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SEPARATIST VERSUS CENTRIST FORCES IN THE USSR, 1988-1991: EXPLAINING THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET INTERNAL EMPIRE BY A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE APPROACH

COMPARING THE BALTIC AND THE TRANSCAUCASIAN CASES: A PROGRESS REPORT

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INTRODUCTION: DETERMINISM WITHIN SOVIETOLOGY AND WHY A STRATEGICAL ALLIANCE APPROACH IS CHOSEN

Unlike many Sovietologists trying to cope with the breathtaking changes in the Gorbachev era, I do not conclude in retrospect that the disintegration of the Soviet Union was <u>inevitable</u>. A Strategic Alliance approach is developed and applied to explain the disintegration of the Soviet Internal Empire in a different, less deterministic way. The main research is on strategic alliance formation among centrists and separatists in the USSR from 1988 to 1991. These alliances were formed to attain contrasting goals, ranging from repressive maintenance of the USSR to uncompromising secession from the USSR. This essay is a progress report, comparing the Baltic cases Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania with the Transcaucasian cases Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.

The two dominant schools within Sovietology, Totalitarianism and Modernization, ossified the field during the Cold War, by stressing the durability of the Soviet Communist system.(1) Most Sovietologists, to their credit, acknowledged that they underestimated the revolutionary potentials of Gorbachev's reform policies of <u>perestroika</u>, <u>glasnost</u>, and <u>demokratzia</u>. They recognized the destabilizing forces of separatism within the USSR in the late '80s, and cautiously suggested that its breakup was a distinct possibility. But once the collapse of the Soviet Union was a fact, they claimed that it was bound to happen.

According to proponents of the Totalitarian school (Martin Malia, Brezinski, etc.), the inherent contradictions within Gorbachev's attempts to liberalize a repressive Communist regime delegitimized the Soviet system, thereby predictably legitimizing separatist tendencies. Proponents of the Modernization school (Jerry Hough, Alexander Dallin, Ronald Suny, etc.) argued that diverging socio-economic and socio-cultural developments among ethnic groups increased national consciousness, inadvertently stimulated by official Soviet nationality policies long before the advent of Gorbachev.

Both schools are creating a new orthodoxy by implying that the demise of the Soviet Union was imminent, indeed, inevitable. The contemporary claim of USSR's inevitable demise, and the preceding claim of USSR's high stability represent just two sides of the same coin.

Both schools sought to blame each other for the past orthodoxy of the Soviet Union as a powerful Monolith. Martin Malia shook mainstream (US) Sovietology by attacking the modernization theories in his <u>To the Stalin Mausoleum</u>, under the pseudonym 'Z' in 1990.(2) Malia aimed to revalidate the 'Totalitarian Model', asserting that the Soviet Communist system was unique, hardly measurable by conventional Western yardsticks of development, i.e. modernization. The 'Modernization Model' tended to ignore the repressive characteristics of Communist rule and to stress misleadingly that the USSR was basically a normal country, developing along the same lines as Western and Third World societies.

According to Malia, the Modernisationists refused to take the dissident sources seriously, and relied instead on official sources that grossly exaggerated economic growth figures and other data.(3) Malia convincingly criticizes the methods and assumptions employed by the modernisationists, but he is not able to account for the internal contradictions of the Totalitarian model.

Malia, Brezinski, and other proponents of the Totalitarian school explain the collapse of the USSR by the inherent inability of Communism to reform itself. <u>Glasnost</u> unintentionally discredited the Soviet system, and thereby marginalized <u>perestroika</u> and <u>democratizia</u>.(4) Gorbachev's reforms from above sounded the death knell of the system, <u>simply because a totalitarian system cannot be reformed</u>. This can be called the 'inevitable delegitimisation' thesis.

But this tenet contradicts with another central tenet, 'political supremacy at all costs', or leads to determinism when the first one is made consistent with the latter.

The second thesis states that the Party will employ any means at its disposal to remain total control, and subvert economic development goals to this ultimate goal.(5)

But if this interpretation of Soviet Communist politics is correct, it cannot account for the Gorbachev-phenomenon. If total control is the raison d'être of the Soviet system, why did Gorbachev stray from this Leninist path, trying, among other things, to solve the economic crises of backsliding technological innovation and consumer welfare?

Malia and other Totalitarianists try to explain Gorbachev's rise by pointing out that these structural crises really endangered the Soviet Union, and thus forced Gorbachev - or any other leader - to initiate liberating reforms and abandon the political supremacy rule of Soviet Communism.(6) But by making both the 'political supremacy' and 'delegitimisation' theses mutually consistent, the following deterministic argument is created:

the political supremacy of the Communist Party inevitably led to structural erosion of the Soviet economy, endangered the Soviet state, and thus forced the Communist Party to abandon its political supremacy through glasnost, perestroika, and democratzia, that irrevocably led to the erosion of Communist legitimacy - and thus of the Soviet state.

If the process of disintegration could really be empirically determined, then why did the totalitarian school fail to predict the future downfall of the Soviet internal Empire prior to Gorbachev's rule? Indeed, why do so many Sovietologists in general reinterpret the political and structural factors as destabilizing factors for the Soviet Empire, applying basically the same competing theories? These theories, or rather their prevalent application, share one basic flaw: self-confirming determinism. Both schools, Modernization and Totalitarianism, describe phenomena within the Soviet Union that have been largely supported by the data. But these structural characteristics cannot account by themselves for the collapse of the USSR in retrospect, as they have been used to emphasize the stability of the system as well.(7)

These factors, such as the rise of an educated elite and the pervasive control of the Communist Party, were mobilized and exploited by political actors for opposite ends - such as independence versus maintenance of the USSR.

Unlike Totalitarianism and Modernization, Strategic Alliance is based on 'Chaos Theory', now taken seriously in the Natural Sciences. It states that small input variations result in enormous output variations.(8) 'Chaos' is the underlying perspective of Strategic Alliance, stressing the fluidity of events, where structural-historical factors are mobilized or immobilized through political actions. Chaos Theory, still underdeveloped in political science, must be profoundly unattractive to historians and structuralists aiming to discern large structures and patterns. But a 'chaos' perspective is needed to analyse dynamic, fluid events with unpredictable outcomes. It may better explain why and how relatively minor decisions on political tactics by separatist and centrist actors had profound consequences for the Soviet Union. Indeed, this perspective is adopted within the Strategic Alliance approach as an antidote to determinism.

The Strategic Alliance approach adopts some elements of both Totalitarianism and Modernization. It adopts the perspective of Totalitarianism that Soviet political culture was permeated with the belief that power should be attained and maintained ruthlessly. This belief was rationalized by Lenin in his 'vanguard party' and 'democratic centralism' theses, allowing no room for civilized political discord.(9) The Bolsheviks subsequently applied the 'zero-sum game' to stifle all the other political movements, ranging from the Social Revolutionaries to Liberals. The focus on political mobilisation within Strategic Alliance resembles the focus on

political entrepreneurship of elites by some Modernisationists. David S. Mason mentions in his Revolution in East-Central Europe (1992) the "resource mobilisation theories" that "have challenged the theory of relative deprivation as the major stimulus to collective action."(10) Mason's description of resource mobilization actually forms the definition of strategic mobilization:

 ". movements form "because of long-term changes in group resources, organization, and opportunities for collective action." Grievances are a secondary factor. Organizations must deliberately mobilize for collective action to capitalize on such grievances. Indeed, social movements may themselves try to promote a sense of grievance and frustration among their members."(11)

 Strategic Alliance, containing the 'Chaos' perspective, concentrates more on short-term strategies, tactics, and events. Resource mobilization studies tend to regard the rules of resource competition and (re)distribution set by the Soviet center as fixed and immutable. Gail W. Lapidus, for instance, concluded in his 1984 article Ethnonationalism and Political Stability: the Soviet Case, that there were "significant intrinsic constraints on the political mobilization of ethnicity in the Soviet Union", as "considerable efforts have been made to foster the emergence of indigenous elites in the non-Russian republics whose loyalty and cooperation would add legitimacy to Soviet rule."(12) The ingenuity of Soviet cadre policies led Lapidus and others to overestimate the loyalty of local elites (these cadre policies are now seen as having contributed inadvertently to the rise of nationalism and separatism!). Also, Lapidus did not take into account the possible emergence of a reform-minded leader (Gorbachev), with huge consequences for cadres policy. His 'conversion' in his 1991 article From democratisation to disintegration: the impact of perestroika on the national question is striking.(13) Roman Szporluk made a crucial observation in a 1989 article on Russian nationalism:

 "The new political reforms in the USSR seem to make the decision who shall head a given party or economic organization subject to elections. This would mean that Moscow could no longer appoint or transfer leading cadres from one republic or region to another (emphasis my own)."(14)

 This helped the local Communist leaders to adapt and seek political survival either by accommodating or copying the goals of separatist movements, or combating the latter by means that ran against the central policies of perestroika and glasnost.

 Unlike Lapidus, Paul Goble stresses the changing rules of the game. Therefore, his Ethnic Politics in the USSR (1989), provides more significant elements for the Strategic Alliance approach. Paul Goble's approach is broader: he describes the political game of ethnic activism, including multiple national issues, not just the issue of integration versus disintegration of the USSR. Goble focuses on several strategies; alliance formation is just one of them. The "five most interesting non-Russian strategies" he identifies are listed below.(15)

- Demonstrations; a rather weak and risky strategy, according to Goble: "by themselves, they may even be a sign of a group's weakness, a confession that this is the only way to get attention."(16)
- Media Management; control or access to the media by different political groups. This will be mentioned as a battle ground, but just as part of forming alliances or opposing blocs. Suffice to say that independent political movements like the Popular Fronts established their own newspapers, infiltrated other newspapers, or just gained the support of the fiercely independent ones.
- Organisational Innovation; the most important strategy on the long term, according to Goble, though he blurs the picture by referring to both 'political institutions' and 'political organizations'. But he appears to mean the setting up more robust organizations for the political

groups.

- <u>Alliance Formation</u>; the central strategy to be analyzed in this research. The primary focus will be on alliances between political groups within republics, rather than alliances between ethnic groups across republics (Goble).

- <u>Using the System</u>; Goble identifies three areas in which "non-Russians have been remarkably adept at taking advantage of a number of opportunities offered by the system to pursue their goals": the new electoral system and legislative bodies established by Gorbachev in 1988; Soviet law and the Constitution; and the demise of "certain republic party organizations".(17)

- <u>Communal Violence</u>; exploitation of ethnic grievances by certain groups. Paul Goble does not regard this as a real strategy, though he regards it as a potential spoiler of normal ethnic politics. However, violence can be an extremely important strategy, as it might split alliances and their constituent groups, or might be used against other alliances and groups.

Demonstrations, media access, organizational innovation, exploitation of the system, and communal violence, are put in the context of strategic alliances among separatists and centrists. Organizational innovation is seen as a phenomenon that developed in three stages: informal association, mass political movement, and political party (see Chapter 1). Having described in detail the problems within contemporary Sovietology, I now turn to Chapter 1 to describe my Structural Alliance approach in more detail.

CHAPTER 1: ASPECTS OF STRATEGIC ALLIANCE

1.1. <u>Alignments and Realignments among Centrist and Separatist Forces, and Types of Organization</u>

 The basis of the analysis is strategic alliance rather than separatism and centrism as such, because the landscape of informal associations, movements and political parties is complex, with overlapping leaderships and memberships. An exhaustive list of all political organizations is impossible, and trying to map a comprehensive one is a trying and frustrating exercise, as Geoffrey A. Hosking, Jonathan Aves, and Peter J.S. Duncan discovered during their research on <u>Independent Political Movements in the Soviet Union, 1985-1991</u> (subtitle).(18)
 The Strategic Alliance approach limits the number of political groups to those that were able to form alliances, thought to be able to do so, and those that thought to be able to go it alone (i.e. refused to form an alliance). Whether the latter were as effective in maintaining or attaining power or in reaching other goals, remains to be seen. The presumption of the Strategic Alliance approach is that alliances as collective weights increase the bargaining (or usurpative) powers of the political groups with common aims. In other words, the assumption is that cooperation, even between rivals, furthers the attainment of goals they have in common. In this research, the Strategic Alliance approach is also a device to limit the number of separatist and centrist organisations to be discussed.

 The definition of the concept is quite simple (and rather self-evident): a strategic alliance is any form of cooperation between two or more distinct political organisations in order to reach a common goal.
 An alliance is tactical when the survival of several groups with different goals are threatened, and when they temporarily band together for self-protection. An alliance is also tactical when two or more political organisations pursue a short-term tactic (eg, demonstrations), that further their distinct but compatible goals.
 A long-term common goal is the crux of a <u>strategic</u> alliance. The goal might just be power, as long as the different groups are ready to share it despite their contrasting ideologies. However, it also presumes a common <u>strategy</u>, otherwise the alliance might quickly fall apart.
 Finally, an alliance is called a <u>coalition</u> when the groups form the political leadership of a government, whether through elections or usurpations (i.e. coups).

 An elaborate typology of alliances is cumbersome and unnecessary for the following two reasons. First, possible alliances between separatist and centrist forces, with different political, ideological, and institutional orientations, can be inferred from the tables in section 1.2. Possible combinations are self-evident. Second, alliance types can be found through inductive, descriptive, and historical analysis.
 However, different types of <u>organizational</u> alliances might be distinguished. It matters quite a lot whether an alliance is a loose association of distinct organizations, or a tight overarching organization that provides the basis for a future merger of the member groups. The following types might be distinguished:

 - <u>loose cooperation</u>: different groups form a loose alliance to develop common strategies, with joint policy statements and actions. But the organizations remain fully independent.
 - <u>umbrella organization</u>: the leaderships of different organizations form a common body for decisionmaking or assistance to the member organizations. Unlike the first type, an   institution

is created that goes beyond the occasional meeting.

- <u>overarching organization</u>: a central organ is created to coordinate the activities of the different groups; their organizations nearly become branches and shift from independence to autonomy. They are on the point of merging.

- <u>new organization</u>: the different groups form one political organization; they become factions or wings. Typically, it becomes a political party.

These types of organizational alliance roughly follow three forms of political association, political movement, and political party. But member organizations within all four types might be political parties already. The three forms of political organization appeared in the USSR in three distinct phases:

- <u>Informal associations</u> (1986-1987)

- <u>Mass movements (umbrella organizations)</u> (1988-1989)

- <u>Political parties (unified organizations with a programme, a single leadership, and a membership)</u> (1990-1991)

Loosely organized political clubs continued to exist in the next two periods, within or outside mass political movements, and alongside political parties. Likewise, political movements continued to exist in the third period. Political parties remained fragile, liable to splits or complete collapse, and are still weak in the post-Soviet era.

The most important and successful organizational innovation has been the amalgamation of loose associations into mass movements, particularly the so-called Popular Fronts.

The first period is not part of this research, because the fate of the Soviet Union was hardly addressed by the early associations. Early official glasnost did not allow to breach this subject. Civil society, i.e. civic associations independent from the state, cannot be used here as a concept within Strategic Alliance. It includes both political and non-political organizations that do not address the fate of the Soviet Union.

Geoffrey A. Hosking aptly explains in his <u>The beginnings of independent political activity</u> (<u>The Road to Post-Communism</u>, 1992), why small single-issue oriented associations arrived first on the scene. They were needed to rebuild civil society, as repression under Gorbachev began to wane.(19) Thus civil society was created by the early associations, including those that proved to be the predecessors of the mass political movements with mainly a separatist agenda.

1.2. <u>Typologies of Political Groups, based on the Centrist-Separatist Divide</u>

Strategic alliances among any political groups can be studied, but here the focus is on separatist and centrist forces, as they were directly concerned with the fate of the Soviet Union.

Therefore, it is necessary to define separatism and centrism in general terms, and to develop a typology of centrist and separatist aims, i.e. different degrees of centrism and separatism. The two central concepts are defined as follows:

<u>Centrism</u>:   the wish to maintain the state within its present borders. The central authorities should retain the basic powers of maintaining security (army, police), diplomatic relations abroad, taxation, and legislation. Local authorities at best retain autonomy in local matters, can implement central laws and directives freely.

<u>Separatism</u>: the wish to create a state within the borders of a larger state. The new authority should get the same basic powers the larger authority holds, and the latter should either relinquish them to the former, or be treated as a neighbouring state.

The 'institutional' typology shown below distinguishes four basic demands by local authorities. The first concept is actually no demand, but complete subjugation to the central authority. The first two concepts are centrist, as they fully maintain the authority of the central state. The last two concepts are separatist, as they progressively transfer state powers from the center to the periphery. This typology, from unity to independence, shows rising competence demands by local governments, set against the extent to which the central authority is willing to grant them. At a certain point, certain demands for certain powers mean separation from the center. When demands for new powers are made, local governments might attain some powers, or share decisionmaking on them, within the classic-political, socio-economic, or socio-cultural fields.(20)

Centrist:
- <u>Unity</u>: complete control from the center; laws and directives must be followed strictly according central guidelines. Centralization is the process of transferring more and more powers to the center.
- <u>Autonomy</u>: the local authorities are allowed to implement central laws and directives in their own ways, or handle certain competences like cultural policy. But most competences remain under central control. Local powers are given through decentralization; the central state government decides whether to grant it, and under what conditions.

Separatist:
- <u>Sovereignty</u>: the local authority is given substantive powers, such as control over mineral resources. Though the central state government might be pressed to meet autonomy demands as well, it decides to transfer regulative powers to the local level through deregulation. Unlike decentralization, the central government cannot simply reverse its decision. A territory becomes responsible for its internal affairs, but still owns allegiance to the larger state on essential security matters.
- <u>Independence</u>: the local authority attains the basic state powers to give its citizens security and develop policies to the outside world. At this point, the local authority has the same powers as the central government. It becomes a <u>separate government</u>, as duplication of competences makes no sense. As a result, the smaller government secedes from the larger state and forms a separate state.

Some political elites might rate control over education much higher, as an essential area of political control, for instance. The institutional arrangements are defined succinctly as follows: unity means total control by the central government; autonomy means transfer of powers to the local government which the central government can reverse; sovereignty means sharing or delineating powers between the periphery and the center; and independence means definite transfer of most or all powers from the center to the periphery.

The typology does not distinguish between official and <u>de facto</u> powers. The Soviet Constitution, at least the history of its versions from 1918 to 1977, is officially federal in form, but Communist Party supremacy made it imperial in substance. The "right of secession" within the Constitution remained a dead letter.(21) The four types can be used to identify both formal and real transfers of powers (both can occur together). In this research, the emphasis is on the

transfer of real powers.

 A real Federation is defined as a Union of <u>sovereign</u> states with both clear divisions of competences and power-sharing arrangements between the center and the periphery.
 A Confederation is defined as a loose union between <u>independent</u> states, who decided to share some decisionmaking powers on the supranational level. However, the terms 'Federation', 'Confederation', and 'Commonwealth' are intermingled and defined differently by the centrists and separatists.
 'Nationalism' is distinguished from 'statism' in separatist terms. They might coincide, but they are essentially distinct concepts, even contrasting <u>ideological orientations</u>. The two concepts are defined as follows:

 - <u>Nationalism</u>: the belief that a nation, i.e. a territory with a homogeneous people with common bonds (culture, language, ethnicity, etc.) should have its own state. When a national people attains a state, i.e. a governing authority, its rights are paramount over any other people residing within the territory.
 - <u>Statism, or Republicism</u>: the belief that the territory of a region, a republic, or any other unit, should get its own state. Such a state does not necessarily have to be based on one ethnicity. Its citizens might be from heterogeneous communities, but they in principle hold the same rights.

 Nationalism is defined as an ideology, both in the primordial sense of people subjectively experiencing common bonds and wanting a state for themselves, and in the political sense of "nation-builders" consciously creating such a belief.
 "State-builders", however, aim to build a state by an ideology other than nationality, recognizing the heterogeneous communities within its (future) borders. They are called statists or republicists. Thus I do not presume in advance that either primordial nationalism or political nationalism was the driving separatist force. Possibly, separatist alliances in different republics exhibited different kinds of nationalism.(22)
 I make the possibly controversial point that statism as an ideology contains an inherently tolerant idea about ethnicity and other characteristics of people, while nationalism contains an inherently intolerant one. I make two propositions:
 first, both non-nationalist separatists and centrists are more moderate, and better able to form alliances among them, than nationalist separatists and centrists.
 Second, the ideological-philosophical differences between nationalists and non-nationalists are so strong, that they create internal divisions within both separatist and centrist organizations and alliances, frequently ending in splits along these lines.

 Figure 1.1 shows the cleavages (though not the possible alliances) cross-cutting the separatist-centrist and nationalist-statist dichotomies. Some combinations are given labels. But they might be confusing, as they are commonly used to identify <u>party</u> ideologies in the political spectrum (Figure 1.2). Therefore, the consistent characterization of a centrist-nationalist group will be "centrist-nationalist". The distinction between centrist nationalists who want to maintain the Empire, and separatist nationalists who want a nation-state of their own, roughly correspondents with Roman Szporluk's distinction between "Empire-savers" and "nation-builders" in his <u>Dilemmas of Russian Nationalism</u>.(23)
 Figure 1.2 shows the Political Spectrum, on a right-left scale. It ranges from defending the status-quo by any means to changing the status-quo by any means. The following types of <u>political orientation</u> are distinguished:

- <u>Reactionaries</u>: those who want to defend the status-quo, in this case the Soviet internal Empire, at all costs. Violent means and other ruthless methods of repression are willingly used (if capable to).
- <u>Conservatives</u>: those who want to defend the status-quo, in this acse the Soviet Union, but not at all costs. They might use dirty tricks, but refrain from resorting to brutal repression.
- <u>Moderates</u>: those who want to reform a present system, in this case the Soviet system, but not fundamentally alter it or do away with it. They are only willing to use essentially peaceful means. In this case, they can also be called <u>reformists</u>, for so far they want to replace the Soviet Empire with a genuine Federation. Arguably, this presents a fundamental change. But this study is about centrism versus separatism; therefore, the reformist agenda is seen as basically pro-status-quo and thus centrist (maintaining the USSR in whatever form).
- <u>Radicals</u>: those who want fundamental change, in this case replacing the USSR with something new. But they want to reach their objectives by peaceful negotiation, compromise, and accommodation.
- <u>Extremists</u>: those who want fundamental change at any costs. They are ready to destroy the status-quo by revolutionary, violent means, even if other means are available.

 The typology does not take into account the perceptions of the political groups of each other. Communist conservatives, for instance, often regarded Gorbachev as a radical in his efforts to revamp and democratize the Soviet system (and the reactionaries regarded him as a plain heretic), while the radicals perceived him as a conservative, who wanted to save the Soviet system.
 Figure 1.2, combining the institutional and ideological spectra with the political spectrum, shows probable 'concentrations' of groups with combined characteristics. Future research on all 15 Soviet republics must determine whether these concentrations are valid. They are based on the hypotheses that nationalists tend to be extremist in both goals and means, and statists moderate in methods. For instance, Figure 1.2 divides the reformist group into separatist-republicists and centrist-statists. These hypotheses will be put to the test for the Baltic and Transcaucasian republics.

 FIGURE 1.1. <u>Cleavages along the institutional separatist - centrist spectrum, and the ideological nationalist statist spectrum</u>.


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                  Institutional Spectrum
Ideological
Spectrum        Separatism           Centrism


        Independence Sovereignty  Autonomy   Unity
        ------------+------------+------------+------------
Statist    Isolationist                Imperialist


        --------------------------------------------------
Nationalist Xenophobist          Ethnocentrist

        ------------+------------+------------+------------
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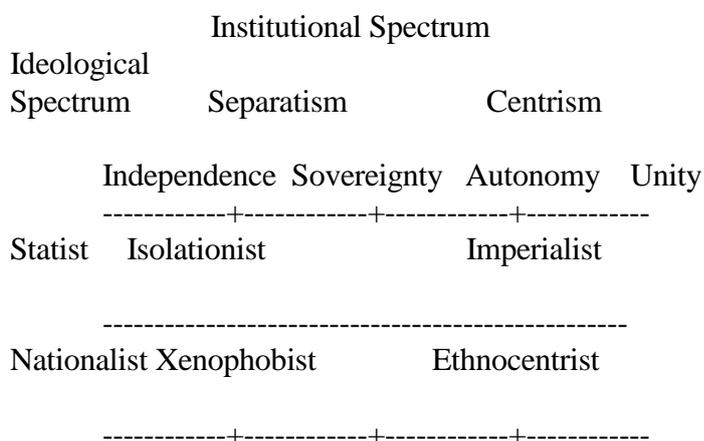
FIGURE 1.2. <u>Cleavages along the institutional and ideological spectra, and the political spectrum</u>.

              Political Spectrum

   Reactionary Conservative Reformist Radical Extremist

   R   *   *
C
   N   *

   R   *   *
S
    N   *

C = Centrist; S = Separatist; R = Republicist (Statist); N = Nationalist
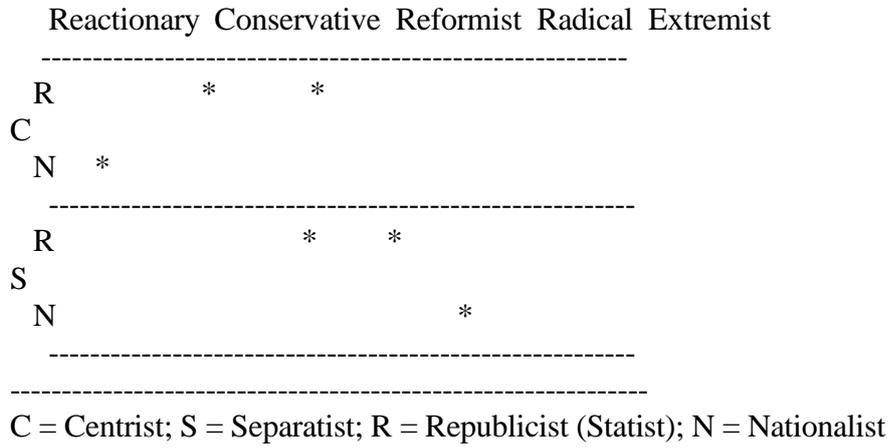
CHAPTER 2. THE BALTICS: SUCCESSFUL SEPARATISM BY MODERATE SENIOR-
    JUNIOR PARTNERSHIP ALLIANCES BETWEEN THE POPULAR FRONTS
  AND THE REPUBLICAN COMMUNIST PARTIES

2.1. 1988: the Establishments of the Popular Fronts - and Different Degrees of Cooperation
  with the Communist Parties

2.1.1. Estonia

 The first political mass movement in the Baltics was established in Estonia - but it was not the
Popular front. In February 1988, the Estonian Group for the Publication of the Molotov-
Ribbentrop Pact (MRP-AEG) was established, to reemerge as the Estonian National
Independence Party (ENIP) in August 20, once their immediate goal was fulfilled.
 It was formed by former dissidents and their sympathizers, and they were quite radical from the
start. Already in January they demanded complete independence from the Soviet Union, "a
position that was far from the political mainstream at the time (R. Kionka)."(24)
 Indeed, the very name of their party challenged the monopoly of the Communist Party. As a
result, the ENIP remained isolated during the first months of its existence; other groups refused
to form alliances with it.(25)
 The Popular Front was founded from a different quarter. On 13 April 1988 a senior Communist
official, Edgar Savisaar, called for the creation of a "Popular Front for the Support of
Perestroika" on television, as pressure from below was needed to push through economic and
political reforms against recalcitrant Communist party members and bureaucrats.

