

The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev

1986

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At the department¹ everyone wished each other to celebrate the New Year 1987 “in the same positions.” And it is true, at the last session of the CC (Central Committee) Secretariat on December 30th, five people were replaced: heads of CC departments, obkom [Oblast Committee] secretaries, heads of executive committees. The *Politizdat*² director Belyaev was confirmed as editor of *Soviet Culture*. [Yegor] Ligachev³ addressed him as one would address a person, who is getting promoted and entrusted with a very crucial position. He said something like this: we hope that you will make the newspaper truly an organ of the Central Committee, that you won’t squander your time on petty matters, but will carry out state and party policies... In other words, culture and its most important control lever were entrusted to a Stalinist pain-in-the neck dullard. What is that supposed to mean?

Menshikov’s case is also shocking to me. It is clear that he is a bastard in general. I was never favorably disposed to him; he was tacked on [to our team] without my approval. I had to treat him roughly to make sure no extraterritoriality and privileges were allowed in relation to other consultants, and even in relation to me (which could have been done through [Vadim] Zagladin,⁴ with whom they are dear friends). I resisted the proposition of him becoming head of the sector after Mostovets: [Boris] Ponomarev⁵ tried to persuade me and to pressure me, and only some unfavorable rumor about Menshikov that reached B.N. [Ponomarev] at that moment helped me to prevent him from getting that post. And more in that vein. But that’s not what I wanted to mention. I wanted to mention the indifference with which everyone met his banishment: as if it is just routine, as if everything that he has done over these 2-3 years—and he knew how to do his work—should be crossed out and forgotten. That’s the value of our work.

Renewal of the staff continues and speeds up before the Congress.⁶ Zagladin told me that [Andrei] Aleksandrov⁷ is planning to leave. He already spoke about it with Gorbachev. He did not try to persuade him to stay. Aleksandrov explained to Vadim [Zagladin] that “since he will not make the team” (i.e. he will not be elected to the CC), he does not feel comfortable staying...” and all of a sudden B.N. spoke about this with me. “Did you hear?” he says.

– I heard! – I was surprised by his reaction. He was all confused and tense, stepped away from the telephones again and started saying: How could that be! He (i.e. Aleksandrov) has such experience, such knowledge, he is so intelligent and educated,

¹ International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU

² Political publishing agency

³ Yegor Ligachev, Politburo member, and number two person in the party hierarchy in the early period of perestroika. Was brought by Andropov from Siberia as one of promising politicians.

⁴ Vadim Zagladin—Deputy Head of the International Department of the CC CPSU

⁵ Boris Ponomarev—Head of the International Department of the CC CPSU

⁶ XXVII Congress of the CPSU

⁷ Andrei Alexandrov-Agentov—Brezhnev’s foreign policy aid, who continued in this position under Gorbachev, and was replaced by Chernyaev in March 1986

how could it be that all these qualities are not needed? You know, —B.N. went on—I was told that it is because he wants to get benefits and a large pension, which he would not have if he retired from a position other than that of the General Secretary’s adviser. What, is he so poor? Or so materialistic?

– You know, B.N. – I said – it is indeed difficult to make it on the 200 rubles of the regular pension.

– Really?!

– Yes, – I said.

This entire conversation was on Ponomarev’s side a conversation about himself. It is not without reason that he also asked how old Aleksandrov was (68). He was very worried about the consequences of the Congress for “himself.” He arouses burning contempt in me—all his life he was one of those people who believed that it is not “him for the revolution, but the revolution for him” (a quote from Lenin, recently recalled by Ligachev in a speech in Baku). He is incapable of appreciating Gorbachev’s role; he cannot acknowledge either his talent at statesmanship or his policies, since Gorbachev for him is absolute evil. He, Gorbachev, not only ends Ponomarev’s career, which has run for over half a century (under all the regimes), but crosses out and sends into oblivion all his “collected works” (which were not written by him), all his pretensions at appearing as the “theoretician of our Leninist party.” He is not even allowing him to play Kuusinen’s role (under Khrushchev).

A curious detail in this context: Cervetti and Ciarononte—members of the Italian Communist Party Politburo—are in Moscow right now. They are on a holiday, but are also supposed to prepare [Alessandro] Natta’s⁸ visit and meeting with Gorbachev. Gorbachev asked Zagladin how things were going “with this:” drafts of summary statements, communiqués, problems, remarks on their program theses (for their Congress in March). Zagladin answered that everything was being prepared. Well, what I’m getting at is: Gorbachev said that he would not meet with them, but Ligachev would, so to give him everything that was necessary. Zagladin asked him: Ligachev will meet with them alone? Gorbachev: yes, alone, i.e. without Ponomarev... !!!

So that’s that. And it makes sense. M.S. knows that it is exactly Ponomarev who “demanded his ideological rights” and told the Italians how to live and work in their own home. He is exactly the reason why the relations between the PCI [Italian Communist Party] and the CPSU were coming to a nearly complete breach.

He knows that the Italians despise Ponomarev and want nothing to do with him. That is why it would be just absurd to “let out” Ponomarev on the Italians now, when they come to Moscow to prepare a meeting between two General Secretaries; a meeting, which should become the starting point of a new era not only in relations with the PCI,

⁸ Alessandro Natta—General Secretary of the Italian Communist Party

but possibly with all of ICM [International Communist movement]. [“Letting out” Ponomarev] would mean showing them that we have not forgotten the “weight of the past,” and that in essence we are not planning to change anything. So the option with “Ligachev alone” is not only the attitude toward Ponomarev personally, it is a change of course.

But for B.N. it will be a dreadful message. (Zagladin, by the way, is undecided about whether he should tell Ponomarev that he is being factored out of the very work that he claimed as his greatest merit before the Party... or should he find out from Ligachev or somebody else?... Technically, Zagladin is his immediate subordinate and cannot conceal such matters from him...)

Today in the program “Vremya”⁹ there was an exchange of addresses by Reagan and Gorbachev to the Soviet and American people, respectively. The idea is American, but M.S. [Gorbachev] did not hesitate for a second... At any rate, Hitler, for example, would not be allowed to address the Soviet people even in 1940. So here is an example of the change in political mindset that is also expected of the people.

January 6th, 1986.

And so B.N. was left out [of the meeting] with Cervetti and Ciaromonte. Ligachev received them.

By the way, Ciaromonte asked Ligachev’s opinion about Yevtushenko’s speech at the RSFSR Writers’ Congress (about which Western propaganda is buzzing). Ligachev was very professional in his answer, saying: I do not see anything reprehensible in it, although I probably would have spoken differently about those matters. The most important is how Yevtushenko spoke; it was in the spirit of the present day policies and the atmosphere that we want to create in life. The only thing I would not have said, were I in his place, is that the theme of Stalin is “taboo” here. We, Ligachev said, have lived through it, suffered through it, rethought it, and turned the page over for good. Right now we have a huge load of important new work and concerns, and we have no need to raise the past and heat up passions that would distract us from daily problems.

From this I reach the conclusion that *The Children of Arbat*¹⁰ will never see the light of day. Bikinin confirmed this (he is now [Alexander] Yakovlev’s¹¹ deputy, the latter gave him my copy to read). I asked him why (and he is a very progressive, unorthodox, smart guy). He replied that right now it cannot be published.

⁹ Main TV evening news program

¹⁰ Anatoly Rybakov, *The Children of Arbat*—book about growing up in Stalin’s times, which was published only in 1987 and instantly became a national phenomenon because of its candid description of the Stalinist regime and political persecution.

¹¹ Alexander Yakovlev—member of Central Committee, who was elevated by Gorbachev, and later became his most influential supporter and new thinker.

- Is that your opinion, or the “official” one?
- It’s mine and general. I’ll tell you when I come over.

January 7th, 1986.

Menshikov came over, spent an hour here. He kept trying to figure out (from memory) what it was that he said and where, that got him driven out like that. I sympathized and kept quiet. “I’m sorry that I came to complain,” he said, “But there is nobody else to go to. I tried Zagladin, since we’ve been best friends for 30 years. But he said: I’ve told you everything there was to tell, and we have nothing more to talk about. Sorry, I have pressing matters to attend to.” And Menshikov started crying.

Such is Zagladin. It’s hideous... Even though in Zagladin’s place, Menshikov would have probably done the same thing...

Then for an hour more I endured Boris Likhachev’s lamentations over the phone. He is being cast out of *The Communist* by [Richard] Kosolapov.¹² But I cannot defend him because he’s a scatterbrain and a blabbermouth, a talker and an inveterate liar to boot. I told him to go to Zimyanin, but only if there is something serious regarding Kosolapov, because otherwise it would be ridiculous. There is “discontent” about Kosolapov brewing at the top. Ponomarev recounted that M.S. had supposedly spoken in the circle of [Central Committee] members and candidates about the fact that social sciences and philosophy are too bookish. “They write their dissertations, but do not participate in the real events that the Party is submerged in. *The Communist*, for example, is headed by a CC member, but we see no pay-offs. You, Mikhail Vasilievich (Zimyanin), promised to work on this, but haven’t done anything yet...”

