

Books

East Germany's Disappearing Future

Jeffrey Gedmin

DAVID CHILDS, THOMAS BAYLIS, and MARILYN RUESCHEMEYER, Eds. *East Germany in Comparative Perspective*. London and New York, Routledge, 1989.

MARILYN RUESCHEMEYER and CHRISTINE LEMKE, Eds. *The Quality of Life in the German Democratic Republic*. Armonk, NY, M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1989.

IAN JEFFRIES and MANFRED MELZER, Eds. *The East German Economy*. London, Croom Helm, 1987.

DURING the 18-year rule of Erich Honecker as general secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands—SED) from 1971 to 1989, the German Democratic Re-

Jeffrey Gedmin is a researcher at the American Enterprise Institute (Washington, DC). His articles on Germany have appeared in The Wall Street Journal and the Christian Science Monitor. Since 1985, he has taught German language and international affairs at Georgetown University's School for Summer and Continuing Education.

GERT-JOACHIM GLAESSNER, Ed. *Die DDR in der Ära Honecker* (The GDR in the Honecker Era). West Berlin, Westdeutscher Verlag, 1988.

F. STEPHEN LARRABEE, Ed. *The Two German States and European Security*. New York, St. Martin's Press, 1989.

public managed to capture at least a measure of the international legitimacy that had eluded it since its founding in 1949. Yet, as the GDR prepared to celebrate its 40th anniversary on October 7, 1989, the SED faced a grave crisis of legitimacy at home. The problems confronting the SED included the departure of hundreds of thousands of GDR citizens to the West; civil unrest, with demonstrations in support of democratization erupting in cities throughout the country; the emergence of reform factions within the SED; and diminished support from a reform-minded Soviet leadership led by Mikhail Gorbachev.

Overwhelmed by these challenges, the 77-year-old Honecker was forced to resign on October 18. During the next three weeks, new General Secretary Egon Krenz engaged in a sweeping purge of the government and party apparatus in what appeared to be a frantic effort

to restore social and political stability to the country.¹

Such maneuvers did little, however, to placate rapidly growing popular unrest, and on November 9 came the stunning announcement by the party's Central Committee that East Germany's borders with West Germany would be permanently opened, effective immediately. In what would be perhaps one of modern history's more remarkable ironies, the SED, which built a wall in 1961 to keep its people in, would take the wall down some 28 years later in a desperate attempt to achieve the same objective.

Following the tumultuous autumn of 1989, the East German communist party² was forced to enter a

¹On December 3, 1989, Egon Krenz resigned, another victim of the GDR's pro-democracy movement. The emergency SED congress, convened the weekend of December 8, appointed the 41-year-old lawyer Gregor Gysi to lead the SED as the party began preparation for elections. Elections were first scheduled for May 6, but were then moved up to March 18, when growing economic problems and continued unrest called into question the viability of the interim coalition government with opposition parties. See *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Munich), Jan. 27–28, 1990.

²The SED was renamed the Socialist Unity Party of Germany—Party of Democratic Socialism (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands—Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus—SED-PDS) on December 16, 1989, and then again renamed simply the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) on February 4, 1990.

new, hitherto unknown world of compromise, coalition, and competition. And as the March 18, 1990, elections would show, though managing to secure 16 percent of the popular vote,³ it was unable to convince the majority of East German voters that its political transformation had been legitimate.

The works under review examine East Germany's domestic and foreign policies before the GDR embarked on its uncharted course of reform and reunification with West Germany. Not surprisingly, a number of their underlying assumptions have been severely undermined by the breathtaking events of recent months—for example, that the German question is “no longer one of reunification, but [a question of] the character of the relationship between the two German states . . .” (John Edwin Mroz, in Larrabee, p. xvi). Nevertheless, these volumes offer numerous useful points of orientation for a discussion of the GDR's political and economic problems and prospects.

