SOVIET POLITICAL MEMOIRS:
A STUDY IN POLITICS AND LITERATURE

by

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B.A. HONS, The University of Western Ontario, 1990

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Department of History)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

June 1992

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ABSTRACT

A growing number of Soviet political memoirs have emerged from the former Soviet Union. The main aim of the memoirists is to give their interpretation of the past. Despite the personal insight that these works provide on Soviet history, Western academics have not studied them in any detail. The principal aim of this paper is to prove Soviet political memoir's importance as a research tool.

The tight link between politics and literature characterizes the nature of Soviet political memoir. All forms of Soviet literature had to reform their brand of writing as the Kremlin's policies changed from Stalin's ruthless reign to Gorbachev's period of openness. In order to understand the importance of Soviet political memoir as a research tool, it was necessary to study the political history of control over literature. The analysis was divided into chronological periods so that the progressive change of Soviet political memoir could be shown clearly. The three periods were the Stalinist, transitional(under Khrushchev and Brezhnev), and glasnost.

A further aim was to show how Soviet political memoir reflected different attitudes in Soviet society. Stalinist, anti-Stalinist, and glasnost were the three fundamental strands of thought that prevailed after Stalin's death. Each of these attitudes evolved over the three distinct periods examined in this paper. The manipulation of facts was an essential point of the analysis. This involved the study of different writing techniques
and interpretations. Socialist Realism served as a yardstick against which the memoirs were compared. This literary doctrine signified the subjection of Soviet literature to political control of the Party. Six memoirs were studied closely and the influence of this doctrine in their writing style varied. The power of Socialist Realism changed as the government's policies changed. Nikita Khrushchev's and Petro Grigorenko's works represented the views of the anti-Stalinist bloc; Leonid Brezhnev's and Andrei Gromyko's memoirs reflected the reaction against anti-Stalinism; Andrei Sakharov's and Eduard Shevardnadze's texts showed the views of the glasnost group that wanted to look at its nation's past critically. Soviet political memoir went from being scoffed at as a bourgeois preserve, to being manipulated as a political tool by opposing forces, to finally meeting the standards of its Western counterparts.

These memoirs sketch a complex picture. They tell the reader that the transition to a new, democratic state is not a simple process since so many groups disagree on the approach. They also give a different perspective of Soviet society. The image of a monolithic machine is shattered by the virtual explosion of personal testimonials triggered by glasnost. What is important to recognize is that all the memoirs analyzed here are important in and of themselves. They tell the reader to acknowledge the power of politics in literature; the interpretation of the past is predicated on this idea. However problematic it is to accept Soviet political memoirs as sources of facts, one must overstep
one's prejudices and realize that they provide a wealth of knowledge about Soviet politics and history. The task of the historian particularly is to understand the political circumstances that lay behind the memoir and perceive it as a political creation.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Isabelle Bailliet who tutored me in Russian and pushed me to study the language regularly. Alberto Rubio also was a tremendous help. His constructive criticism improved my writing style radically. My family was constantly behind me in my studies and without their hard work to serve as an example for me, I could not have aspired to even approach graduate work. I am, finally, fortunate to have the loving support of Tim Brown whose joie de vivre motivated me to give the best of myself to whatever I do.
INTRODUCTION

One of the most noteworthy developments in Russian literature since the death of Stalin has been the emergence of a still growing body of memoirs as impressive in their overall quality as they are compelling in their revelations. The primary motive among writers who have turned to writing memoirs has been the desire to get at the truth. Unfortunately, their attempts have not been very convincing to Western critics. Despite the growing number of Soviet political memoirs coming out of the Soviet Union, a major lacuna exists in the analysis of Soviet political memoir as a research tool.

One of the biggest obstacles that faces reviewers of Soviet literary work is the tight link between politics and literature. Western readers are reluctant to acknowledge the memoirs' bona fide status since they have traditionally been considered explicitly subordinate to extra-literary goals. It is by now a commonplace of Western histories of the Soviet Union that during the thirties all public activity became more highly ritualized and that much of this activity was geared to legitimizing the hegemony of the Stalinist leadership that identified its links with Lenin and Leninism. Reviewers are aware that Soviet literature had to pass through the mincer of a censorship whose first priority was state security and whose second was propaganda favourable to the interests of the Soviet Communist Party. This development more or less coincided with the institutionalization of a distinctive Soviet literary doctrine. All literature, including memoirs, became a political
tool of the Party. But by the late 1980s, Soviet literature entered a new "golden age" and began to disengage itself from its Stalinist past. These were years of enormous spiritual ferment and creative openness such as the much-suffering Soviet culture had not known for six decades. But not everyone was enthusiastic. Some people were firmly convinced that "Satan and the forces of evil were about to destroy all that was still good in Russia."¹

The mixed reception that glasnost had reflects the stratified nature of Soviet society. Like any culture, the Soviet Union had a number of different groups that upheld certain beliefs. Stalinism seems to be the common principle against which these different groups defined themselves. There were those who supported the old methods and there were those who vehemently opposed them. Since the advent of glasnost however, a group with a new approach arose which stood firmly in the middle of the conflict between the Stalinist and anti-Stalinist forces. "Glasnost" means openness; it implies that the ever-widening gap between words and deeds is admitted. But glasnost, however intrinsically important, is an approach, a style; it is not the substance of Soviet politics. (This has frequently been misunderstood in the West, especially with regard to foreign policy.) This new group is a product of glasnost since it claimed to look at the past critically and provide a plan for the future.

Through the close study of the messages related to us by the

memoirists, I hope that the stratification of Soviet society will be understood. Specifically, the memoirs will not be treated as repositories of facts but as mirrors of certain social values. The way the past is interpreted by the memoirists tells the reader a great deal about the political situation at the time their memoirs were written and published. This new approach in the study of Soviet political memoir will contribute to our understanding of Soviet society and its internal conflicts since Stalin's death.

The close historical union between politics and literature makes Soviet political memoir a powerful instrument in the study of post-Stalinist society. Leaders of all statures, particularly since Stalin's demise, strove to give their version of history through the filter of official policy. The political status of the author often influenced his interpretation of events. If the memoirist was an ousted national leader or a disgruntled political dissident, his version of the past probably would differ markedly from a retired statesman with a polished record. According to George Egerton, "War, revolution, and the attendant dramatic social and personal dislocations no doubt served as major stimuli to the production of memoir literature, with exile or loss of power sometimes inspiring the most impassioned apologias." Soviet political memoir accomplished these functions but it also faced added pressure from the state. It is precisely this intimate relationship between politics and literature in Soviet literary

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history that distinguishes Soviet political memoir from its Western counterparts. An awareness of the literary controls that lie behind the memoirs should unveil a plethora of knowledge about Soviet political history. In this paper, I will show first how Soviet political memoir performs the same functions as its Western counterparts and then clarify the messages that can be gleaned from these distinctive works. My primary goal is to prove Soviet political memoir's importance as a research tool.
Chapter One:
Theoretical Foundations of Soviet Literary Policy

The borders between the historical, the political, and the literary are often quite vague. The historian analyzing a piece of Soviet literature is confronted with issues stemming from all three disciplines and consideration of only the "historical" element leaves one with an incomplete appraisal. As Jean E. Howard points out in "The New Historicism in Renaissance Studies," the way that a historian treats a text is based on how he perceives his own role, because "the historical investigator is ...a product of his history and never able to recognize otherness in its pure form, but always in part through the framework of the present."3 This point leads one to what is perhaps the focus of any "new" historical criticism, and that is to the issue of what one conceives history to be: a realm of retrievable fact or a construct made up of textualized traces assembled in various configurations by the historian/interpreter. Hayden White, in his Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism, argues that history is produced, not discovered, and he shows how those synthesizing histories which attempt to describe a period are someone's historically-conditioned constructs. He calls into question one of the ways literary critics have often used "history," that is, as the realm of fact which can ground the seeming multiplicity or "polysemous" nature of

the literary artifact. ⁴

Similarly, such philosophers of history as Brook, Collingwood, and Croce admit that there is some similarity between their discipline and art: the historian uses his imagination to recreate a historical period, and inevitably selects and emphasises certain facts. ⁵ E.H. Carr, who refutes Collingwood's theory that history is merely spun out of the human brain, nevertheless says: "The facts of history never come to us "pure"; they do not and cannot exist in a pure form: they are always refracted through the mind of the recorder...By and large, the historian will get the kind of facts he wants. History means interpretation." ⁶ Carr's statement neatly summarizes the approach that should be taken in the study of Soviet literature, including memoirs. Since problems of interpretation exist in both the study of literature and history, I will be using literary tools to analyze the historical significance of Soviet memoirs.

The link between Soviet politics and literature was first articulated in Marxist theory. According to Marx, not only do changes in productive relationships determine the supersession of one class by another, but they also condition the mutation of the sets of ideas which arise from the economic substructure. These

⁴Hayden White, Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism (Baltimore, Md., 1978), 89.


sets of ideas -- political, philosophical, religious ideologies -- reflect and serve the interests of the social classes which adhere to them; they are at worst gross distortions and at best defective approximations of the truth about various aspects of reality. But as successively more "advanced" classes achieve domination, truth is apprehended more adequately. Dialectical materialism, the scientific theory which makes it possible for man to view the world objectively, is associated with the proletarian consciousness and appears in history with the rise of the proletariat, the class which has been relieved of false world views and can see existing ideological superstructures for what they are -- "just so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests."^7

But there is a strong pragmatic strain in Marxist thought despite its absolutist stand on the ultimate nature of truth. Ideas not only reflect but serve the interests of their adherents and Marxism itself is more than an explanation of the past and present and a scientific prediction of the advent of socialism: it is an instrument for guiding the forces of history toward the realization of the inevitable. Indeed, this is precisely why Marxism is "scientific" and "true", since Marxists not only observe reality but mould it according to their theories.

These are the ideas that lie behind the doctrine of the unity

of theory and practice, and they account in part for the Soviet preoccupation with the intimate relationship between thought and action. Yet, several sources question the validity of constructing a Marxist approach to literature.⁸ They contend that a prescribed Marxist literary theory does not exist. As Margaret M. Bullitt asserts, "at best Marx and Engels considered literature and other products of the intellect to be indirectly and ultimately rather than directly and immediately determined by the economic and political structure of society."⁹ In fact, their appreciation of the aesthetic functions of art and literature far outweighed those of ideology. They apparently disengaged artistic merit from ideological purpose and effectiveness.¹⁰ A number of sources insist that there is no evidence in their writings that Marx and Engels considered art as a purely ideological tool or valued it as such. Rufus Mathewson cites for example, Engels's criticism of the novel Old and New: the author, Minna Kautsky, has violated the integrity of her story by "publicly declaring [her] convictions...[and by] bearing witness to them before the whole


⁹ Bullitt,"Toward a Marxist Theory", 55.

world." If "political correctness" is desirable, open
tendentiousness is not, and in any case, as Mathewson illustrates,
Marx and Engels repeatedly stressed that a work of art must in the
end be measured against the excellence of Shakespeare, or
Rembrandt, or Dante.\(^\text{12}\)

As the process of literary debate among Marxists evolved in
the Soviet Union after the Revolution, these quiet buttresses
against an entirely politicized literature were in fact thrown
aside. Although many of the early Bolsheviks, including Plekhanov,
Lunarcharsky, Trotsky, and Voronsky, were, like Marx and Engels
themselves, men broadly educated in the Western cultural tradition,
men who shared a respect for the writer and the special problems of
artistic production, the mood in the Soviet Union of iconoclasm and
crisis, the accession of the semi-literate to power, and the
Bolshevik emphasis upon the revolutionary aspect of Marxist theory,
eventually combined to favour the manipulation of literature as a
purely political and ideological tool.

Propelled by the urgency to replace literature of the
prerevolutionary political social order with a literature that
reflected and promoted the new social relationships and ideals of
Soviet society, Russian literary critics and theorists began to
stress one side or the other of Marx's two-pronged approach to
human experience: Marx the philosopher, the interpreter of the

\(^{11}\)Mathewson, "Positive Hero", 128.

\(^{12}\)Ibid. 129-131.
world, as opposed to Marx the agitator and Maker of history.\textsuperscript{13} One side stressed literature's aesthetic, objective, and descriptive component; the other stressed utilitarian, selective, and tendentious elements. On the one hand, literature was to be analytic; on the other, agitational.\textsuperscript{14}

Prominent Soviet theorists such as Plekhanov and Trotsky still maintained that the aesthetic, personal, and class-transcending components of literature were essential.\textsuperscript{15} It was not until the First Five Year Plan was introduced in 1928 that official Soviet literary policy took on a definitive shape. The authoritative work used to promulgate it was the product of Lenin's inspiration. Although Western historians like Struve, Bullitt, and Swayze insist that Lenin's contribution to the history of Marxist literary criticism was very slight,\textsuperscript{16} they admit that the importance of his 1905 article "Party Organization and Party Literature," was of seminal import, if only because of the use made of it in later years. Lenin declared in the article that literature "must become

\textsuperscript{13} Mathewson, "Positive Hero", 115-9.


party literature" and said that partiinost in literature means that literary affairs "must become a part of the general proletarian cause...a part of organized, systematic, united Social Democratic party work." Yet some authors dissent from this, by maintaining that this article is not the best example of Lenin's views on literature. According to Bullitt, for example, "Lenin intended the article to be interpreted in a more narrow fashion as applying only to party literature and its subordination to party control." She maintains that Lenin's sentiments as to the proper relationship of the party to literature are more clearly expressed in two documents which he wrote or drafted in 1920: On Proletarian Culture and On the Proletkults. The first document presented Lenin's dictum that all organizations engaged in cultural activity "must be penetrated with the spirit of the proletarian class struggle," while the latter established in what fashion official legislation would supplement the process of education and experience out of which proletarian culture was to develop. In any case, all authors agree that he was the harbinger of subjecting literature to the influence of the Party, to be used as an ideological weapon. As a result of this politicization, in 1934 the Soviets developed three fundamental standards for estimating the merit of a literary work: the truthfulness, or party-minded spirit of the work's portrayal of reality, the work's pedagogic potentiality, and its intelligibility

18 Bullitt, "Toward a Marxist Theory", 69.
19 Ibid., 70.
to the broad masses — all prerequisites for transforming literature into a serviceable social tool. In terms of Soviet doctrine, literature became an adjunct to politics and pedagogy, a sugar coating on the pill of knowledge and morality. Consequently, the theory that politics has a profound impact on literature became the thesis that politics is the essence of literature.

It must be observed that this doctrine emphasized public ideals over personal beliefs: writers were expected to adhere to a shifting program and to cultivate a blind faith in the rightness of the party, whose determinations of truth (like its evaluations of literature) could change radically from time to time. What seemed an arbitrary identification of writers's subjective dispositions with the party ideology became an additional rationalization for insisting that works be written to reflect the party's views and revised to keep pace with its fluctuating line. That the subordination of the claims of self-expression to those of orthodoxy has impaired the quality of Soviet literature is abundantly demonstrated by Soviet literary criticism itself. The conflict between these claims is a main current in Soviet literary politics.

More crucial to the present study, however, is not so much whether Soviet theory prevents literature from approaching photographic objectivity as it is one of whether the political and moral didacticism required by theory is compatible with depicting the myriad facts of human life. Soviet writers, memoirists included, were continuously reminded that, while they must reveal
life in all its diversity, their principal aim was to portray reality in its "revolutionary development," that is, in a didactfully purposeful manner.

The doctrine which is responsible for welding politics to literature on any official level is "Socialist Realism". Andrei Zhdanov's speech to the First Writers' Congress in 1934 is generally considered among the first public pronouncements of this doctrine. Although the purpose of the newly created Union of Writers was to ensure a degree of freedom and tolerance denied to authors from the late 1920s to 1932, members were also under a formal obligation to write in accordance with Socialist Realism. The exact meaning of this term is difficult to determine due to the extensive ground it covers. Perhaps official statements of the doctrine would help one comprehend what the Soviet writer was required to do:

Socialist Realism, the basic method employed by Soviet artistic literature and literary criticism, demands from the writer an authentic, historically specific depiction of reality in its revolutionary development. This authenticity and historical specificity in the depiction of reality should be combined with the task of ideologically reshaping and educating the toilers in the spirit of socialism.

So Socialist Realism does not define a genre, style or school: it is much more all-embracing than that. It is, apparently, a "method," which has been adopted in numerous and diverse works enjoying the imprimatur of Soviet publishing houses. Such

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20Hingley, Russian Writers, 39.

21Ibid.
generosity of definition obscures as much as it explains.

