

The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev

1988

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January 3, 1988.

I am at the “Pines” sanatorium.

I’m reading “Life and Fate” of Vasilii Grossman (so far it is published in tamizdat¹). Truly, it is “War and Peace.” And he is longing for “*perestroika*.” This was written in 1960!

Lesha Kozlov died on December 28. He was a great guy and one of the talented consultants at the International Department. We buried him on the 30th. There was a reception; Askol'dov, I, and the consultants talked about Lesha and about Dobrynin, with whom everybody is unhappy. I said a little too much, namely that M.S. [Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev] has already once promised to take the consultant group away from Dobrynin and give it to me.

M.S. gave me some “homework” for my vacation, with the idea that when I ski in fresh air, I might get some fresh ideas... This is for the CC Plenum on schools, where he would like to speak about ideology. The matter is very timely. We already have such a store of freedom of thought that it's time to synthesize it. The impulses from the 70th anniversary report gave off powerful results, driving Ligachev and Co. into a panic... And I think at the Plenum where he is one of the speakers, Ligachev will try to “stop” and “reverse” what has been achieved. That is why M.S. wants to speak himself. He told me to think about “our values.” But what are our values, when even the main value—socialism—is being questioned in its very core?

For example, today on TV there was a program: “Meeting our Businessmen.” There were people from five regions of European Russia: a family contract, a contracting team, a cooperative, a leasing group, etc. I was so glad! M.S.' ideas are coming to life in the most varied forms, under the slogan of “free labor for free people.” Three engineers from Moscow rented a farm with 120 calves and spoke about property rights for land for these calves. The raikom [regional committee] supports them. A professor—a PhD in Economics and a consultant in the CC Department of Agriculture—brilliantly defended all these ideas and made a reference to the West, where they have family farms. “Small commercial farms” do not interfere with agricultural industrialization and produce unbelievable levels of output.

All that is to say: what ideological values are we to tend to, when our central value—denouncing private property—is beginning to waver?

Does that leave us with the universal values, i.e. the Christian Ten Commandments? Maybe this is the point of history, when, after 2000 years, having suffered through fascism, Stalinism, Hiroshima and Chernobyl, humanity finally has the opportunity to realize the Ten Commandments in practice!

It seems that nothing is accidental with M.S. We should reflect on his book. There are passages that show him to be truly ready to go far and defy all the dogmas, taboos and other “values” of Stalin's perverted version of socialism. It is not without reason that he has twice publicly “released” the idea that we will celebrate the Millennium of the Baptism of Russia.

¹ Literature published abroad, usually without the permission of the Soviet Union—Translator.

And it appears that he is going to follow the common sense of a normal, cultured, intelligent, and good hearted person.

He has been named the world's "Man of the Year." It is amazing how history has carried him to the top of the present-day world. When you are in daily contact with him, when you are dazzled by his truly natural democratism, you sometimes forget with whom you are so casually interacting. When you are so close, it is difficult to imagine that this is a great man. And he is truly a major figure, in the historical sense.

I can't stop thinking about Lesha: constantly... what is the meaning of everything, if just like that... even when everybody is sincerely saddened and grieved, and for some his death is a "loss..." But... alas! A loss that can be easily surmounted. And everything comes full circle... for some "higher" meaning of life. You can't jump out of the circle of banality. And, still! Can it be that all of life is banality?

January 4, 1988.

Pravda started a discussion page. It is responding to its declining circulation—the only central newspaper. *Perestroika* is beginning to put even Afanas'ev on guard, even though he does not believe in it and is placing his bets on Ligachev.

... But he takes Yakovlev into account, for while M.S. is here, Yakovlev will continue to lead in *perestroika* ideology. Already he has said publicly at an all-union meeting of newspaper editors that *Pravda* is not in step with *perestroika*. Later Ligachev corrected Yakovlev: upon his return from France he visited *Pravda* and spoke with its staff. Afterwards, Afanas'ev made it known through Moscow that "some at the CC are of a different opinion [than Yakovlev]." It was interpreted as follows in Moscow: "According to Ligachev's statement, Yakovlev was not speaking in the name of the Politburo." These are the games.

M.S. sees all of this. His conversation with Razumovsky—Vilnius-Moscow... He is upset. But once again it worked out. Yeltsin really did some damage here, he paved the way [qq: зацементировал дорожку]...

January 6, 1988.

[I am reading] Stalin's conversation with Budyakin... from Grossman's "Life and Fate." I am nearing the end and becoming increasingly suffused with it. Today I read Kazurin's response to the publication of Shatrov's "Farther, Farther" in "Znamya." It has the following phrase: "He (Stalin) will remain on the stage until each one of us has it out with him completely." I think that to have it out with him completely, everyone should read Vasili Grossman's great book about our Stalinist era. (I still cannot believe that the entire work will be published in the "October.")

Yesterday I went to Zvenigorod. It's a Chekhovian provincial town... it hasn't changed. Of

course, it has signs of Soviet life. Once again, this is proof that people live for themselves, not for the government or for the “big idea.” There is nothing you can do about that. *Perestroika* could improve their life, let's say to the level of Finland (even though right now it might seem incredible!). That will be the end of any kind of idea. But the kind of idea Stalin had—God forbid.

But Platonov... he had an idea, a universal idea... But what would it be, if everybody lives “well?” What would people need it for...

January 7, 1988.

I finished Grossman's book. It's difficult to define my feelings right now. There is a sense of oppression and hopelessness, but not only about our country's history as it appeared after all the denunciations of the *perestroika* years. In a condensed form, history has attacked me through this book, forcing me to think differently “concerning” myself. I am plagued by the meaninglessness of my life. Seemingly, I should be satisfied: the General Secretary's adviser... (and what a General Secretary!) who has really begun to break Stalinism. I have my work, I was the right [choice] for the General Secretary; I was able to help him in some ways. But still, dissatisfaction is gnawing at me... it's a “strategic” discontentment with myself (to use Mao's terminology).

The stream of New Year's greetings adds to this feeling (there must have been over a hundred, I did not open most of them). I understand the bureaucratic formality of this procedure. They come from PB [Politburo] members (except for Ligachev), from Ministers and the like, many of whom I do not even know. But these greetings intensify the feeling of discrepancy between who I am and what I am perceived to be. There is another aspect to this: they think that sending greetings to Gorbachev's adviser is just “what's done.” They think that by this action they place the addressee on their level, or even emphasize his higher status. While he, the addressee, does not give a damn about all of this. He despises this waste of postal supplies. The very procedure of official importance is despicable to him. It oppresses him, since unwittingly it emphasizes his belonging to “the deck,” “clan,” “elite.” He does not believe that he belongs. He does not want such an elite to exist, and this atmosphere in this stratum of power. He does not feel that he has any power, except for the favor of M.S., who sometimes agrees with his intellectual tastes and preferences.

Some people take for modesty the fact that I shun appearing “close to [Gorbachev]” at the official ceremonies and in the press, some think it's a game at modesty. In reality I am depressed by these receptions and “protocols.” Especially I cannot stand to get into the sleigh not according to my rank, just because I have a permanent spot there.

As rarely happens, I am trying to project what I've read onto my life and fate, to decide what my place in all of this was and is. And could it be that the country is actually, finally, beginning to turn into a normal country... achieving this by suffering through Gorbachev.

But many of those who maimed and crippled our country for so many decades, both physically and morally, many of them are still alive—and receiving good pensions. And most importantly, they “spawned” (through the atmosphere, and the entire style and mechanism of public life) many millions of descendants in all generations. A vast swamp of ignorance, lack of culture, and plain illiteracy remains. In a flash (as it happened in the 20s and 30s), this soil can produce the necessary number of Yezhovs, Berias, and others like them.

There are forces of terrible conservatism at the very top, headed by Ligachev. These forces will not stop at having to use the services of Stalinist followers, who possibly do not even realize that that's what they are.

In a word, one of the newspaper authors is right when he says “Just wait, they will not forgive us (the *perestroika* generation)...”

M.S. understands this. But you cannot build a dam against this swamp and its inhabitants with nobleness alone. Aleksandr Nikolaevich (Yakovlev) is a little nervous and often petty, but he sees the danger more clearly.

To come back to the point: M.S. assigned me to think at leisure about ideas that should be specified at the Plenum dedicated to school reform (with Ligachev reporting). This is all relevant to my thoughts! The danger that I am writing about. And what are the results? I've been thinking in my free time for two weeks now and haven't come up with anything different from what is already written in the newspapers and journals.

March 26, 1988.

For several days and nights, when I couldn't sleep, I've been reproaching myself for not writing. It's a crime against history. I opened up K. Simonov's dictations in “Znamya” No. 3. They are dedicated to Stalin. But he saw or spoke on the phone with Stalin only 5 times, while I interact with a great man almost on a daily basis...

So I've decided to be disciplined and to make at least brief notes of my every contact with Gorbachev. Maybe later I will be able to recreate something from these notes. I just don't have the strength to record it in detail, as I have done in the past: I write so much during the day, and then get home around 9-10 p.m. absolutely beat, and still have to read the newspapers and journals. Right now I have to read, it's an “epoch” that will become a part of history for centuries.

I would like to start, maybe, from a crucial moment.

On Thursday, March 24, there was a PB (during the congress of collective farmers). Around 50 obkom [oblast committee] secretaries were present. Braun, Demidenko from Kazakhstan. The latter called the field-team leaders and the brigade leaders by name as he spoke. And the names are all—Grosz, Frank, Fritz... “These are the names I have there,” he comments

on his speech. The room laughs.

... This was striking: M.S. didn't know that if a state order is sent down, people are fined if it is not carried out. After all, according to corporate law, if no contract is made, one is not responsible for carrying something out...

I saw that he is “charmed” by the resolutions. The obkom secretaries and Birukova explained to him that it hasn't changed, since a state order is like the plan, even “more strict...”

... M.S. offered the PB members to move to the CC Secretariat conference hall (from the Marble Hall).

Routine work followed. Then the outsiders took their leave and only the PB members, candidates and CC Secretaries remained.

I thought that they would discuss Nagorny-Karabakh (on the 26th, meetings and other events are scheduled in Yerevan). But the next day, Friday, Yakovlev calls me. “I am going to second part of yesterday's PB,” he says. “Yesterday, after you left, M.S. brought up the Nina Andreeva article in *Sovetskaia Rossia* [“Soviet Russia”] for discussion. It all started over tea in the Kremlin Palace during a break in the collective farmers' congress. Vorotnikov started the conversation... and for some reason M.S. flared up: 'since you brought it up, let's clear it up, something is going on here...' And right away he proposed to discuss the article after the PB.”

Yakovlev continues telling me: “Gromyko spoke first. His speech was unintelligible. The only thing I understood was that he does not fully approve of the article. Then Vorotnikov justified himself for something poorly said (I did not understand what) at tea in the Kremlin. Then I made up my mind to speak. Otherwise, I thought, they will make an assessment before they could see how the article could be interpreted. And I picked it apart piece by piece—that it is an anti-*perestroika* manifesto, in places directly opposing positions publicly stated by Gorbachev. Everyone became cautious, it looks like they had not understood this when they read the article. Ligachev was listening, red as a lobster. Then he took the floor and started lying: that Chikin (editor of *Sovetskaia Rossia*) had indeed visited him, but besides this he has nothing to do with the article. He swore his devotion to *perestroika* and to Gorbachev. In reality, everything is the other way around... This Nina Andreeva really did write a pathetic little letter, half a page long, defending Stalinist values. In response, on Ligachev's orders a team was sent to her in Leningrad, which had finished up the letter for her... to the point that no one can believe that a teacher at Chemistry-Technology Institute could compose such a page.”

At the conference of editors, Ligachev waved the article in the air, saying that this is the party line. His camp sent an order to the censors—not to allow anything that would criticize or disagree with the article. (And it worked, something broke through only in “*Moskovskie novosti*” [“Moscow News”]. Falin called me—like a litmus test.) Adamovich came to visit, said that entire brochures from the new samizdat, composed of articles against Nina, were rejected by different editorial offices!

At the political day on Trubnaya, a thousand agitators-propagandists were told that the

article was a directive. Ligachev received a stream of thanks and enthusiasm from provincial obkoms and raikoms: “Thank you! Finally, we got the word of the party! It's time to do away with these vilifiers!..”

But at the PB, looking the General Secretary in the eye, Egor Kuzmich says that he had nothing do with the article.

March 28, 1988.

Yakovlev called. I asked him whether he needs the material Gubenko brought from Lubimov in Madrid, I gave it to M.S.--about Lubimov's “stopover” [заезд] in the USSR?

Don't, he says, and I agreed—let “Izvestiya” give his interview. - They might give me a dressing down, but I don't want to involve him in this.

Later, when I asked M.S. whether he read it, he said: “No. And what for? I am in general in favor of the idea that everyone who wants to can go to hell. Open the doors wide for them. And... the ones that we think should join them—same goes for them. And Lubimov? What do we need him for?!” Then he switched to rowdy language and from this I understood that he will not deal with “this” himself: whatever happens will happen.

We spoke about tomorrow's meeting Natta and Co. (General Secretary of the Italian Communist Party). “In a second, call all the advisers: at 16:30 I am getting all the deputies (of departments) and you all will be there too. You don't need to bring anything besides your ears.” (I took that to mean that he does not want me to record it. But, that was not the case.)

We met. But Yakovlev already told me that we will be discussing the Nina Andreeva article in “Sovetskaya Rossia,” just as the two closed PBs on Thursday and Friday had done.

I ask him: How is that possible? Is that a draw?

He says: “No, of course not! It was a two-day thrashing (of Ligachev)!” And A.N. is so happy about it, so pleased.

M.S. started with a discussion of the XIX party conference. Should we present the theses for public discussion, or discuss them within the party? Should the party decide on it first? Think about it. The nature of the theses will depend on this.

The conference has to become a powerful impetus for all the *perestroika* processes. We have to think through everything: the progress of *perestroika* and measures to intensify it; how to go about the practical aspect of calling together the conference. How to prepare the report... We'll get this done. How should we prepare the party for the conference, that's another question. We will need sharp self-criticism: are we fulfilling the Plenum resolutions, are we following the “unity of word and deed?!” What has been done, what failed, and who is responsible. We should also think about finishing up what's left over in the remaining months, and analyze what has been

done: not what we have done in terms of volume, but what we've done using the new methods, whether we've followed the agreements.

We should also speak about the achievements—economic, political, social. This is the first point.

The second point. The progress of democratization in society. There will be one report. Contribute your thoughts, how you imagine democratization. I have some ideas. But I will not talk about all of them. We will convene about this next week.

Think about the qualitative composition of the delegates at the conference, about the documents, the procedure.

I already said some things at the February Plenum. The issues of political reconstruction—the Soviets—will be the central topic. They need to be revived. We need Lenin's approach to their place and role. About the role of the party—the more I think about and study this question, the more convinced I become that if we allow the weakening of the party, we will fail. The party is everything—theory, comprehension, the organization of the masses, and the consciousness of the masses. Who would do this if it weren't for the party?! Nobody would be able to manage this. Even now we see that as soon as we let something slip or fall behind, it immediately makes itself known, resounds through all of society.

I am convinced that we need to radically reform the Supreme Soviet. When I think about it, all I see is the Great Kremlin Palace: everybody is sitting dumbly, some are listening, some aren't even doing that. All the work they do is applaud and vote. Then they go home. Is this the kind of Supreme Soviet we need—in its essence, composition, size, and work?

I am convinced that we need a limit on how long an office can be held. For everybody, up to the General Secretary. But not how the Yugoslavs have it, I've seen enough there. All the leaders are happy not to have a General Secretary. Each one at his place makes speeches for the entire country. Every one is aiming for the first place.

Medvedev: On the other hand, we don't have anybody to invite for a return visit!

Everybody laughs.

Gorbachev: But let's take a look at ourselves. Recently we were working on the staffing of first secretaries of obkoms. There is not a single fitting candidate under 40. And where would they come from? They were excluded from the political process. Every person has to climb the ladder of party work. They had no other way. And now people who were born in the 30s are 50 years old. A person is expected to move to the center only when he approaches 60. Our process of creating specialists is broken.

So, think about this. And in general, how do you envision the apparatus?

This is the second aspect of the XIX Party Conference.

Now I would like to speak about the following: we (the PB) have been discussing the article in *Sovetskaia Rossia* for two days. We have unanimously (!) judged it to be a harmful and an anti-*perestroika* piece, some have even called it reactionary.

The discussion took place on my initiative. We share this point of view. There were members of the PB, candidates, secretaries (except for Dobrynin, he is on vacation).

That such an article should appear would seem normal during *glasnost*. This point of view is possible. A person can express any opinion. I myself have read worse letters to you. A great deal of everything is printed in the newspapers and journals. This is normal. People are considering everything, they want to understand what happened with history. After all, did we live 70 years for nothing? And what did we fight for? Others say that everything was brilliant... But then why should we have such a Plenum? Whose idea was it?

And we, the party, want to examine our point of view: we tread a difficult path, many things have happened. But we were on the path to socialism... We've stated our perspective at the 70th anniversary of the October and in other documents. This set new processes in motion, it touched all the levels of society. It started discussions, flared up passions. Questions rose up in the minds of many people.

It seemed that we had clarified these questions. But in life everything is much more complicated. Everything is mixed up in people's minds. Even at the level of the CC not everything is uniform. And this is normal. Every person wants to figure out for himself exactly what happened, and how. This is normal. Sensing this confusion, I decided to speak at the February Plenum. You remember how attentively everybody listened. But I saw that some people were stunned. They started thinking... started going to personnel policy, more discussions started. And let them happen. We did not issue any orders from here.

After all, we are speaking of transforming people's consciousness. It's not like assigning the First Cavalry to destroy Denikin². We are talking about *perestroika* of consciousnesses of the people who grew up in the Soviet times. This is why we need globalization and democracy. These are our primary instruments.

Now we run into this campaign (Nina Andreeva's article in *Sovetskaia Rossia*). That is precisely how I would like to characterize it—a campaign against the February Plenum, it was planned and executed. And I could not leave this without making a judgment on it. We've assigned *Pravda* to run a response article.

The article in *Sovetskaia Rossia*... It caught my attention right away that some Nina Andreeva could not have written it.

Frolov: It was prepared here, in these walls...

M.S.: Where? By whom?

² A metaphor referring to the legends of the Russian civil war. Assigning the First Cavalry to destroy General Denikin would imply something that is easily done—Translator.

Frolov is quiet... M.S. understood that Ligachev might be named, and let off Frolov.

M.S.: Where else could it have been prepared, but our propaganda department?..

But Yakovlev doesn't know. Ligachev—doesn't know... (M.S. is once again cunning... he understood long ago whose work this was, but he doesn't want to dot the “i” in public).

Sklyarov doesn't know. Who knows? What is going on then? Will we follow the XXVII Congress line and refer to what the General Secretary says, or will we make politics in dark corners?

I had a conversation with Chikin (editor of *Sovetskaia Rossia*). He himself was surprised by such a reaction. He said, he thought he was helping *perestroika*. He is a decent person. And I like *Sovetskaia Rossia*. It has done a great deal for the Plenum. It is a good, serious newspaper. It has discussed so many subjects! It brought the writer Ivan Vasiliev to its pages.

It so happened that it lost its way. Chikin lost his bearing. I told him our trust in him we are not questioning our trust in him.

But this article is not a mere accident. What is it then? Sklyarov saw its bias, so did Yakovlev, and Frolov too. (Oh, M.S. is playing cat and mouse, leading away from the main track, calling the people who are “above suspicion!”)

I was flying to Yugoslavia. I didn't have time to read it. I usually put all the materials that require my attention in a separate folder. I returned on Saturday, read the article and thought—what is this? This isn't right, absolutely not right!