January 12th, 1986.

The night of the 9th [I took a train] from Paveletsky [terminal] to Tambov, [going to] an oblast-wide pre-Congress party conference. I got back today at 5:30 in the morning, also by train. The party conference itself was on Friday and Saturday. The report was on the boring side, too factual, too charged, and too intentionally self-critical. On the other hand, there were debates. Gorbachev’s initiative has liberated people. Of course, they had prepared notes and haven’t yet learned to speak without relying on a piece of paper, but it is already very different from what I heard 5 years ago in Ryazan. Courage broke through, and the desire to change, to acknowledge, and readiness to put an end to the disgraceful practices—personal as well as public. And many things were simply at the level of real intelligent discussion, with analysis and ideas, and all this was

¹² Richard Kosolapov—editor of main party journal *The Communist*.

done without looking back at what this or that superior might say (or think). People spoke from the heart, and not for the sake of witticisms, not to parade bravery and frankness. That's how quickly Gorbachev's era is beginning to show. And what people! Communists... the name of communist is revived, people are beginning to value it... A dairywoman... she has everything: achievements, milk yields, extra yields, fame, etc. And she spoke of school reforms and about how she is teaching children on her farm to combine learning with labor... and how that should be done... or she "generalizes experience," herself a young country girl. In general among the presenters, the women appeared stronger, more sincere, and pert.

I understood that I had to speak. I was seated next to the chairman. I was in the first place everywhere; it was evident to everybody that I was the "principal person" (despite the fact that there were ministers and others from Moscow in the delegation). By the way, I did not get the sense that I would be the "principal person" when Razumov (first deputy of the Party Organizational Department) called me and said, "You're being sent to Tambov." But, it seems Podolsky was told that I'm not only deputy head of the Department, but also a candidate CC member, and was sent foremost in this capacity. So when the chairman called me to speak, the mention of my "regalia" caused a stir, since I was, in fact, the only person "from the CC staff" among the 800 conference participants.

I was nervous the night before my presentation (though nervous doesn't even begin to describe it). I could not decide what I should talk about, a foreign affairs man amidst these people, who are concerned with life-related, practical, concrete matters, and who are speaking in such a new, qualified way about their work. In the evening I mentally sketched at least some "connection" to what has already been said on this stage.

But as always, even from the days on the front, when you are completely engaged in the work and there is no way back, a cool calmness sets in, all the nerves quiet down and you assume full control of yourself, with ease and outward confidence. I had planned to speak for about 12-15 minutes, ended up speaking for 22. [The audience] listened in complete stillness. But this is not very revealing, because a provincial public is well wishing and grateful. A surer indicator is my personal feeling that a "contact with the audience" appeared immediately and lasted until the end.

Then was the oblast committee Plenum. Since the oblast party leadership "disappeared" upon the closing of the conference and I turned out to be the most senior (from the CC!), I lead the Plenum on [Yuri] Afanasiev's¹³ prompting. Podolsky was elected, some secretaries, bureau members. And once again [I performed] like a regular, as if this type of thing is habitual for me... But if I hadn't spoken at the conference, I wouldn't have had such "impudence" in me—there was no moral right for me to "determine" the leadership for a 100,000 member party organization.¹⁴

¹³ Yuri Afanasiev--liberal thinker and later head of the Humanities University in Moscow.

¹⁴ Anatoly Chernyaev was elected as representative to the XXVII CPSU Congress as representative of the Tambov oblast party organization.

Lev Mikhailovich (second secretary) almost organized a trip to Michurinsk (right after the conference), to visit the Michurin and A. Gerasimov museum, and to take the train to Moscow from there. I liked the idea, but during one of the breaks he came up to me and said: “the first [secretary] wants to go with you, I have to stand to attention.” I responded by declining the whole trip, not only because it would have been interesting for me to go with Lev Mikhailovich, and boring and strained with Yevgeny Mikhailovich (the first secretary), but also because what kind of a persona am I, that I should be accompanied by the first secretary, especially after such intense days! And I did not succumb to Podolsky’s subsequent persuasions. But he didn’t leave me alone to just walk about Tambov in the remaining hours before the train (and how I wanted to, together just with Leva Onikov)! I had to walk around with the first [secretary]... we strolled down streets, went into some shops, came out to the quay of Una. It is beautiful, well-kept. [We passed] by the mansion of the merchant Aseev—supplier of cloth for overcoats for His Imperial Majesty’s army...

Then was the train. Almost completely empty sleeping car. Long conversations with Onikov—about the party’s past, the reasons for disgraceful practices, about the “decline” of the Russian bases in the “pan-Soviet” party (second secretaries, not quite right...), about B.N. and his “party history,” about Stalin, Yakovlev, our colleagues, and about what will happen to the CC staff after the Congress, about the “logic” of staff changes, etc. etc. He is very interesting, very well informed, and thinks deeply, this Russified ideological Armenian.

January 13th, 1986.

The most permanent impression of Tambov was that it’s very uncomfortable being in the position of the “big leadership from Moscow.” Especially since I sincerely considered all those people—the delegates, party members, obkom secretaries—to be more significant and useful than I am. They are working, they have a real pursuit. And I, elevated to the high levels of the hierarchy by the long arm of coincidence and “apparatus logic,” am in general an amateur, moreover not of the right profile to lead a 100,000 member organization.

Only after the speech, that is—after having done something for them, did I feel that I had some “right” to be in the position, in which I found myself, namely—senior in the party hierarchy.

January 18th, 1986.

Gorbachev’s statement. It seems he really decided to end the arms race **at all costs**. He is going for that very “risk,” in which he has boldly recognized the absence of risk, because no one will attack us even if we disarm totally. And in order to revive the

country and set it on a steady track, it is necessary to free it from the burden of the arms race, which is depleting more than just economics.

My God! How lucky we are that in the PB there was a man—Andropov—who showed some truly “authoritative” wisdom, who discovered Gorbachev and pulled him out of the provinces!.. And him personally: while there are, I think, 95 regions and oblasts in the USSR. And then he stuck him to Brezhnev!

If Andropov hadn’t found Gorbachev, who would we be left with? The pretenders for [Konstantin] Chernenko’s place were: [Viktor] Grishin, [Grigory] Romanov, and [Andrei] Gromyko.¹⁵ One can imagine what kind of a fate would have been waiting for Russia if any one of them had taken lead, especially after Chernenko. It’s terrible to imagine!..

But we’ve got a rare leader: a very smart man, educated, “alive,” honest, with ideas and imagination. And he is brave. Myths and taboos (including ideological prejudices) are nothing to him. He will get over any kind of those.

Yet, there is still the staff problem. The turnover [of staff] is almost total. At every Secretariat and Politburo dozens [of members are being changed]. But who takes their place? Is there any assurance that they are capable of implementing Gorbachev’s policies, and in the manner of Gorbachev? (It’s not even a matter of wishing to do it, but the ability!) Some examples are showing that—alas!—they are not.

During the week, which swept me off my feet and quickly drove out the Tambov mindset, some things took place.

Gorbachev’s interview for *L’Humanite*. A dozen questions, ranging from “is there a new October Revolution in the USSR right now” to the treatment of Jews: we, French communists need this (“we can understand!”) to fight anti-sovietism at home.

And again B.N. was excluded from this. M.S. assigned [Mikhail] Zimyanin¹⁶ to prepare material for the interview. B.N. started to object, said he would call, but he didn’t. Zimyanin asked me to settle it with Ponomarev somehow: you, he says, know how to do that with your “even temper” and “self-control” (!)... He flattered me.

I didn’t say anything to B.N., but my heart was bleeding. And it started bleeding even more when I saw the drafts that the interview preparation group composed. What squalor! There’s not a trace of the Gorbachev tone. And these are people from the economics department (where they theoretically should understand the “new strategy”).

¹⁵ Politburo members who were seen as possible contenders for the position of General Secretary after Chernenko’s death. Viktor Grishin—First Secretary of the Moscow City Party organization, Grigory Romanov—First Secretary of Leningrad Oblast party organization, Andrei Gromyko—Soviet Foreign Minister.

¹⁶ Conservative Secretary of the Central Committee, was removed by Gorbachev in January 1987.

They are from Zamyatin's department, where they theoretically should know how to write about the new strategy of peace by the year 2000.

It is astounding. Whatever one may say, but despite, or maybe because of, Ponomarev, our "school of composition" is incomparably better. And there are more thinking and intellectually responsible people here than in other departments.

But, we are not in charge. I wrote (or re-wrote) about relations between the CPSU and the PCF [French Communist Party], about anti-sovietism in the context of Soviet-French relations, about Afghanistan, and about the revolutionary nature of the planned socio-economic improvements. I don't know whether it will be possible to incorporate it. And I don't want to officially make contact, so Zimyanin cannot present the matter as if our department also took part in composing it. Kozlov and Gusenkov [participating] in the preparatory group is one thing, but deputy head is another!