The theory of Socialist Realism is enshrined in many thousands of books and articles, and though one may doubt whether a single word of this has contributed an iota of inspiration to any creative artist, one must yet take note of certain ancillary concepts commonly associated with it. They include partiinost, which may be translated "Party-minded" or "conformity with the Party line"; and narodnost: devotion to the common people combined with patriotism. From these principles may be deduced certain features in the practice of Socialist Realist literature.

Out of deference to the common man and under the rubric of narodnost, literature must be written in simple, comprehensible language without stylistic experimentation. Narodnost also dictates a degree of political and national chauvinism. Foreign characters have tended to be depicted as skulking villains while Soviet characters, excluding the small quota of untypical traitors, are healthy, well-integrated, strong, self-confident and positive.

As for partiinost, that obligation has imposed no little distortion on the concurrent obligation to give a truthful depiction of reality. It soon became clear that vulgar, empirically perceived truth might on no account be depicted in the numerous areas where it contravened the higher truth, as enunciated

by the Party. Imposed with maximum harshness, as it was in Stalin's post-war years, Socialist Realism in effect converted authors into copywriters on behalf of the regime, but copywriters whose bucolic eclogues and industrial idylls were ineffectual by the standards of the capitalist world, since this cumbersome material was self-defeating, repetitious, exaggerated and falsified.

What is at issue, however, is the intimacy between Soviet theory and practice. Historians and literary theoreticians are dismayed at the vague origins of the doctrine. Nonetheless, it is generally agreed that Soviet literary policy disinvited Marxist literary proclivities and instead grasped those propounded by Lenin. Consequently, a discussion of the theoretical foundations of Socialist Realism is paramount in understanding the nature of Soviet political memoir and what it tells Western readers about Soviet political culture.

Most Western commentators, however, deny any literary standing whatsoever to Socialist Realism, seeing it as a purely political doctrine. Edward J. Brown for example, speaks of "this meaningless authoritarian term," while Gleb Struve calls adherence to it "tantamount in practice to an undeviating toeing of the current party line."\(^{23}\) And in a relatively recent general work on Soviet literature, Marc Slonim comments acridly:

Had the theoreticians of Communist aesthetics said that

'good' work of art is one that supports Communism, and a 'bad' work one that either does not do it or does it half-heartedly, they would have avoided many further troubles.24

The diagnoses are, of course, quite correct, as far as they go. The extent to which the party manipulated literary output can be judged by the merest glance at the long list of independently thinking writers who were forced to devote themselves to journalism or translation, to fall silent, or were even physically liquidated: Babel, Zamyatin, Bulgakov, Mandel'shtam, Pasternak, Akhmatova, Zoshchenko -- most of the major names of the twenties and thirties. The most dramatic episode in this phase of regimentation occurred when Boris Pilnyak and Yevgeny Zamyatin were subjected, in 1929, to a ferocious campaign of vilification in the media and in public meetings for having published ideologically inadequate works, and outside the USSR at that: Pilnyak's story Mahogany and Zamyatin's We. The affair is notable as the first full-scale Soviet literary witch-hunt -- a process whereby pre-selected scapegoats were publicly denounced (often in pairs) as a device for disciplining the writing fraternity in general.

The history of political control over Soviet literature is represented by the countless lists of writers who succumbed to the power of the Party. The overall picture of Soviet literary output is a very dismal one since writers were coerced into expressing an officially-approved model of their work. Alexander Fadeyev's Young

Guard is a good example. The party's attacks on this work were designed as exercises in the problem of content and the treatment of particular themes in works of literature. But they were even more significant as lessons in literary politics and as reaffirmations of the principle of institutionalized insecurity.

The book was previously awarded a First-Class Stalin Prize in 1946 and praised for its elevation of the ideological and moral level of the Soviet people. Eventually a critic complained in Kultura i zhizn that Fadeyev had not given "a correct presentation of the activities of Bolsheviks behind enemy lines, of the people's real leaders, who did not drop the reins of leadership and who knew how to organize the masses." 25 Fadeyev accepted this criticism in the officially approved manner, thus setting an example for his brethren, and during the next four years, he rewrote the lengthy novel. In the second version of the novel, which appeared in 1951, Fadeyev carefully eliminated anything tending to create an impression of chaos, confusion, or panic during the period of evacuation, and he added sections showing how the party organized the whole movement. He even attached many new passages describing the widespread and carefully planned operations of the party underground. Fadeyev's novel eventually came to be regarded as an outstanding example of a work written according to the precepts of socialist realism.

Memoirists were also faced with the same pressures as Fadeyev. Mikhail Zoshchenko's memoir Before Sunrise was attacked for its

25 Swayze, Political Control of Literature, 43-44.
extreme individualism. Condemnation centred principally on his statement "I am unhappy and I don't know why." An outburst of public criticism occurred not long after the final instalment of the memoirs had been suppressed. Zoshchenko was accused of occupying himself with philistine emotions and interests and ignoring social forces and the great events of the time. The work was discussed by the presidium of the Writers' Union and criticized at the Ninth Plenum. Ultimately, Zoshchenko faced public humiliation and a forced remoulding of his work.

Even more revealing in some ways was the attack on Konstantin Fedin's *Gorky Amongst Us*, a projected three-volume memoir. Criticism was initially directed at the second volume, which appeared in 1944. The final instalment was not published. *Pravda* opened the onslaught in an article which described Fedin's work as "a deeply apolitical book, in which events of the literary world are shown torn from life, closed off in a sphere of narrow professional interests and relations" a book of "highly questionable ethics and distorted perspective." These charges were echoed at a meeting of the presidium of the Writers' Union, where Fedin was charged with neglecting the historical political setting of the period he described and with being "objective," "dispassionate," and "tolerant" toward reactionary writers. Thus, Fedin manifested the same malaise as did Zoshchenko: lack of political consciousness and incipient individualism. But Fedin

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went a step further, for he raised the whole issue of the nature of literature and the function of the writer, and in doing so, he called into question certain hallowed tenets of Soviet literary theory.

The grave situations faced by memoirists such as Fedin and Zoshchenko served to limit the production of memoir literature under Stalin's reign. Instead of facing the wrath of the Party and being accused of writing bourgeois, individualist material, writers refrained from writing their reminiscences in any appreciable manner. Beyond the public show trials that many authors faced, the fear of death was an even greater obstacle. According to Janos Bak, the nature of the Soviet system of succession during the Stalinist period made the writing of memoirs by prominent political figures unlikely. "However pedestrian this observation may sound," Bak contends "that a practical reason for the lack of political memoirs in the Communist world was exactly the fact that important leaders usually served to the natural or -- more frequently -- violent end of their lives and had no physical chance to write about their time in office in retrospect."28 Thus, what remains for the historian are the memoirs of a very few old Bolsheviks written just after the Revolution. Of particular significance are those of the Revolutionary and Party administrator, Vladimir Bonch-Bruevich. He was very close to Lenin during the revolution and his works on Lenin are very important, particularly for the period

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1917—1924. There are several collections of his memoirs, such as his Vospominaniya (Moscow, 1968). With the exception of Trotsky’s, memoirs from other early Bolsheviks are difficult to find. Perhaps the turmoil of the Revolutionary and War periods did not allow them enough time to write down their thoughts.

There also appears to be a handful of memoirs written by relatively unknown people. Rossiya Elektricheskiya Vospominiya Stareishikh Elektrikov gives a glorified account of the otherwise banal topic of electrical energy and its worthwhile achievements in the Soviet Union’s development. The book is obviously directed to the Soviet people considering the countless references to their extraordinary powers. Moreover, texts such as Da Zdavstvuet Revolutsiya!: Vospominaniya Uchastnikov Velikovo Oktyabrya v Ogne Zhizni I Bor’by are among the multitudes of politically gratuitous memoirs published by virtually unknown people with the motive of glorifying their nation’s merits. Since the terror and camps were taboo subjects, punishable through a public reprimand, exile abroad, or even a sentence to a labour camp, it should come as no surprise that none of the prison memoirs or diaries were published in the country that provided material for them.

Thus, the story of Soviet political memoir is enmeshed in the overall history of Soviet political culture. During the Stalinist period, works of literature were essentially political vehicles through which the Party articulated its policies. Writers were repressed and forced, through various methods, either to work for the party or stop writing altogether. Indeed, all forms of
expression, including political memoirs, were rigidly subjected to political control.

It will be useful to divide the remaining part of the paper into three distinctive sections. All three categories are divided chronologically since one of the principal goals of this analysis is to show how Soviet political memoir reflects the changes in Soviet political culture. It was shown in this chapter how repressive Stalinist control over literature resulted in very few memoirs being published in the Soviet Union. The next section will illustrate how a more liberal political climate allowed a greater number of memoirs to be published. This period was transitional since two opposing forces struggled for supremacy: Stalinist and anti-Stalinist. Soviet political memoir served as a political tool for each of these forces in this conflict. The following two chapters entitled respectively "The Reaction to Stalinism: The Case of Khrushchev and Grigorenko" and "The Reaction to Anti-Stalinism: The Case of Brezhnev and Gromyko" illustrate the changing trends in Soviet political culture as represented by Soviet political memoir. The last chapter deals with the most recent political revolution in Soviet history: glasnost. Once again, the new political situation, with its emphasis on freedom and honesty, allows for a wider proliferation of Soviet political memoir. This chapter is titled appropriately "Glasnost: The Case of Sakharov and Shevardnadze."

In addition, the content and style of all the memoirs in each section will be analyzed. Two items will serve as measures in my
analysis. First, I aim to show the political functions of Soviet political memoir using as a reference the intentional functions outlined by Professor George Egerton in his article "The Lloyd George War Memoirs: A Study of the Politics of Memory." The following four functions are central to my analysis:

to narrate one's personal role in political events; to explain, vindicate, and perhaps enhance this record; to present characterizations and assessments of one's political contemporaries (both friends and enemies); and to offer reflections on political experiences, 'lessons' for the benefit of posterity. The function of personal apologia might be broadened to defend the record of a political party or one's country, particularly in the case of war and perhaps to bolster a political creed.  

Another aspect that must be addressed is the degree of influence that socialist realism had on the interpretation of events in each of the memoirs. I want to see how the revolutionary changes that occurred after Stalin's demise influenced the dominance of Stalinist literary controls. Was memoir literature treated the same by each post-Stalinist regime? My principal aim is to elucidate the historical importance of Soviet political memoir as a serious research tool by identifying the intimate link between politics and literature. In short, I believe that Soviet political memoir not only encompasses the views of a single individual, it also reflects the values in Soviet political culture.

Chapter Two:  
The Reaction Against Stalinism: The Case of Khrushchev and Grigorenko

Stalin's death brought a sense of relief to the country as a whole and led to widespread release over the next few years of prisoners who had survived concentration camp conditions. The concentration camp system was not abolished but reduced to considerably smaller dimensions, while the everpresent danger of unheralded arrest was largely removed from the population in general. The powers of the security police were curbed too, but the organization was not dismantled; it was merely brought under more stringent Party control.

Khrushchev's supremacy was notable for sharp policy oscillations in conformity with the man's capricious temperament. Relaxations of Stalinist rigours were instituted, partly owing to a widespread reaction against the methods of the past; and partly because Khrushchev sought to gain political credit by espousing the cause of reform.

The ideological confusion that manifested itself in 1956, after the Twentieth Party Congress, greatly exceeded that which arose following Stalin's death. The denigration of Stalin at the Twentieth Congress and the renunciation of parts of the Stalinist heritage provoked questions about the essentials of party policies and, indeed, about the very foundations of Soviet society, though party leaders tried as best they could to forestall this development. Khrushchev's defamation of Stalin, vivid as it was, traced the dictator's degeneration only from 1934 and was in other
respects qualified, and the Central Committee's clarifying resolution of June represented an effort to shield the Soviet system itself from searching criticism. But the momentous pronouncements of party leaders at the congress, shocking as they may have been to some Soviet citizens, could hardly have failed to arouse expectations of a brighter future. The surge of hope and sense of release that some writers experienced are reflected in remarks about the congress written by Olga Berggolts in April, on the occasion of Lenin's birthday. How often, Berggolts exclaimed, have historians and writers "depicted the past, present, and future path of our people as an express way paved with sugared asphalt! How often and how long have many of us been imprisoned by doctrinaire, dogmatic stereotypes..."\(^3^0\) The discussion that emerged during the summer and fall of 1956 threatened to extend beyond, if not to call into question, that "great truth, the party's truth and Lenin's," which Berggolts coupled with "lofty individual craftsmanship" as the "single law" of Soviet writers.\(^3^1\) The issues raised were not actually new ones, for they centred on problems that had troubled the literary community during the whole of the post-war period. What is remarkable is that the reaction against Stalinist policies took the form of highly articulate searchings which reached the ultimate causes of admitted evils. Taken as a whole, the writers' criticisms, demands and visions threatened to become, whether it was intended or not, a forceful

\(^3^0\)Cited in Swayne, Political Control of Literature, 144.

\(^3^1\)Ibid.
indictment of the essentials of Soviet literary doctrine and of the very fundamentals of the control system. The literary discussion did not move in a single direction: the familiar pattern of conflict between prophets of orthodoxy and advocates of liberalization emerged through the flux of events and grew increasingly distinct as Khrushchev's term came to a close.

This conflict, between the Stalinist and anti-Stalinist forces, is at the core of this section. It was still alive even when Brezhnev claimed the reins of control and started to rehabilitate Stalin and the attendant political controls of his system. Evidently, the fury that Khrushchev sparked in 1956 was unstoppable. As such, the period dating from the death of Stalin to the ascension of Gorbachev is a transitional one. No one group dominated every aspect of Soviet society. This situation is underscored by the dates of production of both memoirs studied in this chapter.

Khrushchev's memoir project began in 1966\textsuperscript{32}, while he was supposed to be under close KGB supervision at his dacha. What is riveting is that two volumes of Khrushchev's memoirs were smuggled to the West under Brezhnev's allegedly watchful eye. Yet, as William Taubman notes, Sergei Khrushchev was reluctant to respond to questions about rumours that the KGB, or elements of it, played a role in transmitting the tapes and transcripts to the West, and that in return for this help, Khrushchev and his associates agreed

to certain cuts in the material. As Sergei states quite apologetically, "I understand the interest in these questions and I agree they are important. I greatly regret that due to circumstances beyond my control, I cannot answer them." Of even greater importance to this discussion, is the fact that Khrushchev's memoirs were used as political tools by the anti-Stalinist bloc against Brezhnev's regime. According to Janos Bak, "Chrushchev's memoirs were soon smuggled back into the USSR and circulated in *samizdat* selections, as powerful weapons in the hands of the still very much persecuted opponents of the regime in the post-Chruschchev era."  

The memoirs of the second author studied in this paper, those of Petro Grigorenko, also tell the reader of a new political climate in the post-Stalin period. His were published in 1982 in the United States -- a fate that befell many works during Brezhnev's rule. According to Ronald Hingley, the third wave of emigration of writers in the 1970s was the most controlled by the state. The policy of expelling or releasing individuals was applied to authors considered trouble-makers after offending by publishing works abroad, by engaging in protest movements, and the like. Similar to Khrushchev's, Grigorenko's memoirs were also distributed in the Soviet underground by *samizdat*. This situation clearly illustrates the conflict between the Stalinist and anti-

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33Ibid., 251.
34Janos Bak, "Political Biography", 2.
35Ronald Hingley, *Russian Writers*, 64.
Stalinist forces in Soviet society. It also shows how Soviet political memoir was used as a political tool by the anti-Stalinist forces against the Brezhnev regime. Moreover, Soviet political memoir had emerged as an effective method to articulate the views of various political blocs in Soviet society. The repressive literary controls that kept memoir literature from growing were greatly weakened after Stalin's demise. Thus, this change in the treatment of Soviet political memoir reflects a simultaneous change in Soviet political culture.

