

The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev

1983

Donated by A.S. Chernyaev to The National Security Archive

Translated by Anna Melyakova

<http://www.nsarchive.org>

1983

January 30, 1983

Something happened to me after the hospital and Barvikha. I'm waning day by day. And there's the anxiety. Not because doctors convinced me that my heart doesn't have much longer left, that it is tired and I need to treat it sparingly. No. It is not the fear of someone who has lived through a heart attack. It is something else... There's a reason I was drawn to read *Faust*. And coming back to work for Ponomarev triggered an acute sensation of the "Uncle Vanya syndrome."

It was more interesting to work on Brezhnev's "Complete Works" because Brezhnev did not interfere in the writing process. Writing for Ponomarev, one sincerely hopes to use Ponomarev's position to put out something worthwhile under his name. But Ponomarev interferes and spoils, trivializes, and primitivizes our efforts. Therefore, not only do drafts that are more substantive than the final product end up flying into the wastebin, but so does all my mental work and painstakingly developed ideas.

Still, that is not the main problem. The main problem is that he stands in the way of developing the kind of policy in our sphere that can and must be done under Andropov. The trouble is that we are wasting time because this department is headed by a petty, vain official with a police-propaganda mindset, who is envious, cowardly, fussy, and ready to betray any idea to make sure he "presents" himself the way he sees fit in front of his superiors.

However, the superiors see right through him and he won't last much longer. It's disappointing that I'll have to follow him into political oblivion, because the apparatus and the superiors identify me with Ponomarev, considering me his alter ego.

In a word, I sometimes think that it is time for me, like Chekhov's Uncle Vanya, to "grab a gun" against the one who prevented me from becoming myself even while he made me a deputy head, a member of the Auditing Commission, candidate member of the CC, etc. He rewarded me in his own style, thinking that for me – like for him and everyone else (though he despises them all) – such things are important and constitute the meaning of life.

February 13, 1983

I've been at the Gorky Dacha since February 2nd, writing a report on Marx for Ponomarev. Myself, Burlatsky, Krasin, Ambartsumov, Kozlov, Veber, plus Pyshkov, who was added by Ponomarev because he spent six months at the dacha, first in a team writing for Brezhnev, then for Andropov, from the beginning of the report about Marx in Berlin.

We wrote 60 pages, sharp, in the Andropov style... but clearly, they would not pass for B.N. So, we started to reign ourselves in. Tomorrow, I will give him a slightly smoothed out text on 47 pages. It is still not really in Ponomarev's style – for him, truth, including Marxist truth, matters only for "propaganda of our success" or "exposing imperialism," but by no means for real politics.

By the way, in Andropov's article on Marx (in *Kommunist*) there is not a hint of the former or the latter. The word "imperialism" does not appear at all.

As Pyshkov told me, when Andropov was commenting on the first draft of that article, he demanded, first and foremost, to contend with the realities and not to say anything "contrary to conscience" (according to Lenin). He had a similar conversation with the editor in chief of *Pravda*, Afanasiev, in the presence of Zimyanin. He demanded only the truth from *Pravda*, told them to follow up on his speeches and not to back down until there are real results. He instructed them to have a better dialogue with the West (praising Arbatov, Zagladin, the five people who can "speak their language.") He noted, by the way, that we lost the battle over "human rights..." That we are wasting time pretending that our contradictions are not antagonistic (what about the prisons, the crimes, etc.? Is that a struggle of "good versus better" or discrepancies?). And so forth.

Pravda, *Sovietskaya Rossia*, *Literaturka* have changed a lot since Andropov's came to power, even compared to their formerly fairly "progressive" positions. For the first time in many, many years, people are rushing to read the front page of *Pravda*! The bureaucratic banalities are almost gone, and so is the tasteless bragging.

At the start of Andropov's visit to the Ordzhonikidze Factory: an old worker asks, "Yuri Vladimirovich, may I open with an unpleasant question?"

Andropov: "That's what we are here for..."

Worker: "Where were you all these years?"

After a brief hesitation in the auditorium, the reply was: "Same place as you were!"

In a word, I believe in Andropov, may God grant him at least five good years!

And may Ponomarev fade away soon, though it could cost me my job. Until he is gone, we will continue to destroy the ICM [International Communist Movement]. The episode with the letter against the PCI. The article for *Novoye Vremya*: he shouted at me "This is opportunism!" when I expressed doubt whether we need to "rebuff the Italians" at all. The article was shot down at the Politburo. We were advised to limit ourselves to a closed letter to their CC... Essentially the letter was the same as the article... basically, it showed that we simply do not want to understand anything, or – from the Italians' point of view – we are simply stupid. The letter circulated among members of the PB for two weeks. Eventually, it was approved... B.N. notified me of this at dacha, over the phone. He grumbled (forgetting that I am by no means in agreement with him on this issue) about how long they hesitated, doubted, edited the letter, but finally agreed.

It seems Andropov is still affected by the inertia of the "Party father" prestige, since he ultimately surrendered. (How is it possible they can doubt that we are right about everything, that we cannot be wrong!). Plus, he does not know what the alternative could be, and nobody told him, including Zagladin. Everything comes back to Ponomarev. Tomorrow I will read the ciphered telegrams to find out what came of this senseless initiative.

The story of the draft Gromyko-Ponomarev memo to the PB (based on Dobrynin's telegram) about our long-term course regarding the United States. I proposed to set a course towards normalization at all costs, regardless of who is in the White House. Korniyenko-Komplektov ridiculed my draft as a naïve outstretched hand. Gromyko agreed with them, called B.N. and now the matter is shelved. Our MFA is full of shallow thinkers. By the way, Komplektov was recently promoted to a deputy at the MFA, but he is a petty official through and through – in his education and his work experience. Politics for him is just another piece of paper, nothing more.

February 20, 1983

On Wednesday Ponomarev came to the Gorky dacha. He had railed against our text over the phone the day before. However, in the presence of “outsider comrades” he behaved nicely (maybe also because he finished reading the entire text by the time he came here, not just bits and pieces of it). Later, he even fell into reminiscences associated with this dacha, as he usually does... How Stalin and Voroshilov used to visit Gorky at the dacha, how the young Mints (who is an academician now) had “stood on this very veranda” and gave a six-hour report on the text of the first volume of *The History of the Civil War*... About Yaroslavsky, that he survived (thanks to Ordzhonikidze, who saved him by sending him to exile in Yakutsk) while his four-volume *History of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks* was excoriated for several months due to one phrase: that before Lenin's return to Russia, Stalin had taken some positions that were not entirely correct.

But these are all just embellishments. The real story is in our work.

Ponomarev handed out a bunch of instructions, which irritated me but were received with reverence and understanding (distance!) by the rest of the guys. They found crumbs of “progressiveness” in his words (for example, admitting some failures and contradictions). Then, we were back to the drawing board.

I find it annoying that some of the seven men here have turned the dacha into a resort. Krasin and Pyshkov barely wrote 2-3 pages in the 20 days we've been here... They are constantly out taking walks or skiing. Look out the window and you are sure to see one of them out there. Krasin seems to be in some kind of manic state: he does exercises and jogs before breakfast, after breakfast (coffee, kefir) he goes skiing. Then he rests on the couch, wearing imported noise-cancelling headphones and listening to some calming music. I don't know what he does after that, but about two hours before lunch he goes skiing again, followed by a walk after lunch... After dinner – billiards and another walk.

I suspect he has a young mistress, so he wants to stay in shape. But what does our poor Marx have to do with it!

This kind of thing infuriates me, especially against the backdrop of enthusiasm and a sincere desire to do a good job from Ambartsumov, Veber, Kozlov. I end up having to write and edit not just my own parts, but finish up for others, too.

We should do away with these dachas – these symbols of freeloading on other people’s brains. Or we should go back to Leninist-Stalinist times, when PB and CC members would write themselves. In other words, elect a bunch of the writers and let them work for the cause, instead of the collected works of Ponomarev and his ilk.

I feel some kind of decline in everyday life. My internal cycle is completely strained when I am on my own. For example, I pick up Gulygin’s book about Schelling, but if you ask me two days later what I read, I could not tell you for the life of me. I started reading Renan’s *The Life of Jesus*, and I remember that it was interesting, but I cannot recall exactly what I found interesting. It all flies out of my mind the next day. The same happens with various articles and entertainment books. Sometimes I read something clearly significant in *Literaturka*, but the thoughts stay in my mind only until the next issue of the magazine.

Still, I managed to jot down two things from an article by the playwright A. Misharin: “Today we need a direct, impartial conversation; a conversation about good and evil, about the things and people that are getting in our way. It is also absolutely clear that this conversation should have the concreteness, passion, and depth inherited from our classical Russian culture. There is no other way.” Or, “...Today’s social drama has to present to the public an examination of issues felt in our society, urgent issues that have not been resolved. It has to capture the main, fundamental shifts in our public consciousness. The main among them – the trial of personal responsibility facing our modern citizen... All the questions have been raised anew. In this moment, the role of literature, theater, family, the foundations of human existence increases tremendously! That is what’s on the agenda right now. What kind of person will you become? A fighter? A nouveau-riche of one sort or another? What people were waiting for twenty years ago is here now.”