Yesterday was Ponomarev's 81st birthday. Since Zagladin is at a Congress in Turkmenia, I had to speak (in the company of select individuals). I spoke nicely (afterwards everyone congratulated me: "at my best," "content and form"), but beforehand I felt quite uncomfortable because hypocrisy was unavoidable. The value of his merits and fine qualities, the ones that he has, is canceled out by his other character traits, but you can't speak about that. He was moved. Again he recalled his Bolshevik youth, but also took notice of my run over the new era. [He said that] we, the Department (and implying him personally) do not need to break ourselves in order to fit into the new working style. And this is probably true: [at our Department] criticism was never driven out; we valued our personal opinions rather than being yes-men; we had great freedom of speech in discussion; initiative was always encouraged although almost never realized. However, if one considers the content of our work, then it's the exact opposite: realism in estimating our "object" was present only in discussions, B.N. did not allow it up to the official level. Halleluiah-ness and "glazing of reality" still predominates here. Accordingly, the nature of [our] work in the ICM: it has long ago become sluggishly anachronistic, totally removed from reality. In all of this the main fault rests on Ponomarev, who does not want to witness the breakdown of the "empire," which since his Komsomol days he's considered to be at the forefront of progress.

Now about the most important episode, that can seriously change my life. On January 14th Yurka Arbatov¹⁷ showed up at my office. It was a work-related visit before his departure to India for the Palme Commission. But instead of reading papers and listening to me, he started a strange conversation. "You know," he says, "The day before yesterday Sashka Yakovlev went 'South' (to Gorbachev, who is there preparing his political report for the Congress). We had gotten into a conversation about Aleksandrov's retirement." (General Secretary's adviser, with whom, by the way, I had yet another squabble yesterday about the texts of letters to the PCF, the social democrats and revolutionary democrats in relation to Gorbachev's statement about nuclear disarmament.) So I tell him," Arbatov goes on, "tell M.S. that he will not find a better

¹⁷ Georgy Arbatov, Director of the U.S.A. and Canada Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

replacement than Chernyaev... he knows foreign affairs, knows them from the CC's point of view, he's honest, smart, experienced. Sashka agreed. I don't know whether he already spoke with M.S... But mind you, don't even think about declining: you'll land both me and him in some shit."

About the same time the phone rang. It was Yakovlev. He is already back in Moscow. Says that M.S. asked that I personally look over the ICM section of his report, and let him know what I think was needed there. Of course I said that I was ready to do it. And then he adds: I probably messed up your life...

So Arbatov's jabber turned out to be true. I tried to tell him, Arbatov, why--I'm not the right man. He waved his arms. "Are you in your right mind? If the General Secretary, and what a General Secretary—Gorbachev!—offered me to be a reviewer (not an adviser!) for him, I would jump at it without second thought. And not because of profit or the status, but to help him in the great work that he has begun. Don't you want to help him? And he really needs intelligent advice, fresh ideas..."

When Arbatov left, I started thinking. The only thing that makes me think "for" it, is that it is impossible to decline. That would be indecent exactly along the lines of Arbatov's reasoning.

Everything else is against it: even though he likes me, Gorbachev doesn't really know me. I will immediately disappoint him by lacking the energy that he needs right now, and that he is counting on me to have. In "technical" aspects I will be in sharp contrast with the retired Aleksandrov, who could read ten ciphered memos, the same number of other papers, and then clearly and conclusively report the most important information to the "chief," and from memory, no papers. And I don't have the character to associate on an equal level with the MFA, the KGB, and the other international departments, and to stand up for what in their propositions would not "appeal" to me, i.e. to lead a permanent serious polemics with them.

And then, I'm tired. I am 65, I want a steady life, more rest and more time for myself, books, exhibitions, theater, the Conservatory, for the loved ones and other women. The bustling position of an adviser does not suit me, not to mention that I don't want to lose that (quite considerable) level of independence that I have in my position (however, that's under Ponomarev, what will come after him is difficult to surmise). I don't want to leave this environment—the Department where I am known, respected, where the relations are natural, where you know how to behave in any situation.

So that is that! Again, except for a feeling of duty and, why not say it—a feeling of vanity, I'm not longing to be "there..."

January 26th, 1986.

One lady I know told me about all the reshuffling: about Grishin, and about Dementieva, and about Pastukhov—that he is [being sent as] ambassador to Denmark, and about Zakharov—who is [being made] second secretary of the Moscow City Committee. We in the CC apparatus find out about all the reshuffling from the Secretariat protocols (i.e. a week later), while Moscow finds out ahead of time.

Zagladin tells me that a doctor came to visit them yesterday (she is their “personal [doctor]”—a family friend, was even at their wedding) and told them that the doctors of Ponomarev, [Vasily] Kuznetsov, [Mikhail] Zimyanin, [Konstantin] Rusakov, and [Ivan] Kapitonov had been given notice that soon they would be transferred to the “second division.” I asked him, what is a “second division?” “That,” Zagladin says, “is where you and I are.” I am amazed! Either Kremlevka¹⁸ superiors “figured it out” ahead of time, or they already know about the decision to retire the abovementioned, which will be made in the near future (and can be made only at the level of Gorbachev)!

... However, these are “trifles” in comparison to Moscow’s January 24 citywide conference. Yeltsin’s report on the symptomatic character reflecting the depth and scale of change can be placed at the rank of the XX Congress about the cult. Which is to say, it is now a real return to Lenin “norms” and order in party life and work ([judging by] the spirit, the words, the approach). The whole world is now trying to get *Moskovskaya Pravda* (in which the report was published)...

In the spirit of the times, but also partially from hard hypocrisy, is that Grishin has been put in the conference presidium (since he is still a PB member)... Of course he is a worthless individual, and from here [stem] all his faults and defects. He is a product of the Brezhneviada... even though he’s not passive, not one of the “what could one have done” (when one was given orders!)... Nevertheless, there is talk around Moscow that two stars should be stripped from him.

Yesterday I met with Iskra and her husband, the well-known philosopher Gulyga. I am always amazed: here are people from highbrow intelligentsia, Iskra is also a party activist on a regional scale—she was a delegate at a regional (Sevastopol’) party conference. I concede: they are among the people who do not believe (the people Yeltsin spoke about), those who lost faith. Alright. But how can one remain indifferent to the new leadership’s very determination for change?! Iskra didn’t even read Yeltsin: Gulyga summarized it to her from “Pravda!” And once again they started saying that [Mikhail] Zoshchenko’s work still cannot be published in full. So it seems they’re waiting: when full publication is authorized, then the change will really have come! That’s the scale on which the intelligentsia is measuring what’s going on!!

Ponomarev’s “isolation” is more and more distinctly felt at the Department. He is removed even from matters that are directly related to the Department. It seems [these changes] are reaching the “outside world” as well. Lunkov is coming down hard on him and Zagladin from Rome. In almost every ciphered note he retells the opinions of PCI

¹⁸ Special hospital and medical service department for Central Committee members.

leaders (or maybe he is taking it from what's been said before). It's pretty much—"they are all delighted by Gorbachev and the changes we are undergoing. Only in the International Department's leadership nothing is changing, the Brezhnevites have a firm seat there and could care less about the changes. They're acting as if Cominform was still here." Ciaromonte supposedly said: "What can we do! It worked out like this over the decades that a mere mention of the CC International Department has the same effect on our members as a red rag on a bull. But do not think," he goes on, "that this transfers to the current CC leadership. Not at all. We are very enthusiastic about it and expect much from it..."

The Italians are now openly naming Zagladin as the leader of our intrigue with Cossuta.¹⁹ It seems that they have exposed their connections, including the financing of the publications Cossuta patronized. I told Vadim about it and grumbled to Ponomarev too, saying that these methods won't yield anything, we'll only set up Cossuta and disclose ourselves. These are not the times to fold the fraternal parties into a pro-soviet sheep pen with such methods. But alas! Our Ponomarev cannot imagine our communist movement in any other form, and that's why his career is over (and not only because he is 81).

I am still reading Pikul's *The Favorite*. Reading slowly. It's very educational and you believe that our history was made just this way... with consequences even for the present times. And his Catherine is quite enticing... I am once again amazed at the assimilating power of the Russian nation. She would not have become The Great if she had not forced herself to become Russian. And she made herself Russian, and did it sincerely, with pleasure, irreversibly, and not only out of ambition; it was partially by the natural law of repulsion from her former nationality... I cannot imagine her on the English or French throne, although it is Western Europe!

January 29th, 1986.

One can sense that our department (Ponomarev) is being factored out more and more. Gorbachev purposely arranged not to invite Ponomarev to the talks with Natta. Zagladin was present, but officially (in print) he wasn't named as a participant (he is only present in the photo and TV [sic]).

