Furthermore, he had to rely extensively on the agency's internal affairs directorates for implementation of his anti-corruption and anti-alcoholism campaigns. Similarly, his attempts at introducing science and technology to the production process, staying in the military-technological competition with the West, undercutting Star Wars and acquiring foreign technology for these purposes also made extensive KGB involvement necessary. Not surprisingly, then, as late as June 1988 – at the Nineteenth Party Conference – he praised the 'purposeful work' of the leadership of the KGB and GRU (military intelligence), 'aimed at improving their activities in the conditions created by the present stage of the development of our society and the unfolding of democratic processes'.[1075]

However, in the radicalization-of-reform, openness, and democratization phase with its new directions in Soviet ideology and foreign policy, the KGB was bound to be more of a liability than an asset. Furthermore, the argument can be made, although not conclusively be proven, that in this phase (lasting until autumn 1990, when he began actively courting the conservative forces), Gorbachev considered the KGB a *threat* to his reform program. There would have been a compelling logic to such a perception. This logic would have consisted of the following elements. (1) As the party's authority was weakening and its power after the 1988 reorganization deliberately being curtailed, its control mechanisms in the KGB were also being eroded. This process was enhanced by the progressive dismantling of the ideology upon which the party's power and authority had rested. The KGB, in contrast, did not suffer commensurately from the de-

1074 Ibid., pp. 608-609. The argument about the KGB as a motor driving perestroika can also be found in J. Michael Waller, *The KGB in Russia Today* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995).

1075 *Pravda*, 29 June 1988.

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ideologization of Soviet politics and society. Its institutional ethos, as mentioned, was much more technocratic and nationalist than ideological. In a disoriented and disintegrating system this would have enhanced the agency's relative autonomy and elevated its status as a repository of law and order. (2) In the CPSU, notably in the International Department, but also in other Soviet institutions, there was some differentiation and a fair number of officials who could be persuaded actively to join in the reform effort. A similar state of affairs did not exist in the KGB. (3) The defense ministry and the armed forces bore the full brunt of perestroika. Although not in a mutinous and insurrectionist mood, they certainly had to be a source of concern for the political leadership. Since the new presidential and parliamentary institutions formed after May 1989 never became rooted and politically effective, it could have been a disastrous mistake for Gorbachev to confront the KGB head-on and precipitate a powerful anti-reform coalition of Chekists, orthodox party officials, and disgruntled military officers. In this interpretation, then, the caution Gorbachev displayed in his attitudes and policies towards the KGB was neither predicated on ideological affinity with the agency nor on gratitude for past favours. For him, it would seem, the KGB was simply one powerful Soviet institution too many to take on.

This is not to say that no attempt at all was made to bring the KGB in line with perestroika and openness and to change its personnel and operations. In 1985-89, eight of fourteen union republic KGB chiefs were relieved of their duties. The officers included, with the likely reasons for their replacement in parenthesis hereafter, the top Chekists of the Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Kirgizia, and Tadzhikistan (corruption or inability to stamp out corruption); Lithuania, Azerbaijan, and Armenia (failure to control ethnic and inter-republican unrest); Georgia (age); and Ukraine (maltreatment of an investigative journalist who died in detention).[1076] At the end of September 1988, the personnel changes reached the very top. Chebrikov, who had been first party secretary of Dnepropetrovsk *oblast'*, KGB cadre chief from 1967 to 1982, and chief Chekist since 1968, and whose career profile reflected the conservative and provincial outlook of the agency, was ostensibly promoted. He was made a CC Secretary and head of one of the newly established Commissions, the

1076 Von Borcke, 'The KGB and Perestroika', p. 62.

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Commission for Legal Policy.[1077] That body was tasked to oversee the work of the CC's State and Legal Policy Department which had traditionally exercised a degree of control over the administrative organs – the armed forces, the KGB, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Prosecutor's Office, the trade unions and the Komsomol. On paper, the functions of the Commission for Legal Policy were broader than those of the other commissions, and thus Gorbachev seemed to have made a deal with Chebrikov in order to whittle away at Ligachev's power. He appeared to have *gained* Chebrikov's support and not, as many observers thought, lost it. The former head of the KGB also still ranked high on the CPSU's 'popularity scale'. In the election of the party candidates for the Congress of People's Deputies from March to May 1989, he – together with Gorbachev and Ryzhkov – was among the Politburo members receiving the highest number of votes.[1078] In practice, however, since the party was losing power, any previously important party position was being devalued, and thus Chebrikov's promotion was in essence a demotion. At the same time, the trend lines pointed in the direction of more pressure on the KGB. In conjunction with the attempt to exert parliamentary control over the armed forces, the KGB, too, was to be supervised – by a Supreme Soviet Committee on Defense and State Security.