That’s the scope we are talking about! I’ve written about it before. Our literature is once again taking the path it set in the XIX century. And life in the Andropov era is taking a new direction, one that hasn’t been visible since Stalin’s times. Though for now, we are going through a shaking up of the rigid system, albeit under the guise of restoring order and discipline.

March 13, 1983

I don’t write regularly and that’s a pity, because there are things to write about. Though I did spend a month at the Gorky dacha. But the main reason [I don’t write] is laziness and strategic fatigue from life.

I was inspired by Eidelman’s publications on Karamzin to read around thirty manuscripts for the next meeting of Questions of History. By the way, there was a sensible, long article by some colonel of the General Staff on the “Battle for the Caucasus.” Picking it up, I of course wondered whether it would mention Brezhnev. Well, it didn’t! Over forty pages of text about the Kunnikov landing, there were only a few pages about Malaya Zemlya. This time, history is rapidly restoring the truth... For how long do we need to be taught decency, dignity, and basic common sense – not as individuals, but as a society?!

How is the Andropov era coming along? The most noticeable aspect is the press. There is no more boasting, there is a great deal of criticism, a serious conversation about current problems. There is no fear of “critics” and slanderers of socialism from “over there.” Higher and higher echelons are being subjected to criticism. Holding the title of Minister will no longer save you. That’s very good, but it is not enough. It appears there is a strategy to create a different atmosphere in society. But I do not see any major policy, any strategy for overcoming the crisis. Maybe it doesn’t exist. Arbatov thinks so (he adores me again, because he was pushed aside rather than brought into the inner circle despite his total confidence he would be). He is convinced that we missed the opportunity already. In his view, it all comes down to firing all the former cadres. To a large extent, personnel is indeed the problem. But where to find replacements? Where is the mechanism that would help identify new people? And most importantly – where is the trust that is necessary for bold personnel policy? The KGB is probably not the place where such trust is developed as a political quality of a statesman.

Arbatov believes that we’ve missed this chance also for this reason – when there is no tangible progress, a process of discreditation sets in, there is a loss of hope and authority. While Andropov was ill for a month, prices went up for many goods and services – gas went up 3x, the phone bill went up 10x, furniture is twice as expensive, there were increases in the price of electricity, metal products, some types of foods, gas, and so forth. In other words, a head-on increase for fairly everyday items. Arbatov calculated that the salary increases mandated by the XXVI Congress for some categories of workers have already been “eaten up.” People are starting to grumble...

The enthusiasm of the first days after Brezhnev have evaporated.

Many are convinced there is a rivalry between Andropov and Chernenko. I do not believe this.

Andropov’s article about Marx stirred up a variety of responses. I liked it for its frankness and “Leninist” style in the sense that it did not conform to the “general” reader. It was addressed to a politically literate, cultured audience. But from the point of view of presenting a set of strategic ideas, Arbatov is probably right... It’s been a week since it came out. I’ve read it three times. But if you ask me what it’s about, if we are talking about the outlook and action plan, I really couldn’t tell you. Still, I think it is already an achievement that it is free of boasting and presents an attitude towards socialism as a real society of real living and far from ideal people.

(Speaking of the people in this society. I went to the Davis Cup at Luzhniki. As always, when I find myself surrounded by this mass of Muscovites, I am shocked by the fact that I have nothing in common with them. It doesn’t really matter that I don’t. But I am sure that Andropov & Co. have nothing in common with them either. The crowd could not care less about this “socialism” and all the worries about how to improve it. The majority [of the people at the stadium] were wearing sheepskin coats, leather jackets, very fashionable, modern, very self-confident, and well-off. In our society, this is the intelligentsia, the employees and the sports-affiliated fraternity. For many of them, being involved in sports means “being in a club,” a club of “their people.” It is both a hobby, and the reason for being, a way to interact with their own

kind. For them, work is nothing more than a means to receive a salary. It does not present any intrinsic meaning or interest to them. For some, it may be just a cover for legal idleness or not quite legal but profitable activities. I think they really do not care what kind of society they live in.

However, this is only one layer – the people from the capital. There may be several million of them around the country. Perhaps, from the point of view of public morality, it is not the worst layer, because it has a certain minimum of culture.

To whom, then, is Andropov's article on Marx addressed? To people like me, Arbatov, Ambartsumov and the rest of the "Gorky dacha crowd"?

March 20, 1983

It was a normal week. There was, however, a meeting of the CC Secretaries (international) from socialist countries. B.N. is very satisfied. Other participants (privately): "How much longer?!" That is, how much longer will we keep convincing and informing each other about things that everybody knows perfectly well? How much longer will coordination be reduced to monologue lectures about the dangers of imperialism and the significance of joint actions!

Andropov received the secretaries. He read out a memo that had been written by us but significantly weakened by B.N. That was disappointing. I expected him to use the opportunity to say something about the socialist community in the spirit of the 1956 resolution. But my attempts were thwarted by B.N., who guessed what I was up to and again (!) resisted putting original ideas into the General Secretary's mouth: he does not want Andropov's tenure to bring in a truly "new era."

Andropov's final speech for the June Plenum on Ideology is being prepared in Volynskoe. Zagladin is in a euphoric state, but he manages to find time for everything else, too. From his articles and speeches on Marx (165th anniversary) alone: an article in *Pravda*, an article in *Kommunist*, an article for Khavinson's journal *World Economy and International Relations*, one in *Novoye Vremya*, a speech at the international seminar in Paris, a speech at a conference at the Party School, and so on and so forth.

Ponomarev is in a rage. But he is no longer in control of his first deputy, even when it comes to work in the Department. For example, at the aforementioned meeting: Zagladin led the editorial committee and would occasionally step into the auditorium where the meeting was taking place, whisper something to B.N., pick up his folder, and leave! He thereby demonstrated that he only does his specific part, and beyond that he could not care less about this pointless fuss. This is one of the symptoms of the collapse of the old "structure" of the apparatus, including the International Department.

On Friday there was a party for Berkov's 60th anniversary (he is a consultant in the International Department, Arbatov's friend) at the House of Journalists. This "celebration" is the clearest picture of the moral decay of our venerable team. We had been so proud of this team since the times of Elizar (Kuskov, who was B.N.'s first deputy before Zagladin). Vulgar jokes,

swearing in the presence of ladies, vicious attacks against each other under the guise of comradely jokes, insulting remarks, arrogant cynicism regarding our (departmental) work. The people who especially stood out: Menshikov, who exposed his vile nature; Sobakin – he showed his stupidity in a drunken state; and Shaposhnikov, who exhibited complete idiocy, in my opinion, bordering on alcoholic schizophrenia. He was incredibly drunk. One could only guess what goes on inside him when he is sober based on the incoherent verbiage that came out of him when he was drunk. It is a “disintegration of personality.” He was once a pretty good person, but he has turned into a spiteful, petty, vengeful, envious guy who can commit any meanness, any betrayal.

I still cannot get over feeling disgusted when I remember those hours at the party. This thought crossed my mind, among others: he (Shaposhnikov) is, after all, a very typical person for the stratum that makes up our high and, in part, the highest echelon of our cadres. This is frightening – because people like that have no “self-regulating” categories of decency, honor, loyalty, moral substance. All they have is bare career interests and unquenched, perverted to the point of illness, vanity.

March 22, 1983

I persuaded Ponomarev to let me work from home to do a final cleanup of the text on Marx for his report at the Bolshoi Theater of March 30th. At home, work goes three times easier, faster, and better than at the office.

A new version for B.N.’s speech at the Department before representatives of the mass media and public organizations on the outcomes of the meeting of the CC Secretaries of socialist countries.

A draft letter to Brandt – an address to the Congress of the Socialist International on détente.

And more routine work.

Arbatov was, after all, invited to Volynskoe to prepare the summit on CMEA. That is good – both for the work, and for him.

March 25, 1983

Last night I finished the report on Marx. Eradicated the last bit of freshness from it. On two pages in the concluding part of the report, I tried to give an answer to the question of why we, the CPSU, consider Marxism-Leninism as a guide to action. A contemporary answer, without sounding like a scholastic lecture.

B.N. and I had a long argument, and he reduced the report to trivialities that could have been written in 2-3 days. The work would have consisted of nothing more than looking for quotes...

What's the matter? Two things. He is afraid to put on airs and demonstratively compete for the role of Party theoretician, i.e. maintain the position he obtained under Brezhnev by force of circumstances. Now, Andropov and Chernenko are "doing theory themselves."

And the second thing: he hates to see everyone hoping for a "new stage" under Andropov. This is due to the fact that he is personally being pushed away from theory (from changing the program of the CPSU, in particular) and from policy. Also, he considers "all of them" the nouveau riche in political activity, and himself as the only "educated Marxist" and theoretician in their midst. Finally, and mainly, it is because he is almost 80 and his dream of becoming a PB member is evaporating completely... He is resisting, not hiding his disdain (in front of us, his "close circle") for the initiatives and new ideas of the new General Secretary and those who support him. His political and ideological conservatism is growing in leaps and bounds.

Brutents told me how Aleksandrov assigned B.N. to compose for Andropov, for the ideological Plenum, three pages on the "third world," and how B.N. tried to sabotage this task.