I saw the text of Gorbachev's speech at the dinner in honor of Natta. The text is very strong, in the Gorbachev style. I read the transcript of the first day (internal questions, but relations between the CPSU-PCI and international affairs were also touched upon). It is a definite turn around in our dealing with the ICM, a completely new

¹⁹ Cossuta was a member of the PCI leadership who for many years lead the pro-CPSU oppositional group in the party.

course and style of relations with communist parties. The argument about “eurocommunism,” which comrade Ponomarev has been fighting for the past 10 years, is now added to the “petty” phenomenon category (a term from Gorbachev’s speech). It decidedly needs to be stopped so it does not hinder the solidary actions of fraternal parties.

In the one-on-one talk, Natta delicately raised the question of “our support” of Cossuta. And in effect he received a statement from M.S. that that was “unacceptable:” the relations are only with the leadership, General Secretary with General Secretary—open and with a level of confidence. Internal party affairs are internal party affairs. (Consequently, the Shaposhnikov-Ponomarev option with the Finns is also defunct, I think).

Ponomarev expressed his “displeasure” to me in passing. “With Natta for 8 hours! 8 hours! For what? Who needs that? What’s the use?!” Thereby he places himself in the “out of bounds” position.

Last week Yermovsky brought me the foreign relations section of the Congress political report from Yakovlev (in Volynskoe). It was great. I corrected some things, wrote some.

He, Yakovlev, has become conceited and stuck up. A new “center of power” has formed: Yakovlev, [Georgy] Razumovsky, [Vadim] Medvedev, [Anatoly] Lukyanov. They are near the General [Secretary]. They sway personal destinies and direct policy.

However, the day before yesterday a group headed by Slezko (Ligachev’s former assistant, now Yakovlev’s first deputy; the former ideological secretary of the Tomsk obkom) was sent to the Gorky dacha in order to finish up a draft of the Program²⁰ based on the four-million remarks and suggestions that turned up as the result of the nationwide discussion of the “new edition.” At the same time, there’s a rumor that the Program will be “moved up” (i.e. will not be adopted at the Congress)? Really? On the other hand, why not? Discussion has shown that there are so many suggestions for amendment and improvement, that it would be better to postpone it for now... Perhaps for a special Plenum, not until the next Congress! And it would be right, because in its present state it does not meet the “April Plenum strategy.”

I am deeply convinced that Ponomarev will not “live past” the Congress. What will happen? Zagladin told me about his conversation with Gorbachev after the first day of talks with Natta. He says Gorbachev sat down, crossed his arms, and asked sarcastically: “Well? Shall we liquidate the communist movement, or rebuild it?” He answered Zagladin’s obvious answer with the question: “What is the main problem, how should we rebuild it?”

²⁰ The Communist Party Program

Zagladin supposedly replied (and if he did, he was right): “first and foremost, we must have a line that the CPSU hasn’t had for many years. And we must accept the parties’ equality in practice.” Gorbachev took this up, but said: “we will not develop a line in time for tomorrow’s talks. However, this is your work (i.e. of the international department), so think, propose. I will say something about this at the Congress.”

I would very much like to speak with Gorbachev “on these subjects...” Speak frankly about how and why we have been helping to drive the ICM to a dead end for 20 plus years.

February 1st, 1986.

Yesterday around five Gorbachev called and offered me to become his adviser. I said that it was of course a big honor, but are you sure that I am the right person for such a job?

– I, he said, am sure. – thus leaving me to decide whether I am sure myself.

– I don’t consider it a promotion, for me it is an increase in responsibility and duty. And, of course, it is interesting to participate first-hand in the new work that you have begun.

– But you won’t be alone... You have probably noticed that Yakovlev is near me a lot these days...

– I noticed. I’ve known him for a long time... I understand that I wouldn’t be alone. However, I’m a poor organizer.

– It’s alright, we’ll figure it out. I liked you for a long time now... from our first trip to Belgium together, do you remember? (Of course! It was 1972, who would have thought that that trip would turn out like that for me!) I like your party spirit (?), your erudition, your composure during critical moments (what did he have in mind?). Well, what do you say?

– One does not refuse such offers, Mikhail Sergeyevich!

– That’s right. How’s your health?

– I’m an athletic person, but the years are telling.

– Well, that’s alright! As soon as I deal with some matters... Lerua (PCF Politburo member, editor of *L’Humanite*) is supposed to visit, I’ll have to give him an interview. Afterwards I will introduce a proposal about you...

Actually, I remembered that he started the conversation from something else.

- What are you doing right now?
- Routine work... Today I read the transcript of your talks with Natta.
- And how was it?
- It was a turning-point event.
- It would be good, if not only the Italians understood that.
- Yes... especially not the Italians.

(I am sure that we both had Ponomarev in mind first and foremost). Gorbachev, of course, didn't know how that very morning B.N. informed his deputies on the outcomes of talks with Natta, and how he directed the composition of a letter about this meeting to select fraternal parties. It followed from this "information," which presented the heart of the matter as totally opposite from what it was, that he, Ponomarev, really did not understand anything. He not only cannot, but he does not want to understand.

His main idea was to convey to the recipients that disagreements were still present and that nothing had really happened. He even "didn't notice" that the argument about Eurocommunism has been delegated to the category of "petty matters." Instinctively he has guessed that he could not evaluate the meeting negatively, and for the telephones (which, he is sure, are bugged) he even said that Gorbachev's speech at the dinner was "based on Marxism-Leninism." However, his main concern was not to give the impression to the fraternal parties that we will remain in fraternal relations with them if they criticize and disagree with the CPSU. Etc., etc.

When I told my secretary that I'm being made the General Secretary's adviser, she started crying. For me and for herself. And this is the right reaction. I don't know what this work will be like, but can only guess judging by previous observations of Aleksandrov. I have a feeling I won't manage it, at least I won't be able to at the level that is necessary for Gorbachev right now. But I will try, and it will shorten my life by several years. My personal life will be reduced to a trifling small size, and freedom will remain only in memories. Only now can I really appreciate the huge freedom I had under Ponomarev, even though for work the results were minimal from this freedom and independence.

Last night I saw a play by Tovstonogov Jr., called "Sholom Alejkhem St., 40" at the Stanislavsky theater. This is an event in our social life. It is evidence of the enormous changes taking place. Moreover, it is real high art, which moves you, brings tears, catches you by the throat.

The theater was overcrowded, but, alas, mainly (95%) by Jewish people, while the people who really need to see it (and feel the guilt) are the Russians. They created this terrible problem, of which we will not be free for decades. The play should be televised

so millions could see it and grasp that the “situation” with the Jewish question is changing: since the times of Mikhoels it had been impossible even to imagine anything like this shown legally on the stage or anywhere else...

February 2nd, 1986.

This morning I was carefully reading *Literaturka*²¹: the continuation of discussion on the social and political qualities of prose, a column about anonymous letters, an article about the understanding of our literature in the West—turns out there are people who want to understand it and therefore should not be “repelled”—this is easiest of all. [There was also discussion] about our art of translation—against Anninsky.

Arbatov came to visit... then we went for a walk. He asked me how I reacted to Gorbachev’s proposition. He knows that he called me. Yurka assured me that everything would be great. And I [assured] him that everything would be bad, that routine work with ciphred telegrams would wear me out.

He told me how the interview for *L’Humanite* was prepared. M.S. called him, asked him to come over saying that what Zagladin and Aleksandrov gave him was boring, banal, impossible. Yurka reworked it in one night. It is better, much better, than what I saw in the version before Zagladin [worked on it]. The passage about the XX Congress is especially important, it is positive. But some things (which I myself wrote earlier) about Afghanistan, about the ICM, about relations between the CPSU and PCF are gone, and that’s regretful. I don’t know at which stage [they were taken out].

Arbatov said that anonymous letters addressed to M.S. are coming from military people, with threats to deal with him like with Khrushchev if he goes on being in favor of disarmament. Lukyanov reported this, but he shouldn’t have, because it is all nonsense. No one can organized a revolt, no military men.

Yurka also “taught” me not to succumb to intimidation from the SDI²² and [space] shuttles: both will die out on their own.

February 3rd, 1986.

Gorbachev called today, just as Shaposhnikov was sitting in my office.

– Hello! I just spoke with Ponomarev. I told him that I’m taking you into my team. And I already signed the draft resolution, sent it around the Politburo.

²¹ *Literaturnaya Gazeta*—a central newspaper devoted to literature and cultural life

²² Strategic Defense Initiative

– Thank you... – and I'm silent. He's also silent, waiting to hear what else I'll say... –Thank you for the trust... – Silence again...

– Are you hesitating?

– No... But as I already said, will I be able to manage? Are you sure?

– I am sure.

– But I have to take care of my work here...

– You have two days. And then start.

[Yevgeny] Shaposhnikov, who was sitting opposite me, guessed that the conversation concerned some kind of assignment. But when I told him what the matter was, he twitched. He even jumped up. As [Karen] Brutents later diagnosed it, many will be warped by this “triumph of justice.”

And, of course, it went around the Department. In the evening Zagladin already called, Aleksandrov informed him that there is a resolution to replace him with me. Zagladin perkily congratulated me and expressed his hope that now we will finally have an opportunity to do what we have planned to do.