Now the questions have started coming in—where is this coming from? People come and ask me whether it's true that the article is preparing the public for news that Gorbachev has already been removed from his work, so that people would begin to understand why he's been removed.

Look how far this has come!

I tell Chikin: you were at the congress of collective farmers. You saw what was going on... What is holding us back? This is all coming from “there,” from Stalin. And you throw this article into a heated atmosphere.

He says—there are different opinions.

Yes, they are different. There are also monarchists and revolutionaries. Some people consider October to be a squiggle in history. And then there are people who have no ties or allegiances, they present history without its roots...

Chikin says to me: I wanted to show the different opinions.

I say to him: It looks like you wanted to present me with some information. As if I don't

know about the different opinions, you wanted to bring it to my attention... The country is dealing with such issues, it's on the edge of a crisis, and you are throwing into the pot a detached quote about "counterrevolutionary nations!"

Chikin was worried. I believe him (Wrongly! He is a Ligachev's suck up and a Stalinist!)... I believe people in general. Sometimes, of course, they can disappoint me, act underhandedly.

I said at the PB: we have a very important role in history—to pull our country, to set it on the right path... to return it to Lenin... Be attentive, look ahead.

I was sitting next to a Latvian man from "Agdzhi" (a prosperous Latvian collective farm). He says to me: "Mikhail Sergeyevich, there is such a thick layer between the leadership and the people. They are tying up the people, not letting them breathe or work."

Viktor Petrovich (M.S. says this to Nikonov), you propose to reduce the Regional Agro-Industrial Union [RAIU] by 50 percent, I propose 60 percent and more. For example, in Saratov alone, there are hundreds of people in RAIU, an entire squadron, robust gals (he points to the breast), this reserve is for beets. Nine hundred people are occupied for the RAIU only in Saratov.

Do we need RAIU like this? The policies have been set. We have told them what to do. The State will provide orders, so why do we need these intermediates? The people have forgotten how to act independently. Ivan Vasiliev spoke at the collective farmers' congress: I've seen it all, he says. Now nobody will sign a lease contract, they don't want to deal with it... Why is this so? Because the specialists are against it. They've been sitting around for decades, doing nothing, and they've ruined the villages. And then a contract comes around and produces results that they couldn't dream of. This discredits them and of course they are against any novelties. These are the kinds of things we reveal through our reform. The people see all of this. We should say this to the specialists, because they've turned into bureaucrats themselves. Naturally, I am against firing a thousand people today and a thousand more tomorrow. It needs to be done humanely, so the process is consistent. We do not need any strong-arm tactics, we should not nip any new undertakings. We should give complete freedom to everything, to everybody who would like to get something done.

The other day I read in "Ogonek" how in Uzbekistan women who work with cotton are being poisoned by the fertilizers. And nobody cares. One woman spoke up, and for that she was persecuted and left without a salary. People like her are beaten down, so they suffocate with their initiative and complaints.

Perestroika is yet to bring us many different things. We cannot get stuck on the little things. The laws need to start working. Recall the instigators in Armenia. There are people like them. They feed on problems, on troubles. We need to take such instigators and put them on public trial, and jail them.

There is a great power in our policies, but we need to be able to enforce it. Chebrikov in his department conducted an analysis (they run such "sociological" studies) and came to the

conclusion that criticism related to *perestroika* is not destructive in nature. I want the department deputies to know this.

Perhaps we should pass a resolution at the Politburo on the *Sovetskaia Rossia* article (there are voices of agreement). It wouldn't hurt to send it around the party organizations as well.

To Boldin: Do we have a record of what was said at the Politburo? (Boldin hesitates, because for a long time it has been forbidden to record anything at the Politburos. M.S. understood that he gave something away... he continues) There has to be something. Collect everything that has been said by Politburo members, make a good note, so people would read it and understand what's going on, and send it around the obkoms. I wanted to say all of this to you so you keep it under consideration.

And now I'm moving to the 120th anniversary of Gorky.³ It's not a good round figure, but I have to do it: hands are being raised even against Gorky...

April 1, 1988.

A.N. Yakovlev acted out to me how it all started. It happened at the Kremlin, in the Presidium room during the break in the collective farmers' congress. People took their seats.

Vorotnikov : Once again this scoundrel Soyfer was published in "Ogonek." What are we going to do with the press?.. We need to do something...

M.S. : Why? They published scholars afterwards, who raised objections about the first publication. What do you want? Some people say one thing, others another. These are scholars, it's their milieu. Let them do this... why are you nervous about it? We can't operate as we once used to...

Ligachev : The press has also started biting back... There was an article in *Sovetskaia Rossia*. A very good article. Our party line.

Vorotnikov : Yes! A genuine, valid article. This is what we need. Otherwise things are getting out of hand...

Gromyko : Yes, I think it is a good article. It puts things in their places.

Solomentsev started saying something along those lines. And Chebrikov was about to open his mouth...

M.S. I looked through it briefly before my trip to Yugoslavia. ... (he is interrupted with "It's a worthwhile article. Consider this...") I read it thoroughly when I came back... (Once

³ Maxim Gorky, famous Soviet writer, father of the "socialist realism" in literature, his books include *Mother*, *On the Bottom* and many others.

again, people are vying in praising the article). And I am of a different opinion...

Vorotnikov : Indeed!

M.S. : Indeed what?...

(There is an awkward silence; they are looking at each other.)

So, let us discuss this at the Politburo. I see this matter is moving in the wrong direction. It smells of dissent. What is it indeed? This article is against *perestroika*, against the February plenum. I never object when people express their views, whatever they might be, and whether they are expressed in print, in letters, or in articles. But I see that this article has been made a directive. In party organizations it is discussed as if it were our base position. It is prohibited to publish objections to this article... this is an entirely different matter.

At the February Plenum I did not give “my” report. We all discussed and approved it. It was a Politburo report and the Plenum approved it. And now, it turns out they are giving us another line... I am not holding on to my chair. But as long as I am here, in this chair, I am going to defend the ideas of *perestroika*... No! This will not do. We will discuss this at the Politburo.

On Thursday evening, after the official part of the PB, when we, the assistants, were asked to leave, the conversation continued as follows...

The following paragraphs are narrated by Yakovlev: M.S. said a few words, but such words that Ligachev turned pale and had to speak first.

Ligachev : Yes, Chikin visited me. I liked the article. But further than that I had nothing to do with it (Yakovlev’s commentary: he is lying, and I saw how it infuriated the General Secretary).

Gromyko already adjusted his position, spoke incomprehensibly for a long time, but it was clear that it was in nobody’s favor.

Vorotnikov was excusing himself for yesterday’s “Indeed!” but looked for a way out by complaining about the press and saying that there is no keeping it in check.

After Vorotnikov—Yakovlev said—I understood that it was time for me to speak, because I wasn’t sure that everyone had read the article, even the people who might have spoken against it, so it turned out that they would start automatically agreeing to the lack of discipline in the press and the matter would have been hushed up...

I spoke for about 20 minutes. I demonstrated point by point that the meaning of the article—in spirit and in tone, and in its every position—is against Gorbachev, against the February Plenum, that it is an anti-*perestroika* manifesto. It was late when I finished, around 10pm. M.S. suggested that we finish for the day and continue the next day.

The next day Ryzhkov spoke first. He spoke harshly and mercilessly against the article.

His speech was the strongest.

I had two impressions from the article, Ryzhkov said:

- What do we need this *perestroika* for?!

- Since such an unfortunate thing as *perestroika* has happened, we should limit and suppress it as much as we can.

Yakovlev said to me: I will not repeat everything that people said afterwards, and one cannot remember it all. What is important is the breakdown of the main ideas.

Shevardnadze condemned the article strongly and categorically. Medvedev's speech was decisive and well argued. Slyunkov and Maslyukov spoke briefly, but to the point and emotionally, with indignation. Chebrikov (who had almost stumbled the day before) spoke his calm and condemning word and M.S. liked that very much (he even repeated it to Natta). Chebrikov said that their KGB “sociological” studies have shown that the criticism, which is gaining in scope, is not destructive!

General Yazov mumbled something vague about the press that doesn't know where to stop, but “on the whole” he was on the side of the General Secretary.

Solomentsev, Nikonov, and Lukyanov “came to the rescue” of Ligachev and the article... M.S. later said that this surprised and disappointed him. He even called Luk'yanov to his office (this is his friend from the university, they lived together in the dormitory on Stramynka street). Zaikov, who came back from his vacation especially for this, was not very concrete. (Perhaps it's because his hands aren't clean... this article was copied in the Moscow party organizations and was discussed as a directive. This probably did not happen without his knowledge, maybe even coordinated with him. In a word, he did not figure this out in time!)

Yakovlev for some reason did not mention Dolgikh and Biryukova. I did not ask him. But I think that Dolgikh was in Ligachev's wing.

Razumovsky spoke well.

Of course, a unanimous decision was made to condemn the article, and to assign *Pravda* to present a crushing article.

M.S. started the meeting with department heads and us with this: that we should officially formalize this decision with a PB resolution and send out a note to the oblast committees, summarizing what was said at the PB.

Today Yakovlev showed me the first draft of the *Pravda* article. It is written effectively. God willing, they will not maim it in distribution. I “intensified” some more points in it.

Frolov started to backtrack, saying that a crushing article in *Pravda* is the old method, while we are responding to a letter to the newspaper. Let the response be a signed letter in the

same *Sovetskaia Rossia*. I became furious: the revolution is a very authoritative affair, if we mumble, the Stalinists will hush everything up again, etc.

In a word, this is a turning point in the history of *perestroika*. (Ryzhkov even suggested relieving Ligachev of his duties as a supervisor of ideology! And if, as Yakovlev said, M.S. does not take pity on Egor Kuz'mich, the data will be in the records.)

I had other interactions with M.S. today as well.

Mengistu is crying for help, the Eritrean army has demolished his forces... so save him! The SOS flew out to Moscow, Havana, Berlin: he demands weapons, money, transportation, supplies, etc.

Yazov, Maslyukov, and Dobrynin are ready to oblige. According to tradition, they prepared a note and a draft resolution to supply 10 AN-12 planes, 40 tanks, cannons, machine-guns, and rockets.

I write on the draft: Mikhail Sergeyevich, at the PB and in public you have been steering people toward political resolutions. But here we are, giving the routine answer right away: immediately providing more weapons. It will not change anything, while with this "help" we will push Mengistu toward the hopeless attempt to "solve" everything through military force. Instead, we should hint to him that he should learn some lessons from what is happening...

A couple hours later I was told that he took off my note and signed the resolution.

At 5p.m. there was a PB on Afghanistan... At the end of the meeting we started discussing Ethiopia. M.S. called on Akhromeev, who depicted a catastrophically hopeless picture of Mengistu's chances of winning a military victory. He has been fighting for Eritrea for fourteen years, and the matters have been getting worse and worse. Meanwhile, we are pursuing his "worthless policies" [негодную политику] instead of pursuing our own. During this speech M.S. kept glancing at me, probably thinking that his adviser is sitting there and gloating.

Afghanistan. Shultz sent a letter to Shevardnadze. They are ready to sign [the agreements] in Geneva if the issue of continuing to supply the Mujaheddin with military aid is dropped. (Honestly: why did they start with that nonsense in the first place? No agreement would be able to put an end to this "aid").

The Politburo was supposed to decide whether we are signing in Geneva or not. M.S. weighed all the pros and contras. The "pros" clearly have the majority: we decided to pull out a long time ago, and it would be easier and more graceful to do it within the framework of an agreement. And most importantly: our boys there are still dying! What are we doing: did we decide to keep a firing-ground for our weapons there? And where is the word and deed! It is one more victory for the reality of the new thinking. Plus the burden of 6 billion [rubles] a year (from the 20 billion addition to the national income!).

M.S. asked each member of the PB personally. Everybody is for it. Akhromeev showed

on a map the plan for withdrawing our troops. In any case, whether the agreement is signed or not, we will begin withdrawing on May 15th.

April 3, 1988.

There are 100,000 young people on the Arbat. But are they outside politics? They are using *perestroika*. But are they ready to stand up for it? Do they understand the meaning of Gorbachev? Do they appreciate him? Do they know that this is the “one string,” on which their freedom hangs right now?!

I walked to my school. My heart aches. Moscow is slovenly, all over the place there are potholes, dirt, trash, and dilapidated roads. In many places the buildings look like Stalingrad in 1942. Good Lord! How much money—and manpower—is necessary everywhere, wherever you look.

Arbatov called me. He found out somehow that there was a PB on the article from *Sovetskaia Rossia*.

April 10, 1988.

From the 6th to the 8th I was in Tashkent. Before the trip, M.S. called me up: we are going. Everything changed. We have to support Najibullah. And... put an end to this matter... Two days later, in a speech at the Uzbekistan CC he said the word “trouble,” saying that it is the mildest word that can be used. But this phrase did not make it into the published version of the text, he crossed it out.

In the airplane on the way there, as we were both thinking about what to say to Najibullah M.S. was correcting the material I prepared in a hurry... Suddenly he brought up the story with *Sovetskaia Rossiya*.

You know, he says, before I went to Yugoslavia I saw this article (Nina Andreeva’s piece) and put it into the box where I usually put away things to come back to later. When I got back, I read it carefully; the talk about it started going around already, I understood what it means... But I was not yet “ripe” to raise the question at the Politburo. And then, when we were having tea (during a break in the congress of collective farmers) we started talking about it. Vorotnikov brought it up... Then I understood that it cannot be left as it is: “If this is a model for you then let’s discuss it...”

M.S. saw by my reaction that I already know most of this. He hesitated, and I said:

- Mikhail Sergeevich, sometimes I get the feeling that your colleagues do not understand what you want, they do not read carefully what you say and write... or they cannot understand the essence of it.

- You see, that is the limit! (and he made a gesture with his hand). A limit this high. I do not think that there are bad intentions here, factionalism, or a disagreement in principle... it's just the limit. And this is also bad.

We were housed in one of [Sharaf] Rashid[ov]'s mansions. In the evening, M.S., Shevardnadze, Kryuchkov (Chebrikov's deputy on foreign intelligence), and Lushchikov (M.S.'s adviser) sat together in the dining room and finished up the joint Soviet-American declaration, in order to send it to Najibullah today (Najibullah is staying in the city).

We had dinner, there was a funny episode. Kryuchkov: we should not have mentioned Cordovés in the declaration, he is a scoundrel.

M.S.: Why is he a scoundrel, he's not giving you any data? (Everybody laughs)

Kryuchkov : No, he is not!

Shevardnadze : Why do you think that is?

Kryuchkov : They are paying him a good salary. (Laughter).

On the morning of the 7th there was a meeting with Nadjibullah. He was with an adviser. M.S. asked Nishanov to join him, so later he would show up in the report: "To support Uzbekistan, because they have been completely trampled down" (because of the Rashid[ov] scandal⁴).

They reached agreements quickly. Najibullah (knowing that we have no other option) asked us for cash, weapons, material support, and food.

M.S. promised to look into it.

Najibullah looks confident. He has probably cast a much wider net than he tells us. And he has no alternative. "The seven" other opponents have all squabbled with each other... and the world knows him.

In a word, he wants us to leave.

Then we visited a collective farm, a greenhouse growing cucumbers, a residence... M.S. knows how to communicate with people. And he does it so easily, without adjusting his personality or elevating himself in inaccessibility. From the conversations he perceives how the people act, what they say and how they say it. [The people in Uzbekistan] spoke to him freely in broken Russian, they were open and respectful; they were not intimidated and only rarely were they shy (the men). The Uzbek women in the greenhouses were ready to kiss him and afterwards they all asked to take pictures with him from every angle. They sat down on the ground around him—so it looked just like a harem scene.

⁴ Former First Secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan responsible for unprecedented levels of corruption and abuse in cotton industry of the republic.

When we were returning to the “residence” he said that he has definitively made up his mind to speak before the active [party members]. So let us have dinner and then sit down to prepare... we will have a contest of the minds.

Here is how the work progressed: M.S. produced a stream of ideas, I kept interrupting with “formulations,” or to extract something from his “stream of consciousness” that could be put down on paper. Shevardnadze and Lishchikov did not say much. The session ended only around midnight. Well, M.S. says (to me and Lushchikov), make this presentable and give it to the man on duty.

We went to the neighboring building—a hotel where the girls were staying (secretaries, stenographers)... And I had to practically re-write the 40 page shorthand record, moving parts around, bringing out the central ideas, removing repetitions, in a word, doing in-depth editing. Lushchikov does not know how to do this.

I stayed up till 4a.m. We had to get up at 7:30 a.m. to lay flowers at the Lenin monument... Then we visited the factory “Algorithm” (there are almost no Uzbek employees there), and then there was a speech at the CC. The text was only a skeleton for him... In essence he made a new speech; the previous evening had served to gather his thoughts together and to practice.

No! We haven’t had a leader like him since Lenin and his colleagues. The comparison with Kirov does not work because Kirov was “the people’s tribune,” but he took his cues from the primitive. And he was not as intelligent. Perhaps they are comparable in their moral qualities and their feeling of responsibility.

Then we had pilaf at the palace from which Najibullah had left shortly prior. Then we flew home. On the airplane we drank tea together for a long time. M.S. was tired and happy with what was accomplished, especially by the fact that he “rehabilitated” the Uzbek people from the blemish and scorn resulting from the Rashid[ov] scandal. (His words to the collective farmers that “it is not the people’s fault” instantly spread through the republic). We all spoke a lot, about everything. Sometimes Raisa Maksimovna led the conversation, at those times M.S. quieted down...

What I remember particularly is that he was hurt by Shatrov's new appearance at the cinematographers' convention. Shatrov said that he had lunch with the American President at the White House and that Leontieff spoke, and said that “*perestroika* offers *glasnost*’ for the intelligentsia, but the regular people need meat!” And Gorbachev applauded even to these words.

But first of all, nobody spoke at the White House besides M.S., Reagan, and Cliburn.⁵ Secondly, even if Shatrov confused a lunch at the White House with a reception at the embassy, Leontief (Nobel laureate in economics, a former Russian) said nothing of the sort. And thirdly, even if this had taken place, how can you prattle about it... After all, it goes against the entire

⁵ Van Cliburn, an American pianist who won the first International Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in Moscow in 1958.

spirit and style, against all of Gorbachev's politics!

... Truly, the conceit of the foremen of *perestroika* is overshadowing decency, and Yakovlev was right when he said: "They want to be the Aleksandr Matrosov of *perestroika*, but end up being Pavlik Morozov..."

I moralized about this to Yu. Afanasiev.

M.S. was upset, especially by the fact that this segment of Shatrov's speech was broadcast by TV around the country.

... The article in *Pravda* (April 5) put many people in an awkward situation. M.S. said to me in the airplane: Ligachev visited me. He looks beaten. He's suffering. He said to me: let's conduct an investigation. Give an order to check the facts: I did not give an order to make the Nina Andreeva article the directive. I did not give it.

M.S. says to me: Maybe he did not give it. But he got his opinion across to the right people and the anti-*perestroika* [ones] were immediately ready to oblige. And the ball started rolling. Some party committees already gave an order to discuss it at party meetings (as a model of how to approach *perestroika*). Not to mention the fact that some Nina Andreeva could not have written such an article, which I saw as soon as I read it. This is a platform, a manifesto... To Yegor (i.e. Ligachev) I said: calm down, we are not going to conduct any investigations. The last thing we need is to organize a schism in the PB with our own hands.

M.S. went on: it's good that this happened, it's a lesson to everybody... Chebrikov gave a good speech (saying that the nature of the criticism is not destructive).