A brief background sketch of the authors will elucidate their memoirs' value in the study of Soviet history. Khrushchev was one of the world's most important statesmen at the time of his downfall in October of 1964. Together with his corresponding number one and personal foe in Peking, and the President of the United States, he was one of the supreme arbiters of international politics. Yet on October 14, 1964, as a result of a palace coup, the Central Committee ratified a previous decision of the Presidium deposing Khrushchev from all his offices, including the posts of Chairman of the Council of Ministers and First Secretary of the Party. The Soviet public was curtly informed that the Central Committee had acceded to Khrushchev's plea that on account of his advanced age and ailing health he be released from his multifarious duties. The man who had dominated the USSR for ten years, and who

had shaken the world with his threats and designs became overnight an obscure emeritus. In fact, in the last seven years of his life, Nikita Sergeevich was mentioned only twice in the official press. As a result of this damning fall from grace, Khrushchev wanted to leave his mark on history by giving his version. As his son Sergei states, "[t]his was his way of demonstrating his strength to those who had wronged him: they had broken him, and he would not give up." In this section, I will examine two of Khrushchev's three volumes: *Khrushchev Remembers* (1970) and *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament* (1974)

Petro Grigorenko is also a unique figure in Soviet history. He was not only a former Soviet general officer and party member, but an outspoken dissident. He was deeply critical of Stalin's military shortsightedness and bungling which cost Russia so dearly when the Red Army crumpled under Hitler's onslaught in the summer of 1941. But his emergence as a leading military thinker holding important positions at the Frunze Academy, the equivalent of the British Staff College, precluded any harsh treatment. It was not until some time after Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin in 1956 that he was promoted to Major-General. However, Grigorenko's irritation over the slow rate of de-Stalinization and his fear of another "personality cult" under Khrushchev pushed him into open dissidence in the name of democratic ideals. He dared express his discontent in a private Party meeting in September, 1961, after

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which he was formally reprimanded and marked for life. This transformation led to official reactions spanning the gamut from local discipline to incarceration in psychiatric wards, and eventually to exile abroad in 1977. In this chapter, I will analyze Memoirs (1982).

The story behind the memoirs' production effectively illustrates the dominant role that politics played in literature and how Soviet political memoir was treated as a political tool by anti-Stalinist forces. Moreover, whether their reception in the West was positive or negative is not as crucial a concern as is the degree of sensation that they spurred when they were discovered. The controversy regarding the authenticity of Khrushchev's memoirs when they were first announced in the November 27, 1970 issue of Life is clearly illustrated in the prefatory Editor's Note,

For more than a year a very small group of people at Life has been sitting on a very large secret: the reminiscences of Nikita Khrushchev. We could make no public reference to the subject, and we could not even talk about it around the office...We were certain that the Soviet government would raise the question of authenticity or even denounce the work as a fake. Indeed, just last week the Soviet news agency Tass published a statement from Khrushchev...that he had not 'passed on memoirs or materials of this nature' and that the project was therefore 'a fabrication.' Knowing a year ago that such comments would be forthcoming, we had to be sure that what we had was not a fabrication.38

Initial reaction at Time Inc. to the acquisition of the Khrushchev reminiscences, which were originally in tape form, was extreme suspicion. Eventually the excitement in claiming to be the

publisher of the former Soviet leader's memoirs became quite evident. According to Prendergast and Colvin's book on Time's history, Time's advantage was that it could offer simultaneous magazine and book publication, the latter through Time Inc.'s trade book subsidiary, Little, Brown and Company, as well as television exposure through Time Life Films.\(^{39}\)

In all, one hundred and eighty hours of tapes, both reel and cassette, and eight hundred and twenty pages of Russian transcripts were delivered to Time Inc. for the two volumes that Little, Brown published, the four instalments from the first volume, and the two instalments from the second volume that appeared in Time following Life's demise in December 1970. According to Prendergast and Colvin, the material arrived in the United States by several routes -- "in the usual way that underground stuff gets out of the Soviet Union."\(^{40}\) A spectrographic analysis was conducted using for comparison a United Nations recording of Khrushchev during his appearance at the 1959 U.N. General Assembly. The analysis established conclusively that it was indeed the Soviet leader speaking on the smuggled tapes. There were pages missing but no evidence of tampering. In fact, it was recorded that one hundred and seventy-five hours of tapes were unmistakably Khrushchev. On the other four and a half hours the voice was less certain. As Prendergast and Colvin indicate,

\(^{39}\text{Ibid.}\)

\(^{40}\text{Ibid., 289.}\)
Khrushchev had trouble at first with the primitive equipment, and sometimes put the microphone on top of the recorder. The subject matter of these portions (some incidents of World War II, Khrushchev's visit to Britain in 1956) did not suggest that there had been any doctoring however.\textsuperscript{41}

Indeed, the aforementioned authors stress that the background noises of dogs barking, dishes rattling in the kitchen, birds singing and children playing while he was outside in the garden, all recorded sharply on the German machine that Khrushchev later used, further supported the tapes' authenticity.\textsuperscript{42}

Edward Crankshaw, the British expert on Soviet affairs and biographer of Khrushchev, who was enlisted to provide historical guidance for the project, was similarly convinced. Crankshaw admitted in his introduction to the first volume that he, too, was not told how the material was obtained. However, he was certain that it was Khrushchev speaking, and to Crankshaw, Khrushchev's motivation, apart from self-justification, seemed evident:

Nobody now active and in office is attacked directly. The main target of criticism is Stalin...I think it may be assumed that the chief concern of the person, or persons, responsible for releasing these reminiscences to the West --- it certainly appears to be one of Khrushchev's chief concerns -- was to counter the current attempts [in the U.S.S.R.] to rehabilitate Stalin.\textsuperscript{43}

In February 1970, the contract was signed for the Khrushchev material providing for payment of $750,000 through a Swiss bank. All rights went to Time Inc. Final discussions that summer set the

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid.

publication protocol, which Jerrold Schecter, as senior editor, summarized in a message to New York: the material was not to be presented as a "memoir" but only as "reminiscences." Confidentiality should be maintained until the last moment. "If the first leaks suggest a sensation, we can expect a sensational and potentially devastating response," Schecter wrote. "It is imperative that although we speak of a Russian manuscript we do not directly mention its author." Rather, the formula "is that the manuscript contains material that was collected and put on paper by persons with permanent access to the subject over a long period of time [avoiding] any indication of the subject's role in the project."44

Life senior editor Gene Farmer began preparing four excerpts, totalling thirty-five thousand words, for publication in the magazine. Shortly afterward, Life opened the bidding for foreign newspaper and magazine syndication. According to Prendergast and Colvin, it was a "blind auction."45 Gedeon de Margitay, Life's Paris-based syndication chief, made the rounds with the kit, containing Talbott's characterization of the work and Crankshaw's introduction but no actual Khrushchev excerpts nor any information about the source. Buyers were told by de Margitay that "we are taking a gamble and I was asking them if they'd like to gamble

44Prendergast and Colving, 290.

45Ibid.
along with us." Explicitly, the buyers were forbidden by contract to speculate in print on the origin of the Khrushchev material beyond what Time Inc. had told them. Even under these conditions, sales were brisk. In all, European, Latin American, Middle Eastern, and Asian publishers paid a total of $880,000 for publication rights, more than covering Time Inc.'s outlay. No syndication rights were offered in the U.S.; Life intended to capitalize fully on exclusivity on its home ground.

Khrushchev in print was a worldwide sensation. Life's coup set off a speculative flurry in which, inevitably, publishing rivalries played a part. In Europe especially, newspapers and magazines that had not been sold rights to the Khrushchev reminiscences challenged their authenticity. Among publications accepting the Khrushchev memoirs as genuine, also, there was questioning of motive and source -- the why and how of Khrushchev's unburdening of himself to an American publisher.

Press attention focused on the possible role of an enigmatic figure who called himself Victor Louis. He had been imprisoned under Stalin; now liberated, he served as Moscow correspondent of the London Evening Standard and lived in capitalist affluence, with an English wife, a seven-room Moscow apartment, a suburban dacha with sauna and tennis court, a Porsche and Mercedes in the garage. The New York Times described the multilingual 42-year-old Louis as

\[46\text{Ibid.}\]
\[47\text{Ibid.}\]
a man "who doubles or triples as a newsman, literary hot-goods salesman and, it is suggested, secret police agent." It was reported that in 1967 Louis had attempted to discredit the autobiography of Stalin's daughter, Svetlana, titled Twenty Letters to a Friend, which was then being sold to Western publishers. Earlier, he had attempted to produce a pirated version of My Fair Lady for Soviet audiences. There were numerous suggestions that Louis had been the agent in the Khrushchev transaction. As Prendergast and Colvin show, it was cited in a Danish paper that he had been registered at the Hotel d'Angleterre in Copenhagen in August 1970, at the same time Murray Gart, chief of correspondents, was in town for a regional conference of Time-Life European correspondents.

The Soviet reaction was as Life had anticipated, even to the extent of a denial from Khrushchev's wife. "Impossible...a joke," she was quoted as saying. Khrushchev's own denial, however, was seen as less than categorical; he disavowed delivering "material of a memoir nature" to any publisher, but not the fact of this material's existence. According to Strobe Talbott, the acclaimed editor of the first and third volumes of the memoirs, Khrushchev himself had declared not that he didn't know how the manuscript had gotten abroad but that he himself had not sent it.

In 1972, after Khrushchev's death, the original tapes were

48 Ibid.

49 Sergei Khrushchev, Khrushchev on Khrushchev, 309.

50 Ibid.
retrieved from a Swiss bank vault and brought back to the U.S. for presentation to the Oral History Collection at Columbia University. De Margitay was the courier. In a scenario "right out of an Eric Ambler novel," as he described it, de Margitay flew to Switzerland where, following instructions, he went to the steps of a church in Lucerne that was high on a hill, visible from all sides. The contact man appeared, exchanged a few words with de Margitay in accented French, handed him a plastic shopping bag containing the tapes and departed. That afternoon de Margitay flew back to New York. The tapes passed through U.S. customs without so much as a glance.

As a result of his quest to uncover the truth, Khrushchev faced the inevitable problem of the KGB. Although he was aware of the bugs planted at his dacha in Petrovo-Dalneye from the beginning of his memoirs project in 1966, the Soviet authorities did not confront Khrushchev until 1968. Subsequently, a deal was made with the Soviet authorities to save parts of the memoir which were eventually smuggled to the West. As was suggested earlier, forces high up in the government who opposed Brezhnev's Stalinist policies may have been involved in the project. As a consequence, Soviet political memoir was treated as a political weapon. Unfortunately, Sergei Khrushchev refused to reveal the collaborators' identity in his recently published book about his father. Hence, even amidst

51 Prendergast and Colvin, *The World of Time*, 292.

52 In his book, Sergei Khrushchev also gives a lot of information regarding how his father recorded his thoughts in his dacha, often in view of the security guards. Sergei himself, along
the optimism generated by glasnost, the very nature of the collusion prevents the reader from fully understanding the history behind the memoirs' production. More importantly, the political intrigues and unexpected twists and turns surrounding the story of the memoirs' making is reflective of the conflict between the Stalinist and anti-Stalinist forces in the Soviet Union. After Khrushchev's fall, however, the Stalinist forces were officially in power. In direct contrast to the excitement surrounding the publication of memoirs by famous political figures in the West, Sergei Khrushchev laments the trenchant passivity rooted in his country.\textsuperscript{53} This was exemplified by the disregard for his father's memoirs which were published in sixteen languages around the world. As he states, "for seventeen years, nobody paid any attention to it -- yet another example of our long-standing thoughtless, 'who cares' attitude to the history of our homeland."\textsuperscript{54} Yet, the intriguing story behind their production illustrated the memoirs' political significance and how they were used as political tools by various forces in Soviet society.

In contrast to Khrushchev's memoirs, Grigorenko's work did not spawn nearly as much controversy. Most reviewers were interested


\textsuperscript{54} Sergei Khrushchev, \textit{Khrushchev on Khrushchev}, 233.
in his career and how he became a dissident. Production of his memoirs was ignored. This may stem from his exile to the United States in 1977 when he came for medical treatment with his wife Zinaida and their son, Oleg. His memoirs were published in the United States by an American publishing company and any mysterious involvement by the KGB or Soviet authorities is highly unlikely. All that can be determined from the nature of their production is that, since Grigorenko actually wrote his memoirs in the West, it seems that reviewers accept them as valid and authentic. The absence of a diary or any mention of other materials does not seem to bother Western reviewers of his work. As a product of a Western publishing house, Grigorenko's work shares the same Western influence as Khrushchev's memoirs but since it was not smuggled into the West, it is considered more authentic. In addition, the fact that Grigorenko was not permitted to publish his work in the Soviet Union underscores the anti-Stalinist forces behind his memoir's creation.

The method of analysis that I will follow in the remaining part of the chapter demands a degree of explanation. Topics discussed by both authors will be the focus of the first section. Style, moreover, is crucial in demonstrating the move away from socialist realist precepts. Attention will be placed on diction, tone, and the nature of the audience. Lastly, I will discuss how

academics have used these memoirs in their research and determine whether they treat them with more seriousness than traditional Stalinist texts. This section, therefore, is meant to illustrate the relationship between stylistic change and political attitudes.

First, an examination of the subject matter discussed by both authors is crucial in an analysis of their work. In this section, I will look at the two most prominent topics dealt with by both men: Stalin and the Great Patriotic War. My decision to examine these topics is two-fold: 1) they were discussed more than any other subjects; 2) they were topics traditionally discussed by authors during the Stalinist period.

Khrushchev's feelings against Stalin represented the raison d'etre of his memoirs. As several sources have noted, particularly Edward Crankshaw in the introduction to the first volume, the chief motives of the parties responsible in smuggling Khrushchev's memoirs to the West were to "counter the current attempts to rehabilitate Stalin."56 Proof for Crankshaw's view is not difficult to find. One has to look no farther than Khrushchev himself when he declares that "Stalin should be shown to the Soviet people naked, so that he can occupy his proper place in history."57 Khrushchev's aim seems two-fold in nature: to attack Stalin and his legacy and to relieve himself of any connections to this horrible period in Soviet history. The latter part of his agenda is attempted by Khrushchev presenting himself as a naive follower

56Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers, ix.

57Ibid.
of Stalin. He cloaks himself in innocence and emphasizes that his loyalty to Stalin was actually a devotion to Communism. As Khrushchev admits,

I was a hundred percent faithful to Stalin as our leader and our guide. I believed that everything Stalin said in the name of the Party was inspired by genius, and that I had only to apply it to my own life.58

According to Khrushchev, therefore, he was a victim of the system which allowed tyrants like Stalin to rule in the name of Communist ideals. It taught him to obey without a doubt. In this way, Khrushchev distances himself from a dark past, a past in which he was an active player. For example, when he admits that the collectivization campaign brought only misery to the Soviet people,59 he quickly explains how Stalin's followers were indoctrinated as to their proper reactions — reactions which he naively misunderstood as correct and necessary at the time. As the following passage shows, Khrushchev's memoir serves as an apologia for his past mistakes:

When the failure of the collectivization became widely known we were all taught to blame scheming Kulaks, rightists, Trotskyites, and Zinovievites for what was happening. There was always the handy explanation of counterrevolutionary sabotage.60

Khrushchev sees himself as a victim of the time, of the system, and of Stalinism. He suggests that he was not unique and should not be

58Ibid., 46.

59Ibid, 71.

60Ibid., 74.
condemned for something which he could not control.

Khrushchev's discussion of the Great Patriotic War offers glimpses into the Soviets' dismal condition while the Germans were wiping out whole armies in vast encirclements. The Kharkov disaster was one of the most devastating events in the War. Khrushchev played an instrumental role in this debacle. In typical fashion, Khrushchev chooses to place all blame on others. Evidently, his position stands in direct contrast to the claims made by Marshal Zhukov in his memoirs that Khrushchev vehemently supported Stalin's idea of a major three-pronged offensive in the Ukraine, toward Kharkov. 61 As can be discerned from the following quotation, Khrushchev tries to share his guilt with Timoshenko -- thus lightening his own burden:

I forget who had taken the initiative for organizing the Kharkov operation in the first place. Later Stalin was to accuse me of having ordered the offensive. I don't deny that I may have had a part in it, but, as I asked Stalin, 'What about the commander, Timoshenko?' 62

The masking of Khrushchev's guilt is masterfully illustrated in this quotation. The passage also shows another function of political memoir -- vindication of a leader. In this case particularly, it helped to reshape a past event into something more beneficial to Khrushchev.

Alternatively, Khrushchev draws a guilty picture of other figures who were just as devoted to the system and to Stalin as he was. Lazarus Kaganovich, Khrushchev's former mentor is among those

61Ibid., 182-183.

62Ibid., 184.
whom Khrushchev condemns as a Stalinist sycophant. According to Khrushchev, "[Kaganovich] was nothing but a lackey. All Stalin had to do was scratch Kaganovich behind the ears to send him snarling at the Party."63 Khrushchev seems to have some difficulty in arranging his thoughts about Kaganovich. This is demonstrated when one considers Kaganovich's career. He was apparently demoted by Stalin from First secretary of the Moscow Regional and City committees to People's Commissar of Transport in 1935. Similar to other demotions, Stalin's reasons lay in his view of Kaganovich as a threat to his position since Kaganovich was getting too close. Khrushchev was chosen by Stalin as Kaganovich's replacement. Memoir, therefore, is used to evaluate one of Khrushchev's contemporaries and give his own version of the nature of Kaganovich's decline in the Party's ranks. By portraying Kaganovich as an opportunist, Khrushchev is thereby polishing his image as the right man who replaced him.