B.N. suddenly gave me a gift, an amazing set of ink pens. I decided to try them out and realized that I already have three, gathering dust.

He's a strange guy, my boss. On the one hand, he is very lonely. He wants at least someone to be close to him, like me for example. So, he got sentimental with the pens. On the other hand, he is not a particularly generous person, because he is an egoist by nature and now his old age is compounding that. So, he wants to get off easy... for our conversation yesterday, evidently on a very sensitive subject for him.

April 3, 1983

B.N.'s report on Marx took place on March 30th. At the Bolshoi Theater. Unexpectedly, Andropov was there, heading the entire Politburo! (I ended up in the front row.) B.N. read decently, but he failed to convey the emotional passages.

It was received... fairly well. The congratulations kept coming in the day after... and to me, too.

I watched very closely for the "sentiment" between the presidium and the speaker.

There is a condescending, slightly ironic attitude towards him. He does not want to see it. Then again, the general public, including abroad, does not know this. On the contrary, especially abroad, they consider him a "grey cardinal," while in reality he does not play any role in policy or theory (the latter he especially claims as his own, it is his last redoubt). He is just a high-ranking, experienced official.

He himself is very pleased with how everything went.

The next day he went on vacation to the Crimea.

Zagladin left before him (again!) to Hungary, then to Vienna for a secret meeting with Cossutta.

In the last days while B.N. was still here, I tried to save Basov, a referent on Afghanistan. But it was too late. That evening I was “informed” about what happened to him. The police seized him on the street, he was drunk after attending the wake for a friend who died in Afghanistan. Bastards – showing off their uncompromising stand on workers of the Central Committee! When I started giving a speech about it to Ponomarev in the morning, he said, “Well, he was drunk. And you know how tough they are about that nowadays!” I only managed to save him from a Party investigation and reprimand. At the time I was having this conversation, the letter of dismissal was already on Chernenko’s desk.

Since I brought up the subject of how Shchelokov corrupted the police, B.N. mentioned by the way (after getting up from his desk, away from the phones!), “If you knew what crimes are associated with him. Gustov (deputy of Pelše, the Chairman of the Party Control Committee) reported at the Secretariat... What they did was... They would divide the valuables and jewelry seized from criminals amongst themselves. They even had a kind of ‘cooperative,’ a shop where only select people were allowed, mostly relatives. Their family was using three Mercedes cars. There is a great deal of crimes to his name. He deserves severe punishment. But, you understand, everyone knows who put him in that post... For ten years he was Minister of Internal Affairs. Now it is an awkward situation. You know, his wife committed suicide.”

I tried to use this story to come back to Basov’s case: Basov will be fired because of this person. But unsuccessfully.

Meanwhile, Shchelokov was in the front rows at Ponomarev’s report at the Bolshoi Theater! The tickets (personalized) were distributed by none other than Comrade Grishin’s City Committee!

It is understandable, of course. Brezhnev knew what he was doing. He gave “his” people such positions and ranks that it became very difficult to get rid of them. The same Shchelokov – he is a full general, brimming with medals, glorified and untouchable for so many years. Suddenly, in front of the whole world, to strip him of his epaulets! And what to tell our people and the world! It will not do. We do not do such things. Let it be swept under the rug. We will manage.

Vasil Bykov’s *Sign of Misfortune in Druzhiba Narodov*. The entire philosophy of Soviet history is now in his crosshairs.

May 14, 1983

Again, I did not write for a long time, even though periodically information came up that deserved it. Maybe it is because of fatigue. It is permanent: from my work.

Zagladin has not been at work in three months. For a brief while he was in the countryside and did some work there (Andropov’s concluding remarks for the Ideology Plenum). Then he took three business trips abroad, including Berlin (165th anniversary of Marx). Then he

was in the hospital due to his diabetes. While there, he wrote article after article for all kinds of publications, from the Polish *Nowe Drogi* to *Novoye Vremya* and *Agitator*. His passion for this form of self-expression for a long time aroused universal surprise and respect, but now is becoming the subject of universal irony and ridicule: the joke is that whatever magazine you open, Zagladin is there, either under his own name or a pseudonym.

I visited him in the hospital, “at his request.” It turned out that he wanted to share something very intimate with me. He decided to divorce his wife. He fell in love with a friend of his daughter, she is 25. I sincerely supported him, saying “For a man he must go with a woman” (from Kipling), and for a man like him, who voluntarily took on an intellectual burden, it is even more so.

A few days later he called me and told me that he informed Tamara (his wife) of his decision, and, oddly enough, received a release: there will be no scandal. He asked me how better to notify Ponomarev.

In a word, he is completely occupied with himself: writing his essays and looking after his soul. By the way, even though he is in the hospital on Michurinsky, he goes to see a psychic – Juna – every other day. He says the results are amazing, and the doctors have no idea why and attribute it to their efforts.

That said, he does not forget about his work responsibilities. As Aleksandrov-Agentov sarcastically put it, Zagladin set up shop at the hospital: he edited Chernenko’s report for the Plenum; participated in writing the preface for the Andropov compilation, which is supposed to come out in the FRG; received the head of the SPD delegation, Schumacher; carried on his secret games in big politics.

Menshikov visits him almost daily. On the eve of Victory Day, he came to see me and said that U.S. Ambassador Hartman invited him for a visit. I asked: what for?

“For a cocktail...”

“Really, what for?”

“Don’t you know... I have contacts with many Americans from the time I worked in the U.S. Those who need to know, know about it. When I came to work here, I told Ponomarev.”

“And what did he say?”

“Nothing... I visit the embassy very often. Especially when one of my acquaintances is here, they have a reception. I’ve already been several times this year. I run it by Zagladin every time. This time he also thinks I should go. Hartman is going home and probably wants to convey something important before leaving.”

“Are you sure that he, like the others you met with, are telling you anything that Moscow doesn’t already know from Dobrynin and other channels. After all, you do not read all the ciphered telegrams. I read almost all of them and think they contain more than enough material for the PB to competently formulate its policy towards the U.S. This is the business aspect, so to

speaking, that eliminates the need for your ‘confidential’ contacts. The other aspect is this – can you be certain that they will not turn you in when it appears advantageous for them to do so. You are no longer an IMEMO representative in the United States, a free scientist. You are now an employee of the Central Committee and thus a very good object for provocation.”

“I don’t think so. They are playing by the rules...”

“Be careful... Right now it’s particularly important to be careful. Look at the campaign of anti-Soviet spy mania taking place, in a dozen countries already our guys were expelled within 48 hours.”

“I considered that. But you know, they sent an invitation to Aleksandrov, too. He said he won’t go himself, but Menshikov should go.”

“Who did he say that to?”

“To Zagladin.”

“So! Dixi et salvavi animam meam [sic], as people say, including Marx.”

He did go to the embassy and, as usual, did not show me the record of conversation or even tell me about it at all. Naturally, I did not ask.

The day before yesterday my phone rings: Aleksandrov, Andrey Mikhailovich!

“Anatoly Sergeyeovich,” I hear the familiar Jesuit voice, “explain to me, please, on whose orders did Comrade Menshikov meet with Ambassador Hartman? It’s written in his report, ‘I was instructed to meet...’ You must know that such phrasing means the order was given by a CC Secretary, no less. Otherwise, it does not count. And no one else has the authority to issue such orders. Now I have to report to Yuri Vladimirovich, and he will ask where the order came from... What am I supposed to tell him? There was sensitive information in that conversation, even though nothing we did not already know. For example, that Shultz wants to visit if Andropov receives him, that they do not want Zimyatina to visit because it is not the right level.”

I told Aleksandrov exactly what happened, not forgetting to mention that he supposedly had also been invited. In a word, I told him exactly what I wrote above. I asked him: “Did Menshikov send you the memcon himself?”

“No. Zagladin sent it to me.”

“So, we should consider it Zagladin’s ‘order.’ I spoke with Ponomarev on this topic a few days ago. He was surprised that Menshikov engages in such ‘personal politics’ and denied that Menshikov asked him for general permission to continue contacts when he was approved for our Department. Ponomarev definitely did not know anything about this visit for a cocktail.”

“What would you have me do, Anatoly Sergeyeovich?”

“I don’t know. I could not override Zagladin’s ‘advice,’ especially since there was a reference to you as well.”

“The devil knows what! I will call Ponomarev.”

He really did call Ponomarev. The latter denied everything of course (he told me about it himself later), blamed it all on Zagladin, who “does whatever he wants, even though we don’t see him at work for months at a time.” Ponomarev promised to “put things in order” regarding Menshikov. He advised Aleksandrov to shelf the memcon, send it to the International Department to write it off. That’s what A.M. did. As the result, I saw the note. Aside from Menshikov’s claims to the significance of his contacts, there was nothing in it that we did not already know.

This is one of the latest episodes of Zagladin’s “secret personal politics.”

Another episode is not over yet. But it already cost us a couple million rubles and could turn into a huge scandal.

