

Excerpt From the Diary of Anatoly Chernyaev
Gorbachev's Views of Erich Honecker

11 October, Wednesday, 1989 I have read the record of conversation of M.S. [Gorbachev] with Honecker in Berlin. I spoke with him [Gorbachev] about this. Shakhnazarov was present. M.S. called Honecker an "asshole" [mudak]. He, Gorbachev added, could have said to his [East German] lieutenants: I have undergone four operations, I am 78 year old, the stormy time requires too much strength, let me go, I have done my job. Then he might have kept his place in history. Shakh[nazarov] and I voiced our doubts that even if he had done so he would have kept his place in history. 2-3 years ago it might have been possible. Today he has already been cursed by his people.. . The Politburo [of the SED] is in session for the second day in Berlin. [future Honecker's successor Egon] Krenz has promised "to raise a question" about changes (to our Ambassador [Vyacheslav Kochemassov] for transmittal to Gorbachev). Honecker warned him: [if you do it] you will become my enemy. However, Krenz seems to have taken the step. What is about to happen?

Source: Anatoly Chernyaev, diary entry, 11 October 1989, trans. Vladislav Zubok, Notes of Anatoly Chernyaev, The Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Cold War International History Project, *Documents and Papers*, http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1409&fuseaction=topics.home (accessed May 14, 2008).