The volume edited by David Childs, Thomas Baylis, and Marilyn Rueschemeyer and that edited by Rueschemeyer and Christine Lemke examine social institutions and social policy in the GDR. The former features a comparative approach; the latter contains articles that stress empirical analysis of such topics as gender roles, the education system, the environment, and leisure time. Although both books touch on economic problems, the volume compiled by Ian Jeffries and Manfred Melzer con-

³Even the 16 percent attained by the PDS caught many observers by surprise. Between October 1989 and March 1990, communist party membership had plummeted from 2.3 million to 650,000. Popular anti-communist sentiment was reflected by employment notices that had begun to appear in shop windows by Christmas time, declaring that “SED members need not apply.” *The New York Times*, Dec. 15, 1989.

centrates exclusively on the East German economy and the problems of reform. The work edited by Gert-Joachim Glaessner is an impressive collection of studies that examine major aspects of both domestic and foreign policy during the Honecker era. And finally, the book edited by F. Stephen Larrabee rounds off this array of works, focusing on the foreign-policy dimensions of East-West German relations.

IN ITS frantic quest for legitimacy this past year, the SED in its new guise as the PDS faced pressure on two fronts: first, externally from the Federal Republic; and second, from the country's nascent internal opposition.⁴ Despite West Germany's de facto recognition of the GDR, which East Berlin obtained as a result of the Basic Treaty (*Grundlagenvertrag*) signed in 1972 by the two German states, the Federal Republic has continued to pursue its policy of “one German nation.” Specifically, as David Childs points out, even after two decades of rapprochement with the GDR's communist regime, Bonn never came to “regard the GDR as a foreign state nor . . . its citizens as foreigners” (in Childs, Baylis, and Rueschemeyer, p. 1). Thus, the tens of thousands of GDR citizens who began to stream across Hungary's open border with Austria last summer on their way to

⁴For an exposition of the GDR's legitimacy deficit in the past, see Angela Stent, “East German Quest for Legitimacy,” *Problems of Communism* (Washington, DC), March-April 1986, pp. 79–85. For an examination of East Germany's grass-roots opposition prior to the events of autumn 1989, see Vladimir Tismaneanu, “Nascent Civil Society in the GDR,” *ibid.*, March-June 1989, pp. 90–111. For a discussion of the role played by GDR churches in East Germany's dissident and opposition movement, see Robert F. Goeckel, “Church and Society in the GDR” (in Rueschemeyer and Lemke, pp. 210–27); and Reinhard Henkys, “Theses on the Change of the Social and Political Role of the Churches in the GDR in the 1970's and 1980's” (in Glaessner, pp. 332–53).

the Federal Republic were well aware of the friendly welcome accorded them under West German law.

West German claims to represent Germans in the GDR are based above all on the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*)—the de facto constitution of the Federal Republic—which was adopted on May 23, 1949. The Basic Law formally enshrines the concept of German unity. The framers of this document took care to stress in the preamble that they spoke for all Germans, including “those . . . to whom participation was denied” and noted in the last article that the document “shall cease to be in effect on the day on which a constitution adopted by a free decision of the German people comes into force.”⁵ In accordance with this legal position, GDR citizens have been automatically entitled to West German citizenship as well as to an extensive benefits package designed to expedite resettlement in the West.⁶

The issue of actual German unification had lost much of its salience as an operational goal of West German politics over the last two decades, but as a result of the dramatic changes in East Germany since October 1989, the “German question” had quickly reemerged as the central issue of foreign policy platforms for all West German political parties by the end of the year.⁷

⁵“Basic Law,” in Peter H. Merkl, *The Origin of the West German Republic*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1963, pp. 213, 248.

⁶In the aftermath of East Germany's first free election, the Bonn government announced on March 20 that it would put an end to most special benefits for East German resettlers on July 1, 1990 (*The New York Times*, Mar. 21, 1990). The decision reflected an attempt by West Germany to stem the flow of refugees from the East, which, by the end of March, continued unabated at a rate of more than 2,000 a day.