I’m talking about Cossutta’s purchase of the newspaper *Paese Sera*. He wants to turn it into something like *Iskra* to fight against Berlinguer & Co. and then turn the party back into a Marxist-Leninist one. Cossutta assures us (Zagladin) that 25 percent of the PCI is behind him (although, as the pre-Congress discussion earlier this year showed, in reality it is not even one percent). Immediately after last year’s January Plenum, at which the PCI adopted the famous resolution on Poland and thereby condemned and dissociated itself from real socialism, Cossutta made contact with Zagladin (they had met secretly in Paris and Vienna) and declared that he is going to fight, but he needs financial support. Zagladin convinced B.N., who always had a tendency for police methods of work in the ICM, by reminding him of similar successful operations from 50, 40, and 30 years ago. The latter agreed and convinced the CC that we need to do this to defeat Eurocommunism. Cossutta receive two million through a shell trading company.

He managed to buy the newspaper, but so far (a year) there have been no changes (ideological-political). In the meantime, it was steadily heading for bankruptcy. The PCI leadership soon “sensed” that something was happening with *Paese Sera*... They organized a subscription to save the newspaper from bankruptcy. The press started openly writing that it was the “hand of Moscow” destroying the newspaper in order to hand it over to Cossutta’s proteges. Benedetti, Cossutta’s man whom he put in charge of the newspaper, finally closed the newspaper recently. Cossutta cried out for help again, saying that they closed the newspaper to clean up its editorial office, put “their own” people in charge, and will resume publication in the summer. He said he was sure that in 12-13 months it will be quite good. But for that, he needed another two million immediately, in the fall, and again in January.

B.N. would have given it to him. But with our current currency shortage, he is embarrassed to ask the Central Committee to take so much money from the Soviet people for an affair that is so clearly questionable from all points of view. For two months now, Cossutta has been sounding the alarm, asking, demanding. But B.N. is stalling. He keeps making me or Zuyev (head of the Latin countries sector) “ask” what Zagladin thinks. The latter, while he is at the hospital, refuses to receive a cryptographer to show him the telegrams. Over the phone, he tells me and Zuyev that since we started it, we need to see it through. He does not call Ponomarev

himself. I convey “Zagladin’s opinion” to B.N., but when he asks me for my own, I express “deep doubts.” Zuyev shares this point of view. B.N. is torn. He really dislikes Berlinguer, he really wants to bring him down, he dreams that Cossutta would make it happen. And B.N. relies very much on this type of tactic and would have asked the CC for money already, but the “currency situation” is holding him back, plus he is afraid of failure.

The recent episode when the entire leadership of the Iranian Tudeh Party admitted that their newspaper had been a spy organization for the Soviet Union since its founding, or at least since 1945, further intensified Ponomarev’s hesitation.

This entire affair is the result of Zagladin’s “personal politics” in the ICM, his penchant for intrigues and all sorts of “covert operations.”

Come to think of it, after Mitterrand’s victory, Zagladin was in Paris and made contact with the president’s personal representative. Then he wrote to Moscow (bypassing Ambassador Chervonenko through the resident communication line) “forty barrels of encouraging information,” from which it followed that Mitterrand is practically getting on a plane to Moscow to kiss Brezhnev.

The reality turned out to be the opposite. When Mitterrand expelled 47 of our people from France in early April, *Le Monde* leaked about Zagladin’s secret connections in the highest echelons of the French state apparatus. The tabloids hinted that he, Zagladin, had given the “president’s representative” names of several of our employees who now were among those expelled.

And once more... about Zagladin. The other day, B.N. got up from his desk and went to the middle of his office, as he usually does in sensitive situations. He told me the following. When Honecker was here with an official visit in early May, our General Secretary casually asked him: “How is our ambassador (Abrsimov) doing over there?”

“I don’t know how he’s doing, probably well.”

“Maybe he’s been there for a while, maybe it’s time for him to go home?”

“I would not object,” Erich replied.

Andropov told Ponomarev about this and said, “Who should replace him? Semenov (ambassador to the FRG)? But he seems to be well placed. And why move from Germany to Germany.”

“We can find someone, let me think about it,” replied B.N.

“I’ve already thought about it – Zamyatin.”

“Will he want to? After all, he aimed high, hoping to become a CC Secretary under Leonid Ilyich and not without reason,” B.N. supposedly said.

“Well, he calmed down now. Plus, I already spoke to him. He agreed.”

“Is that so?”

“The question now is who would replace him (i.e. Head of the CC Department of International Information). What do you think about your deputy?”

B.N. said he needed time to think. And he started thinking out loud when I was there. I offered the opinion that Zagladin would certainly agree.

“Sure, he would agree. The question is whether we should allow it. With the liberties he takes, he will be sticking his nose in our affairs every day, and then might completely take them over,” B.N. said.

I was taken aback by hearing such a pathetic argument from a CC Secretary and could not think of anything to say. He asked me to think it over and give him a list of names by morning.

In the morning I sent him a note in which I named some candidates: Blatov, Dobrynin, Yakovlev (ambassador to Canada), Shishlin, Grigoriev (deputy in *Pravda*), Kraisov (deputy in TASS).

But in my heart, I am convinced that it will be Zagladin.

B.N. has been snubbed a few times. He expected to be the speaker at the celebratory meeting on the 80th anniversary of the CPSU. Zimyanin got that job. Ponomarev was sure that he would be allowed to appear in the journal *Problems of Peace and Socialism* with an article on the subject. The journal sent a request to the CC to have Ponomarev as the author, saying that he is one of the biggest scholars on the history of the CPSU, a notable statesman of the ICM. They needed an article precisely on the aspect of the ICM and something else. Instead, the article was assigned – clearly with Andropov’s knowledge – to Kapitonov! This is in response to the request from the journal, which had gone through Ponomarev and was directed by him to Gorbachev, who has been standing in for the ailing Chernenko for a month now as the head of the Secretariat.

B.N. is getting ready to speak at the Plenum. I’ve already prepared two versions of the speech for him. He brought in scholars: two from the Institute of Philosophy, and two from the International Lenin School. Although it is obvious that their philosophical, scholarly roulades are not suitable for any Plenum and no one needs them, they will be tossed in the wastebasket, along with 95 percent of everything on this subject over the years. Moreover, it will only be 7-8 pages of text, what philosophy can we speak of! But, in classical B.N. style, he does not consider us (except for Menshikov) capable of producing anything interesting, even though he’s been using our brains and our pens for almost 20 years. No amount of empty material from scholars, to whom he gives assignments before every event, can convince him that they are incapable of writing what we need.

His natural shamelessness together with the lackey cynicism he has developed over his long political life, have no bounds. The other day he forwarded me a note signed by the new Head of the Propaganda Department Stukalin. It is a denunciation of Nenashev, the editor-in-

chief of *Sovetskaya Rossiya*. Two of his articles, one from April 27th and one yet to be published – on the state of ideological work – have been condemned for being pretentious, indiscriminately critical, and of course, as always in these cases, confusing. I read the note and was indignant to the core. In reality, over the last year and a half, Nenashev managed to turn *Sovetskaya Rossiya* into the most interesting, most read of all the central newspapers. It is sharp, bold, frank, journalistically competent, it is fresh in how it poses problems and covers issues, it has a deep and honest approach to all our affairs. And here you go! Once again, we take one step forward and two steps back. Nenashev's articles, in spirit and execution, in how they are substantiated by facts, fully correspond to what was said at the XXVI Congress. But we are already afraid of our rather timid courage in implementing our own decisions. The XX Congress syndrome and its consequences!

Of course, the honor of the Propaganda Department uniform is at play! Who is Nenashev to judge all ideological work in such a way!! (By the way, *Sovetskaya Rossiya* is an organ of the CC). Indignant, I went to Ponomarev (although he clearly sent this note to me as a warning, since I am preparing his speech at the Ideological Plenum). The note was already signed by all the CC Secretaries, including Ponomarev. I gave a passionate speech. He made lazy excuses. "I didn't read those articles," he said...

"How could you sign the note then? It is a fundamental matter. It is essentially a rejection of the tenets from the Congress. What editor would allow himself even a bit of courage and honesty if we use such methods? And look at the humiliating form of punishment they came up with: someone from the Propaganda Department comes to the editorial board meeting and, with everyone present, slaps the editor-in-chief in the face! I have a feeling that someone intended to simply torment Nenashev, so they came up with this obvious fake."

The conversation came to nothing. But B.N., who "didn't read," has already crossed out Nenashev from the list of editors I recommended to look over our note on the ICM after a decision is made about it. This is our spiritual Beria-ism, which, it seems, we cannot shake off.

I ran into Nenashev in the stairwell on my way to the Secretariat meeting. I asked him:

"Mikhail Fedorovich, why are they messing with you?"

"Ah, to hell with them. Disgusting!"

Ambassador Yakovlev was in Moscow in connection with Gorbachev's forthcoming visit to Canada. We chatted. He said he keeps trying to figure out why he is being banished. "Now Golikov has been sent into retirement, and Trapeznikov is about to be driven out. Gorbachev himself told me that it was a matter of days. I was removed from the Department of Propaganda and sent into diplomatic exile based on their denunciation to Brezhnev. But... I was presented to lead the APN (the *Novosti* Press Agency, replacing Tolkunov, who was again transferred to *Izvestia*). Apparently, several secretaries have already put down their signatures. However, my paper to Andropov was shut down without any explanation." (By the way, even before this conversation, B.N. tried to "explain" to me that this is as it should be, since they (!) have something against Yakovlev).