M.S.' speech in Tashkent was published today. He made some more edits after Yakovlev and me, particularly in the place where "everybody in the party is equal and there should not be leaderism." He removed the phrase "the General Secretary and the common communist are equal..." And he was right to do so, it would not sound serious, as if he were playing up to something. It is one thing when it is said in a small circle or even at a large, but closed auditorium. But if it were published in the entire country it would look like demagoguery.

Thus, upon arriving from Tashkent he was at the CC till midnight, and had no more energy to prepare materials for Arafat's visit. In the morning, with [Karen] Brutents' help, he prepared up some positions for the meeting with Arafat.

When Shevardnadze, Dobrynin, Brutents and I entered his office at the Kremlin five minutes before the meeting with Arafat, M.S. looked tired... Critically and as a joke, he said: I should fire you... I'll kick the bucket, I'm so tired. I have no desire to meet with this Arafat... What's the point?.. Only Anatoly (and he points at me) was against this meeting all the way. And you all insisted on it. (It is true that I was against it; I even had major conversations with E.A. [Shevardnadze]; I sabotaged the execution of PB's resolution to receive him; convinced M.S. temporarily not to carry it out. But it looks like E.A. became engaged in this and... we carry different weight, M.S. agreed with him in the end.)

The talk really was practically pointless. And we do not need him. Arafat, on the other hand, is celebrating. Now he feels even more important.

Perhaps the only useful point was that he heard from M.S.'s own lips that on no account should the "Palestinian rebels" take up weapons; that would be the end of everything.

April 24, 1988.

The most important events have been three meetings between M.S. and the First Secretaries of the obkoms and the Republics' CCs, a total of 150 people. I recorded everything in detail. He checked the idea of "All power to the Soviets!" on them... and presented the idea that the First Secretary should be the Chairman of the Presidium of any Soviet, but he should be popularly elected. If you are not elected--leave. And this set up would go to the very top: even in Pitsunda he said that the idea is that he would become a "President-General Secretary." And this is right. This is the central idea of *perestroika*, while he is alive. But during this time--through the XIX party conference, he wants to create elections and other guarantees against dictatorship... not only of the individual, but also of the party.

The main theme in the text and subtext of these meetings was the Nina Andreeva article. Razumovsky notified the first two groups (there was a break of three days between them) what the subject at hand would be. Therefore, it started from Pugo's (Riga) second speech: how could it have happened that a CC organ (*Sovetskaia Rossia*) printed something like this, etc. And why was there an order to print it in the oblast' newspapers...

But I, Pugo said, "suspected something fishy" and stopped the printing, and in two days it was recalled. But many printed it, and in some places, including Leningrad, started to "positively" support it at the party conferences. People say that some were even planning to conduct a "theory seminar" on Gorbachev's ideological mistakes (by way of *glasnost*).

Others were more harsh. One said: how does this happen? We are members of the CC. We approved your (M.S.) report at the February Plenum. Now all of a sudden a CC organ offers a completely reverse platform! Who are we after that? Why weren't we asked?..

A third raised a question--why don't we remove Chikin and dismiss the editorial staff?

M.S. flatly opposed this: we cannot use "those" methods to convince people that the new ideas are right... We will proceed only by the democratic process. He said to them directly: "Not all of you saw it, not all of you understood the anti-*perestroika* nature of the article. You hesitated."

He was especially furious when Petrov (Sverdlovsk, the "workers' aristocracy" from Stalin's brood) from the third group (which hadn't been notified) stood up and said: "So what! I liked the article and I ordered it to be reprinted. It's time to stop being humiliated for our past. The worker's collectives want to know: when will it stop!"

M.S. was somewhat disconcerted: “Did you get to the bottom of it, after the article in *Pravda*?”

Petrov: I’m working on it. Of course, Nina Andreeva is not right in everything. But *Pravda*, too, does not answer questions. Plus, after the first objective collection of responses to the article, it started printing only one-sided evaluations!

M.S. restrained himself, you could see.

Petrov: You demand that everyone says what he thinks... So I am saying it. And I am still trying to figure it out for myself.

There were no sharp condemnations of Nina’s article in this group. Most of the speakers did not touch upon the subject at all; they spoke on the subject of the conference: their ideas on reforming the political system and party work, i.e., they were giving their thoughts for the XIX party conference.

As the meeting progressed, Gorbachev raised the subject of Stalinshchina. When we did not know the whole picture, he said, it was one thing. But when we found out more and more about what happened... there can be no two ways about it. For your consideration I will give you some numbers: 1 million party activists were executed. Three million were sent to camps, to rot. This is not considering the effects of collectivization. Lists were made of the best people of the party, to be removed...

And Nina Andreeva... if we follow her logic, she is asking us to return to 1937. Do you want that? You are members of the CC. You have to think deeply about the fate of our country and of socialism. And constantly remember--we are all for socialism, but what kind of socialism? We do not need the kind we had under Stalin.

A Secretary of the Kalininskiy obkom started to complain that some groups, especially from the intelligentsia, are demanding that the city be renamed with the name of Tver’. They used to base this on historical reasons. Now, after the article “The President’s Wife” in *Ogonek*, they are also basing it on the fact that Kalinin does not deserve to have the city named after him. “What are we coming to?” he exclaimed.

M.S. answers him: “So what? Everything written in *Ogonek* is correct. That is how it was. Remember, how Lenin framed the question when Stalin offended Krupskaya. And here! Stalin sent Kalinin’s wife to jail... as well as other wives. And they acted as if nothing had happened. They continued to praise him and crawl at his feet. What moral is this! What kind of Bolsheviks are these?! So figure this out for yourself. I am not imposing anything. But figure it out with the people (about the city’s name).

And with Brezhnev. Churbanov (his son-in-law) was prosecuted for 700,000 [rubles] in bribes that he got from all around the Soviet Union. And this is Leonid Il’yich’s family! How can

we prevent people from rejecting his name: Brezhnev region, city... Naberezhnye Chelny⁶, an icebreaker!..

Several days later I had a conversation with Yakovlev. He asks me: When do you think this change happened in M.S.? Remember how sourly he received *The Children of Arbat*⁷? And then the affair with Shatrov⁸... Compared to what is printed right now, that stuff is baby talk. It's as if there is a new man in his place: he does not tolerate even the slightest indulgence in Stalinism.

I answer him: I think it happened when he saw that the people around him who are headed by Ligachev think (and do) the same as Nina Andreeva, and that even in the generalship of the party they do not understand the depth of his plans... or do not accept it.

In the end, if there was no Nina Andreeva, we should have invented her. All of this caused such a storm of anti-Stalinism, and such freedom in the newspapers, that Ligachev and others "would not have it!" in the past. And now he has his tail between his legs. I observed him at the Politburo last Thursday, April 14. He doesn't have the same aplomb anymore. He spends more time being quiet; he looks kind of pathetic. And when he spoke on some peripheral issue--I think it was about the fact that vocational schools should be managed from the center, rather than being attached to factories--Ryzhkov came down on his sharply (and this was in the presence of several ministers), Zaikov "disagreed," and even Vorotnikov said something.

M.S. comments were worthy of Solomon--as is his customary manner when he speaks about details: saying that everybody has some rationale. But in essence he supported the Premier. Ligachev pathetically quieted down. I thought: this is the beginning of the "rejection."

Yesterday an unscheduled Secretariat on the preparation of the XIX party conference took place. Gorbachev led it himself. He did not trust Ligachev to do it, even though according to his "status," the latter was supposed to lead it.

Last Friday, I think, M.S. went to the hospital to visit [Hafez al-] Assad, who came secretly for a medical examination. He is very open with him. With others--with the Europeans, even with Shultz, this is the right thing to do because they are decent human beings. But with this guy (as with Najibullah) you have to be more careful. Guile is in their blood. Assad needs nothing better than to milk us. He wants the rockets to be no worse than Israel's. Everything else he understands "his way." It's not for nothing that he is close to Khomeini.

Shultz was here on April 22. I prepared a great deal of materials for the meeting. M.S. kept changing "conceptions" and dictating to me. It seems he was not satisfied--he made Dobrynin write two more pages late at night. But he did not even look at them later.

⁶ A city that was named "Brezhnev" after the latter's death in 1982, subsequently renamed Naberezhnye Chelny in 1988.

⁷ In the 1985 installment of the Diary, Chernyaev writes about a continuous struggle to get permission to publish Rybakov's novel *The Children of Arbat*.

⁸ A.N. is speaking about M.S.'s reaction to the ending of Shatrov's play *And Further, Further!* where Lenin leaves, and Stalin stays. [Footnote in the original]

When he sat down across from Shultz, he put everything aside. He opened the folder, which had held the papers and which had his comments written across it.

Shultz: This is all that you have?--jokingly.

M.S.: I have a lot of things--also with irony.

And he presented everything calmly, confidently, and deeply. He was in great force. Nowadays he feels very confident during talks in general. He always thinks of unexpected moves ("the unpredictable General Secretary," he jokes). About Reagan's last speeches he said "whatever you do, you can't make (America) like you." And the greater Gorbachev's popularity in the world, the less capable Reagan & Co. will be to accept the *new thinking*; i.e. not even agree, but proceed from the fact that there won't be any communist aggression and expansion (from Moscow), and objectively there cannot be.

Dobrynin continues to be an "ambassador" even as he is the head of the International Department of the CC. This gives me a lot of work, since I get no help from the MFA or from the International Department in preparing materials for M.S. What they are providing is nothing more than references or trivialities. As a rule, there are zero ideas, or even original trains of thought. Except from Brutents.

Not that M.S. doesn't have plenty of his own ideas. Nevertheless, with his inhuman workload in domestic affairs, one wants to "guess" for him; to remind him of the most important in this or that foreign opportunity, in talks and documents, resolutions and preparation of PB discussions. I think so far I have been able to do this.

I have also been successful in preparing reports on the outcome of his talks. He likes it because it is easy for me to catch the "spirit," I know how he really thinks, and mostly know what he would like to present to the public. We also have a similar style of writing--no water, no unnecessary words, no blank shots.

This work he entrusts to me completely. Still, sometimes he checks. On the outcome of the talks with Shultz, for example, he called me from the car after the conclusion of the evening honoring Lenin (April 22), literally 20 minutes before the TV program *Vremya* ["Time"] and asked me to read what I composed. He approved it.

I developed a totally new style [for writing these reports] in comparison with Aleksandrov's work with Gorbachev, not only with Brezhnev and Chernenko. I write the reports about the talks based on fact (as opposed to writing it beforehand based on the MFA's style), using not only the thoughts, but even M.S.'s expressions and characteristic words.

And somehow everybody recognized these reports as a substitute for press-conferences, which are customary in the West for high-level meetings and which M.S.'s interlocutors give here at the press-house on Zubovskaia or on the plane... In a word, this is our evaluation of the meetings and what we would like to say in that regard.

M.S. just called. It seems he wanted to talk. "I am sitting," he says, "surrounded by journals and articles. Raisa Maksimovna came in and scolded me: why are you sitting around! The air is so fresh! You haven't moved all day, let's go for a walk!" Her hello to me... But he still talked with me for 20 minutes.

The first topic was the reaction in the world to his talk with Shultz. Everybody jumped to defend Reagan. It's good that we transferred the leadership from Thatcher to Reagan. That's where it belongs, that kind of leadership... And she already started fussing, asking for it again: but we let her know.

Me: Naturally. She had such a chance-- "closeness with Gorbachev!" She's not going anywhere. Let Reagan get himself clean.

M.S. (picks up): Everybody should know that we are not trading off our dignity under any circumstances. You know, Anatoly, they do not respect weakness. They will trample you and smear you. From time to time you have to remind them, who they are dealing with. Just look, how they listened (i.e. Shultz, Nitze, Ridgeway).

Me: Nobody rushed to defend their President.

M.S.: Yes. Shultz is an intelligent and decent person. The reports from Kiev say that he did not seek a meeting with the dissidents. He is speaking with the people, becoming convinced that I am saying the truth.

And Nitze? He's an old man...

Me: I think the politicking that reigns under Reagan is even unpleasant to themselves. But, they have to play the game with him.

M.S.: When we were saying goodbye, Nitze (M.S. spoke with each one separately when they were leaving) said to me: it's too bad that I am already old and will not be able to do your important work with you. But age is also wisdom. I've seen many things in my time. I've had to work with many people. But with you, something totally new is opening. And I still want to do something worthwhile. With you, it is possible.

Ridgeway said: I am amazed at you. Where does this stream of thoughts come from, this ability to see everything immediately, and to look far. It is all so simple and so disarming.

And look (M.S. says to me), Shevardnadze told me that Ridgeway and Bessmertnykh sat down and conducted negotiations, and they were on the same wavelength--this issue is like this, that issue we will not touch for now, we'll put it off, etc. They were like two normal, reasonable, intelligent people. This team works well together. When will there be another one like them?

Me: Mikhail Sergeyevich, I observed you during the meeting. When they were listening to you, these people forgot that they are officials... serving Reagan...

M.S.: Overall, we seized the moment the right way. And this is a notice for Reagan's visit

here. We should warn him. Let him know that we will not go easy. We will guard our dignity.

The second subject was the XIX party conference and yesterday's Secretariat.

You know, he says, I did not get anything from yesterday's discussion. The only people who added something were Yakovlev, Medvedev, and Lukyanov. The rest... are thinking only about their ambitions and about their positions.

Me: I agree, there are no ambitions. There is nothing to bring.

M.S.: You are right. There is a philosophical impoverishment. They are limited, they are lacking culture. The poverty of thought results from this, not to mention their attitude toward my plans... There is something here, Tolya! And Ligachev surprised me again, when he attacked the press. He said that the only good thing is the Russian government, while the USSR Sovmin [Council of Ministers] does nothing. Just think! He is openly declaring his allegiances and antipathies... Does he think we are so primitive that we do not understand this? Vorotnikov's is the worst government of all the republics. Did you notice how they railed at him (without naming him) at the meetings with obkom secretaries. And Ryzhkov? We don't let him work--dragging all his affairs to the PB. And here everything comes down to the powerlessness of the Soviet government! But, Yegor [Ligachev] hates Nikolai [Ryzhkov], and gets the same in return...

This is the ceiling, Tolya! What can you expect from him. For 18 years he (Ligachev) led an obkom, he does not know any other way. And the education plays a role. We need to look for a way out...

We need a breakthrough at the party conference. A new intellectual breakthrough.

Look at the party. It should have an avant-garde role, but how, if we take away its command and its governance? "All power to the Soviets!" But how? How do we make the Soviets work after a 60-year-old habit of being henchmen, and after their complete discrediting?

We say: return Lenin's image to socialism! Yes. But what does it mean in today's circumstances? We are cleaning it from Stalinshchina, Brezhnevshchina... there is a lot more work here. But this is a negativist work. What should the construction be? A legal socialist state. It's a major problem, etc.

It's time to fill everything with concrete content. We've had enough declarations. People will lose faith if we keep speaking in formulas and promises.

Our youth—what do we say to them? What does this world mean to them? How do they understand it, and why do they need democracy? What do they prefer?

In a word, we need to think. Time is flying by.

Tomorrow at 3pm we—the advisers and Yakovlev—and we will think.

I told M.S. about Boffa, with whom I met yesterday.

April 26, 1988.

M.S. got together Yakovlev, Slyunkov, Medvedev, Lukyanov, three advisers, Bikkenin, Sitaryan, Mozhin (deputy of the Department of Economics), and Boldin, and talked through all the XIX party conference ideas... The most important thing is that it will go down in history as the first fundamental reconstruction of the political system since World War II; featuring a new concept for the avant-garde role of the party; “All power to the Soviets!;” a legal state; and the national question (“All the doors and windows are banging, and stones are drumming on the roof”)—we cannot wait with the national question till the Plenum.

The outcomes of *perestroika*. Self-criticism of the past three years. But it became clear from the speeches of Slyunkov and Sitaryan, there is not even an idea of how to tune the economic mechanism to work on the new principles. It is an alarming situation. Production is falling; the market supply is growing scanty. Sugar is sold through food stamps even in Moscow. This is *a propos*.

By the way, M.S. told us (“for you only”) the following in relation to the problem of guaranteeing the irreversibility of *perestroika*. The people are very worried that the whole thing might be tipped over. The situation has escalated during these three weeks of the standstill (between the publication in *Sovetskaia Rossia* and the article in *Pravda*). Here is an example... remember, last week I did not come to work for three days. I had to undergo a medical examination, I’ve been putting it off for a long time. Well, the traffic police stopped my son-in-law (he is a doctor in the municipal hospital No.1), they know his license plate. They asked him directly: “Where is Mikhail Sergeevich?” My son-in-law didn’t give them a clear answer, and they said: “Don’t try to play around it. Tell us, where is M.S.? We know that his car hasn’t been entering the city in three days! There are rumors that he’s been removed... If that’s true, tell us. The people are wound up, they say that if he’s been removed—they will arm themselves and take to the streets!”

Everybody spoke in order; a lot was said. I also spoke. Very loudly, and unlike the others, I was standing, in the heat of the moment. Two of the themes that I discussed should be recorded:

- 1) Against Ivan’s (Frolov) thesis “on returning from Lenin to Marx.”

Yes, it’s true that we do not read enough Marx, that we know him poorly, not substantively, that we got scared by the Western debates over his early works. We need to do something, but not at the expense of Lenin.

- 2) Against Shakhnazarov’s thesis to “enter the world community, saying that we are the same as everybody else...”

On this point I was vehement. Our power is in our difference. Should we say that we

want to fit in? We (i.e. Gorbachev) have been saying it to the West for three years already. This is not enough. For Reagan (his last three speeches) we are still a totalitarian government, the breeding ground of communist expansion, we are suppressing our people, etc... It has always been like this and will continue to be like this with Reagan & Co. But the fact that not one West European newspaper published these speeches, and only two American newspapers published it—this is a historical fact in itself.

At the meeting with Shultz M.S. openly criticized Reagan's two speeches. But neither Shultz, Nitze, Ridgeway or Powell protested, because they are decent people and they must be embarrassed for their boss, even though their position requires them to defend him. This is also a significant fact.

You, Georgy, say that “we are the same...” They will answer this: excuse me, if you are the same as us, tell us—how many personal computers do you have per capita? Oh, 48 times less than we do! Then say goodbye to the place of a superpower. We would treat you as we treat Panama, if you didn't have big rockets... They still mean something for now...

And yet. What do we have right now? We have a high-level session of NATO in Brussels on the subject of “How do we stop Gorbachev?”

That's how it is. We are not “the same as everybody,” we are a powerhouse of modern world development of morality and justice. This is our strength, and we should foster it.

The third theme was that the XIX party conference should be a critical border. But we should not usurp April of 1985. The revolution started then. The conference should be a border in the sense of the things that will be said there: we are finally cutting the umbilical chord from the command-administrative system and from all the inheritance of Stalinism. It is especially important to say this considering “Ninotchka...” [Andreeva] She and others like her need to hear it from the tribune. The word “irreversible” is becoming obsolete. The baby=*perestroika* has already been born. The prenatal period is over. His further development will depend on the cleanliness of the swaddling clothes and the novelty of his toys.

Today I wrote an outline for the international section of the report at the conference. I got together all of “my” experts (Galkin, Veber, Koval'skiy, Ambartsumov, Rybakov, Gusenkov). We went over my ideas; they added many interesting thoughts. I re-wrote the scheme and asked them to share their thoughts in writing by May 1st. Tomorrow I am leaving for Volynskoe-2. The others left today.

But I still have Arismendi coming up, the Japanese (CP and SP [Communist Party and Socialist Party (КП и СП)]), and Vogel (SPD). And routine work. Today, for example, I entirely re-wrote the Statement from the Soviet government to Afghanistan, written by Shevardnadze, Chebrikov, Yazov, and Dobrynin... and M.S. accepted my version without a single correction.