 One of the most important radical organizations was the Estonian Heritage Society, formally
founded in December 1987. The organization quickly politicized, as its cultural goal of restoring
real Estonian history coincided with the political goal of the Estonian Group for the Publication
of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (MRP-AEG).
 Since the hard-liners orchestrated the police crackdown on February 1988 against a
demonstration commemorating the Estonian-Soviet peace treaty of 1920, the MRP-AEG
decided to follow a confrontational strategy of continuous demonstrations on historical issues.
This caused a rift with the Communist reformists, who feared a backlash. The EHS and the
MRP-AEG formed the first major radical alliance in the Baltics.
 Ironically, Savisaar's television address in April encouraged them to hold huge rallies in Tartu
on April 14-17, where thousands of people sang for hours and waved the pre-Soviet flag. This
heady period became known as the "Spring of the Blue-Black-White", and for a longer period as
the "singing revolution".(26)
 The Popular Front of Estonia (PFE) copied the tactic of mass rallies, and by June 17 it was able
to attract around 150,000 people to discuss the Estonian Communist Party's platform to the 19th
Party Conference, and its list of candidates. The Central Committee of the ECP got the message.
It dismissed Vaino, and his successor Vaino Valjas (a native Estonian) "moved smartly to
cement an alliance with the Popular Front (Hosking)."(27)

 The major advantage of the Popular Front was that its founding members were reform-minded
Communists, who could push through legislative changes and negotiate with Moscow. But at
the same time, this became a major disadvantage. While by August the PFE called in its
program for "the transformation of the Soviet Union from a federal state into a confederation of

states", its continued readiness to work within the Soviet institutions supplied the MRP-AEG - EHS alliance with ready ammunition. The PFE's founding congress on 1-2 October adopted a program in which the language of 'sovereignty' was even more moderate.(28)

In contrast, ENIP's consistent call for the reestablishment of pre-war Estonia, and the rejection of all Soviet institutions ranging from the army to the Supreme Soviet, were based on the historically and legally correct view of Estonia under Soviet occupation. MRP-AEG initially attempted to take a huge leap and call for outright secession, but this was premature. By failing to take the necessary steps in between to build their arguments, the radicals failed to get immediate support. But as MRP-AEG formed an alliance with EHS, both were able to mobilize the Estonians on single concrete issues, notably the unbanning of the old national flag, and the publication of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, in order to prove that Estonia and the other Baltic states were under occupation. This was a smart step-by-step strategy, bound sooner or later to bring the issue of independence on the political agenda.

On 16 November 1988, the Estonian Supreme Soviet adopted a "Declaration About Sovereignty", giving precedence to Estonian legislation, but stopping short of seceding from the Soviet Union at first secretary Vaino Valjas' insistence. The declaration was a reaction against a proposal in the All-union Supreme Soviet to amend Soviet Constitution in such a way, as to give the new Congress of People's Deputies the power to "take decisions on questions of the composition of the USSR". This competence appeared to supersede the constitutional right of secession.(29) Whether insensitive or intentional, this proposal heightened the distrust within both the Baltic Communist parties (who predictably wanted maximum autonomy at the least) and the Baltic opposition movements against the center, solidifying their alliances.

2.1.2. Latvia

The Popular Front had a grassroots origin in Latvia, as some of its constituent groups organized the "calendar demonstrations" in 1987. Especially Helsinki '86, originally a small human rights association, organized these demonstrations to commemorate sensitive events like August 23 1939, the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. As these public actions were widely publicized, the EHS and the MRP-AEG probably adopted the Latvian "single issue-commemoration" strategy. The Latvian Popular Front was founded after the June 1-2 Latvian Writers' Union plenum, that discussed the theses drafted for the 19th CPSU Conference called by Gorbachev.

The final resolution minced no words: among other things, it called for a complete reassessment of Latvian history, and the publication of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. It also demanded a stem on immigration into Latvia, because it endangered the position of the ethnic Latvians (just 52 percent of the total population in 1989). It did not yet call for outright secession, but demanded sovereignty within the Soviet federation, specifically on foreign relation matters, such as membership in international organizations.(30)

This resolution encouraged 17 prominent figures to form an organizing committee for the Latvian People's Front on June 21. The Front became a loose umbrella organization, as most founders were leading members of important independent organizations, including Helsinki '86, the Environmental Protection Club (VAK) , and the Latvian National Independence Movement. The official founding congress was held on October 8-9 in Tallinn.(31)

The Latvian Independence Movement, founded on June 17 1988, was similar to the Estonian ENIP in its rigid legalistic view on independence. Unlike ENIP, however, it was one of the founding members of a looser organized Popular Front. Thus a much broader alliance of radical

groups existed in Latvia than in Estonia during 1988.

Paradoxically, one of the main reasons why the political developments were slower in Latvia was the Latvian Front's stronger grassroots base. True, the number of Party members in both the PFE and the PFL were similar: about a third of the more than 1000 delegates at the 8-9 October founding congress were Communist Party members; the 1-2 October founding congress of the Estonian Popular Front showed that 28 percent of the members were members of the Communist Party.
However, the Latvian People's Front lacked high Communist officials within its leadership. It had fewer political connections with the diminished but still dominant Latvian Communist Party.(32) Even Janis Peters, a poet and chairman of the creative unions, could not change this basic fact, despite his successful efforts "to put organizational initiative in the hands of individuals less visibly affiliated with protest and other opposition groups (Dreifelds)."(33)
2.1.3. Lithuania

In Lithuania, political changes lagged behind those of Estonia, though they were a bit quicker than in Latvia. Both Geoffry A. Hosking and Rein Taagepera stress the much larger demographic majority of the ethnic Lithuanians - around 80 percent, as opposed to around 50 percent of ethnic Latvians in Latvia, and around 60 percent of ethnic Estonians in Estonia - as the main factor of the slower rise of nationalist movements in Lithuania.
But it is doubtful whether demographic factors have been the sole or even main causes of the different speeds of political change. The origins and organizational characteristics of the Popular Fronts and other mass movements were at least as important, because they affected the probablities and types of strategic alliances.(34)

The Popular Front Lithuanian Reconstruction Movement ("Lietuvos Persitvarkymo Sajudis") or Sajudis ("movement") was proposed on May 23 1988 in the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences and established by an initiative group of 36 members for perestroika, glasnost, and democratzia on June 3. But it got a hostile reception from the Communist Party of Lithuania (LCP).(35) While in Latvia a residual alliance of sorts existed between the Popular Front and the republican Communist Party, and in Estonia a close, high-level alliance was formed between the CPE and PFE-leaderships, no strategic alliance existed in Lithuania during 1988.
The CPL was more conservative than its Baltic counterparts. Its first party secretary Ringaudas Songalia (who was chosen on December 1 1987, after the highly conservative Petras Griskevicus died in November) opposed glasnost, and had a low tolerance for dissidents and other opposition figures. Though Songalia's tenure was to be short-lived, it kept a break on political change in 1988. The fact that half the initiative group on June 3 consisted of Communist party members, suggests that a split within the CPL was already emerging on the policy towards independent organizations.(36)

Sajudis quickly became a mass movement, as a network of organizations was established throughout the republic during the summer. The model function of the Estonian Popular Front was crucial at this stage.(37) Like in Estonia, a huge demonstration of 100,000 people send off the Lithuanian delegates to the 19th Party Conference in July. Despite these shows of strenghth, the movement faced the potential danger of a split between its radical faction, headed by the musicologist Vytautas Landbergis, and the moderate faction, lead (among others) by Kazimiera Prunskiene, who "had good links with reformist elements in the Communist Party"(Aves).(38)

The Lithuanian Freedom League (LFL), with a long underground history and emerging openly

in 1987, was similar to the radical <u>Estonian National Independence Party</u> and the <u>Latvian National Independence Movement</u>. Like the LNIM, the movement was dominated by former dissidents, who stuck to their uncompromising stance against the Communist Party.

The LFL was reluctantly accepted by <u>Sajudis</u>, whose umbrella organization resembled that of the Latvian popular Front (the LFL got seven seats in <u>Sajudis</u>' founding congress in October).(39) But <u>Sajudis</u> remained ambivalent: while 38 percent of the <u>Sajudis</u> diet favored a close alliance with the League, 49 percent only favored an alliance if the League dropped its confrontational tactics.(40)

The LFL had gone ahead forming its own alliance with six smaller radical groups, called the <u>Association for Lithuania's Independence</u>. The most important difference with <u>Sajudis</u>' program was its call for complete independence, for control "not only of domestic but also of foreign and defense policies (Vardys)."(41)

The LFL's existence became less instrumental as a distinct radical movement, because at the founding congress of <u>Sajudis</u> in Vilnius in October 22-23, the radicals got the upper hand. The program still mentioned its support for <u>perestroika</u>, and for sovereignty within the Soviet federation. However, demands for full <u>independence</u> were rife. Rolandas Paulaskas, for instance, argued that stating in the program that Lithuania was part of the Soviet Union would legitimize the occupation of the country since 1940.

The radical faction within <u>Sajudis</u> decisively won at the October founding congress not only because of LCP's conservatism and by LFL's radicalism, but also because <u>Sajudis</u> had followed the same strategy of mobilization on simple, concrete issues as the MRP-AEG - EHS alliance in Estonia during the summer. It held numerous meetings and demonstrations, such as a huge rally of 250,000 people on August 23 to commemorate the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.(43)

It took an intervention by the new reformist First Secretary of the CPL Algirdas Brazauskas, just appointed on October 20, to refrain the congress from demanding full independence: "we must learn to wait".(42) This did not prevent the congress from electing the radical Landsbergis as <u>Sajudis</u>' chairman. Full independence as an explicit goal was already in the pipeline in the autumn of '88.

2.2. <u>1989: the Establishments of Moderate Alliances between the Popular Fronts and the Communist Parties, and the Rising Challenges of the Radical Congress Alliances</u>

2.2.1. <u>Estonia</u>

The close alliance between the CPE and PFE quickly produced a host of official pronouncements, policies, and actions, increasing the rift with Moscow: on January 17, 1989, the PFE was finally officially registered and recognized; on January 18, the ESSR Supreme Soviet introduced a law to make Estonian the state language; and on January 24, leaders of the CPE and PFE jointly raised the blue-black-white national flag, in effect repeating the flag-waving action undertaken by the MRP-AEG-EHS alliance in April 1988.

On January 24, in an alternative commemoration of Independence Day, ENIP, the Heritage Society, and the <u>Estonian Christian Union</u> (formally founded in December 1988), announced the formation of the <u>Estonian Citizens' Committee</u> (established in February), enlarging the radical alliance. They called for a boycott of the March 26 elections to the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR, as it was an institution of an occupying country, and it would be absurd to elect Estonian delegates for it. The ECC proposed the formation of citizens' committees, to register all the citizens of the Estonian republic prior to 1940 and their descendants. Only these

people had the right to elect a genuine Estonian Congress, scheduled on February 24, 1990.(44)

The radical intellectuals, also in the other two Baltic republics, put forward the legally strong argument that the country was forcefully occupied by a foreign country since 1940, and it thus made no sense to seek sovereignty or secession through Soviet institutions. They would be incensed if they were called separatists, because they were just trying to reassert lost independence, rather than creating a new one.

The legalistic logic and historic correctness of the argument struck a chord. The registration campaign by the local citizens committees set up in the subsequent months got good results. By July, around 100,000 people had registered, and by September around 300,000 (by January 1990, it would rise to 520,000, and by February to around 600,000, roughly half the population).

But the boycot campaign proved unsuccessful for so far as 87.1% of the registered voters in Estonia turned out to choose among the candidates for the allotted seats in the Union-wide Congress of People's Deputies. Apparently, the Estonians did not want to put all their eggs in one basket. The Popular Front was the big winner, as all its endorsed candidates won the four seats for the Soviet of the Union, while 17 endorsed candidates carried seats among the 32 seats for the Soviet of Nationalities. The Communist Party won for so far around 90% of the candidates and winners were members. But usually the winning candidates were members of the PFE as well, or endorsed the latter's platform. The PFE emerged in this election as the senior partner within the moderate alliance, in the minds of the people if not yet in the practices of governance.(45)

Another challenge came from the Russian quarter: a conservative-centrist alliance between the United Council of Work Collectives (OSTK) and "Interdvizhenie", or Internationalist Movement ('Intermovement' in short).

The OSTK was formally established in December 1988. The movement was originally concerned with economic issues and symphathetic to the Popular Front. But this changed when ethnic Estonian members broke away and set up the Council of Workers' Collectives of Estonia (STKE), because Russian members openly rebelled against the Estonian Soviet's declaration on sovereignty in the same month.

Interdvizhenie's founding congress was held in March 1989.(46) Its program railed against the policies of the CPE-PFE alliance, particularly the citizenship and language laws, that "violated the constitutional principle of equality of citizens". The program stated ominously that if discriminating measures against the Russian-speaking population continued, it would "reserve the right to support the idea of setting up an autonomous republic in north-eastern Estonia in accordance with the right to self-determination."(47)

However, both organizations did fare badly at the March elections for the USSR Congress of People's Deputies: Intermovement and its allies carried only 5 of the 36 districts, although its leader Evgeni Kogan won over a PFE-candidate.(48)

Interdvishenie and OSTK were more successful in organizing strikes with a strike committee of workers in All-Union enterprises to protest against the Electoral Law passed on August 8, that excluded all those who had lived in the Estonian SSR for less than five years. The Estonian Supreme Soviet, also under pressure from Moscow, agreed to suspend temporarily the five year-residence requirement on October 5.(49)

The investigation on the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact got bogged down by disagreement within the Estonian Supreme Soviet, which split on July 20 along ethnic lines. The commission of the USSR Supreme Soviet, emboldened by this split, refused to meet the request of the Estonian faction to publish the Pact's secret protocol incorporating the Baltics into the USSR.

The disappointment was such that the leadership of the PFE radicalized, resorting to confrontational tactics in August, such as pushing for the strict election law.

The other partner in the alliance, the CPE, tried to make the best of it with damage control. The CPE could not afford to break the alliance with the PFE. First Secretary Valjas managed to water down a resolution by the Estonian Supreme Soviet on November 11 calling Estonia's annexation in 1940 a "military occupation", through a clause stating that the condemnation did not entail secession from the USSR.(50)

Ironically, the USSR Congress of People's Deputies denounced the Nazi-Soviet Pact in December 1989, diminishing the legitimacy of the ESSR Supreme Soviet and thereby the justifiability of the CPE-PFE's strategy of making decisions within it.

Moreover, the Citizens' Committee finally got the media access it needed: on January 10, 1990, leading members of the Citizen's Committee, the Estonian Supreme Soviet, and the Estonian Popular Front had a live debate on television. Riina Kionka observes that

". . the discussion led the committee's leaders to question the legal competence of the standing Supreme Soviet and Estonia's status as an occupied country. The free-wheeling debate was a clear victory for the committee."(51)

The Committee's registration campaign got a further boost, and the Popular Front was forced to back the February elections for the Congress on January 28, 1990. Thus the new year began with the radical alliance threatening to take over the policy-making role from the moderate alliance.

2.2.2. Latvia

Radical movements such as the Latvian National Independence Movement (LNIM), Helsinki-86, and the Environmental Protection Club (VAK), looked again to Estonia for inspiration to further their cause. Thus in April 1989 they founded the Latvian Citizens' Committee. They set up local committees to register citizens eligible for elections of a Congress on April 1990, circumventing the republican Soviet parliament in the same way and for the same reasons as the Estonian Congress movement.

Like in Estonia, the proposed amendment of the Soviet Constitution giving the new Congress of People's Deputies the right to have a final say on the composition of the USSR drew a lot of criticism in Latvia. The legal specialists within the People's Front, headed by Professor Ilmar Bisers, argued that Gorbachev and the other central reformers wanted to create an entirely new USSR parliament without properly consulting the republican governments.(52)

In February, the new Chairman of the Latvian Supreme Soviet, the reformist Anatolijs Gorbunovs (who had a political struggle with First Secretary Janis Vagris, representing the conservative wing of the Party), send a delegation to Moscow to lobby for changes in the draft document for the new All-Union parliament. The draft was changed in such a way that the formal right to secede was not nullified by a veto power for the Congress of People's Deputies.

Before the Latvian National Independence Movement helped to set up the Citizens' Committee in April, it was disentangling itself from the Popular Front. On February 18-19 it held its founding congress, but its program was attacked by the Latvian Supreme Soviet on March 23, as parts of it went against the republican Constitution. The Presidium threatened to declare the movement illegal if it would not amend its program within two months.

The Independence Movement was able to get crucial media access during its emergency meeting on May 28, demonstrating "that it was not made up of extremists and eccentrics but, rather, included some of the most prominent Latvian cultural personalities (Dreifelds)."(53)

They were able to publicize the strong legal and moral argument that as Latvia was under Soviet occupation, an non-Soviet parliament was the only right forum to reach independence. The Estonian Citizen's Committee alliance was in a similar position only in the beginning of 1990.

The argument for a legally correct secession split the leadership of the People's Front. Its board, pressed by several members who had attended the LNIM's emergency meeting, made an appeal on May 31 embracing full independence. The Estonian Popular Front could avoid such damaging rifts, because ENIP was a distinct organisation outside the Front's decisionmaking-bodies. Some of the more moderate board members, Ilmars Bisers and Mavriks Vulfsons, happened to be in Moscow at that time, attending the Congress of People's Deputies. The Governing Council of the Front ratified the board's decision on June 10, and the PFL's Second Congress in October declared explicitly the aim of full independence.

To make matters worse, the Latvian International Working People's Front or "Interfront", initiated at the Riga Civil Engineering Institute on October 18 1988, was much more popular than the Estonian "Intermovement". Latvian society was polarizing along ethnic cleavages much faster and deeper in 1989 than Estonian society.(54) But the conservative-centrist (pro-USSR) Interfront became vulnerable to splits after its second congress in June, as some Russian members correctly disagreed with the leadership's refusal to form an alliance with organizations of other ethnic minorities (Jews, Poles, Belorussians, Ukrainians, etc.).

Though the Popular Front was able to ride with the LNIM's windfall since the latter's May 28 publicity coup, the former's opportunistic radicalization was damaging its residual alliance with the Latvian Communist Party. Gorbunovs denounced the PFL's independence appeal as an illegal document that also contradicted the Popular Front's statuses and policy documents.

Gorbunovs' mistake to give an ultimatum to the LNIM on March 23, had the unintended consequence of endangering the CPL-PFL alliance. This corresponds with the perspective of Political Chaos Theory: political personalities in cliff-hanger situations could easily make different decisions, with hugely different consequences.

2.2.3. Lithuania

Communist Party leader Brazauskas seemed to make the same mistake as Gorbunovs, when at a Central Committee plenum on February 21 1989, he attacked Sajudis' explicit calls for independence on November 20 1988, and February 16 1989.

The brand-new alliance between the Lithuanian Popular Front and the Communist Party was already strained since Brazauskas prevented the Supreme Soviet on November 19 1988 from declaring itself sovereign by constitutional amendment, i.e. declaring veto power over All-Union laws and directives (the Estonian Supreme Soviet had adopted such an amendment on November 17).(55) Nevertheless, the CP platform for the March elections of the USSR Congress of People's Deputies formulated the goal of sovereignty as "an exclusive right to our land, forests, natural and cultural resources and treasures; our own constitution and the laws; citizenship; state language and freedom to maintain relations with the other Soviet republics and with foreign countries."(56)

But Brazauskas' position was fundamentally different from Gorbunovs (apart from the fact that the latter was not first secretary, but chairman of the Supreme Soviet presidium).

First, Brazauskas faced a quickly radicalizing Sajudis, who in effect took on the role of both a Popular Front and an Independence Movement. The Lithuanian Freedom League, though instrumental in helping to radicalize Sajudis, was a less significant contender than the two other

Baltic Congress movements. In the beginning of 1989, the moderate alliance appeared to be under threat from another quarter as well, the conservative Yedinstvo or "Unity" movement, established in November 1988 and mainly consisting of Russians and Poles. It was better organized than its Latvian counterpart, and its strikes on February 15 against the new language law were on a much larger scale than in Latvia. But as around 80 percent of the population were ethnically Lithuanian, the movement was bound to remain marginal. Moreover, extremists won the internal struggle on the May 13-14 founding congress, causing the movement to split.(57)

Second, Brazauskas was under extreme pressure from Moscow (he had to visit the capital almost weekly), and from the Central Committee of the LCP, still dominated by conservatives. Both moderates and conservatives in Moscow were concentrating their attention on Lithuania, fearing that the radical Sajudis would force the LCP on the same potentially separatist path of sovereignty (veto power over All-Union legislation) as the CPE on November 1988 (the declaration of republican sovereignty). Gorbachev remarked on February 14 that "those who demand Lithuania's secession from the Soviet Union are either people consumed by personal and career ambition or they are simply extremists."(58)

Third, despite being under pressure, Brazauskas did not demand Sajudis to change its 20 November 1988 "moral independence" declaration or threaten to officially ban the movement. It could have split the Popular Front, as moderates within the movement already objected to the 20 November statement. Brazauskas was wise not to adopt a divide-and-rule strategy, however tempting before the March 1989 elections. The LCP needed a strategic alliance with Sajudis on the longer term, even with a radicalized one.

The March 1989 elections to the USSR Congress of People's deputies paradoxically healed the alliance, as the results were much the same as in Estonia and Latvia: Sajudis won handily, and the CP won only for so far its personally popular candidates Brazauskas and second secretary Vladimir Berezov (a Lithuanian Russian) carried their seats in the first rounds. As in the two other Baltic republics, the LFL-Congress movement boycotted the elections. Brazauskas and Berezov wisely accepted LCP's role of junior partner in the alliance, because all other options would have hastened the demise of the Party.

Thus Brazauskas felt free to give his blessing to a second meeting of the Supreme Soviet on the sovereignty question on May 18, that finally amended the Lithunian constitution after a six-month delay. Brazauskas was a republicist, aiming to loosen the ties with the center as far as possible. Significantly, all three Baltic CP-leaders met with the politburo in Moscow on May 11, where Gorbachev showed his willingness to proceed with economic autonomy.(59) But Gorbachev remained essentially centrist, and must have disliked the "declaration of Lithuanian state sovereignty" on May 18, amounting to de facto independence.

The declaration effectively pushed Lithuania ahead of Estonia on the road to independence. Estonia declared itself sovereign in November 1988, but (as pointed out in section 2.1.1) it was caught in cautious terms. The Lithuanian declaration, in contrast, "was every bit as radical as the "spiritual" declaration of independence by Sajudis on February 16 (Vardys)."(60) The moderate LPF-LCP alliance had become radical.

2.3. 1990: the Moderate/Radical CP-PF Alliances fared Differently in each Republic, and the Radical Congress Alliances had Different Rates of Success

2.3.1. Estonia

The CPE-PFE alliance attempted to outflank the Citizens' Committee by holding elections for

the Supreme Soviet on March 18, 1990. But ENIP and its allies had registered around 850,000 people, including 60,000 non-Estonians. Moreover, they managed to hold the elections for the Congress in the beginning of March, just before the Supreme Soviet elections. 600,000 people turned out to vote, nearly as many as during the March 1989 elections for the Congress of People's Deputies.

The Congress convened on March 11, announcing "the first democratically elected representative body of the citizens of Estonia since 1940." It boldly demanded the withdrawal of the Soviet Army, appointed delegates for negotiating with Moscow, and called for international recognition of the Congress as the legitimate successor of the pre-war parliament. These steps were already planned in February 1989. But the Congress movement had put in its program one essential constraint: the Congress would not automatically assume legislative and other decisionmaking powers. The Congress would just be a forum with superior legitimacy.(61) But this self-limitation created a no-win situation. Trivimi Velliste, member of the Citizens' Executive Committee admitted this privately to Riin Kionka on January 17:

"the Supreme Soviet has legislative power but is not legally competent. The Estonian Congress, on the other hand, will be legally competent but will not be in a position to make laws. This is a problem."(62)

The PFE was only able to become the leader of a pro-independence bloc and win 78 of the 105 seats in the Supreme Soviet elections (the PFE got 35 seats within the 78 won by the bloc), by quickly changing its tune and calling for independence and recognizing the moral legitimacy of the Estonian Congress. The CPE got only 5 seats. The PFE became the senior partner in governance within the alliance, as Edgar Savisaar was able to set up a non-communist government. The newly elected Supreme Soviet made a provisional declaration of independence on March 30.(63)

The popularity of the Congress of Estonia increased the fears within the PFE and CPE that their dominant position was ending. But these fears were exaggerated, as the Congress had no legislative power, and did not intend to usurp it. When the PFE held its second congress on May 26-27. The mood was nervous, as the Congress had declared itself the highest state authority on its second congress on May 25. The PFE made a crucial error by attacking the Congress during its meeting, instead of forming a strategic alliance with the Citizens' Committee. Their programs had converged since the beginning of 1990. The PFE's position was not immediately threatened: even the Congress' May 25 declaration on state authority was a largely symbolic gesture, provoked by the PFE's continuing campaigns in the media against the Citizens' Committee after the first Congress meeting in March.(64)

Conservative Russians also appeared to overestimate the power of the Congress, when "170 elected officials at the local, republican, and all-Union levels (Kionka)" established the centrist Interregional Council of People's Deputies and Workers of the USSR on May 26. But their potential strenghth was undercut when the following day many non-Estonians demonstrated against the Interregional Council, and for independence.(65)

The CPE was in bigger trouble. General Secretary Valjas and Savisaar went to great lengths to keep the Russian members in the Communist Party. They offered the largest Russian faction under V. Malkoviski a free economic zone in north-east Estonia (where many Russians live). This may have weakened the credibility of its newly pro-independence platform in the Supreme Soviet elections. At its extraordinary 20th Congress in March it called for independence for the first time, and decided to break away from the CPSU, like its Lithuanian counterpart in December 1989. But in the longer term it became impossible to maintain the unity between moderate Estonian separatists and moderate Russian centrists in the party. The CPE finally split

in December, when Malkovski and his supporters joined the smaller faction headed by A. Gusev that already broke away in March. An enlarged conservative alliance appeared in the making, as Evgenii Kogan, leader of the Intermovement, was one of the participants in the founding congress for a Moscow-loyal Communist Party.(66)

2.3.2. <u>Latvia</u>

 The Latvian People's Front won the elections for the 201-seat Supreme Soviet in the summer of 1990. 138 of its endorsed candidates were elected.(67) Gorbunovs became chairman of the Supreme Council. The Latvian Citizens' Committee registration drive was as successful as in Estonia; more than 700,000 people turned out to vote for the Congress. But the impact of the Congress elections was diminished by the fact that they were held after the Supreme Soviet elections.
 The new Supreme Council declared independence on May 4, 1990. Like the Estonian declaration, it did not implement independence immediately, but installed a waiting period. The negative reactions and heavy-handed actions by Moscow against the Lithuanian declaration probably accounted for this tactical decision by the Estonians and Latvians.
 The moderate alliance in Latvia was more seriously weakened than in Estonia, because the Latvian Communist Party did not just fare badly in the Supreme Soviet elections, but split after the elections, on April 7. A <u>minority</u> moderate wing of 263 delegates split from the Communist Party, instead of the other way round. Despite the efforts by the first secretary Janis Vagris, a 518 delegate-<u>majority</u> of conservative Communists wished to remain loyal to the CPSU. The reformists had been less powerful in the Latvian than the Estonian party. Or fewer communist reformists in Latvia were prepared to declare independence for the republic and for the party.(68)
 Ominously, a representative from Moscow called Boriss Pugo attended the 25th Congress of the LCP on April 6. He warned the delegates against following the Lithunian example, saying that "the experience of your southern neighbours . . . is fraught with the most serious consequences." The threat seemed to have worked. Alfred Rubiks was chosen as the new first secretary. He was known as a "reactionary", who favored Russification of Latvia - one can hardly imagine a more explosive stance on a more explosive issue in Latvia.
 The reformists refused to be intimidated and thus broke away, establishing the <u>Independent Communist Party</u> on April 14, which became later known as the <u>Democratic Labor Party of Latvia</u>.(69)

 The split was a disaster for the moderate alliance, as one of the partners, the <u>official</u> Latvian Communist Party with all the funds and offices, was now dominated by conservatives. Dzintra Bungs observes that "this split served to strenghten the front's impact on political life in the republic", as supporters of the Popular Front just in time got a parliamentary majority within the Supreme Soviet through elections.(70) Was a moderate strategic alliance still necessary at this point? The Popular Front had to fill government posts on its own, with no moderate partner to help it gain experience. It was just too early for the Popular Front to do without the moderate alliance. Moreover, executive power did not prevent declining membership for the Popular Front by the time it convened for its third congress on October 9-10. Proposals to dispense with the Popular Front (having the most diverse membership of all the Baltic Popular Fronts) and form a political party in order to regain popularity were rejected. Most delegates feared that a new organization would only increase the political problems. They just hoped that the tide would turn for the better in 1991.

