

Anatoly Chernyaev, Personal Memorandum to Mikhail Gorbachev
November 11, 1989

11.11.89 to M. S.

Mikhail Sergeevich!

On the eve of his visit to Japan, A. N. [Yakovlev] called me in so that he could “test drive” some international problems on me.

We started talking about everything else, and I felt an acute internal grievance in him. In fact, it has been slipping before, but now especially. And I understood immediately what it was caused by, because it was painful to my ears, too, when at the last Politburo meeting, as if in passing, you placed him under Medvedev’s leadership” One can only guess why [you did] that. But there are also interests of our cause [at stake]. If you want to get a real platform for the XXVIII Congress, it would be risky to rely on Medvedev. He is too “correct,” too much of a prisoner of the “political economy school,” in which he was educated; too cautious. Mainly, he is completely devoid of political imagination. Meanwhile, we are talking now not only about the development of the concept of perestroika, but about a change of the theoretical bases of our policy and the development of society, about a new leap of fundamental significance in the history of socialist thought, about a dialectic surmounting of Lenin. And that relates to all spheres—from the heights of our beliefs to the basic details of party work. Of course it is impossible either in the pre-congress CC (Central Committee) platform, or even in the report at the Congress to develop all this in a proper form, but this issue should be raised. Otherwise the Congress will not fulfill its historic mission.

And at a moment like this, you are giving (obviously due strictly to passing and tactical considerations, because I do not believe that you do not see the difference in Yakovlev and Medvedev’s potentials) today’s “Bukharin” into service to today’s ... well, to which of those people can I compare him ... “Pyatakov.” Due to this fact alone, Yakovlev will not work to his fullest. And to use his potential later, “on the eve” of the Congress, so to speak, in an “intimate fashion”—wouldn’t it be too late, too big a rush? Without even mentioning the human aspect of this ... dignity, pride, age, political prestige after all, and so on.

I apologize. I believe it was my duty [to say this], and not only because of my personal attitude toward A. N. [Yakovlev].

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