⁷See Gebhard Schweigler's chapter in Larrabee (pp. 73–105) for a detailed discussion of the German question and political parties in the Federal Republic.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl's proposal for a German confederation—designed as a step-by-step path toward unity and unveiled before the Bundestag on November 28—was above all an initial step to define the position of his party, the Christian Democratic Union (Christlich-Demokratische Union—CDU), on this issue, but it also attempted to set the political agenda on reunification for all other political parties.⁸

Communist power in the GDR had all but disintegrated by the beginning of 1990, and the PDS, succumbing to the wave of pro-unity sentiment in East Germany, was forced to revise its own long-standing position on the German question and endorse unification. The framers of East Germany's first constitution (and it was called a constitution), like the framers of the Federal Republic's Basic Law, chose to stress unity, maintaining that "Germany is an indivisible Republic."⁹ As Hermann Weber (in Glaessner, p. 2) notes, SED policy on the German question began to shift under Walter Ulbricht, when the communist party's general secretary conceded the existence of "two, independent German states" in 1967. The 1968 "Ulbricht Constitution" still included the goal of effecting "a rapprochement by steps between the two German states until there is a unification on the basis of democracy and socialism."¹⁰

But amendments to the constitution in 1974, coinciding with Erich Honecker's intensification of *Abgrenzung* (the stressing of ideologi-

cal, cultural, and historical differences between the two German states), formally laid the German question to rest. The new constitution, in which all references to unification were deleted, explicitly declared that the GDR was no longer "a socialist state of the German nation," but rather "a socialist state of workers and farmers."¹¹ When Prime Minister Hans Modrow finally embraced the concept of German unification in early February 1990,¹² he not only altered what had been a key component of East Berlin's inner-German policy for the last two decades, but in effect fatalistically signed his party's name to the GDR's death certificate—a step he undertook with the full blessing of his Soviet benefactors.

As the parties of the two German states scrambled to define their inner-German policy for election campaigns this year, what the Soviet Union's position on the new German question would be remained a source of great speculation and controversy. Will the Soviet Union permit a united Germany to remain within the NATO alliance (a stance favored by Warsaw-Pact allies Poland and Hungary), or will Moscow continue to advocate neutral status for a united Germany? As in so many other areas, a great deal of conventional wisdom regarding the Soviet Union's position on the German question—for example, Larrabee's assertion that Gorbachev would be unlikely to "espouse any radical schemes which would lead to a fundamental restructuring of

alliances or reunification of the two German states" (in Larrabee, p. 21)—had become obsolete by the end of 1989. Whether David Childs's speculation that Gorbachev's Kremlin was perhaps prepared to discard the SED (and the GDR) as "superfluous," if Moscow and Bonn could "feel they trust each other enough and have enough in common" (p. 18) was correct, or whether the Soviet Union merely planned the installation of a reform communist regime in East Berlin as its final objective—a process that quickly exceeded the intended limits of "democratization"—one stunning point has become clear: unimaginable just a year ago, the Soviet Union today appears ready to allow German unification to take place, with few, if any, strings attached, all in the context of the GDR's peaceable transition to democracy.

This winter, once unification had become a forgone conclusion, it appeared that, if Gorbachev could play mid-wife to a unified, but *neutral* Germany, the Soviet president might shore up his support at home among Kremlin hard-liners, who had long been long transfixed by the prospect of decoupling the Federal Republic from NATO and radically diminishing the influence of the United States in Europe. But now, in light of Poland's anxiety regarding the security of its western border,¹³ as well as reported Soviet

⁸The core of the CDU inner-German policy has consistently been to achieve "the unity of Germany in freedom." *Foreign Policy Platform, Christian Democratic Union, Federal Republic of Germany*, Wiesbaden, June 14, 1988, p. 7.

⁹As cited in *Zur Geschichte der DDR. Von Ulbricht zu Honecker* (On the History of the GDR. From Ulbricht to Honecker), Bonn, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 1986, p. 90.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 94.

¹¹*Verfassung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* (The Constitution of the German Democratic Republic), 6th ed., Berlin, Staatsverlag der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1976, p. 9.

¹²East Berlin ADN International Service in German, Feb. 1, 1990, translated in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: East Europe* (Washington, DC—hereafter *FBIS-EEU*), Dec. 1, 1989, p. 7.