Grigorenko also portrays himself as a naive follower of Stalin. He stresses this message like Khrushchev does by maintaining that all mistakes committed by Stalin were ignored since Grigorenko himself was inculcated with Communist ideals. Grigorenko expresses this attitude in his discussion of the TASS Communique number 8 of June 21st, 1941, which was designed to reassure the Soviet people that Hitler was not going to attack:

But I was unable to agree with him. I had not been brought up to criticize. To me words of the Party, leadership, especially those of the 'great leader,' were the height of

63 Ibid., 46.
wisdom; thus they merely had to be understood and elucidated for those who did not understand. I interpreted the TASS communique in a positive light. And I believed so strongly in my interpretation that my conviction was interpreted to my hearers.  

Like Khrushchev, therefore, Grigorenko wants to be judged as a man who was a victim of the system and not one of its tyrannous leaders.

Grigorenko also stresses the grave ineptitude of various military figures during World War Two. He frames a picture of a generally incompetent General Staff that conducted the war according to absurd concepts. However, Grigorenko himself is shown as one of the few true experts who was frustrated with his country's unpreparedness for war. He maintains that the "information" that he received from the General Staff in Moscow was often misinformation. Usually, the locations indicated on orders were unclear. "For example," Grigorenko contends,

they would cite a tiny place or maybe a high point alongside a large city. And this tiny place or high point would be called by different names on different maps. We would have to spread our maps of all scales, and one man would read the communique while the other operations officers searched the maps. Usually it took some time to find the point in question. How could we know that the author of the communique was referring to a place just outside the captured city, instead of to the city itself.  

Grigorenko also castigates Stalin's supporters much like Khrushchev did in his memoirs. However, Grigorenko's criticism rests with military figures instead of purely political officials. Marshal Zhukov is the recipient of most of Grigorenko's wrath. He

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65 Ibid., 129.
is shown to have been a ruthless leader who gained pleasure from destroying officers' careers. In the sad story of "Major T.'s" fate, Zhukov is shown as nothing more than a power-hungry tyrant:

Shtern was preparing to decide the issue by battle. At the same time he was resolving a multitude of problems Zhukov had created, one of them being death sentences...Everyone was astounded at the indictments. Each man's file contained either an official report from a commander stating that the man had failed to execute an order and should be court-martialled and shot. Or, it would contain a personal note from Zhukov stating that the man was to be court-martialled, convicted and shot for not executing an order from Zhukov. There was nothing else: just one small piece of paper.66

Grigorenko's attack on Zhukov may be due to various reasons. He may certainly have disapproved of Zhukov's methods and decided to express them in his own work. Or, Grigorenko sees Zhukov as a symbol of the Stalinist system which he eventually grew to oppose. But the most obvious reason could be that Grigorenko resents Zhukov for attaining glory as a war hero -- a position that Grigorenko feels is owed to him. Of course this last claim cannot be proven through the memoirs solely but one can speculate by keeping in mind the fate of a former war hero who not only lost his prestigious status but was eventually stripped of his Soviet citizenship. Memoir, therefore, cannot only expose the errors of one's contemporaries, it can also hide one's insecurities quite conveniently.

The discussion on subject matter has revealed several aspects of Soviet political memoir. It has shown how memoir can be manipulated as a tool to polish up one's own image. Memoir also

66Ibid., 108.
allows one to give a critical assessment of their contemporaries—a valuable function especially if the person in question is disliked by the memoirist. In addition, it can vindicate the memoirist in the face of alleged past mistakes and shortcomings, and thus re-shape the reader's memory of the past. A final function of Soviet political memoir is its reflection of political attitudes in Soviet society.

In this chapter, the memoirists discuss certain topics in a strikingly different manner from that found in Stalinist works. The most obvious difference is their portrayal of Stalin. Khrushchev and Grigorenko fiercely criticize him and stress all of his shortcomings. As a consequence, however, they must explain their deep involvement in the Stalinist system to the reader. This actually means vindicating themselves by promoting the image of being victims of the system instead of its prime leaders. Both memoirists also present a negative view of the Great Patriotic War. They destroy the image of a heroic victory for Stalin and his nation and instead tell the reader that it was almost a major defeat due to the ineptitude of Stalin and his followers. The radical shift of interpretations between the memoirs studied here and work traditionally approved by the Stalinist regime, emphasizes the anti-Stalinist attitudes that influenced the development of transitional memoirs. The fact that there were rumours of KGB involvement and that the memoirs were eventually printed in samizdat suggest that anti-Stalinist views existed when Khrushchev's and Grigorenko's works were published. The government
had reason to fear that these memoirs would promote anti-Stalinist attitudes and thus weaken their own position.

An analysis of the memoirs' style also reveals a move away from traditional Stalinist writing techniques. First, their language is not as constrained as it was in Stalinist-approved literature. The instances of heavily politicized words are very few. Khrushchev often criticizes the Soviet regime with minimal use of Marxist jargon. For instance, Khrushchev attacks the Soviet Communist Party for its careerism when he declares,

Those first years of Soviet Power were years of struggle and hardship and self-sacrifice. But the people still believed in the Party...Nowadays a Party card all too often represents nothing more than its bearer's hope of finding a comfortable niche for himself in our socialist society.\(^{67}\)

Khrushchev's praise of socialist society does not go beyond what is shown in the above passage. He does not use words such as "bourgeoisie", "proletariat" and other typical Marxist language. His aim is not to stress the conflict between East and West as writers were demanded to do by the Stalinist literary establishment. This is shown when Khrushchev discusses the Sovietization of Eastern Europe after W.W.II:

At the end of the war we had troops stationed in Poland and Hungary. Stalin took an active personal interest in the affairs of these countries, as well as of Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Rumania.\(^{68}\)

Instead of drawing the picture of a struggle between the glorious Soviet forces against those of the dark capitalist world,

\(^{67}\)Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, 17.

\(^{68}\)*Ibid.*, 361.
Khrushchev's memoir lacks Marxist language and presents a far less combative setting to the reader.

Grigorenko's language is also not socialist realist in nature. He chooses to use allusions quite extensively which make his writing seem erudite. A good example of his language is found in one of his impassioned speeches:

My conclusion was that whoever wanted to struggle against tyranny had to destroy within himself the fear of tyranny. He had to take up his cross and climb Golgotha. Let people see him, and in them the desire to take part in his march will awaken. Let others see those who follow him and they themselves will follow.69

Both authors employ an animated diction. They also do not use as many Marxist–Leninist expressions and the degree of political rhetoric is much less pronounced. Since Socialist Realist language is virtually absent, then it seems that Khrushchev's and Grigorenko's memoirs reflect anti-Stalinist attitudes.

Moreover, both Khrushchev and Grigorenko display an intimate tone. Khrushchev seems anxious to tell the truth to the reader. He hopes that his memoir will teach lessons to future generations. His emotions are quite pronounced which reveals an intense relationship with his subject. A good example is Khrushchev's explanation for criticizing Stalin, found in the preface to his first volume:

What I have to say is not slander, and it's not malicious gossip. It is meant to serve the important and constructive function of our Party's self-purification. I address myself to the generations of the future in the hope that they will

69Grigorenko, Memoirs, 290.
avoid the mistakes of the past.\textsuperscript{70} Similarly, Grigorenko displays a close tie with his subject as well. The following passage illustrates his intimate tone which bears a spiritual accent:

In my long life, I have seen two social structures. I have seen and lived in two social structures. I have seen and lived in socialism as it is described by Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Yevgeny Zamyatin, and George Orwell. And then I saw another society. It did not call itself socialist but it set as its purpose the achievement of material prosperity. In this it was successful, but the society soon fell into a state of spiritual decline. Material abundance cannot be the end of human activity. The purpose of life is something else.\textsuperscript{71}

The intimate tone that Khrushchev and Grigorenko display shows that both authors disregard Socialist Realism's focus on material concerns. Instead, they emphasize spiritual qualities, a betrayal of Socialist Realism. As such, both memoirs basically disinherit the techniques of the old system in order to show a disapproval of Stalinism.

The messages in both memoirs are the same for both the Western and Soviet readers. Unfortunately, state-approved copies of the memoirs were not available to the Soviet audience. Yet they were made available in \textit{samizdat} by unidentified sources. This situation suggests the influence of oppositional forces behind the creation of the memoirs who intended to dismantle the idealized view of Stalinist society.

In addition to the tone, the nature of the intended audience can

\textsuperscript{70}Khrushchev, \textit{Khrushchev Remembers}, 9.

\textsuperscript{71}Grigorenko, \textit{Memoirs}, 452.
be interpreted from the above-cited passages. Khrushchev's memoir is interesting since its published form was not produced by Khrushchev himself. As the parties involved in the memoir project were essentially based both in the Soviet Union and the West, and the memoirs proliferated in both areas, two audiences were intended. Moreover, Grigorenko's work was written and published in the West. Yet it too was distributed in the Soviet Union through samizdat. His treatment of the subjects discussed also indicates two intended audiences.

A final aspect of the memoirs that must be addressed is the way that academics have treated them. What is of specific interest is whether they have been accepted as serious research material. This factor would demonstrate another difference from Stalinist texts. Khrushchev's memoirs have been used extensively by numerous historians and political analysts. In his book, Khrushchev and Brezhnev as Leaders: Building Authority in Soviet Politics, George W. Breslauer uses Khrushchev's works as a source of comparative analysis. According to Breslauer, "in the notes I shall include corroborating or disconfirming evidence from Khrushchev's memoirs, juxtapose them to the portrait drawn from our main sources, and offer explanations of similarities and differences."72 In this regard, Breslauer presents a very strong argument to explain the extent to which the First Secretary was able to control the policy agenda of the Politburo. Martin McCauley also underscores the

value of Khrushchev's memoirs as an insightful source for the study of Soviet policy in *Khrushchev and Khrushchevism*, a compilation of essays by various historians who seek to determine the relation between the man and the policies pursued by his regime. Michael Shafir examines the memoirs and compares them to Khrushchev's Eastern European policy, thereby uncovering a distinctive contradiction. As Shafir shows, Khrushchev would at one point claim that "we deliberately avoided applying pressures on other Socialist countries" contending that "every Communist Party should, and would, handle its own internal problems by itself."73 Alternatively, Khrushchev would also support Ulbricht's building of the Berlin Wall because, as he phrased it, "naturally, under the dictatorship of the working class, there can be no such thing as absolute freedom."74

Grigorenko's works are also accepted as valuable sources, particularly for what he tells about the infringement of human rights in the Soviet Union. In his book entitled *Andropov*, Zhores Medvedev refers to Grigorenko's memoirs in order to show the treacherous methods employed by the KGB against Soviet dissidents. Medvedev's attack is directed against Andropov and the repressive measures his regime implemented in order to suppress opposition. From the words of Grigorenko himself, Medvedev finds that in 1967-68 Andropov had personal responsibility for the thorny problem


74Ibid.
relating to the Crimean Tartars. They had been deported from the Crimea to Uzbekistan in 1944 and were fully rehabilitated as a nation only in 1967.\textsuperscript{75} Moreover, Mikhail Heller and Aleksandr Nekrich refer to Grigorenko's memoirs in their book, \textit{Utopia in Power}. They use his reminiscences in the chapter, "The War, 1941-1945" which deals with the situation faced by Vlasov and his followers during the War. The most illuminating aspect revealed by Grigorenko is that most Vlasovites who were prisoners in Soviet camps, including Vlasov himself, did not confess to treason without attacking Stalin, despite the fact that they were promised life if they had done so.\textsuperscript{76} The anti-Stalinist attitudes expressed in these works obviously were more convincing to the Western reader. Since Khrushchev's and Grigorenko's memoirs have been treated quite seriously by academics in their research, the change between memoirs such as these and traditional Stalinist literature is nowhere more apparent than in this section.

Khrushchev's and Grigorenko's memoirs reflect a new political climate in the Soviet Union following Stalin's demise. The most obvious change is that Soviet political memoir was no longer regarded as a bourgeois, individualist preserve as it was under Stalin. Instead, more memoirs were being written by prominent Soviet figures. Soviet political memoir was also treated as a


\textsuperscript{76} Mikhail Heller and Aleksandr Nekrich. \textit{Utopia in Power}. transl. from Russian by Phyllis B. Carlos, New York: 1982, 437.
valuable political tool by anti-Stalinist forces who wanted to stop
the return to Stalinism. The history behind the memoirs' production
reinforces their political importance. In Khrushchev's case, for
example, the story of the tapes and how they were smuggled to the
West seems to have almost foreshadowed their actual content.
Moreover, the fact that they were officially published only in the
West while they were distributed clandestinely in the Soviet Union
points to the tensions of the Cold War era. This fact also shows
the unique nature of the audience. Although the authors hoped that
their works would eventually be published in their nation, their
intended audience is the Western one. Yet another feature is the
memoirists' attack on Stalin and the inadequacies of the Stalinist
system. This characteristic is the most conspicuous difference
separating memoirs of the transitional period from traditional
Stalinist works. A final aspect is the way that academics have
accepted Soviet political memoirs as serious research materials.
Even though Khrushchev's works suffered from more critical
evaluation and skepticism from Western reviewers, they have been
treated with the same seriousness as Grigorenko's. In short,
Soviet political memoirs of the transitional period are definitely
different from Stalinist texts based on the nature of their
production, content, and reception by Western academics.

Khrushchev's and Grigorenko's memoirs, therefore, reinforce the
thesis that Soviet political memoirs are important research tools.
They show how the new political situation in the Soviet Union
allowed the proliferation of anti-Stalinist attitudes. The mystery
behind their production, the distinctive change in interpretations from those demanded in the Stalinist era, and the rejection of Socialist Realism, reflect the views of oppositional forces in the Soviet Union. The fact that former Stalinist supporters articulated anti-Stalinist ideas affirms the political turbulence of their period.
Chapter Three:
The Reaction Against Anti-Stalinism:
The Case of Brezhnev and Gromyko

The keynote of the Brezhnev administration which followed the dismissal of Khrushchev in October 1964 was extreme caution. One early outcome was a brief period of relaxation, lasting from late 1964 into 1966, during which the new leadership was still feeling its way. This phase saw the publication of remarkably outspoken material less in the form of imaginative literature than in that of memoirs, particularly military memoirs, and articles by historians and military experts. They contained revelations about early Soviet history and criticism of Stalin's and also of Khrushchev's military activities.

Once the Brezhnev administration was firmly established it began to impose Stalinist controls more effectively, if less newsworthy than those of the previous dispensation. From 1966 onwards literary censorship was unobtrusively strengthened and rendered more sophisticated, being applied with special rigour to works and periodicals enjoying a large circulation. As for Khrushchev's devious and limited brand of de-Stalinization, it was replaced by a different policy: that of discreetly rehabilitating the great dictator while yet keeping public comment on him to the minimum. Even the soothing Khrushchevite euphemism for the horrors of the Great Purge ("phenomena associated with the cult of personality of

I.V. Stalin") ceased to be employed, while Khrushchev himself became a virtual unperson -- someone to whom reference could no longer be made in print. The general effect of this policy was to remove the pall of uncertainty under which the USSR had lived when Khrushchev's sudden bouts of rage or benevolence were at any moment liable to initiate a sudden switch in policy.

The Brezhnev era marked the return to repressive literary controls. The first noteworthy example was the trial in Moscow in February 1966, of two writers, Andrey Sinyavsky and Yuly Daniel, on the basis of literary works by them which had somehow come to be published abroad under the pseudonyms, respectively, of Abram Tertz and Nikolai Arzhak. Hard labour sentences of seven and five years imposed on the two authors caused considerable indignation throughout the world. It was noted that never previously, even under Stalin, had writers been overtly prosecuted on the basis of what they had written and "after a trial in which the principal evidence against them was their literary work."  

The year of this double trial coincided with a great increase in the particular kind of transaction that the accused had conducted: the spiriting abroad for foreign publication of Export Only literary works found or assumed to be ineligible for publication in the USSR. One reason for their proliferation since 1966 was the imposition of more effective censorship controls at home. After 1966 writers could be fairly certain that works of a certain character had no hope of Soviet publication: under Khrushchev, by

78Hingley, Russian Writers, 50.
contrast, it was difficult to be absolutely certain that any item must inevitably be excluded.