2.3.3. <u>Lithuania</u>

Brazauskas knew that time was running out. A November 1989 poll showed that 56% supported "an independent Communist Party with its own program and organization, without subordination to the CPSU".(71) The only way for the Communist Party to survive was to become independent from the all-Union party; this in itself was separatism.

At the Extraordinary 20th Congress of the LCP on December 20, 1989, Brazauskas insisted that he wanted a "a union of sovereign states" replacing, not breaking up, the Soviet Union. But this went clearly too far for the centrists, 135 of whom left both congress and party after a majority of 855 delegates voted for independence from the CPSU. The break-away group, that set up its own Central Committee led by Mykolas Burokevicus on December 22, consisted mainly of reformist centrists, quite different from the conservative centrists who dominated the Latvian party since April 1990.(72)

The declaration of party independence created a bomb-shell in Moscow. Unlike the largely symbolic declarations of sovereignty by the Baltic Soviets during 1989, this declaration directly challenged the monopoly of the CPSU, and gave teeth to the Lithuanian sovereignty declaration. After an emergency session of the CPSU Central Committee, Gorbachev and an advance team of CPSU-leaders decided to go to Lithuania, to start a dialogue with their like-minded but separatist colleagues as quickly as possible.

Gorbachev arrived in Vilnius on January 11, and made clear his opposition to secession: "We have been tied together for these fifty years, whether we like it or not; moreover, we have not lived in a federation. We have lived in a unitary state with its own realities."

Gorbachev correctly pointing out the reality of interdependence, but his dismissal of the official federal nature of the USSR was insensitive and incorrect. Gorbachev corrected himself later in the day, when he said that "we must grant sovereignty and delimit as much as possible the competence of the Union and of the republics in political terms. We must live together."(73)

Gorbachev's arguments cut little ice with the Lithuanians, primarily because they had already made their mind up. Gorbachev tried to regain the initiative as the reform leader, mentioning for the first time his support for a multi-party system. But he was unable to dissuade the LCP from their new independent strategy, and left Vilnius in a despondent mood. Essentially, he had failed to safeguard a moderate alliance with the Baltic reformists on common points.

The LCP's strategy seemed to work; according a new poll, it received 73% support, ahead of <u>Sajudis</u>' 65%. <u>Sajudis</u> became worried. Nevertheless, the strategic alliance was becoming closer: already three founding members of <u>Sajudis</u>, Kazimiera Prunskiene (a leading moderate), Romoldas Ozolas, and Bronius Genzelis, had joined the politburo of the CPL in December 1989.

But during the Supreme Soviet elections at the end of February, <u>Sajudis</u> received 99 out of the 133 seats for the candidates it supported, while Brazauskas' party won just 40 seats. Nevertheless, Brazauskas' strategy had saved the party for the time being; the Communist parties in the two other Baltic republics suffered more ignominious defeats.

Brazauskas graciously accepted his new junior partner role as one of the deputy prime ministers (the other deputy post was filled by Ozolas), next to Prunskiene as prime minister. Landsbergis was chosen as chairman of the new Supreme Council. The Lithuanian PF-CP alliance had strengthened, in the form of a government coalition. It thus was in a much stronger position vis-a-vis Moscow than the Baltic sister alliances (of which the Latvian disintegrated).(74)

On March 11, the Lithuanian parliament voted for the restoration of independence, and started immediately it. Gorbachev and the USSR prime minister gave an ultimatum on April 13, demanding the withdrawal of the independence declaration. After the deadline passed, Gorbachev imposed an economic blockade, cutting of coal supplies on April 28 among other things.(75)

Meanwhile, attempts at accommodation continued. Prunskiene and Brazauskas offered Gorbachev the following deal: the declaration of independence, being a historic act, cannot be withdrawn, but its implementation can be frozen and new measures suspended pending further negotiations. In return, Moscow had to lift the economic blockade and be ready to accept eventual independence, and negotiate on the practical matters of the 'divorce'.(76)

Gorbachev was ready to talk, and ready to accept the suspension proposal as an intermediary step reducing the tension. But he and his close colleagues were not ready to accept eventual independence, or the continued rejection of the Soviet Constitution by the March 11 declaration. Even when Prunskiene and her allies managed to put a moratorium on the application of the declaration at the end of June against Landsbergis' objections, a compromise with Moscow failed to materialize.

The fault lies mainly with Gorbachev. He should have accepted ultimate independence for the Baltics by the beginning of 1990, and negotiated for an incremental, managed secession. He could not and did not maintain the moral high-ground given the historic injustice of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. He could have built a new alliance with the Lithuanian reformists, as conservative and reactionary alliances at the all-Union level were not strong enough to prevent it at that time.

At the end of 1990, Gorbachev came under heavy pressure from a powerful bloc of reactionaries, lead by the Soyuz faction of 470 members in the Congress of People's Deputies. Gorbachev was forced to appoint hardliners Boriss Pugo as the Interior Minister and General Boris Gromov as his Deputy on December 2.(77) Gorbachev became too isolated to resist the reactionary pressure, as he failed to form any moderate alliance beyond his small group of "Gorbachevians".

2.4. The Year of Allying Dangerously

2.4.1. Estonia

Estonia escaped most of the reactionary-orchestrated backlash in January 1991, which was concentrated on Lithuania, the Baltic country farthest ahead in its bid for independence (see March 11 1990 declaration). All three Baltic nations received stern warnings on January 7 to comply with the USSR military draft laws or else. Though the Baltic governments jointly protested against the influx of troops in a Baltic Assembly declaration on January 8, each Baltic republic got a different treatment. Estonia remained calm on January 14, the day after the military attack on the television tower in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius, where 14 people died. In the Latvian capital of Riga, barricades were put up after an appeal of the PFL, but nothing happened.(78) On January 9 Defense Minister Jazov told prime minister Savisaar that no more airborne troops would be sent to Estonia, and that a joint commission would be set up to discuss the problems on the military draft. Stephen Foye comments that the Soviet authorities were applying divide-and-rule and carrot-and-stick tactics, in order "to frighten proponents of reform and, then, to offer them a compromise solution. It could also be interpreted as an effort to

undermine Baltic solidarity by isolating Lithuania."(79)

 The crisis gradually died down during February, without the Estonian government having made any large concessions to Gorbachev, let alone to the <u>Estonian Salvation Committee</u>, a shadowy organization supposed to take over power after Moscow would declare emergency rule. The PFE felt confident enough on January 31 to decide in the Supreme Council to hold a referendum (or 'poll') for independence on March 3, before the union-wide referendum on a renewed Soviet federation on March 17. Still, the PFE remained cautious: the referendum was non-binding, essentially an opinion poll with high legitimacy. The Estonian Supreme Council refused to participate with Gorbachev's March 17 referendum for a new Union Treaty, but did not try to stop it. On the first referendum, 78% out of the 83% of the voters who turned out said 'yes' to the question "do you want the state sovereignty of the Republic of Estonia to be restored?" Thus many non-ethnic Estonians must have voted 'yes' too.
 The PFE was able to act on its own, without a strategic alliance with other groups, except for the cooperation with the other Baltic governments. An alliance with the Independent Communist Party would have been difficult, because it refused to participate in both the March 3 and March 17 referendums. But it called for a "no"-vote for March 3, while its pro-Moscow CPE(CPSU platform) adversary urged for a boycott.(80) Early results of the March 17 referendum showed that a large majority of those who voted said 'yes', but the turnout was just 23%; Soviet law stated that the turnout must be at least 50% (though only a simple majority was needed, i.e. a total of just 26% of the total eligible population).(81)

 Despite these political triumphs, the PFE gradually slipped in the opinion polls. Apart from the economic troubles, the PFE was losing its strategic purpose. Independence was gradually becoming a reality, bringing contrasting visions, policy disagreements, and personal animosities between parliamentarians elected with PFE approval (while only half of them really supported its program) and the PFE-led government to the fore. On the Third Congress of the movement on April 13-14, Illar Hallaste, deputy to the Supreme Council <u>and</u> the Congress (overlapping membership), argued for maintenance of the mass movement, while Savisaar argued for a unified party. In the end, the meeting decided to maintain the old organization, partially because of fear that rival politicians would claim the Front's name and provoke an uncontrollable disintegration. The absence of both danger and strategic alliances (they tend to correlate) threatened to make the PFE superfluous.(82)

 Danger and strategic purpose returned when the coup attempt of August 19-21 was staged in Moscow. On August 20, as army columns were reportedly moving in on Tallinn, the Supreme Council declared immediate independence, ending the transition period declared on March 30. When the chips were down, the Congress of Estonia declared its support to protect independence, thereby creating a tactical alliance with the Supreme Council. The leaderships of PFE and ENIP decided on August 20 to share decisionmaking power in a <u>Constituent Assembly</u> to prepare a new Constitution. The draft was to be approved by referendum on November 15. For the first time, the two rival assemblies attempted to forge a <u>strategic</u> alliance. But after the coup had failed, differences on procedural and substantial matters resurfaced. The selection procedures for the Assembly delegates had not been worked out on August 20 (understandable, given the pressure), and notions on citizenship and thus eligibility differed widely between and within the two assemblies.
 PF-deputy Enn Leisson demanded in the beginning of September that the Constitutional Assembly should be replaced with a Supreme Council working group. Only after the draft was finalized, the Congress would have a say in an Assembly. According to Riina Kionka, Leisson's

attacks were politically motivated, as the PFE held only about a quarter of the Council seats, and thus would be in the minority in the Constituent Assembly (the declaration stated that the Congress and Council would select each half of the representatives).(83)

The dual assembly alliance survived, mainly because most PFE-politicians were ready to grant the Congress a share in decisionmaking, even if it lessened the domination the Popular Front had held since the Supreme Soviet elections of March 1990. The Constituent Assembly was established on September 6-7, when both the Council and the Congress chose their thirty delegates, and convened on September 13.

During September five first draft on independence were proposed. After heated debates the proposal by ENIP-member Juri Adams was adopted on October 11, which envisaged a strong parliamentary system (all the other four proposals favored a strong presidency), inspired on the pro-parliamentary 1920 constitution, as opposed to the pro-presidential 1938 one. The fear of some PFE-leaders, among them Leisson, that decisionmaking within the Constituent Assembly would shift power to the Congress was validated by this event. Especially President Ruutel's position had become tenuous, as his office would be diminished under the new Constitution.(84) Amazingly, the radical (now 'conservative') pre-war vision held by ENIP and the Congress had won out. At the end of 1991, the radical ENIP-led Congress was on the verge of becoming the senior partner in the strategic alliance of assemblies.

2.4.2. Latvia

Despite internal disagreements on the organizational future of the Latvian People's Front, its leader Romualds Razuks, elected in October 9-10 1990 at the Third Congress, ensured that the popular movement stayed united in January 1991. The situation was tense, with people setting up barricades in the streets of Riga, fearing similar Soviet army assaults on media and government buildings as in Vilnius.

As the PFL had no partner to form a strategic alliance with, closing the ranks against the crackdown in Lithuania's capital Vilnius on January 12-13 was an absolute must. This was all the more necessary, since the Supreme Council fractured along ethnic lines. The predominantly Russian and conservative Ravnopravie ("Equal Rights") faction, representing the International Front, walked out of the parliament in mid-January, demanding a new government coalition and the supremacy of USSR legislation. But the "Equal Rights" faction had only a minority in parliament, and the increasingly intransigent Interfront was alienating moderate Russians, who rescinded their membership. In the same way, most Russians refused to support the All-Latvian Salvation Committee, a shadowy reactionary organization who intended to take over power if Gorbachev was to impose Presidential Rule.(85)

The conservative-reactionary alliance between Ravnopravie and the Salvation Committee was short-lived; after the crisis died down, the conservative faction returned to the Latvian parliament in February, realizing that its walkout-tactic had backfired (it was repeatedly used in the previous months). The Ravnopravie-faction then denounced the SCL.

The "Equal Rights" faction decided to shift its strategy to negotiation: an interfaction bureau was formed, consisting of five of its deputies and five deputies of the majority PF faction. Though basic disagreements on language and other issues persisted, this parliamentary body represented a conservative-moderate-radical alliance. This unusual combination showed that alliance formation was the only viable route left to break the deadlock, if one ruled out the use of extra-parliamentary, extremist methods.

After Gorbachev simply refused to declare presidential rule in the Baltics (see Lithuania in this section), he concentrated on his referendum on the future of the USSR on March 17. But the turnout in Latvia was far below the minimum requirement of a 50% turnout of all registered voters. The Latvian government easily outmanoeuvred Moscow simply by holding its own referendum on independence on March 3. The referendum on March 3 asked "Do you support the Democratic and Independent Statehood of the Republic of Latvia?", and was answered positively by nearly 75% out of the 87% of Latvians who voted.

After this successful outcome, the Supreme Council confidently ruled on March 6 that the USSR referendum was invalid, as Latvia had legally become independent after March 3.

But the Supreme Soviet only formally restored the Democratic Republic of Latvia on August 21-22, at the time of the coup attempt in Moscow.(86)

The broad parliamentary alliance was severely strained when the question of citizenship came up in the latter half of 1991. Even a battle of competence developed between the PF-board and the Supreme Council. On October 3, the PF-board suggested to register all citizens, and single out those who were citizens in the interwar Republic. It held the legalistic view that only the latter had the right to approve any expansion of citizenship through a referendum. But the Supreme Council refused to be hamstrung by this proposal, at the insistence of the Ravnopravie faction. The PF-faction within parliament and the PF-leaders within the government wished to maintain the broad alliance with Ravnopravie.

When the Supreme Council started to draft a new law on citizenship on October 15, the move was severely criticized by LNIM and the broader Citizens' Committee, who sided with the PF-board. In contrast to the previous year, the CC directly challenged the legislative authority of the Supreme Council on an extraordinary meeting of the Congress on November 2. This realignment divided the entire parliament and government from the organizations they were supposed to represent; even deputies of the LNIM continued to side with the PF-faction, against the LNIM's wishes.(87)

This division brought the organizational future of the PFL back on the agenda on its Fourth Congress on November 15. First deputy chairman of the Supreme Council Dainis Ivans criticized the new alliance between the PFE-board and the Citizens' Committee and the consequent betrayal of the broad-based program of the Popular Front movement. He argued that a new political party must maintain the appeal of the center through a tighter organization. Razuks, leader of the PF-board, argued that a mass movement was still needed to keep political stability while steering the country toward de facto independence. Normal multi-party politics was premature, as it could undermine the unified front against Moscow.

The LPF was severely weakened by defections (both in parliament and organization) and declining membership at the grassroots level, when after the congress a rush developed to establish new political organizations. On November 25, the more 'conservative' PF-parliamentarians left and set up the Satversme ("Constitution") faction, wanting to stress the 1922 Constitution. And on December 7, the LNIM held a meeting to discuss the establishment of a new radical alliance, attended by the Liberal Party, the Green Party, and the Farmers' Union. The political party was replacing the mass movement as the main mobilizing organization. But nobody in Latvia was confident that the new political parties would be able to build stable strategic alliances in the post-Soviet period.(88)

2.4.3. Lithuania

Fourteen people were killed in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius on January 13, 1991, when

Soviet troops advanced toward the television tower with tanks to occupy it. The move to 'restore order' was ostensibly based on a January 13 deadline from Moscow to the Baltic governments to comply with the conscription of youth into the Soviet Army. Under reactionary pressure, Gorbachev resorted to intimidation, ordering airborne and "Black Beret" troops into the Baltic republics on January 7, to enforce the military draft.(89)

Shadowy National Salvation Committees sprang up in Latvia and Lithuania at the beginning of 1991, aiming to replace the Baltic governments (the Lithuanian one is indicated as 'LSC' in the Appendix, and the Latvian one as 'SCL'). Jonathan Aves points out that "it was significant that their members were chiefly drawn from the local 'conservative' Communist Parties and representatives of the Soviet military rather than the organisations that had attempted to mobilise the Russian-speaking population in 1989-90."(90)

The Lithuanian Salvation Committee (LSC), established on January 11, announced that it was taking control over the government and called for presidential rule. Gorbachev's demand to Lithuania to abide by the USSR constitution was the pretext to usurp power after the January 13 deadline. The members of the committee never appeared in public. Its only official spokesman Juozas Jermalavicus, ideology secretary of the pro-Moscow LCP, gave contradictory statements on January 15. In February, there were reports that Burokevicius, first secretary of the LCP (CPSU-platform) was one of the leaders of the LSC. These reports supported earlier suspicions that a secret reactionary alliance existed between the LSC, LCP, and Yedinstvo.(91)

Information on the extent to which Gorbachev was responsible for the crackdown in Vilnius is ambiguous. On the one hand, his harsh warnings and ultimatums in the beginning of January stimulated the hard-liners in Moscow to set up the SC's, expecting that Gorbachev would introduce presidential rule. On the other hand, one could dismiss this expectation as a misplaced belief. Soyuz-leader Alksnis said on January 25 that "we did everything that Gorbachev asked us to. Then presidential rule should have been imposed. But he betrayed us."(92) The most plausible hypothesis is that a reactionary alliance in the security services and the military-industrial complex misused Gorbachev's orders to create a fait accompli in the Baltics, claim the violence on separatist extremists, and force Gorbachev to declare presidential rule.(93)

The reactionary offensive in the Baltics foundered on Gorbachev's refusal to impose presidential rule. He stated repeatedly that whatever his disagreements with the Baltic governments (such as the legality of the independence declarations), they were democratically elected, and he would certainly not replace them with the Salvation Committees.(94)

The radical tendency of Sajudis made negotiations with Moscow difficult. The only heavyweight moderate who had access to Gorbachev was prime minister Prunskiene, who met him on January 8. But just hours later, when she returned to Vilnius, she and her whole cabinet resigned, at a very inopportune moment. The official reason was the government's decision the previous day to raise food prices by 220% on average. On January 5 Sajudis, the Independence Party, and the CHU declared their opposition to the price rises without sufficient compensation. But Prunskiene referred to the real reason, when she told the Supreme Council that she resigned because of "conceptual differences" between the cabinet and Landbergis and his radical supporters in parliament on how to respond to Moscow. Prunskiene favoured negotiations; Lansbergis favoured standing firm, fearing that any compromises with the Soviet leadership would endanger independence.(95)

Lithuania held its own nonbinding referendum on independence on February 9. The results were predictable: 90% out of the 85% of eligible voters who participated said 'yes'. This

outcome was higher than in the two other Baltic republics, partially because of the higher proportion of the ethnic Baltic population in Lithuania. The March 17 referendum organized by Gorbachev got the cold shoulder from the Sajudis-led government, and got a low turnout (less than 25% of the turnout on February 9).

Gorbachev denounced the Lithuanian poll on February 5 as being "without legal foundation", while the subsequent polls in Estonia and Latvia drew less stern responses from Moscow. The different treatment had to do with the more radical stance of Sajudis. On the polling date, Prunskiene criticized Sajudis for its refusal to negotiate with Moscow, but by then the moderates within the movement had been resoundingly beaten and marginalized.(96)

The deadlock provided reactionaries within the security services on the central and republican level with a new opportunity to take autonomous actions. OMON-troops of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs (the "black berets") burned down customs posts set up by Lithuania and Latvia in May; the continuing tensions culminated in the death of 8 Lithuanian border police on July 31.(97)

Like the Estonian Supreme Council, the Lithuanian Supreme Council refused to be intimidated on August 19, when Soviet troops occupied the media center in Vilnius (the same place where the deaths occurred on January 13). But unlike PFE and PFL, Sajudis did not seek any strategic alliance with other political groups. Instead, it relied on harsh countermeasures, such as prohibiting pro-Moscow newspapers on August 20. The Press Control Administration lifted the newspaper bans on August 23 and 24, rebuffing the government's overzealous steps. In contrast, the PFE adopted swift countermeasures on August 22 against those who explicitly supported the Moscow coup.(98)

Particularly Sajudis' attitude to the independent press was worrisome. On November 30, five major newspapers accused the government of nationalizing the press by implementing a November 7 Property law in such a way that it would nationalize all "LCP(CPSU)" property, including the papers it formerly owned but had become independent since. The government sought to find a compromise with the newspapers on December 2-5.(99) At best, Sajudis exhibited callous insensitivity to the press. At worst, the allegations were true, and the Sajudis-led government did aim for complete media control, thereby equating radicalism with authoritarianism. Sajudis was strong enough to do without a strategic alliance, but as the most radical Baltic Popular Front, it needed restraint by a moderate partner.

2.5. Conclusion

The patterns of radicalization and separatism in the Baltic republics were similar, though the specific ways in which the main political organizations radicalized differed somewhat.

The developments of the Baltic Communist Parties have differed more from each other than the Baltic Popular Fronts or other opposition movements. While the CPE remained staunchly reformist, moving only gradually to the radicals, the CPL (Latvia) swung from conservatism to reformism and back, and the LCP (Lithuania) radicalized faster than the PFE.

The Baltic CP's split between pro-USSR and pro-independence factions during the March 1990 elections for the Supreme Soviet. Because Brazauskas managed to hold the majority of the LCP together on a separatist agenda, the alliance with Sajudis continued until the beginning of 1991. The PF's became the senior partner in the alliances after the parliamentary elections (Lithuania), or became the sole government party (Latvia).(100)

These patterns are shown in Tables I.1 and I.2 in the Appendix, based on Figures 1.2 and 1.3 in Chapter 1.

The preliminary findings on the strategic alliances in the Baltics suggest several alternative scenario's of what could have happened. These scenario's are based on assessments of 'cliff-hanger' and other fluid situations from the Political Chaos perspective. They point to the structural opportunities that were used or discarded. The scenario's listed below are not mutually exclusive or exhaustive; combinations or sub-scenario's can be formulated.

1. <u>Confrontations between conservative CP's and radical (or moderate) PF's in he Baltics</u>
The initiative by Savisaar to set up the PFE in 1988 was supported by many reformists within the CPE. But the conservatives could realistically have won the internal powerstruggles within the CP's during 1988-1989. For instance, Brazauskas might never have been elected in December 1989 without the help of Gorbachev.(101) Then moderate strategic alliances with the PF's or any other independent groups would have been impossible. This scenario could also have occurred in Lithuania.

2. <u>Moderate-radical or radical strategic alliances between the Baltic Popular Fronts and the Citizen's Congress movements</u> (this can be combined with scenario 1)
In Estonia, such an alliance was formed prior to the August coup in 1991, while in Latvia an alliance between the CPL and the LCC was formed after the coup. The institutional alliances between the PF-led Councils and the radical Citizens' Congresses could have been more durable, because the following strategy was possible: the former would enact laws and negotiate with Moscow for eventual independence, while the Congresses would wait for a transitional period. As soon as independence were be reached, the Congresses would replace or merge with the Councils, or form a provisional assembly with the Councils and call for new elections.

3. <u>Grand moderate-radical alliances between the Baltic CP's, PF's, and CC's</u>
This scenario is a combination of the 'real' scenario that has actually occurred and the scenario described above. Such a broad alliance would have been even more difficult to break by the centrists on the republican and all-Union levels.

4. <u>Super conservative-moderate-radical alliances between the Baltic CP's PF's, CC's, and Interfronts</u>
This scenario is a more extreme and unlikely variant of scenario 3. Still, some broad (but brittle) alliances with the conservative Russian fronts were actually formed in January and August 1991, except with the Lithuanian <u>Edvinsto</u>. These alliances were mainly tactical, however, for common survival during crackdown episodes. The strategic basis of such an alliance would have been guarantees for the rights of local Russians and other ethnic minorities after independence. But a broad alliance would have been difficult, because most Russians in the Baltics were worried about the citizenship and language requirements proposed by the radicals within the Congress movements and the Popular Fronts.

The order of the scenario's is not based on any definite hierarchy of probability, even on the ordinal level (one possibility is more probable than another, but the observer cannot measure quantitatively by how much), though broader alliances between more political organizations are more difficult to reach, organize, and keep together - and therefore less probable. Assessing the likelihood of alternative pasts remains speculative.

But the research has clearly shown the <u>parameters</u> beyond which scenario's become improbable, even <u>unrealistic</u>. Both reactionary and extremist groups found no fertile ground in the Baltics. Scenario's encompassing them as successful alliances are unrealistic. Most Baltic separatist leaders realized that only peaceful means and moderate strategic alliances would secure independence.(102) Only the scenario of brutal and successful repression of the pro-independence movements and republicist Communist elites by Moscow could have prevented Baltic independence. Local reactionaries were by themselves unable to would have to suppress separatism, due to lack of local support.

CHAPTER 3. THE TRANSCAUCASUS: SUCCESSFUL ETHNONATIONALISM AND WEAK SEPARATISM BY EXTREMIST ANTAGONISTIC BLOCS

3.1. <u>1988: the Establishment of Nationalist Movements against the Wishes of Conservative-Reactionary Communist Elites</u>

3.1.1. <u>Armenia</u>

 The issue of Nagorno Karabagh stimulated Armenian nationalism, based on cultural and historical grievances. Unlike the Balts, the Armenians were not so much hurt in their pride by Soviet annexation. The two years of independence (1918-1920) were far too short to create a statist patriotism, i.e. the pride of belonging to an independent state.
 Nagorno Karabagh ("Mountainous Karabagh"), is a pocket of land in the middle of another Soviet Republic, Azerbaijan. It was mostly populated by Armenians, and had a long history of Christian Armenian culture, dating back to the 4th century. When the independent Armenian republic (1918-1920) was annexed by the Soviet Union, it was promised that Karabagh would be handed back. But it never came of it. From then on, Karabagh remained the only autonomous region within the USSR whose ethnic majority was separated from its national Soviet republic. Ethnic tension was compounded by religious animosity, as the Azerbaijanis were predominantly Muslim.(103)
 The Armenians had high expectations: they saw in Gorbachev's liberalizing policies of <u>Glasnost</u> and <u>Perestroika</u> a golden opportunity to push for the return of Nagorno Karabagh to Armenia. The <u>Armenian Movement for National Self-Determination (AMNSD)</u> was created by Paruir Hairikyan and other ex-dissidents in the autumn of 1987. Hairikyan orchestrated demonstrations in September and October 1987 on Nagorno Karabagh.
 Given this background, the huge demonstrations by Karabagh Armenians on February 13 1988 should have been expected by the Soviet leadership, as a petition signed by tens of thousands of them was sent to Moscow in January requesting a referendum on the issue. Paradoxically, the tens of thousands of Armenians who began to march in the Armenian capital Yerevan from February 20 sought enthusiastically support from Gorbachev. They carried portraits of the Soviet leader, while singing "Karabagh, Karabagh".(104) The Soviet of People's Deputies of the Nagorno Karabagh Oblast called for the transfer of the autonomous region to Armenia on the same day.
 Not Gorbachev, who as Soviet leader had to recogn with the sensitivities of the Azerbaijanis, but Armenian nationalists such as AMNSD-leader Hairikyan bore prime responsibility for the subsequent disenchantment. The <u>Karabagh Committee</u> (KC), set up by Vano Siradegyan and Levon Ter-Petrossyan in January, was the second main organization behind the demonstrations. They mobilized the people on short-term expectations, perhaps to gain popularity and authority that they would have otherwise lacked.(105)

 Gorbachev held an emergency meeting of the Central Committee on February 18, not only discuss the demonstrations in Armenia and Karabagh, but also to assess nationality problems in general. The Politburo decided not to hand Nagorno Karabagh back to Armenia, and representatives of the Central Committee were sent to Stepakanert (the capital of Karabagh) to bring the bad news. The local first secretary Boris Kevorkov, a Breznevite, was replaced by Henrik Poghosian (or 'Poghossyan'). At the end of March, the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers passed a resolution on addressing the socio-economic problems in Karabagh, but by then the Armenians had lost faith in Gorbachev.(106)

Gorbachev was constrained by two fundamental factors in his attempt to respond effectively to the crisis.