So, Yakovlev said, he keeps trying to figure out what exactly they “have” against him. He recalled an episode from 6-7 years ago. At a reception at the Portuguese embassy in Ottawa, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada (he is of Russian descent) approached him and casually, over a glass of whiskey, said, “Why don’t you, Mr. Yakovlev, replace 11 of your employees with 11 diplomats?”

“I immediately understood what was the matter,” Yakovlev said. “I reported it to our resident and further up ‘the chain of command,’ to Gromyko. Three months went by with no reaction from Moscow. Then one day, I was summoned to the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and presented a dossier on 11 people – all of them were caught red-handed, there was nothing to say. They were ‘to be gone from Canadian soil’ within 48 hours. I once again reported this dossier ‘up the chain of command’ to Gromyko. It seems I should have sent it to another department. Now I’m being reminded of it.”

It may very well be so.

People keep saying that Shchelokov, the former Minister of the Interior, has been expelled from the Central Committee, from the Party, and is being put on trial. I don’t know... B.N. did tell me that his case was heard at the PB. Gustov (Pelše’s deputy) reported. The consensus is that he deserves very serious punishment, but it is embarrassing to say this publicly to our people and for the world to find out. After all, everyone knows who brought him to the capital, who nurtured him, who covered for him... As for the facts of the matter, B.N. shared only one – a cooperative was formed at the Ministry of Internal Affairs where valuables seized from criminals were sold cheaply to the inner circle.

For now, though, we do know that the switchman has been dealt with: Shchelokov’s former deputy has been stripped of his rank of general, has been expelled from the party and put on trial.

I also know that Medunov’s (First Secretary of the Krasnodar Regional Committee of the CPSU) case was heard at the PB. I do not know what they decided. Everything will become clear at the Plenum.

Ivashova (professor, philologist) presented me with her book *Epistolary Dialogues*. About modern British literature. It turns out there are dozens of notable names. I know only two-three of them. And I’m from the reading public, an intellectual. For whom does this literature exist? For whom do they analyze the processes of life, struggle for the past and future, try to teach people something, warn about something, or simply just inform of how other people live? For people like Ivashova – specialists.

Incidentally, what right do we have to be offended that the West does not know our contemporary literature if we, the nation that reads the most, do not know what is being written by the heirs of Shakespeare, Dickens, Galsworthy, and so forth.

May 15, 1983

In connection with Kosolapov's article in *Kommunist*, which is very clever and maybe even useful, I picked up Lenin's works from the bookshelf. Once again, as in Gorki in the winter when we were working on the report and had to read a lot of Lenin, I felt certain: we must re-read the classics to stay up to date with our times. The "new interpretation" of Marx-Engels-Lenin, for which Trapeznikov hounded Gefter about 10 years ago, is the only viable path for us, and for everyone. Not to mention training one's ability to think politically. We should also learn from them (and only them) what it means to have moral courage of thought, and reinforce this lesson in case someone encroaches on your party card for "dissent."

Here's a simple thing: Lenin's "Under a False Flag" from 1914. Volume 26. It is a piece we studied as students, then in graduate school, and while I was teaching at Moscow State University. I came back to it a few times over the years. Now it once again reads as most relevant and smart, inspiring, and at the same time totally forgotten (even my previous examination of it).

I got a call from work; we made an unfortunate omission in the note on the ICM that was sent out on Friday to the Secretariat. We forgot to include the CP of Japan among the opportunist parties. B.N. remembered it at night and called Balmashnov and then Zhilin to the carpet, since I was not there.

My mistake also lies in the fact that I did not show the draft of this note to all the deputies, though it is a general department matter.

May 22, 1983

The main event of this week was the discussion at the Secretariat of our note on the state of the ICM. What was unusual: everyone was asked to leave except the Secretaries, myself, Rakhmanin, Zamyatin, Stukalin and Lukyanov, Bogoluybov.

Chernenko led the Secretariat, he is back after a month and a half absence. B.N. was given the floor. After reading the two pages we prepared for this event, he went on for 20 minutes talking nonsense in his inarticulate dialect. He "set goals," clearly taking tedious "lessons" about the ICM from some old public speech (as I later found out, his adviser Vershinin found this text for him). It sounded ludicrous and inappropriate: to give such an oversimplified lecture to CC Secretaries. I was very embarrassed: some people glanced in my direction, thinking that this was "my doing."

It was rubbish both in content and politically: he remembered Lister (a Republican general in Spain 1936-38) and gave him an assessment that completely differed from the line we officially established about 10 years ago. You could feel that he was "stooping down" to adjust to the level of "his colleagues," whom he considers complete laymen in their field and capable of thinking about CP leaders only in the categories of "our man" or "not our man."

But he clearly underestimated "his colleagues." They know some things, and, as it became clear from their speeches and comments, they have their own opinions, often more objective and realistic than Ponomarev wanted to present in his report and that we depicted (under pressure from him) in the note.

Everyone noted the importance of the issue and the fact that the CC has not had such a broad outlook in over 10 years (essentially since the 1969 Conference). Fragmentary information and individual decisions on this or that party (delegations to congresses, greetings, meetings with visitors here, ciphered telegrams from ambassadors) do not make up a full picture and are forgotten among the many daily affairs of those who are far from the ICM.

However! The analysis given in the note was deemed to be overstated. Dolgikh said, “too optimistic.” Kapitonov joined this assessment (though I remember when we went to the Congress of the Swiss Communist Party together in 1980, he resolutely opposed my attempt to report to Moscow a genuinely realistic analysis). And this is right!

I think this approach came from the general spirit of the Andropov era (realism and truth) but also from an increasingly critical attitude toward Ponomarev. Even here he looked pitiful in his attempts to primitivize the situation, to lead away from serious conclusions, to prevent from facing the facts.

In general, they see him as an anachronism (albeit with outward respect for his old age). They look ironically at his attempts to pose as a theoretician and a major figure. They are disdainful of his conceited activity and urge to get on every podium, for every special occasion, always poke his nose into big politics with his didactic articles and cheap propaganda.

They gave two weeks for revisions, and on top of updating the note, we have to provide a detailed Politburo resolution on the ICM. Again, it is a flick on the nose for B.N. (he pointed it out himself, making the flicking gesture when I told him exactly what decision the Secretariat issued). Namely: to assign Ponomarev, Zimyanin, Rusakov, Zamyatin, and Stukalin to work it out in accordance with the discussion.

In other words, it indirectly shows a lack of confidence that B.N. can provide a “fitting” draft to the P.B.

He started grumbling at me again: we should not have gotten involved in this affair, we should not have proposed this issue for the Secretariat. This is according to the principle: if a pile of shit is lying on the road, don’t touch it! If you touch it – it’ll stink.

Nothing matters to him except keeping his chair and satisfying, whenever possible, his senile vanity.

By the way, on Friday we had a disgusting conversation “in this context.”

“Did you hear,” he said, “that it was decided for me not to speak at the 80th anniversary of the CPSU, and even an article to *PPS* (which is purely our business – the international role of our party, our journal, our issue, the editor requested that I write the article) was assigned to Kapitonov.”

“Yes, I heard about it.”

“What do you think, should I make peace with it or try to do something?”

I shrugged.

[Ponomarev continued] “Could you speak with Aleksandrov? As if by happenstance, not on purpose, and of course not here at the CC or on the phone. Perhaps at dacha on Sunday?”

“But our dachas are in different locations. Mine is in Uspenka, his is in Usovo.”

“Really?” he feigns surprise. “Which one of our guys lives there? Ah! Brutents.”

“I could ask him...”

“Do that. But warn him to be careful, as if [he brought it up] inadvertently. Look, for 20 years students have been studying from my textbook (History of the CPSU). That’s longer than [studying from] the Short Course, even though such a figure is behind it. Still, it served for 15 years, and my textbook for 20! I have been doing ideological work for 50 years.”

And so on, and so forth in the same disgustingly unworthy spirit. This is a Secretary of the Central Committee, a representative of the leadership of a great party!

On Saturday morning I called Brutents and conveyed this “request.”

The second event of the week was Arbatov’s 60th anniversary. He received his second Order of Lenin. He organized a big reception on this occasion at the CMEA (a favorite place for such events). I mocked and teased him, knowing that the event would still take place. And it did. I organized an address from the International Department for him and read it as a toast. By the way, I had to go first. After the repeated vulgar buffoonery from the toastmaster academician Primakov, no one dared to take the floor for 40 minutes (or they did not want to waste their sober nerve cells). But I was in a hurry.

Bovin’s toast with the bushel of salt and so forth. He once again surprised me with his vulgarity, his desire to confirm his reputation as a “free thinker” who is not afraid of anything despite being in the orbit of the highest authorities. But the reverse comes out: cheap political hooliganism, which is not received as “despite” his position but “because of” his position (he is under the wing of high authorities therefore everything is allowed). He is shitting in the trough from which he eats.

I left early. But Sashka Berkov told me what happened later. Our establishment (academic-MFA-journalistic, interspersed with some from the CC apparatus) looked trite, pitiful, narcissistic, cowardly and impudent. The repulsive face of our high society. However, the party-CC element was the most modest and reserved. After my “serious” oral-written toast, no one from the CC fought for the microphone.