Ponomarev sent for me. He was flustered. Tried to present the matter almost as if it happened on his recommendation. But I didn't let him talk at random and told him exactly how it happened.

I must not dawdle. I must make a final effort and try to calmly do what I can. They can't send me “farther than the front.” The only thing I am afraid of is that I won't meet Gorbachev's expectations and plans. And I do not know what he wants from me...

Tomorrow I will have to clear out my stuff that has accumulated here over 20 years.

February 22nd, 1986.

I haven't written for the last two weeks. During this time a transition from the kingdom of relative freedom to the kingdom of absolute necessity took place. Every day, including Saturday, there is an enormous flow of information. And if there, in the Department, I could skim a lot of it—there would be no political consequences from that, except possible trouble with B.N.—here I have to notice everything, and if I miss something, then more than just a “talk” with the General Secretary could result from it.

But not even that is what oppresses me, but the uncertainty of rights and responsibilities, up to the point of not knowing what to take to him and what to put into the general file.

A talk, an “explanation,” never took place. I was immediately thrown into the work: a talk with [Edward] Kennedy... (and a newspaper photo, by which all the people who know me started to “figure out” what happened with me).

After the first Politburo (and I must be present at every one now) he called together some people: Yakovlev, Lukyanov, Medvedev, [Valery] Boldin, Smirnov, and me. He shared his reaction to the four-hour long discussion of his draft Congress political report (the document equal to the entire XX Congress combined, in the amount of energy and mastery it contains). He also said that we will go to Zavidovo for a week to get away and finish it up. But in the evening I had Kennedy, at night I processed the talk transcript, where M.S. once again showed his manner to persuade, defend, prove...

And the next day he summoned me to his rendezvous with [Viktor] Chebrikov and [Eduard] Shevardnadze and said: “I wanted to appoint you to work on the report, but now you will have to work on this, you’ll find out in a minute...” The matter at hand was a TV interview, in which we would convey to the West some of our responses and “forward shifts” on the missile matters in the form of responses to the Soviet audience. The idea came up while [Gorbachev was] under the effect of talks with Kennedy. (We want to say that we do not link the euro-rockets and the SDI, that we are prepared to remove tactical missiles from the GDR and CSSR in the first round, what we understand inspections as “fundamental,” and in general, what does America want from us). The MFA [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] people made a trial model. Boring. I did not trust myself, so called up Arbatov, who has made [projects] for *Time* and *L’Humanite*; he knows the tastes. We wrote 20 pages together in a day. I sent it off. In the morning it came back: “There is nothing to present here. Our people will not understand it. Disconnected,” etc. The first pancake... [is always lumpy] Maybe it was because I placed so much confidence in the self-assured Arbatov? (Even though Yakovlev warned me that more than once he’s been made to “clear out” Aratovisms from texts).

(By the way, Kennedy said to Zagladin: your Arbatov is like our Kissinger). I worked it over in a day... But I did not get a response to this version. It turns out Yakovlev hinted to him that it is inopportune right now. Actually I said the same thing with Shevardnadze and Chebrikov, but they did not understand me. M.S. hesitated: the interview would be too close to the Congress and his report, it may slacken the reaction. He came out to the Politburo with this question. And everybody agreed that it shouldn’t be done. However, he assigned the MFA staff to “add” some of the material from this interview to the political report.

Thus, I did not make it to Zavidovo. But, as my colleagues instructed me, I wrote him notes on what I considered to be in my “competence” out of the stream of material coming through.

For example, in the report on strategic relations with the FRG I proposed to consider the “problem of reunification,” which cannot be avoided since it is a strategy (I don’t know what came out of it). I suggested not to publicly congratulate Yemen’s new leadership... This came through, but maybe it would have been done without my “prompting.” I proposed to write an article on the “regional crises—against ‘neoglobalism.’” (He agreed).

In one issue already I seriously intervened in policy: I stopped Congress invitations for the Finland Communist Party and for the Sinisalo people. This could have slipped through the Secretariat in a package with other additional parties, but I had the “right” of control.

M.S. reacted to it. He called me (Ligachev was in his office), and read my memo out loud. They said something. Then he told me: “We will bring this question to the Politburo, prepare the material.” Naturally, Ligachev ordered that B.N. also get the material. He presented it (through Shaposhnikov) as such: again, saying that Aalto was anti-soviet and a revisionist, that he was fracturing the party, that the “minority” has become the majority, etc. In a word, they copied it from Sinisalo’s letter, which the Department received recently.

I wrote the same things as I have written many times at the Department, on which I insisted and about which I argued with Ponomarev, and even warned him in the summer that if he kept insisting, he’ll run into trouble.

It would be simply foolish to continue with the Sinisalo business in the Finnish CP after the talk with Natta, from which B.N. did not understand anything despite his good nose, after M.S.’s remarks about Cossuta, and after what he included in his political report (about equality and non-interference).

All the PB members and CC Secretaries had B.N.’s (Shaposhnikov’s) papers. More than that, they have grown used to the idea that Aalto is anti-soviet and must be finished off... Shaposhnikov was invited to the PB (seemingly at B.N.’s request, which turned out to be another one of his mistakes). In the “dressing-room” he ran into Lev Zaikov, who, being a Leningrad secretary, has more than once followed the “Shapo line” under the leadership of Shaposhnikov in Leningrad and Helsinki. Zaikov promptly promised Shapo [shnikov] to continue to “smash the revisionists.”

Shaposhnikov (we met in the stairwell) was sure that the moment has come when his dearest dream will be fulfilled and Aalto will be dealt the death blow. Frankly, I was not sure how it would end. I was nervous, especially since M.S. hinted that I might have to present a supplementary report. But Gorbachev showed tact towards me and towards B.N.—he did not destroy him with my hands.

He gave Shaposhnikov such a pogrom, and in reality Ponomarev as well... (therein lies the mistake: if Shaposhnikov was not there, M.S. would have been tactful with the old man, but in the presence of Shaposhnikov made him the whipping boy).

The main idea was that the times when we gave orders to fraternal parties as we would to Obkoms and republican CCs have ended. If we disagree in something, we will uphold our ideas, not excommunicate, ignore, or interfere in their affairs.

Shaposhnikov, impudent, jumped up and started trying to prove something. M.S. told him: “Sit down. If needed, you will be called upon...” B.N. was pathetic and right away started adjusting, hedging, justifying himself. It’s terrible! (I am once again convinced: absence of intellectuality equals absence of human dignity).

But even before that, around the 14th, when I, after all, decided to visit B.N., he started asking me to put in a word for him with M.S., so that he was finally made a Politburo member! I kept a polite silence, while he was “proving” to me that he understood international politics better than Chebrikov and Shevardnadze... Who are they? Greenhorns. He mentioned that he always “took the right line” in relation to China, etc.

Therefore, I made a fool of myself with my natural supposition that he was worried whether he would stay on the wagon at all. Turns out he was concerned with something entirely different—whether he would get promoted!

Meanwhile I already knew that he would be retired (Lukyanov hinted at that), and the “activity of his wife and the entire family” in moving up through family channels has already caused discontent. And then Sashka Yakovlev, motioning in the direction of M.S., said outright: “it has been decided to keep him in the CC as an old Comintern man,” but retired!

B.N. already speaks with me ingratiatingly... Yet another chameleon change. It is repulsive and pitiful. He sent me a piece of boar that he killed while hunting. He has been doing this for many years. But now he’s judging everyone by his own standard.

[Alexander] Bovin²³ came to visit me. This is really a drama. For his entire political career he had been waiting for the time to come, which has come now. And right at this time he has been pushed back, exactly under Gorbachev. He blames everything on Yakovlev. He has two motives:

first of all, it turns out that Bovin was involved in sending Yakovlev to Canada. Yakovlev once said to Bovin and Arbatov: why are you working so hard for Brezhnev, do you want to turn this ignorance into a cult?! And only yesterday Bovin himself admitted that he “brought it” (that statement) to notice;

secondly, the Jewish self-importance: “next to me (Bovin!), Sashka (Yakovlev) will pale before the General Secretary’s eyes!”

²³ Brezhnev’s speechwriter, famous Soviet journalist, and then the first Soviet Ambassador to Israel

He brought me his talented essays (on positioning propaganda, on Nicaragua, on “the meaning of life” (as understood by) Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Andropov, Chernenko, and...)

He says he was not asking for anything. But he came to ask... I can understand. And someday I will go to M.S. on his behalf. But he will not make it to the Congress, and will get the boot from the Revisions Committee, where Brezhnev, having forgiven him, placed him. It’s a pity. It looks like Arbatov gave up on Bovin when he found out that he was “not liked” by Gorbachev.

We had a farewell party for Aleksandrov. Present were three of his secretariat girls and two helpers-colleagues who really did not like him. And that was all! And what a farewell I would have had from my Department, if I had agreed to a party! They are still “sobbing” about it, as they all say, no matter whom you ask. Only now did I sense that I was “loved” in the Department.