One KGB officer's loss was another officer's gain. Kryuchkov was appointed chairman of the KGB, promoted over the heads of two first deputies, and he was the first chief of foreign intelligence ever to reach the top position in the agency. His career had been closely tied to that of Andropov, beginning in Hungary when the former was posted to the *rezidentura* and the latter ambassador in that country. Kryuchkov followed Andropov to Moscow and worked for him in the CC socialist countries department and later, when his mentor became KGB chief, as head of the agency's secretariat. Kryuchkov was thus privy to the agency's most sensitive secrets. In 1971 he was promoted to deputy head and, three years later, head of the FCD. In December 1987, Kryuchkov – travelling incognito – was included in the Soviet delegation going to Washington to sign the treaty on the elimination of intermediate-range nuclear missiles. Never be-

1077 This description and analysis of Chebrikov and the Commission on Legal Policy is based on Rahr, 'Who Is in Charge of the Party Apparatus?', pp. 21-22.

1078 Ibid.

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fore had a Soviet leader been accompanied on a visit to the West by the head of the FCD.[1079]

When he became chairman of the KGB, Kryuchkov was hailed by Western analysts as an 'expert with modern ideas, at least in foreign policy' and an 'ally' of Shevardnadze and Yakovlev.[1080] Gordievsky, however, who knew him well, has painted a different picture. He has described him as single-minded, self-confident, intolerant of differing viewpoints and utterly humourless, as someone who never strayed from a prepared text and never tried to coin a striking phrase. A workaholic, he shunned alcohol, and even before Andropov and Gorbachev launched *their* anti-alcoholism campaigns, he banned drinking parties wherever he had the power to do so. When he became FCD chief he had absolutely no experience of foreign intelligence operations or of life in the West. His world view was 'shaped by ideological stereotypes and conspiracy theories' and by 'paranoia about the threat from the West'.[1081] This was not, one would have thought, the kind of personality and political profile conducive to the pluralization and liberalization of Soviet society, abandonment of empire and cooperation with Western countries. It was a profile that fit much more closely his later role as one of the main organizers of the abortive August 1991 coup. In fact, he never repented his role in it. The only regret he had was that he and his co-conspirators had let themselves be deceived and that they had not acted more decisively. When asked later about the reason why he, as head of such a powerful organization as the KGB, could have let the collapse of the Soviet Union happen, he replied: 'We were hostages of our own illusions. ... We obeyed the law and the president, and Gorbachev had one quality: his hypocrisy was so great that it was not easy to tell the difference between truth and lies.'[1082] What precisely it was that recommended Kryuchkov to Gorbachev or someone close to him is unclear and will probably remain so.

Perhaps it was *apparent* flexibility and adaptability. Kryuchkov did introduce some cosmetic and operation changes and thereby conveyed the impression – to some – that the KGB was now in step with openness. As aptly described by American journalist David Remnick, Kryuchkov tried

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1079 Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story*, p. 625.
1080 Von Borcke, 'The KGB and Perestroika', p. 64.
1081 Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story*, pp. 534-35, 602.
1082 David Remnick, 'Letter from Russia: The War for the Kremlin', *The New Yorker*, 22 July 1996.

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to 'personalize' himself and the institution he represented. He confessed to the press his admiration for Van Cliburn and Bellini's *Norma*.[1083] He fielded (carefully screened) questions on a television show. He allowed (carefully chaperoned) tours of Lubyanka. Comrade Katya Mayorova was crowned Miss KGB – probably then the only security services beauty queen in the world. 'Violence, inhumanity, and the violation of human rights have always been alien to the work of our secret services', he told the Italian communist party newspaper *L'Unità*.[1084] To the parliament's Committee on Defense and State Security he revealed: 'The KGB has no secret informers, only assistants.'[1085] In November 1989, Sergei Kuznetsov, an active member of the Democratic Union Party, had been sentenced to three years' imprisonment for civil rights activism. One month later, Kryuchkov presided over a meeting with the International Women Journalists' Press Club where he clarified for the record that 'the security organs did not combat "dissent", only specific unlawful activities'.[1086] As for the future work of the *komitetchiki*, he said, 'our actions must protect human rights'.[1087]

