Gorbachev’s New Political Thinking, the Fall of the Berlin Wall, and German Reunification

1. Gorbachev and the New Political Thinking
   - interdependence and mutual security
   - abandonment of class struggle –common human values
   - reducing the military factor (third world conflict—withdrawal from Afghanistan)
   - mutual security—reasonable sufficiency, defensive defense, rejection of deterrence
   - abandonment of Clausevitz’s theory:
     Georgii Arbatov: “We will deprive you of an enemy.”
   - INF negotiations: acceptance of zero-zero option, inspection
   - START Treaty (deep cuts)
   - 1988 UN speech: unilateral disarmament (500,000 troop cut)
   - rejection of the Brezhnev doctrine
   - danger of de-ideologization

2. 1989 Eastern European Revolution and the Fall of the Berlin Wall
   - Testing Gorbachev’s rejection of the Brezhnev doctrine
   - May, Hungary: Nemeth’s liberalization, (demolition of fences at Austrian border)
   - June, Tiananmen Incident
   - June: Poland: Round Table, Solidarity’s landslide victory in election
   - July-August, East Germans sought asylum in W. German embassy in Hungary, Czechoslovakia;
   - GDR citizens crossed the border to Austria
   - September, Hungary voids agreement with GDR to enforce visa restrictions, 15,000 GDR citizens
cross to West: Czechoslovakia closed borders to Hungary for GDR citizens; East Germans flocked
to Czechoslovakia
   - New Forum formed in GDR, Leipzig demonstration
   - October, GDR citizens in Czechoslovakia allowed to emigrate to W. Germany
   - October 7, Gorbachev’s visit to GDR (40th anniversary of GDR): anniversary celebration
   - October 9, Leipzig demonstration, no police intervention (turning point)
   - October 16, over 100,000 demonstrate in Leipzig
   - October 24, Egon Krenz succeeds Honecker
   - November 4, demonstration of 1 million in Berlin (Stefan Heym spoke)
   - November 9, border to W. Berlin opened: Fall of the Berlin Wall

3. Unification of German
   - November, Kohl’s 10-point plan for new all-German structure
   - GDR slogan: “We are the people” to “We are one people”
   - July 1, 1990, FRG-GDR economic union
   - Two plus four negotiations
   - July: Gorbachev’s acceptance of German reunification
     - NATO membership in exchange for German economic aid (5 million DM)
   - September, 2 plus 4 treaty
   - October 1, four powers agreed to end their power in Berlin
   - October 3, GDR ceased to exist. German reunification

Question: Was German reunification by West Germany’s absorption of East Germany the only option? What other alternatives existed, and why were those alternatives not taken?