This is lyricism... And the work—I don’t understand yet. I’ve identified directions for myself:

- disarmament
- Soviet-American affairs
- the ICM
- regional crises
- the Jewish question
- the idea of “Soviet national security”

I have no idea how am I going to follow them.

The most significant [concern] right now is the terrible nervous overload and the absence of any kind of time for myself.

June 7th, 1986.

I am not writing only because I have no strength left after a 14-16 hour workday. I’m also not writing because it is difficult to comprehend it all and to set it in writing. In my position, the only thing to write about is him—the one who dared to raise Russia and to make it rear up (who has the plans for it), a post-Stalinist and post-Brezhnevist Russia.

A mini-Lenin has come... in the form that Mayakovsky described him. Seemingly a simple, normal person, with all the traits characteristic of an intelligent, normal,

sensible and practical person. And at the same time, all these traits are raised several levels in comparison to a normal, regular “comrade.”

And if one starts from the top, from Lenin, he has all the qualities characteristic of Lenin, only they are all on a lower level. And the coordination of these qualities, their “complexity,” is also like Lenin’s.

In a word, one should write about him every day, since I see him and hear him almost every day. He is incredibly frank, sometimes he shocks with his “confidence:” you get scared by it—why does he suddenly burden you with the responsibility of his innermost [thoughts]?

It is my moral duty to write about him... It is most likely more important than conscientiously doing my official responsibilities for him—he could do without me. But if I do not write about him, it will be a great loss for history... even if he does not make it with the great work he has set out to accomplish.

And I should write down right away when he speaks one on one, when he leads political discussions, when he openly discusses something in closed circles, and, of course, when he leads the Politburo: it is a great wealth of mind, character, awareness, knowledge, precision in the ability to understand the essence of the matter, decisive rejection of anything even resembling demagoguery and attempts to cover anything with ideology, especially lack of talent and inability to work.

In a day he goes through a colossal amount of information. I cannot understand how he manages to do it. And this information is used, in processed form it rushes forth as deduction, analysis, conclusions, decisions, disagreements or support of somebody...

95% of time and energy is spent on internal affairs... even though it seems to be the other way around if one judges by newspapers and TV [sic]. (By the way, the laymen are already grumbling about this).

I must not be lazy (Lord give me the strength!), especially at the Politburo I need to take notes and reproduce it in the evening, or maybe even right away at work... And of course I need to record what he says to me or in my presence. And at least make a list of matters about which I had to speak with him. Much wears away so only the impression is left, but the actual canvas—his thoughts, especially their form and context—disappears.

So let me begin... I have a couple of sheets on the table here. They have been lying here for a month. They are notes. For example, the advisers decided to get together and stop by his office at the end of the day to congratulate him with May 1st. He sat us down and thought out loud for two hours. What can I coax out from these notes?

What saved the country (under Brezhnev)? “Oil + vodka + people’s patience.”

The bureaucratization of the party machinery, especially since 1975. Everything is cluttered up, it's decaying, you can't tell what's where, why, and for what... It's a total mess—especially in thinking about the individual (the disappearance of social policies).

By the way, the right things were always said (take any of Brezhnev's speeches). But what was done... Nothing was done at all! Only for yourself!

We need to generalize the common experience, since "people are the makers of history," as we say all over the place. And democracy! Nothing will save us if we do not open up as democracy. Lenin was absolutely right. We need to search for forms of it and learn from the people, stop with the sermons and the cries of the know-alls, who know everything and know only how to teach.

"Power" is the most profitable work right now. That is why everyone is eager to get to power, and once they get there they become little independent princes.

About the CPSU history textbook... here I intervened and criticized Ponomarev's style, the textbooks that completely draw even students away from our history. I said that we should invite five intelligent people, not professors or even specialists, to a dacha and give them a year's time. Have everything at their disposal, even the archives. The sovietologists abroad have already written about everything, using the Trotsky archives among other things, as well as our own newspapers, books, journals... There are hundreds of books on CPSU history. Let them write a bestseller. The CC will then review it...

At that time he did not say anything about it. But two weeks ago at the Politburo at an opportune moment he gave a heated speech in the same vein, and right away assigned Yakovlev and (alas!) Zimyanin to organize a competition for a concise CPSU history textbook...

...The leftist forces in the USA and Western Europe were defeated by technology and productivity of labor. He wins who has the higher productivity. Lenin said that, and for a long time we were hiding from this truth. Life is above any ideology.

One will not be able to keep a hold on to the third world if one does not bind it with technology. Which is what they (the West) are doing.

And we will not even keep a hold on the socialist countries if we do not bind them to us with technology.

A struggle is going on. A real struggle for the Congress. The resistance is enormous and varied. There was an article "Against the trend" in the "Pravda" from June 27. The question is being decided "either or." Either we fulfill what we planned and how we planned it, or we fail with socialism.

This is the content (of the notes) of only one of his conversations with his advisers.

How much I have lost over these months by not noting it down. But for the first two months I lived like in a shock. Only now, it seems, I have gotten adjusted to him.

June 22nd, 1986.

It's been 45 years since the beginning of the war. I should write down sometime what that day was like... I remember it as if it were yesterday, down to the little details.

Before the Writers' Congress. Everybody around here, including Yakovlev "himself," is surprised that the "[Georgy]Markov course" is being kept despite the fact that, one would think, he is a symbol of Brezhneviada in Soviet literature. In 1985 alone, he published his gray imitations with 27 publishing houses. He has 14 billion rubles on his savings-bank book. He is the center of attraction for swindlers and mediocrity, "a two-times Hero of Socialist Labor"—in this case it is a stigma, not a merit. But he is Ligachev's "childhood friend" (either from their youth, or from work, or because they're both from Siberia). And even though Ligachev knows Markov abuses this, and that everybody has been talking about nepotism and favoritism, and that Ligachev's prestige is soiled by it, he persistently keeps him there. Yakovlev told me that he had had a conversation about it with Gorbachev, but he "does not want to quarrel with Yegor Kuzmitch [Ligachev] because of this." But this is only the introduction. The actual story is the following.

A week ago we received a dispatch—pre-Congress information under Chebrikov's signature. It talked about the Western secret services influencing Soviet writers, the ones who in the past allowed deviation from class nature, who doubted the rightness of collectivization and national policies (weren't they the "cosmopolites"), who disagreed with literary policies, etc. In a word, the writers subject to oppositional and revisionist mindsets are now... (Which is totally incomprehensible, for what is to be understood as opposition and revisionism? In relation to whom, Gorbachev? To the April line, which all these "oppositionists" have been waiting for and for so many years tried to help bring it about in any way they could?)

Names were named: [Anatoly] Rybakov, [Anatoly] Pristavkin, [Boris] Mozhaev, [Mikhail] Roshchin, [Andrei] Zubov, [Bulat] Okudzhava²⁴... and several other less known ones.

In a word, it was a denunciation... from a previous era, from the 1930-50s, as if nothing was changing in the country.

I went to Yakovlev and asked him how one is supposed to understand this. And what does it mean that M.S. ordered this information to be sent around the PB and the Secretariat, and asked Ligachev and Yakovlev to speak with him personally.

²⁴ Prominent liberal cultural figures

Yakovlev said he spoke with him. “And what?” Yakovlev said he was angry and frank. He said that we have already forced 15-20 talented writers to run away abroad. Do we want more to go? And in general, what kind of methods are these? M.S. listened to him, but Yakovlev did not say how he reacted. But, he says, it seems he heeded the words, and told him to go and say the same thing to Ligachev. He did, was of course more careful, but did not meet with understanding. The only thing Ligachev did not like was that the KGB is still dealing with literature. Why the KGB?! For how much longer? This is the CC’s prerogative. I don’t know, Aleksandr Nikolaevich says, but it seems M.S. is planning to have a talk with Chebrikov.

A day after this, Gorbachev’s meeting with 30 writers took place. I have not seen the transcript yet, but A.N. told me what happened there. He said he was especially glad, simply happy, to witness Anatoly Ivanov’s speech—he is one of the Black Hundred, a dinosaur, a member of the “back to the soil” movement. From the first words he began to “strip” and appeared completely exposed. His main idea was that something like the CC resolution “on the journal *Ogonek* and *Leningrad*” should be made. Then there would be order.

I, A.N. said, saw how M.S.’s jaw fell. But he reacted indirectly. [Mikhail] Shatrov²⁵ spoke against Ivanov, and M.S. supported Shatrov.

What will happen at the Writers’ Congress?

The day after speaking with Yakovlev, I did the following.