There were a few changes at the operational level. So called 'active measures', disinformation, and cooperation with and financing of 'peace movements and various front organizations – work that had traditionally been coordinated with the CC's International Department – were being deemphasized. Officers that had been trained for work abroad were being reassigned to the Baltic republics, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and other areas in which independence movements and ethnic unrest were erupting. Finally, prompted by the embarrassment which terrorists armed with Soviet weapons and explosives were causing in Moscow's diplomatic relations with the West, the hijacking of an Ilyushin transport plane from the northern Caucasus to Israel in December 1988 and, as Kryuchkov said, the disappearance not of 'several tons of enriched uranium in the world but ...

1083 The enumeration of measures designed to enhance the KGB's image draws on Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb*, pp. 342-44.

1084 Ibid., p. 342.

1085 Supreme Soviet Hearings, 14 July 1989, BBC, SWB, SU/0513 C/1-6, 20 July 1989; as quoted in Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story*, p. 627.

1086 Transcript of the December 1988 meeting (Stenogramma vstrechi Predsedatelia KGB Vladimira Kriuchkova s chlenami Mezhdunarodnogo press-kluba zhenshchin-zhurnalistok), Yevgenia Albats's personal archive; Albats, *The State within a State*, p. 206.

1087 Ibid.

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of several hundred tons', the KGB was by 1989 ready for (limited) cooperation with Western intelligence agencies to combat international terrorism.[1088] However, to the extent that it is known, there were no concomitant personnel cuts in the KGB and no significant organizational changes.[1089]

After this survey of the functions of the KGB in the Soviet political system and the ambiguous relationship between Gorbachev and the KGB, the question about the likely role of the agency on the German problem can now be addressed.

KGB Operations in Germany

What follows closely from the cosmetic character of the changes in the KGB is the fact that access to the agency's archives on its operations in Germany remains closed. Some interesting and intriguing information, however, *is* available, suggesting some plausible lines of interpretation. There is, first and foremost, little doubt about the KGB's concern about developments in East Germany. Like the armed forces, the security agency's largest base abroad was in the GDR, and to lose it would have meant major disruptions of its intelligence operations in West Germany and NATO. Organizationally, one of the FCD's deputy heads, Gen. Victor Grushko, had nominal responsibility for West European affairs but *de facto* for the German problem as a whole since – as in the MFA before 1986 – one of his departments, the Fourth Department, dealt with both West and East German affairs as well as with Austria. General Anatoli Novikov was the chief of this 'German' department.[1090]

Even before the rapid erosion of the GDR's stability in 1989, the FCD and the German department in Moscow as well as the *rezidentura* in East Berlin (Karlshorst) were facing the same problem that Gorbachev had to contend with at the political level: East German arrogance and condescension; disdain for the changes occurring in the Soviet Union; expression of

1088 For the changes in KGB operations see Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story*, pp. 635-36 and Albats, *The State within a State*, p. 235.

1089 The dissolution of the Fifth Directorate was noted above, fn. 1061.

1090 The data on the organizational structure concerning the KGB and Germany and on Gen. Grushko are from Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story*, pp. 3-4, 565, 641, 653; on Novikov, see Reuth and Bönte, *Das Komplott*, p. 211.

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concern about their possible repercussions in the GDR; and failure to inform Soviet counterparts about sensitive developments in the GDR. The harbingers of change became briefly visible in the mid-1970s, when a KGB officer from the Karlshorst *rezidentura* was arrested for drunken driving and its chief, Gen. Anatoli Lazarev, complained about 'the use of Nazi methods against a fraternal power'.[1091] Honecker vigorously rejected the complaint, and at his insistence – along the Yefremov-Abrasimov pattern – Lazarev was recalled to Moscow.[1092]

When Kryuchkov moved up to become top Chekist in October 1988, he was succeeded in his post as FCD head by Leonid Shebarshin.[1093] Unlike his predecessor, Shebarshin had extensive international experience. He was a professional diplomat who had been posted twice to Islamabad, transferred to the KGB, and worked for the agency in New Delhi and Teheran. There is little direct evidence of his relations with the East German state security ministry or his attitudes towards developments in the GDR. A rare exception are the transcripts of his talks with Stasi chief Mielke in East Berlin in April 1989. Also present at the meeting were Lt. Gen. Grushko, Col. Novikov, and the head of the *rezidentura* in East Germany, Gennadi Titov.