In the morning, M.S. will receive the Patriarch. Ivan struggled for a long time over what form of address to propose: holy father, Your Holiness [преосвященство] or by his secular name?

Yakovlev gave an excellent speech last Friday before the CC apparatus. The thoughts, the words, the passion, the ideology, and the eloquence of his speech! There was pathos--"where were you (we), during the time before *Pravda* came out and said: 'It is ok to defend *perestroika!*'"

June 19, 1988.

In the end of April I was in Volynskoe-2. We were working on a draft of the theses for the XIX conference, which M.S. re-dictated... I had to insist on, with Shevardnadze's help, having some self-assessment in the international section. He agreed... this is a historical shift... For the first time we are speaking critically about our foreign policy prior to 1985.

For the Conference report I prepared an even more critical version, leading to ideas about the evolution of imperialism... Which, however, Honecker has already noted in the theses and in his circle has expressed his disagreement. Same with Bilyak. In general, our friends are very afraid of *perestroika* and new thinking.

We took a break from Volynskoe-2 due to Reagan's visit.

You can't say more about it than is already said in our press and theirs. But from my perspective--M.S. guessed what would touch Reagan's emotions. And he did precisely that... Reagan saw that we are not an "empire of evil," but normal people, with a rich history at that, and... we are such a giant that you cannot intimidate or dazzle us. And this works. Reagan still keeps telling everyone how he walked around the Red Square and Arbat. He sent M.S. a personal letter, "To Mikhail from Ron." I prepared a draft response, "To Ron from Mikhail," but M.S. has been sitting on it for the third day already--either he is too busy or he is thinking it over.

Immediately after Reagan we re-located to Novo-Ogarevo (to prepare the party conference).⁹ M.S. came every morning at 10 and we worked together till 10-11 in the evening. He re-dictated our drafts.

When I speak of "we" I mean Yakovlev, Medvedev, Lukyanov, Frolov, Shakhnazarov, Boldin, and myself. Nobody else...

The project to re-structure the political system will shock, first and foremost, his colleagues at the PB... He sent out the reports (104 pgs) two days ago. The discussion at the PB will be tomorrow.

It will stun them because the majority of them will not have high-level positions in the new system.

⁹ Novo-Ogarevo was a state house (dacha) near Moscow where advisers and speechwriters gathered to draft Gorbachev's speeches and other documents.

M.S. hesitated for a long time and thought out loud in front of us: he started the section by saying that he will resign, but offers the following structure (the General Secretary becomes Chairman not of the Presidium but of the USSR Supreme Soviet, i.e. “the President”). And let the conference... or later the Congress of the Soviets (a new institution) decide on this question...

He moved away from this thought with the refrain that “I do not need a new burden.” It is true that *perestroika* will not take place if it is not enforced from the top. The only people who want and can enforce it are M.S. and maybe 2-3 more members of the Politburo, and a part of the CC Secretaries.

So this decision will really decide our fate.

Nevertheless, even judging by the very critical and skeptical letters and press, everybody understands that *perestroika* is Gorbachev, and if he disappears, everything will fall through under the current PB.

When M.S. was with us, Frolov told an anecdote that his daughter brought from MGU [Moscow State University]: “It is the opening of the XIX party conference. The first person to enter the Presidium is Ivan Susanin, then Gorbachev, and then the rest. Susanin leads Gorbachev to the Chairman’s place, and tells the rest: ‘As for you, we are going to keep walking...’” Everybody laughs, and M.S. even more than everybody else. Truly, this is the voice of the people.

In the breaks in Novo-Ogarevo there were meetings with Najibullah and Cardinal Casaroli. Both were significant. Najibullah showed himself to be weak, confused, and incompetent (he asked us to leave Polyanchko--an adviser from the KGB--with him); he offered to organize a joint war: USSR-India-Afghanistan against Pakistan. He asked us to conduct major operations with the participation of the Soviet troops (although in the third echelon) against the mujahedeen... to lift the moral spirits of the Afghani troops... “And if they run away?”--M.S. rebuffed him pretty bluntly on both counts.

The conversation with the Cardinal was philosophical. This man, behind whom stands all the wisdom of millennia of Christianity and all the cunning of a Jesuit, he understood that he was dealing with a man who is opening the door into a new era for humanity.

M.S. did not send out a record of his talk with Casaroli around the PB. He doesn’t want to tease the geese--an expression he’s been using for all kinds of occasions lately. Of course, they would not “understand” this conversation.

The press is raging about Stalin, Brezhnev, and the present-day epigones. There are unbelievably frank discussions of the theses and of how the apparatus stifled the elections to the party conference. The Moscow party conference discussed the episodes with Afanasiev and Gelman. M.S. defended the latter and “suggested” to Zaikov to remove Afanasiev, whom the raikom failed to elect...

Afanasiev paid us back (as M.S. told us in Novo-Ogarevo) by starting an affair with an Italian student, visiting her regularly at the hotel where she lives while she completes her school training and represents the CIA at the same time.

July 10, 1988.

A week has passed since the conference. A great deal has been written about it. The most precise and subtle observations are printed in the serious press. By the way, only today I've been able to read my fill of it, and it has calmed me down. They were able to see correctly that M.S. is a great politician who has done the maximum (and even a little more) of what was possible. He likes to say so himself, that politics is the art of the possible.

This side of him has been revealed for the participants of the conference, even though they thought they knew him well. But they knew him as an extraordinary personality; an interesting interlocutor; a sincere man who does not have an attitude and does not show off; a person who gets carried away; who is capable of making unexpected moves and brave decisions; who is smart and resourceful, etc. But this time they saw the politician with enormous self-confidence, who wields the art of winning over and subduing, and who knows how to lead.

This calmed me down because I, as the majority of the intelligentsia, had a mixed impression from the conference. It was a huge event, a turning point like never before, M.S.' authority and the people's love for him are unquestionable and have gone up a notch; his superiority and the people's trust in him are all encompassing; the decisions (resolutions) are unique... But people's state of mind is dejected, even alarmed... I even wanted to tell him about this if the opportunity came up... But he was so cheerful and confident in the days after the conference that I just could not. And all this despite Armenia and other troubles.

On the other hand, he led the Politburo in a very businesslike manner, talking about the conference very rationally and without any turgidity. He did not hesitate to agree with Ligachev-Zaikov-Vorotnikov that despite the enterprise law (which discredits the entire psychology of a self-supporting economy) we should leave the former practice of sending citizens to collect the harvest, for the harvest is in danger (as if you can save it by these means!)

And still, for some reason the mood is depressing. Because first of all, this truly historical conference (nothing like this has happened since the 1920s) has hit the press and intelligentsia in the face, i.e. those rushed into *perestroika* headlong and without whom it would not have started or progressed, without whom this conference would have been impossible.

Secondly, Ligachev's speech was just so clever, skillful, and foul, deceitful, and impudent... Once again, M.S. is saying that the party, the people, and the country achieved *perestroika* through suffering, to have gone on like this would have been fatal; that *perestroika* naturally grew out of the crisis, etc. But Ligachev declares that everything depended on an intrigue in the PB; that he, Ligachev, was at the heart of the events; and that together with Chebrikov, Gromyko, and Solomentsev they nominated Gorbachev in March of 1985... But these

four, they could have nominated somebody else! He also said that just like he [Ligachev] made Tomskaya oblast' prosper, he could have done the same for the entire country, if only the talk of freedom, democracy, and *glasnost*' weren't getting in the way.

He even quoted Pushkin that "in the wild noises of animosity" he hears the sound of approval... This was in the context of the Western press and the local administrators of *perestroika* criticizing him, while this same West names Gorbachev "Man of the Year" and keeps admiring him.

Ligachev was able to state his position fully, including the fact that he supported Bondarev--a reactionary, obscure speech a la "Nina Andreeva," and with an anti-Semitic subtext to boot!

Plus, the depressive mood is also stemming from this episode: Baklanov¹⁰ was driven from the podium, but Bondarev received an ovation. Baklanov did show himself to be a Jewish milksop--he should have left after the first claps and exclamations. That would have been a defiant action. But he really wanted to give a speech, which would have been more fitting at a youth-literary symposium rather than an event like this... and on the heels of Bondarev. By the way, I am sure that the reaction against Baklanov also had an anti-Semitic air.

And M.S. should have been above the Ligachev-Yeltsin conflict. Instead, he dedicated a third of his concluding remarks to Yeltsin. By doing that, he practically joined Ligachev, or in any case he "swallowed" his platform and his insults. He has a complex here... By the way, Yakovlev told me that M.S. did not want to talk about Yeltsin. Supposedly, in the back room during the break he spoke with PB members in this vein. But suddenly, Raisa Maksimovna came in and started to berate Yeltsin indignantly, saying that "we can't leave it like this." That settled the question.

Yakovlev told me another thing: M.S. was very afraid that in one of the speeches Yeltsin (or somebody else) would name Raisa Maksimovna and get a round of applause. Now I understand why he was so angry even when he was leaving the hall, when it became clear that it would be impossible not to allow Yeltsin to speak.

Raisa Maksimovna's influence is also telling in another issue. Before the last day of the conference, M.S. got us all together (after the conference, at 9pm in the presidium room of the Great Kremlin Hall) to talk about his closing remarks. Slyunkov, Boldin, Yakovlev, Frolov, Shakhnazarov, and I were present.

Some gave advice, thought out loud, he himself poured out ideas. I also stated my thoughts; by the way, I suggested that we should speak about the lessons of the conference itself, about its pluses and minuses. Particularly that it is impossible to pass by such a "spoonful of tar"¹¹ as Bondarev's speech--it was reactionary, obscure, anti-*perestroika*, etc. M.S. stopped me,

¹⁰ G. Baklanov, just as U. Bondarev, is a writer, who in the 1950s started the so-called "truth from the trenches" in prose about the Great Patriotic War. [Footnote in the original]

¹¹ From the Russian saying "Like a spoonful of tar in a barrel of honey."

dismissing my comments with a wave of his arm and saying: “Did you see how the audience reacted to him?”

--I saw it! That made it especially embarrassing. That is exactly why we should talk about it.

Nobody said anything (even though one on one, quietly, Shakh[nazarov], Ivan, and Yakovlev all expressed their indignation with Bondarev and Ligachev’s support of him). Then again, Shakh told me that when Ligachev for some reason came by the row where we were sitting, Ivan enthusiastically shook his hand and congratulated him with a “brilliant speech.” I did not see this myself. But Shakh assures me that he saw this and now he understands completely “what kind of a person Frolov is,” who constantly brags that he was righteous and principled during the entire period of the stagnation!

So, everyone kept quiet. And M.S. cut me off: “I am not going to do what you are proposing!”

Now I learn the following... M.S. is going to Poland. Medvedev, the Department of Culture, and Yakovlev prepared a list of the delegation, which included the academician Likhachev (M.S. will have to attend a major meeting with scientists and cultural figures). Sagdeev was also on the list. I doubt that they made the list without consulting M.S. Suddenly, he crosses both of them off the list (already three days after the conference), and suggests... Bondarev. This is despite the fact that both academicians have already packed their suitcases and are very honored by such trust... In response to our words that it would be inappropriate, he firmly insisted. To Medvedev’s merit, he was decisively against Bondarev and did not allow his inclusion, saying that the Poles will not understand... he is an inveterate Russian chauvinist! But the academicians were still removed. I suspect that this is also R.M.’s work, to whom Likhachev is “boss” on the Cultural Fond, and he probably did not please her in something.

M.S.’ terrible weakness in this regard (R.M.) is dangerous to his authority. People are saying that he loves Frolov and looks past his impudent idleness and exploitation of his position as an adviser in academic areas because Raisa Maksimovna went to school with Frolov’s wife and they might even have been friends in the past.

M.S. is ready to fulfill her smallest whim. He almost fired Gusenkov when during R.M.’ time together with Nancy Reagan (Gusenkov was in charge of the “women’s program”)¹² something seemed not quite right to her in how she was shown on TV. She spoke with Gusenkov in a “raised” voice, reprimanded him and hinted that “perhaps we should part ways.” In a word, she’s going to extremes.

This is very bad. Yakovlev saw the danger in this a long time ago. Back then, I thought he was exaggerating.

Well, what about myself? Am I satisfied with my work over these months of preparation

¹² During Reagan’s visit to Moscow

and carrying out of the conference? Yes, I am. I did a lot of work besides the international section and the theses, the report, and the first resolution. In all three cases M.S. accepted my materials “from the first presentation” and did not re-dictate them, even though he smoothed out some of my overly-critical corners.

In a word, the international sections practically did not take away any extra time from M.S. and the Novo-Ogarevo and Volynskoe-2 team.

But not only that... Yakovlev, the team leader, gave me all the other sections to edit (except for economics), and twice. The Frolov pieces I just re-wrote (and he did not even write them himself, he got his “white slaves” from *The Communist*--Latsis and Kolesnikov--to write them). Without batting an eyelid, he presented them as his own, even though he did not know who re-wrote them. He must have thought it was Yakovlev, the team-leader.

And during the review of all the texts of the reports and resolutions I intruded more than once, to the annoyance of M.S. (He allows himself to tell me to “resume my seat” rather impolitely, and even though I snap back, he never does this to Frolov--the academician!--and once again, he’s afraid to offend R.M.!)

M.S. took me into the first committee, which reviewed the first two major resolutions. And since there was no “apparatus” attached to it (165 people), I was writing down the results of the discussion. And M.S. accepted almost everything, including the famous oath that “the CPSU will never again allow anything like a cult and stagnation.” The entire world noticed it, saying: “The CPSU has reached the pinnacle of the rift from the past.” (*Messaggero*).

In a word, I am happy with my anonymous contribution to the “turning-point event” of our history.

About Rust. Back in Novo-Ogarevo somebody brought him up in relation to something. M.S. asked what we should do with him. I put my two-cents in immediately: “We should let him go. Right after the conference we should do this as a demonstration of our humanitarianism, which it will fuel. And God forbid that we do it close to Kohl’s or Genscher’s visit.”

Luk’yanov and Yakovlev supported me right away. M.S. decided--let’s let him go! He assigned Boldin to call Chebrikov to prepare the release. But there was no paper on this account. Yesterday, after the meeting with India’s president in the Ekaterinian Hall, I tell him: “Mikhail Sergeyevich, you are leaving for Poland. Right now you will immerse yourself in last-minute preparations. I have some pressing matters.” He says: “Let’s go to the CC right now, we’ll talk there.” I ask him, “What do you mean, ‘go?’” And he said that we’ll walk with our feet. We left the building and went. He told security to “move back” so they “do not flicker before us.” The two of us kept walking. There were tons of people at the Kremlin: sightseers, tourists. The crowd was stupefied at seeing him. Some stopped in confusion and retreated to the walls, while others rushed to shake his hand; the women embraced him. He tried to talk to them, but of course they were speechless. They delightedly exclaimed something and applauded. He approached another group, started a conversation about life, about the conference. Asked people where they were from, reacted to their responses. A group of young Frenchmen appeared, he talked with them. An

enormous crowd collected by the Aleksandrovsky cathedral: our people from Khabarovsk to Minsk, plus Bulgarians, Czechs, people from the GDR. Each one wanted to say his name, shake his hand, touch him. When he came up to the French tourists, one of our provincial women ran up to him, saying “What about me? What about me?” He gave her a hug, said something, and they kept standing like that, in an embrace, surrounded by elated French tourists who were taking pictures. By the bell he talked with another crowd... and quickly walked toward the **Spassky tower**. People were running toward him from all directions, from the cannon and the garden. We passed the Spassky gates, and the entire Red Square was astir. I told him: this is where Rust landed. If you remember, you wanted to finish with this business... Yes, yes, he says, it’s good that you reminded me. When we get to the CC I’ll make a phone call. (And he did call Shevardnadze when we got there, since Chebrikov is on vacation, and ordered to have the paperwork delivered “today.”)

By the Cathedral of St. Basil the Blessed the queue dispersed. The people ran to the fence. Some Swedes showed up, started embracing him and saying something. One man put his hand on M.S.’ shoulder and said: “Mikhail Sergejevich, you should work less, take care of yourself. We can see that you are tired.” M.S. also clapped him on the shoulder, saying: “It’s ok, friend. We will endure. This is the time to work, we’ll rest later.” Hundreds of people were yelling from behind the fence of the Cathedral: “Mikhail Sergejevich, we are with you, be strong. We are always with you. It is good. Thank you.”

Then he told me, “let’s walk down Razin street. I want to walk past the ‘Rossia’ hotel. I used to always stop here when I would come over from Stavropol.” We crossed the street to the building of the commissariat. A group of Italians was coming toward us, about 25 people... These guys had no reservations at all and clung to him from every side. And I noticed that every one of the 25-30 people there either shook his hand, or embraced him, or held him at the elbow or waist. They were yelling, inviting him to Italy... That was real enthusiasm.

We went down Razina street in front of the amazed pedestrians, and starting from Ipat’evskiy lane it was in front of the amazed CC apparatus, which was at this time moving toward the cafeteria en masse.

We reached the entrance and he took me to his office, where he dealt with his routine work. This is when I found out that on August 1st he is going on vacation. And he said to me: “Get ready, we are going together again... and maybe we’ll think something up this time, too...” (He was hinting at the year 1986 when he “thought up” Reykjavik, and 1987 with the book “*Perestroika*” and the report on the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution.)

September 13, 1988.

In September M.S. is planning to visit Krasnoyarsk. I am on Michurinskiy avenue, at a hospital with an ailing heart. While I have some free time, I’ll describe what happened in the Crimea.

From August 1st till September 4th we were at “Zarya” (near Foros). For the fourth time M.S. takes me along with him for vacation. This is at a wild beach near Tesseli, where I took vacations once, swimming beyond the cliff. But the entire territory to the lighthouse (Sarych) is taken. The presidential palace in “Livadiya” is a barn compared to what is built here. I asked M.S. the day after we arrived whether he likes it here. He said yes... but some of the superfluities are tiresome, such as the escalator to the sea, but it wasn't built for me (hinting at Brezhnev or Chernenko). But he's dissembling: the Tesseli-Foros inhabitants say that everything here was built a year and a half ago.

What does he need this for? The rumors are not only in Crimea, but in Moscow, too: it cost 189 million or so. There are also rumors that in Messera (near Pizunda) there is another “dacha,” which cost 132 million. It is possible that the numbers are exaggerated... but even if it is half as much, and “Zarya” does not cost less. Plus, there is a whole army of security and servants... what does he need it for? Or is he powerless before the wishes of R.M. in this, as well? With her provincial psychology: if she got to this point... if her husband is so great and does not spare himself for his country!... Under the impression of this “Zarya” for the first time I had major doubts, how does one say it, maybe--doubts of the selfless nature of the heroic deed of *perestroika*. And it is a heroic deed, I write this word without any quotation marks.

Our relationship has also changed. Even in comparison with Pitsunda (there were already signs) last summer. He is still very spontaneous. For example, he got carried away with the shorthand records of the first party congresses after 1917--the VIII, XI, and XII. And when he invited me and Tamara Prokofievna (the stenographer), this time he never invited me alone, he was animated like a young student, reading excerpts out loud, commenting, drawing conclusions for the present day, and making very sharp philosophical remarks about the polemics of those, Lenin's, congresses...

But unlike before, he did not “talk to us” simply, and when I started on a subject that he thought he would disagree with from the first words, he immediately interrupted me and stated his position in a way that let me know that the discussion is closed.

