Among the first significant developments to occur in the Soviet Union after Iurii Andropov assumed the post of General Secretary of the CPSU in November 1982 was the announcement of an intensified campaign against corruption, accompanied by changes in the leadership of both the Committee of State Security (KGB) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD). That the police apparatus and the problem of crime were areas of immediate concern for the new Party leader was not surprising, since corruption had become a burning domestic issue well before Brezhnev died. But the long-time KGB associations of both Andropov and the new Minister of Internal Affairs, Vitalii Fedorchuk, together with the exceptionally severe attack on the internal affairs apparatus which ensued in the next year, added a new dimension to these developments and raised important questions about the relationship between the KGB and the MVD.

As described by Soviet sources, the functions of the two police organizations are distinct: the Ministry of Internal Affairs is responsible for preserving public order within the country and protecting Soviet citizens from ordinary crime, while the Committee of State Security, in addition to its multifarious foreign activities, deals primarily with so-called “crimes against the state” perpetrated by alleged enemies of the Soviet system. The KGB and the MVD

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1. See Pravda, 18. Dec. 1982, p. 2, where it was announced that Vitalii Fedorchuk, who had been USSR KGB Chairman since May 1982, had replaced N. A. Shchelokov as USSR Minister of Internal Affairs. V. M. Chebrikov, a KGB first deputy chairman, was named Chairman of the USSR KGB.

2. The functions of these two organizations are discussed in numerous Soviet publications. Among them are V. M. Manokhin, ed., Sovetskoe administrativnoe pravo (Moscow: Iurid. lit., 1977), pp. 446-49, 454-58; and Iu. M. Kozlov, ed., Sovetskoe administrativnoe pravo: Upravlenie v oblasti administrativno-politicheskoi deiatel'nosti (Moscow: Iurid. lit., 1979), pp. 5-16, 68-201. In addition to its crime-fighting responsibilities, the MVD has a variety of other functions, including administration of labor camps and prisons, the internal passport system, automobile inspection, firefighting, supervision of internal transport, and administration of internal and convoy troops, while the KGB is responsible for guarding the borders and, of course, extensive foreign activities. The discussion here will be devoted mainly to the internal police functions of the two groups.
are portrayed as working in close cooperation toward the goals of protecting Soviet society and state. This image has been largely accepted by Western sovietologists, who seem to conceive of the two law enforcement agencies as a "police community" or a unified interest group with common goals and concerns.3

A closer look at the two police organizations, however, reveals a more complicated relationship, which has been fraught with tension and conflict over the years. The source of this conflict lies in the fact that the Party itself has the ultimate control over the legal system and can interfere in the legal process whenever there is some political concern that overrides its stated commitment to socialist legality. Since the line between crimes that are viewed by the Party as political, or representing a threat to state security, and those that are non-political, has been subject to considerable fluctuation, the distinction between the legal spheres of ordinary and political crime—and hence between the functions of the two police groups—has been blurred. As one Western scholar has said, "in Soviet conditions, any offence or category of offences can receive a political character."4 Though Soviet leaders at various stages have tried to rationalize the administration of justice by promoting the rule of law and defining the respective tasks of the police organs, Party dominance over the legal system has frequently hampered these efforts.

The relationship between the ordinary and the security (or the political) police has been further complicated by the regime's demonstrably ambivalent attitude toward the administration of justice, arising from the conflicting goals of socialist legality and total political conformity. Efforts to combat ordinary crime effectively by means of an efficient and strong regular police force have been thwarted by the leadership's need to preserve its dominance through a powerful security police. As a result, the police apparatus as a whole has undergone numerous changes in function and organization, with the powers of the security police vis-à-vis the regular police waxing and waning in accordance with the political climate, but remaining supreme.

Continued encroachments by the state security organs on the authority of the internal affairs apparatus have not only weakened the latter's effectiveness in fighting ordinary crime and created friction within the police system; they have also had far-reaching political implications. During the Stalin era, when the security police gradually achieved near dominance over Party and