Mielke lived up to the Russian proverb, 'Wherever the khan, there goes the horde.' He followed closely in Honecker's footsteps. In an extraordinarily tedious and pretentious briefing, Mielke showered his colleague with the usual statistics about the GDR's achievements and concluded: 'As a matter of principle, it can be stated that the situation in our republic is characterized by great political stability. State security is at all times reliably safeguarded.'[1094] He then verbally flogged and flailed Shebarshin, vehemently complaining about an article in *Moskovskaia pravda* ('with a circulation about 1 million') that had revealed to Soviet readers that Stalin had at one time worked as an agent for the Czarist secret police, the Okhrana.[1095] He pierced him with questions: Had the KGB not placed the

1091 Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story*, p. 640.

1092 Ibid.

1093 Shebarshin has published a book about his work as head of foreign intelligence; Leonid V. Shebarshin, *Iz zhizni nachal'nika razvedki* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 1994). It does not, however, contain anything of value on the issue of KGB operations in Germany.

1094 'Top secret' notes (*Notiz*) about the talks between Mielke and Shebarshin on 7 April 1989, SE, Central Party Archives, ZAIG 5198, Bl. 100-39.

1095 The article had appeared in *Moskovskaia pravda* on 30 March 1989.

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archives under its control? Are there still any archives that are not under KGB control? If Stalin had liquidated the people who knew about his past, why hadn't he destroyed the archival evidence? Could it now be said that it had been Stalin, the Okhrana agent, who had defeated fascism? Had he built socialism and the international communist movement in that capacity? If that were true, he, Mielke would also be an agent of the Okhrana. In fact, 'all of us would be Okhrana agents because we worked under Stalin'. The blistering attack culminated in a thinly veiled threat: 'I have to be afraid that you will expose our agents if there is a possibility to look at the archives. ... You hurt yourself, and we are put in the uncomfortable position [to have to decide] whether we can still tell you where we are getting [our] information from.' Shebarshin interrupted Mielke at that point, the only time he did so in the course of the harangue, to state the obvious: *'I sit here like a defendant. I am not responsible for this article.'*[1096]

Several other gems serve to refract both the secret service mind-set and the state of Soviet-East German relations. After his lecture, Mielke asked his guest's forgiveness for its length. However, they had not been meeting all that often. Furthermore, 'I thought that Comrade Shebarshin would report it [the content of Mielke's statement] to Comrade Kryuchkov, and that Comrade Kryuchkov will transmit it in an appropriate form to Comrade Chebrikov, who would inform Comrade Gorbachev.' One almost has to admire the pathetic if not pathological sense of self-importance of the Stasi chief, his apparently unshakable belief in the effective flow of information and the unbroken importance of the Soviet Politburo as a decision-making body. Mielke evidently assumed that Kryuchkov, not being as yet a full member of the Politburo, would have no direct access to Gorbachev, but that Chebrikov, by virtue of his full membership, *did* and would have the time and interest to listen to a rehash of Mielke's innuendos. Nevertheless, what Mielke specifically had in mind was stated at another place with similarly disarming simplicity as his explanation of the purposes of his elaborations. Since Gorbachev's visit to West Germany was at that time only a few weeks away, he warned against 'détente euphoria', falling victim to 'human rights demagoguery' and other 'imperialist intrigues', and allowing 'interference in the internal affairs of socialist countries'. In that

1096 'Top secret' notes (*Notiz*) about the talks between Mielke and Shebarshin (italics mine).

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context he exclaimed: '*The FRG is playing a dual game! To know that is important for Comrade Gorbachev's trip to Bonn.*'[1097]

A final gem is an exchange about the role of the security agencies in political and social change. In the process, Shebarshin – in stark contrast to his own superior and to his East German counterpart – emerges as an essentially sensible observer and politically loyal official. After a poignant and fair presentation of both the risks and benefits of perestroika and glasnost, he dismisses his East German host's evident proclivity for the eradication of problems such as the emergence of nationalism and excesses of glasnost by traditional administrative measures: 'It would not be realistic to hope that [these problems] can only be solved by state security means, albeit the state security organs have to make a corresponding contribution.' He also tells his host that whether anybody liked it or not: 'We are carrying out the orders and instructions of the party. We don't make policy, but we are implementing it.' Mielke disagreed. In another example of his exaggerated sense of self-importance and of the manipulative role of the security agency Mielke countered: *'It isn't entirely true that we are only implementing party policy. Our information must find expression in party policy.'* He begged his interlocutor 'not to be too modest' about this.[1098]