I chose a different method, which I use almost everyday in Moscow (but it's a different matter here [in Moscow], where he has dozens of live interlocutors)... I write or dictate my opinions, evaluations, or suggestions on a separate sheet of paper and send it to him together with other documents that he receives from me. Sometimes he considers them, but I find out about it much later or indirectly. Sometimes he reacts right away and calls me, but only if he accepts them. Sometimes he just ignores them and the girls return my papers without any comments written on them.

At times he acts (how does one say this--considering who he is, and who I am) not very respectfully, even though he likes this expression himself and uses it often. For example, Shevardnadze decided to write an article on the year 1939. M.S. calls me late at night in Tesseli (where I lived within a five-minute walking distance from my “workplace” near his palace, but an 11km roundabout drive by car, [which I took] three times a day: in the morning, at lunch, and after work): read this carefully and give me your opinion. I wrote a full review. He agreed with it and added that England and France wanted to incite Hitler against us, while Stalin wanted to

incite them against each other. Or: “these kinds of things are not done in two days” (i.e. Hitler sent us the letter on the 20th, and on the 23rd we signed the pact)... In a word he was thinking quite decisively in the spirit of Kulishe’s article in *Komsomol’skaya Pravda*, which appeared two days later. And he agreed with me that the Agreement of August 23rd was faulty in principle and brought only troubles and losses.

He called Ligachev himself. They agreed that the article would be taken down; saying that next year the 50th anniversary of the war is coming up, new research will be ready, and we will make our official position then. Plus, he asked me to call Ligachev and “explain everything in detail.”

And what’s the outcome? One August 1st, an article appears in *Pravda* with the same signatures as in the first version, with minor corrections. It was stupid, without proofs, and practically freeing Stalin from blame.

Of course I did not allow myself to ask him for “explanations” (last year, under different circumstances, I would have asked). I found out from Boldin and Vorontsov what happened, which was the following: Ligachev took M.S.’ opinion for a “dissatisfaction” with the existing text. And he assigned the authors (through Vorontsov) to work on it some more. He sent the new version to M.S., who returned the article without any corrections to Boldin and gave Ligachev the go-ahead! And all this despite the fact, which is clear to him (and I wrote to him about it in my review), that unless he plans on canceling *glasnost*, historians will still come to Kulish’s point of view (or something close to that). Why should he connect himself to this flawed concept, which Falin already once imposed on him (though Yakovlev) in the report on the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution (now he swept aside my objections). But since then, a lot of *glasnost*-suffused water has flowed under bridge, in this as in many other matters. Of course, the West reacted very clearly to his article as a victory for the Ligachev line in the present moment.

On the other hand, Chebrikov sent me a draft of his interview with *Pravda* about his work in the KGB and *perestroika*. I marked it up quite unceremoniously, and sent it to M.S. (especially about the “ideological functions” of the KGB and the relations with the market and cooperatives). He not only agreed with all of my comments, but as I saw from the texts in the newspaper, added some too.

These are two contrasting examples. What do they indicate? That in relation to me (and maybe not only me) he has already developed an “instrumental” approach: the person does work, and let him; I’ll take what I need and discard what I don’t need. I don’t have time to explain things to him, and why should I? He’ll get over it!

Overall, my hurts are ridiculous. He has turned the country upside down. He has given it back a human face. He saved humanity from a catastrophe, which would have inevitably happened if we continued with Brezhnev’s foreign policy. He will truly enter history on the same level as Lenin, whatever *perestroika* comes to.

And who am I? Nobody in particular. **That’s right.** But... the traits that come through

in his relations with me can disfigure him as a statesman of *perestroika* and new thinking... As in a drop of water, “according to the unforgettable Ponomarev.”

When he was taking me south with him, he stated the objectives on which we would work:

- prepare materials for a lecture (or a brochure) “on socialism;”
- prepare the main speech for Krasnoyarsk;
- develop a conception for the reform of the CC and its apparatus.

Besides, we had to finish the postscript to the Polish-Soviet book (based on the outcomes of his trip to Poland), which he promised the Polish intellectuals. By the way, there I also offered him to step away from the position on 1939 that he offered in the report on the 70th anniversary of October. But... alas! He condemned the Agreement of September 28th--on the friendship and border with Germany. He did that much. But that is not new...

I think the stormy meetings in the Baltics during these days played their role in this. To recognize August 23rd as faulty would mean to put the joining of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania in question... Even though he clearly sees and does not deny that the “joining” was an intervention from the very beginning.

We came up with quite a bit “on socialism.” He dictated a new part: why do we need this subject right now? Everything is so scattered that nobody knows anymore, what’s socialism, what’s not, and what it means at all.

I made a summary of the kinds of evaluations of our pre-*perestroika* society that have appeared in our press: was it socialism at all, etc. There are four main directions--from Afanasiev to Astafiev. According to preliminary analysis, which I asked Ambartsumov to conduct, plus the book *Inogo ne dano* [We Do Not Have Another Way], I wrote a 30 page scheme of the evolution of Lenin’s understanding of socialism. On 40 more pages I summarized and unified what Gorbachev himself has said in these three years on this subject--how he imagines socialism.

But he did not work on this material, which I handed to him week after week. When we got back on Monday, he got together the advisers, and said that we have this material and that it needs to be turned “from quantity to quality,” and we should use it to prepare for the CC Plenum, at which the reorganization of the political system will be confirmed. This is where we’ll need a “theory of socialism.” “We all need to work--and Ivan Timofeevich will be team leader”--he said, without batting an eyelid.

This is the magic of an academic title, a fabricated one, received through a career in bureaucracy... Despite the fact that the XIX conference has already shown that Frolov is incapable of anything besides chattering on the theme... “about man,” and he does not have any real ammunition. Shakhnazarov has a great deal more of it, and I just read more about it, I live it... I have found that I have read and studied more in philosophy than the philosopher-

academician Frolov. But what can you do! Anyway, it is completely clear to me in this matter, and I have been “informed” of this before from many sides, that the mystery of M.S.’ benevolence toward Ivan is R.M. This is how he got into Gorbachev’s circles in the first place. Ah, let it be! God forgive my sinner’s soul!

M.S. worked on the Krasnoyarsk speech very thoroughly. He dictated it many times, sometimes even at night over the regular phone line in Tesseli.

I prepared the international section quickly, went over it with the MFA, with [Marshal] Akhromeev and Kamentsev (foreign economic committee). M.S. approved, accepted, and praised it (which you rarely hear from him); and did not come back to it. But he painstakingly belabored the domestic section. He is very worried by the situation that arose after the party conference. Objectively, it worked out that the party conference added fuel to the fire: the apparatus understood that its days are numbered and at best stopped working, practically turning off the old mechanism of the administrative system (in the worst case it is aiming to show that all of this is Gorbachev’s venture). The new mechanism has not started functioning yet... And there is nothing on the shelves. The word in Moscow is that the times are worse than under Grishin... and they are intensely comparing this time to the two years when Yeltsin was in Moscow.

Gorbachev is beginning to be irritated by the intelligentsia, which keeps adding panicky analyses, producing facts claiming that in the years 1927, 1950, and 1968 there was plenty of food on the shelves and everything was available.

He asked for numbers and data. He dictated one thing, then another, then crossed it all out. He looked for approaches. But he still brought a “justificatory” and “coaxing” speech to Moscow. Only when he was here he found the right key: the goal we set is a difficult one but we do not have another, we will go forward, and the people who implemented the new approaches are already reaping results. Do not ask me how *perestroika* is going. I am supposed to be asking you: I gave you full freedom to act how you think is best. So act. Feed, clothe, provide for yourselves, etc.

He got the idea for this conception in Sevastopol’, where he decided to go for a tour a day before leaving for Moscow. At the very sea-front he was met by a crowd of many thousands, and he spent the three and a half hours of his “tour” in debate and polemic with the people (as I had warned him would happen).

When they pestered him with questions on the Sapun mountain--about the deficit in sugar, housing, subscription, pensions, the failure of the enterprise law, the Crimean atomic power station, (by the way, he never once lost his temper--he knows how to talk to people), he said: am I a Tsar? Or Stalin? Do you want me to go around cities, pointing and saying that you get an apartment, you get a pension, you get a fair salary, and you get order at your factory? No. In two years you had time to judge which people would be good leaders and organizers. And to elect them; to drive out the worthless ones; to organize yourselves and carry out what you would like to see happen. This is the essence of *perestroika*. It means that you have not understood it entirely, if you keep demanding all the answers from me and keep waiting for directions and charity from Moscow.

As the result, the speech for Krasnoyarsk became strong and “optimistic.” I also “complimented” him when he called me on Sunday, the last day before his departure.

September 14, 1988.

Yesterday I watched M.S.’ speech in Krasnoyarsk on TV. He was superb, especially at the meeting with scientists and economic executives. He was calm, confident, and his reactions and direction of the conversation were knowledgeable. He does not get irritated, but he is sharp and even strongly-worded, but without hurtful and offensive tones. And he sees the person immediately--whether a person should be asked at all, whether it would be meaningful to enter into a polemic with this person. His keen black eyes light up if the person is interesting. And his faces dulls, he averts his gaze, and quiets down if it’s a bureaucrat [чинуша]. In a word, he is a real leader of the country that he is freeing from idiotism, and about whom we hear daily, weekly, and monthly in the newspapers and journals. It is a celebration of common sense. One would think, how easy this is!

By the way, in these live conversations he sometimes “blurts out” (or maybe he does it intentionally, in his folk-aristocratic manner) ideas that he is not always ready to present officially. Yesterday, for example, he called the famous state farm director Veprev to the podium (Veprev is a true statesman, unlike many of the ministers at the same podium).

Veprev: soon we will have to enter the peasant into the endangered species list, if things go on this way. Family contracts are the only solution.

M.S.: Not many people are rushing to make these contracts.

Veprev: We have to move away from the gradual approach. It cannot go on like this.

M.S.: I will ask you a direct question. Once before in 1929-30, we already conducted a sweeping change. We are still dealing with the aftereffects of that. We should not force people to lease. If we rush, we could compromise a deep change.

And that’s M.S.’ evaluation of collectivization. It is final. But he has not said it officially yet; he is probably saving it for the Agricultural Plenum. He is preparing for it; when we were on vacation he kept sharing his thoughts about it. (By the way, I suggested the term “to de-peasant [раскрестьянивание] the country.” He seized it right away, and now he has used it.)

Here is what I am driving at: in Tesseli I asked the intellectuals Galkin and Krasin whether they had looked through the collection “Gorbachev’s visit to Poland?” No, they had not. They said that it’s routine material, banal information that is not really relevant. . . I told them that they should not dismiss it. The conversations with the Polish people on the streets and with academicians are full of things that M.S. has not yet said officially. Some of the issues, including strictly “ideological questions,” that he brings up in these conversations he has never formulated as clearly before.

About his work on the CC apparatus reorganization note (in “Zarya”). He dictated it twice. Both times he asked me to work on the text, to format it and to add to it, “if you come up with something.”

The main ideas are: if we hold a congress (of the party) right now, we will not get a “new” CC, because the “new” cadres have not come to light. But we need to work on the fundamental reform of the CC. Also—this needs to be a functioning organ and people need to be appointed not according to their position, but according to their brains and the capability to be *perestroika* revolutionaries. We need to create CC member committees, which would develop policies. The departments will be their apparatus.

About the apparatus itself. It contains almost 3000 people. At first M.S. said: we’ll decrease it by half. I said we should decrease it by two thirds. We agreed on a decrease of a half to two-thirds, but the final version read “by a half or more.”

Of course, that is considerable. But it is not the main thing. He is removing almost all the economic-administrational divisions and the industrial departments. He will leave the socio-economic department, but as a theoretical unit, stripping it from any administrative rights (this is a polemic and it’s directed against someone who gave him “considerations.” Later at the PB, I understood that it was [Vladimir] Dolgikh). They will have absolutely no administrative privileges; otherwise everything would slip back to its former ways.

From the economic-functional departments he will leave the Department of Agriculture, because the issue is just too sensitive. But this is temporary, until we resolve it...

Also the defense industry remains. [Nikolai] Ryzhkov objected to this at the PB: once again, it will control the military-industrial committee of the Soviet of Ministers. M.S. agreed: there should be a conceptual-control department for the General Secretary’s military policies in the capacity of Chairman of the Defense Soviet. When we were in “Zarya” in the summer, I told him that this department is not necessary. When he is the president, he can put together a group of experts to advise him.

There will be one International Department instead of three.

There will be one Department of Ideology instead of three.

There will be a General Department to manage the affairs of the CC.

He did not write directly what will happen to our current secretaries. But he dropped a clue in a phrase that says that the apparatus will attend to the PB and the CC secretaries.

I asked him as he was dictating: what will happen to the current secretaries who are in charge of departments? You are practically liquidating them with this note and at the same time you are assigning the “Secretariat” to prepare “concrete proposals on how to reform the apparatus along the lines of this note...”

He bore though me with his black coals: This is my duty. Let them think about it. And let

them think about themselves, too. I am thinking about them... and he softened up.

When he got to Moscow he revealed his thoughts at a meeting with advisers. Maybe he did not tell me that time because the stenographer was present.

So, what is he “thinking?”

He wants to separate [Yegor Kuzmich] Ligachev and [Aleksandr Nikolaevich] Yakovlev and “release” both of them from ideology. (Oh, he is clever!) Yakovlev will be moved to the (consolidated) International Department as a curator. A.N. asked for this himself, in order to get away from daily interaction with E.K... In secret, he said: let him get fools to write his speeches (without a buffer, like A.N.’s Baltic speeches in response to Ligachev’s Chernigov speech).

Medvedev will go to the Department of Ideology. M.S. spoke well of him ... Said that he knows the economy, and he has worked in the ideological spheres as far back as Leningrad. He is sensible and has character. Sometimes, M.S. said, I want to punch him in the face. At the PB, for example. Sometimes it looks like we finally finished, barely settling everything by compromising, when Medvedev gets up and pushes his line... and he makes his arguments dryly, efficiently, and irrefutably... And I like it. He has his point of view and he doesn't glance over his shoulder when he persistently defends his opinion.

Everybody, and especially I, actively agreed and added our own ideas:

- [Nikolai] Slyunkov should be transferred to the socio-economic department.
- [Vitaly] Vorotnikov should be made the Chairman of the Presidium of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet: where “he can continue to grumble.” We will find a Premier for Russia from the new and brave, and we will make him a candidate member of the PB.
- What’s to be done with Ligachev? I thought perhaps he should be sent to the transformed Committee of Party Control. But this would be better for [Boris] Pugo. He is honest and smart. But Latvia did not accept him: he is not “their own.” They already have “their own,” who is making his way up... M.S. named some Latvian last name (how does he remember it all!).
- Ligachev should go to the Department of Agriculture. He knows this field...

We, the advisers, all supported this plan.

The legal department will also be a part of the CC. Here he had his fill of talking about the fact that this (i.e. the political system) is the deciding factor in our long revolution. This should always be close by.

Somehow I did not catch whether he will put [Anatoly] Lukyanov in charge of this, or whether he wants him in the Supreme Soviet, closer to the president.

He praised [Aleksandra] Biryukova. He wants to make her deputy representative of light

industry, or chairman of the All-Union Central Soviet of Professional Unions (where she was before). He is leaning toward the first option. She is smart, active, principled, and she has a good grasp of the work... and she is a woman.

In regard to Pugo he added: we need to fill the central organs, the PB as well, with people from the republics. I am ready to bring him here right now. But who would replace him? There is nobody, not even on the way to being ready. These are the fruit of cadre politics, if I may say so!

He sent the note around the PB and to the secretaries. On October 8 it was discussed at the PB for six hours. Of course, everybody was “for it.” But there were shades of disagreement.

The first “concern” was what to do with the people who will lose their jobs. M.S. answered that those who are still “alright” and have the right attitude should be given government work in the mass media, in science, in universities and in diplomacy. But the majority has lost their profession and will have to be let go. Boldin-Kruchin offered a proposal to allow retirement without an age restriction with a pension of 90-95 percent of what it would be if the person retired at 60.

The proposal was not accepted. M.S. said that some will see this as an [unfair] privilege, especially since these people were in power during the period of stagnation. We have to think about it. Ryzhkov said: this has to do with the party apparatus and the election organs, but what should we do with the ministers?

In a word, this issue was left for later. The question was symptomatic—already now nobody wants do party work; former secretaries of party organizations are refusing to run for elections.

In the note, M.S. mentioned a salary increase for party workers.

Yesterday in *Znamya* I read V[ladimir] Tendryakov’s “Okhota” [The Hunt]—the year 1948. It is about [Aleksandr] Fadeev, about cosmopolitanism. Talent comes through in every phrase. The force of action is enormous... The story is a social-moral phenomenon beyond comparison...

Especially the fact that it is written by a Russian person. Emka Mandel’ (Korzhavin) is published there. I thought back to the time when I knew him. One particular episode comes to mind. I was coming home from work in a tram; I was still living on Kutuzov street. It was late, the tram was empty. At a kiosk at work I bought a little book—a collection of his poems. I was flipping through it when I saw the poem “From Nekrasov:”

Nekrasov writes:

He will stop a horse in mid-gallop

He will go into a burning house.

Korzhavin continues:

And the horses still gallop and gallop,

And the houses still burn and burn.

I was choked with tears. Right there, in the tram. From that time whenever I remember this poem, I cry.

I looked through two issues of *Kommunist* (12th and 13th). The subjects are: private property, bureaucracy, socialism, professional unions. Bukharin. The history of morality after 1917. Darwinism. Religion and nationalism. *Kommunist* is now the leader of progressive thought.

In *Izvestiya* there is a stupid article by [Georgy] Arbatov. He made a laughingstock of himself, revealing his ignorance in scholarship and in theory. He stuck his head out because he cannot gracefully accept the fact that he is no longer at the center. He should have stuck to his reputation as an expert on the U.S. He was still alright in that position. I think he will destroy the last credit of M.S.' trust, while all of society will laugh at him.

Recently I had a rather rude argument with him: he came in "without permission," even though I asked him not to come over because I needed every minute of my time (before Krasnoyarsk). He still came in and started his whining: that the respectable scholars are turning away from M.S.; writers are leaving the struggle because he did not support the foremen of *perestroika*; prices, stores, etc. I blew up. Said a heap of rude things. Then we apologized to each other over the phone.

September 15, 1988.

From the conversation in the Crimea.

M.S. can't stop admiring Bukharin, he is reading him. I offered him some more brochures and articles from the years 1925-27. I think that last year's acquaintance with Bukharin had a strong effect on his evaluation of the "era of the cult" and his readiness for rehabilitation. He picked up a great deal from getting to know the situation with the party and around Lenin. He was especially interested in the relations between Lenin and Bukharin, about whom he said: "What a talent! What a mind! He got carried away, did not think things through. He was in a hurry! But he was always thinking... developing Lenin's ideas. Not a single encounter with Lenin passed by without a result: he knew how to learn and to correct himself."

I should write about M.S.' reaction to Ligachev's speech from Gorky.

I read all kinds of things in the newspapers and journals and it makes me want to go back to the source: to read *Besy* [The Devils, by Dostoyevsky], *Idiot* [The Idiot, by Dostoyevsky], Tolstoy, Chekhov... It turns out there is a great deal that I did not understand when I read them. Maybe I should come back to the many works that I once read superficially, with eyes that did not yet see the depth? And in general, I read more Western books than Russian classics.

[Fyodor] Burlatskiy published in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* from September 14, an article called “Brezhnev and the breakdown of [Khrushchev’s] Thaw.” This article is an event and an action, despite all of Fyodor’s vain eccentricities. And it is a very useful action for everybody, including M.S. (I think he will like the article’s spirit, even though he might express himself in his usual manner on certain passages.)

But to come back to Ligachev. Tesseli. The TV program *Vremya* just finished.

M.S. calls me: Did you see what Yegor just said (in Gorky)?