¹³In February, Chancellor Kohl, in contrast to the GDR government and to other political parties in the Federal Republic, resisted giving Poland an unambiguous guarantee on the inviolability of its western border at the so-called Oder-Neisse line. Mr. Kohl hedged on the issue, demanding that Polish officials guarantee the rights of the German minority in Poland. While Mr. Kohl finally agreed on March 6 to allow the two German parliaments to recognize existing borders on behalf of united Germany, the Chancellor's hesitation is likely to leave a lasting mark on Polish perceptions of Germany. See *Gazeta International* (Warsaw), Mar. 1 and 9, 1990.

concerns that a neutral Germany might become a "loose cannon" in the middle of Europe, Soviet officials have begun to soften their position, indicating that indeed a unified Germany might belong to NATO.¹⁴ Regardless of its alliance membership—an issue that remains to be settled through the so-called "two plus four" process—Germany's unification might serve Gorbachev well, if by overcoming this division in the heart of Europe, Moscow could gain unfettered access to West German capital and technology to finance the Kremlin's desperate drive to modernize the Soviet Union.

AT HOME, since the summer of 1989, the PDS has faced insurmountable odds in attempting to fend off the country's rapidly organizing opposition, while struggling to secure at least some measure of support from the GDR's populace before the March 18 elections. The GDR had boasted a multiparty system since its founding in 1949, but the challenge of a real opposition was decidedly new.¹⁵ Communist party leaders began early in the fall to separate for purposes of dialogue "constructive" reformers from "destructive" oppositionists. The former camp appeared to include organizations such as "New Forum," whose leaders, at least ini-

¹⁴*The New York Times*, Mar. 21, 1990.

¹⁵Four other political parties have previously played subservient roles: the Liberal Democratic Party of Germany (Liberal-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands—LDPD), the National Democratic Party of Germany (National-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands—NDPD), the Democratic Farmers' Party of Germany (Demokratische Bauern Partei Deutschlands—DBD), and the Christian Democratic Union (Christlich-Demokratische Union—CDU). In a bid to rid themselves of their tainted image after four decades of cooperation with the SED, the four so-called block parties have pledged that they would no longer work in coalition with the PDS after the March elections.

tially shared the rhetoric of the reform wing of the SED. New Forum co-founder Rolf Henrich, himself a member of the SED until last spring, insisted for example that a reformed GDR would continue to be an independent "socialist country,"¹⁶ while other leaders described their organization as a "'working class party' . . . ready for cooperation with the SED comrades." If the SED wanted to bolster and co-opt such "reformist" groups and thus marginalize the impact of anti-system oppositionists, the strategy proved unsuccessful when left-wing opposition groups began to realize that affiliation with the country's discredited communist party spelled political doom.¹⁷

In another bid to attain a degree of legitimacy, the PDS tried to reach out to Marxist intellectuals, such as writers Stephan Heym and Christa Wolf, who, as "licensed rebels," (Childs, p. 14), had in the past proved useful to communist authorities who wanted to project their "flexibility" and "sensitivity" to dissenting views, without facing the risks of competition with a genuinely democratic opposition. But the days of simple co-optation had disappeared by late autumn 1989, and, with very few exceptions, the GDR's cultural luminaries have chosen to eschew association with the PDS.¹⁸

Attempts by East Germany's reformed communist party to secure a limited degree of legitimacy reached the point of desperation

¹⁶*Der Morgen* (East Berlin), Oct. 28–29, 1989, trans. in *FBIS-EEU*, Nov. 3, 1989, p. 33.

¹⁷New Forum co-founder Bärbel Bohley has sharply attacked communist party attempts to co-opt dissidents. "I am personally insulted and shocked," she told an Austrian interviewer in November, when "[Prime Minister] Modrow says on television: my friends Markus Wolf [PDS reformer and former head of state security] and Bärbel Bohley." See *Die Presse* (Vienna), trans. in *ibid.*, Nov. 24, 1989, p. 43.

when the PDS began to wage a campaign this winter against an alleged threat to East German society posed by radical right-wing, neo-Nazi elements. To this end, the PDS even enlisted the help of the country's secret police to engage in acts of public vandalism for which unidentified "fascists" were blamed.¹⁹

As the PDS's mandate to lead East German society has vanished, so too has the myth of East Germany's distinct and separate socialist culture. For most of the GDR's history, the communist regime had regarded the formation of the "socialist man" as an "inseparable part of the socialist revolution" (Glaessner, in Rueschemeyer and Lemke, p. 80). Ironically, GDR social scientists had asserted in recent years that "socialist values" had "increased and . . . [had become] dominant among the youth" (Lemke, in Rueschemeyer and Lemke, p. 65). Yet the GDR's policy of *Abgrenzung* proved singularly unsuccessful, as recent events in the GDR have demonstrated.