As in the Gorbachev-Honecker private conversations, several sensitive subjects in the Shebarshin-Mielke exchange were either missing or only cryptically alluded to. The most important of the these was the systematic attempt made by Honecker to increase, with the assistance of Mielke, his own control in the domestic system and the Stasi's autonomy vis-à-vis the KGB. As Gordievsky has confirmed, both attempts had begun well before Gorbachev's ascent to the highest office in the Kremlin. He also provides an interesting twist to this confirmation when he reports that Mielke and Markus Wolf, the Stasi's chief of foreign intelligence, were complaining at the KGB's Lubyanka headquarters that 'Honecker was restricting the intimacy of Soviet-GDR intelligence operations'.[1099] It is difficult to say whether these complaints were either genuine or disingenuous or a ruse or trap laid to ascertain how the KGB would react. Whatever the case may be, the 'endless discussions in the [KGB] centre', some of them witnessed by Gordievsky in Grushko's office, on how to strengthen Mielke's and

1097 Ibid. (italics mine).
1098 Ibid.
1099 Andrew and Gordievsky, *KGB: The Inside Story*, p. 640.

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Wolf's hands against Honecker, were utterly pointless.[1100] In Gordievsky's view, the 'situation was further complicated by the fact that Mielke and Wolf themselves were scarcely on speaking terms'.[1101]

Missing in the 'top secret' conversation of the secret service officers was also a KGB operation in East Germany that was so secret that it was kept not only from the Stasi but out of normal KGB channels – the *Luch* ('beam' or 'ray') operation. According to a report by the German Federal Agency for the Protection of the Constitution, and replicated by Soviet sources,[1102] '*Luch* was removed from the ordinary hierarchical structure of the official *rezidentura* and was known only to members of the Fourth ['German'] Department directly concerned and the top level of the FCD.[1103] It is plausible to assume that Titov was also informed about the operation and provided staffing for it. That is, Shebarshin, Grushko, Novikov and Titov were almost certainly aware of the operation in their meeting with Mielke in April 1989 but chose to keep quiet.

What about *Luch*'s functions? The Federal Agency's report states:

> The establishment of this group had been considered necessary in the course of the growing tendencies of emancipation of the MfS [Ministry for State Security] in relation to [its] KGB 'mentor' and doubts about the unconditional loyalty of the leading SED cadres in that connection. ... Starting from the mid-1980s, the *Luch* group had been instructed to persuade citizens of the ... GDR in leading positions of science, technology and politics to cooperate with the KGB and thereby influence socially relevant processes.[1104]

This poses the interesting question whether Gorbachev was playing a dual game, asserting publicly and in conversation with Honecker the principle of 'non-interference' but authorizing clandestine operations for the desta-

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1100 Ibid.

1101 Ibid. In his book, Markus Wolf, *In eigenem Auftrag: Bekenntnisse und Einsichten* (Munich: Schneekluth, 1991), refers neither to the differences with Mielke nor to Soviet-East German controversies over the breakdown of cooperation.

1102 Evgeni Bovkun, '"Luch" KGB v svetlom tsarstve kapitalizma', *Izvestiia*, 22 September 1993. The title of Bovkun's article is derived from Russian literature, that is, from *luch sveta v temnom tsartstve* (ray of light in the dark Czardom), a literary critique by Nikolai Dobrolubov in reference to a nineteenth century play by Alexander Ostrovsky, *Groza*. Dobrolubov called the heroine of this play, a progressively- thinking woman, a ray of light in the darkness.

1103 A summary of and excerpts from the report by the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (Federal Agency for the Protection of the Constitution) can be found in Reuth and Bönte, *Wie es wirklich zur deutschen Einheit kam*, pp. 210-12.