First, the Armenian and Azerbaijani politicians were unable or unwilling to negotiate among themselves. Gorbachev disliked the Armenian nationalists, who did not show the slightest inclination to negotiate with the Azerbaijanis, and just expected Moscow to ignore the latter by giving Karabagh back to them immediately. At a televised meeting of the Supreme Soviet's presidium on the Karabagh issue on July 18, Gorbachev tersely asked G.M. Voskanian, chairman of the Armenian Supreme Soviet: "What do you see as a compromise? I think we must find a decision that does not infringe on either the Armenian or the Azerbaijani people and does not put them in a situation in which it can be said that one side won while the other side was defeated."(107)

Unfortunately, the Armenians regarded this as an insult to Voskanian, who was a respected academic in his country. The new first secretary Harutiunyan (or 'Arututyunyan') of the ArCP, chosen in May, was one of the few Armenians at the meeting who offered concrete compromise solutions to defuse the crisis (such as putting Karabagh under the temporary juridistiction of a USSR or RFSR- authority). But nobody within the KC, the AMNSD, or any other radical movement offered a strategic alliance to the reformist.

On February 28, large scale riots broke out in the Azerbaijani town of Sumgait, where Armenians were attacked and at least 31 of them killed. Armenian nationalist leaders condemned Moscow for not labelling the attacks as "genocide".

Second, the conservatism of the Armenian Communist Party (ArCP) constrained Gorbachev.

The ArCP under first secretary Karen Demirchyan could even be called reactionary in its uncompromising stance against the Karabagh Committee and AMNSD. It did not really endorse Glasnost and Perestroika, or try to form a strategic alliance with any of the opposition movements.(108) The ArCP expelled AMNSD-leader Hairikyan on July 20, banning the Karabagh Committee at the same time, and deployed troops on the streets of Erevan by September 22 (including MVD troops of the USSR internal security ministry).

The response by the nationalists was equally harsh. Levon Ter-Petrossyan called for the formation of paramilitary units; Siradegian wanted to halt all negotiations, "and speak only from a position of strength given us by our unity"; and Samvel Georgisian said that "we must openly declare war".(109)

Antagonistic blocs were formed; radicals became extremists, moderates became conservatives, and conservatives became reactionaries. Almost all politicians within the main political organizations were polarized in the last few months of 1988. The leaders of the Karabagh Committee were arrested in December 1988 and January 1989 following the huge earthquake in Armenia on December 7, killing tens of thousands of people. Gorbachev reserved his strongest criticisms for the Karabagh Committee and sided with the republican Communist authorities, having given up on finding moderate solutions for the time being.

3.1.2. Azerbaijan

Azerbaijani nationalists did not accept the Armenian claim on Karabagh. Like in Armenia, the issue of secession from the USSR did play a less prominent role in the Baltic republics, given the short period of independence (1918-1920). Azerbaijani nationalism was reactive; it hardly existed prior to the demand by Karabagh Armenians to (re)unite with Armenia in February 1988. Azerbaijani nationalists were not yet able to establish strong Popular Front-like movements in 1988. They were only able to mobilize the people on a single issue: Nagorno

Karabagh. Mark Saroyan calls the dependency on a single explosive issue the "Karabagh syndrome": "the relentless insistence of the NKAO (Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Oblast) Armenians on self-determination repeatedly called for Azerbaijani reactions and made it difficult for the Azerbaijani movement to shift the focus of its activity and of popular Azerbaijani attitudes toward a more broad-based national emancipation, irrespective of the Karabagh crisis."(110)

This syndrome preempted the development of a mature civil society. The absence of strong civic groups on multiple issues radicalized and extremisized the Azerbaijanis even more profoundly than in Armenia and Georgia. The lethal riots in Sumgait in February was the Azerbaijni response to the unification demands by the Armenians, who were not yet resorting to violent means. From then on, communal violence increasingly became both a political tactic stimulating ethnic animosity, and a phenomenon of spontaneous ethnic hatred.(111)

A second factor that hampered the healthy development of independent associations and mass movements resistant to extremist tendencies, was the continued conservatism of the Azerbaijani Communist Party (AzCP). At a special Central Committee meeting in April, the conservative General Secretary Kamran Baghirov refused to go beyond improving the socio-economic conditions of the Armenians within the Karabagh Oblast. Baghirov was replaced by Abdulraham Vazirov in May. But Vazirov was hardly more reformist than his predecessor. He put his faith in an ill-fated strategy of "strengthening the role of the party" through relatively conservative measures like cadre renewal and streamlining the apparatus, as outlined in his speech at the 19th Party Conference of the CPSU in July. Vazirov rejected the compromise proposals on Karabagh by Armenian first secretary Harutiunyan at both the Party Conference and the meeting of the Supreme Soviet's Predium in July.

Vazirov's attempt to circumvent the Karabagh issue backfired. On November 17, Azerbaijanis demonstrated in Baku denouncing the AzCP's failure to keep control over Nagorno Karabagh (effective power was increasingly wielded by the Karabagh Committee, and to a lesser extent by the official local authorities under Armenian control). They also demanded that Moscow carried through its decision on July 18 to keep Nagorno Karabagh under Azerbaijan's jurisdiction.(112)

A death sentence on one of the perpetrators of the Sumgait killings in February by the USSR Supreme Court on November 21 fueled the anger. The handling of the Sumgait massacre by the Soviet authorities was bound to be seen as too lenient by Armenians if Azerbaijani sensitivities were taken into account, and as too harsh by Azerbaijanis if the authorities responded the other way round. Anti-Armenian violence broke out in several Azerbaijani cities, also in response to reports of anti-Azerbaijani violence in Armenia. Tens of thousands of Armenians and Azerbaijanis were already fleeing to each others' national Soviet republic.(113)

The November demonstrations proved to be the breeding ground for informal associations, and the first attempt to set up an Azerbaijni Popular Front (AzPF). But the AzCP's harsh response against the demonstrations put the idea of a Popular Front on hold. The AzCP imposed a state of emergency, arrested leading organizers who spoke to the crowds, and condemned their activism. Vazirov and his associates made no attempt to find accommodation, although few moderates could be found among the activists.

Militants were undeterred by the repression in November and December, as they saw how successful the demonstrations and hunger strikes had been in mobilizing the Azerbaijanis on the Karabagh issue. The clampdown only prevented them temporarily from setting up organizations to boost their intransigent cause - strict Azerbaijani control over Nagorno Karabagh no matter what the costs.(114)

3.1.3. <u>Georgia</u>

Ethnic conflict in Georgia appeared at first sight improbable, and unable to sidetrack statist separatism. Georgia had a seemingly stable demographic composition: 70 percent of the population were ethnic Georgians and only 5 percent were Abkhazians and Ossetians.
But interethnic relations were damaged by several historical factors.

First, Georgia had the strongest civic culture in the Transcaucasus and stronger opposition movements than Armenia and Azerbaijan. But this ironically contributed to ethnic animosity and violence that erupted in 1989. The most significant civic groups were born in the underground: the long history of nationalist agitation in the Soviet era prior to Gorbachev nurtured a radical, uncompromising culture. In the '70s and '80s, the backbone of the civic underground was provided by the <u>Georgian Helsinki Watch Group</u> (or Helsinki Union), led by Zviad Gamsakhurdia, son of the famous Georgian writer Konstantine Gamsakhurdia. Both his background and reputation as a dissident who already saw prison walls for the first time in 1956, were to become his trump cards in becoming a major politician after 1988.(115)
The strong civic organizations were also used by populists like Gamsakhurdia to mobilize the people on ethnic-nationalist causes. These politicians were able to operate in a political culture that was unused to moderation or accommodation. They were even able to damage the organizational development of the political organizations they led.
The activist culture, however, created a relatively strong urge for independence from Moscow. The short-lived Georgian Democratic Republic (March 1918-February 1921), unlike the Baltic Republics during the Interbellum, could not have nurtured a national independent-mindedness by itself.

Second, Soviet nationality policy had created the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic and the South Ossetian Autonomous Region, thereby giving the minorities "a territorial coherence to their claims (Aves)."(116) But the Abkhazians constituted in 1989 just 17.8 % (93,000) of the population within 'their' republic, while the ethnic Georgians made up 45.7% (240,000). In the South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast, just 60,000 Ossetians lived according the 1979 census. The very fact that these people were minorities within their own <u>national</u> territories strengthened their perception of being suppressed and discriminated. Ethnic relations were already spoilt in the '70s and '80s, as the local Communist elites dominated by the ethnic minorities ruthlessly suppressed Georgian dissident groups who fought for their rights.
In June 1988 58 Abkhaz communists sent a letter to the 19th Party Conference describing discriminations by the Georgians and demanding their region to be upgraded to a Union Republic. Thus local communists rather than (ex)dissidents started the ball rolling toward ethnic confrontations and secessionist aspirations, whether they were motivated by sincere grievances or cynically exploited those feelings to maintain their power. In November 1988 an initiative group within the Abkhazian Writer's Union prepared the foundation of "<u>Aidgylara</u>" (Popular Forum), the Abkhazian Popular Front.(117)

Finally, a conservative-reactionary Communist Party under first secretary Dzhumber Patiashvili (in power since 1985) hardly contributed to a mature civil society, a mature political culture, or mature relations between ethnic groups. The <u>Georgian Communist Party</u> (GCP) was unable to prevent the reestablishment of the Helsinki Watch Group as the <u>Helsinki Union</u> in May-June 1987 (the Armenian counterpart was reestablished around the same time), led by Gamsakhurdia and Merab Kostava. The second important association was the <u>Ilia Tchavtchavadze Society</u>.

They jointly addressed multiple issues, such as human rights and environmental pollution.

 In November, the first mass demonstrations were held in the capital Tbilisi, against the proposed amendments on the Soviet Constitution that would give the future Congress of People's Deputies de facto veto power over the right of secession (see section 2.2. on this matter). Radicals within the Tchavtchavadze Society made fully use of the demonstrations to gather adherents, and felt confident enough to split and set up the Ilia Tchavtchavadze - Fourth Group. The faction was led by Gamsakhurdia, Kostava, Giorgi Tchanturia, and Irakli Tsereteli. Personal animosities, clashes of ambition, and disagreements on tactics and strategies that soon broke out between these men. Already at the end of 1988, the "Fourth Group" broke up. Gamsakhurdia and Kostava formed the Society of Saint Ilia the Righteous (SSIR), Tsereteli formed the Georgian National Independence Party (GNIP) with Irakli Batiashvili, and Tchanturia established the Georgian National Democratic Party (GNDP).
 The tensions between them were born from the stubborness of their radicalism, which degenerated to extremism in the ensuiing years as the power of office went to their heads.(118) Thus none of them were able or willing to cooperate with each other, mainly because they were ex-dissidents who were not used to the politics of accommodation above the underground.

3.2. 1989: the Rise of Extremist Nationalism, Superseding Statist Separatism, and the Failure to Establish Strategic Alliances among the Communist Parties and the Opposition Movements

3.2.1. Armenia

 Moscow intervened by arresting the leading members of the Armenian Karabagh Committee, notably Ashot Manchurian in the beginning of January, 1989. Though the central government made use of the earthquake in December 1988 to declare martial law and uproot the nationalist movement. Gorbachev and his colleagues in the Politburo could not afford anarchy to develop unchecked. For the first time, they initiated a clear plan to contain the crisis: on January 12, a "special government administration" was established for Nagorno-Karabagh under Arkadiy Vol'skiy (Arkadi Volski), a troubleshooter for the region since July 1988. Government authority was transferred from Azerbaijan to this Special Administration Committee (SAC). This was a temporary measure pending a more lasting solution (if any was possible). The earlier policy of sticking to the status quo, keeping the Oblast under Azerbaijni rule, had only worsened the conflict.

 The Moscow initiative, the earthquake, and the arrest of its leaders, temporarily paralyzed the Karabagh Committee. But in April a report by the Karabagh Communist Party (mainly Armenian) chastised the SAC for collaborating with the Azerbaijani authorities.(119)
 On May 11, demonstrations began for the release of the KC-leaders. The Volski Commission sought to keep the situation under control by giving in to the protester's demands little by little, together with the officially subordinate Karabagh Supreme Council representing both Azerbaijanis and Armenians.(120) The most important concession was the freeing of 10 of the 11 members of the KC on May 31 (except Arkadi Manucharov).
 Some of the other concessions by the tentative SAC-NKGS(Nagorno-Karabagh Oblast Soviet)

alliance were the recognition of the 28 May anniversary of the Armenian republic (founded in 1918) as a national holiday, and the recognition of the red-blue-orange flag of the original Republic as a national flag (but not as the flag of Soviet Armenia).(121)

But whenever Volski sought to form a stable alliance, he was forced to approach either the Armenians or the Azerbaijanis, inevitably displeasing the other side. And whenever the SAC sought to remain neutral, it encountered deadlock, because the Armenian and Azerbaijani representatives within the Supreme Council(NGKS) could never agree on anything. The problem was that the nationalist extremists did not merely think of losses to the enemy, but to gains for themselves. A neutral body, that the SAC attempted to be, would withhold them their gains.

At the end of June, the Armenian Pan-National Movement (APNM) was established by some of the released KC-members, under the leadership of Levon Ter-Petrossyan. The local Karabagh government, predictably sympathetic, registered the new organization. The APNM was an umbrella organization containing numerous informal organizations, reminiscent of the Baltic Popular Fronts. The first secretary of the ArCP Suren Harutiunyan (chosen in May 1988) addressed the APNM's first Founding Congress in November, indicating an emerging alliance. At the congress, more than half of the delegates were in favour of full independence. But this percentage was low compared to the general consensus for independence within the Baltic Popular Fronts at that time (with the possible exception of PFE).(122)

The AMNSD, whose leader Hairikyan was only to return from exile in 1990, disliked the formation of the APNM. The AMNSD feared that its leading role as the Armenian nationalist movement would be undermined by the emerging APNM-NKGS-ArCP alliance (at the expense of SAC). The AMNSD had been the only major Armenian organization that called for independence in 1988. However, Karabagh was the main issue, superseding that of independence. Even when the AMNSD, in order to gain popular support, argued that secession was just a means to secure Karabagh, its "independence first, Karabagh later" idea failed to win many adherents.

The fact that the Armenians first looked to Gorbachev in 1988, indicates that they would have been satisfied to stay within the USSR if Karabagh was given back to them.

If Armenians were asked to choose between reuniting with Karabagh and seceding from the Soviet Union, and both options were to be mutually exclusive, most would have chosen the first option. The popularity of pan-nationalism (or pan-ethnism) rather than separatism indicated the deeply felt need for ethnic reunification rather than state independence. The Armenians suffered from the "Karabagh syndrome" too.

The Volski Commission became increasingly isolated by the strengthening PNM-NGKS alliance, and was unable to stop intrusions by the Azerbaijani authorities. The SAC finally gave up on November 28, handing governing authority over to Azerbaijan. Outraged, the Armenian Supreme Soviet declared a "United Republic of Armenia" on December 3, provoking violent actions by Azerbaijni militants. The whole cycle of violence started again. The year 1989 ended back on square one.

3.2.2. Azerbaijan

In Azerbaijan, officials were initially positive about the Special Administration Committee, established in mid-January 1989, perceiving it as a temporary arrangement. According to Suny, "de facto Azerbaijani sovereignty over Karabagh ended, even as the enclave remained within the Republic of Azerbaijan."(123) The Azerbaijani regime disliked losing effective control over

Nagorno Karabagh, but were at the same time satisfied (and relieved) that the local Armenian government was subordinated to the Volski Commission.

But the installation of the SAC did not deter radical politicians and intellectuals from forming an initiative group in March for an Azerbaijni Popular Front (AzPF). Abulfaz Aliev became the leader; other leading members were Etibar Mamedov and Leila Iunusova.

The moderates within the AzPF were marginalized by the absolute refusal of the AzCP to do business with the AzPF. There had been one attempt in April to forge an alliance between the AzPF and the AzCP, when Vazirov and other Party leaders met secretly with AzPF-representatives. But the negotiations failed, particularly because the AzCP refused to legalize the Popular Front, fearing that it would undermine the Communist Party's hegemony in the republic.(124)

The AzPF was a loose coalition between the intelligentsia and activists who thrived on the demonstrations during the last months of '88. The activists were generally more radical or extremist, and already condemned the Volski Commission when it was installed in the beginning of 1989. The movement was in permanent danger of fragmentation due to the rivalries between ambitious politicians. Saroyan remarks that the "APF's formation did not reflect an attempt to build a coalition between organizations that had already worked out their own respective programs and concerns regarding political, economic, cultural, or environmental issues."(125)

Due to its lack of organization, the AzPF had failed to gain durable support among the ordinary people and the intelligentsia in Baku by the time its held its founding congress in mid-July. The AzPF fell for the Karabagh Syndrome, because it was tempted to bolster its support among the Azerbaijani population by making use of the widespread anti-Armenian sentiment, fuelled by the bitter experiences of the tens of thousands of Azerbaijani refugees from Armenia and the NKAO.

Consequently, the core of the Popular Front's programme was nationalistic. It stated that the Azerbaijanis were "the dominant ethnic group in the republic", implicitly denying equal rights for Armenians and other ethnic minorities in both Azerbaijan and the Karabagh Oblast.

The programme was radical in its call for ethnic sovereignty for the Azerbaijani over the entire territory, while it was moderate in its call for republican sovereignty within the USSR. Sovereignty over natural resources was the only radical-statist and potentially separatist element in the programme.(126) Like the Armenians, the Azerbaijnis were not particularly interested in seceding from the Soviet Union; this aim was a lower priority than keeping Nagorno Karabagh. Secession would only become urgent as a means of ensuring ethnic-territorial union.

Strikes demanding legalization of the AzPF and reestablishment of Azerbaijni rule over Karabagh were organized in August and September. AzPF-leader (of the Executive Board) Abulfaz Aliyev even threatened full-scale rebellion if the demands were not met. The large railway strike and the blokkade of Armenia and Karabagh eventually forced the AzCP to give in to the AzPF's demands. The parliament fulfilled the AzPF's demands to dislodge the Volski Commission, and to start legislation on political and economic sovereignty; devolution of decisionmaking powers from the all-Union to the republican level had to ensure the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Continuing strikes forced the AzCP to legalize the AzPF on 6 October.

The relations between the CP and PF-leaderships remained hostile. Vazirov and his colleagues tried to turn their concessions into advantages. They might have expected, not without reason, that the Popular Front's legalization would expose the movement's organizational weakness. Also, Vazirov managed to water down the "Law for Sovereignty" within parliament, as the draft approved in late September called for a "sovereign socialist state" within the Soviet Union.(127)

Finally, the AzCP had lost its enthusiasm for Volski's SAC, which had progressively lost control to the APNM, the successor of the Karabagh Committee. The popular demand, championed by the AzPF, for SAC's removal presented a convenient opportunity to reassert control by the <u>communist</u> regime over the Oblast.

On November 28 the Special Administrative Committee was abolished by the USSR Supreme Soviet and Nagorno Karabagh was placed under full Azerbaijni control again, "for reasons that remain a mystery", according to Ronald Suny.(128) According to many Sovietologists, allowing the Volski Commission to muddle through was the better of two unsavoury choices.

Despite the clever tactical calculations, Vazirov made the strategic error of assuming that the weaknesses of the Popular Front would automatically entail strengths for the Communist Party. The AzPF was unable to end the strikes and the blockades, because it had no organizational control over the workers.(129) By the end of 1989 the authority of the Communist Party was in shatters, leaving a power vacuum in the republic.

Extremists made use of the chaos by increasing it. In late December crowds rampaged in Dzhalilabad and in the beginning of January 1990 militants took over in Lenkoran. In both instances, extremists merely used the name of the Popular Fronts to legitimize their attacks on the offices of the Communist Party and Internal Affairs in both cities. Their links to the AzPF were questionable; it was unclear whether they were actual members.(130)

Azerbaijan and Armenia seemed to have built a sort of doomsday machine when they entered 1990. Weak civil cultures and organizations with a Karabagh Syndrome, and ossified republican elites trying to suppress radicals and extremists, made a combustible mix for ethnic violence.

3.2.3. <u>Georgia</u>

On 19 March 1989, leaders of <u>Aidgylara</u> and members of the regional CP committee met in Lykhny, a village near the Abkhazian capital Sukhumi. This was a conservative-radical alliance with extremist tendencies. They drafted a petition demanding the restoration of Abkhazia as a full Union Republic, as it existed between February 1921 and April 1930. The petition was signed by 30,000 people, including 5,000 Russians, Greeks, Armenians, and Georgians. If the demand were met by Moscow, it would mean secession from Georgia.(131)

Elizabeth Fuller observed that "this demand outraged Georgian public opinion and was one of the issues behind the hunger strike and demonstrations in Tblisi that culminated in the violence on 9 April 1989 in which nineteen unarmed Georgian demonstrators were killed by Soviet Army and MVD troops."(132)

The Soviet Army, MVD troops, and paratroopers were utterly ruthless in the use of tanks, personnel carriers, and field shovels by Afghan veterans against civilians. On April 10, martial law was declared in Tblisi and Gamsakhurdia, Kostava, Tchanturia, Tsereteli, and other opposition leaders were arrested.

But the Georgian opposition groups also bear a major responsibility for letting the events spin out of control. Their politics was typical radicalism degenerating toward extremism. Their heavy dependence on demonstrations and hunger strikes to fuel popular anger were typical tactics Paul Goble warned against. An intolerant attitude was created by confrontational politics and vice versa (a feedback-loop). Georgian students at Sukhumi University, for instance, demanded that the Abkhazian officials who participated in the March 19 petition be punished.

However, General Secretary Patiashvili bore <u>direct</u> responsibility for the killings on 9 April, by

his ill-fated attempt to restore GCP's dominance by old-fashioned repression. He refused to address the demonstrations, and sent on April 7 a telegram to the Politburo claiming that the rallies were going out of control and asking for permission to impose martial. At that time Gorbachev and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze were abroad. The reactionary conservatives Yegor Ligachev and KGB-head Victor Chebrikov decided to dispatch troops to Tblisi.(133)

Gorbachev was wise enough to send Eduard Shevardnadze, the former general secretary of the GCP, to Tblisi to calm the Georgian people and intervene in the GCP. On April 14, Patiashvili was replaced by Givi Gumbaridze, an ally of Shevardnadze.

However, the GCP and the CPSU were completely discredited among the Georgian population after the Tblisi massacre, despite Shevardnadze's successful diplomacy.(134)

As a result, separatism grew strong in Georgia, unlike in Armenia and Azerbaijan. There had been earlier separatist manifestations, such as the anniversary demonstration of the Soviet annexation of the Georgian Republic in 1921 during February. But now separatism was fueled by the new hatred against Moscow and the republican elite.

Gumbaridze sought to redeem his party's credibility and power by pursuing two fundamental but contrasting strategies: defeating the opposition forces by taking the initiative on the main issues, and forging a moderate strategic alliance (in loose cooperation) with them by giving in to their demands. Ironically, the first confrontational strategy was wise, because it was based on policy initiatives rather than zero-sum politics. The second giving-in-to-demands strategy was unwise, because Gumbaridze attempted to forge a tacit alliance with nationalist movements by giving in to their nationalist demands. For instance, Gumbaridze gave in to the demand by Georgian radicals to replace the Georgian branch of the Abkhaz State University in Sukhumi by a branch of Tblisi State University. The measure, officially intended to provide better services to Georgian students, was clearly designed to insult the Abkhazians.

It sparked off interethnic violence on July 15, that continued for two weeks; twenty-one people died.(135)   Gumbaridze forgot that a strategic alliance should be based on common goals, methods, and principles.

Other actions undertaken by Gumbaridze were sensitive and necessary for his second strategy: the release of opposition leaders jailed by his predecessor, and the granting of media access by the summer. Gamsakhurdia participated in discusions about future legislation, particularly on expanding sovereignty. Slider remarks that "Gumbaridze won the grudging respect of several opposition leaders who dealt with him on a regular basis."(136)

But a sole mistake or blunder and especially a repetitive strategic error by an otherwise clever politician can undo all his or her previous efforts. Gumbaridze repeated his error in late August, when the government decided to force Ossetians to speak Georgian by making it the only official language in the South Ossetian Oblast. Only 14 percent of the Ossetians could speak Georgian. The Ossetian Popular Front Adaemon Nykhas (founded in January) appealed to Moscow to override the measure, and called for unification with the North Ossetian ASSR in the RSFSR (Russia).(137)

It was Gamsakhurdia who was the real powerbroker. He unexpectedly appeared before GPF's July founding congress to push through the election of Nodar Natadze as chairman of the GPF.(138)   One could almost speak of intimidation. Ironically, Natadze became one of Gamsakhurdia's enemies.

It was Gamsakhurdia and others who fractured the radical Main Committee for National Salvation (formed by jailed opposition leaders in April) in the beginning of November. The Committee became divided between moderates and radicals. The split within the MCNS was significant, because it divided those who put priority to republican independence and those who

put emphasis on Georgian nationalism. Tchanturia, leader of the <u>Georgian National Democratic Party</u> (GNDP) was the leading proponent of the first group, Gamsakhurdia of the second. Tchanturia warned against an 'Ethnic Syndrome', i.e against ethnic conflicts with Ossetians and Abkhazians dominating the political agenda.(139)

The republicist group appeared to get the upper hand: the Georgian parliament concluded in November that the 1920 treaty establishing Georgian independence was violated by the Soviet annexation in 1921. The declaration implied that future independence was legally justified. Republicist separatism became a much stronger force in Georgia than in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

3.3. <u>1990: the Marginalization and Disintegration of Moderate Alliances against Powerful (Electoral) Blocs of Radicals and Extremists, especially in Azerbaijan and Georgia</u>

3.3.1. <u>Armenia</u>

The decision by the USSR Supreme Soviet to replace the Special Administration Committee in November 1989 by an Organizational Committee - that became dominated by Azerbaijni officials - predictably outraged the Armenians. The Armenian parliament declared on 20 February 1990 that the decision of 5 July 1921 to keep Nagorno Karabagh under Soviet Azerbaijan was illegal. To Moscow's credit, it inserted detailed conditions to safeguard the rights of the Armenians in Nagorno Karabagh, such as equal Armenian and Azerbaijani representation on the new committee. But since Moscow had no stick to wield after the abolishment of the relatively moderate SAC (massive intervention and repression was not considered practicable or desirable at the time), the Presidium of the Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet was able to reject these conditions as unconstitutional.(140)

Extremists determined the events, as radicals and moderates were unable or unwilling to form strategic alliances to offer an alternative to violence; incidents along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border killed at least ten people. Weapons were stolen from military depots by shadowy paramilitary groups established in January, such as the <u>Armenian National Army</u>.