In a word, this is all unworthy of the hero of the day, who, despite his Jewish attachment to home and fame, has a clear sense of duty and passion to work for the cause (and for himself only in passing).

May 26, 1983

I turned 62. So many years. Many lives fit into these 62 years. Yesterday I had the people I like from work over to my house.

Today I read 45 pages of Chernenko's report for the Plenum. A complete disappointment. It's small change. It has a bit of everything. He praised and scolded everyone. And, it turns out, we are no longer talking about a radical restructuring of ideological work, as was written in the 1979 special CC resolution, but only about "improvement."

In a word, this era has not yet begun, we have not yet made a serious step forward, but we are already getting ready to take two steps back. You cannot tell from the report that the ideological situation (if taken seriously, in the Leninist way) in society is awful. The report is protective rather than innovative. The word "continuity" keeps coming up... Continuity of what? Of whom? Of Shchelokov, Trapeznikov, Golikov, the Brezhnev family, Medunov?

Though I did also read Andropov's concluding remarks for this Plenum, they were sent out a week ago. They are much more serious. But it is not really about ideology, rather about politics and our way of life.

May 27, 1983

My wartime friend Kolya Varlamov, when we were celebrating Victory Day together, told me in great secrecy that his new son-in-law, a successful young doctor, gets called to Andropov several times a week for a total blood transfusion: Andropov's kidneys do not work at all. "Did you see how he makes his signature?" Indeed, I noticed it later. It's like a crooked line, only worse.

Today I finished the updated version of the note and draft resolution on the ICM for the CC. Coordinated it with other departments. Bogolyubov called: "Andropov considers this issue very important, it was discussed at the PB..."

Meanwhile, Ponomarev is still afraid of this issue. He still has not decided what he will speak about at the Plenum, should he be given the floor. About the ICM, or about drunkenness, or about the "duty of scientists" for the scientific and technological revolution. In my opinion, there is already a complete collapse of the social and moral impulse in him.

I am reading another book by Eidelman, *Big Jeannot* (about Pushkin [sic]¹). Again, I admire his ability to write historical things about us, about contemporary times without any subtext.

Zagladin is still out of office. The flow of paperwork from morning till 7-9pm is crushing my nervous system.

I came across something while reading Mezhirova... I am older than my colleagues by only 5-7 years, including Zagladin – yet I am also older than them by the entire Patriotic War. But I cannot look down on them for that, even though it could be useful... for my own greater

¹ *Big Jeannot* is about Ivan Pushchin. [trans]

peace of mind. As for Ponomarev, I have the right to completely despise him. Instead, I have been serving him for almost a quarter of a century.

June 5, 1983

My week went by in small skirmishes with Ponomarev, who is clearly fussing and getting old... He just cannot adjust to the new bosses. And they keep pushing him to the side. I think the Plenum will not be pleasant for him. He still cherishes the promise that he will be given the floor: he is torturing us with preparation for his speech. He keeps proposing appallingly primitive ideas. We are trying... But we no longer have the fervor we used to – to say something significant through him. Nobody wants to listen to him anymore.

June 6, 1983

Today I had a new clash with Ponomarev. On Friday we gave him one version of his Plenum speech. He summoned me in the morning and greeted me with an exclamation: “Help!” Meaning that the material won’t do at all. I got angry and started to brazenly ask him what he actually wants, specifically. He once again started talking pretentious nonsense. I objected: [what he’s asking for] is already included in Chernenko’s report and in Andropov’s closing remarks. It would not suit you to repeat the report, and should your speech anticipate the General Secretary’s remarks – it would be a scandal, because the entire leadership knows that we all received the contents of the concluding remarks a month before the Plenum.

From the long altercation that followed, I began to understand that he simply wanted to appear like a great scholar, “the theoretician of our party.” As usual, he does not really care about the cause, only about how he will look. But I still do not understand how exactly he wants to position himself. He was not included in the roster for the celebration of the 80th anniversary of the party, so we cannot even hint at this subject. He is being pushed out of foreign policy and he lost interest in the “crusade.” But I do not understand why he is stubbornly avoiding this subject, just as he did when we were preparing the note on the ICM for the CC. He does not want to associate himself with the Communist Movement because there is nothing good and useful left there for us? Possibly. But the entire party and the CC associates him with the ICM! He has to take that into consideration. There are, after all, the rules of the game. He cannot make a co-report, he must speak “about himself.” But he does not want to! He wants to set tasks for scholars, talk about the role of science and theory, and propose problems for theoretical research. Which ones?! I again started to impudently question him, but he could not name a single one. All the ones we can think of are already presented by Chernenko and Andropov.

I told him twice that it looks like I am not up to the task, which means Kozlov and Veber are also not up to it. He should assemble another team. I said I could not understand him.

“I see that you do not understand me,” he replied. But he did not take me up on the challenge. He just kept lamenting that he lost time and should have assembled a team at a dacha ahead of time, as we did for the report on Marx... That time it turned out beautifully.

He tried to name some issues regarding capitalism. For example, to give an answer to millions of people around the world – what are the causes of the crisis. I replied: there are dozens

of books and hundreds of articles, including in the journal of his beloved Khavinson, that provide answers to this question based on contemporary science. If we (!) do not read them, it is our problem and not science's. If these materials are not being read abroad, that is an issue of funds and propaganda cadres, which could be discussed at such a political forum as the Plenum. But you can't get through to him. He is ignorant both in science and in theory, even in his history of the party. He sent me a note with an outline of an idea on how to introduce [class] consciousness into the working-class movement – even a first grader would get a failing grade for such nonsense.

All of this is about myself – what a humiliating role I am in, doing everything I can to dress a naked, completely naked king.

September 6, 1983

Complete mental frustration. I am in the proximity of crucial events, but “thanks to” Ponomarev, there is nothing but fuss.

On September 1st, a South Korean Boeing 747 with 269 passengers on board was shot down over Sakhalin. In the name of inviolability of borders. From hundreds of information notes that I have been rummaging in for days, it is clear that the Americans set up a provocation for us. The tragedy is that we fell for it.

Reagan started such an anti-Soviet furor around the world that nothing will wash us clean of the stigma as murderers of innocent people in the eyes of regular people around the world (of whom there are billions). Dozens of governments, parliaments, all sorts of organizations and leaders, including social democrats and even some CPs (for example, the JCP), no longer consider us part of the civilized world. Reagan threw out the slogan “Us and Them!” meaning the entire world and the USSR. Thousands of newspapers and other voices picked it up. (By the way, socialist countries, except the ČSSR, are still silent. China condemned us in terms similar to Reagan's).

The country's moral prestige, the idea of communism, has been dealt another terrible blow. Everything looks different now, all our international affairs. We should go into deep isolation, separate ourselves from the world, not use our mental or financial resources on so-called international relations and prestige. Close ourselves off and work on ourselves. Create a new image for ourselves in the course of five to ten years, after internally rebuilding and really renewing our country.

The new “edition” of the Party program is being prepared; it would be great to put into it a completely new conception of our position in the world... Utopia! But is there any other way out?

Some kind of fate is overtaking our leaders: Stalin – 1937, Khrushchev – 1956, Brezhnev – 1968 and 1979, and Andropov barely had time to get started and now he will forever be associated with this ill-fated aircraft. Alas! I do not know, maybe we did not shoot it down. But now we can't prove anything. We behaved and continue to behave stupidly during this episode,

inconsistently, helplessly. This episode showcased with monstrous obviousness the power and pressure of the “military complex” over our entire life and politics.

I’m really neglecting my diary. Meanwhile, every day presents material practically for the history books. I wanted to immediately write down how the August 25 Politburo went, but I did not get around to it and now only fragments are left. Still:

The atmosphere itself... unprecedented. Debates, comparison of positions, thinking aloud, disagreements and even refusal to pass a resolution because members failed to reach full agreement. All of this took place in a comradely spirit, without attacks, as if it was normal practice. Of course, Andropov and Gorbachev are setting the tone, but the invited speakers are not afraid to get involved in the discussion.

Andropov is very frank and does not hesitate to question the “sacred truths.” For example, there was a discussion of the prices (and subsidies) for agricultural goods we get from Bulgaria. It was clear that our “friends” are ripping us off more and more brazenly: they stopped supplying the best and most sought-after goods (they are selling them for cash to the West). The mediocre stuff they do send us arrives late, poor quality, and so forth. The prices they charge are higher than world prices. All the while, they demand we keep the annual subsidy (400,000,000 rubles) for nothing. (In 1978 they received this gift supposedly for the development of agricultural infrastructure, but since then they haven’t spent a ruble of that money on developing their agriculture, i.e. specifically to increase exports to us!). So, the question arose to do away at least with this subsidy – their annual gift.

Yu.V. [Andropov] was against this idea. He said: every time a member of the PB makes any decision, he must keep in mind the state of the communist movement. Consider what is happening: the Chinese are successfully drawing various communist parties into their orbit, they are deftly and cleverly pursuing their line of isolating the CPSU. We should not help them by taking the kind of actions that were proposed here. Look: we did not give Cuba the kind of military support it requested and our relationship went downhill. Honecker came with a request, we did not give him everything he asked for. Our relations cooled. The Poles have been asking for God knows how long – we cannot give them everything, and again there is a cooling. Now with the Bulgarians.