I reply: I saw it.

M.S.: What do you think?

I don’t remember exactly what I said, but I remember that it was rough and along the lines of: “it is an attack on the foundations of the new thinking. And even though I told you before that I agree that this happens because of his lack of understanding, because even your closest colleagues are incapable of reading what you say publicly and what they signed in official documents of *perestroika*; now (including Ye.K.’s speech at the XIX party conference) I am convinced that this is a program. It might be hastily constructed, but it is consciously driven and opposed to you. And behind it are not only cadres, but entire structures as well... And if anything adds confusion (that Ligachev mentioned) it is that this demonstration of an alternative to new thinking goes ‘unpunished.’”

He listened to me without interrupting.

M.S.: Alright, you are generalizing as always. Tomorrow, write down your thoughts on this for me ... about the international part of his speech. But make it brief, for a conversation (with whom?).

In the morning I did this, but I could not resist adding evaluations of the entire speech and the speaker’s pretensions. Specifically, I referred to the fact that in other PB members’ and secretaries’ public speeches after the XIX party conference, nobody touched the subject of international affairs. But this guy, rather than addressing some burning international question that a member of the Soviet government cannot leave unmentioned, he tackled the theoretical essence—the class nature of international development.

M.S. received it, but—not a word. He also did not say anything about Yakovlev’s speeches in Riga and Vilnius, which followed immediately after Ligachev’s speech. I tried to start a conversation about this, since A.N. gives a direct response to Ligachev. I asked him whether he had read Yakovlev’s speeches in “Soviet Latvia” or “Soviet Lithuania?”

He answered curtly: No.

I understood that he does not want to involve me in a conflict between two PB members. This means that he does not trust me to keep his thoughts to myself.

Three or four days later I asked Shishlin to send me from Moscow articles from English, French, and American journals about this episode with Yegor Kuzmich and Yakovlev. This theme was already all over the radio intercepts. M.S. noticed this. For some reason during a telephone conversation with me he froze up in surprise: “they understood it all...”

I gave him the articles. The one in *The Economist* is particularly strong and intelligent, it provides a comprehensive breakdown of the relations between Ligachev and Gorbachev in the given situation.

He kept them. I already know what that means: he added them to his “archive.” Otherwise, when he does not think the material is important, he sends it back without commentary.

We came back to Moscow. On Monday the 5th, he got together the advisers. When he started speaking frankly about how and where he would like to appoint his colleagues [in the scheme of staff reform], the problem of Ligachev came up. Shakhnazarov and Ivan expressed themselves sharply. Ivan offered the example of a letter that some Moscow engineer sent to Ye. K. He wrote that he is upset by the TV show “5oe Koleso” [The fifth wheel] (or “Vzglyad” [Look]) in which unattractive young people of Jewish descent impose their questionable views on the Soviet audience. Ye. K. sent this letter around the Secretariat and assigned his minions [Pyotr] Slezko (deputy director of the Department of Propaganda) and Zaitsev (deputy director of the Department of Culture) to “look into it and take measures.” This is the resolution on the letter.

Ivan: Is this politics? Is this politics? How is this possible!...

M.S. heard him out, but did not react. Later on in the conversation he started to shield Ligachev again: I’ve known him for many years. I’ve seen a lot. He is an honest guy. He’s just lacking culture... it’s his level. What can one do.

At this point I commented: Mikhail Sergeyevich, in his position, ignorance and a lack of culture are political problems. It is a danger for our entire cause.

Later he notified us that he is sending him to the Department of Agriculture, and he’ll “divorce” him from ideology.

Overall, he has subtle tactics.

We expressed our sympathy that he has to do this. We can understand him on a human level: [it is difficult] to remove people with whom everyday, every week at the PB you worked on the same cause... And now he has to remove [Andrey] Gromyko, [Mikhail] Solomentsev— “that’s a decided matter” (M.S.), to move around or distance others... while he is moving to a position superior to all, the position practically of the president. Yes, it is for the good of the party and the country. And we do not have an alternative if we want *perestroika* to succeed. But one can understand him. He is sure that the country needs him precisely in that capacity; that the current PB does not do its part and has become a hindrance; and that the majority will “not have

a job in the PB,” as he described it himself.

He has done the maximum to make the ousting look like the result of an “objective” process of *perestroika* of the political system, rather than the result of his personal “sympathies and antipathies” and his “personal” staff politics.

One can understand his caution and tact. Plus, when he got up to answer the phone at another table, he commented: “do not forget that we could have a vote at the PB, too...”

September 20, 1988.

M.S. came back to work yesterday after Krasnoyarsk. He got carried away telling about the trip; he said he was walking on the edge and came to some sharp realizations. The problem is in the staff. They do not know how to work, they are behind, and they are incapable. But, he said, “I spoke against hongweibingism [хунвейбинство]¹³, against “firing at the headquarters,” I made it pretty dramatic...” You cannot make people join *perestroika* through a new 1937. There are some smart people. But it is all so un-coordinated, un-organized, they don’t know how... And the party active is falling back into its well-worn path “under Yegor’s direction and protection.” (!) (He decided to show me some of his secret thoughts and plans). I “complimented” him on the impromptu speech in Shushensky (on the new thinking as related to Lenin, who in Shushensky for the first time had the idea that humankind takes precedence over classes). Suddenly he came out with a tirade against Frolov. “His only excuse is that he is a philosopher.” M.S. got the common-mankind idea when he was flipping through the pages of a book in the room where Lenin lived. And he used it right away.

In a word, he is satisfied, even though the workload was hellish. He said many timely and necessary things, such as that difficulties are inevitable because it is a time of change. That we are going through a great school; and those who have already started “studying” the subjects of *perestroika* are seeing results.

Regarding materials for the talk with [Hassan] Sharq, the Afghani Prime Minister

M.S. sees the situation as follows: Sharq and [Mohammad] Najibullah have made an arrangement. They probably want to remove the NDPA [National Democratic Party of Afghanistan] from power, or to fundamentally transform it. Both of them, together and separately, are doing things against the Politburo and all the Ministries. They are ones of the few who understood that we will really **leave**, and on time! Therefore they are betting on a real coalition rather than a screen for the NDPA.

M.S. believes that we should let them do this. Our main goal is to avoid any bloody conflicts when we leave. Nobody would forgive us that, neither in the third world, nor in the most obscure liberal circles in the West, which for 10 years have been railing at us for the

¹³ A reference to the Chinese Red Guard, Youth Squadrons that “enforced” the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s.

occupation.

The conversation had major subtexts in this vein. I tried to reflect this in the report. I sent it to M.S. (I do this rarely, but this time the material is too delicate). He either did not see it among his other papers, or he decided that it is better to keep the subtexts: “let everyone guess and draw conclusions.”

I don't know how he will react tomorrow, when he sees it in the paper.

September 25, 1988.

It has been a week since I left the hospital. Mostly I've been busy with routine work. From things that might have political significance: Shevardnadze asked me to comment on his draft for the speech at the UN General Assembly. I advised him not to play up [педалировать]¹⁴ the role of the Security Council, even though it is mentioned at the congress and later. [As the result of the] serious objective process in world politics, it is nowadays not “fashionable” to elevate the role of the superpowers. India “openly” dislikes this, same as the FRG and Japan. I don't know whether he'll accept my suggestions.

Yakovlev asked me about what happened in the Crimea, whether M.S. is finally planning to get rid of “his most devoted *perestroika*-guy” (Ye. K.). I told him the same idea I have been suggesting to everyone: that M.S. is not a simpleton, he does not want people to think that he is removing only the people he does not like. He wants to arrange it so that “objectively” in the course of political reform there just would not be place for some people.

Vaksberg published an article about Aliiev in *Literaturnaia Gazeta* with a condemnation that most likely nothing will follow. M.S. does not want reprisals, even if they are deserved; he does not way to play up to the people who favor “1937 in reverse.”

What I have read this week: besides Tendryakov, I read Evgenia Ginzburg's (Aksenov's mother) novel *Krutoi Marshrut* [“Journey into the Whirlwind”] in *Yunost*. Talented writing, which once again makes you terrified for state in which we, and I personally, lived. As for us, the excellent elite 1st pilot Gorky school, we did not see much of it, even though Nina Gegechkori was taken from our class, and some of our fathers were taken away [into Soviet prisons and camps]. I distinctly remember that we sympathized with her and helped her as we children could, and then accepted her back with compassion, but without hatred toward those that did this to her... We saw politics as some kind of higher, elemental force, to which normal human criteria did not apply.

I edited the discussion at the XIX conference, the discussion of the resolutions. It's time to publish the transcript of the party conference. The PB made the decision not to publish the

¹⁴ Chernyaev uses a slang term, педалировать, which is derived from the word “to pedal” and means to increase something by pedaling, such as the speed of a bicycle or the sound of a piano. [Efremova's Electronic Dictionary. педалировать. May 19, 2008. <http://edu.prometey.org/dictionary/d1/73342.html>]

speeches made after the end of the conference. Mostly, this decision was taken in order not to publish Yuriy Afanasiev, even though he already printed his speech in *Pravda* in the end of June, with certain circumstances.

September 27, 1988.

During these two days M.S. has been clearing up the Politburo and the Secretariat. Yesterday morning he called people to his office one by one, starting with Gromyko.

Today he conducted the Politburo. So far we know the following results:

Chebrikov—secretary of the CC.

Yakovlev—international affairs.

Medvedev—member of the PB on ideology.

Vorotnikov—chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet instead of Orlov, i.e. moved to a less powerful position.

Dolgikh—retirement.

Demichev—retirement.

Lukyanov—candidate member of the PB and first deputy of the chairman of the Supreme Soviet.

Gromyko—retirement.

Dobrynin—retirement (but M.S. promised to later make him a personal adviser “of the president”).

Biryukova—candidate member of the PB and deputy representative of the USSR Council of Ministers.

Talyzin—replaces Antonov in CMEA [Council for Mutual Economic Assistance].

Solomentsev—retirement.

It's strange that he did not promote Boldin to a secretary.

He is in a hurry because there has already been a leak about his note on the reorganization of the party apparatus, “and nobody is doing anything.”

I visited the International Department today, everybody was glad to see me. One guy said: “Anatoly Sergeevich, nobody is working right now, people just smoke in the hallways and

moan. They are afraid of retirement...”

On the 30th M.S. wants to conduct a Plenum to “consolidate everything” and quickly reorganize and reduce the apparatus. In the evening he called me about a trifle: the schedule for [Ciriaco] de Mita (Italian prime minister).

M.S.: You probably heard?

Me: I heard something...

M.S.: Don't downplay it... Anyway, send me a program (for de Mita) to my house. I'm under emotional distress right now.

I don't envy him during these times. He has to say something to everyone... and then show them out, after having built *perestroika* with them for three years. It's true that they weren't very good, but they tried.

Dobrynin called me after the PB. Well, he said, my secretary-days are over. And he said it briskly, like he usually talks. Of course it's sad, he's still energetic and his mind is still sharp. That's why he wasn't thrilled to hear the word “retirement.”

I have to grant it to him--he did not whine or complain. I sympathized with him and pretended that I didn't know anything, saying that this is the first time I hear about it and I am very surprised! He did not do very well as a secretary, but he is a good guy and would have been useful to me as an expert on America.

The reason I went to the International Department was to visit [Boris Nikolaevich] Ponomarev. He asked me very pitifully to come over, saying that it was “work related, nothing personal...” This is what he had to tell me: he was on vacation in Bulgaria (in a regular sanatorium, after the personal dachas!), where he met with vacationers from our fraternal parties. They told him that the negativism in our press is undermining their positions. So B.N. teaches me that we should have some positive material on our achievements.

I ask him, what positive material?

-Well, about the victories of socialism, that we do not have unemployment, that our healthcare and education are free, etc.

I got wound up: first of all, we already have unemployment and it's likely to stay, and our healthcare and education are in such a state that it's embarrassing even to mention them. The vacation norm in the West is 5 weeks, here it's two. People can't survive on our pensions. The quality of life is 2-3 times below the West. Should we write about these virtues? Should we slip back into demagoguery? They didn't believe us then, and they definitely will not believe us now. Our friends are used to being dependent on us and living in illusions. When we left them one on one with the reality, they found themselves in low water. No thanks, B.N.

He is pathetic and ludicrous. He gave me a note to give to M.S., advising him that he

needs to give some attention to the youth. Thanks! M.S. would never have guessed. B.N. asked me to find a place for him at some project, writing the history of the CPSU...

I saw that even though he spends hours in the International Department in his dim little room, he doesn't reach much and knows very little of what is written about *perestroika*. And he definitely does not understand anything.

October 3, 1988.

M.S. carried out his plan. The Plenum was on the 30th, the session of the Supreme Soviet was on Saturday, October 1st. He emerged from it as the chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. Back in the summer I was against it, but my complaints were met with a disapproving, piercing glance. Plus, someone needs to carry out the reform, and we can't try to use the party again—we would be going against our stated logic. But the post is tarnished by Podgorny, Brezhnev, and in general [by everybody] after Kalinin... The intelligentsia met the developments as one would expect: "We've seen this before..."

Recently he called me about a minor question. I congratulated him (without epithets), and sympathized about how on a human level it was difficult for him to do this. I said that overall it worked out like an objective political process, rather than [the pursuit of] personal considerations. I told him what was going around Moscow as soon as people found out about the Plenum: that M.S. decided to damn it all and resign, since the people do not want to do anything for themselves. He laughed. He said that the French were the first to guess that it's all happening according to Gorbachev's premeditated plan.

Then I said something about the fact that everything converges on him now and it will be impossible for anybody to blame the hindrances of the PB anymore. "Yes," he said, "the responsibility is greater. On the one hand it's easier, I won't have to waste time and effort on diplomacy and listening to endless talks, on the other hand—I have to act in a way that would soon produce results..."

October 9, 1988.

On Monday M.S. called me and Shakhnazarov to his office. He kissed Shakhnazarov—it was his birthday, he turned 64. We put together a schedule of M.S.' meetings and visits. He has made the final decision to go to the UN on December 7-8, from there to Cuba, and on the way back to make a stopover in London to talk with Thatcher. While we were at it, we removed [Uliy] Kvitsinsky from the post of deputy of the International Department.

M.S. lost his patience in regard to Nagorno-Karabakh. He stood opposite to us and started talking: "I want it to be done humanely; I don't want blood, I want for us to start talking with each other. The corrupted public is having an effect. [Stepan] Demirchan (first secretary of

Armenia's CP) is organizing his own group of people. They are egging on the public. The intellectuals have gone bankrupt; they cannot offer anything that would lead to a solution. But I do not know a solution either. If I knew what the solution is, nothing could stop me, I would break all the conventions to get it done. But I don't know it!"

He unexpectedly mentioned Alievshchina (Aliev is already retired). We dug into this matter, and the affair that we are unearthing might be bigger than Rashid's.

I used the opportunity and told him what Shatrov passed on to me: during a break in the Plenum, [Mikhail] Zimyanin and Yu. Zhukov came up to Chakovsky and said: "You bastard, you'll regret printing that about Aliev!" (The night before, *Literaturnaya Gazeta* published Vaksberg's article on Aliev's affairs under Brezhnev with quotes from his speeches about Brezhnev, mentioning the gifts, the palaces, and the bribes).

At 1p.m. M.S. got together Yakovlev, Medvedev, Luk'yanov, Frolov, Shakhnazarov, and me to discuss ideas for the forthcoming political events. We discussed it for a long time, until Luk'yanov reminded us about the resolutions of the XIX party conference. Then everything fell in place quickly: at the November Plenum there will be a brief message from Ryzhkov on the progress of RER and the socio-economic program until the year 2005. At the session on the next day there will be a report on election law and amendments to the Constitution.

Gorbachev's major report on the nature of socialism and the final political reorganization will take place at the Congress of People's Deputies in April of 1989. (At the Plenum before the Congress we should state his ideas). Additionally, the Agricultural Plenum is in February, where the questions of economic relations in the village and of private property will be resolved. This will be integrated into the themes of the Congress.

We spent three hours there, sometimes digressing from the subject. By the way, M.S. criticized the article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* about Stalin's poisoning of Bekhterev because Bekhterev diagnosed him with paranoia. ... "Why do we bother then, if Stalin was just crazy? Why do we need history, theory, etc.? It's all so easy."

He also mentioned that we should not rule out the possibility to remove of editors if they are "harmful" and "do not listen to arguments." Medvedev started to object.

... It was just our luck that the next day it became known that Yegor Yakovlev (*Moskovskie Novosti*) was resigning in protest against the firing of his deputy Bandura by the administration of the *Novosti* Press Agency. He was fired because he did not follow the order not to portray Churbanov's trial as a political process against Brezhnev ("a criminal trial"). When I found out, I tried to talk to Yegor (saying that it's not about personal matters at such a moment in history). I asked Falin what happened. But he took the bit between his teeth and wouldn't back down; he's in an administrative rage, [insisting that] a breach of discipline must result in punishment. In a word, Falin brought his 1937 and his cold war even here, he's reverting to Ligachev-methods from personal longhair motivations. It's a normal thing in Russia!

Meanwhile, a meeting of the editorial board of *Moskovskie novosti* took place, which

Falin attended. They gave him a hard time there... He called them all a congregation of anarchists and opportunists, and they called him a bureaucrat. Then at the meeting of *Moskovskie novosti* party organization they even cited M.S. from his last meeting with editors, saying that he supports the repression and wants to confine journalists to the usual cage of control and censorship, even though he had said that everything is allowed (to print!) that is not restricted by law. And overall: "the meeting resulted in the conclusion that we cannot work with this kind of *Novosti* Press Agency administration."

Falin reported to Medvedev, who said that he sent the note to the CC.

I think it will conclude with the expulsion of Yegor Yakovlev according to the Yeltsin formula (voluntary resignation), and... with the bankruptcy of *Moskovskie Novosti* even without Ligachev's involvement, who is on vacation right now; brought about by the hands of the *perestroika* makers, represented by Falin (the administration voted 11 in favor of firing Bandura, 5 in favor of a serious reprimand, but leaving him at his post).

Yesterday I was finishing up the materials for Vancio and de Mita. I spoke on the phone twice with M.S. Shevardnadze. Bondarenko complained to him that Chernyaev is setting the General Secretary against interfering in Austria's joining of the EEC [European Economic Community]. I really did express myself sharply against the superpower approach to the modern meaning of the 1955 State treaty on Austria's neutrality.

October 23, 1988.

It looks like today I won't have to work, unlike the previous two weekends.

Yesterday M.S. called me to talk about the materials for Kohl. When we were discussing Kohl himself, I told M.S. that "the country is ready to go very far with us, but he is not." To which he replied: "It's the opposite with us—the leadership is ready, and not only with the FRG, but the country is not..."

On Friday I forgot that overall the program with Kohl had been coordinated, and decided that besides the one on one meeting, M.S. should not lead the negotiations (as he did with de Mita). Let Ryzhkov do it. Shevardnadze raised a great din about this. He called me and spoke to me in a tone that was unusually rude for him. M.S. called me immediately afterwards and jumped at me: "Who came up with this ridiculous idea?" I told him that I did. And I did it deliberately. After all, there is an order: you are the president, he is a prime minister. It's a different matter with the Italians because we have such "heartfelt relations" with them. Plus, de Mita never compared you with Goebbels. Not to mention the fact that you are worn out to the limit and it's time to stop constantly appearing on the TV screen in the Georgievsky and other halls and to fill newspaper pages while the shelves in the stores are empty.

He softened up a bit, started to calm down: "What are you saying, it would be a scandal. We can't do that." In a word, he restored everything to its former order.