Developments within the ArCP were worrisome as well. On April 6, Suren Harutiunyan was removed from his general secretary post. Maybe he was a suitable scapegoat for the worsening violence. But his successor Vladimir Migranovich Movsisyan was a conservative, a representative of the Breshnev era and the corrupt Demirchyan regime prior to Harutiunyan. How could such a politician deal with the ethnic conflict any better than his predecessor? The moderate nationalist Harutiunyan, who supported the unification of Nagorno Karabagh, would have had a better chance to defeat APNM-chairman Levon ter-Petrossyan during the Supreme Soviet elections in May.(141)

Frustration about the ArCP (there were reports of intimidation against opposition candidates) and the 'loss' of Karabagh brought apathy and a low turnout at the Supreme Soviet elections on May 20. Just 46% of eligible voters participated. Before the next rounds were held, violence erupted in Erevan on May 27-28 between Soviet troops and extremists; 24 people died. The next electoral rounds on June 3 and July 15 gave no clear winner, though the non-communist deputies formed together a majority in parliament.(142)

Ter-Petrossyan tried to form an alliance with reform-minded centrists. During the first session of the new republican Soviet on July 20, he called for accommodation with Moscow: "We must

look upon Gorbachev as a partner, with whom we have to work out mutually acceptable solutions, but in no circumstances as an opponent."(143)

 Ter-Petrossyan had become moderate on pan-nationalism as well, unlike his activist days in 1988 and 1989. He opposed radicalist-extremist groups who called for immediate secession from the USSR and retaking territory lost to Turkey after World War I. Indeed, "Ter-Petrossyan's priority was to neutralize the unofficial paramilitary groups (E. Fuller)", an aim that had broad support among ArCP's conservatives and moderates, and among many radicals within his APNM.(144) This aim he had in common with Gorbachev, who demanded on July 25 that the informal paramilitaries had to be disarmed and disbanded within two weeks.

 His moderation and pragmatism helped him to win the contest within parliament for president (i.e. chairman of the Supreme Soviet) against ArCP-leader Movsisyan in the beginning of August.(145)

 But a moderate strategic alliance with reformist-centrists in Moscow did not materialize, mainly because Ter-Petrossyan embarked upon a rapid program of secessionist legislation. Ter-Petrossyan needed to concentrate on the issue of secession from the USSR as the best substitute to channel heated emotions, since Azerbaijan retained full control over Nagorno Karabagh.

 In late August, the new Supreme Soviet adopted a Declaration of Independence to begin "a process of affirmation of independent sovereignty." When Ter-Petrossyan managed to keep out any explicit call for recovery of land form Turkey, he was accused of betraying the PNM's pan-national causes. A pan-Armenian crusade involving Turkey would have had far more explosive consequences than the Karabagh issue already was. Ter-Petrossyan almost single-handedly put national independence on the top of the political agenda in 1990.

 Instead of accepting a junior partner role in a strategic alliance with the APNM, the ArCP used the last months of 1990 to attack Ter-Petrossyan's government. But during the first stage of the Party Congress in late September, a small group of moderate separatists called for republican independence of the Party from the CPSU. In late October the Congress finally adopted a resolution stating that "the Communist Party of Armenia should be an independent party with its own Program and statutes". At the same congress Movsisyan was replaced by the historian Stepan Pogosyan.(146)

 More worrying for Ter-Petrossyan was Hairikyan's return from exile in November (he was elected as a deputy of parliament from exile in May). Haririkyan's AMNSD resembled the radical Congress movements in the Baltics, as it had called since its foundation for secession from the USSR through a referendum, outside official Soviet channels and institutions. But the AMNSD was far more radical than its Baltic sister movements: while the movement was ostensibly statist-separatist, its real core had become pan-nationalism. It called for annexation of Turkish territory and Nakhichevan (an enclave of Azerbaijan) as they supposedly belonged to the Armenian people. The AMNSD formed an alliance with the Republican Party of Armenia (a political organization that split from the AMNSD in 1989) in December, and began to apply violent methods. When the alliance occupied buildings of the ArCP in Erevan, it became clear that Hairikyan and his supporters were willing to apply extreme means to challenge the Ter-Petrossyan government in the future.(147)

3.3.2. Azerbaijan

 When the Azerbaijni Supreme Soviet succeeded in filling the new Organizational Committee with Azerbaijni officials, one would expect that the violence within Azerbaijan would die down. The radicals and extremists got what they wanted: retaining rule over Nagorno Karabagh. But

the ruler was the Communist Party under Vazirov, who had failed to halt its delegitimization in 1989. The AzPF was still too weak to replace the AzCP as a credible governing elite. Thus extremists had a fertile and open field to play on.

On January 13, a horrible climax in the violence was reached when Azerbaijanis went after Armenian inhabitants in Baku and killed at least 25 of them. Pogroms chased Armenians from their homes, and their belongings were taken or destroyed. The culprits were militants (especially embittered refugees), who parted from a large demonstration organized by the Popular Front and led the pogroms that continued for several days.(148)

Moscow decided to intervene militarily on January 14. Soviet troops only entered the city on January 19-20 to suppress the AzPF, whereby at least 60 Azerbaijnis were killed (the final death count varied between 125 and 150).(149)

Even if Moscow's real intention was to prop up the Vezirov regime, moderates within the Popular Front behaved unethically as well by downplaying the Armenian deaths, and refusing to comment on the role of the extremists within the AzPF. At a mass funeral of 60 Azerbaini victims of the Soviet intervention (many of them innocent bystanders) on January 22, nothing was said about the Armenian victims. The Azerbaijanis exhibited nationalist selectivity in their moral outrage. Moreover, Abulfaz Aliyev, Panakhov, and other leaders of the AzPF tried to cover up the involvement of many of the movement's members in the violent coup attempt in mid-January, when armed militants were on the verge of storming party and government buildings.(150) The Social Democratic Group, probably the only reasonable moderate faction within the AzPF, finally decided to leave and set up the Social Democratic Party in May. The January massacres in Baku were the final drops in the bucket for these moderates.

The army intervention and the state of emergency declared on January 15 (also for Karabagh) saved the AzCP for the time being. However, the reformist Vazirov was replaced as first secretary by prime minister Ayaz Mutallibov on January 24. The long-term prospects for the AzCP remained grim because of the widespread anti-communist mood since 100,000 of the 380,000 party members burned their party cards during the anti-Armenian pogroms and the Soviet intervention. Extreme nationalists had succeeded in combining anti-Armenianism with anti-Communism, in order to gain power in the future.

Nevertheless, Mutallibov tried to rebuild the authority of the AzCP by pursuing the nationalist line of his predecessor, while being more cautious on economic autonomy, political sovereignty, and eventual secession from the USSR. This way he could improve relations with Moscow and keep the Soviet troops present as long as possible (contrary to AzCP's public demands for their withdrawal). In May the AzCP allowed the AzPF and other informal organizations to resurface. But talks between the AzCP, AzPF, and other groups failed to improve relations or reach any common ground on issues.

Failing to form any alliances, Mutallibov intended to maintain AzCP's monopoly on power. In late June he decided to hold elections for the Supreme Soviet as soon as possible, to increase the chances for the AzCP to win with the advantage of its party apparatus. But he underestimated the opposition groups. A huge coalition of 57 groups called the Democratic Forum, including many small cultural and ecological associations, was formed. Given their fragmentation and organizational weaknesses, these opposition groups realized that a broad strategic alliance was essential to have any chance in the elections. The Democratic Forum was able to put pressure on the AzCP and delay the elections until September 30.

Nevertheless, Mutallibov's party won handily in the first round of voting; of the 240 out of 350 contested seats receiving a clear majority, only 10-15 seats were won by "informals". After the second and third rounds on October 14 and December 16, the AzPF had only 40 seats in the 350

seat-parliament.(151)

According to Fuller, many Azerbaijanis held the AzPF responsible for the January violence.(152) Several other factors might have contributed to the resounding defeat of the opposition groups within Democratic Forum. The AzCP firmly controlled the media, and only sporadically allowed the opposition access to it. And the Democratic Forum, potentially the real Popular Front (qua umbrella organization and broad range of member organizations), was still in its infancy. The member organizations remained individually weak as well. The moderate Social Democratic Group (or Party), for instance, had only 800 full members and 1200 candidate members by September.(153) Finally, many Azerbaijnis were probably intimidated by the Soviet-led crackdown in January, and by Mutallibov's authoritarian rule. A vote on the AzPF, or on the DF in general, was considered risky.

Now a conservative communist regime in Azerbaijan faced a non-communist regime in Armenia, led by a moderated Popular Front-like movement. This made the future developments on independence and Nagorno Karabagh less predictable.

3.3.3. Georgia

Gamsakhurdia had to defeat several political opponents, each leader of a political organization, before he could obtain power.

The first main opponent, General Secretary Gumbaridze, undermined himself by continuing his ill-fated giving-in-to-demands policy instead of taking the initiative. A huge demonstration on March 8 1990, for instance, demanded that the government formally condemn the annexation of the republic by the Soviet Union. The Supreme Soviet gave in to this demand the following day. Gumbaridze could easily have outflanked the radicals by openly condemning the Soviet annexation in November 1989, when the parliament concluded that the annexation of Georgia in 1921 was illegal (see previous section).

The second main opponent, GPF-leader Nadar Natadze, attempted to defeat Gamsakhurdia and other politicians on a March 13 conference of radical organizations discussing whether to participate in the coming Supreme Soviet elections, or to organize alternative elections for a National Congress. Natadze defended the strategy of the more moderate Baltic Popular Fronts to participate in Soviet elections, and gain independence through Soviet institutions.

But GNDP-leader Tchanturia, Gamsakhurdia's third and most dangerous opponent, fiercely opposed this plan, favouring the Baltic Congress model. On the second day, Gamsakhurdia sided with Tchanturia, calculating that a confrontation with the GCP was more beneficial. When GNIP-leader Irakli Tsereteli joined the other two in a tentative alliance, the GPF was isolated and defeated. The GNDP-GNIP-SSIR alliance was tactical in nature: the only common goal was to stick together uptill the Congress elections, and defeat the other political organizations.

A National Forum was set up to organize the Congress elections. But the GPF calculated correctly that the ambitious leaders within the radical alliance would not stay together for long. The announcement by GPF-representative Nodar Tsuleishvili that the movement would urge the GCP to delay the Supreme Soviet elections until the end of October was a smart move in this context. The GCP, with a "muffled sigh of relief (Aves)", followed the request on 20 March in the Supreme Soviet. If the elections would have continued on the original date (March 25), most radical organizations would have boycotted them , seriously undermining the Supreme Soviet's legitimacy. Now a tacit alliance existed between the GCP and GPF, because they had a common goal: to make the elections a success and attain sovereignty and independence in a Soviet-made parliament.(154)

The Popular Front's strategy proved successful; the Congress alliance disintegrated when

Gamsakhurdia left the National Forum in the middle of May, because some of his supporters were shot at. But Jonathan Aves points to the real (more fundamental) reason of the split: Gamsakhurdia "had been increasingly isolated in the Forum as Tsereteli had gradually moved into a firmer alliance with Tchanturia."(155)

However, a strong GCP-GPF alliance never came off the ground because of two reasons. First, the GCP's authority remained weak; Gumbaridze's attempts to push through reforms foundered on strong resistance by conservatives. The crucial Party Congress intended to rescind the Party's leading role by amending the party statutes and republican constitution in May, was postponed until after the parliamentary elections. Therefore, an unreformed Communist Party had to compete with opposition groups for parliamentary seats. This damaged the moderate alliance, because amendment of the election law for genuinely democratic elections was the second crucial precondition by the GPF for the alliance, next to postponement of the elections.(156)
Second, Gamskhurdia formed a new radical alliance in the same month called the Round Table, between his SSIR (now headed by Tedo Paatshvili), the Monarchist-Conservative Party (MCP), and the Merab Kostava Society (MKS) lead by Vazha Adamia.(157) Gamsakhurdia made an astounding u-turn by his decision to found and lead the Round Table as an electoral bloc in the Supreme Soviet elections (he had allied himself with radical organizations who favoured this course). The Round Table took credit for demanding democratic elections, while the GPF had urged the GCP to amend the election law months earlier.
The GCP attempted to postpone discussion of the new election law until after the October elections. At the end of July, the Round Table responded by organizing a railway strike. When Moscow refused to side with Gumbaridze on a crackdown, he was forced to back down. This clumsy manoeuvre discredited the Party even further, and further weakened the alliance with the GPF. According to Aves, it convinced "a large section of Georgian public opinion that only Gamsakhurdia could force the Communist Party to give up power."(158)

Meanwhile, Tchanturia and Tsereteli were worried about the successes of the Round Table-alliance. Their National Forum-alliance (including six main groups) succeeded in holding elections for the National Congress on 30 September, a month before the elections for the Supreme Soviet. But the turnout was disappointing, even dangerously low because the Forum had announced in advance that more than 50% of the electorate had to participate to make the Congress legitimate. This high criterion put the National Forum into a tight spot; it kept the ballot boxes open on October 1 and October 14 to meet the threshold. In the end, the NF claimed a turnout of 50.88%, a heavily disputed figure. The GNIP led by Tsereteli won 35.6% of the votes, the GNDP headed by Tchanturia got 32.6%, and the liberal Democratic Georgia received 18%.(159)
The defeated National Forum was at first sight more radical a Congress movement. But it had been willing to listen to the Abkhazian Popular Forum and the Ossetian Popular Shrine, unlike the Round Table. A May conference of the NF had allowed representatives of the Abkhazian and Ossetian PFs to speak. The philosopher Merab Mamardashvili and other former PF-activists who founded the moderate Democratic Georgia, encouraged this beginning of a dialogue.(160) Gamsakhurdia, in contrast, demanded in June that only voters with a positive test on Georgian language could vote - a proposal that luckily was not included in the new election law. Gamskahurdia benefited from his intolerant stance in the Supreme Soviet elections.(161)
Gamsakhurdia's Round Table/Free Georgia coalition was a powerful electoral bloc, to which the fledgling alliance between the GCP and GPF paled in comparison.(162) The first round of the parliamentary elections on October 28 gave Round Table/Free Georgia 54.3% of the vote,

and the Communist Party 29.4%. After the second round on November 11, Gamsakhurdia's bloc got 155 of the 250 seats (62%). The GCP won 95 seats (37%). Of the remaining two seats, one was won by Valerian Advadze, leader of the moderate Conciliation, Peace and Renewal bloc; the other seat went to Eldar Shengalia of Democratic Georgia.(163)

The outcomes of the Congress and Soviet elections marginalized the moderate political groups in Georgia. They were marginalized further by a disturbing trend in the competition between political organizations: intimidatory violence. On September 19, the headquarters of the GNIP were firebombed; in the beginning of October, two of Gamsakhurdia's bodyguards were killed; on October 26, Tchanturia was wounded by attackers. Some observers asserted that the rival organisations were using shady paramilitary groups to attack and terrorize each other. Fact is that Jaba Ioseliani, leader of the paramilitary Mkhedrioni (Warriors) fiercely opposed Gamsakhurdia. When DG-leader Mamardashvili died of a heart attack when he was harassed by Round Table-supporters after Gamsakhurdia's election victory, it seemed as if the politics of reason and accommodation died in an avalanche of extremist politics of intimidation.(164)

3.4. 1991: Diverging Developments in the Transcaucasus: Pragmatic Politics in Armenia, Conservative Politics in Azerbaijan, and Confrontational Politics in Georgia between Antagonistic Alliances

3.4.1. Armenia

Levon-Ter Petrossyan continued to be attacked by both the ArCP and the AMNSD on his policies of moderate nationalism and improving relations with Turkey in the beginning of 1991. But APNM's opponents were too fragmented to pose an immediate threat. Particularly the centrist and separatist tendencies could not be combined, as Fuller points out:

"Given that the Union for National Self-Determination [AMNSD] is pushing for immediate secession, while the Armenian Communist Party still considers the existence of Armenia outside the USSR "unthinkable", a tactical alliance between these two parties can be ruled out (emphasis my own)."(165)

The ArCP under the new and more centrist leader Stepan Pogosyan (who replaced Movisyan in the second stage of the Party Congress in late November 1990) was put in an awkard position, because it opportunistically hailed the Hay Tad (the Armenian Cause), the recovering of all territories lost to Turkey since the 1915 genocide. It would be quite difficult to combine continued membership in the Soviet Union with expansionism outside the USSR's borders. The last thing Moscow wanted was a war with Turkey.

On March 1, the Armenian Supreme Soviet, like the Georgian and Baltic parliaments, decided to boycott the all-Union referendum on March 17. Apparently, only some CP-deputies voted for the referendum to proceed. On March 17, just 5000 construction workers in Spitak were known to participate in the all-Union referendum.(166)

But unlike any other republic, Armenia also decided to hold a referendum on secession on September 21. Fuller remarks that "Armenia was unique among the union republics in its determination to abide strictly by the rules in its campaign to secede from the Soviet Union" (see the two-thirds majority requirement of eligible voters in the Law on the Mechanics of Secession).(167) Ter-Petrossyan intended to beat Gorbachev at this own game, confident that sufficient majority of Armenians would vote for independence. He said in mid-April that "as long as people see we are pursuing a realistic policy, they will remain on our side".(168)

The Armenian president and his APNM-led government managed to face off extremist challenges as well. The provocative actions by the AMNSD-ARP alliance (such as dirupting the February 20 anniversary of the campaign for Nagorno Karabagh) were reprimanded by the parliament on March 19, as it threatened to overturn the registration of AMNSD if it continued its "illegal actions that serve to destabilize the situation in the republic".(169)

The APNM stuck to its moderate policies even when the conflict over Nagorno Karabagh picked up steam again in the subsequent months. MVD troops and Azerbaijani OMON troops began to deport Armenians from Karabagh during May, June, and July. Nevertheless, Ter-Petrossyan "told a Western journalist in July that he would settle for a compromise that restored the powers of the local soviets [in Karabagh]".(170)

In the end, Ter-Petrossyan's position was endangered most by his own actions during the August coup. On August 19, he called for "maximum restraint and caution, [and] avoid any hasty value judgments" at an emergency meeting of the parliament's Presidium.

Ter-Petrossyan did not support the coup by the Emergency Committee in Moscow, but unlike the leaders of the Baltic governments and the Russian president Jeltsin, he was not ready to condemn or oppose the coup openly. It had to do with courage; the Baltic republics had at least as much to loose as Armenia if the coup was to succeed.

Ter-Petrossyan obviously had lost his nerve when he vacillated on the crucial issues of secession, independence, and the fate of the Soviet Union. On August 22, he stated that Armenia had to secede, because a future Soviet leadership could easily be a "neo-Fascist" one. Several days later, when Ter-Petrossyan feared a too rapid disintegration of the USSR, he proposed some sort of political union with the RSFSR. On August 28, he proposed before the USSR Supreme Soviet a "commonwealth along the lines of the European Community". His opponents naturally accused Ter-Petrossyan of collaboration, cowardness, inconsistency, and opportunism.(171)

After the successful September 21 referendum, Ter-Petrossyan regained his composure.

On September 23, the Russian president Boris Jeltsin and Kazach president Nursultan Nazarbaev, mediators for a peace agreement on Nagorno Karabagh, met with leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Karabagh in Zheleznovodsk (Russia). Amazingly, Armenia "agreed to renounce any further territorial claim to Nagorno-Karabakh (Fuller)", in return for democratic elections in the NKAO for the local soviets, amounting to autonomy.(172)

Armenia had made far more fundamental concessions than Azerbaijan. It is astounding that the APNM was ready to reverse its unification policy, the backbone of the movement's programme and popularity in previous years. In contrast, the AMNSD had radicalized to the point of extremism, moving away from its relatively statist-separatist origin.

But the peace agreement was on thin ice; the ceasefire after September 23 was ignored by armed extremists, killing at least seven people in Nagorno Karabagh. The AzPF started demonstrations in Baku against the peace agreement - despite the fact that it only marginally differed from the status quo prior to 1988.(173)

Armenia declared itself independent in September, just before the Soviet Union was officially disbanded in December due to the initiative by the Slavic republics (Russia, Ukraine, and Belorussia) to create a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). But the newfound independence did all but ensure the successful ending of the Karabagh conflict in the post-Soviet era.

3.4.2. Azerbaijan

 Once the position of the AzCP was secured by the Supreme Soviet elections in 1990, Mutallibov concentrated on attaining political stability, ready to cooperate with other political organizations. But his decision to participate in the all-Union referendum on March 17 estranged even the more moderate members of the AzPF. When the question of the referendum was kept away from the agenda of the Supreme Soviet on February 6, around 40 deputies of the AzPF and the Democratic Bloc walked out. Mutallibov was all but an ardent centrist (though he was more centrist than his Georgian and Armenian colleagues), and the backlash from the opposition made him have second thoughts. In early March he remarked that "if the situation is aggravated [in the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabagkh] we could obtain a referendum result that everyone might later regret."(174) He feared that a majority of Azerbaijanis would vote against the new Union treaty.
 Nevertheless, the Azerbaijani parliament finally decided on March 7 to proceed with the all-Union referendum. This contrasted the decisions made by the Armenian and Georgian parliaments, because the AzCP had won the parliamentary elections in 1990, unlike the CP's in the two other Transcaucasian republics. Consequently, the Azerbaijani government was more conservative and centrist than its Transcaucasian counterparts.(175)
 Thus Mutallibov decided to support the new Union treaty, and to forego the opportunity to form a strategic alliance with the AzPF (such an alliance was not needed to get a parliamentary majority). The AzCP was smart enough to keep its options open; the March 7 decision included a second question to the referendum on whether Azerbaijan could (or should) secede from the USSR in the future.
 As many as 90% out of the 75% of eligible voters who turned out on March 17 said 'yes' to the new Union treaty.(176) The results show how docile and manipulable the Azerbaini population still was. The AzCP's task was made easier by the fact that Azerbaijani nationalism contrasted with and superseded statist separatism even more profoundly than in Armenia and Georgia.

 In the following months, the AzCP succeeded in winning back some of its lost authority, a development unprecedented in both the Baltics and the Transcaucasus. Mutallibov signed the "9 + 1 agreement" on the new Union treaty in Moscow between Gorbachev and nine Union republics in late April, committing Azerbaijan to sign the new Union treaty on August 20.
 At the end of June, the Law on the Presidential Elections was finalized. Candidates had only a month to apply, putting the badly organized opposition groups at a serious disadvantage. The only candidate opposing Mutallibov was philologist Zardusht Ali-Zade of the moderate Social Democratic Group (or Social Democratic Party; both names signify the same group), who was registered at the end of July. He only barely got the minimum of 20,000 signatures.(177)

 Like his Armenian colleague, Mutallibov endangered his own position by his own miscalculations during the August coup. Apparently, Mutallibov remarked during a visit in Iran in August 18-19 that the coup was "the natural consequence of the policies that have brought chaos into the Soviet Union over the past few years."(178) He supported the coup against Gorbachev. The interim president had criticized Gorbachev in the previous months for failing to stop Armenian militants in Nagorno Karabagh. He also repeatedly called for political order and stability. The Emergency Committee might have appeared to him the right USSR-leadership to suppress Armenian actions in Karabagh.
 But Mutallibov survived the controversy, stifling allegations by the AzPF by confiscating the latter's newspaper circulation on August 23, and resigning as first secretary of the AzCP and the CPSU on August 29 (he still remained chairman of parliament and member of the AzCP).

On August 30, two things happened that further strengthened Mutallibov's position.

First, the Supreme Soviet unanimously adopted a Declaration of Independence restoring the 1918-1920 Republic. This was a crowning achievement of his rather opportunistic separatist policy - and a direct result of the failed August coup. It also met one of the demands by the AzPF, thereby taking the initiative away from the popular movement.

Second, Ali-Zade of the AzSDP withdrew from the parliamentary race, citing intimidations disrupting his campaign. Thus Mutallibov won the presidential elections unopposed on September 8, receiving more than 80% out of the 84% of the electorate who voted.(179)

The peace agreement brokered by Jeltsin and Nazarbaev on September 21-22 put another feather in President Mutallibov's cap. As shown earlier, this agreement fundamentally favored the Azerbaijanis. The AzCP now felt able to ignore the protests by the AzPF. The Azerbaijani president went to Alma-Ata to join the Commonwealth of Independent States, even after the National Council (a 50 member body, with 25 places for opposition groups) unanimously refused to join the CIS.(180)

Structural opportunities for moderate strategic alliances, such as between AzCP and AzSDP, were squandered by the uncompromising stances of all main parties. The breakup of the Soviet Union in December did nothing to change the politics in Azerbaijan. The AzPF was able to topple the AzCP in May 14-15 1992, after Azerbaijnis in a village were massacred by Armenian extremists in Nagorno Karabagh.(181)

3.4.3. Georgia

At first there were hopeful signs of political cooperation in Georgia. Several communist reformers joined the new government after Gumbaridze was replaced by Avtandil Margiani at a GCP Congress in December 1990, that finally declared itself independent from the CPSU.
And Gamsakhurdia appointed the widely respected leader of the All-Georgian Rustaveli Society Tengiz Sigua as his prime minister.(182)

But Gamsakhurdia diminished his authority by making wildly contradictory statements, such as justifying in mid-December 1990 the abolition of the South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast, contrary to his promises during the October elections.(183) Furthermore, he reacted ruthlessly against political opponents once he controlled the security and police organs. One of the first politicians to be arrested was Torez Kulembekov in January 1991, the chairman of the rebellious Ossetian Soviet, elected in December 1990 (boycotted by the local Georgians).(184) Gamsakhurdia usurped near-dictatorial powers; the parliament made him interim president until the presidential elections in May 1991. The newly elected 'assemblies' after the local elections on March 3 (the conservative-communist local soviets were suspended in December 1990) had few powers since Gamsakhurdia had appointed prefects in February who were loyal to him.(185)

As Gamsakhurdia led the government, he controlled the political agenda. On April 9, the 227-member legislature unanimously approved Gamsakhurdia's text of the Independence Declaration. Gamsakhurdia felt secure by the outcome of the March 31 referendum on independence, in which 90.3% of the electorate participated, of whom 98.85% said 'yes' - an incredibly high figure. Fuller points out that "Gamsakhurdia had threatened beforehand to withhold Georgian citizenship . . . from the entire population of those raions in which the majority of the population voted against independence." This was plain intimidation, particularly directed against Azerbaijanis and Armenians, the main ethnic minorities outside Abkhazia and Ossetia.(186)

Both Abkazia and South Ossetia defiantly participated in the March 17 referendum.

Revealingly, 52.4% of eligible voters turned out in Abkhazia; 45.7% of the population were Georgians (1989 census). In South Ossetia, 99% of the Ossetians (50,000 people) participated.

These and other ethnic minorities sought to protect their autonomous status within a new USSR, because their status was undermined by the chauvinistic leadership in Tblisi. They feared that an independent Georgia would entail repression.(187)

The pinnacle of Gamsakhurdia's power was reached on May 26, when he won the presidential elections with 86% of the cast votes. The moderate Valerian Advadze of the CPR (or Union of National Concord and Rebirth) came second with just 7-8%, and the CP-candidate (first secretary Margiani?) and GPF-leader Natadze came third and fourth with negligible percentages.

