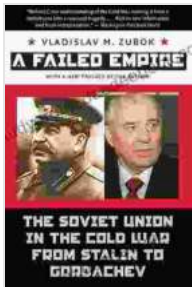


Germany in Soviet Policy From Stalin to Gorbachev: A Comprehensive Analysis

The Soviet Union's policy towards Germany was one of the most important and complex aspects of Moscow's foreign policy during the Cold War. Germany was a key battleground in the ideological and geopolitical struggle between the Soviet Union and the West, and Soviet leaders from Joseph Stalin to Mikhail Gorbachev grappled with the challenge of how to deal with a divided Germany.



Imperial Overstretch: Germany in Soviet Policy from Stalin to Gorbachev: An Analysis Based on New Archival Evidence, Memoirs, and Interviews (Internationale Politik und Sicherheit Book 48)

by Hannes Adomeit

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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X-Ray for textbooks : Enabled



Stalin's Policy: Division and Control

Joseph Stalin's policy towards Germany was shaped by his belief that Germany was a potential threat to the Soviet Union. Stalin feared that a reunified Germany would ally with the West and seek to roll back Soviet

gains in Eastern Europe. As a result, Stalin sought to keep Germany divided and under Soviet control.

In the aftermath of World War II, Stalin divided Germany into four zones of occupation, with the Soviet Union controlling the eastern zone. In 1949, the Soviet Union established the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in its zone of occupation. The GDR was a communist state that was closely aligned with the Soviet Union.

Stalin also sought to prevent West Germany from joining the Western alliance. In 1948, he blockaded West Berlin in an attempt to force the Western powers to withdraw from the city. The blockade failed, but it did lead to the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in 1949.

Khrushchev's Policy: Peaceful Coexistence

Nikita Khrushchev, who succeeded Stalin as leader of the Soviet Union in 1953, pursued a more conciliatory policy towards Germany. Khrushchev believed that it was possible to achieve peaceful coexistence with the West, and he sought to improve relations with West Germany.

In 1955, Khrushchev signed the Austrian State Treaty, which restored Austria's independence and neutralized the country. This move was seen as a sign that Khrushchev was willing to negotiate with the West on the issue of Germany.

In 1957, Khrushchev visited West Germany and met with Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. The two leaders discussed a range of issues, including the reunification of Germany. However, no concrete agreements were reached.

Brezhnev's Policy: The Status Quo

Leonid Brezhnev, who succeeded Khrushchev as leader of the Soviet Union in 1964, pursued a more hardline policy towards Germany. Brezhnev was determined to maintain the status quo in Europe, and he was not willing to make any concessions to the West on the issue of Germany.

In 1968, Brezhnev invaded Czechoslovakia in order to crush the Prague Spring, a movement for political liberalization. This move was seen as a warning to the West not to interfere in Soviet affairs.

In 1971, Brezhnev signed the Four Power Agreement on Berlin, which guaranteed the status of West Berlin as a separate political entity. This agreement was seen as a victory for Brezhnev, as it helped to legitimize the division of Germany.

Gorbachev's Policy: Reunification

Mikhail Gorbachev, who succeeded Brezhnev as leader of the Soviet Union in 1985, pursued a more flexible policy towards Germany. Gorbachev was committed to perestroika and glasnost, and he sought to improve relations with the West.

In 1987, Gorbachev met with West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl in Moscow. The two leaders discussed a range of issues, including the reunification of Germany. Gorbachev indicated that he was willing to consider reunification, but only if it was done in a way that did not threaten Soviet security interests.

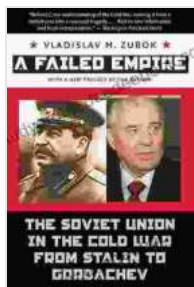
In 1989, the Berlin Wall fell, and East Germany began to collapse. Gorbachev did not intervene to prevent reunification, and in 1990, East and

West Germany were reunited.

The Soviet Union's policy towards Germany was one of the most important and complex aspects of Moscow's foreign policy during the Cold War.

Soviet leaders from Stalin to Gorbachev grappled with the challenge of how to deal with a divided Germany, and their policies had a profound impact on the course of European history.

In the end, it was Gorbachev's policy of flexibility and openness that led to the reunification of Germany. Gorbachev's willingness to negotiate with the West and to accept the reality of a reunified Germany was a major turning point in the Cold War, and it helped to bring about the end of the division of Europe.



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