The same morning, I had another unpleasant conversation with Shevardnadze about his proposal to appoint deputy Minister Karpov. This time he also had an irritated tone with me, saying that he knows what he is doing and answers for his proposals. Shevardnadze and I haven't had these kinds of confrontations before. But he should also know that I'm filling his position not only to write post factum communiqués.

M.S. gave an interview to *Der Spiegel*. I had insisted on it for a long time. It came out great: he sat down and had a measured conversation with intelligent German [reporters]. They were blown away.

At the PB on Thursday (which I left after the first question) a vehement encounter between Ryzhkov and Ligachev (who had just come back from his vacation, so this was his first PB with the "demotion") took place, actually over that first question. They were discussing the plan for 1989. Ryzhkov made his report that they added everything up, cleaned everything thoroughly, and were barely able to balance the account, with a deficit; they tried not to tap into the means of the industries and the republics too much; in a word, as much as they could in RER. Of course, they had to freeze or cancel many construction projects; the agro-industrial complex, where small projects have been built for decades, was also affected.

And now Ligachev stands up and begins to passionately defend the food program and the people's interests, looking after the regular people who have nothing to buy at the stores, etc. Maslyukov, Slyunkov, and others tried to dissuade him. Vlasov, the new Premier of Russia, supported him.

Ryzhkov blew up: it appears as though you are for the people, and we are just technocrats and do not care about them. And it went on from there... Then Ligachev made the statement that he is appointed to defend the food program for the people, he got a sphere that is collapsing. And while he is here, he is going to fight for the people's interests.

During the discussion M.S. tried to reconcile them in his usual way, but after this statement he said that he has to also make a speech. And he did! (I have it written down). The general idea is: if you want to oppose yourself to the PB, that you alone are for the people and we all are for the devil knows what, it won't work.

When we were leaving, Frolov whispered to me: "His number's up, at best he'll be around for a couple months longer." Then Yakovlev told me about a personal conversation he had with M.S., who cursed Ye.K. left and right... It looks like he is finally convinced that Ligachev is a burden on *perestroika*, that he hinders the process and will continue to do so.

I am exhausted: Vranitzky, de Mita, Sarney, Kohl... and permanent ongoing matters that take up 12-14 hours a day. M.S. asked me: can you handle it? I told him that it does not have "historic significance" whether I can or not. But for him... (this was after he told me that he has a flicker in one of his eyes). He really has so much to do: constitutional affairs; history of the CPSU; the economic program for 1989 and beyond; the cadres; and hundreds of everyday affairs...

October 28, 1988.

Kohl visited. He met one-on-one with Gorbachev (plus me and Teltschik [assistant to the chancellor]). When you watch this striving “at the highest level” to speak as one human being to another (mutually), you physically feel that we are entering a new world where the determinant is no longer class struggle, ideology, and polarity in general, but something all-human. And you realize how brave and far-sighted M.S. is. He declared the new thinking “without any theoretical preparation,” and began to act according to common sense.

After all, his ideas--“freedom of choice,” “mutual respect for each other’s values,” “renunciation of force in politics,” “common European home,” “liquidation of nuclear armaments,” etc., etc.--all of this is by no means new. What is new is that a person who came out of Soviet Marxism-Leninism, from a Soviet society conditioned from top to bottom by Stalinism, began to carry out these ideas with all earnestness and sincerity when he became head of state. No wonder the world is stunned and full of admiration. But our public still cannot appreciate that he has already led them from one state to another.

Sometimes he is still caught in the old clichés. For example, after the “embrace” with Kohl during the first meeting, Kohl made a speech several hours later in which he again and again spoke about a “unified Germany” and about “Berlin, ...” The next morning M.S. consulted as to what sharp words he should say to him at the start of the negotiations. He even made Falin and me write a “page” so that he would not forget the sharpness of everything he wanted to say. But he did not say any of it ... Later it was as if he “made excuses,” saying that Kohl needed [to speak] about unity in order to fight off his allies and the overly-enthusiastic public at home!

Three days ago I wrote him a note, protesting Vorontsov-Varennikov-Zaitsev’s proposal to organize a pogrom of the mujaheddin with bombs, rockets, and flame-throwers over the entire territory of Afghanistan, in order to make them more compliant with Najibullah.

M.S. did not say anything to me. But in his circle, during a session of the Supreme Soviet, “in the back” (off stage, while they were having tea) he said some cutting remarks “to nobody in particular” that there are some people who think that we will succeed with mere talks and persuasions, who want to practically leave Najibullah to his own devices, etc. Yakovlev made a comment along the lines of Najibullah not being important enough to sacrifice the lives of hundreds and thousands of people and to risk our prestige (on following Geneva). At this point M.S. got really wound up (as always happens when he knows that he is not right, and when the conversation turns to Yeltsin and Nagorno-Karabakh). The other members of the PB acquiesced.

But it must have touched a chord. Yakovlev got the sense from speaking with [Dmitriy] Yazov that M.S. gave him some orders to “rein him in.”

In relation to the beginning of today’s entry, on the destruction of the dogmas and principles with which we lived for two-thirds of the 20th century: Shainis wrote in MEMO [*Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya*, Journal of World Economics and

International Affairs] about socialism; Borko in *Kommunist* on capitalism; two people in *Mezhdunarodnaia Zhizn'* on neocolonialism. There are similar articles in every issue of the serious journals. This is a sweeping destruction of the pillars that held the entire official "Marxism-Leninism," which was studied at the universities and were the topic of hundreds of dissertations.

M.S. sometimes says similar things, for example in the afterword to the Soviet-Polish book, which recently came out in Warsaw in Politizdat.

The following episode is also characteristic: Chebrikov tells M.S. about Sakharov's election to the Academy of Sciences Presidium that "Our Academy is not very mature." M.S. made fun of that as soon as he put down the phone, by telling Chebrikov that Sakharov should be permitted to travel abroad, he has proved himself a patriot and an honest person. Then he bitterly and venomously told about Chebrikov's comment to Yakovlev. Chebrikov said to M.S. about Ligachev and Ryzhkov's confrontation at the PB: "Yakovlev and Ligachev seem to be buddies [дружки]!"

M.S. made a master move when he removed Chebrikov from the KGB, thereby leaving him without the levers and the apparatus of power. As a Secretary of the CC he is powerless against *perestroika*.

But there is still Vorotnikov, as well as Ligachev, [Viktor] Nikonov, and the "swampy" ones at the PB. There is also the CC, over half of whose members have been removed or sent into retirement "based on age." Of course, there are also the officialdom, which is being reduced in all areas right now and is finding itself in low waters... and what is worse, they are finding positions in different places.

Sometimes M.S. has minutes when he just wants to talk without planning it ahead of time. When this happens, he turns on his direct line, which he did three days ago. We talked for about five minutes, I don't remember what about. Then we came across a subject for which we needed Medvedev, so we talked three-ways, interrupting each other.

In the course of the conversation M.S. says: I asked Kruchina to calculate how much I cost our people. He counted that in 10 years I cost Moscow 100,000 rubles; while I gave back to the government 850,000 rubles, especially through the royalties from the book *Perestroika i novoe myshlenie* [Perestroika and the New Thinking]. And this is without the hard currency part of the royalties.

Burlatsky published a filthy opus on his role in the politics of the 1950-70 in *Novyi Mir*. This is all from vanity. Our *perestroika* officials are so petty against the background of progress!

Yakovlev is asking me to intercede with M.S. about publishing his articles and speeches.

There is a great deal of personal relations between our politicians. (Maybe, this is good. For it is not based on a conspiracy against our own people, like it was in the '30s, '40s, '50s... all way up until 1985.)

November 3, 1988. Politburo.

Today is a historical day. After the planned Politburo, M.S. became more serious and, clearly nervous, he began to speak on the subject that he “tried out” during his main talk three days ago with Shevardnadze, Yakovlev, Falin, and Dobrynin. This was about of his trip to the UN in December.

M.S.: Cdes. Ryzhkov and Maslukov, as well as other colleagues, are asking me a question. This question is also in the letters that I am receiving. Very recently, at a meeting with young Comsomols I once again came across this question: they asked me, why do we need such a big army? People have been troubled by this question for a long time.

We approached this theme at the XIX party conference. In the report, in the theses, and in the resolution we said that we need quality, not quantity.

Now the moment has come when we need to make a major decision. We are taking little steps, like the agreement to liquidate medium and short-range missiles [INF] and some other things. But that does not change the principal nature of the situation. E.A. comes across this every day... Today Shultz talked about it again. The military doctrine we announced differs from what we are actually doing in military building. If we publish how the matters stand, that we spend over twice as much as the US on military needs, if we let the scope of our expenses be known, all our new thinking and our new foreign policy will go to hell. Not one country in the world spend as much per capita on weapons as we do, except perhaps the developing nations that we are swamping with weapons and getting nothing in return.

We said that we are ready to publish data and we are pushing the Americans on this account, but if it really comes to that, what are we going to do? But that is not the main thing. We will not solve the *perestroika* objectives if we leave the army as it is: the best scientific-technical forces, the best production funds, reliable supplies... The little-Comsomols are right, why do we need such a big army?! Six million people! Somebody told me that they are offering to lower the conscription age to 17. (Maslyukov inserts a comment: Yagodin came to me with this proposal, but I refused to sign it). What are we doing? We are depleting our intellectual resources of their best young forces! Who is going to conduct *perestroika*? (Yazov: by November 9th I will present a proposal on all these questions... M.S. probably gave him an assignment immediately after the conversation).

In the GDR we have [stationed] a powerful group of armored forces, plus pontoon forces. When all this hangs over them, how can they believe that our doctrine is defensive?!

There is also the question of reducing (for now reducing) our presence in socialist countries. Today E.A. [Shevardnadze] told me about his talk with Grosz. Right now the issue is not very acute. But it could become severe under a situation like the one in Hungary right now. And then we won't be leaving voluntarily, we'll be driven out of there...Dmitriy Timofeevich! (Marshall Yazov) They say your troops are standing on a territory that contains a historical

monument of world importance?

Yazov: The territory contains a famous church. A reconnaissance battalion and a medical battalion are station there, but we are already moving them.

M.S. Thank God! At least the monument is safe! (Laughter)

So comrades, we need to think through this issue and discuss it with our friends. I propose that the Defense Council considers everything. Then we will come back to this at the PB. Does anybody have any questions?

(Everybody nods)

Ryzhkov: (very tensely) I feel responsible to say that if we do not do this we will not achieve the XIII five-year-plan, and there can be no talk of a raise in the quality of life. Whatever government you place here, it will not resolve this problem [without reducing military spending].

M.S.: If we all agree and if we make some major decisions, then I plan to announce this in my speech at the UN.

Everybody: Yes, yes...

M.S.: This will make a great impression... after the agreement to liquidate middle and short-range missiles, and after Afghanistan, this action... the world will see that is not empty talk, these are policies. We will advance the entire process. I would put it this way: with all the significance this has for the impression in the world and for the advancement of our policy of peace, the most important aspect is still *perestroika*. Nikolai Ivanovich (Ryzhkov) is right: we will not succeed with *perestroika* without this action.

There is no question that we should be militarily powerful. But we should achieve our power through scientific advancement, through technology, through qualified cadres and modern organization of our troops. Planes, missiles... but not like Karmal who sucks us dry but doesn't produce results. We cannot be weak. This is the axiom. But we need to be powerful for security's sake, not for the purposes of intimidation.

M.S. also said that he is talking about **unilateral** reductions, not about the material that is going into the negotiations with the Americans and the mandate of Vienna meeting.

This will be the evidence that I was present at an event that may well take the second place of importance after the April of 1985.

Additionally, the PB discussed food supply to Moscow. On this count there was total mess and nonsense, both from Zaikov and Mesyats. We did not reach anything, even M.S. could not think of something.

There was also talk of “Memorial...”¹⁵ Kapto already started “to act,” he wrote a denunciation. But M.S. took the following approach: it’s your own fault; you decided to create a memorial to the victims of Stalinism and once again nothing got done... So people decided to do it themselves, except now they have exceeded the limits... (Kapto is already charging it with the desire to become an “alternative political structure.” M.S. stifled that idea and said—study it!)

We discussed Solzhenitsyn. Frolov, I, and Shakhnazarov write him (Gorbachev) a “protest” against Chebrikov and Medvedev’s note, which says that “we should uphold the decree that strips him of his citizenship as a traitor of the Motherland...”

M.S. understood our point of view: yes, he is an enemy, irreconcilable and staunch. But he is an ideological enemy, and we do not try people for their beliefs in a legal state. So “think about it.” The authors of the note sat there, steaming. Chebrikov tried to interject that “he did betray...” (i.e. there was an action). M.S. just hemmed at that.

November 9, 1988.

Gorbachev called me very late at night yesterday. Said he could not reach anyone. “Your family hasn’t disowned you yet?.. Well, since I reached you, let’s talk.” And he started to rapidly tell me what he would like to say to the people on TV on the ethnic question, Estonia is especially worrisome right now.

He talked for forty minutes. Afterwards I tried to reproduce it for the stenographer and sent the copy to him.

Today I learned from Shakhnazarov that this text is already on his desk, with an assignment to write an introduction.

Before the holidays Shevardnadze sent M.S. an outraged note that the military are cheating the policy (as they did 10 years ago with the SS-20). They are creating new weapons systems, locating powerful troops near NATO, provoking the NATO people with their reconnaissance activities, etc. In a word, they are undermining the trust in the new thinking and the defense doctrine.

M.S. erupted in an order: a make a report!

Today this was the topic at the Defense Council. But the main subject was—what to say at the UN on the unilateral reduction of weapons and armed forces in Europe.

Shatrov published a very good interview in *Ogonek*, it deals with “Leninism” and with Solzhenitsyn.

¹⁵ A non-governmental organization formed in 1987. Memorial was established in order to find information and build a memorial to the victims of Stalinist repressions

In *Izvestiya* there was an interview with Glazunov (a popular artist). He really stripped for them. He's a scoundrel and a bigot... I wonder how M.S. and R.M. took it, since he is a favorite of theirs. And how does Ligachev look now, who opened Glazunov's exhibition at the Youth House on Komsomol'sky Avenue this summer, and then got him TV, newspapers, and other publicity.

Korolenko. Letter to Lunacharsky from 1920. This is in the vein of Shatrov's thesis on removing the robes of holiness from our revolution... But if it ceases being a legend and heroism, why do we need it? It was more terrible than the French revolution. But 200 years after their revolution, they still keep it covered with blankets of romanticism, even the people ideologically opposed to it—the reactionaries!

November 13, 1988.

I spent the last few days preparing materials for M.S.'s trip to India. Of course, there were "initial" materials from the MFA, Kamentsev, and the International Department. But I am shocked by the level of these drafts, it's as though the people were not reading Gorbachev's speeches, as if they didn't know his philosophy, his way of thinking and his manner of speech. What's worse is that the MFA is handing us positions which do not agree with the official positions of the Politburo.

Every day brings new information on almost every relevant issue. But the drafts they offer the General Secretary look as though they had been written months ago. Plus, the speeches they write are dozens of pages long, as though Brezhnev and Chernenko were still in their places and were going to read these texts "into the face" of their interlocutor.

Every time I have to rework this crap into something decent so it's not embarrassing to show it to M.S., who has very little time to "master" the material. And that's exactly what he does, he masters the material before every foreign meeting.

Friday in the afternoon after some internal meeting he calls me and says: "Tolya! We need an international piece for the speech in Orel (he is going there for two days, to promote *perestroika* in that part of Russia). What should we tell them? (It will be a meeting of the obkom secretaries). We started discussing it, and in the evening I sent him a text. But I did it like this: I called Veber and Ermonsky, told them what M.S. and I had come up with. Three hours later they sent me a text. In two hours I re-wrote it and sent it to M.S. There is no reaction from him, which means he accepted it. He wants to talk about the material with which he will go to the UN and to Thatcher.

Yesterday I presented the Indian materials.

In *Novyi Mir* there is Lebedev's article on our entertainment industry... The way things are moving, our public opinion (and press) will perceive, evaluate, and illuminate socialism in a Soviet state the same way as, for example, the mass media in England evaluates its own society.

That is, not partisan, but “free” to think whatever it wants, rather than what is allowed.

Today I was at the Manezh at an exhibition of young artists, dedicated to the 70th anniversary of All-union Leninist Young Communist League. All the art is professionally weak. But it presents such a powerful picture of the agitation of spirit in the country, the liberation of calling, talent, abilities, and preferences for creative energy!

November 15, 1988.

M.S. is back from Orel. He is happy, and why shouldn't he be! He saw the first fruit of *perestroika* in the main criteria—in food, housing, in the villages. And what people!

But the meeting with Medvedev, Slyunkov, and Chebrikov, who just came back from Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, dumped three buckets of cold water on his good mood. As people say, all three of them were “horrified.” Daily and nightly they were picketed with slogans such as: “Russians get out of here!” “KGB, MIA [Ministry of Internal Affairs], Soviet army—to Moscow!” “Do away with the dictatorship from Moscow!” “Immediate withdrawal from the Union!” “Full Sovereignty!” etc.

Fanaticism and hysteria have already obliterated reason. During talks the intelligentsia say one thing, and at meetings—with the same Medvedev, Slyunkov, and Chebrikov present—they say the exact opposite. They have a full national consensus.

Chebrikov tells about a beauty contest, where a girl in a bikini was asked what she would say to Chebrikov if she met him on the street... “otherwise he spends all his time hanging around here.” She hesitated, stroking her breast, and said: “Leave us alone!”

In a word, Czechoslovakia of 1968 or Finland of 1918 is drawing near... M.S. has to make a decision. Both are very dangerous. But the first would be the death of *perestroika* and the new thinking. While Russian chauvinism plus conservatism in the second option can be withstood, if other oblasts follow Orel's example.

November 27, 1988.

M.S. televised at the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, they were discussing Estonia. The speeches were shabby, he shouldn't have organized this public appearance. Our guys don't know how to lead “parliamentary debates.” They know how to criticize while acquiescing to what they think their assignment will be; even if the assignment is not given, as happens right now in the *perestroika* era. And M.S. couldn't find the arguments to convincingly show the unfoundedness of the Estonians. He went into economic calculations: how much we are giving the republic and how much it is giving us. But they don't need, and they never needed what we have been “giving” them for 40 years. As for the “isolation” of “subsistence farming,” this is really not a threat for them. As soon as they leave, the Finns, Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, the FRG and the

US will take them under their wing and in a year and a half or two Estonia will turn into a “candy” sweeter than Finland.

There is not way out except for renew the treaty between the republics, which really means to start from the same place as Lenin did when he spoke against Stalin's “autonomization.” For some reason I am sure that if we gave them complete freedom to choose, without imposing anything on them, they, as well as Latvia and Lithuania, would vote for the Union, but for independent existence within it. And that would be good! M.S. says himself that each republic should have the standard of living that it can earn for itself, as any self-supporting organization.

No. I am too Russian to condemn the Estonians.

On Friday Yakovlev stopped by. He told me about an episode that took place in the “Walnut Room” before the PB session. This PB was scheduled to discuss Estonia, amendments to the Constitution, the events in Azerbaijan where they are already burning the infantry combat vehicles, the armored carriers, and even tanks, military trucks. Three Russian soldiers were killed there. In Baku people are walking around with green flags and with Khomeini's portraits, calling for an all-round repetition of Sumgait for Armenians.

So in this heated atmosphere Ligachev once again pushed his line: I said back in February that we should use force, restore order, show all of them! How long are we going to stand this? We've let it all go, everything is coming loose, the country is falling apart, etc.