The Democratic Center (DC), the only moderate-radical alliance criticizing Gamsakhurdia's authoritarianism, was established in parliament on May 17 between the GPF, some independents, and the Liberal Democratic National Party and the Free Democrats (of the Democratic Georgia bloc). But it was "too small to have an appreciable impact (Slider)."(188)

A broader alliance with parties within the National Congress became impossible because of increasing differences between Tchanturia's GNDP and Tsereteli's GNIP on how to deal with the government. The former aimed for an all-out confrontation, while the latter wanted to reach some minimal accommodation with Gamsakhurdia's RT. Democratic Georgia, the organization that participated in both the Soviet and Congress elections in 1990, had left the Congress. DG could have been the bridge between the assemblies for a broad radical-moderate alliance.(189)

The first major crack in Gamsakhurdia's power base came during the August coup. On August 19, Gamsakhurdia, the government, and the Presidium of the Supreme Council appealed for calm and no protests against the coup. On August 20, Gamsakhurdia gave in to one of the demands by the Emergency Committee in Moscow: the abolition of the republican army. Tengiz Kitovani, the commander of the National Guard, refused to step down and subordinate his troops to the Georgian Internal Ministry. Some 15,000 men remained loyal to Kitovani. Gamsakhurdia made a capital blunder, as the National Guard (founded at the end of January) was one of his main power bases, and Kitovani was originally an RT-supporter.(190)

During the coup, Gamsakhurdia lost his credibility as a national(ist) leader with strong principles; even his mental stability was questioned.(191)

Since then a snow-ball effect occured in the political landscape. Demonstrations against Gamsakhurdia mushroomed from the beginning of September; both moderate alliances like the Democratic Center, and radical alliances like the GNDP-GNIP (Tchanturia and Tsereteli had reunited) joined in their call for Gamsakhurdia's resignation. On September 2, the GPF and GNDP demanded in rallies for the release of Mkhedrioni-leader Ioseliani. Incredibly, the growing anti-Gamsakhurdia alliance wanted to include extremists in its ranks. Apparently, the moderates and radicals thought they needed all the allies they could get to topple Gamsakhurdia.(192)

The anti-Gamsakhurdia alliance consisted now of four basic groups: the moderates within the Supreme Council, the radicals within the Congress, and paramilitary leaders like Kitovani and Ioseliani. A "fifth column" surfaced within Gamsakhurdia's own RT. On September 15, deputies of the Merab Kostava Society, several members from the SSIR with their leader Paatashvili, and others defected from the Round Table, though Gamsakhurdia managed to keep a bare majority in parliament. Nevertheless, the addition of a fifth basic group was the final nail in the coffin for Gamsakhurdia. From mid-September, Tengiz Sigua, who resigned as prime minister the previous month, sought to keep the super alliance together.(193)

On September 21, Gamsakhurdia appealed on television to his supporters to protect the government buildings. In reaction, the rebellious faction of the Natural Guard under Kitovani sent troops on 22 September to protect opposition militants who had occupied the television center. But Kitovani's false assertion (which he retracted few hours later) that his headquarters were attacked by pro-government troops killing 60 of his men, undermined the anti-government alliance. Fuller observes that Kitovani's "irresponsible pronouncements apparently served to deepen an incipient rift within the opposition forces between the moderates, committed to relying strictly on constitutional methods, and those elements who were prepared to resort to force if necessary."(194)

On 5 October, Kitovani withdrew his men to a water reservoir in Tblisi, and a standoff developed until December. Relatively moderate politicians like Tchanturia and GPF-leader Natadze who could have stabilized the huge anti-Gamsakhurdia alliance, were arrested in September and October. On the other hand, Gamsakhurdia's government was in shambles and was protected only by a core group of supporters.
Moreover, a new strategic alliance between moderate forces was established in October called the Democratic Movement of Georgia, including the GPF, the Democratic Choice for Georgia [DAS], the Green Party, the Republican Party, and the Union of Free Democrats.(195)
But the extremist forces headed by Kitovani determined the events. On December 20-21, Kitovani's men surrounded with heavy artillery the parliament where Gamsakhurdia had retreated. During the next two weeks more than 100 people died in battles between pro- and anti-Gamsakhurdia supporters in the city center. At the end of December, a Military Council was established led by Kitovani, Ioseliani, and Tchanturia (who were freed). The more moderate politician Sigua became head of the Military Council, but was widely seen as a figurehead. Gamsakhurdia, completely cut off from his supporters outside Tblisi, eventually fled on January 5-6 1992 to Armenia, and finally received asylum in the separatist region of Chechno-Ingushetia (in the RSFSR) in February.(196) These events completely overshadowed the breakup of the Soviet Union.

3.5. Conclusion

Secession in the Transcaucasus was not as much an aim in its own right as in the Baltics. Ethnic and territorial union was the prime aim in Armenia and Azerbaijan, whether to be reached inside or outside the Soviet Union. In the later years, secession was generally regarded as a better means than USSR-membership to attain the prime goal. Only the Georgian opposition movements had been consistently separatist since 1988 and earlier. Georgian nationalism contained a strong element of independent-mindedness, i.e. separatism, while the Azerbaijani and Armenian nationalisms had much more to do with ethnic identity and territorial union. Popular movements like the AMNSD and the AzPF were ostensibly separatist, but the Karabagh syndrome increasingly led them toward extreme nationalism that superseded the question of secession.
Tables II.1 and II.2 show significantly different patterns of alliance formation, despite similar patterns of radicalization among the opposition movements and slow reformism among the communist parties in the Transcaucasus. Georgia was clearly furthest ahead in alliance formation; but the Georgian alliances were usually electoral or tactical blocs engaged in a life-or-death struggle with enemy alliances. Strategic alliances evidently do not always ensure civilized rules in political conflict, as in the Baltics.

Given the divergent patterns, it is more difficult to give a preliminary list of alternative scenario's on strategic alliances for the entire Transcaucasus. Therefore, models typical for each republic are formulated below. The 'Azerbaijani Model' is a more negative version of what happened in Azerbaijan, while the 'Georgian Model' is a more positive version of what occurred in Georgia.

1. Azerbaijani Model: confrontations between reactionary/conservative CP's and radical/extremist opposition movements

    Politics is completely atomized; political struggles are saturated by personal animosities and zero-sum politics, preventing any shared decisionmaking or compromise. Consequently, any strategic alliances, let alone moderate ones, are out of the question.

2. Armenian Model: confrontations between three antagonistic blocs: reactionary-conservative alliances (between CP's and 'Interfront'-type movements), moderate-radical alliances, and extremist alliances

    Politics is as antagonistic as the first scenario, but the power struggles occur between strategic alliances rather than individual groups. This scenario is slightly more 'positive' on alliance formation than the actual history in Armenia, because it presumes a close alliance between the AMNSD and the APNM, two similar, Popular Front-like movements. Also, an isolated CP faced moderate-radical and extremist alliances.

3. Georgian Model: competitive politics between broad alliances

    Unlike the second Model, super alliances including numerous political groups of conservative, moderate, and radical nature are formed to engage in peaceful, tolerant politics. Civilized conflict is the core of this model. Unlike the actual history of Georgia, these broad alliances are based on common long-term aims and programmes, rather than   on common animosity against another politician, group, or alliance.(197)

 Georgia had the most possibilities; its history could have been as bad as the first scenario or as good as the third scenario. Georgia had the best chances for moderate-radical politics to flourish, because its conflicts were not as intractable as the issue of Nagorno Karabagh, to which Armenia and Azerbaijan were practically bound to become embroiled in. Also, the Georgians might have voted for a wiser, more moderate, and more stable politician than Gamsakhurdia with similar dissident credentials.
 Therefore, the Georgian Model appears to be the least likely scenario for Armenia and Azerbaijan. It would have required extraordinary leaders in both the republican CP's and the opposition movements to contain or even solve the Karabagh conflict. My assessment is that the Georgian Model was unlikely to happen in Azerbaijan (but still possible), while the Azerbaijani Model was far more likely to happen in Armenia than the Georgian Model.
 The parameters of realistic possibilities are formed by the most positive combination of the Georgian Model occurring in all three Transcaucasian republics, and the most negative combination of the Azerbaijani Model in all three republics.
 These assessments naturally remain in the realm of speculation; exact probabilities or definite hierarchies of probability for the scenario's are inherently impossible to give. The scenario's are just recapitulations and simplifications of the structural opportunities and constraints discovered in this historical analysis. In the Transcaucasus as well as the Baltics, such opportunities and constraints were used, bungled, or discarded, according the Political Chaos perspective.

CONCLUSION: BALTIC AND TRANSCAUCASIAN POLITICS, ALLIANCE FORMATION, AND THE FATE OF THE SOVIET UNION

In both the Baltic and Transcaucasian regions during 1988-1991, political currents cut across the ideological and institutional spectra. Internal struggles within political organizations were largely between rival factions occupying different places on the political spectrum.

The unfavourable descriptions of the political factions and organizations occupying the extreme ends of the political spectrum point to a basic normative element in this research. Reactionaries and extremists as defined in section 1.2 of chapter 1 are those who willingly apply violent methods, even if other methods are available. The political spectrum has been introduced to assess whether political orientations closely correspond with separatist and centrist orientations, as suggested in the hypothetical distribution in Figure 1.2.(see Chapter 1) The Tables II in the Appendix roughly but not uniformily follow the hypothetical pattern.

The degrees in which separatist and centrist alliances were moderate-radical, extremist, moderate-conservative, or reactionary, influenced the way politics was done. And the contrasting politics in the Baltics and Transcaucasus had quite different consequences for the Soviet Union.

One of the elements that determined the distribution of forces on the political spectrum, and the type of separatist aims pursued, was nationalism. The fundamental assertion that nationalism is essentially intolerant in its selective morality for its own national group, and thus more liable to extremism than statism, is broadly supported by the history of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict. The reactions among the Azerbaijani politicians and ordinary people after the anti-Armenian pogroms in January 1990, described in section 3.3.2, are revealing.

The results in the Appendix support partially the two hypotheses on nationalism versus republicism formulated in Chapter 1. Both separatist and centrist republicists indeed appear to be more moderate and tolerant in methods and politics, as the first hypothesis states. However, this hardly translated in fruitful alliances between centrist and separatist republicists, though some serious efforts were made.(198)

On the republican level, the Tables in the Appendix show few if any durable separatist-centrist alliances. These alliances foundered simply on the fundamental gap between separatism and centrism. It appears that a bridge could only be built across this chasm if either the centrists or the separatists were willing to give up their basic aim; this condition asked too much even among non-extremist separatists and non-reactionary centrists.(199)

The second hypothesis is broadly supported by the findings; nationalists and statists were indeed opposing factions, particularly within popular mass movements in both the Baltic and Transcaucasian republics.

Strong centrist alliances, either on the local level or on the local and central levels, were conspicuously absent in the six Soviet republics studied. In the Baltics as well as the Transcaucasus, the centrists were concentrated in the republican Communist parties. In the Transcaucasus, the centrist factions within the CP's were generally stronger than in the Baltic counterparts. On the other hand, the Transcaucasian republics lacked any significant 'Interfront'-movements to form alliances, probably due to the absence of any large Russian populations like in the Baltic republics.

But the basic proposition that political movements need strategic alliances with other groups to get things done, the essential justification of the Strategic Alliance approach as an explanatory

model for the success of separatism, is only partially supported by the findings. The following general exceptions or conditions to the necessity for strategic alliances have been found:

 - Separatist opposition movements in the Baltics and Transcaucasus won the parliamentary elections in 1990, with the exception of Azerbaijan. New governments were formed, most of them led by a single Popular Front-type mass movement. Only in Lithuania did some major communist reformists join the government (until the beginning of 1991). Most of them did not need strategic alliances with other movements for government coalitions, though some of them only got a parliamentary majority as an electoral bloc with many other opposition groups. On the other hand, strategic (or tactical) alliances were formed in times of emergency, such as in Estonia and Latvia during the August coup.
 - Broad mass movements like the Popular Fronts were in fact umbrella organizations, i.e. organizational alliances between many diverse groups, with the same separatist aim. For these movements, the only important external alliances were with the reformist and radical factions within the republican CP's, when they still held government power in 1988 and 1989. Government power, and who holds it, appears to be a crucial intervening variable determining the significance of any strategic alliance. Of course, strategic alliances were still important to separatist organizations as means to stick together against harassments by conservative-centrist authorities.
 - The formation of strategic alliances between political organizations due to their common (centrist or separatist) aim hardly guaranteed ultimate success. Political cultures with a winner-takes-all mentality among ambitious politicians, quickly fragmented those alliances. Particularly antagonistic politics in the Transcaucasus weakened alliances. Therefore, strategic alliance formation may be a necessary condition in many circumstances, but often proves to be an insufficient condition by itself. There must also be a political culture encouraging the durability of strategic alliances.
 - Strong non-moderate strategic alliances were also formed, particularly between extremist or 'extrimicized' movements in the Transcaucasus. Thus the tacit proposition in this research that the strongest alliances are found among moderates (including the moderates on methods in the political spectrum) appears not to be generally viable.

 The first condition questions the general necessity of strategic alliances for separatist movements, as they could reach their aim of independence once they occupy governmental and parliamentary seats. But radical movements like Sajudis needed the moderating, balancing influence of moderate partners in a government coalition. Therefore, strategic alliances in the moderate realm of the political spectrum (conservatives, reformists, and radicals) might still be crucial in nurturing civilized political discord, preventing authoritarianism, and a culture of tolerance and accommodation. Thus the second condition of a tolerant political culture could be created in a feedback-loop. This is the basic normative prescription in this essay.

 The research also found that the separatist forces in the Baltics differed fundamentally from those in the Transcaucasus, because the latter pursued other aims than pure separatism as defined in Chapter 1.
 The history of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact put the Baltic republics into a unique position within the USSR. The main grievance of the Balts was the callous way in which their state independence was crushed by the Nazis and Soviets during and after World War II. The strong legal and moral argument against the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact as the basis of the Soviet annexation provided Baltic separatists with extra leverage. This partially explains why they were so far ahead of like-minded people in most other Soviet republics. In the Transcaucasus,

the history of Soviet annexation had to be relived through conscious mobilization tactics by nation-builders, given the short periods of independence in the first quarter of this century. In the end, separatism became both a means and a substitute for national-territorial union, the prime aim of nationalist movements in particularly Azerbaijan and Armenia during 1988-1991. Separatism became an important issue only in 1990 and 1991 because most Transcaucasians were disillusioned with Moscow, and believed that state independence would further their nationalist ends.

My preliminary conclusion is that Transcaucasian nationalism destabilized the Soviet Union, because the central leadership in Moscow became increasingly unable from 1988 onwards to control or solve the ethnic conflicts. The authority of the Soviet Union as a federal state that could control the events in its periphery was severely weakened. In practice, the Soviet Union did not have effective control over the Transcaucasus by 1991. But the turmoil would not have caused the formal disintegration or breakup of the Soviet Union.

Transcaucasian separatism, even under the best scenario's formulated in section 3.5, was too weak to force the fall of the Soviet Union. At most, Transcaucasian nationalism - and possibly similar nationalisms in other regions not covered in this report - contributed to the de facto disintegration of the Soviet Union, but not to its official disbandment.

In contrast, Baltic separatism would have decreased the size of the Soviet Union in almost any realistic scenario. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact provided the lever, the moderate strategic alliances between the CP's and PF's gave the pushing power. It is important to note that in the days after the August coup, numerous countries recognized the independence of the Baltic states, and Gorbachev, his position weakened after his return to Moscow, was forced to follow suit. Therefore, Baltic independence was one of the few separatist developments almost bound to end successfully. Only brutal and effective repression in January and August 1991 (or any other time in alternative history) could have prevented the Baltics from becoming independent.

Therefore, it is instructive to review Ronald Suny's scenario's for the USSR as a whole, as a reminder that each of them could have happened. Suny formulates three scenario's in his Roots of the national question, in ascending order of likelihood:(200)

1. "Return to the pre-Gorbachevean order"
   A restoration of the old communist regime in Moscow that would be able to restore the Soviet Internal Empire in its former 'glory'. But maintenance of the old USSR was unlikely   to happen, particularly after the failed coup attempt in August 1991. Suny rightly remarks   that "without another coup d'état, supported with more determination by the army and the   police, a return to the recent past remains impossible." Future research applying the   Strategic Alliance approach may find this scenario to be beyond realistic parameters.

2. "the complete breakup of the Soviet Union, full independence for the non-Russian
   republics, the creation of a dozen or more sovereign [independent] states"
   This is what actually happened, though all fifteen republics became equally independent in
   formal terms, and nine of them joined the new Commonwealth with no central authority worthy the name.

3. "the partial breakup of the Soviet Union: full independence for the Baltic republics, possible unification of Moldova with a more democratic Rumania, but the unity of the three Slavic republics with Central Asia and Transcaucasia on the basis of a confederation"
   Significantly, Suny regards this as the most likely scenario. One must keep in mind that Suny wrote this article in 1991 way before the USSR was officially disbanded after

Gorbachev's resignation on December 25. Suny was unsure "how tight or loose" the new rump Union would be. I consider the CIS too loose to call it a 'confederation'.

On the whole, Suny's assessment is consistent with my assessments on the impacts of Baltic separatism and Transcaucasian nationalism.

Therefore, the developments in the Baltic and Transcaucasian republics would not have caused by themselves the complete and formal breakup of the Soviet Union. Probably the overwhelming referendum vote in favour of independence in Ukraine on December 1, 1991, started the ball rolling toward the definite breakup of the USSR. The outcome prompted Yeltsin to convoke secretly with the leaders of Belorussia and Ukraine on December 7, set up the Commonwealth of Independent States, and declare that "the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as a subject of international law and a geopolitical reality, is ceasing its existence."(201)

Naturally, future research needs to cover all fifteen Soviet republics during 1988-1991, and also to study the periods of independence and the development of the CIS in the post-Soviet era. As Ukrainian separatism appears to have given the final push toward the fall of the USSR, it is of paramount importance to find out the nature of this separatism, whether it was really bound to develop the way it did, or whether alternative scenario's of alliance formation are discernible. The enlargement of CIS beyond the three Slavic states Russia, Belorussia, and Ukraine needs to be scrutinized; it was far from certain that the Central Asian republics would join the Commonwealth at the time. Indeed, it was far from certain how the Commonwealth would develop as an institution.(202)

Future research must also modify and improve the Strategic Alliance approach in general, and the methodology and terminology of the institutional (a better term must be found), ideological and political spectra. The constraining conditions for effective strategic alliances found in this research might serve as propositions to be tested further. Whatever the methodological merits and constraints of the Strategic Alliance approach, this progress has clearly shown that the breakup of the Soviet Union was all but inevitable.

APPENDIX: STRATEGIC ALLIANCES ACROSS IDEOLOGICAL, INSTITUTIONAL, AND POLITICAL SPECTRA

<u>Explanation</u>

 The political movements or parties are placed in the categories according preliminary research; others might place them differently based on new or better information.
 Movements or parties may be absent within certain 'year sections' for the following three reasons: the available sources are unclear about the development of the movement or party in question; the available sources contradict each other on the development of the movement or party in question; or the available sources do not mention at all the particular movement or party.
 The movements or parties are only indicated by their initials; their meanings can be found in the year sections in chapters 3 and 4, particularly in '1988' and '1989' when many of the political organizations were founded. The Lithuanian Communist Party is identified as 'LCP' and the Latvian Communist Party is identified as 'CPL', in order to make a distinction. Similarly, the Communist Parties of Armenia and Azerbaijan are distinguished as 'ArCP' and 'AzCP' respectively, and the Azerbaijani Popular Front is indicated as 'AzPF'. Other movements in the two republics are not distinguished as such, because their labels are clearly distinct.
 Isolated movements or parties without alliances are also shown in the categories; they have no 'connection signs'. A further "<u>Comment</u>" on classification problems is given on the next page. The meanings of the connection signs are given below.

 --- : weak alliance (loose cooperation; frequent disagreements on tactics or strategies, etc.)
    { \ : vertically across categories}
=== : strong alliance (loose cooperation but with strong commitment, or umbrella organization and beyond. See section 1.1.) {\\ : vertically}
 -/- , =/= : alliance under severe strain; in danger of breaking up.{\|, \\| vertically}
 -//- , =//= : definite break of alliance.{\||, \\|| vertically}
 ( ): development <u>within</u> a political organization (overarching or new; see section 1.1.)
    E.g. (-//-): a final break between wings in a political movement that was a weak organization anyway, barely holding the different factions together on common strategies   or tactics. The brackets are also used to identify political groups within an
 umbrella or overarching organization (the name of the latter is shown after ':').
 Breakaway groups are also shown within brackets. Sometimes the signs are used imaginatively in order to make the connections between movements and parties.

<u>Comment</u>

 Classifying of the Baltic and Transcaucasian associations, movements, and parties in the Political Spectrum has been the easiest, while classifying them in the Ideological Spectrum has been the most difficult. For instance, I have defined the Baltic Congress movement as 'nationalist', because of their strict citizenship requirements meant to safeguard their own ethnic Baltic group. However, numerous proposals restricting citizenship in the future independent Baltic states have been made by radical members of the Baltic Popular Fronts as well. Therefore, the Baltic Congress movements are placed in the 'Nationalist' category only because they are <u>relatively more</u> nationalistic than the Popular Fronts. <u>Sajudis</u> is defined as 'nationalist' given its radicalism.

Other movements or parties in the Baltics and Transcaucasus are placed in these categories in relative terms as well. The Armenian Movement for Self-Determination, for instance, has only been relatively statist compared to the Armenian Pan-National Movement, until Ter-Petrossyan's moderating policies constraining pan-nationalism in 1990 and 1991. All the Transcaucasian CP's have been more statist (given the Leninist-Marxist ideology and political culture) than the opposition movements, and are categorized as such. This is not to say that the communist elites were free of nationalist tendencies.

Relative comparison is also the basis for placing different movement in different Political and Institutional categories. So both APNM and AMNSD have been put in the Separatist category in Table II.2, despite the primacy of the Karabagh issue. Those movements could hardly be described as ardent pro-USSR centrists. Because both the APNM and AMNSD called for independence (the latter already in 1988), they are both put in the most separatist category: 'Independence'. In Table II.1, this category is used as an approximation, because most opposition movements in the Transcaucasus called for independence as a means to attain ethnic and territorial union (see section 3.5). Sometimes movements exhibited such mixed characteristics, that the different concepts could hardly be distinguished.

For instance, GNDP, GNIP, and GPF were more republicist than the other Georgian opposition movements, but were still basically nationalist. They are switched between the Statist and Nationalist categories in Table II.1 to compare them relatively with other movements. Therefore, the Tables should be regarded as rough indicators only, that can be improved and modified in future research.

[NB 2015: *the original layout has been lost, so the tables may be partially or fully unintelligible.*]

TABLE I.1 Strategic Alliances along Institutional and Ideological Cleavages in the Baltics (see Figure 1.1)

ESTONIA

Institutional Spectrum

Ideological
Spectrum   Separatism   Centrism

1988   Independence Sovereignty Autonomy   Unity
         ------------+------------+------------+------------
Statist   STKE   PFE==CPE   OFSK
         --------------------------------------\\-----------
Nationalist MRP-AEG==EHS   Intermovement
         ------------+------------+------------+------------
1989   ------------+------------+------------+------------
Statist   PFE==CPE   OFSK
         --------------------------------------\\-----------
Nationalist (ENIP=EHS=ECU):ECC   Intermovement
         ------------+------------+------------+------------
1990   ------------+------------+------------+------------
Statist   PFE==CPE(=//=)   Interr.Council
         --------------------------------------(+ibid)-----

```
Nationalist   ECC
          ------------+-----------+-----------+------------
1991      ------------+-----------+-----------+------------
Statist      PFE--ICPE                ESC
          ---------\------------------------------------
Nationalist    ECC                 CPE(CPSU)
          ------------+-----------+-----------+------------
```

LATVIA

```
                  Institutional Spectrum
Ideological
Spectrum          Separatism           Centrism

1988     Independence Sovereignty Autonomy    Unity
          ------------+-----------+-----------+------------
Statist          PFL-------CPL
          ------------\\------------------------------------
Nationalist   (LNIM, H'86)              Interfront
          ------------+-----------+-----------+------------
1989      ------------+-----------+-----------+------------
Statist          (=/=)PFL--/--CPL
          --------------------------------------------------
Nationalist (LNIM=H'86=EPC):CCL           Interfront(-//-)
          ------------+-----------+-----------+------------
1990      ------------+-----------+-----------+------------
Statist          (=//=)PFL-//-CPL(-//-)
          --------------------------------------------------
Nationalist    CCL
          ------------+-----------+-----------+------------
1991      ------------+-----------+-----------+------------
Statist          PFL---------------Ravnopravie-//-SCL
          -------\\\|---------------------------------------
Nationalist    (Satversme)
          ------------+-----------+-----------+------------
```

LITHUANIA

```
                  Institutional Spectrum
Ideological
Spectrum          Separatism           Centrism

1988      Independence Sovereignty Autonomy    Unity
          ------------+-----------+-----------+------------
Statist                  LCP                   -------------------------------------------------
-
Nationalist ALI=(LFL)--Sajudis            Yedinstvo
          ------------+-----------+-----------+------------
1989      ------------+-----------+-----------+------------
Statist          LCP
          --------------\-----------------------------
```

```
Nationalist (LFL)--/--Sajudis          (-//-)Yedinstvo
        ------------+------------+------------+------------
1990    ------------+------------+------------+-----------
Statist        ILCP(=//=)          (LCP-CPSU)
        -----------\\--------------------------------
Nationalist LFL-//- Sajudis
        ------------+------------+------------+------------
1991    ------------+------------+------------+------------
Statist    LDLP                LCP=LSC
        -----\--------------------------------\\------
Nationalist  Sajudis              Yedinstvo
        ------------+------------+-----------+------------
```

TABLE I.2. Strategic Alliances along the Institutional, Ideological,and Political Spectra in the Baltics (see Figure 1.2)

ESTONIA
                Political Spectrum
1988
  Reactionary Conservative Reformist Radical   Extremist
```
  -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
C  R              CPE==PFE
  N
  ----------------------------------------------------------
S  R
  N                     MRP-AEG==EHS
  -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
1989
  -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
C  R          OSTK \\
  N         Intermovement
  ----------------------------------------------------------
S  R              (=/=)CPE==PFE
  N                   (ENIP=EHS=ECU):ECC
  -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
1990
  -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
C  R          OSTK \\
  N         Intermovement
  ----------------------------------------------------------
S  R                   (=//=)CPE==PFE
  N                         ECC
  -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
```
1991 {Estonia continued}
```
  -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
C  R  ESC     CPE(CSPU)
  N
```
60

```
       ----------------------------------------------------------
S  R                            CPE--PFE
   N
       ----------+----------+----------+----------+----------
```

<u>LATVIA</u>

             Political Spectrum

<u>1988</u>
   Reactionary Conservative Reformist   Radical   Extremist
```
       ----------+----------+----------+----------+----------
C  R                      CPL
   N          Interfront    \
       --------------------------\--------------------------
S  R                      PFL \\
   N                       (LNIM, H'86)
       ----------+----------+----------+----------+----------
```

<u>1989</u>
```
       ----------+----------+----------+----------+----------
C  R                      CPL
   N      (-//-)Interfront    \|
       --------------------------|\--------------------------
S  R                      PFL \\|
   N                       (LNIM=H'86=VAK):CCL
       ----------+----------+----------+----------+----------
```

<u>1990</u>
```
       ----------+----------+----------+----------+----------
C  R             (-//-)CPL
   N                     \||
       --------------------------||\--------------------------
S  R                      PFL \\||
   N                         CCL
       ----------+----------+----------+----------+----------
```

<u>1991</u>
```
       ----------+----------+----------+----------+----------
C  R   SCL--//--Ravnopravie-----
   N                     \
       --------------------------\--------------------------
S  R                      ------PFL \\||
   N                       (Satversme)
       ----------+----------+----------+----------+----------
```

<u>LITHUANIA</u>

             Political Spectrum

<u>1988</u>
   Reactionary Conservative Reformist   Radical   Extremist
```
       ----------+----------+----------+----------+----------
C  R             LCP
   N          Yedinstvo
       ----------------------------------------------------------
```

```
S  R
  N                Sajudis--LFL==ALI
  -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
```

1989 {Lithuania continued}
```
  -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
C  R
  N         Yedinstvo(-//-)
  ----------------------------------------------------------
S  R                     LCP \
  N                        Sajudis-/-LFL
  -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
```
1990
```
  -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
C  R         (LCP-CPSU)
  N
  ----------------------------------------------------------
S  R                  (=//=)ILCP \\
  N                        Sajudis-//-LFL
  -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
```
1991
```
  -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
C  R LSC==LCP
  N    \\ Yedinstvo
  ----------------------------------------------------------
S  R                     LDLP \
  N                        Sajudis
  -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
```

  TABLE II.1 Strategic Alliances along Institutional and Ideological Cleavages in the Transcaucasus (see Figure 1.1)

ARMENIA
```
                 Institutional Spectrum
Ideological
Spectrum        Separatism         Centrism


1988    Independence Sovereignty Autonomy   Unity
        -----------+-----------+-----------+------------ Statist     AMNSD            ArCP
        ---------\-------------------------------
Nationalist      KC
        ------------+------------+------------+------------
1989    ------------+------------+------------+------------
Statist     AMNSD    NGKS-//-SAC-//-ArCP
        ------------------/-------------------------------
```

```
Nationalist       APNM--/
          ------------+------------+------------+------------
1990      ------------+------------+------------+------------
Statist        APNM              ArCP
          --------------------------------------------------
Nationalist   AMNSD==RPA
          ------------+------------+------------+------------
1991      ------------+------------+------------+------------
Statist     APNM              ArCP(=//=CPSU)
          --------------------------------------------------
Nationalist   AMNSD==RPA
          ------------+------------+------------+------------
```

AZERBAIJAN

```
                Institutional Spectrum
Ideological
Spectrum        Separatism           Centrism

1988    Independence Sovereignty Autonomy    Unity
          ------------+------------+------------+------------ Statist                AzCP
          --------------------------------------------------
Nationalist        [AzPF]
          ------------+------------+------------+------------
1989      ------------+------------+------------+------------
Statist                AzCP
          --------------------------------------------------
Nationalist        AzPF
          ------------+------------+------------+------------
1990      ------------+------------+------------+------------
Statist         SDP          AzCP
          -------------\\||--------------------------------
Nationalist        DF:(AzPF,etc.)*
          ------------+------------+------------+------------
1991      ------------+------------+------------+------------
Statist         SDP       AzCP**
          --------------------------------------------------
Nationalist        DF
          ------------+------------+------------+------------
```
    *: not entirely sure whether AzPF was member of DF;
       see note 163.
   **: still basically centrist, despite the Independence
       Declaration; see section 3.4.2.