1104 Ibid., p. 210.

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bilization of the Honecker regime – an effort, furthermore, that turned out to be successful when Honecker was forced to resign on 17 October 1989. The story sounds interesting but has no basis in fact. In reality, the *Luch* operation was more limited in scope and politically ineffective. It also changed over time, as the West German report states. Whereas, from the mid-1980s until 1988, 'priority was given to persuade high-level GDR leading cadres' to cooperate with the KGB, *Luch* subsequently concentrated on the establishment of contacts with 'experts at the mid-level of management' and 'members of the [old] bloc parties, parties newly founded in the process of systemic change, and youth organizations.'[1105]

There may have been two interrelated reasons for the change in approach. The first is high-level political intervention. Several instances are known in which high-ranking members of the SED Politburo had contacted Soviet representatives about the possibility of assistance in the replacement of Honecker. SED Politburo member and First Deputy Prime Minister Krolikowski had approached Ambassador Kochemasov and told him that for a long time he had looked for a pretext under which to talk to him. A very difficult state of affairs had arisen in a party rife with dogmatism, centralisation and curtailment of discussion. Everything was being painted in rosy colours. Something needed to be done. When Kochemasov asked what it was he had in mind, he received the following reply: '*The leadership has to be replaced*.'[1106] The ambassador was also told that there were other members in the Politburo who shared this point of view. In accordance with Gorbachev's stance of non-interference and referring to the circumstances of Ulbricht's replacement, Kochemasov explained that the times of Soviet involvement in East German leadership changes were over. Kochemasov nevertheless sent a telegram to Moscow reporting the conversation.[1107]

Kochemasov was similarly approached, as he writes in his memoirs, by Prime Minister and Politburo member Willi Stoph.[1108] Even prior to that, Stoph had taken the 'extreme risk' of establishing contact with the KGB *rezidentura*. According to Ivan Kuzmin, the head of its Information Department, the East German premier had transmitted material to the KGB residency, some of which in his own handwriting. The material described

1105 Ibid., p. 211.
1106 Kotschemassow, *Meine letzte Mission*, p. 59 (italics mine).
1107 Ibid.
1108 Ibid., p. 60.

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the precarious state of the East German economy, the state of affairs and distribution of power in the party and Honecker's dishonesty in his relations with the Soviet Union. Stoph's approach, in Kuzmin's interpretation, allowed only one simple conclusion: unless Honecker was replaced the GDR would collapse.[1109] To that extent, it was a 'direct appeal to Mikhail Sergeevich [Gorbachev] for [his] support' in an attempt to force the East German leader from office.[1110] How did Gorbachev react? He responded, according to the KGB officer, in line with a 'personal trait of his character. As usual, he said nothing. He didn't take any decision.'[1111]

It is reasonable to infer from all this that the political leadership in Moscow *could* have cooperated with a faction in the East German leadership trying to unseat Honecker but deliberately desisted from making such an attempt. The change in the level of contacts *Luch* was seeking to establish may have been directly connected with this approach. The political leadership in Moscow appears to have reasoned that sooner rather than later, somehow, Honecker would be forced out of or die in office. In that event, it was expedient to have in place contacts with mid-level cadres for the post-Honecker era. Gorbachev thus declined to authorize the KGB to give history a push. He decided to let things drift or, if one prefers to use his terminology, to let history decide. And decide it did. But in ways neither predicted nor desired by him. The account of the role of the KGB, or lack thereof, in the unfolding events in East Germany would be incomplete without a brief comment on one of the many agents in that part of Germany: KGB captain Vladimir V. Putin.

1109 Interview with Ivan Kuzmin, conducted by Mikhail Karpov, 'Padenie Berlinskoi steny', *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 5 November 1994.

1110 Ibid.

1111 Ibid. Kuzmin obviously thinks that the political leadership *should* have taken action – and earlier than 1989. Starting in the second half of 1988, he wrote in an article, the *residentura* reported more frequently and more strongly about the GDR's growing indebtedness, deterioration of economic conditions, dissatisfaction among the population, and the emergence of '*irreversible structures'* which pointed to an '*objective process towards the restoration of German unity'*; Ivan Kuzmin, 'sekretnye sluzhby mnogo znali – no resheniia prinimali politiki', *Novoe vremia*, No. 20 (1993), pp. 28-29 (italics mine).

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Putin at the Dresden *rezidentura*

Putin was posted to Dresden in August 1985 at the age of 32, shortly after having completed training at the KGB's Red Banner Institute in Moscow where he concentrated on the analysis of and possible future appointment in German-speaking countries, that is, in the (4th) department of the KGB's First Chief Directorate (FCD), including, as mentioned, Austria, Switzerland and both Germanys.

What is it that he did at that posting? Did he involve himself in promoting perestroika, glasnost, demokratizatsiya and the New Political Thinking in the GDR? How well known and how influential was he in influencing the course of events, perhaps as an active participant in the *Luch* operation?