At first, M.S. listened to him ironically, egging him on. But then he blew up: why are you always trying to scare me, Yegor?! Why do you always thrust it under my nose—“see what your *perestroika* is leading to! Where are we going! What is happening!” Well, I was and I will be for *perestroika*. I am not afraid of the things that are unfolding. If you (he addresses the members of the PB) think that we cannot go on like this, that I am doing something wrong, then please let's go to the next room (points to the PB conference room) and I will submit my resignation. On the spot, without a word of grievance or protest. Elect whomever you like and let him conduct affairs as he can. But while I am in this seat, I am conducting my line and I won't back down!

...The conversation ended there, and we went to the meeting. But E.K was not the instigator at the start of the conversation, it was Vorotnikov. Ligachev only joined in.

In the evening after the Politburo M.S. summoned Yakovlev. He was upset, even though he cannot get “distracted” right now. In the morning he was at the National Economy Achievement Exhibition—mechanization from the defense sector for agricultural purposes; then he had a meeting with Mitterrand, then a Presidium on Estonia and on the day before the session, then Mitterrand again, followed by the preparation of the Plenum report (which is tomorrow) and preparation for the sessions of the Supreme Soviet (December 29-31).

M.S. and Yakovlev talked. Yakovlev said: I told you Mikhail Sergeyeovich! A resentful person cannot be an adviser, especially if he is an opponent of *perestroika* at heart!

It has only been a week since we returned from India, but it feels like it was months ago. He hasn't started preparing for the UN, Cuba, and Thatcher yet. Though, at a PB we did discuss unilateral reduction of armed forces (clearly not enough!), "human rights"--to release all political prisoners, write off the debt of third-world countries. The MFA an draft about these three points, the text is long and florid, in the style of Tolya Kovalyov and Petrovsky. E.A. approved it and it was sent to M.S. on Monday. As for the "philosophical" part of it—it is full of beautiful words, they want to substitute wordiness substance.

Before the trip to India I asked Veber and Ermonsky to think about something. I told them of my intention to advance the new thinking through our ideological canons. They came up with some material. I built a text around that (including some specific topics proposed by the MFA). I like what I wrote, it is 27 pages. I sent it to him last night. I had been writing it all week, neglecting operational preparation for New York and London, and for this I got a dressing down from Raisa Maksimovna the other day. I barely restrained myself from saying a couple of strong words, which would ensure my retirement the next day. Her women's games, pretensions of a president's wife! Maybe they are well-founded. But why me? There are entire departments in the MFA, in the embassies! Dozens of people whose job it is to do these things. And she is well aware of what my job is and how busy I am to delve into protocols! But her sense of tact must have atrophied together with the perception of real life.

December 4, 1988.

The day after tomorrow we are flying to New York (UN) – Cuba – London. The workload will be nightmarish—14 hour workdays with no weekends. The speech for the UN is 30 pages; M.S. read my draft the day before yesterday and yesterday I edited it according to his idea. He liked the text (the ideas and form), but he didn't like the structure... and I had to clean it of Yakovlev's additions, which M.S. had initially encouraged him to make. Now I have to make excuses with A.N.

Even though I changed the additions, they still looked high-flown and created repetitions.

What's new?

- 1) Advancement in new thinking, moving farther away from "Marxism-Leninsm;"
- 2) On human rights—release of political prisoners and "refuseniks" ["отказников"]
- 3) Writing off the third-world debt
- 4) Unilateral reduction of troops in the GDR, CzSSR, and the People's Republic of Hungary.

There will be a sensation.

Additionally, there are numerous drafts for his speeches in New York and materials (and

references) for his talks, including the talks with Reagan and Bush. And all of this is either done by me or through me.

Meanwhile, the Baltic states are storming; in Armenia and Azerbaijan there were around 50 murders this week; there is outright violence between the ethnic groups; there are 50,000 refugees, children are out in the cold, the houses and apartments are plundered, there are strikes everywhere, sabotage of public transportation, etc.

M.S. led the session of the Supreme Soviet his way. He was once again magnificent. And every time after his impromptu additions to his speeches he called to “brag” that he won once again. (He said: to praise yourself is to give yourself moral support.) His workload is superhuman and it's hard to imagine how he manages.

He made major concessions to the Estonians and others like them, removing provocative (ambiguous) amendments to the Constitution and brought the situation with the republics out of the crisis by promising second-stage political reforms. And despite the fact that at the PB (and especially at the Plenum) nobody objected, the majority “purse their lips” and do not approve of his liberalism. They can sense that he is ready to go very far along the path of “federalization” of the Union. It's not for no reason that he leaves [.....] the most general concepts: the October Revolution, socialism, fidelity to Lenin's decisions. His idea is that in everything else we'll find a way to compromise.

But he is often worried about the reaction of the Russian part of the empire. Several times in our one on one conversations he alluded to the fact that the “superpower” potential is rumbling menacingly. (I personally think that “united and indivisible” is not the main theme in Russian nationalism right now. The current nationalism is of the kind that says: all these Estonians and Armenians can go to hell!)

It seems the people really don't care. It is the anti-*perestroika* crowd that is spreading the idea that M.S. is splitting the Soviet Union—our great achievement.

M.S. asked me, and I found out that he asked Shakhnazarov and Yakovlev as well, whether the Balts really want to leave. I answered him: it looks like they do. And the matter is far along if the People's Artist of the USSR Via Artmane publicly speaks about the “40-year occupation of Latvia.” I don't know whether M.S. is playing dumb or whether he truly thinks so, but he responded that the countries would “perish” if they separate from the rest of the Union.

The hijacking of a bus with 30 children in Ordzhenikidze, the flight to Tel-Aviv, the conduct of the Jews has been impeccable. The whole world will appreciate this. But our programs on TV haven't said a word of gratitude. This thing [antisemitism] is still somewhere in our system!

Nina Berberova is published in *October*. What style and what precise information! This is because she is dealing with form of high artistic merit, writing about Gorky, Pasternak, Merezhovsky, Bunin, Romain Rolland and the entire Soviet “society” from that perspective.

December 17, 1988.

M.S. is sick. He caught a cold, or more likely some infection, in Armenia. He says the infection is “seeding” right now, he has chills and feels dizzy. He hasn't come to the CC in a week.

Meanwhile, I can record what happened at the UN.

We flew into New York on the 6th. The welcome was more than humble, it did not promise any triumph to come. To “have some fun” M.S. scheduled a meeting with our team (the so-called press group), which came in advance to prepare the Americans for Gorbachev's arrival.

There was tea for 40 people, including everybody from Mark Zakharov to Lisovolik. Arbatov, Zorin, and Shishlin were showing off. Dobrynin's conversation was smart. Pozner was brief.

M.S. seated Banionis, Vasiliev, Abduladze, and Mark Zakharov across the table from himself. Somebody was telling about a world-famous artist, a man from Lithuania who lived in Israel, who is pro-Soviet and wanted to write M.S.' portrait. He replied: when we start making portraits and handing out medals, it will be the end of *perestroika*.

At this moment I was looking at Zakharov, who, as it turns out, said at a press conference the day before that the opponents of *perestroika* in the USSR are the majority.

...Zorin bragged about how he “washed off” this comment from the press-group.

After the reception was over, M.S. left 10 people with him to go over the program for tomorrow. I could feel that he did not want “unnecessary” public speeches and interviews.

In the morning I showed him a short and unintelligible telegram about the earthquake. Neither he, nor I gave it much thought.

Then the UN... in the hallways groups of officials met him with applause...

I was sure that the speech would make an impression. But I was expecting anything like this. For over an hour nobody stirred. And then the audience erupted in ovations, and they would not let M.S. go for a long time. He even had to get up and bow as if he were on stage.

Directly from there we went to Governor's island. There streets were still fairly empty... In the car he spoke on the telephone with Ryzhkov and found out that the earthquake in Armenia was terrible.

December 21, 1988.

America. I probably should not give too much detail, since it's all in the papers. But the Gorbachev phenomenon is truly the most critical movement in history... To discover its simple human meaning is possible already in our time (at least for us, but also for “them”).

And it works out so simply—like an everyday thing—with him. In the airplane [on the way to New York] for example, he called me, Shevardnadze and Yakovlev, and started “digging” in phrases and paragraphs... it would seem like it's a regular thing. But he was “straightening out” a historic action. Or how he made the decision to cut short his trip because of Armenia. He called his advisers and the delegation—8 people after [Peréz] Cuéllar's reception. He was sitting in a shirt without a jacket, Raisa Maksimovna at his side. He asked for vodka and a full dinner. With the first glass he thanked everybody (but he gave me a meaningful look) for the help in preparing the speech. He already understood that it was bigger than a sensation... a triumph which did not die down even after the earthquake.

Then he called Plekhanov (“9”) and said: “Tomorrow we are going home! Eduard Ambrosievich, please invite some correspondents and explain our reasons... You and you (to me and Shakh)--sent telegrams to Thatcher and Castro, telling them that we will not be visiting...” Then several times he came back to it, saying: “This is the right decision!... I can't do otherwise. I would never forgive myself!” Which means he had doubts and was seeking our support. This was also a historic decision.

He still wasn't sure whether he would fly to Armenia when we were in the airplane on the way back. He came out of his room to join us. Talked about some things. But when we landed at Vnukovo, as soon as he met with the PB he made the decision. As he was saying goodbye he said “I have to go!” And this was a historic action, which was not overshadowed by the selfless Ryzhkov, who had been there for two weeks, seen his share of horrors and fixed things “with his own hands.”

M.S. is still sick after Armenia. I am communicating with him through notes, reminders about telegrams and over the phone, when he calls me. I sent him the “outcomes of New York” for the Politburo (it will take place on 12.27), and then everyday some matters came up.

– Bezymensky found in the GDR's MFA new facts about the protocol for August 23 of 1939. He wrote me a note that it's time to admit to things.

– The note by Ukrainian seismologists, who had been predicting earthquakes for many years, and predicted the one in Armenia, which they presented at a seminar in Tomsk in June of 1988.

– Yakovlev's speech in Perm with a very brave movement in the course of new thinking, with his commentary.

– A note written together with Shakhnazarov about the countries with a “socialist orientation,” which are a millstone around our neck and which accept neither *perestroika*, not the new thinking. M.S. wrote “good” across the top and assigned us to prepare a conception for the PB at the end of April.

– Note on Cuba, that we should not go there at all and that it's time to tell “the Beard” that aren't even thinking about it, and that it's time to stop being a revolutionary at the expense of 1/5 of the growth of the Soviet national income. M.S. reacted to this: “If I go there, it won't be before December” (clearly sarcastic!)

– Ponomarev's vile request to leave him the dacha.

– Because of my vacation M.S. assigned Dobrynin to prepare the material for the meeting with the “Trilateral Commission” (Nakasone, Giscard, Rockefeller, Kissinger, Brzezinski) on February 18th. But he called me right afterwards because he had doubts that Dobrynin will manage the task (“he's forgotten how to think a long time ago”) and asked to add Zagliadin to this project, and for me to lead a “three-way” meeting for the three of us.

– A schedule of his meetings and trips for the first half of 1988 [sic]. He leaves a minimum. But a lot will be added on later. I will oppose as much as I can: he can't turn into a constant interviewee [проходной собеседник], and everybody wants an interview with him. It became a status-symbol: what's your significance at home and in international politics if you haven't had a meeting with Gorbachev!

– I protested against Razumovsky's and Boldin's imposing of “their” structure on the CC International Department (M.S. supported me in this).

Some of my friends are telling me that people are railing against Gorbachev, and especially against Raisa. Nobody believes anything. This is coming from the academic circles. If that's the case, then our so-called intelligentsia is worthless.

Some of this reaches M.S., especially about the empty shelves in the stores. This is reflected in the conversations about *perestroika*.

On the third day after he got sick we had the following conversation on the phone. He asked me for what I thought about the reaction to the UN [speech]. I said something like “the very course of history” and that more and more people feel this.

He said: “Yes, I am sure that I made the right choice (I understood that he was talking about the internal *perestroika*). If I felt that I made a mistake I would immediately submit my resignation. But I am sure that there is no other way, we chose the right way! But it's going to be so hard, Tolya!”

I haven't noted another one of my undertakings. Under the impression of his success and “resounding fame” from the speech at the UN I once again thought that our educated public does not seem to notice the evolution in the “new thinking.” This evolution happens in almost every M.S.' major speech. People did not notice it in his appearance before the Polish intellectuals in Warsaw, etc. But the West German, English, French, and even American newspapers noticed that he is progressively moving away from Marxism-Leninism. And all ours can write about are the initiatives!

I told Falin that we should assign Veber & Co. to write a big article for *Kommunist* in which they would trace the evolution of the new thinking after the XXVII congress. At the same time they should analyze how some have rushed to the “openings” that M.S. created, such as our scientists—the leaders in different scientific journals, first and foremost the MEMO, in the journal *Rabochii klass i mezhdunarodnaia politika* [The Working class and International Politics], and in the literary thick journals, in Yu. Afanas'ev's book, etc. In some places there is foolishness, but in others it's the real emancipation of thought.

Falin tells me: I am all for it, but Medvedev is jealous about any encroachment on his sphere. “I'll take the responsibility for it” I said impudently and smugly. But seriously: while I can, I will take it on; during the era of *glasnost'* even the small steps become irreversible.

December 31, 1988.

It is the last day of a great and dramatic year. Truly, without fools and demagoguery, it is a turning-point year.

Starting on the 24th of December I was supposed to be at a branch of Barvikha near Domodedovo. In reality I was there for only three days.

Yakovlev called there, told me about the PB that discussed New York. He advised me to be “alert” to the possibility that the election method “from the party” might bring the gang of Bondarev, Ivanov, Alekseev, etc. to the Congress of Soviets.

He sent me a philosophical congratulatory note and two bottles of Bulgarian [wine]. He is drawn towards me for some reason.

Anya (my daughter) organized a return match for Ruby (member of the Italian parliament). He came with his wife Vera, who is a former Soviet citizen. She is smart and sharp. In the age of Eurocommunism, here she was considered to be most maliciously anti-Soviet. Popov (translator from the Italian) was also here with his Natasha.

We had an interesting conversation: talked about *perestroika*, about our recent past with PCI-CPSU, about Gorbachev, Berlinguer. I raised the question of what will happen to the world revolutionary process when we, the USSR, cease being a superpower?

Indeed. Right now the West is euphoric about us because Gorbachev had the courage to refuse this status and remove “the Soviet threat.” But without this, in everything else, why would the developed West need us? What could be their interest in us, as compared to, say, Latin America or China?

Curiosity? Yes... after all there are Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, and others, on whom the world myths about us are built.

A problem. It's ok if it's a world issue. But what if it's a provincial one, only ours?

Ruby brought a request to meet with M.S. from Occhetto (General Secretary of PCI). I suggested this to M.S. before. He said: "It's not clear!" Now, after the conversation with Ruby, I wrote him a long note yesterday, suggesting January 13th. We'll see what he says.

In the newspapers, journals, and TV there is total discord (on the outcomes of the year and regarding the New Year) of our entire 70 year-long system. None of the terminology is shunned anymore—down even to totalitarianism. The "kolkhoz and sovkhoz" have been declared to be a mistake "from the start." Almost all the émigrés are now good, "and we, their Motherland, are guilty." Now those émigrés are presented as our only wealth, our "spiritual potential," which has mostly been scattered or destroyed over these 70 years.

On the TV you now often see metropolitans and bishops, whom the participants of the conversation, including little boys and girls, are calling "my lord" [владыко].

Gavriil Popov (yesterday on TV) is right when he said that in 1989 nothing noticeable will happen in "the state of life," even though new trends will appear. But it looks like this is his internal plan, or maybe an objective logic that Gorbachev started (and he does not want to resist it, even though he still says words of "restraint"), that the regime which was constructed over 70 years has to break down, only then our society will begin to rebuild itself anew, "out of the instinct of self-preservation." And no dogmas of the past are accepted, even if they are "Lenin's!"

Popov is right in term of the economy. But from the perspective of further disintegration of the regime, the year 1989 will bring major events. This is the "uncontrollable" tempo that has started!

1988. Outcome and Significance.

The year 1988 became a turning-point, and not in the best direction. Gorbachev's stated intentions and his actions were not able to give *perestroika* stability.

During this year Gorbachev formulated (of course, in continuation of previously outlined objectives) what we could call a strategy of changes and took some more-or-less decisive measures to ensure their irreversibility. His implacability in regard to attempts and demands from his colleagues to rein in *glasnost'* and to check the growth of groups and organizations independent from the CPSU helped to turn *glasnost'* into real freedom of speech.

Gorbachev firmly and finally disassociated himself from the nostalgia for Stalinism and irrevocably condemned it, taking advantage of the "Nina Andreeva affair." This position was most conclusively reflected in the spring, during his meetings with three groups of first secretaries of CPSU obkoms—the Generalship of the party. He prepared the XIX all-Union party conference according to his own plan, and started the real separation of the party from state

power. In this context, he conducted a major re-organization of the central party apparatus and removed from the Politburo and the CC Secretariat people who had been the inheritance of the Brezhnev era. The response to this was the formation of a “party” opposition to Gorbachev-style *perestroika*, his personal authority, and his power.

Gorbachev did not serious measures to neutralize or suppress this opposition. He did not do it out of moral considerations and because it contradicted the principles of his reform ideas and his democratization purposes. But this left room for the destructive activities from the side of his opponents, as well as from his ultra-radical supporters. As a result, he did not succeed in replacing the power of the party with a civil government of the Soviets.

During the trip to the Krasnoyarsk region, Gorbachev saw first hand that in the fourth year of *perestroika* there was nobody who could continuing the work. There were no cadres capable and sincerely devoted to carrying out fundamental reforms, or even working in a new way “under democratic conditions.”

On top of this came the unexpectedly rapid growth of ethnic problems and contradictions. Gorbachev saw the danger in them already at that point, but he delayed forming a new national-federal policy (which, as the development of the events has shown, would still not have saved the country from dissolution).

The mechanism of the State began to unravel.

The year 1988 revealed the inadequacy of the initiated market reforms (and in essence their general impossibility in the USSR). The innovations Gorbachev initiated and the departure from the Soviet state-planned economy abruptly worsened the economic situation along with the psychological atmosphere in the country. In these circumstances the “pluralism of opinion” adopted by the intelligentsia and the offended apparatchiki enabled them to make use of the mass dissatisfaction with the policy of *perestroika* and the nature of Gorbachev's leadership. In turn, this provided the impetus to turn the criticism of the “deformation of socialism” and “deviation from Lenin” into a total debunking of Marxism-Leninism as an ideology and a theory, and the rejection of a socialist regime in general.

But the year 1988 is also a critical point at which Gorbachev himself moves away from Marxist-Leninist approaches to the evaluation of the domestic, and especially the international situation. The brightest, and one could say historical, event in this sense is his speech at the UN General Assembly. The policy of “new thinking” was confirmed in practice by the withdrawal (even though belated) from Afghanistan. The decision to move out the troops in itself was a significant event. No less significant was the lengthy discussion of the “Afghan question,” which was absolutely uncharacteristic for the Soviet leadership. It meant that everywhere from now on, **in principle** the expansionist element was removed from the USSR's international operations.

From the records in this volume we can see that the author continues to admire Gorbachev's historical deed, even as he believes less and less in the possibility of his plan's success. In the relationship between the adviser and his hero, what becomes evident is the author's different evaluation of Gorbachev's great statesmanship, and his personal ability to

resist the temptation of power in everyday life and in his relations with people.

If we rightfully speak about the tragic nature of Gorbachev's fate (in the grand, Shakespearean sense), it is during 1988 that not only his adviser, but Gorbachev himself felt this tragedy.

For many, the sign from above of this tragic nature was the terrible earthquake in Armenia, which seemed to close the year.

Translated by Anna Melyakova and edited by Svetlana Savranskaya for the National Security Archive