Gebhard Schweigler observes that although over the years East and West Germans may have developed in certain cases different "attitudes," Western scholars never possessed any objective evidence that supported East Berlin's claim to have cultivated a separate national consciousness in the GDR (in Larabee, p. 98). It was, for example, the very absence of a separate national identity in the GDR that allowed the increased inner-German

¹⁸Although not a cultural figure, Katarina Witt, the Olympic gold medal figure skater, continues to be a passionate supporter of the GDR's socialist system. But alas, beneficiaries of the GDR's elite sports system, such as Witt, have incurred a great deal of public wrath for the privileged—and by GDR standards lavish—life styles they enjoyed under the Honecker regime. See, for example, *The Wall Street Journal* (New York), Dec. 4, 1989.

¹⁹*The Washington Post*, Jan. 11, 1990.

contacts resulting from the détente of the 1970's and 1980's, in Angela Stent's words, "to erode the already fragile domestic legitimacy of the [East German] government."²⁰

Nevertheless, it is a regrettable fact that a number of leading West-ern scholars, perhaps overly impressed by the prestige abroad gained by the GDR in the years following the conclusion of the Basic Treaty in 1972, and oblivious to the pervasive role played at home by the East German security service (*Staatsicherheitsdienst*), succumbed to GDR propaganda. They frequently mistook East Germany's stability for the legitimacy, indeed even popularity, of the communist party. For many, Honecker's 1987 trip to Bonn virtually finalized the GDR's claim to legitimacy. GDR scholar Max Schmidt, for example, promotes the official view of the deposed Honecker regime, asserting that the Honecker visit "underscored for the international public the independence and equal status of both German states, their sovereignty, and the nature of the relations between them, based on international law" (in Larrabee, p. 128).

The stunning revolt of 1989 conclusively shattered the myth prevalent in some circles of the SED's "domestic consensus with its citizenry" and Honecker's basking in "domestic support" and "popularity" (A. James McAdams in Larrabee, pp. 53, 67, 64). The SED had not been a party that merely "request[ed]" priority in shaping civil society" (Rueschemeyer and Lemke, in their concluding chapter, p. 233, my emphasis) but rather—as must now be apparent to all impartial observers—was a Leninist

political organization that demanded its leading role and pursued its totalitarian objectives through a variety of violent and coercive methods.

ON THE economic front, the GDR's new democratically elected government (along with the West German government) has inherited a formidable challenge to rebuild Germany's eastern sector.²¹ Although the communist regime had liked to boast that its system stood at the top of the socialist world in economic development and performance, offering its citizens one of the highest standards of living in the Eastern bloc, the country's economy had begun to experience acute problems even prior to the upheaval of 1989.²² The GDR's foreign trade had stagnated, economic growth had stalled, the country's manufacturing base was in drastic need of modernization, and ecological problems in many areas of the country had reached catastrophic proportions.²³

In the consumer realm, the GDR experienced an absolute decline in goods and services in the 1980's (Doris Cornelsen, in Glaessner,

p. 370), a fact even communist officials had begun to concede by the summer of 1989.²⁴ By the autumn of 1989, frustrated East Germans, who, via West German television, always compared the state of their economy with the Federal Republic's, not with those of other socialist states, as Jeffries points out (in Jeffries and Melzer, p. 1), had begun to fix their gaze not on reform, but rather on rescue from the West.

In order to revive its emaciated, listless economy and placate popular unrest, the PDS indicated its willingness to turn to the West for help.²⁵ East Berlin, which had always relied heavily in the past on foreign trade (and loans) with the West to bolster its economy, had long since accepted "the distasteful choice of limited dependence" on West Germany (Ronald A. Francisco in Childs et al., p. 196). But this past year, East Germany's decision to open the door to West German aid and investment (unquestionably a necessary and popular move) was a critical factor behind the collapse of uncompetitive, comparatively small, resource-poor East Germany.²⁶

²¹For an assessment of the economic problems facing Bonn and East Berlin in the reconstruction of eastern Germany, see *Die Zeit* (Hamburg), Feb. 16, 1990: "Bonn Plans the Next Step Toward German Unity," *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg), Mar. 19, 1990, pp. 33-44; and "Going for Broke: The Daring Plan to Rebuild the East," *Business Week* (New York), Apr. 2, 1990, pp. 50-54.