Once Putin had risen to prominence, academic specialists and journalists from all over the world travelled to Dresden and Leipzig, Bonn and Berlin, to uncover traces of his activities and the possible imprint he may have left there. The results were poor.[1112] The previous chief of Soviet foreign intelligence and head of the KGB from 1988 until 1990, Vladimir Kryuchkov, could not remember Putin. That name also did not ring a bell with the legendary chief of GDR state security, Markus Wolf. The previous head of the SED's Dresden regional party organization, Hans Modrow, as far as he knew, had never met him.[1113] And the previous KGB general of the First KGB Department, Oleg Kalugin, shrugged his shoulders when the name Putin was mentioned.

Putin, in what is described as an autobiography, provides some information about his activities.[1114] He says tersely that he carried out 'work along

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1112 The enumeration of persons who could have remembered Putin but didn't draws on Alexander Rahr, *Wladimir Putin: Der* '*Deutsche' im Kreml*, 2nd, revised ed. (Munich: Universitas, September 2000), p. 55.

1113 Putin, however, stated in his 'autobiography' that he 'met Modrov a couple of times at official receptions'. Vladimir V. Putin, *Ot pervogo litsa. Razgovory s Vladimirom Putinym* (Moscow: Vagrius, 2000), p. 66.

1114 Putin, *Ot pervogo litsa.* The autobiography comes in the format of questions-and-answers in six interviews by three journalists. One may want to disagree with their claim (p. 4) that, with the publication of the book, 'the question of "Who is Mr. Putin" has now been closed'. − Doubt about whether the main questions about who is Mr. Putin are answered should extend to Rahr who claims that 'Putin himself has very extensively [sic] told about his time as an agent in Dresden' (*Putin,* p. 56). 'Extensive' may be an apt characterization but how credible?

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the lines of political intelligence − acquisition of information about political actors and plans of the potential adversary. … We were interested in any information … about the main adversary, and the main adversary that was NATO'.[1115] In more detail, 'ordinary' and 'routine' work in such postings, including the GDR, would, he continues, consist of

> recruitment of sources for information, acquisition of information, and its analysis and dispatch to the centre. That pertained to information about political parties, trends in these parties, and about their current and possible future leaders, about the rise of people to decisive positions in the [political] parties and the government apparatus. It was important to know who worked how and on what in the foreign ministry of the countries that interested us, how it conducted its policy on different questions and in different parts of the world, and …. what would [probably] be the position of our partners [sic], for instance, in disarmament negotiations. Of course, in order to receive such information, one needed sources and, therefore, in parallel with the [performance of analytical tasks] recruitment work … was carried out.[1116]

It is possible and even probable that Putin carried out such work. But why of all places in Dresden? The city, with a population of about 500,000, after East Berlin and Leipzig, was only the third-largest in the GDR. Its location close to the border with Czechoslovakia was far away from West Berlin and NATO territory. Putin was even deprived of the pleasure − one would think, as an analyst to cover trends in NATO countries, the *requirement* – of watching West German television: In Dresden and the surrounding area it was technically impossible to receive West German TV broadcasts. The local population sarcastically referred to that area as East Germany's *schwarzes Loch*, or 'black hole', and the *Tal der Ahnungslosen*, the

1115 Putin, *Ot pervogo litsa*, p. 62.

1116 Ibid., pp. 62-63. Rahr (*Putin*, p. 59) claims that Putin's work also included the gathering of intelligence on political parties (and leaders) in East Germany. There is no evidence of this, certainly not in Putin's 'autobiography'.

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'valley of the clueless'.[1117] Dresden, as he himself acknowledged, was an appointment to a 'provincial' post.[1118]

The journalists conducting the interviews for his 'autobiography' asked him whether he had, during his time as an agent, ever been in West Germany. He had not, he says.[1119] He emphatically denies ('complete rubbish') that he was in any way engaged in the acquisition of information relating to Western high technology.[1120] It was also 'nonsense' to conjecture that 'I was involved in any operations outside the purview of the local organs of power of the GDR'.[1121] The interviewers also wanted to know whether he in any way participated in the *Luch* operation and what, indeed, that operation was all about. Putin claims he 'doesn't know'; he did 'not involve himself in it'; and he does 'not even know whether it was carried out'. To the extent that he was aware, its target was the 'political leadership of the GDR' and that level was above his position.[1122]