GEORGIA

```
                Institutional Spectrum
Ideological
Spectrum        Separatism           Centrism

1988    Independence Sovereignty Autonomy    Unity
```

```
            ------------+-----------+------------+------------
Statist          ISC--HU         GCP
            -------------\||----------------------------------
Nationalist      ISC4th
            ------------+-----------+-----------+------------
1989      ------------+-----------+-----------+-----------
Statist       (GNDP) GPF(-/-)  GCP
          ---------\||-------------------------------------
Nationalist (GNIP-SSIR,etc):MCNS(-//-)
            ------------+-----------+-----------+------------
1990      ------------+-----------+-----------+-----------
Statist   (GNIP-/-GNDP):NF  GPF-/-GCP
          ------\||-----------------------------------------
Nationalist Mkh.  (SSIR=MCP=MKS,etc):RT
            ------------+-----------+-----------+------------
1991            ------------+-----------+-----------+------------   Statist          (GPF=DG,etc):DC
GCP(=//=CPSU)
          -\---\------------------------------------------
Nationalist Mkh.  NF   RT(=//=)
            ------------+-----------+-----------+------------
```
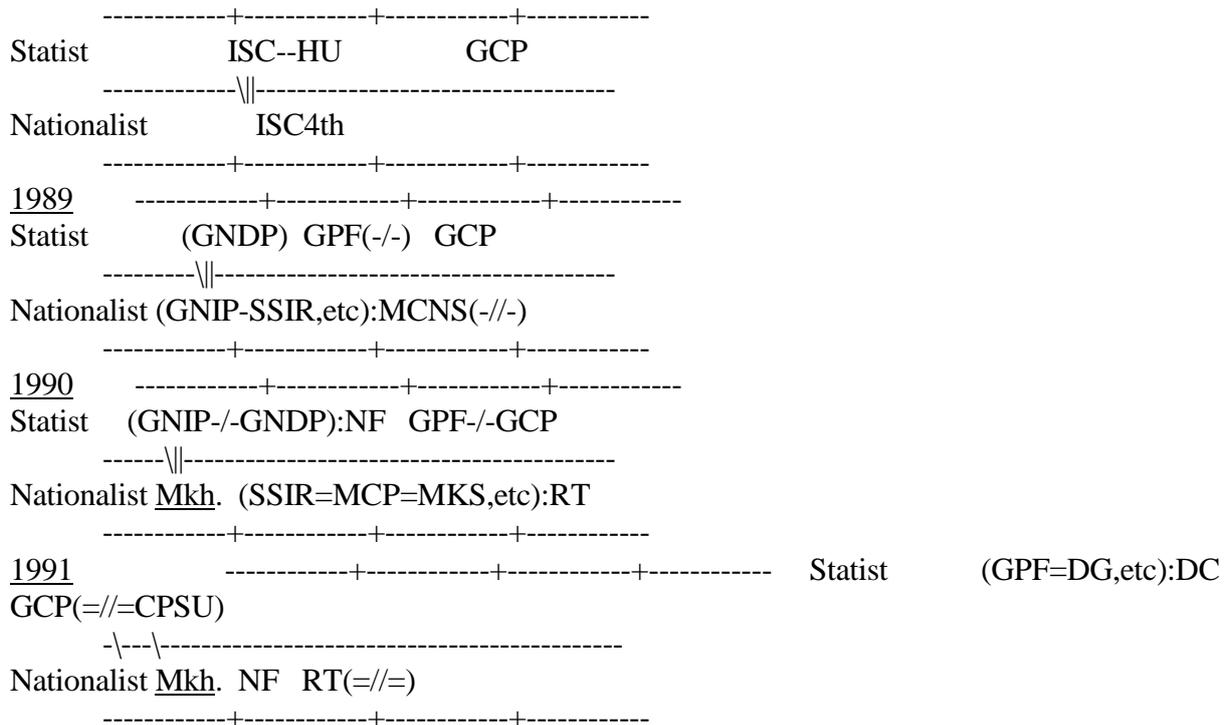

TABLE II.2. <u>Strategic Alliances along the Institutional, Ideological, and Political Spectra in the Transcaucasus</u> (see Figure 1.2)

<u>ARMENIA</u>
           Political Spectrum
<u>1988</u>
   Reactionary Conservative Reformist   Radical   Extremist
```
  -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
C  R           ArCP
  N
  -----------------------------------------------------------
S  R                        AMNSD
  N                          \ KC
  -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
```
<u>1989</u>
```
  -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
C  R           ArCP--//--SAC-\
  N                      ||
  --------------------------------||-----------------------
S  R                  \   AMNSD(=//=ARP)
  N                  \---APNM
  -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
```
<u>1990</u>
```
  -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
C  R          ArCP
  N
```

```
         --------------------------------------------------------
S  R                    APNM
   N                           AMNSD==ARP
         -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
1991
         -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
C  R          (CPSU=//=)ArCP
   N

         --------------------------------------------------------
S  R                    APNM
   N                              AMNSD==ARP
         -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
```

AZERBAIJAN
          Political Spectrum

1988

   Reactionary Conservative Reformist   Radical   Extremist

```
         -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
C  R          AzCP
   N

         --------------------------------------------------------
S  R
   N                          [AzPF]
         -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
1989
         -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
C  R              AzCP
   N

         --------------------------------------------------------
S  R
   N                            AzPF
         -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
```

1990 {Azerbaijan Continued}

```
         -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
C  R              AzCP
   N

         --------------------------------------------------------
S  R                      AzSDP\\||
   N                      AzPFDF
         -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
1991
         -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
C  R              AzCP
   N

         --------------------------------------------------------
S  R                      AzSDP
   N                            DF
         -----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
```

<u>GEORGIA</u>

Political Spectrum

<u>1988</u>

Reactionary Conservative Reformist   Radical   Extremist
-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
C R   GCP
  N

S R   HU--ISC
  N   \||-ISC4th
-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
<u>1989</u>

-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
C R   GCP
  N

S R   (GNDP)\||| GPF(-/-)
  N   (GNIP-SSIR,etc):MCNS(-//-)
-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
<u>1990</u>

-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
C R   GCP
  N   \|
-------------------------|\----------------------------
S R   GPF   (GNDP-/-GNIP):NF
  N   (SSIR=MCP=MKS,etc):RT <u>Mkh</u>.
-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
<u>1991</u>

-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------
C R   (CPSU=//=)GCP
  N

S R   (DG=GPF,etc):DC \--------------\
  N   NF RT(=//=) <u>Mkh</u>.
-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------+-----------

NOTES

INTRODUCTION
1. Peter Reddaway remarks in a footnote in his article <u>Sovietology and Dissent: New Sources on Protest</u>, that a volume called <u>After Brezhnev</u> appeared in 1983, a cooperative effort by eight main Sovietologists, including Seweryn Bialer and Gail Lapidus, with 35 scholars having participated in the research.
 Reddaway states:
 "In his preface, Byrnes wrote that "all of us agree that there is no likelihood whatsoever that the Soviet union will become a political democracy or that it will collapse in the foreseeable future"."(Reddaway, p.12)
 See RFE/RL Research Report, Vol.2 No.5, 29 January 1993, p.12, footnote 2.
2. See 'Z'(Martin Mlia), <u>To the Stalin Mausoleum</u> DAEDALUS, winter 1990, pp.295-344. See also Martin Malia, <u>From Under the Rubble, What?</u> Problems of Communism January-April 1992, pp.89-106.
3. See Malia, <u>To the Stalin Mausoleum</u>, pp.301,310-316,319.
Peter Reddaway also discusses the failure by Sovietologists to take unofficial sources of protest seriously in his <u>Sovietology and Dissent: New Sources on Protest</u>. See note 1.
4. See Malia, <u>Mausoleum</u>, pp.324-325.
5. Malia states that ". . economic decisions are taken for political and not economic reasons, in accordance with the policy priorities of the Party-state, and not in response to social demand (except from the military) or for reasons of production efficiency."(p.318)
 Stalin used destructive policies against his (perceived) enemies, like the Collectivisation drive to wipe out a recalcitrant peasant class, even though they prevented healthy modernization of society. See Malia, <u>Mausoleum</u>, pp.305-316.
6. Malia actually reverts to modernizationism by focusing on socio-economic developments. See <u>Mausoleum</u>, pp.316-319.
7. The Totalitarianists tend to regard nationalism as as a 'sleeping beauty' phenomenon, reawakened by the deligitimization of the Soviet system. "The cause of this sudden explosion (the nationalities crisis) lay in the same process of desacralization that was undermining all Soviet institutions", Malia states in his <u>Mausoleum</u> on page 325.
How could one explain otherwise the <u>disintegration of the Soviet Union</u> as a federal state?
8. A leading proponent of this theory is James N. Rosenau, in his <u>Turbulence in Politics - a Theory of Change and Continuity</u> (1990).
9. See Malia, <u>Mausoleum</u>, p.308.
10. David S. Mason, <u>Revolution in East-Central Europe - The Rise and Fall of Communism and the Cold War</u>, Chapter 4 <u>In Search of Explanations: Theories of Social, Economic, and Political Change</u> Westview Press, 1992, p.108.
11. Ibid.
12. Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, <u>Ethnonationalism and Political Stability: The Soviet Case</u> World Politics Vol.36 No.4, July 1984. In: Rachel Denber (ed.), <u>The Soviet Nationality Reader - The Disintegration in Context</u> Westview Press, 1992, pp.427,433. From now on, articles published in this volume will be noted with 'The Soviet Nationality Reader' between brackets.
13. See Gail W. Lapidus, <u>From democratization to disintegration: the impact of perestroika on the national question</u> (ch.3), in: Gail W. Lapidus, Victor Zaslavasky, Philip Goldman (ed.), <u>From union to commonwealth: Nationalism and separatism in the Soviet republics</u> Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp.45-70.
14. Roman Szporluk, <u>Dilemmas of Russian Nationalism</u> Problems of Communism Vol.38

No.4, July-August 1989, pp.15-35; p.516 (Soviet Nationality Reader).

15. Paul Goble, Ethnic Politics in the USSR Problems of Communism Vol.38 No.4, July-August 1989, pp.1-15;

pp.560-564 (Soviet Nationality Reader).

16. Ibid, p.560.

17. Ibid, p.564.

CHAPTER 1

18. See Geoffrey A. Hosking, Jonathan Aves, and Peter J.S. Duncan, The Road to Post-Communism - Independent Political Movements in the Soviet Union, 1985-1991 Pinter Publishers, 1992, Preface, p.vii.

19. See Geoffrey A. Hosking, The beginnings of independent political activity, Chapter 1 in The Road to Post-Communism, 1992, p.1. See note 18. This article discusses several types of early associations; see pp.1-28.

20. I developed a detailed list of state powers: three "classic" ones (security, basic legislation, external relations), three "substantive" ones (natural resources, and socio-economic competences), and three "social" ones (education, tradition, and entertainment). In a simplified model, I identified Unity with local authorities having none of those state powers, Autonomy with the social powers, Sovereignty with the substantive (and social) powers, and Independence with the classic (and substantive and social) powers.

 But I left out the Typology of State Powers and the figure extrapolating these powers with the four basic concepts, because of the limitation of the required length of the paper.

 Moreover, this 'Institutional Model of State Powers' requires detailed content analysis of political programmes to classify the political movements. Most sources available are not that specific: thus this model can only be applied and tested in future research.

21. See Gregory Gleason, The Evolution of the Soviet Federal System, in: Federalism and Nationalism: The Struggle for Republican Rights in the USSR

Westview Press, 1990, pp.41-59. (The Soviet Nationality Reader, pp.107-120.) See note 12.

22. Alexander J. Motyl distinguishes between 'national behavior'(ideological) and 'national beliefs'(primordial). He argues that the Soviet authorities regarded the latter type as the more dangerous one, and concentrated their energies in suppressing this type. By the way, his terminology is confusing: it would be better to define 'national behavior' as primordial nationalism, and 'national beliefs' as ideological nationalism. See A.J. Motyl, The Sobering of Gorbachev: Nationality, Restructuring, and the West, in: Seweryn Bialer (ed.), Politics, Society, and Nationality Inside Gorbachev's Russia Westview Press, 1989, pp.149-174 (The Soviet Nationality Reader, pp.573-595. See particularly pp.575-576).

23. Szporluk makes no clear distinction between nationalism and statism, as he maintains that Soviet imperialists are hidden Russian imperialists, whether they want to admit this or not. It would be interesting to see whether subsequent strategic alliance research on the Russian would support Szporluk's observation. See Roman Szporluk, Dilemmas of Russian Nationalism Problems of Communism Vol.38 No.4, July-August 1989, pp.15-35 (See the Soviet Nationality Reader, particularly pp.512-513).

CHAPTER 2

24. R. Kionka, Identity Crisis in Estonian Popular Front, Report on the USSR, May 10 1991, p.18.

25. According to Rein Taagepera many sympathizers shied away from open membership, for fear of reprisal. See R. Taagepera, A Note on the March 1989 Elections in Estonia, Soviet

Studies Vol.42 No.2, April 1990, p.335.

26. See R.Taagepera, Estonia's Road to Independence, Problems of Communism, November-December 1989, pp.16-18; R. Taagepera, A Note on the March 1989 Elections in Estonia, p.334. See also Geoffrey A. Hosking, Popular Movements in Estonia, Chapter 7 of The Road to Post-Communism, pp.182-183. See note 18.

27. Hosking, p.185.

28. Ibid, pp.186-187. See also Kionka, May 10 1991, pp.18-19 (see note 24).

29. Taagepera, p.18 (see note 26).

30. The resolution did not call for a transfer of external relations powers from Moscow to Latvia; it just demanded international competences alongside those of Moscow. See Juris Dreifelds, Latvian National Rebirth Problems of Communism, July-August 1989, pp.83-84.

31. Ibid, pp.83-85. See Eric Rudenshiold, Ethnic Dimensions in Contemporary Latvian Politics: Focusing Forces for Change, Soviet Studies Vol.44 No.4, 1992, pp.612-613.
 See also Hosking, p.185.

32. Jonathan Aves stresses the similarities, stating that "the leadership of the (Latvian) Popular Front was largely dominated by moderates who had good links with reformist elements in the Communist Party".(Aves, p.33.) But I stress the differences, and assert that the Estonian Popular Front was farthest ahead because its leading Communist members had even better (and quicker) access to the Estonian Communist Party leadership.
 See Aves, The evolution of independent political movements after 1988, chapter 2 of The Road to Post-Communism, pp.32-33. See also Dreifelds, p.85 (see note 29); and Hosking, pp.186-187.

33. Dreifelds, p.44.

34. In his Estonia's Road to Independence, Rein Taagepera concludes that "Estonia pulled decisively ahead of Latvia as early as September 1987, with the "Four-Man Proposal" for economic autonomy, and remained the reform leader until May 1989, when Lithuania's Supreme Soviet passed a resolution declaring the republic's sovereignty."(p.25)
 He puts the birth dates of the Popular Fronts not at the official founding conferences (as some others do for all political movements) but at the first public announcements (see Table 2, p.24). Finally, one has to keep in mind that the terms "autonomy" and "sovereignty" might not exactly correspond to the definitions given in Chapter 1.
 See Hosking, p.186. See Taagepera, p.25. Taagepera accounts for the different speeds of comparable political events within the Baltic states by their differing ethnographic and demographic population distributions.

35. The initials for the Lithuanian Communist Party will be consistently LCP, and those for the Latvian Communist Party CPL, in order to distinguish them; this will be done in the same way for the Latvian and Lithuanian Popular Fronts. See the Appendix.

36. See V. Stanly Vardys, Lithuanian National Politics Problems of Communism, July-August 1989, pp.55-57.

37 Already in May, "the Academy hosted two distinguished Estonian economists from the Estonian Academy of Sciences, who discussed the newly organized Estonian People's Front"(Vardys). See Vardys, p.56 (note 36).

38. Aves, p.34. See notes 18 and 32.

39. There are some organizational differences, however. One of the most important ones is that Sajudis became an informal organisation at its formation, with no dues-paying members like the Latvian People's Front. See Vardys, p.57.

40. Vardys, p.59.

41. Ibid, p.58.

42. Aves, p.33.

43. Somehow, Sajudis has been able to take the initiative from the Freedom league, as the latter already applied the same single issue-strategy during 1987. The League organised, for instance, the August 23-commemoration of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in that year.(NOTE: the sources at my disposal do not reveal why or how Sajudis has been able to outdo the Freedom League on these issues. See Vardys, pp.58,62.

44. See Taagepera, pp.19-20. See also Hosking, pp.191-192.

45. See Riina Kionka, The Estonian's Citizens' Committee: An Opposition Movement of a Different Complexion, Report on the USSR, February 9 1990, p.31. See Taagepera, p.23. See also Taagepera, A note on the March 1989 Elections in Estonia, pp.336-337 (note 25).

46. See Hosking, p.189. Taagepera mentions that it was already established in the late summer of 1988; see p.332 (note 25).

47. Hosking, p.189.

48. An opinion poll in early April showed that Interdvizhenie, OFSK, and the smaller Union of Work Collectives collectively mustered only 29% support among the non-Estonians. The radical Citizens' Committee alliance between ENIP, EHS, and ECU received just 18% support among Estonians. But unlike the conservative alliance, it was much better organised, and much smarter with its alternative registration strategy. The 1989 census shows 475,000 Russians, 963,000 Estonians, and 128,000 other immigrants. See Taagepera, pp.331,337,338. See also Taagepera, Estonia's Road to Independence, pp.19-20.

49. See Aves, p.190. See also Taagepera, pp.21-22; according to Taagepera, the Intermovement controlled the strike committee.

50. See Taagepera, p.23.

51. R. Kionka, The Estonian Citizens' Committee: An Opposition Movement of a Different Complexion Report on the USSR, February 9 1990, p.31.

52. See Dreifelds, p.86. These broad-ranging criticisms resembled those made by the Sajudis Diet in Lithuania on November 13, 1988, labelling Gorbachev's amendment proposals as "undemocratic". See Vardys, p.66.

53. Dreifelds, p.88.

54. According to a poll at the end of the same year, 48 percent of the ethnic Russians said the conservative Latvian movement was necessary; according the April 1989 poll in Estonia mentioned earlier, the "Interfront" received just 11% support from the Russian constituency. See Dreifelds, pp.86,91. See also Taagepera, A Note on the March 1989 elections in Estonia, p.338.

55. See Alfred Erich Senn, Toward Lithuanian Independence: Algirdas Brazauskas and the CPL Problems of Communism, March-April 1990, p.22. See also Vardys, Lithuanian National Politics, pp.65,67 (note 36).

56. See Vardys, p.70. Communist reformists preferred the term "sovereignty", even to attain de facto independence on some state powers (mainly economic and cultural), because the term was "already contained in the Soviet constitution and therefore politically prudent in dealing with Moscow (A.E.Senn)." See Senn, p.22 (note 55).

57. See Aves, p.35. See also Vardys, p.59.

58. See Vardys, p.75.

59. The Congress of People's Deputies granted the Baltics economic autonomy on July 27, reaffirmed by the USSR Supreme Soviet (the daily legislature, elected by the Congress) on November 27.

60. See Vardys, p.73.

61. See for more information Toomas Ilves, The Congress of Estonia Report on the USSR,

March 23 1990, pp.31-32. See also Riina Kionka, <u>The Congress Convenes</u> Report on the USSR, March 23 1990, pp.32-35. See also Taagepera, pp.19-20.

62. Kionka, p.33. See note 61.

63. See Hosking, pp. 194-195. None of the sources available indicate whether any communist members were taken up in Savisaar's government.

64. See R. Kionka, <u>Identity Crisis in Estonian Popular Front</u> Report on the USSR, May 10 1991, pp.18-21.

65. See Kionka, p.19 (note 64).

66. See Hosking, p.194.

67. See Dzintra Bungs, <u>The People's Front of Latvia at the Crossroads</u>, Report on the USSR November 22 1991, p.25. Jonathan Aves mentions that the Latvian Popular Front received 131 seats. See Aves, p.48 (note 32).

68. See Dzintra Bungs, <u>Latvian Communist Party Splits</u>, Report on the USSR, April 27 1990, p.18. The description of the conservatives closely follows the definition given in Chapter 1. But Dzintra Bungs distinguishes between pro-independence "reformists" and pro-autonomy "moderates", led by Vagris. Based on voting patterns, Bungs mentions that 55% of the delegates were conservatives, 12% moderates, and 33% reformers. If the reformers would have sided with the moderates, the party could have split right in the middle.

69. D. Bungs, pp.18,20. See note 68.

70. D. Bungs, <u>The People's Front of Latvia at the Crossroads</u>, p.25. See note 70.

71. See Senn, p.25 (note 55). See also Vardys, p.74 (ibid).

72. Many of these centrist communists were not hard-liners, because most of them were among the 160 delegates who voted for an autonomous, "self-sufficient Party of Lithuania within a restructured CPSU." See Senn, p.26.

73. The last sentence shows Gorbachev's almost mystical conviction that past injustices can be forgotten and a new common home can be built. After having studied many of his statements, I have become convinced that Gorbachev has been and still is an idealistic internationalist (maybe even a cosmopolitanist). This helped him to develop a visionary foreign policy that effectively put an end to the Cold War. But it hampered his efforts to develop a dialogue, possibly even a strategic alliance (!), with both radical and moderate separatists, particularly of the statist kind. Gorbachev was even less able to understand the nationalists - thus a strategic alliance with them probably was never in the cards.)
 See Saulius Girnius, <u>Gorbachev's Visit to Lithuania</u>, Report on the USSR, January 26, 1990, p.5. See further Ann Sheehy, <u>Gorbachev's Arguments Cut Liitle Ice with Lithuanians</u> Report on the USSR, February 9 1990, pp.33-35.

74. See Senn, pp.27-28. See also Aves, p.48 (note 32).

75. Gorbachev, already sensing the danger, sent Landsbergis a telegram on March 10 on the USSR Congress' resolution annulling the independence declaration! See Aves, p.48. See also Vera Tolz, <u>The USSR This Week - Situation in Lithuania</u> Report on the USSR, May 11 1990, p.25.

76. See Kestutis Girnius, <u>Lithuania and the Soviet Union: Negotiating a Settlement</u> Report on the USSR, May 11 1990, pp.22-24.

77. A delegation of the party-establishment and the military-industrial complex reportedly laid down an ultimatum to Gorbachev on November 11: "Within six weeks he had to get things under control in the republics, Moscow and Leningrad or there would be physical ways of removing him (G.J. Church)." See George J. Church, <u>Crackdown or Breakdown?</u> TIME, December 31 1990, p.12.
 See also Nelan W. Bruce, <u>Broadside from the Right</u>, TIME, December 31 1990, p.14. Robert C. Kaiser estimates in his <u>Why Gorbachev Happened - his Triumphs and his Failure</u> (Simon &

Schuster, 1991) that the Sojuz bloc accounted for 561 members when the Congress of people's Deputies convened on December 17 1990, while the progressive Inter-Regional Group had shrunk to just 229 members.(p.381)

These and other pieces of evidence show that Gorbachev did not move willingly, but was rather forced to the right. Gorbachev did not trust Pugo and Gromov, but he could not envisage that the other future coup-leaders would be willing to take extreme action; he regarded them as trustworthy conservatives. Information also based on the BBC-documentary The Second Russian Revolution, Brian Lapping Associates, 1991.

78. See Riina Kionka, Baltic Notebook Report on the USSR, Vol.3 No.2, January 18 1991, pp.22-24. See also Dzintra Bungs, Baltic Notebook Report on the USSR, Vol.3 No.4, January 25 1991, pp.9,11-12.

79. See Stephen Foye, Crackdown Ordered to Enforce Military Draft Report on the USSR, January 18 1991, p.9.

80. The Moscow-loyal CP called for a boycot in order to hold an "alternative" plebiscite between February 24 and March 3. The information on the results is sketchy. See Riina Kionka, Round Three in Estonia's Referendum Season Report on the USSR, March 29 1991, p.18.

81. See for overall early results: Ann Sheehy, The All-Union and RSFSR Referendums of March 17 Report on the USSR, March 29 1991, pp.19-23. Significantly, 5 out of the 6 republics who refused to participate were Baltic or Transcaucasian: only Moldovia replaced Azerbaijan. Possibly, these republics were the most nationalist, or separatist in the Soviet Union at that time.

See further R. Kionka, Estonia Says "Yes" to Independence Report on the USSR, March 15 1991, pp.25-26; R. Kionka, "Alternative" Plebiscite in Estonia Report on the USSR, March 15 1991, pp.25-28. See also D. Bungs, Baltic Notebook Report on the USSR, Vol.3 No.4, February 22 1991, p.26.

82. See R. Kionka, Identity Crisis in Estonian Popular Front, pp.20-23 (note 65).

Kionka adds that "the Congress of Estonia also continued to lose its influence, primarily because its leadership had made a number of strategic and tactical errors, the most grievous of which was to enter into an unholy alliance with Estonia's top Communist apparatchiks in November, 1990 (emphasis my own)."(p.20.) I have found no more information on this very intriguing alliance, so I decided not to mention it within the 1990 section.

83. See R. Kionka, Estonia's New Constituent Assembly Report on the USSR, October 4 1991, p.22-24.

84. Kionka characterizes Arnold Ruutel as "possibly the only high Brezhnev holdover in the Soviet Union and the Baltic States who is still in power." See R. Kionka, Debate about New Constitution Sparks Old Rivalries in Estonia Report on the USSR, December 13 1991, p.22.

85. See Eric Rudenshiold, Ethnic Dimensions in Contemporary Latvian Politics: Focusing Forces for Change, pp.623,625-626 (note 31). See also D. Bungs, The People's Front of Latvia at the Crossroads, p.25 (note 67).