About ten days before “the described events,” Boris Mozhaev came to visit me (he is a well known writer, a village-writer). For a long time he made me laugh by his stories of what’s going on at their Congress. He is angry, venomous, a master of imitation, a real verbal acrobat, and simply made me almost die of laughter at his portrayal of Markov and Karpov (the literary generals). They’ve been using their power in the Writers’ Union to delay Mozhaev’s new novel (“Muzhiki i babi [peasant men and peasant women],” part 2) for two years. He took apart Alekseev, and everyone who makes commonplace literature—“the secretary novels.” He left the foreword to “Muzhiki i babi” with me, as well as a review of VASKHNIL²⁶ academician [Vladimir] Tikhonov’s novel. The novel deals with the events of 1929-30, with collectivization, which dealt a fatal blow to agriculture and to socialism.

He also left me his 110-page article on the present-day Soviet literature, in which he scathes the vulgar writers and the literary bosses.

He asked me to report and show all this to Gorbachev. I did not do it right away then, but after Chebrikov’s note and conversation with Yakovlev I could no longer keep

²⁵ Prominent playwright, author of *Onward, Onward, Onward*—a radical play about Lenin, which was staged in Moscow in 1987.

²⁶ All-Union Academy of Agriculture

Mozhaev's requests to myself. I added my note [to the material], saying that these are the kinds of people who show up in the department of opposition and anti-sovietism. If this is really the case, then it is difficult to understand the April line in all the other respects as well.

Gorbachev read my note and kept all the materials. I wonder what will this come to. It is reassuring that M.S. could not come round after Ivanov's speech and called Yakovlev several times, asking where such people are coming from, these people are wood lice.

Yakovlev thinks that Gorbachev was put on guard by the fact that the KGB chairman presented his note to the General Secretary and was sure that this position of his would meet with understanding and support.

December 3, 1986.

Yakovlev, whom I congratulated on his birthday, told me: "Yesterday I was speaking with the General Secretary about this and that, about literature, different obstacles, we were preparing his meeting with theater people. Then he suddenly started speaking about you (that is, about me). What a 100% direct hit we got, he says. What a guy. Remember when we were looking for somebody to replace Aleksandrov? And we found him, no one could be better. Staggering capacity for work, and he says what he thinks, does not try to adjust, does not adulate."

"And then," Yakovlev says, "he even 'slandered' you: 'he's smart' he says! What luck!"

Thanks, I told him. If, of course, you didn't make it up.

– Upon my word! I swear. Of course I agreed with him, especially since I was your sponsor.

What is startling is something else... that I was not very stirred by this. Even though not everyone or every day happens to get this kind of an evaluation from the CC CPSU General Secretary.

I must be very tired. And I have grown up. Even praise does not move me much—the meaning of life is not in it. But where is it?

However, he speaks about himself with the words from the song "if there was only a motherland..." Truly. There is a revolution going on: one has only to glance at the newspapers and journals every day.

And if one could hear what he says at the PB and in closed circles!

December 7th, 1986.

I want to write and I am afraid to do it, because no matter how much I try to write there will not be enough time to even outline what happens every day around M.S. Before my eyes he is growing into a major figure in our history.

I see him every day candidly, with all of the ordinary nuances of his nature, his behavior, his educational level—but all of this in no way lowers the greatness of this man in my “intelligentsia” (snobbish) eyes.

I record in detail what he says, how he leads the PB. When I retire I will be able to recreate it... of course, with the loss of a living sensation of it. However, much of what happens one on one with him or with a third person, especially if it's Yakovlev, I naturally cannot write down in his presence...

Much that is distinctive comes through in his talks with foreigners (like the day before yesterday, for example, with the Norwegian lady Brundtland)... or in my one on one contacts with him (which happen late at the night, for the most part), during the visit to India in his part of the presidential palace. This gets lost because there is no chance to record it... you leave him with some kind of an assignment that you have to work on immediately instead of writing down your impressions.

Nevertheless, history will not forgive me if I do not leave for posterity my testimony about this person, even if subjective, for only I (and maybe Yakovlev also) see him in the frank and open state.

From what I did not record in the last several days:

- talk with Kovalev in my presence, about the meeting with theater figures;
- my talk with him about Dobrynin and the International Department... and his phone call yesterday. He already spoke with him and referred to me, but assures me that he was not offended.
- How he protects Raisa Maksimovna! He did not send her the note from *Le Monde* about how she looks abroad.
- Talk about Aksyonov, the cosmonaut who came to me to complain that our SDI is not at all asymmetric.

The last Politburo... About India.

This Politburo will go down in history... not because of India, but because of the prices for sausage. We almost had a fight because Ligachev spoke from the “populist” position in defense of the poor.

And he offended M.S. quite badly, because M.S. understands well that perestroika will not happen if we keep strictly to the norms of a “social” state, i.e. wage-leveling.

Ligachev spoke in the name of the people who are used to living parasitically off the state, even not working at all. Although all the retired, the poor, the disabled, the failures, the students, etc. are in this group as well.

The argument was rough, and only Ryzhkov supported M.S. strongly and directly. Vorotnikov, Solomentsev, and indirectly even Shevarnadze inclined towards Yeg. K. [Ligachev]

I have never seen M.S. so furious (and so upset) at a PB before. “I see my role as the General Secretary—if it’s going this way—in taking down this question, closing the discussion, and assigning the Council of Ministers to examine the question once again. Otherwise we would get to blows here. As it is now, we are on the verge of a rift.”

And what happens in newspapers and journals?

Voznesensky reinstated Khodasevitch in *Ogonek* and Nabokov in *Noviy Mir*.” A certain Lev Voskresensky published in *Moskovskie Novosti* [*Moscow news*] on November 30 a reply to the Englishman—what is the difference between perestroika and the New Economic Policy. And he wrote in black and white that the New Economic Policy was repealed too soon, and science still needs to figure out what the consequences of that were. In every issue of the thick journals there is something like this, or something is forthcoming.

December 8th, 1986.

Today I summarized three meetings between Gorbachev and the smaller NATO people—Shluter, Lubbers, Brundtland. M.S.’ conclusion: who believes in the Soviet threat? People are holding on to NATO not because they are afraid of us, but because they are afraid of the US.

I had to re-write Gorbachev’s talk with Brundtland for the MFA people: everything seems all right but so sterilized that his characteristic expressions, thought nuances, and humor were gone.

I dictated an assignment to Krasin (a consultant) to prepare ideas for the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution on the main issue: perestroika and the fate of world development, pluralization [sic] rather than unification of the revolution.

Dunaev came over. He described the prospects of Japan and our relations with them.

Shevardnadze called and promised to give me the material for Nadjibullah's visit, but only tomorrow. I asked him to clear up the issue of the line of the China-India border in our atlases. He wants to send [Yevgeny] Primakov as ambassador to India, he praised him and compared him to Lunacharsky.

Gorbachev declined *Spiegel* an interview, again because of Kohl, who compared him to Goebbels. My persuasions did not outweigh the opinions of Dobrynin and Shevardnadze.

Zagladin keeps wanting to prove to me that Dobrynin is not in the right place. Instead of helping him, which he should as his first deputy, he is scheming against him.

December 10th, 1986.

Kutsenkov visited me yesterday (my old friend, a major ideologist). He brought a survey of a heap of newspapers from India. We should not build any illusions, he says. No euphoria. Right now everything is "in the formative stage," even the emotions!

Kokoshin visited (Arbatov's deputy). Brought a note: "America's perspectives."

It is scholarly but there is not enough courage (or analysis) to say what we should expect from America and how to behave in the future. In a word, it is not PB material yet.

I spoke with Dobrynin about M.S.' idea to create something like a National Security Council under the PB. He keeps thinking about how it functions in his America, and says that it would not work for us. What will work for us? I think if we decide to create it, then it should be done with the participation of Arbatov, Falin, Vorontsov, Kovalev, Kryuchkov, and maybe some people from among the major economists—specialists in Western [economy], even though we do not have "Varg" anymore and Mileykovsky is small... And some smart fellows from the SCST and SCER [should be involved]. Some people from the International Department: Zagladin, consultants, Lisovolik (he worked in America).

Dobrynin wants to talk to me about the department (he's under the effect of a talk M.S. had with him). Zagladin is snobbishly offended and wants to "prove" that Dobrynin does not understand anything. He himself spent all of fall abroad on four assignments and has been out sick for a month. He called me, promised to "talk" about Dobrynin. I should not agree to this talk; I should not give Dobrynin reason to think that I am intriguing against him. I really do not want to butter up Dobrynin, I want to help him.

Dobrynin offered Brutents to go as ambassador to India. Brutents panicked: why did Dobrynin make such an offer? Although in general he wouldn't mind it! But he called Shevardnadze and he said that he will be nominating Primakov.

There are materials for Najibullah's visit. I disliked and rejected (at lunch) the speech and re-wrote it, but for M.S.' talks everything is intelligible, smart, only... made with a twist at what Shevardnadze said at the PB: it is time to stop seeing Afghanistan as an occupied and confined country. It is an independent state... and [should be regarded] only this way!

But there is excess in the promised economic aid... we will be left shirtless ourselves, not to mention that the "new Afghanistan" will appear in 100 years.

And some more details: we should tell Najibullah to act without glancing back at the [Soviet] advisers, and to tell us how many and which ones he needs, the rest we will remove at once. I will suggest this to M.S.