Besides, it takes five minutes to quarrel, but it takes decades to rebuild relations. Consider China. We had a falling out 20 years ago. Moreover, the party fully supported us and condemned the Chinese, and so forth. Now that two decades have passed, you look at those events and think: what was it for, in fact? Whom did it benefit? What was the whole argument about? And you do not find anything serious to justify our position.

September 10, 1983

We admitted to shooting down the airplane and everything got back to normal, just like everything else in this modern terrible and indifferent world.

I just read an article by V. Kupriyanov in *Literaturka* about contemporary young poetry. I was amazed that such things are being printed now (I mean the poetry) in Soviet publications.

The 1981 collection “Young Voices.” Turns out there is this passage from I. Zhdanov: “Fatherland is night and a feast, everything else is foreign. We are faithful citizens of the night, we deserve to turn off the light.” Or, Oleg Khlebnikov: “As for happiness and greatness – oh, please keep up appearances when in public, and do not flutter with a seal of happiness on your face!”

And Andrey Dmitriev’s big poem “Home.”

September 12, 1983

Today I read the transcript of Gromyko’s meeting with Schultz in Madrid. It is, as they say, an image of our time. Schultz asked to start with a one-on-one meeting. What for? To talk about Sharansky. (At such a moment!) He said our representative in Madrid promised their representative that Sharansky would be released after serving half his term, so in September or February. Only under this condition would Reagan agree to sign the final document of the Madrid meeting.

Gromyko replied: “Your representative either misheard or something else. We did not make any promises, everything is clear with Sharansky... We explained to you many times: this is none of your business. I will not talk about this anymore, please do not raise this subject again.”

Schultz: “This and that, how can it be... you are going back on your word. If Sharansky dies in prison it would be catastrophic for Soviet-American relations, etc.”

Gromyko: “I told you, I will not discuss this subject. If you have nothing further to discuss, we can leave.”

Schultz expressed all kinds of indignation and started talking about the plane.

Gromyko interrupted him: “I will not start our conversation by talking about the plane. We have issues to discuss that affect the life of all mankind. I agreed to meet with you for that reason. I have things to say about the plane too. But I refuse to discuss this issue first.”

The tete-à-tete ended at this point and they came out to their advisers. With nearly a dozen people present, Schultz started by discussing the plane. Gromyko interrupted him again. After a fairly inappropriate altercation and bickering for such a level, Schultz was forced to listen to Gromyko’s rather long statement about missiles, i.e. about the issue that “affects the fate of mankind,” or, to put it à la Ivan the Terrible, about “our sovereign affairs.”

Schultz tried to twist this topic by bringing it to the importance of the human right to life, and again started talking about the plane and the 269 lives lost, saying that human lives are nothing to the Soviet system.

This time, Gromyko heard him out and then gave a rebuke, blaming, as expected, the United States entirely and completely for the airplane crash. He concluded by saying that he rejects all requests and claims (material compensation to relatives, access to the crash site,

apologies and promises that “it won’t happen again”). Rather rudely, he said, “Let those who are responsible do these things.”

Schultz was squirming again: he does not understand, he is outraged, he has no words, etc. Finally, he said he had “exhausted himself.” This brought the “conversation” to an end.

Such a transcript, say, in the era of Prince Gorchakov and Bismarck, would be an interesting document about diplomatic customs. In the 1930s, it would be *causus belli*. And for us... what is it for us?

Not war, but still evidence of the fact that this vast world, full of fantastic achievements of the human mind and labor, can in a few short minutes fall victim to a nervous breakdown of one the two “superpower” leaders. Dobrynin is already reporting in ciphered telegrams: Reagan was furious when Schultz told him what happened.

Of course! He had been imperturbably told that we don’t give a rat’s ass about all their “indignation,” all their threats and their mighty hot air, their national and global hysteria against us. At the same time, he had been calmly reminded that, as Nixon and Brezhnev admitted, “we can destroy each other 7 times over (now it is over 12 times).” And yet, we are not shuddering or panicking.

Indeed, when you walk down the street, you see hundreds and thousands of people. I bet that throughout the day, and in particular the day when Gromyko met with Schultz, not one of them thought even once that tomorrow they and everything around them could be gone. Our people are not made that way, they are not taught to believe in nuclear apocalypse, or that there will be a war. They do not think about it. They come to protest only when their trade union or party committee directs them to.

Today I composed (and Zagladin then polished up) material for Andropov’s conversation with Zhivkov on matters of the Communist movement. We came up with a completely new, modern concept of our policy in the ICM, though it is based on the words, hints, and “the spirit” of Andropov’s own statements made at the Plenum, the Politburo, and in his conversation with Cunhal. This position would be completely unacceptable for Ponomarev. But we prepared a speech for him based on this new position for the closed meeting of the CC Secretaries of socialist countries on September 20th, after “today’s sparrow” will have already flown to the South, into the hands of Yu.V., even though he will say this to Zhivkov (if he agrees) a month after Ponomarev.

We will try to make policy this way. Will it work?

September 16, 1983

I got sick again. I’ve been home for two days. Running a fever when you have a heart condition is not good. I don’t want to get old or succumb to infirmity.

The Politburo led by Chernenko was nothing out of the ordinary. Results from Gromyko’s meetings in Madrid and France. He described how it went, but the transcript conveyed it more vividly.

I was struck by Mitterrand's preamble speech with Gromyko: he was effusive about his friendship and love for Russia, etc. But don't touch our missiles, he said. Gromyko was more polite with him than with Schultz, but still said everything about Chad and the missiles. Our MFA's handling of the meetings was well-received at home. (Only today I found out over the phone that Gromyko would not go to the UN in New York, even though not a word was said about this yesterday. It is the right decision: we will not collect any dividends on the plane, but to sit there and listen to public insults!... Reagan is planning to speak there himself. It is not appropriate for our rank.)

In general, we should pay less attention to what others say and think about us. Since Khrushchev's times we have taught Westerners to see us as partners who engage in the game and play by the rules. The problem is, these are THEIR rules. We will never be "good enough," no matter how we try and how patient and noble we try to appear. So, we should engage less in their games. Let us remain a mystery to them. There would be more dignity in that. For that to happen, the MFA must be reduced to the rank it held under Chicherin and Litvinov: not at the level of the Politburo. By the way, I think in no other socialist country is the Minister of Foreign Affairs a PB member.

I'm re-reading the *Kreutzer Sonata*, for the first time in many years. Physiologically, this "problem" is still the same. But sociologically – things changed enormously. The way Tolstoy presented this aspect of the problem now seems ridiculous, primitive, absurd.

A little while ago I received a call from the history department, saying that the second edition of *The Moscow State University during the War* is coming out. Could I provide my information. (I was not included in the first edition, even though I'm not somewhere in the Far East, and I not only studied but also taught at the university.) For some reason I got excited. I wrote three pages about how I fought in the war and went to take them over there, still with a feeling of nervous excitement. Disappointment set in when I found room 504 at the end of the hall. It contained two miserable women (one looked familiar but very faded), and the sad-looking "office" furnishings of a poorly funded institution. Our old history department on Herzen Street was creaky and crumbling even before the war, but the mementos of the former princely mansion, with a copper sign at the entrance "Please Remove your Galoshes," and other vestiges of the former status gave the history department an academic and museum-like charm. The new location is a prefabricated concrete building that has gotten shabby in 15 years. But that is not the problem. The problem was that these women, as well as the book's editorial board, are not interested in me as a person in the slightest. They have an "assignment," a job. There was no chance for any heartfelt connection with my past at the history department, I needn't have gotten excited. It was just another small lesson about people's loneliness and the indifference of "social" existence. Nobody cares about you (or anyone else) as a person, only as a unit of something in the past or the present, something that is in the field of view of the artificially created or real interest of some groups of people or departments.

Zhilin called me in the evening. He said Ponomarev was disappointed with the ICM text that was based on my draft, and written by me, for the closed meeting of the CC Secretaries of socialist countries. What was the problem? The text was short and written in the spirit of

statements Andropov made publicly, and even more often at the PB, as well as any statements somehow related to the subject. In other words, it is a realistic assessment, with a concern for unity rather than “ideological” purity, through greater attention to the specific conditions in socialist countries, their internal issues (how they are going to solve them is their business!), increasing the theoretical authority of the CPSU, and of course, putting things in order in our country as the decisive factor in influencing socialism around the world and our prestige in the ICM.

Apparently, this will not do at all. Apparently, we should have taken the speech he gave to the embassy party committee secretaries (in August) and copied from there – that everything is fine in the ICM, the movement is on the rise, that good and very good parties like the American, German, Danish are fantastically and successfully fighting against capitalism and bringing to the masses the “truth about real socialism.” There are some individual shortcomings and manifestations of opportunism in some parties of course, but for the time being it is completely resolvable if we all work together.