The most prominent Russian writer of the Brezhnev era is Solzhenitsyn, whose literary career began in 1962 with the Khrushchev-sanctioned One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich. Solzhenitsyn became an Export Only author after it had proved impossible to publish certain other works, notably Cancer Ward and The First Circle, in his native land. His forcible ejection from the Soviet Union in February 1974 turned him into an emigre author. By 1975, his renowned memoir, The Oak and the Calf was published in the United States.

Several noteworthy descriptions of life under Stalinist oppression have issued from American and European publishing houses. A formidable example of such a work is Yevgenia Ginzburg's Journey into the Whirlwind, 1967 Milan; and Within the Whirlwind, 1981 Milan. The two volumes cover the period 1934-1955 from the eve of her arrest for alleged participation in a Trotskyite conspiracy, through her ten years in camps and eight years in exile in dreaded Magadan, to her eventual release and rehabilitation. What is of political significance to note, however, are the differences in ideological tenor between the first and second volumes of Ginzburg's memoirs. They provide an instructive example of the compromises that the mere spectre of censorship extracted from writers who hoped to publish in the USSR. While working on her first volume, Ginzburg believed in the possibility of a Soviet edition. To that end she laid blame for the Stalinist terror
exclusively on Stalin, thus tacitly exculpating his aides and the Party itself. As time went on, however, Ginzburg became persuaded that her memoirs would not be published in the Soviet Union within her lifetime. In dealing with writers considered obstreperous, Brezhnevite policy showed a degree of flexibility. Some offenders were tried and sentenced to concentration camps, incarcerated in psychiatric clinics, expelled from the Union of Writers, and even thrown out of the country. Not a few were induced by these means or by the threat of their application to assume more conformist postures. Socialist Realism still remained the mandatory literary doctrine.

One approach used by the Brezhnev regime to counter the anti-Stalinist coup started by Khrushchev was, ironically, a method also manipulated by Khrushchev's supporters: the writing of his memoirs. Brezhnev was the first Soviet leader who published his memoirs while still in power. The message in them was undoubtedly one that glorified the Stalinist system and its past. As was shown in the last chapter, Khrushchev's memoirs were a reaction against Brezhnev's Stalinist policies. They were not only smuggled out of the Soviet Union and published in the United States, but they were eventually smuggled back in the USSR and printed in samizdat. There were also rumours that members of the KGB and other highly-placed figures in the Brezhnev government were behind Khrushchev's memoir project.79 The figures were allegedly unhappy with Brezhnevite policy and preferred the changes instigated by

79See editor's note in Khrushchev on Khrushchev, 251.
Khrushchev. This chapter deals with the same transitional period but focuses on the Stalinist bloc, a group that also exploited Soviet political memoir as a political tool. It seems that a new political culture developed during the Brezhnev period since a considerable number of memoirs were published not only by the anti-Stalinist group represented by Khrushchev, but also by the Brezhnevite leadership itself.

The memoirs of Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev and Andrei Gromyko are the focus of this chapter. I chose them because of their prominent position in Soviet political history, the availability of their memoirs in both English and Russian, and the wide publicity that these memoirs attracted from the Western press. Incidentally, Gromyko's second English edition is quite appropriate for a study of the transitional period. I will show how the reasons behind the production of this revised edition stem primarily from the pressures generated by glasnost while the overall message of the book remains Stalinist in nature. This memoir reflects the changing political culture in the Soviet Union at the beginning of glasnost and emphasizes its treatment as a valuable political tool by certain political blocs in Soviet society.

A brief background sketch of Brezhnev and Gromyko is necessary as a prelude to an indepth analysis of their memoirs. Brezhnev launched his career as general secretary of the Party almost immediately after Khrushchev's fall from power in October of 1964. His authority grew with the years, and one could speak even of a cult of Brezhnev, especially after the general secretary of the
Party also became in 1976 a Marshal of the Soviet Union and his autobiographical writings were given tremendous prominence.\textsuperscript{80} The texts that will be examined in this chapter are \textit{The Virgin Lands} (1978), \textit{How It Was: The War and Post-War Reconstruction in the Soviet Union} (1979), \textit{Memoirs} (1982), and \textit{Vospominaniya} (1983). Gromyko's political importance is just as obvious as Brezhnev's. His extraordinary career dates back to 1943 when he became ambassador in the United States at the age of 34. He was later made a deputy minister of foreign affairs in 1946 and, after a short spell as ambassador in London, foreign minister in 1957. These fifty years as a Soviet diplomat gave him a wider range of experience than most Soviet citizens; his memoirs are valuable for this reason. In this chapter, I will study \textit{Memories} (1989), \textit{Memoirs} (1990), \textit{Pomyatnoe: Kniga Pervaya} (1988), and \textit{Pomyatnoe: Kniga Vtoraya} (1988).

Another issue that must be addressed is the question of the memoirs' production. Memoirs such as Brezhnev's and Gromyko's have often been ignored as historical documents because of their questionable origins. In Brezhnev's case, Western critics attacked the memoirs for their mysterious production since rumours of them having been ghost-written were widespread.\textsuperscript{81} As the Soviet historian Walter Laqueur states, for example, Brezhnev "received the Lenin Prize for Literature for his autobiography, a work of


monumental insignificance which apparently was not even written by him."\textsuperscript{82} Brezhnev even openly admits at the outset of his memoir on post-war reconstruction that he did not keep a diary. This may have fuelled the allegations of the books being "genuine propaganda from start to finish."\textsuperscript{83} The eventual removal of the texts from Soviet shelves strengthens these appraisals. The Gorbachev regime, in its quest to erase as much of its Stalinist past as it could, thought that the removal of Brezhnev's memoirs would give the West a new image of the Soviet Union. Critics of Gromyko's works also pointed to their mysterious nature. Specifically, attention was placed on Gromyko's revised and abridged version which includes a chapter attacking Stalin. The general consensus among reviewers was that Gromyko aimed to follow fashionable trends of anti-Stalinism in order to maintain his prestigious reputation in the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{84}

The controversy surrounding the nature of Gromyko's and Brezhnev's memoirs, however, is not an obstacle to my analysis. I am not concerned here with the authenticity of authorship and truth. What I look for in these memoirs is not the accumulation of facts but the way in which these "facts" are manipulated. The


\textsuperscript{83}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{84}These views are expressed by John Sametica in his article "Remembering with advantages," \textit{The Spectator}, 17 June 1989, 29; Martin Walker in his article "Stony-faced silence," \textit{Manchester Guardian Weekly}, 21 May 1989, 26; and "Grim Grom," \textit{The Economist}, 20 May 1989, 100.
portrayal of reality varies between the three categories of memoirs in this paper and I believe that the degree of mystery and distortion tells the reader a great deal about Soviet society.85

The remaining part of the paper will prove the importance of Soviet political memoir as a research tool. I aim to show how Soviet political memoir serves as a mirror of the trends and attitudes in post-Stalinist society. Despite the monolithic appearance of Soviet society, there was a stratification of ideological currents and political power. Stalinist and anti-Stalinist forces conflicted and led to the rise of a new, "emergent" order -- glasnost. These forces produced cultural objects, among them political memoirs, and by analyzing these works, I hope to understand these very forces. In the last chapter, the anti-Stalinist forces were reflected through Khrushchev's and Grigorenko's memoirs. In this chapter, my goal is to show how Brezhnev's and Gromyko's memoirs represent the views of the Stalinist bloc.

Perhaps a brief outline of my method of analysis will shed light on the nature of my research. I will look specifically at two general categories. Subject matter is an important area to begin

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85 Even though there have been tremendous changes in Soviet publications under glasnost, there is still a lot to be done. As Walter Laqueur shows, 3,500 books, previously banned, have been made accessible. Yet these materials are mainly the proscribed books by Old Bolsheviks and some publications which were erratically censored such as grammars and Russian-language textbooks. In fact, a recent article in Sovetskaia Kultura stated that half the basic sources for the history of Soviet society are still inaccessible. Walter Laqueur, Soviet Realities: Culture and Politics from Stalin to Gorbachev, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 44-45.
with since the choices that are made (e.g. which "facts" to include and which not to include) reflect an attitude to the past. There is also the question of style -- the way language is used -- which includes diction, tone, type of audience, and narrative genres. With these tools I aim to outline the general characteristics of the memoir genre as they appear in these particular Soviet examples.

The first area that I will study is subject matter. I have decided to analyze three topics in particular: the depiction of Soviet life, the Great Patriotic War, and the idolization of a past Soviet leader. The most obvious reason for the choice is that both memoirists discuss them at great length. These subjects therefore will help me determine the basic attitudes and forces that resonated throughout Soviet society. More importantly, the way that Brezhnev and Gromyko interpret these topics will reveal a dominant, Stalinist attitude behind the production of their memoirs.

The most notable aspect that the memoirs share is their portrayal of Soviet life. Brezhnev chooses to glorify Soviet society by employing the literary device of "good-guy/bad-guy." Not surprisingly, the Americans are brandished as evil-doers who refused to help the Soviets after the war. Nevertheless, the strength of the Soviet people, under the guidance of the Communist Party, managed to triumph in the face of great odds. The animated rhetoric stresses this dichotomy quite effectively as the following passage illustrates:
the calculation was a simple one: with no choice in the matter, the Soviet Union would have to ask for the machinery and the sheet-steel; with nowhere to turn to, the communists would submit and fall to their knees...No! the wise men across the ocean miscalculated in their policies -- something we might remind people of today, as both instructive and timely.  

Brezhnev also emphasizes the importance of the common man. However, his prescribed model is the extraordinary Stakhanovite man whose success was measured according to the highest standards which Brezhnev coins, "the All-Union socialist emulation drive." Despite the stress on the common man, he is not given an identity for the simple reason that it conflicts with the Marxist-Leninist belief in community. As a result, the Soviet man is important only when part of a collective effort whose success is also largely due to the Party's guidance. This theme is expressed in the Russian version in the chapter "Kosmicheskii Oktyabr" ("Cosmic October") where Brezhnev maintains that Soviet advances in aerospace technology stem from the Party's efforts. He declares,

But it is also important to mention something else: Cosmic October showed again to the world the creative power of victorious Socialism, the strength of the genuinely free work of millions of people, the creative genius of the people directing the Communist Party.

One of the central characteristics of political memoir that the above passages have illustrated is their didactic nature.

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87 Ibid., 88.

Essentially, Brezhnev is telling the Soviet audience that the Americans are not to be trusted and should believe only in their own nation's abilities, which are superior to the West's anyway. Seen in a different light, the refusal to admit weakness is reflective of the Soviets' methods in dealing with large-scale problems.

Gromyko also denies the existence of Soviet shortcomings -- but in a more sophisticated fashion. This stems from his extensive experiences abroad and his relationships with several foreign political figures and famous celebrities. As a result, his assessments of American society are far more detailed than Brezhnev's. As the following passage will show, Gromyko's subtle sarcasm demonstrates a degree of control in his method of criticism which stands in striking contrast to Brezhnev's impetuous rhetoric. For instance, Gromyko holds that the American people are blind in their devotion to a country which is not democratic since it does not guarantee prosperity to everyone. In short, Gromyko is cleverly masking a political principle within an economic framework:

Soviet visitors to the USA are struck by the strange (to them) sight of people standing in line for a job, or for unemployment benefit, or just for a bowl of soup. If you ask someone how he got into this situation, he'll tell you: 'I haven't got a job, my family's got nothing. I've tried looking for work, but I haven't found any.' And if you ask him who's responsible he'll say: 'That's how it is. This is a democratic country -- one guy finds a job, another doesn't.'

When the English and Russian versions of Gromyko's memoirs are

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compared, one discovers a clearly discriminatory approach. Certain issues which are discussed in English are excluded in the Russian, particularly controversial topics such as the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, whereas subjects which smear the Americans' image are elaborated in greater detail in the Russian. In fact, a revised second edition, with the chapter that criticizes Stalin, does not exist in the Russian. Unfortunately, information on the origin of the English edition is difficult to find. Perhaps certain groups in the United States wanted to appeal to the American audience by adding on this chapter. This shows the tendentious nature and political intent of memoir literature by selecting specific subjects for a particular audience. Gromyko is either building up a view or dismantling it depending on the reader's ideological standing. For instance, an item which is not discussed in the English version is the topic of a repressive American police force whose scheme is to suppress criticism against the American government. Again, Gromyko emphasizes America's social problems and concludes that the United States is not a defender of democracy but an upholder of inequality:

The American police machine, all its army of agents and informants are first of all directed against those who raise their head to defend their political and civil rights and go on the streets to demand the end of the arms race, of unemployment, and that the unemployed be given "a roof on their head." Here the American idea of democracy works perfectly.90

The above cited passages show an important function of memoir -- vindication of a Party. By concentrating on America's social

problems, Gromyko is drawing the picture for the Soviet people that life in their country may not be as bad as it is in America -- the bastion of democracy. Moreover, one could infer that the Soviet government has not failed in providing for its people when compared to one which professes equality and prosperity.

One of the most consistent and enduring themes in both works is the topic of the Great Patriotic War. Although both authors vary in their degrees of emphasis, they both express the same view -- that the Soviet Union sacrificed more than any other country in this War and should therefore be respected as a great nation. Memoir here is used as a tool to shape social memory and frame a positive picture of the Soviet people's participation in the War.

Brezhnev also manipulates memoir to maintain his leadership role in the war. In How It Was: The War and Post-War Reconstruction in the Soviet Union Brezhnev shows himself as a gallant leader of the Eighteenth Army Political Department. In fact Brezhnev ascribes a greater importance to his role than the Army commander's since "it was the political worker who was entrusted with this most effective weapon during the war...nothing -- neither tanks, nor guns nor planes -- would have brought victory." Brezhnev even claims that Zhukov mentioned his extraordinary leadership abilities in his memoirs. Nonetheless, Brezhnev's self-centredness is sometimes interrupted by his gratitude offered to other officers. In this sense his memoirs fulfil a further function: the assessment of

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91 Brezhnev, How It Was, 25.
92 Ibid., 21.
one's contemporaries. What is particularly interesting to note are the detailed descriptions of the atmosphere of a specific day, including the weather and emotions. For example, as he states, "It was cold, windy, and pitch-dark...I was overwhelmed by a sudden pang of longing to go home..."\(^{93}\) In addition, Brezhnev also remembers receiving a letter from his mother on that same day. All these details seem suspicious when one considers that Brezhnev did not keep a diary during the war. It is useful to expose another way in which the topic of the Great Patriotic War is exploited by Brezhnev. In order to justify the Soviet Union's domination of Eastern Europe following the Second World War, Brezhnev propounds the idea that the Soviet people were owed these areas as compensation for their formidable sacrifices. Moreover, by claiming control over these countries, Brezhnev maintains that Eastern Europe is obliged to follow a predetermined path as outlined by Marxist-Leninist teachings. "Now Soviet man had appeared in Europe as a liberator, and it was very important that he honourably live up to the noble and humane mission he was entrusted with."\(^{94}\) In other words, the Sovietization of Eastern Europe was destined to happen. Soviet political memoir, therefore, enables the memoirist to justify his country's past and present policies.

Gromyko also uses political memoir as a tool of apologia when referring to the Soviet Union's expansion in post-war Europe. Not

\(^{93}\)Ibid., 43.

\(^{94}\)Ibid., 51.
surprisingly, Gromyko chooses to present a different version to the
Soviet people than he does to the West. For instance, Gromyko
states that the Eastern European countries wanted to join the
Soviet Union following the War since they were impressed by its
strength. As he asserts,

Participants at the conference, such as Poland, Czechoslovakia,
and Yugoslavia, expressed opinions close to our own relating to
the glorious issues, even though the difficult situation in
these countries at that time had to be better known. In general
our contacts with their delegations were friendly and efficient:
we met their representatives nearly every day.9

It appears that Gromyko thinks it more important to harp on the
Soviet Union's right to these areas in the Russian version since
the emotions of this event run deep in Soviet memory. As a
consequence, Gromyko is exploiting political memoir's ability to
justify the past and shape social memory.

Alternatively, Gromyko deliberately conceals certain facts. For
instance, he does not discuss the existence of the Molotov-
Ribbentrop Pact in the Russian version. Perhaps it was hoped that
its absence would also prevent the resurfacing of a disgraceful
incident in Soviet political history. Nevertheless, Gromyko does
give it a brief mention in the English version. Keeping within the
parameters of official interpretation, Gromyko denies the existence
of the secret protocol. He holds that since the chief prosecutor
at Nuremberg "labelled it a forgery"96 then the myth behind its
existence is obvious. "After all," Gromyko adds, "he made his

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95Gromyko, Vospominaniya, 240.