On Monday M.S. will receive Hart (American Senator) and the ambassador of England. The department and the MFA started fussing about who will present the materials to M.S., since I'm not there they are just afraid to do it. Here it is, that very funnel [sic] that, I think, the *Sunday Times* [sic] wrote about me.

I've paid off a loan from 1952! Remembered those days, the university.

December 11th, 1986.

A Politburo day that I did not attend, I'm sick. Finished the material for M.S.' one on one talk with Najibullah. Then [finished] the material for his meeting with the English ambassador. Then [I wrote] all kinds of notes explaining what I changed in the material prepared by the Afghan committee. And there were constant calls from Dobrynin, Vorontsov, from the reception room, from Lukyanov, etc.

Falin [sent me] his thoughts on personnel policies for the Plenum (M.S. gave this "assignment" to write to him personally on what every person thinks, without being cautious about anything). So some people send the material directly to him, and some do it through me. They write and say such things, for which they would have been expelled from the party within 24 hours about a year and a half ago...

Something similar [was done] a month ago at Yakovlev's request, when he was disappointed by what the Party Organization Department prepared (about personnel) for the Plenum. I collected "opinions" about personnel from Kozlov, Weber, Yermonsky (the department consultants). They were even more angry and frank than Falin.

On the whole, we are crawling into a new stage of Soviet history. Today I looked through many journals and newspapers of the past months, through *Literaturka* [*Literaturnaya Gazeta*] and Lavrov's report on creating a Theater Union!

One feature... Today in *Pravda* there is an article on the 130th anniversary of Plekhanov. Not a word about opportunism or revisionism... A tragedy of a great figure. Indeed! How the Stalinists must be feeling now, and all the people who learned from the *Concise Course* and the Ponomarev textbook.

A revolution is in progress. But it is still slow, because the fired scoundrels get a considerable pension and the opportunity to "stink up." A revolution deals differently with the former leaders. But then it would not be a Gorbachev's revolution.

December 13th, 1986.

I am lonely at heart. I am even frightened to go on vacation... as if I am losing time and there is so little of it left. There is a feeling that now vacation is not a way to restore strength. It cannot be restored anymore. It would be better if it wasn't a total vacation, but just a month of a "free schedule..." And not to go anywhere. And that nobody would be at home.

M.S. said to Dobrynin... to all PB members after meeting with the Yugoslavs: "That's it! I've had enough of foreign affairs. And you Eduard, and you Dobrynin, quiet down please. I am tired of it. Every day I take a folder with me and study it till 2 a.m. That's it! I am switching to the internal front. And we need to prepare for the Plenum. As soon as I receive Hart and the English."

And my leave time is just at this time. Once again: since it's a vacation I'd rather get loose and get away somewhere, not sit in a sanatorium.

Al. Beck's *The New Appointment* is a strong work. We are beginning to restore history... at a time when the youth is already not very interested in our past. Here is the breach in the link between generations.

December 14th, 1986.

Shatrov's speech at the Theater Congress in the Kremlin (M.S. was present). I thought: an irreversible process has started in ideology. Only Yezhov or Beria could stop it. And M.S. is acting wisely by clearly encouraging it, by letting people like Shatrov, [Yevgeny] Yevtushenko, and others know—go ahead while the going is good. And for now he himself is refraining from openly adding Stalin and Stalinism [to the ideology change]. Maybe this is why he does not stop Ligachev and his conservatism, so the

torrent does not burst too strongly—if it did, we would all have to switch to the superstructure,²⁷ while right now the most important is economics.

So let the ideology work through self-financing for a year or so. Let that “little bit” that he asked me to convey to Boffe, keep working in history for a while yet, until Gorbachev himself makes a statement about the New Economic Policy, collectivization, and Stalin.

December 15th, 1986.

I was at M.S.’ meeting with senator Hart, who came with his daughter. M.S. was at his best. He depicted a model of an ideal modern president, who, if he appeared, could really demonstrate “the greatness of America.” He argued about illusionism, romanticism, and the other [traits] ascribed to him. The stability of the world is, by the way, holding on this illusionism right now.

He invited the daughter to see what the Soviet Union is like in reality—to travel around and see. She replied: I will help my father in the presidential campaign and will take advantage of your invitation only after 1988! That’s how it is!

M.S.’ meeting with the English ambassador. The guy brought a message from Thatcher, an impudent one. M.S. [summarized it]: “She gave a thrashing to me and Reagan” for a perfunctory approach in Reykjavik. But realism, madam, is a dead end. It was proven in Geneva. Got very mad and quite undiplomatically “portaged” the ambassador. He promised to report everything. M.S.: “I know why I spoke!”

He is not going to Zavidovo. He said that he did not have anything to go with yet. That means the 130 pages that Yakovlev brought him on Saturday are not at the right level yet.

Today I am already formally on vacation, but I spent half of the day at work. I said goodbye to the papers. Especially significant are Arbatov’s ciphered telegrams from the United States.

Alas! The efficiency coefficient of this type of information for our policy and propaganda even under Gorbachev does not exceed that of the locomotive.

Yesterday I spent half the day on foreigners’ letters to Gorbachev. While we were in the south, my second room got crammed with them. There are all kinds of letters: requests for interviews, requests for autographs on books, postcards and photos. Some ask him to write articles for journals and newspapers. There are a ton of requests for meetings. There are requests to release the dissidents that are still imprisoned.

²⁷ In Marxist terminology, the upper “structure” [*nadstroika*] of the socio-political formation, consisting of culture, education, religion and ideology.

A belated (the PB members already voted “for” it) page-proof came across my desk, for an article called “L.I. Brezhnev. For the 80th anniversary of his birthday.” I was shocked. I called my stenographer and dictated my indignant conclusion, then called the reception room and asked to immediately deliver it to Gorbachev. He read it in the evening and called me, told me to pass the note to another adviser Lushchikov, who supervised this article. With displeasure, Lushchikov let me know that I was poking my nose into other people’s affairs. He said it had been voted on, and that the material is already at *Pravda*. But I insisted alluding to the fact that now they were not [just] my remarks but the General Secretary’s.

Vlasov (Albert Ivanovich, deputy head of the Information Department) came over. He said that the PB chose a poor time to declare the repeal of the moratorium on nuclear explosions. I agreed and right away wrote a note to Gorbachev, saying that rather than on December 18th, it would be better do it at the beginning of January, after the New Years and Christmas. He sent my note around the PB, but Shevardnadze and Dobrynin persuaded me over. Eduard Amvrosievich calls me and says: it doesn’t really matter now, we’ve notified the G6, the socialist countries, and the communist parties... And the advantages? What advantages, when there are only drawbacks to this decision of ours! No matter how to you try to prove otherwise...

– That’s true too! I agreed.

Postscript for 1986

In the beginning of this year (early February) the author of these notes became Gorbachev’s foreign policy adviser. His observations of Gorbachev’s behavior, manners, and actions acquired the character of a live, everyday personal and official contact.

Attention is drawn to Gorbachev’s phenomenal frankness in evaluating the situation and in signaling his intentions. Gorbachev expresses brave ideas that were shocking to the people around him; many of these ideas never were realized. He is relentless in criticizing what we had and how things are done.

Gorbachev encourages the “unwinding” of glasnost, but he still sees it as the party’s tool for carrying out transformations, not as “free speech” that operates by its own logic.

He resolutely stops Ponomarev’s (in essence the Comintern’s) way of practicing relations with foreign communist parties and the communist movement in general. But he is still certain that when liberated from the CPSU’s guardianship and completely

independent, the foreign communist parties will be able to get a fresh breath and in that quality still keep a future.

In other words, he does not break with the presentation of the USSR as an “ideological power,” but he has gotten very far in establishing principally new relations with the West, and in forming foreign policy he absolutely excludes the ideological component—confrontation and incompatibility. The term “**new thinking**” has not been used yet, but in principle it is already “working.”

He is more and more concerned about securing personnel for the transformation. However, so far he has no doubt that the CPSU can and must become its leading and propelling power. With all his dislike of idolatry and dogmatism, Gorbachev continues to solemnly believe that appeals to Lenin and “Lenin’s approach” can serve not only as a moral, but also as a practically effective lever for the realization of his plans.

This year the cohort of the “founding fathers” of perestroika (Ligachev, Ryzhkov, Vorotnikov...) was still working in accord, with the leading team of Gorbachev-Yakovlev.

In this “volume,” as in the others, there are many of the author’s personal concerns and thoughts. He found himself in a new position, a more influential but less independent one; [he is] much more responsibility-laden and very overworked.

The illusions about “opening prospects” for his “socialist motherland” are still solid in his eyes. His conformism is explained and excused by his proximity to Gorbachev and the hopes for success in his work. So far the hopes have not collided with his intellectual doubts too strongly.

If we try to give a formula to Gorbachev’s evolution in 1986, it might be the following: exceptional courage in words and evaluation of problems, and caution in actions.