86. See D. Bungs, The USSR Referendum: A Nonevent in Latvia, Report on the USSR, March 29 1991, p.15. See also Rudenshiold, p.627 (note 85).

87. The government leaders, many of them founding fathers of the PF, were more moderate than their successors on the board. See D. Bungs, pp.25-26 (note 67).

See for details on the guiding principles of citizenship restoration and naturalization Dzintra Bungs, Latvia Adopts Guidelines for Citizenship, Report on the USSR, Vol.3 No.44, November 1 1991, pp.17-19.

88. See D. Bungs, Political Realignments in Latvia after the Congress of the People's Front, Report on the USSR, December 20 1991, p.19. See also Rudenhiold, pp.618-619,624.

For further political developments in Latvia in 1992, see D. Bungs, <u>Latvia: Toward Full Independence</u>, RFE/RL Research Report Vol.2 No.1, 1 January 1993, pp.96-98.

89. The measure also applied to Georgia and Armenia. See Dimitri Simes, <u>Gorbachev's Time of Troubles</u>, Foreign Policy No.82 1991, p.133. See also Stephen Foye, <u>Crackdown Ordered to Enforce Military Draft</u>, Report on the USSR, January 18 1991, p.7.

90. Aves, p.58 (note 32).

91. On the one hand, Jermalavicus claimed that he did not know the identities of the SC members. On the other hand he said there was "a five-man group of Lithuanian Communist Party officials" who at the same time were no members of this party. This appears to have been a tactic of covering one's tracks if the crackdown misfired (it did).

See Saulius Girnius, <u>Lithuania's National Salvation Committee</u> Report on the USSR, January 25 1991, p.7. See on the reports about Burokevicus D. Bungs, <u>Baltic Notebook</u> Report on the USSR Vol.3 No.4, February 22 1991, p.29.

92. See R. Kionka, <u>Baltic Notebook</u> Report on the USSR Vol.3 No.6, February 8 1991, pp.30-31.

93. A Special Investigative Commission of the Russian Parliament reported in February 1992 that the leadership of the KGB had orchestrated the crackdown in Vilnius in January 1991. The KGB Gorbachev false reports on violent actions by extremists in the Baltics, urging him to impose Presidential Rule. See Hubert Smeets, <u>Gorbatsjov was pion in machinaties van KGB</u> ("Gorbachev was pawn in machinations by KGB"), NRC Handelsblad (Dutch) 5 February 1992. See also Volkskrant (Dutch), <u>KGB loog tegen Gorbatsjov om noodtoestand uit te lokken</u> ("KGB lied against Gorbachev to provoke martial law"), 5 February 1992, p.1.

94. Gorbachev's comments appear in the BBC-documentary the <u>The Second Russian Revolution</u> (1991), and other sources. See notes 80 and 99.

Therefore, I do not follow Stephen Foye's skepticism on this issue. See S. Foye, <u>Gorbachev Denies Responsibity for Crackdown</u>, Report on the USSR, January 25 1991, p.1.

95. See S. Girnius, <u>Lithuanian Prime Minister Resigns</u> Report on the USSR,
January 18 1991, p.21. See also R. Kionka, <u>Baltic Notebook</u> Report on the USSR, Vol.3 No.2, January 18 1991, p.29.

96. <u>Sajudis</u>' uncompromising stance bordered on extremism, as our definition of radicalism presupposes a willingness to negotiate even while pursuing far-reaching ends (see section 1.2). The only reason why the movement can be defined as 'radical' is its consistent refusal to apply violent means.

See S. Girnius, <u>Lithuania Votes for Independence</u> Report onthe USSR, February 22 1991, pp.24-25. And S. Girnius, <u>Referendum in Lithuania</u> Report on the USSR, March 29 1991, pp.16-17. See also D. Bungs, <u>Baltic Notebook</u> Report on the USSR, Vol.3 No.8,
February 22 1991, p.29.

97. See Girnius, <u>Continued Intimidation in Lithuania</u> Report on the USSR, Vol.3 No.24, June 14 1991, pp.12-13. See further D. Bungs, <u>Latvia Demands Departure of "Black Berets"</u> Report on the USSR, June 14 1991, pp.14-19.

98. See Kionka, <u>A Break with the Past</u> Report on the USSR, September 6 1991, pp.60-61.

The PFL's actions in Latvia on August 23 and 24 were somewhere in between: it suspended four centrist organizations, among them the <u>Interfront</u> and the <u>OFSTK</u> (Council of Work Collectives). The bans were apparently based on investigations in their possible role in the coup. But if the bans were unrelated to any findings of the investigations, then the PFL acted as authoritarian as <u>Sajudis</u>. See Bungs, <u>Latvia Reaffirms Its Independence</u> Report on the USSR, September 6 1991, pp.56-57.

99. See on the complex proposals during the negotiations Girnius, <u>Controversy over Free Press in Lithuania</u> Report on the USSR, December 20 1991, p.23.

100. The available sources do not make clear whether the Savisaar government established in Estonia in 1990 included members of the CPE. See note 63.

101. Michael Gorbachev appears to have played a vital role in securing Brazauskas' appointment. A.E. Senn states that "Moscow sent observers to participate in the discussions concerning succession; and even before being designated as the new leader, Brazauskas had to make a ritual journey to Moscow to obtain Michael Gorbachev's nihil obstat." See Senn, <u>Toward Lithuanian Independence: Algirdas Brazauskas and the CPL</u>, p.21 (note 55).

Brazauskas revealed to the <u>Sajudis</u> congress that he had spoken with Gorbachev a few days before. See also Vardys, pp.61,65 (note 36).

102. See Girnius, <u>Lithuania's National Salvation Committee</u> January 25 1991, p.8 (note 91).

CHAPTER 3

103. See Ronald Grigor Suny, <u>Nationalism and Democracy in Gorbachev's Soviet Union: The Case of Karabagh</u> Michigan Quarterly Review, Fall 1989, pp.486-487 (Soviet Nationality Reader, 1992). See note 12.

104. See R. G. Suny, p.485 (note 103). See also E. Fuller, <u>Armenia - from Apathy to Violence</u> Report on the USSR, June 8 1990, p.19.

105. The KC was basically moderate in is methods, according to Ronald G. Suny: "Made up of nationalist intellectuals, many of them members of the Communist Party, the Karabagh Committee tried to guide the mass movement in peaceful and disciplined actions." See Suny, p.495. But the KC continued to rely on mass demonstrations, bringing to mind Goble's reservations about this strategy. So the KC was radical rather than extremist, at least in the beginning. See further section 3.1.1.

106. See Suny, p.491. And E. Fuller, <u>El'tsin Brokers Agreement on Nagorno-Karabagh</u> Report on the USSR, October 4 1991, p.16.

See also Mark Saroyan, <u>The "Karabakh Syndrome" and Azerbaijani Politics</u>, Problems of Communism, September-October 1990, p.17.

The names of the politicians are spelled differently by different authors. I try to keep to one spelling as consistently as possible.

107. Suny, p.496. See also Gorbachev's interchanges with other Armenian delegates,
pp.496-497. Those are very revealing.

108. Gorbachev had the authority to replace Demirchyan, but "inexplicably, Demirchian clung to power, and the Moscow leaders did not decisively intervene (R.G.Suny)." I cannot offer an explanation either, except sheer overload: Gorbachev could not turn his attention everywhere simultaneously and apply the cleaning broom.

See Suny, pp.489-492. See also Aves, p.40 (note 32).

109. Ibid, p.500.

110. M. Saroyan, p.22. See note 106.

111. It is not entirely clear to what extent the riots were spontaneous or orchestrated, though rumors (of two Azerbaijanis killed in Agdam) seemed to have played a vital role. One of the reasons why the information is so sketchy is the absence of distinct, well-organized Azerbaijani organizations in 1988. See for more details Suny, p.492. See also E. Fuller, <u>El'sin Brokers Agreement on Nagorno-Karabakh</u>, Report on the USSR, October 4 1991, pp.16-17.

112. See Saroyan, p.20. See also Fuller, <u>El'tsin Brokers Agreement on Nagorno-Karabakh</u>, p.17.

113. See Saroyan, p.24. More than 200,000 Azerbaijni refugees fled from Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh during the fall of 1988.

114. See Suny, pp.500-501. See also Aves, p.41.

115. See John Dunlop, <u>Language, Culture, Religion, and Cultural Awareness</u>, pp.323-324

(Soviet Nationality Reader, 1992). See also Darrell Slider, <u>The Politics of Georgia's Independence</u> Problems of Communism, November-December 1991, p.64.

116. J. Aves, <u>The rise and fall of the Georgian nationalist movement, 1987-91</u>, Chapter 6 in <u>The Road to Post-Communism - Independent Political Movements in he Soviet Union, 1985-1991</u>, 1992, p.160. See note 18.

117. See Aves, pp.159-160 (note 116). See also E. Fuller, <u>Abkhazia on the Brink of Civil War?</u> RFE/RL Research Report, 4 September 1992, pp.1-2. And E. Fuller, <u>South Ossetia: Analysis of a Permanent Crisis</u> Report on the USSR, February 15 1991, p.21.

118. These factors played a more significant role than any generational differences (Tsereteli and Tchanturia were of the younger generation). See Aves, <u>The rise and fall of the Georgian nationalist movement 1987-91</u>, pp.158-159 (note 116).

119. See Christopher J. Walker, <u>Armenia and Karabagh - the Struggle for Unity</u>, Minority Rights Publications 1991, p.129.

I have decided not to use Walker's study extensively, nor his 1980 <u>Armenia - the Survival of a Nation</u> (Routledge, revised edition 1990), because he is clearly not a neutral or detached observer. The way how he quotes the KCP-report submitted to Gorbachev, for instance, is worrisome: he assumes that the Armenian account of events is correct.

His remark on page 406 (<u>Survival of a Nation</u>) that "the manner in which their <u>reasonable, democratic wishes for Karabagh</u> were ignored made them feel that perestroika had passed them by (emphasis my own)" is typical.

120. But Azerbaijnis called it the "Armenian National Council", accusing it of granting too much influence to the Armenians. See Saroyan, p.25 (note 106).

121. See C.J. Walker 1991, p.128. See also C.J. Walker 1990, p.406. See note 119.

122. See Aves, p.50 (note 32).

123. Suny, p.499 (note 103).

124. I wonder who the AzPF-representatives were. If they were radicals or extremists, the breakdown of the talks were partially caused by them. See Saroyan, p.23 (note 106).

125. Saroyan, p.22.

126. See Saroyan, p.23. Aves points out that "the Popular Front programme was remarkable for the absence of references to the decisions of the Communist Party or even perestroika." See Aves, p.41.

127. See Saroyan, p.26.

128. Suny apparently meant that the grounds for the USSR Supreme Soviet's decision were unknown because it was reached in a closed session. He mentions some of the possible reasons for the decision:

first, the authority of the SAC was undermined by the continuing unwillingness by the Armenians to cooperate with it and by the growing hostility from the Azerbaijnis.

Second, Moscow might have reasoned that returning Karabagh to Azerbaijan would mollify the Azerbaijni strikers sufficiently to end the blockade of Armenia and Karabagh.

But this compromise was doomed to failure, because the blockade, though causing hardship, was not an equivalent bargaining chip for the Armenians: they would rather live under a blockade than give up Nagorno Karabagh.

See R. Suny, <u>State, civil society, and ethnic cultural consolidation in the USSR - roots of the national question</u>, in <u>From union to commonwealth: Nationalism and separatism in the Soviet republics</u>, p.38 (note 13).

129. The Azerbaijni Popular Front did not organize the strikes, given its weak organization. Instead it called upon workers to organize strikes to press for the demands. Above all the blockade of Armenia and Karabagh, and the demand to replace the Volski Commission by an

Azerbaijni body were popular. The demands for AzPF's legalization and laws on economic and political sovereignty were less popular, and attached by the AzPF only to serve its own interests. See Saroyan, pp.25-26. See Aves, p.42. See also Suny, pp.37-38 (note 128).

130. See Aves, p.50. See also Saroyan, p.28.

131. See E. Fuller, 4 September 1992, p.2 (note 117). See also J. Aves, p.160 (note 116).

132. Fuller, 4 September 1992, p.2.

133. Many of those who believed that Gorbachev was responsible for the crackdown, especially Russians and Georgians, had an exaggerated notion of CPSU-decisionmaking as a smooth pyramid where decisions were made from the top down, i.e. from the General Secretary to the base. But this ideal pyramid-model is largely a myth, never realized in practice.

 By April 1989 a severe power struggle was going on within the CPSU between reactionaries, conservatives, and reformists. A radical faction was formed within the Congress of People's Deputies, the reformist-radical Interregional Group in July. There are numerous indications that these factions tried to outmanoeuvre each other, increasingly circumventing party rules. The Communist Party was fracturing, slowly but surely. Even prior to the Gorbachev era, crucial information was kept away from the Politburo or the General Secretary by opponents on the lower levels. Martian Malia has convincingly shown that pure Totalitarianism, related to the myth of an omnipotent and efficient Party apparatus, was never accomplished by the Soviet Communist system, not even under Stalin. See From Under the Rubble, What?, p.104. See also 'Z', pp.300-301.

 See also Robert Kaiser, Why Gorbachev Happened - His Triumphs and His Failure Simon & Schuster, 1991. See for instance his comments on pp.155-156. See on the April killings in Tblisi, pp.272-273.

134. Opinion polls right after the Tblisi massacre, organized by the GCP, showed that 89 percent of the respondents were for "real independence", while 81% held the CPSU leadership responsible for the April 9 killings. 71% condemned the GCP leadership, while 79% said that the opposition groups represented their real interests. See D. Slider, p.66 (note 115).

135. See Aves, p.160. See also Fuller, 4 September 1992, p.2 (note 117).

136. See Slider, The Politics of Georgia's Independence, footnote 19, p.67 (note 115).

 But Jonathan Aves is more skeptical about the motivations and policies of the GCP:

 "The essence of Communist Party strategy did not change with the appointment of Gumbaridze as first secretary. The local leadership continued to try and placate nationalist demands but refused to let political power slip out of its hands."(p.162.)

 However, giving in to nationalist demands only undermined the GCP's authority and credibility. Aves shows more convincingly on page 162 that steps toward democracy and free press were largely phony, based on deals with opposition groups not to challenge the GCP's monopoly on power.

137. See Fuller, 15 February 1991, p.21 (note 117).

 In November 1988, the Patiashvili regime decided to upgrade the Georgian language, provoking strikes in the South Ossetian capital Tskhinvali. In January 1989, Adaemon Nykhas was established, undoubtedly encouraged by these popular protests. Maybe Aves is right in his assertion that the Patiashvili and Gumbardidze elites closely resembled each other. See Aves, pp.162-163.

138. Aves, p.162. Slider mentions that the founding congress of the GPF was held in June, but Aves places it in July. See Slider, p.67. See also Aves, p.162.

139. See Aves, pp.162-163.

140. See Fuller, Gorbachev's Dilemma in Azerbaijan Report on the USSR, February 2 1990, p.14.

141. See Fuller, <u>Armenian Party First Secretary Replaced</u> Report on the USSR, Vol.2 No.16 (date unknown) 1990, p.24.

142. As usual, each side blamed the other for the killings, and reports from both sides were unreliable. However, the official account by the Soviet Army of militants firing upon soldiers could be correct: informal paramilitary troops were formed since January. On the other hand, the Soviet Army was known to use excessive force, with no rules or culture of self-restraint. See Fuller, June 8 1990, p.20 (note 104); <u>Democratization Threatened by Interethnic Violence</u> Report on the USSR, January 4 1991, p.41; and <u>The Challenges to Armenia's Non-Communist Government</u> Report on the USSR, May 3 1991, p.20.

 Aves, however, mentions that "over half the places" were won by the APNM. See Aves, p.50.

143. Fuller, May 3 1991, p.19. See note 142.

144. Fuller, January 4 1991, p.41. See note 142.

145. But Ter-Petrossyan remained a populist, attacking the Communist Party on August 3, while Movsisyan put forward some concrete policy proposals.
See Fuller, May 3 1991, pp.20-21 (note 142).

146. See Fuller, May 3 1991, p.22. In the second stage of the Party Congress in late November, the new party program and statutes were formally adopted. See also Fuller, January 4 1991, p.41.

147. See Fuller, May 3 1991, pp.21-22.

148. See R. Suny, <u>Roots of the national question</u>, p.38 (note 129). See Saroyan, p.28. See also E. Fuller, <u>Gorbachev's Dilemma in Azerbaijan</u>, February 2 1990, p.15 (note 140).

149. See E. Fuller, February 2 1990, p.15.

 The widespread assumption that cynical politics was the only or main factor for the weeklong delay is over-simplistic. The "fog of war", the delay of information about the violence reaching Moscow, and the time for the Soviet troops to arrive on the scene could have played a role as well. Again, many observers overrated the smoothness of communication and deployment of Soviet institutions as the Army. See note 133.

150. See Melanie Newton, <u>The USSR This Week - Events in Azerbaijan</u> Report on the USSR, February 2 1990, p.24. See also Fuller, February 2 1990, p.16 (note 140).

151. According to E. Fuller, "the fact that the AzPF won less than 10% of the seats in the parliamentary elections in September 1990 is a measure of the widespread shock and despair resulting from the January killings." See Fuller, <u>Azerbaijan After the Presidential Elections</u> RFE/RL Research Report, 26 June 1992, p.1.

 But in another article she asserts that the AzPF won 40 seats in the 350-seat parliament, <u>more</u> than 10%. See Fuller, <u>The Azerbaijni Presidential Election: A One-Horse Race</u> Report on the USSR, September 13 1991, p.13. One explanation is that Fuller mentions in her June 1992 article just the results of the first round.

 Presumably, the AzPF was a member of the Democratic Forum. But the information available does not explicitly confirm this. In one article, Fuller mentions the Popular Front as a member of the "<u>Democratic Azerbaijan</u> coalition". I presume that the DA and DF-alliances are one and the same. See Fuller, September 13 1991, p.13.

152. Fuller does not make clear to what extent the shock was about the pogroms against the Armenians in Baku, and to what extent about the Azerbaijanis killed by Soviet troops. See Fuller, January 4 1991, p.42 (note 142). See also note 151.

153. See Fuller, September 13 1991, p.13 (note 151).

154. Slider suggests that the Supreme Soviet delayed the elections reluctantly. But I find Aves' observation that the GCP gladly obliged GPF's request more convincing.
See Aves, p.167 (note 116). See also Slider, p.69 (note 115).

155. Aves, p.168.

156. The GPF was angered in March when it discovered that one third of the 2300 electoral candidates were industrial or agricultural managers handpicked by the GCP. This shows how brittle the GPF-GCP alliance was. Indeed, these undemocratic practices by the GCP brought many radicals groups to choose for the Congress alternative. See Slider, p.69.

157. Apparently, the MCP brake up after the foundation of the Round Table, with the smaller UGT staying in the alliance. See Aves, pp.165,168.

158. Aves, p.169.

159. See Aves, p.170. See also Slider, p.70.

160. See Aves, pp.169-170.

161. Nelson and Amonsahvili found in their 1991 survey research on the 1990 parliamentary elections that "among Georgians, Round Table voters are more prone to judge several ethnic minorities in Georgia more negatively than are Communist supporters . . .. These differences are much greater than Party differences in opinions about the right of Ossetia and Abkhazia to separate from Georgia . .."
 See Lynn D. Nelson & Paata Amonashvili, Voting and Political Attitudes in Soviet Georgia Soviet Studies, Vol.44 No.4, 1992, p.696.

162. It is unclear whether Round Table/Free Georgia is the same electoral bloc or an enlarged version of the Round Table. Lynn D. Nelson and Paata Amonashvili list the member organizations of the electoral bloc in their 1992 article Voting and Political Attitudes in Soviet Georgia: "Gamsakhurdia's party is the Helsinki Union of Georgia. Other parties in the Round Table-Free Georgia bloc include the St Ilia the Righteous Society, the Merab Kostava Society, the Union of Georgian Traditionalists, the Popular Front of Georgia-Radical Union, the National Liberal Union of Georgia and the National Christian Party of Georgia."
 See Soviet Studies, 1992, p.687 (note 161).

163. See Nelson & Amonashvili, p.687 (note 161). See also Slider, p.70.
 According to Aves, the GCP got just 64 seats (p.171). Aves asserts that the GPF got 12 seats, not mentioned by Nelson & Amonashvili.

164. See Fuller, January 4 1993, p.43 (note 142).

165. Fuller, The Challenges to Armenia's Non-Communist Government Report on the USSR, May 3 1991, p.23.

166. See Fuller, The All-Union Referendum in the Transcaucasus Report on the USSR, March 29 1991, p.4. See also Ann Sheehy, The All-Union and RSFSR Referendums of March 1 Report on the USSR, March 29 1991, p.22.

167. Fuller, The Transcaucasian Republics Equivocate Report on the USSR, September 6 1991, p.40. See also Ann Sheehy, March 29 1991, pp.19-21 (note 166). The March 1 session of parliament was behind closed doors; it was unknown how many deputies voted in favour for the March 17 referendum. See Fuller, March 29 1991, p.3 (note 166).

168. Fuller, May 3 1991, p.23. See note 165.

169. Ibid.

170. Fuller, October 4 1991, p.17 (note 111).

171. See Fuller, The Transcaucasian Republics Equivocate Report on the USSR,
September 6 1991, pp.40-41.

172. Fuller, October 4 1991, p.16 (note 111).

173. See Fuller, October 4 1991, p.18 (note 111).

174. Fuller, March 29 1991, p.4 (note 166).

175. See Fuller, The Azerbaijani Presidential Election; A One-Horse Race Report on the USSR, September 13 1991, p.13.

176. Only 20.6% of eligible voters turned out in Nakichevan, the Azerbaini enclave adjacent to

Armenia, of which 87.3% said 'yes'. Maybe former CPSU Politburo member and AzCP first secretary Geidar Aliev's opposition to the new Union treaty accounted for the low turnout. He was elected deputy by a 95% majority in his birthplace Nakichevan. See Fuller, March 29 1991, p.4. See also Sheehy, March 29 1991, pp.21-22.

See for more background on Geidar Aliev: Fuller, <u>Azerbaijan: Geidar Aliev's Political Comeback</u> RFE/RL Research Report, 29 January 1993, pp.6-11.

177. See Fuller, September 13 1991, p.14 (note 175).

178. See Fuller, September 6 1991, p.42 (note 171).

179. See Fuller, September 6 1991, p.42; Fuller, September 13 1991, p.14. See also Fuller, <u>Azerbaijan After the Presidential Elections</u> RFE/RL Research Report, 26 June 1992, p.2.

180. The National Council was set up as a compromise with the AzPF and other opposition groups, to quiet their demands for Mutallibov's resignation after the August coup. But by December Mutallibov was elected president and felt able to ignore the council's 'no' vote to Azerbaijan becoming a member of CIS.

See Fuller, <u>Azerbaijan's relations with Russia and the CIS</u> RFE/RL Research Report, 30 October 1992, p.52. See also this article for further developments in the post-Soviet era.

181. Ibid, pp.52-53.

182. See Slider, p.70. But Fuller mentions that Sigua, a member of the RT/FG coalition, replaced the <u>moderate</u> Akaki Bakradze, "a man of considerable personal integrity and a bold and astute political thinker", as leader of the AGRS just after the parliamentary elections in 1990. See Fuller, <u>Gamsakhurdia's First 100 Days</u> Report on the USSR, March 8 1991, p.11.

183. See Fuller, March 8 1991, p.11 (note 182).

184. The Abkhaz Supreme Soviet planned to hold elections, but failed to carry them out in February 1991.

See Fuller, 4 September 1992, p.2 (note 117). See also Aves, p.172 (note 116).

185. Daniell Slider is one of the few observers who emphasizes that some of Gamsakhurdia's actions were understandable, even defendable, given the huge pressures exerted upon him. See Slider, pp.71-72,77-78. See also Fuller, March 8 1991, pp.11-12. And Aves, p.173.

186. See Fuller, <u>Georgia Declares Independence</u> Report on the USSR, April 19 1991, pp.11-12.

187. See Fuller, 4 September 1992, p.2 (note 117).

See also Fuller, March 29 1991, p.5 (note 166). See also Slider, p.76.

188. Slider, p.71. See also Aves, p.173.

189. See Fuller, <u>How Strong Is the Georgian Opposition?</u> Report on the USSR, October 18 1991, p.28.

190. See Fuller, October 18 1991, p. 28 (note 189). See Fuller, September 6 1991, p.42 (note 167). See also Aves, p.172.

191. Fuller remarks that "An article in the <u>Guardian</u> observed that "Mr.Gamsakhurdia appears to be highly insecure and prone to conspiracy theories"; . . . and Irina Sarishvili of the National Democratic Party told <u>Newsweek</u> that "I don't want to be rude, but we have very serious doubts about the President's sanity."" See Fuller, October 18 1991, p.27.

Indeed, there is an uncanny similarity between Gamsakhurdia and Stalin (a native Georgian) in their behavior. Does Georgian political culture or other traditions contribute to this politics of suspicion?

192. Elizabeth Fuller describes in her article <u>How Strong Is the Georgian Opposition?</u> the emerging of a broadening alliance against Gamsakhurdia. This is one of the few articles that concentrates on and describes well the processes of alliance formation or coalition building.

See note 189.

193. See Aves, p.174. See also Slider, p.79.

194. Fuller, October 18 1991, p.29. Extremism as defined in chapter 1 presumes a willingness to use force also if it is strictly unnecessary.

195. See Slider, p.79. Different authors use slightly different names for the political organizations, most of them probably slightly different translations of the same parties. Sometimes it is unclear to distinguish the different labels. For instance, is the 'Democratic Choice for Georgia' the same party as 'Democratic Georgia' mentioned in other sources? This is a recurring problem. Only if one knows the Transcaucasian (and other) languages one can confidently distinguish and label all the political groups.

196. See on further developments in the post-Soviet era: Fuller, <u>The Georgian Parliamentary Elections</u> RFE/RL Research Report, Vol.1 No.47, 27 November 1992, pp.1-4. See also Fuller, <u>Eduard Shevardnadze and the Georgian Elections</u> RFE/RL Research Report, Vol.1 No.36, 11 September 1992, pp.32-33.

197. The second model all but presumes that alliance formation ensures civilized politics; the case of Georgia has clearly shown that. If one wishes to relate the formation of super alliances across the political spectrum to <u>violent</u> politics (i.e. the extremes of the political spectrum), one may call this the 'Georgian Model', representing what actually happened in Georgia. Then the third model as defined in section 3.5 might simply be called the 'Baltic Model'.

CONCLUSION

198. More research needs to be done to determine to what degree the local centrists and the centrists in Moscow were actually <u>Russian nationalists</u>; for simplicity's sake, most reactionary and conservative Communist leaderships at the republican level are defined as 'statist' in the Appendix. But at least some of them might have tacitly defended the survival of Russian imperialism rather than Soviet imperialism. See Note 23.

199. Only sovereignty as an institutional power-sharing arrangement between the central and republican governments could have been a basis for a centrist-separatist alliance. In that case, the USSR-leadership and republican centrists had to transfer state powers to the republics, and separatists had to be satisfied with sovereignty within a new Union. Seen from the perspective of real decisionmaking competences, this arrangement would have given most to the separatists, as Sovereignty is placed in the separatist half of the Institutional Spectrum.

 Further research needs to be done to find out why republican sovereignty was insufficient for the separatists in general, though it is clear why it was insufficient for the Baltic separatists.

200. Suny, <u>Roots of the national question</u>, pp.39-41. See note 128.

201. See George J. Church, <u>The End of the U.S.S.R</u> TIME, December 23 1991, p.9.

202. See on early developments of CIS Ann Sheehy, <u>Commonwealth of Independent States: An Uneasy Compromise</u> RFE/RL Research Report, 10 January 1992, pp.1-5.

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