96Ibid., 38.
statement right in front of Hitler's Foreign Minister, Ribbentrop himself, sitting there in the dock."97 Such inconsistencies in interpretation of the Soviets' role in World War Two appear throughout his memoirs. Any comparison of the two language versions reveals the complex nature of political memoir, which attends not only to the needs of the memoirist, in legitimizing his role and supporting his party's policies, but also shows how dynamic memory is by giving alternative interpretations according to the type of audience. Political memoir not only rekindles the past, it can also define it.

A final similarity between the two memoirs is their deification of a Soviet leader as a way to justify the authors' own status. This device is quite effective in relaying a special message to the audience as well. The figures that Brezhnev and Gromyko use symbolize the old, oppressive forces of the Stalinist era. By glorifying them, the memoirists are also painting an idealized picture of the old system. As a consequence, Brezhnev and Gromyko use memoir to legitimize their careers as well as the system they helped to create.

As the founder of Socialism in Russia and the most revered man in Soviet history, it seems logical that Brezhnev would hold up Lenin as a model figure. The numerous references to him suggest an attempt to legitimize all of Brezhnev's actions by relating them to Lenin's. This practice of Lenin worship was actually developed and mastered by another of Brezhnev's predecessors -- Stalin. However, 

97Ibid.
the choice of idolizing Lenin as opposed to Stalin is also obvious when one recalls the anti-Stalinist shock ignited by Khrushchev. According to Harry Gelman, the Brezhnev oligarchy decided to maintain the program formulated by the Party in June 1956, which held that although Stalin's accomplishments were more important than his errors, he had made serious mistakes in his later years. 98 As a result the Brezhnev regime followed a policy of avoiding trouble by discouraging discussion of Stalin generally, while pursuing a gradual, intermittent tightening of the ideological screws -- a policy that is itself a reflection of their Stalinist heritage. The atrocities which Khrushchev exposed in his secret speech had irreparable effects in Soviet society and, therefore, any relation to Stalin might be self-defeating.

Brezhnev's general message is one of a loyal student of Lenin rather than his mere admirer. By assuming this role, Brezhnev is able to justify his leadership through propagandizing the image of one who is capable of directing the Soviet people to an illustrious future. Brezhnev demonstrates this image when he discusses Lenin's

The Development of Capitalism in Russia:

as a student I read this classical work and noted with what care and depth Vladimir Ilyich had studied the growth of metallurgy in the South. I remember it was very important to me that the great leader of the world proletariat, when analyzing the socio-economic development of the whole country and embracing all of Russia with his gaze, had seen our region...and had studied its past, knew its present and could see its future. 99


99 Brezhnev, Memoirs, 3.
With the knowledge acquired from this work and others written by Lenin, Brezhnev later shows how he rose within the Party's ranks:

To make Lenin's co-operative plan a reality, the Congress adopted the course of agricultural collectivization...my experience of land-management acquired during the first collective farms helped me a good deal in the future when organising hundreds of new state farms in the virgin lands of Northern Kazakhstan. 100

These passages are meant to show how Brezhnev wants the readers to interpret his career's development -- through merit, not patronage. In so doing, Brezhnev uses memoir as a vehicle for political legitimation. Moreover, his memoir also reflects the heroes of the old system. Lenin is treated as an inspiration for maintaining the strength of the old, authoritarian forces. The fact that Brezhnev extensively emphasizes the greatness of Lenin means that there were forces in Soviet society that reacted positively to his name. Lenin, therefore, was still a powerful symbol of the old system when Brezhnev's memoirs were published.

Gromyko also emphasizes the greatness of a past Soviet leader -- Stalin. What is unique about his memoir, however, is that the second English edition includes an entire chapter on Stalin's terror which is not found in the Russian. It is safe to assume that the new political climate in the Soviet Union pressured Gromyko to add this section. However, the overriding admiration of Stalin and his system in the rest of the book make this chapter unconvincing. The schizophrenic nature of the memoir reflects the transitional period's pressures for and against change.

100 Ibid., 26.
One can speculate that due to the nature of Gromyko's ties to Stalin, his purpose in upholding Stalin's leadership abilities tacitly implies a legitimation of his own role as well. As a result of the battering Stalin's image received following Khrushchev's secret speech, the positions of Stalinist yes-men such as Gromyko were in jeopardy. Consequently, Gromyko's support of Stalin represents more than a fascination, it is also a gesture of self-defense. The following passage illustrates how Gromyko admires Stalin's intellect and his achievements in formulating a uniquely "Stalinist" language -- one which was designed for the common man:

In a word, Stalin was an educated man, and apparently no formal education could have given him as much as the work he did on himself gave him. This work resulted in the famous Stalinist language: his capacity to develop a complicated idea in a simple, popular way.\(^{101}\)

Gromyko's admiration teeters on the edge of the absurd when he describes Stalin's physical features. He even denies ever having noticed Stalin's pockmarks.\(^{102}\) This can only suggest that Gromyko chooses to be blind to the obvious, a characteristic of Socialist Realism, that simultaneously creates a falsified image of Stalin and clears away any controversy surrounding Gromyko's position.

On the other hand, Gromyko's subsequent criticism of Stalin in his second English edition does complicate his approach somewhat. But this inconsistency is relegated to the background when compared to his overwhelming praise of the tyrant. What is more disturbing

\(^{101}\)Gromyko, *Pamyatnoe*, 204.

\(^{102}\)Ibid., 199.
is the fact that Gromyko is unable to recount the horrible experiences of the 1930s in any great detail -- particularly his own role. According to George Kennan, Gromyko has a selective memory and refuses to challenge his political record:

Let us, by all means, permit the past to bury its dead. But I cannot concede the validity of a view of Russia and her place in the life of the twentieth century that takes no account of any of these developments, or finds them unworthy of specific note in the memoirs of a great and honoured Russian political figure.\textsuperscript{103}

The memoirist, according to Kennan, must be accurate in his recital of the past, particularly when his eminent position allowed him to participate in the most monumental episodes in his nation's history. Since Gromyko failed to present an accurate portrayal of Soviet history, his memoir served the interests of those elements in Soviet society which believed that a very limited degree of criticism against Stalin was necessary. Moreover, the "pinning on" of this chapter to a book which is predominantly Stalinist in content and form, also suggests the influence of the old, oppressive forces in Soviet society. These forces attempted to meet the minimum demands of the Gorbachev regime while they made their Stalinist views quite clear to the reader. This dichotomous situation reflects the nature of the transitional period which attempted to disinherit Stalinist historiography to a very limited degree.

In summary, the topics discussed by Brezhnev and Gromyko show how powerful Stalinist forces were in Soviet society well past the

\textsuperscript{103}Kennan, "Buried", 3.
death of Stalin himself. All three topics glorified a time before glasnost when questioning the power of Marxism-Leninism meant immediate repression. The prestige of both memoirists also demonstrated how powerful the old, oppressive forces were as recently as 1990, when Gromyko's revised English edition was published. Even in the most "glasnost" of times there was an audience for these books and the values they embody. The significance of Khrushchev's and Brezhnev's memoirs, therefore, lies in what they tell the historian about post-Stalinist society.

An examination of the memoirs' style is also necessary in the evaluation of a literary work. The type of language these authors use is based on the repressive literary doctrine of Socialist Realism. The incorporation of this doctrine in Brezhnev and Gromyko's memoirs underscores their works' importance in defining the types of political forces that existed in the period after Stalin. Language can be treated as an historical tool due to its ability to express the attitudes of certain social and political groups.

First of all, a simple language makes the communication of Soviet propaganda easier and the shaping of images more in tune with the precepts of Socialist Realism. According to David Lowe, classic Soviet literary works eschew dialectical forms, colloquialisms, slang, and substandard variants, not to mention obscenities. The result is an ossified diction that reproduces the style and tone of Pravda but not the
language of the street, factory, collective farm, or home.\textsuperscript{104} The writer had to meet several other requirements as well. Katerina Clark contends that "If a writer wanted his novel to be published, he had to use a proper language...and syntax...To do so was effectively a ritual act of affirmation of loyalty to the state."\textsuperscript{105}

Brezhnev chooses simple words to promote seemingly uncomplicated ideas. His language style remains constant in all of his memoirs even though he is promoting something different in each one. A striking example of Brezhnev's language is found in his memoir How It Was:

Two different social systems are competing in the world today. That competition began in Lenin's lifetime and is still in progress. Comparisons are inevitable...We make such calculations, and so do our ideological opponents. Forced to acknowledge that in many areas the Soviet Union has caught up with the United States, for instance, and left the latter far behind...they, our ideological opponents, place emphasis on those economic indicators in which the biggest capitalist state is still in the lead.\textsuperscript{106}

Words such as "ideological opponents", "capitalist state" and "different social systems" recur throughout Brezhnev's memoirs. They are strikingly Socialist Realist in nature since they stress the Soviet Union's political situation and its ideological competition with the United States. Gromyko also uses Marxist


\textsuperscript{106}Leonid Brezhnev, The Virgin Lands, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978, 94.
jargon quite extensively. Although his language tends to be a little more sophisticated than Brezhnev's, his words are still heavily political in nature. A good example is Gromyko's description of Mao's success in 1949:

Led by the Communist Party, the people had seized power from the bourgeoisie and landowners. Chiang Kai-Shek's armies had been routed, and the country rejoiced at the opportunity to create an independent state which would move along the path of socialist transformation in its economic and social life.\(^\text{107}\)

Words such as "bourgeoisie" and "proletariat" are characteristic of the type of language found in both memoirs. These words are typically Marxist in nature and show how constrained the memoirists were when they wrote their works. Their choice of words was subject to the same ideological restrictions as were their topics of discussion. These restrictions, moreover, are the trademarks of the Stalinist era, which thereby suggest the influence of repressive attitudes in the writing of Brezhnev and Gromyko's memoirs. Therefore, even the study of language illustrates the value of Soviet political memoir's ability to describe the political situation in Soviet society.

Another way of evaluating the authors' treatment of their subjects is by studying their tone. Brezhnev seems quite insincere and artificial through his frequent use of exclamatory marks, interrogatory sentences, and dialogue. For example, in *How it was*, Brezhnev recalls the cheers of Soviet soldiers at the May 1st 1943 celebrations when red flags were put in his brigade's position:

"Look at that you lousy Nazi! What have you got to say to that?"\textsuperscript{108} This method actually seems more suitable for a story than a memoir. Although Gromyko's words are more sophisticated than Brezhnev's, he too displays an insincere and artificial tone. For instance, Gromyko subtly puts down Mao as is evident by his sarcastic tone: "Of Mao himself, I might add that, if one disregarded his theoretical aims, philosophical concepts and peculiar views on politics, he was on the whole a nice man, and courteous too."\textsuperscript{109} This coldness and detachment is found throughout Gromyko's work. The tone, therefore, tells a lot about the memoirist's personality and the level at which he wants his ideas to be conveyed. Brezhnev chose the candid path whereas Gromyko preferred to be more subtle.

In addition, the memoirist's tone tells the historian something about the political forces that lay behind his memoir's production. Generally, Brezhnev and Gromyko discuss topics in an impersonal and non-descriptive way in order to conceal any possible doubt about the past. It seems that the detached method makes the avoidance of self-criticism less apparent. This tone is reminiscent of the Stalinist era's stress on dispossessing aesthetic qualities from writing and instead focusing strictly on material concerns. One can speculate that the parties who were involved in the production of Brezhnev's and Gromyko's memoirs used old, Stalinist techniques as a way to reinforce the old political order and its aversion to


\textsuperscript{109}Gromyko, \textit{Memoirs}, 252.
self-criticism.

Tone and diction also play an important role in setting the focus of an audience. Brezhnev does not change his manner of speech in either translation and thus chooses to give a simplistic story-like recital to the English as well as the Russian audience. Apart from a few sentences found in the Russian, the only notable difference between the two language versions is the inclusion of two chapters in the Russian — "Cosmic October" and "A Word about Communists." Both chapters harp on the success of Marxism-Leninism and one could speculate that they were intended as propaganda. Gromyko also has an additional chapter on Stalin but it is included only in the second English edition. Consequently, several critics accused Gromyko of being insincere in his criticism of Stalin and of merely following the new progressive trend under Gorbachev. Nonetheless, the fact that he did include it only in a revised second edition in English underscores his intended audience and message. The revision also reflects the political changes that occurred in Soviet society near the end of the transitional period.

Yet the overall message is not one of a new view of Soviet history. Instead, it is essentially Stalinist in its attitude with a minor revision added on. The forces of glasnost undoubtedly lay behind the inclusion of this chapter but they are insignificant in the face of Stalinist forces which predominated in the rest of the memoir. This situation clearly illustrates the prominent position of repressive, Stalinist attitudes in Soviet society at the time Gromyko's memoirs were published.
A unique aspect of Brezhnev's and Gromyko's memoirs is the way in which the authors narrate their childhoods. According to Katerina Clark, the authors of Socialist Realist literature share a primary commitment to myth through their popularization of ideology. "But the commitment to myth-making alone is not the mark of their Socialist Realism," Clark maintains; "[t]he point of convergence that makes these disparate works form a single tradition is the informing scheme of human biography that underlies each work and has its roots in Marxist-Leninist historiography and revolutionary lore." The author aims to pattern his own life according to the legendary traits of the revolutionary hero who was typically of Russian and Proletarian stock. Both Brezhnev and Gromyko begin their discussions at childhood. The developmental pattern from a child to a state leader is embellished with Soviet rhetoric. In Brezhnev's case, this pattern is only evident in his Memoirs which deals with his life as a factory worker and how he grew to be a devoted Communist. As the following passage will illustrate, this developmental approach serves a definitive purpose -- justification of Brezhnev's proletarian roots. In so doing, Brezhnev accomplishes two purposes: he brings himself closer to the Soviet audience by making himself seem as one of them and reaffirms the Communist credo of a strong proletarian solidarity to his Western readers. According to Brezhnev:

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111 Ibid.
I belonged to this class by birth, was brought up in this milieu and was so to speak, linked to it by blood ties. My father remained a worker until the end of his days. My grandfather, my mother's brothers, my uncles and myself, when the time came to start at the factory, were all workers...The Brezhnev family gave many decades of its life to the factory lists.\textsuperscript{112}

Brezhnev also emphasizes his ethnic and class roots when he declares, "I am Russian by nationality a dyed-in-the-wool proletariat and a metallurgist by inheritance. That is all I know about my pedigree."\textsuperscript{113}

Gromyko, likewise, sees it as important to trace his political development from childhood through to his last days as a Soviet statesman. With respect to the developmental method, Gromyko discusses his family's genealogy by giving us details about the origin of his last name and its connections to the town of his childhood, Gomel.\textsuperscript{114} This yet again is another instance of the Stalinist style in Gromyko's memoirs.

This pattern also illustrates one of the most enduring symbols of the old, Stalinist attitude. Distinctions of prominence were always based on class and ethnic origins. Incidents of repression against various "bourgeois" elements, Jews, as well as nationalities such as the Georgians and Crimean Tartars, were numerous in the Stalin period. Understandably, therefore, one who


\textsuperscript{113}Brezhnev, \textit{Memoirs}, 9-10.

was not of proletarian and Russian stock faced a precarious future in politics. Since many members of the Soviet elite met neither criteria, their aim was either to exaggerate a minor incident or even fabricate a background that would make them seem legitimate members of the Soviet establishment.

The fear of not conforming to the Marxist–Leninist image was quite prevalent in the Stalinist period. Since Brezhnev and Gromyko both vehemently stressed the legitimacy of their ethnic and class roots, then one can definitely see the enduring influence of Stalinist attitudes during the time of their memoirs' publications.

Brezhnev's and Gromyko's memoirs are thus valuable research sources when appreciated as mirrors of a regime's image rather than scorned for their mythical representations. No one can deny their polemical structure, and since this is a reality inherent in the history of Soviet literary policy and political parlance, then one should understand these memoirs for what they are and not for what they should be. Since their language and method are strikingly animated, the task of the historian should not be to ignore their significance because of their lack of truthful representation. Instead, historians should study the values embodied in these texts because, regardless of their truthfulness, these values were held in Soviet society by writers and readers alike. Brezhnev and Gromyko tell the audience what a certain segment of Soviet society wanted to be told: specifically, that the Stalinist social order remained in place and that the traditional interpretation of Soviet
remained in place and that the traditional interpretation of Soviet history was valid.