The autobiographical notes are nevertheless an extraordinary document because they are typical of the narrow mind-set not only of the Soviet military and security establishment in the GDR but also in the Soviet Union. They are of interest not so much because of what they explicitly state but what they reveal about implicit assumptions and convictions. Thus, one searches in vain about anything relating to what ostensibly was the main object of his work, West Germany and NATO. Instead, the reader is treated to observations about East Germany and the reasons for its demise. 'The GDR', he states, 'was for me in a sense familiar.' In conversation with his Stasi colleagues, he

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1117 Concerning the 'black hole' problem, incredible as it may sound, the central SEP cadres' HQ had difficulties persuading officials to take up posts in the Dresden area. − Even the East German political leadership, up to its most prominent exponent, Erich Honecker, watched West German TV. This was revealed on the occasion of the reopening of the reconstructed Semper Opera in Dresden when Honecker admitted to visiting prime minister and SPD leader Johannes Rau that he had come to realize how beautifully the Opera had been restored by having watched a report on it on West German TV: Dieter Buhl, 'So manches Glas auf den Frieden', *Die Zeit*, 18 January 1985.

1118 Putin, *Ot pervogo litsa*, p. 62.

1119 Ibid.

1120 Ibid., p. 66.

1121 Ibid., p. 67.

1122 Ibid., p. 65.

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> suddenly realized that they, and the very GDR, were [stuck] in conditions that the Soviet Union had outlived many years ago. ... [The GDR] was a stone-hard totalitarian country along the lines of the Soviet Union in the 1930s. The tragedy was that many people [sic] genuinely believed in communist ideals. I thought then: If changes were to begin [in the Soviet Union] what impact would that make on the fate of these people? … It was difficult to imagine how the GDR could set in motion such sharp changes [as in the USSR]. Yes, this didn't enter into anyone's head! Furthermore, when these changes did occur, we did not make any assessments as to how they would end. Sometimes [sic], of course, the thought arose that this regime could not maintain itself for long.[1123]

No wonder, then, that 'the Germans', after the fall of the Berlin wall, 'destroyed its MSS [Ministry for State Security, or Stasi]' and that the 'crowd' that had appeared at the Dresden *rezidentura* was 'in an aggressive mood'.[1124]

It was, of course, nonsense to compare Honecker's crumbling GDR of the 1980s, at a loss to cope with mass demonstrations, with Stalin's USSR of the 1930s, with mass terror as a constituent element of the system. Even more revealing of Putin's mindset and that of his fellow Chekists in Dresden and Moscow, however, is the complete absence of any thought given to the *national* issue, the core of the German problem. He fails to reflect on the operational problems of the Common House of Europe for East Germany, and how it could be possible to accommodate two German states with a common history and language under one common − German and European − roof. He fails to mention the *Mitteleuropa* debate.[1125] Such terms as German 'unity', 'unification' or 'reunification' do not occur in the report on his time he spent in the GDR. He fails to note the difference between the demand for regime change in East Germany and the demands in other countries of the Soviet bloc and, indeed, the Soviet Union. Specifically, he does not show any awareness of the fact that by the time the threatening German 'crowd' appeared at the Dresden *rezidentura* in December 1989, the slogans of the demonstrators throughout East Germany had already changed from *Wir sind das Volk* ('We are the people') to *Wir sind ein Volk* ('We are one nation'). There is, finally, no reflection on

1123 Ibid., p. 70.
1124 Ibid., p. 71.
1125 Putin's mental map reveals some strange features. In reference to the GDR he says: 'It seemed to me that I travelled to an east European country in the center of Europe.' Ibid., p. 70.

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the fact that the Soviet military and the KGB were instruments of the centre's colonial control, the ultimate guarantee of the GDR's existence. Questions, therefore, pertaining to the legitimacy of Soviet rule in East Germany and Eastern Europe, let alone the Baltic republics, remain untouched.

Putin, however, does deal with the relationship between the center and the periphery. And what he says is again vivid testimony to the mindset of the Soviet military and security establishment, both in Moscow and in Dresden. When the threatening crowd appeared at the *rezidentura,* Putin says, 'I called our Group of Forces and explained the situation.' They replied that there is nothing that they could do without any instructions from Moscow, but Moscow was silent. Some military did arrive and the crowd dispersed but Putin had 'the feeling that the county [the Soviet Union] no longer existed'.[1126] Even more importantly for understanding his policies as president after 2000, he considered it a mistake, in fact, incomprehensible how 'one could just drop everything and leave'. [1127] He, so his message, would have acted differently than Gorbachev.

1126 Ibid., p. 71.
1127 Ibid., p. 73.

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