²²See "East German Economy Falters," Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty, *Soviet East European Report* (Washington, DC), Jan. 10, 1989; and "East Germany: Clinging to the Hard Line—and Taking a Hard Fall," *Business Week*, Sept. 4, 1989, pp. 28-29.

²³See Joan DeBardeleben's excellent chapter in Lemke and Rueschemeyer (pp. 144-64) for an overview of the GDR's environmental problems. For recent reports in the West German press on East Germany's ecological crisis, see "The Dirty Republic—An Environmental Report," *Der Stern* (Hamburg), Jan. 25, 1990, pp. 26-29; and "Will the GDR Make Us Poor?" *Bunte* (Munich), Jan. 25, 1990, pp. 22-26.

²⁴*Der Standard* (Vienna), Aug. 3, 1989, trans. in *FBIS-EEU*, Aug. 4, 1989, p. 16. See also *The New York Times*, Dec. 21, 1989.

²⁵During the December 19 meeting between Helmut Kohl and Hans Modrow, Bonn agreed to add 1.5 billion Deutsche Mark (US\$871.8 million) to an existing fund of 4.5 billion Deutsche Mark for a European Recovery Program, as well as an additional 2 billion DM to guarantee major export loans to East Germany. See *The Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 20, 1989.

²⁶Historically, it is worth noting that the Federal Republic's interest in trade with the GDR has always been political, rather than economic, and a brief examination of inner-German trade statistics reveals East Berlin's vulnerability to Bonn's influence. GDR-FRG trade accounts for 8.3 percent of total GDR trade, whereas for the FRG, the figure is 1.5 percent. The Federal Republic is, next to the Soviet Union, the GDR's most important trading partner. By contrast, the GDR ranks 13th among Bonn's trading partners, standing behind such countries as Sweden, Denmark, Spain, and Iran (Gert Leptin, in Larrabee, p. 280).

²⁰Angela Stent, "Intra-German Relations: The View From Bonn," *The Federal Republic of Germany in the 1980's: Foreign and Domestic Changes*, New York, German Information Center, 1983, p. 24.

GDR officials had always reacted with irritation that "certain political circles" in West Germany used trade to exert "political pressure" on the GDR (Juergen Nitz, in Larra-
bee, p. 306). Nonetheless, East Berlin was seldom able to resist the manifold benefits it received through its special trade relationship with Bonn, which included—precisely because the Federal Republic did not treat the GDR as a foreign state outside its customs territory—de facto membership in the European Community.

IN THE end, it was this paradoxical relationship between East and West Germany that helped push the GDR to its moment of truth. To assure itself of a future in the new era of open borders, the GDR had to reconcile itself with reliance on immediate and substantial economic assistance from West Germany. However, the only way the country's economy could overcome its "grave systemic defects" (Hannelore Hamel and Helmut Leipold in Jeffries and Melzer, p. 303) and avert economic collapse was by relying on West German advice as well as on its aid, a step that threatened

the GDR's claim to legitimacy as a separate "socialist" state. This winter, before unification had been accepted by East Berlin, Prime Minister Hans Modrow and other communist functionaries made frequent mention of their fear that the GDR would be absorbed by the Federal Republic.²⁷

While the PDS deliberated the perils of systemic economic reform, East German citizens resolved the matter themselves, first voting with their feet,²⁸ then at the ballot box. The March 18 election represented a referendum on communist rule, which East Germans soundly rejected, as well as a referendum on rapid unification with the Federal Republic, which they overwhelmingly supported.²⁹

Formal unification with the Federal Republic is now targeted for 1991 or 1992. Chancellor Kohl, pleased with the victory of his conservative partners in the GDR, appears confident that he can win re-election in West Germany in December 1990, and he sees no need to unnecessarily upset the present balance in Europe if it can be avoided. But the economic problems facing the GDR remain staggering. To avert

further crisis, or perhaps even collapse of the GDR's economy, the date of currency union with the Federal Republic has been set for July 1. Formal unification may remain a year or two away, but week by week the GDR will continue to be absorbed by the Federal Republic's powerful, robust economy. 1990 will mark the year the GDR's failed socialist experiment drew unmistakably to a close.