Brezhnev's and Gromyko's memoirs are also important for what they do not tell us directly. The topics of hero worship, the Great Patriotic War, and the glorification of a mythical Soviet society were shown to be the tools of Stalinist forces that wanted to express their loyalty for the old system. Since such illusions of grandeur were vehemently embraced at a time of serious economic and political collapse, the forces of Stalinism were doubtless still alive. In addition, the study of Soviet literary history and the impact of Socialist Realism shows how memoir literature represents another catechism in the repertoire of official doctrine. The fact that Stalinist attitudes were prevalent in both these memoirs and in Soviet society makes the texts important for analysis of a bygone era.
Chapter Four:
Glasnost: The Case of Sakharov and Shevardnadze

One of the most significant words to appear recently in the English and Russian languages is "glasnost." This word represents the revolutionary political change that overtook the Soviet Union when Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary in 1985. Glasnost has opened up one of the most fascinating chapters in Russian cultural history. My choice of words is deliberate, both the emphasis on history and the stress on "cultural" (albeit in a wide sense). Whether glasnost will have a lasting impact on the political future of the country is uncertain and, in any case, cannot be answered today.

Under glasnost complaints about many aspects of Soviet society have been voiced in a way that was unthinkable even a few years ago: books have been published, plays and movies performed, pictures and sculptures exhibited that were banned for many years. Informal societies outside the party as well as officially sponsored organizations freely discuss topics that were formerly taboo.

Glasnost has made possible the publication of memoirs from a number of noteworthy figures, particularly from the political realm. Since glasnost means the willingness of the Soviet Union to hear the truth about itself, without the fear of repressive literary controls that characterized the Stalinist, and to some extent, the transitional periods, a number of dark secrets about the Soviet past have appeared in the memoirs of a number of former Stalinists. A very recent example is found in *The Globe and Mail*
of April 21, 1992. The article points to information relating to
the poisoning and unsuccessful assassination attempt of Alexander
Solzhenitsyn in 1971 that was derived from the memoirs of retired
KGB Lieutenant-Colonel Boris Ivanaov. This new attention on
Soviet political memoirs occurred only because of glasnost and its
demands for honesty and self-criticism.

The memoir which probably began the trend to expose the Soviet
Union's darkest secrets is that of Nikita Khrushchev's _Khrushchev
Remembers: The Glasnost Tapes_. Two earlier volumes (1970 and
1974) already revealed a great deal of information about the inner-
workings of the Kremlin leadership. In _The Glasnost Tapes_ the
world discovered new details about Stalin's purges, the monumental
mistakes Stalin committed in W.W.II, and the Molotov-Ribbentrop
pact. The most fascinating information related to the Cold War.
Khrushchev tells the world for the first time how close global
nuclear disaster was in 1962 as a result of the Cuban Missile
Crisis. Specifically, Khrushchev describes the shock he felt when
he learned that Castro actually believed that the Soviet missiles
installed in Cuba were meant for a pre-emptive strike against the
United States instead of serving as a deterrent against another Bay
of Pigs. Khrushchev's memoir was received enthusiastically by the
West because of its candid discussion of highly sensitive
information. This book reflects the new political climate that
developed in the Soviet Union with the advent of glasnost. As

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115"KGB poisoned writer, report says." _The Globe and Mail_ April
Strobe Talbott contends, "[t]here are no indications in the new tapes that anything else has been deleted or held back. We believe that the Khrushchev archive is now complete." Glasnost supporters obviously believed that it was an appropriate time to release the tapes and show the world the Soviet Union's new political course. Soviet political memoirs finally were treated and received in a similar fashion to their Western counterparts. This situation resulted only because of the demand for openness and the withering away of repressive literary controls. A new order emerged in Soviet society which was reflected through the new types of Soviet political memoirs that were being published in the Soviet Union. Specifically, a Westernized Soviet political memoir mirrored the emergence of a Westernized Soviet political culture.

The memoirs of Andrei Sakharov and Eduard Shevardnadze are the focus of this chapter. The reasons for studying them are twofold: first, they represent a different, "emergent" order in Soviet society; second, they both share similar characteristics which makes comparing them easier.

A brief description of the men and their memoirs will show how significant they are to Soviet history. Andrei Sakharov is known as the "father of the hydrogen bomb." His numerous achievements as a prominent member of the Academy of Sciences won him international respect as a world-class scientist. Sakharov became a human-rights campaigner, first and foremost, because he saw that Soviet science was corrupted by politics. In 1964 he voted against the admission of fraudulent but well-connected
biologists to the Academy of Sciences. Then, in 1968, the year of the invasion of Czechoslovakia and two years after the failure of an early attempt at economic reform, he made his decisive break. Convinced that it was impossible to create an effective antiballistic-missile defense, and horrified by new knowledge about the practical consequences of thermonuclear war, Sakharov published "Reflections on Progress, Peaceful Coexistence and Intellectual Freedom", arguing that the main hope of avoiding mass destruction lay in the convergence of the communist and capitalist worlds. From this time until 1986, Andrei Sakharov faced the wrath of the Soviet authorities, who eventually stripped him of all his government awards and banished him to the closed city of Gorky in 1980, where he lived under constant surveillance for the next six years. In 1986, Gorbachev invited Sakharov to return to Moscow and resume his work in the human rights movement. In this chapter, I will analyze Memoirs(1990) and Moscow and Beyond, 1986 to 1989(1991).

Eduard Shevardnadze is famous for his achievements as Soviet Foreign Minister from 1985 to 1990. He helped Mikhail Gorbachev promote the Soviet Union's new policies of glasnost and perestroika. Under Shevardnadze, the Soviet Union experienced unprecedented changes, such as the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, the reunification of Germany, nuclear disarmament, and, probably the most rewarding of all, rapprochement with the United States. Unfortunately, the pressure that he faced from the right-wing section of the Communist Party along with Gorbachev's
unwillingness to accelerate the rate of change, forced Shevardnadze to resign his position as Soviet Foreign Minister in December 1990. I will analyze his memoir *The Future Belongs to Freedom* (1991).

The events behind the memoirs' production differ somewhat from those of Khrushchev and Grigorenko. Although the memoirs in this chapter were not free of external harassment and obstruction, their final publication occurred in the Soviet Union and the West without the obstructions that plagued the manuscripts initially. Some chapters of Sakharov's manuscript were stolen in November of 1978 during a "covert search of [his] apartment."\(^{116}\) In March 1981, the KGB confiscated "a bag containing notebooks, documents, and diaries, and once again parts of the memoirs were lost."\(^{117}\) In October of 1982, the KGB stole another 900 pages of the manuscript, while additional material was confiscated from his wife while she was travelling from Gorky to Moscow by train.\(^{118}\) Despite the heart attack she suffered in April 1983, Elena Bonner passed on six-month's work of the memoir to a mysterious figure whom Sakharov refuses to identify. The KGB's attempts to harass Sakharov showed both its need to prevent his noble story's exposure, and its knowledge that his immense reputation made it impossible to shut him up by simply killing him. Yet, Sakharov's reluctance to identify some of the personalities involved in the smuggling of his memoirs was partly due to his fear of retribution and his desire to protect their identities.


\(^{117}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{118}\) *Ibid.*
memoirs may stem from his fear that they would suffer at the hands of the KGB. This fear was apparent even in 1990 when his Memoirs were published. Nevertheless, the fact that they eventually were published in the Soviet Union in 1990, without the KGB's harassment, indicates the influence of the new, "emergent" forces in Soviet politics. This idea gains strength when one considers that his Moscow and Beyond, 1986 to 1989 did not face any known KGB interference.

In contrast, the only problems that Shevardnadze encountered with the production of his memoirs were with his editors. According to Shevardnadze, "the editors had departed from their initial idea of publishing the material in its original form." 119 Instead, they had reworked the material by topic: the new thinking, European affairs, global problems, and so forth. "I didn't feel that this was the best way of doing it," Shevardnadze contends, "Torn from the actual context where they had been articulated, my ideas had lost their original currency and had become abstract and academic. A few insertions of a personal nature hadn't saved the manuscript." 120 As a result of his despair over the book as well as the events that had unfolded in the Soviet Union, Shevardnadze decided to put the memoir on hold. He decided to resume memoir writing only after his resignation. Since the story behind the production of Shevardnadze's memoirs is free of Stalinist literary


120 Ibid.
controls, the influence of the new, "emergent" attitudes of glasnost are quite apparent. Literature that was highly critical of the Soviet system, particularly from eminent figures in society, was not obstructed as were Sakharov's before 1986 and Khrushchev's in the late 1960s.

The method of analysis in this chapter is the same as that followed in the last two chapters. Content and form are again studied to show how Sakharov's and Shevardnadze's memoirs reflect a new, "emergent" force in Soviet society. Specifically, the nature of the interpretation of events will reveal an attitude that can not only denounce the old Stalinist system, but also is willing to look at itself critically. I chose to group the events discussed in this chapter under three general categories: the portrayal of Soviet life, the perception of the West, and the "new" system. These three categories will reveal a marked contrast to the interpretations of similar events made in the pre-glasnost section of this paper. Style, moreover, will include diction, tone, audience, and narrative genres. Finally, I will show how well the memoirs were received by Western critics. The aim again is to show how the memoirists' interpretation of events and writing style illustrate the influence of new attitudes in Soviet political culture.

The first striking characteristic of glasnost memoirs is their dark portrayal of Soviet life. Sakharov makes it clear that the dreadful state that the Soviet Union faces stems from Stalin and his oppressive system. The remnants of the old system persist and
only if they are completely discarded does the Soviet Union have any hope of progress. The following passage illustrates how depressing life was under Stalin -- a completely contradictory view from that given by Brezhnev and Gromyko. Moreover, the following passage also shows how memoir can be used to teach lessons to posterity by exposing the mistakes of the past and urging the reader to take a different course. According to Sakharov, most families experienced terror under Stalin's rule:

Different classes of society were affected to different degrees, of course, but the number of those who died was in the millions. They perished from a whole range of cataclysms: the deportation of Kulaks...the famine following collectivization; witch hunts for 'saboteurs' and 'enemies of the people'...spy mania...and other causes both familiar and obscure. Millions more died in the war, and the magnitude of the losses must be charged to the regime and the disorganization it produced. All those terrible events are now part of history, but their effects persist.121

Despite the dark picture, however, Sakharov also tries to draw a more realistic picture of Soviet life by illustrating how even he was in awe of Stalin's power. Stalinism was so pervasive that when the tyrant died, people were dumbfounded and afraid of the unexpected. The following passage demonstrates another function of political memoir -- apologia. Although Sakharov was never a staunch supporter of Stalin, he was nevertheless shocked when he heard about his death. Sakharov recounts why he uttered the sentence, "I am thinking of his humanity"122 in reaction to the news:

121Sakharov, Memoirs, 23.

122Ibid., 164.
Very soon I would be blushing every time I recalled these sentiments of mine. I can't fully explain it — after all, I knew quite enough about the horrible crimes that had been committed — the arrests of innocent people, the torture, the deliberate starvation, and all the violence — to pass judgment on those responsible. But I hadn't put the whole picture together, and in any case, there was still a lot I didn't know. Somewhere at the back of my mind the idea existed, instilled by propaganda, that suffering is inevitable during great historic upheavals. 'When you chop wood, the chips fly.' I was also affected by the general mourning and by a sense of death's universal dominion. I was more impressionable than I care to recall. 123

Sakharov explains why he was once impressed by Stalin's power not only to apologize for his past, but also to show the reader that even the Soviet Union's foremost leader of Human Rights was just as impressionable as anyone else. This interpretation also represents the views of the new forces in Soviet society who are willing to look at their history critically.

Shevardnadze is quite detailed in his descriptions of Soviet life. He seems to be informing the reader about the true state of living conditions in the Soviet Union as a way of proving his dedication to glasnost and its stress on the truth. The following passage illustrates the didactic function of political memoir in teaching the audience about the weaknesses of the Soviet system.

As Shevardnadze contends,

Yes, democracy, freedom, and justice cannot exist outside of any kind of social system, but we would have to ignore reality altogether to assert that the 'socialist model' we have constructed here contains any semblance of those qualities. Or one can simply go out on the street and see people's faces, how they are dressed, what kind of apartments they live in, what their working conditions are, and how little it all resembles a life worthy of a human being, how hopelessly far

123 Ibid.
it is from the socialist idea.\textsuperscript{124}

Shevardnadze's aim is to instruct the audience about the reality of the Soviet Union's dismal situation and its need to abrogate all ties to the old system. His memoir reflects the attitudes of those forces in Soviet society who not only attack the old system but give detailed reasons for their disillusionment. A good example is given in the following passage where Shevardnadze blames the old system for the Soviet Union's problems:

the true state of affairs in our country...has led me to conclude that the root of existing evils is not in the individual people, but in the system. And if some people seethe with hatred for the system, that is only because the system is ruthless toward the individual. Under conditions of totalitarianism, it is impossible to guarantee observance of human rights and freedoms, and that means it is impossible to guarantee the normal development of the country.\textsuperscript{125}

The difference between the glasnost and pre-glasnost sections is quite apparent. Soviet life is considered miserable yet the authors try to present a cogent argument for discarding the old system. Both Sakharov and Shevardnadze instruct their readers about what the true state of affairs is in the Soviet Union and correct past interpretations of Soviet history. They also represent the views of those who support glasnost and want constructive change in their society.

Another topic that both memoirists discuss at some length is their perception of the West. What is striking, however, is the

\textsuperscript{124}Shevardnadze, \textit{The future Belongs to Freedom}, 57.

\textsuperscript{125}\textit{Ibid.}, 37.
radical difference from pre-glasnost memoirs that portrayed the West as a corrupt, iniquitous society. Sakharov gives a highly positive view of Canada and sees it as a distinguished nation. According to Sakharov,

From Italy we flew to Canada, a completely different world -- a prosperous, hard-working nation, not smug in any way, not self-centred, without very much in the way of history. 'Canada could serve as a model country', I remarked in one of my speeches, if it weren't so difficult to follow the example of others.\(^{126}\)

Sakharov uses memoir to instruct his readers as to what he considers to be a desirable society. The passage also indicates how Sakharov is giving a contradictory view of the West from the one traditionally given by staunch conservatives such as Brezhnev and Gromyko. In effect, Sakharov's interpretation is reflective of the new, "emergent" forces in Soviet society that are willing to admit that the West has several attractive aspects.

Shevardnadze's appraisals of the West are also quite flattering. His views are most pronounced when he describes some of America's top political figures. George Schultz is given the most flattering evaluation. The following passage demonstrates another function of political memoir -- evaluation of one's contemporaries. What is of particular significance however, is that a former Soviet Foreign Minister praises an American counterpart. This positive description underscores the new attitudes in Soviet society that want to instill trust in America and its politicians who may one

day play a pivotal role in the Soviet Union's recovery. This is quite evident when Shevardnadze talks about his close relationship with George Schultz:

Perhaps for the first time in the history of relations between our two countries, the foreign ministers of the U.S.S.R. and the United States visited each other's homes and met each other's children and grandchildren...When we sat at the negotiation table -- either surrounded by colleagues or one on one -- nothing prevented us from remaining ourselves in outlining our positions and trying to bring them closer. If one of us said, 'I can't go any farther than that,' the other understood: 'That's how it really is. He isn't bluffing.'

Although Shevardnadze gives a positive portrayal of the West overall, and even concedes that "often the notion of the enemy was artificially cultivated in the interests of the ruling regimes and monarchs" he refuses to exonerate America's role in the Cold War. The following excerpt illustrates how Shevardnadze uses memoir to vindicate the Soviet Union's involvement in starting the Cold War. He places all blame on the Americans since they built the first nuclear device. As Shevardnadze asserts, "No one would dispute the fact that the first recipe for the bomb was not concocted in the Soviet Union; it was not our country that began the nuclear arms race or repeatedly pushed the Cold War to the threshold of a hot war." Although glasnost memoirs give a radically different view of the West, the Cold War is still interpreted as America's fault. Perhaps this issue is still too

127Shevardnadze, The Future Belongs to Freedom, 72.
128Ibid., 65.
129Ibid., 93.
A final topic that must be addressed is the authors' vision of a "new" system. Both men have similar views on the changes needed in the Soviet Union. They also give explanations for their changed outlook on the future since they once performed important functions for the "old" system. This aspect of the memoirs is significant since it shows how memoir is used as an apologia. The authors explain their reasons for their former views by drawing a picture of the type of atmosphere they had to work in which made alternative measures unlikely. The biggest question that faced Sakharov was his involvement in building the hydrogen bomb for the Soviet Union. Ironically, the man who was the father of the hydrogen bomb ultimately became the foremost opponent of nuclear arms. Sakharov's reasons for building it are clearly reminiscent of a naive scientist who did not think of the consequences. He maintains that the Second World War also had a major influence on his decision to build the bomb. As he declares, "I had no real choice in the matter, but the concentration, total absorption, and energy I brought to the task were my own. Now that so many years have passed -- I would like to explain my dedication -- not least to myself. One reason for it (though not the main one) was the opportunity to do "superb physics."\(^\text{130}\) "Moreover," Sakharov continues,

\(^{130}\)Sakharov, Memoirs, 96.
conflict, I regarded myself as a soldier in this new scientific war. (Kurchatov himself said we were 'soldiers,' and this was no idle remark.)

Sakharov shows how he eventually made his decision to stop his work on thermonuclear testing and join the disarmament movement. His transformation was intellectual rather than ideological:

During the second half of the 1960s, I became involved in discussions of a still broader range of problems. I read economic and technical studies concerning the production of radioactive substances, nuclear weapons, and delivery systems, visited several secret military facilities...What I learned was more than sufficient to impress upon me the horror, the real danger, and the utter insanity of thermonuclear warfare, which threatens everyone on earth...Gradually, subconsciously, I was approaching an irrevocable step -- a wide-ranging public statement on war and peace and other global issues. I took that step in 1968.

The "new" social model that Sakharov came to support was one which expelled not only Stalinism but the entire Soviet system. His solution to the threat of global destruction was the integration of socialist and capitalist ideas.

"I am convinced that their [global problems] solution demands convergence -- the process that has already begun of the pluralistic transformation of capitalist and socialist societies (in the USSR it's called perestroika). The immediate goal is the creation of a system that is efficient (which means a market and competition), socially just, and ecologically responsible."

Finally, Sakharov believes that there is only one person who is able to lead the Soviet Union along the new course -- Gorbachev.

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131 Ibid., 97.
132 Ibid., 268.
133 Ibid., 160.
Although Sakharov is not entirely satisfied with the pace of change, he still sees Gorbachev as the only alternative. The following passage illustrates a further function of memoir — evaluation of one's contemporaries. Here, Sakharov compares two of the biggest rivals in the Soviet Union: Gorbachev and Yeltsin. This aspect of political memoir is valuable to historians because it shows the conflict within the glasnost ranks over who is the best leader of a reformed Soviet Union. According to Sakharov,

I just can't see an alternative to Gorbachev at this critical juncture. Even though his actions may have been prompted by historical circumstances, it has been Gorbachev's initiatives that have completely altered the country and the psychology of its people in just four years.\(^{134}\)

Alternatively, Sakharov does not see a lot of hope in Yeltsin.

Now, about Yeltsin. I respect him, but he is a person of a different calibre than Gorbachev. Yeltsin's popularity is to some extent dependent on Gorbachev's 'unpopularity,' since Yeltsin is regarded as the opposition to, and victim of, the existing regime. This is the main explanation of his phenomenal success (five or six million votes, 87 percent of the total) in the elections for deputy from the city of Moscow.\(^{135}\)

Sakharov's memoirs, therefore, serve as a political tool that promotes a contemporary leader. They also reflect the pluralistic nature of glasnost attitudes.

Similar to Sakharov, Shevardnadze was a prominent member of the Soviet establishment who later became one of its foremost opponents. He too uses memoir to vindicate himself of his past role and prove to the reader that he is devoted to change. In

\(^{134}\)Sakharov, *Moscow and Beyond*, 115.

\(^{135}\)Ibid.
response to allegations that he was a staunch Brezhnevite, Shevardnadze attempts to describe the atmosphere that he faced — one that required cooperation with the "suzerain" rather than opposition. According to Shevardnadze,

At the Twenty-seventh Party Congress I was asked how I could reconcile my former praise of Brezhnev with my current position. I replied that the General Secretary not only did not hinder our efforts (and of course could have done so because of their 'heretical' nature) but even supported them. There was no stagnation for me from that quarter. So am I supposed to sacrifice fairness, decency, and good memory to the attitudes of the day? How would I look to myself?\textsuperscript{136}

Shevardnadze is not clear about why or even how he underwent a change in his beliefs. He tells the reader that he experienced a great deal of internal conflict\textsuperscript{137} and his knowledge of "the true state of affairs in [his] country"\textsuperscript{138} led him to conclude that the system was the root of all evil. Yet, he praises a renowned Stalinist like Gromyko quite readily. "I had deeply respected my predecessor, admiring his enormous experience, competence, and erudition."	extsuperscript{139} Shevardnadze's message of change is mixed since he uses his memoir to compliment a man who was one of the most devoted Communists of his time. Despite the confusion over his personal beliefs, Shevardnadze is more lucid in his discussion of the time when the state embarked on its new course. According to Shevardnadze, the Soviet Union's withdrawal from Afghanistan was

\textsuperscript{136} Shevardnadze, Eduard, \textit{The Future Belongs to Freedom}, 34.

\textsuperscript{137} \textit{Ibid.}, 37.

\textsuperscript{138} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{139} \textit{Ibid.}, 43.
symbolic of its new attitude:

I want to make the point that after the settlement whereby Soviet troops were withdrawn from Afghanistan, the civilized world began to trust us. That opened up great prospects for putting into practice the principles of the new thinking. Perhaps it was the experience of the Afghan epic that prompted us to think of the possibility of partnership and cooperation with the West.\textsuperscript{140}

Unlike Sakharov, Shevardnadze doubts Gorbachev's future as a leader of the new system. He questions his ability to ward off the pressure from the right-wing conservatives who oppose change. Nevertheless, Shevardnadze still admires Gorbachev and, as the following passage shows, he accepts a degree of responsibility for the difficulties that face Gorbachev. Memoir is used as an apologia for Gorbachev's waning achievements. As Shevardnadze states,

back in the early days of perestroika, while acknowledging the existence of an opposition, he wasn't afraid to go against the grain...Instead, the problem lay in the slow rate that change was being pushed...Yet even here I refuse to take the role of critic of Gorbachev, because I bear equal responsibility. My internal disagreement with some of his decisions is of no account now if I didn't openly oppose them at the time.\textsuperscript{141}

The section on subject matter demonstrated a distinctive difference from pre-glasnost memoirs. Sakharov and Shevardnadze give the reader a dismal portrayal of Soviet life while they draw a flattering image of a traditional enemy. Yet they go beyond attacking the old system to provide details of a new political approach. What is more interesting, however, is that the political

\textsuperscript{140}Ibid., 47.

\textsuperscript{141}Ibid., xviii.
functions of Soviet memoir remain constant. This situation indicates how memoir is used as a tool by different forces in Soviet society to promote their specific attitudes to the reader. Due to the reasons mentioned above, Sakharov's and Shevardnadze's memoirs reflect the views of a new, "emergent" force in Soviet society.

A brief discussion on style will also show how Sakharov's and Shevardnadze's memoirs ignored Socialist Realist techniques. The first area to look to for this change is diction. Both authors have a language style that is free from any heavy, political Soviet influences. Their language is actually similar to that found in Western works. Moreover, the tone that both authors emit is far more personal and self-critical than that found in Brezhnev's and Gromyko's memoirs. A good example of Sakharov's non-politicized language and intimate tone is found in his description of his relationship with Elena Bonner, whom he affectionately calls "Lusia": "Truly, she is the only person who shares my inner thoughts and feelings. Lusia prompts me to understand much that I would otherwise miss because of my restrained personality...We are together. This gives life meaning."\(^{142}\) Shevardnadze also demonstrates an intimate tone and a language free from Socialist Realist constraints when he gives a colourful description of Washington: "The exuberant green of Arlington Hill and the bright white columns of the memorials soothed the eye, calming the soul

\(^{142}\)Sakharov, *Moscow and Beyond*, 160.
with a landscape of peace."¹⁴³ Shevardnadze's description, in particular, shows how the departure from Socialist Realist techniques makes a positive portrayal of America possible. In addition, the message of the glasnost forces, who support truth and self-criticism, is enhanced by a non-politicized language.

The way that the memoirists treat their audience also reflects the attitudes of the emergent forces. Sakharov and Shevardnadze have two intended audiences: Western and Soviet. This probably is due to the new political situation under glasnost which allows for politically critical literature to be published in the Soviet Union. Moreover, the communication of similar interpretations to both audiences is more beneficial for glasnost supporters since their principle beliefs are self-criticism and rapprochement with the West. Sakharov shows that he directs the same message to the West and the Soviet Union in the following example:

I have since argued...that the West should encourage the process of perestroika, cooperating with the USSR on disarmament and on economic, scientific, and cultural issues. But support should be given with 'eyes wide open,' not unconditionally. The opponents of perestroika should understand that their triumph, and a retreat from reform, would mean the immediate termination of Western assistance.¹⁴⁴

Shevardnadze also seems to speak to both audiences as is evident in the following statement: "Dialogue requires impartiality and lack of prejudice regardless of the partner. Even if I feel uneasy with my counterpart, I suppress my dislike. I know all too well that to

¹⁴⁴Sakharov, Moscow and Beyond, 13.
stereotype a personal enemy is fatal to the cause.¹⁴⁵ Thus, the
dialogue with both audiences represents a marked change from pre-
glasnost and transitional memoirs as well as the views of those who
support glasnost.

Another aspect that must be examined is human biography. Brezhnev's and Gromyko's memoirs emphasized their ethnic and
cultural roots in order to prove that they were legitimate members
of the Soviet establishment. They considered a proletarian and
Russian background as the Marxist-Leninist model. Conversely, Sakharov and Shevardnadze give a more realistic description of
their backgrounds. Sakharov candidly describes growing up as a
child of the enlightened professional intelligentsia. One great-
grandfather had been a priest, one of his grandfathers a major-
general, and his father had written science textbooks.¹⁴⁶ Shevardnadze likewise admits unabashedly that his Georgian
ancestors were "considered very prosperous farmers."¹⁴⁷ His
father was also a member of the intelligentsia and two of his
uncles were tsarist officers.¹⁴⁸ Proletarian and Russian roots do
not seem to be considered important. Sakharov and Shevardnadze
merely describe their pasts instead of prove them as Brezhnev and
Gromyko did. As a consequence, the levers of Socialist Realism
have not only loosened in these memoirs, they have disappeared.

¹⁴⁵Shevardnadze, The Future Belongs to Freedom, xiii.
¹⁴⁶Sakharov, Memoirs, 12.
¹⁴⁸Ibid., 7.
Glasnost's demand for truth has risen in their wake.

A final area that should be addressed is how Sakharov's and Shevardnadze's memoirs were received by Western academics. This will help determine how much they differ from Brezhnev's and Gromyko's memoirs. Unfortunately, Sakharov's and Shevardnadze's memoirs were published too recently for any substantial examination of them in scholarly works. As a consequence, reviews of the memoirs are the only available information on their reception in the West. In general, both memoirs were welcomed positively by critics. Sakharov's work was praised as being "beautifully written" and as "testimony to his personal courage and his powerful humanitarian appeal for individual honesty, fundamental rights and social justice." Unlike Brezhnev's that were attacked as monumentally insignificant due to their lack of truth, Sakharov's received evaluations such as the following: "vivid details break through that draw us back to the wonderful honesty of the narrator." Shevardnadze's memoirs also received a warm reception. Reviewers compared his work to his profile as Soviet foreign minister. As one critic described Shevardnadze's memoirs: "It symbolised the new Soviet approach to the world...A human face and a constant questioning of the past have served Mr. Shevardnadze

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well. But, as his book shows, it has been a terrific struggle.\textsuperscript{151} Despite the warm reception, Shevardnadze was criticized for not revealing enough "tantalizing hints" about "the behind-the-scenes maneuvering in the Kremlin."\textsuperscript{152} But this kind of criticism does not compare to the overall credit his book received such as the following: "[t]he defence does not entirely convince. But his later record, and the quest for decency that shines through this book earn him the benefit of the doubt."\textsuperscript{153} Thus, Sakharov's and Shevardnadze's memoirs were not only accepted as serious materials, they were interpreted as symbols of a reformed Soviet Union.

Glasnost memoirs reveal a significant departure from the previous texts studied in this paper. Although Sakharov's and Shevardnadze's works demonstrated similar political functions to those of the others studied in this paper, the manipulation of ideas is far different in these texts. Their view of life is far more realistic than that given by Brezhnev and Gromyko. They attack Stalinism and the Soviet system yet also provide a solution -- something Khrushchev and Grigorenko did not do. Their portrayal of America is also quite indicative of a different force in the Soviet Union that supports good relations with the West in order to


\textsuperscript{153} \textit{The Economist}, Op., cit., 96.
Soviet Union that supports good relations with the West in order to help save its nation from economic disaster.

Sakharov's and Shevardnadze's memoirs also escaped the influence of Socialist Realism. Their views were not locked in a political vacuum like those of Brezhnev and Gromyko. Specifically, their use of language was free from political rhetoric while the intimacy and candour with which they presented their views emphasized the influence of glasnost in their writing. The great praise that they received from Western critics is testimony of the new political character. Once again, the interrelation of politics and literature reflects a different political current in Soviet society. Thus, Sakharov's and Shevardnadze's memoirs are important for what they tell the historian about the new political atmosphere in the Soviet Union.
CONCLUSION

Soviet political memoir has demonstrated its potency in the arenas of both politics and history. While it performs the same political functions as its Western counterpart, it also tells the reader a great deal about a different society. First, the memoirists attempted to vindicate themselves, the Party, and sometimes both, from a shady past. All of the authors provided excuses for their involvement in the Stalinist system. They gave warnings to the reader in order to teach him lessons of the past in preparation for the future. Those of the Stalinist group persuaded the reader to uphold the values of the Stalinist past, whereas the message of the other authors was to reject these attitudes in view of their nation's history of suffering. The evaluation of their contemporaries was another function performed by these Soviet examples; Stalin figured prominently in Brezhnev's and Gromyko's memoirs while he was portrayed as a villain in the other texts. Lastly, the aspect of apologia was a powerful stimulus in the production of all the memoirs in this paper. Since the authors share a responsibility in their state's development, they must explain the nature of the Soviet system and why they contributed to its growth. Soviet political memoir fulfilled the same tasks as the Western. Thus, the impetus of these functions reinforces the ubiquitous nature of political memoir.

Soviet political memoir also tells the reader of a heterogeneous Soviet society. It reflects three fundamental strands of thought that prevailed after Stalin's death: Stalinism, anti-Stalinism,
and glasnost. Each of these attitudes evolved over the three distinct periods examined in this paper: Stalinist, transitional, and glasnost. The manipulation of facts was an essential point of my analysis. This involved the study of different writing techniques and interpretations. Socialist Realism served as a yardstick against which the memoirs were compared. Brezhnev's and Gromyko's works adhered closely to this doctrine; they gave a Stalinist interpretation of the past while their style was ideologically constrained. Alternatively, Khrushchev's and Grigorenko's memoirs offered a highly negative appraisal of Stalin and their perception of the past often contradicted Brezhnev's and Gromyko's version. Their writing style barely had traces of Socialist Realist influences. Due to these differences, transitional memoirs were recognized by Western academics as historical sources with some value. Finally, Sakharov's and Shevardnadze's memoirs thoroughly rejected the old Stalinist methods. They not only ignored Socialist Realist principles, they jumped ahead of Khrushchev's and Grigorenko's memoirs by prescribing an alternative system. These works not only received recognition from Western critics, they also earned praise for their superior standards.

The varied nature of these texts illustrates how politics and literature are an inseparable pair in Soviet society. As the political values changed, so too did their reception in the West. The attitudes expressed in the memoirs evolved from one category to another (i.e. from transitional to glasnost). This development
illustrated how changes in the Soviet Union's political culture could be studied through Soviet political memoir. Following Stalin's death, the number of memoirs that were published increased. Soviet political memoir went from being scoffed at as a bourgeois preserve to being manipulated as a political tool by opposing forces, to finally meeting the standards of their Western counterparts. In essence, each group distinguished itself through its own brand of content and form. These examples, therefore, represent the different values that prevailed in post-Stalinist society.

It seems that Soviet political memoir will be of increasing importance to political analysts and historians in light of the recent profusion of highly sensitive information coming out of the former Soviet Union. These memoirs sketch a complex picture. They tell us that the transition to a new, democratic state is not a simple process since so many groups disagree on the approach. They also give us a different perspective of Soviet society. The image of a monolithic machine is shattered by the virtual explosion of personal testimonials triggered by glasnost. What is important to recognize is that all the memoirs analyzed here are important in and of themselves. They tell us to acknowledge the power of politics in literature; the interpretation of the past is predicated on this idea. However problematic it is to accept Soviet political memoirs as sources of facts, one must overstep one's prejudices and realize that they provide a wealth of knowledge about Soviet politics and history. The task of the
historian particularly is to understand the political circumstances that lay behind the memoir and perceive it as a political creation. Soviet political memoir is a relatively new historical source. Perhaps the enthusiasm generated by glasnost will attract a few more converts.
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