²⁷*Neues Deutschland* (East Berlin), Jan. 12, 1990.

²⁸In addition to the more than 350,000 East Germans who had left for the West by the end of January, Lothar de Maizière, chairman of East Germany's CDU, speculates that approximately 30 percent of the GDR population is "sitting on packed suitcases," prepared to leave for West Germany should the election results turn out to be disappointing. See *Die Welt* (Hamburg), Jan. 25, 1990.

²⁹The right-of-center Christian Democratic Union received the largest portion of the vote, 40.91 percent. The CDU's coalition partners, the German Social Union (Deutsche Soziale Union—DSU) and Democratic Awakening received 6.32 percent and 0.92 percent respectively. The East German Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands—SPD) gathered 21.84 percent of the vote. The PDS received 16.33 percent of the vote. Other smaller parties competing in the election received the remaining 13.68 percent. See *Deutschland Nachrichten* (New York), Mar. 23, 1990.

A New Security Regime for Europe?

Phillip A. Petersen

WILLIAM T. LEE and RICHARD F. STAAR. *Soviet Military Policy Since World War II*. Stanford, CA, Hoover Institution Press, 1986.

HARRIET FAST SCOTT and WILLIAM F. SCOTT. *Soviet Military Doctrine: Continuity, Formulation, and Dissemination*. Boulder, CO, Westview, 1988.

THE INTERNATIONAL security system in Europe, to which we have long grown accustomed, is rapidly breaking down. The roots of this security system can be traced back to the peace concluded after World War I. After the Western Allies had won that war, they failed to create a just and stable security system. The failure of the post-World War I security system led inextricably to World

Phillip A. Petersen is Assistant for Europe and the Soviet Union on the Policy Support Programs Staff in the Office of the US Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Security Policy. Dr. Petersen wishes to acknowledge the research assistance of his deputy, Joshua B. Spero. The views expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the United States Government.

War II. A new security system emerged in the late 1940's, but it was based on a divided Europe and brought direct Soviet influence all the way into central Germany.

Perestroika and "new political thinking" in the Soviet Union and the revolutions of 1989 in Eastern Europe have provided the opportunity to create a new security system in Europe. But the challenge in adapting to accelerating changes in the international security constellation centers on the degree to which Western observers can free themselves from existing intellectual constructs.

For an appreciation of the dominant role misperceptions came to play in framing the West's security policy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, the two volumes under review here provide valuable insight. To be fair, it should be noted that both works predate the most dramatic changes both in the USSR itself and in Moscow's relations with the rest of the world. Having noted this fact, it is equally fair to point out that on the fundamental issue of change, William T. Lee and Harriet Fast Scott consistently misunderstood the Soviet position throughout the 1970's and early 1980's as well.¹ Both argued that the "nuclear" revolution in military affairs was not simply a description of objective reality, but the

culmination of a military-technical revolution that led the Soviets to conclude that nuclear war was winnable, and, therefore, as a continuation of politics, was an appropriate instrument of state policy. Thus, the works reviewed here represent the culmination of a long history of these two authors' misperception and misrepresentation of the context in which Soviet security decisions were taken.

THE TITLE of the book by Lee and Richard F. Staar communicates the viewpoint of its authors only indirectly. Lee and Staar argue that the only change in Soviet military doctrine and strategy since 1960 is a 1964 modification allowing "for the possibility of a conventional phase in a superpower coalition war" (p. 29). This being the view of the authors, they would find no inconsis-

¹Although there have been concessions to the notion of "doctrinal modifications," the basic conclusion that "its fundamentals remain the same" may be found, for example, in the Scotts' *Armed Forces of the USSR*, Boulder, CO, Westview, 1979. For William T. Lee as well, acceptance of the fact that "the Soviets modified their doctrine and strategy for war with NATO to allow for a conventional phase" never seemed to suggest any change in "their belief that such a war would escalate to massive use of nuclear weapons." See, for example, William T. Lee, *Understanding the Soviet Military Threat*, New York, National Strategy Information Center, 1977.