This is the stuff he will read to Bil’ak, Axen, Ovari and other members of the Politburo and CC Secretaries of socialist countries in a closed meeting, i.e. a confidential setting. But these people know the real state of affairs. They have been telling us for a long time, at the level of CC department heads and deputies in the communist parties of the socialist community (including the Germans, Hungarians, even the Bulgarians), that we sugarcoat things at such meetings. They do not understand why. From a political viewpoint, it means we do not trust them, we are deceiving them, throwing dust in the eyes of our most faithful friends. What for? Only so Ponomarev does not have to be present at the collapse of his empire (à la Churchill), i.e. so the communist movement appears the way he wanted it to be 50, 40, 25, 20 years ago.

But there is another danger here: at best, our friends may simply consider us to be fools who do not understand what is really happening in the ICM and are talking nonsense and trying to pass it for policy. This policy, however, cannot be coordinated because it has nothing to do with reality. We, the deputies and consultants, will once again be embarrassed in front of our colleagues from the International Departments of fraternal parties. At the same time, these people have known us personally for the last 10-20 years, they know we are not stupid. Which means that the “concept” Ponomarev presents to them is the position of the CC CPSU. In other words, look higher, the stupidity is coming from our party.

Finally, B.N.’s senility has progressed so far that he does not sense the danger to himself personally. After all, the same Bil’ak or Axen can go to their General Secretaries, or even to ours, and say: why the hell do we need such coordination, built on illusions and self-deception!?

In a word, Ponomarev is not only an impediment, he is also endangering our policies in the communist movement. If he hadn’t been around 10-20 years ago, the situation in the communist movement would have been better, more natural. I won’t even mention the fact that in the six months of the Andropov era we could have radically changed our policy and the entire atmosphere of the ICM.

I am not upset because he rejected the text I wrote; I am upset because he is harming the cause. I am in favor of removing Ponomarev, as he has outlived himself two and three times over – even though I am sure it would negatively affect me personally. I would have to leave soon after. Most likely because Chernenko, and maybe even Andropov, believe that I am the primary author of the nonsense that Ponomarev delivers more often than necessary. I do write it, but only because my job requires it. But I hate it more than anybody, and I have been open about this at the Department for a long time. I am surprised it hasn't reached B.N. yet.

September 18, 1983

I cannot stop worrying about the “Ponomarev phenomenon.” Naturally: it is also where my public life will come to an end. Alas! But I have nobody to blame but myself.

Turgenev's 100th anniversary. I read an article about him, precisely the kind I wanted to read. I haven't read Turgenev in a long time, but I was reading him at the start of my formative years, at the start of the journey to become who I am today (in the attics, at the dacha in Laikovo, as a 12-year-old I would read his novels ecstatically, endlessly, with tears in my eyes, I could not put them down). I wanted him to be “reinstated” in our memories, cleared of textbook gloss. Looks like it has been done on the occasion of his 100th anniversary (*Moskva* No. 9).

September 20, 1983

I did not go to the meeting of the CC Secretaries of socialist countries that took place on Lenin Hills. My excuse was that officially I was still sick. In reality, it is unbearable to sit through this tiresome farce and pretend along with everybody that something serious and important is taking place. Plus, it is shameful in relation to our friends. Every time they come to a meeting of this type, their Politburos seriously consider the delegation's positions and the delegations are authorized to take some actions. Meanwhile, our delegation, which has been headed by Ponomarev for the last 10 years, is given no authority (not even for propaganda). The things he says have no informational value: our friends know all of this already – about the missiles, about American imperialism, and about the communist movement. We never offer any real coordination or cooperation in the sphere of policy or propaganda, we do not want it. Ponomarev's main objective is to get assent and put a checkmark next to his name: contributed to consolidating the unity of the socialist community.

In a word, I did not want to participate in this embarrassment.

Still, my conscience is bothering me a little: like I shirked my duties, even though I am officially still sick.

But, I wrote about ten pages of “text” on the ICM. I conceived it (while walking to work) as a “frank” note for Ponomarev, but then got carried away and did not notice how the style changed and it turned into something like theses for our Department's “theoretical conference.” Rykin has long been encouraging me to make an introduction at it. I will figure out later how to use it.

September 28, 1983

I completely lost the thread connecting my personal and work life – the course of world events. This is probably because for me, this process happens through Ponomarev, and he has succumbed to a state of senile vanity. He is “pounding his feet,” as Brutents says, to remain in the line of sight of Andropov and Chernenko, to please and to appear needed. But this only increases their contempt and disdain for him. Every week adds some fact to this score, things that are significant in the apparatus.

So, if I still believe that something worthwhile can be done in the ICM, it is only because Ponomarev will likely be given the boot soon. Nothing is possible while he is around. He keeps dressing up the phony narrative he cultivated and nurtured for his entire political life.

Zagladin has detached himself from the Department, probably thinking along the same lines as I am. Unlike me, however, he has been gaining points as an independent figure while at the same time satisfying his passion for self-expression – on TV, in reports, in interviews, in conversations with delegations, or, as yesterday for example, in a 4-hour “Question and Answer” (84 items) session at the Lenin School. Despite the fact that this is “Vadim’s illness,” it is a thousand times more useful than Ponomarev’s red-tapism and quasi-Stalinist orthodoxy.

Today I was putting together a work plan for the ICM in accordance with the PB resolution from July 13. Around 80 percent of it is unrealistic. And the part that will be done will amount to nothing more than a checkmark for events, they will not be able to influence anything.

Meanwhile, B.N. rushed off to the South, taking Brutents with him. He wants to be present at the conversation between the Yemeni Muhammad and Andropov. Brutents told me how B.N. impudently and humiliatingly nominated himself for the trip. This is disgusting not only in its own right, but also because we, his deputies and associates, look like idiots in the eyes of our colleagues, because everyone understands that all of his so-called activities would be impossible without us. For those around us and those involved, we are an integral part of his trite bustling and pretentiousness.

October 1, 1983

On the 27th, Andropov made an announcement about foreign policy. I think this is the most important step we have taken in many years. We finally decided to show our “class dignity,” as if to say “we are not going to cozy up to you and we will not let ourselves be pushed around, and if it comes to that, we may just tell you all to go to hell!” Perhaps it is a not-quite-conscious step in the right direction, for which I’ve been waiting a long time now – a step in the direction of a kind of limited isolationism. Russia was always a mystery to them, the Soviet Union even more so. But under Khrushchev and Brezhnev we squandered this powerful foreign policy resource considerably. So, it is time to restore it.

Now, about the mishap. During the “Vremya” program, some ridiculous passage about maneuvers of the armies of socialist countries appeared in text of Andropov’s address. The tone and subject-matter of this passage were completely different from the rest of the address. I had seen the text of the address earlier in the day through the mailing list. When I heard the

newscaster, my eyes grew wide in disbelief. I decided that this was a last minute “correction,” probably from Ustinov – he decided to show our fist more openly.

But in the morning, I found out that it was a “technical” error. Two telex tapes were mixed up and a paragraph from some article in *Krasnaya zvezda* [Red Star] or *Na zashchite rodiny* [Defending the Motherland] was inserted into the General Secretary’s address.

This happened despite the fact that the text was behind seven seals and came to Lapin at the TV station as early as 9am. At one o’clock it was read by the announcer Kirillov, i.e. there was a ton of time before the evening *Vremya* program to listen through it and check. Unfortunately, carelessness has taken deep root even here.

Chernenko assigned me (us – the Department) together with the Department of Propaganda and the Department of Foreign Policy Propaganda (Zamyatin’s) to urgently investigate and “make proposals.” We summoned Lapin and Mamedov, politely interrogated them, then Stukalin went to see Chernenko. In the end, we signed a note with a reprimand for the “person responsible for the release” that day. We put a blank next to the names of Lapin and Mamedov: the Secretariat will set the punishment measures itself. Maybe they will fire the biggest scoundrel on TV. It is high time! Aleksandrov, his main patron, is not so powerful anymore to protect him if there is a decision to remove him.

How did the “West” react to this incident? Dzhavad stopped by in the morning: he said he was listening to the BBC. The commentator said, “These Russians. Just try to deal with them... They always have a secret agenda. They had one version for the internal audience, saying that if anything happens, they will deliver such a blow that the West won’t know what hit them. Rest assured, so to speak. And the West got a softened version, to lull with their peace-loving rhetoric. Their fist is hidden inside of a decent glove.”

Dzhavad commented: all these Kremlinologists cannot even imagine that this is just Russian sloppiness, not a cunning, premeditated move by the Kremlin rulers.

October 8, 1983

Zagladin jetted off to Paris again: Mitterrand asked him to come secretly (not directly from Moscow) to convey something “extremely important” through the top channels.

B.N. is dissatisfied with me because I did not speak at the Secretariat when there was a discussion of notes on the 40th anniversary of the Leipzig process and Zionism. Ponomarev complained that our Department prepared the majority of this material, and Zamyatin is reaping the benefits again, since he always butts into any discussion and goes on about things that are fully presented in the notes and the Secretaries know perfectly well. That’s exactly why I did not “butt in,” especially since there aren’t any doubts about either of the issues.

Meanwhile, Ponomarev keeps making appearances. Every week he makes a report somewhere, ready to speak for any audience. It’s some kind of illness. Now he came up with the idea to gather the editors of fraternal party newspapers in Moscow for the November holidays. He wants to “instruct” them how to fight against Reagan. (They don’t know how to do it

themselves, of course!) I tried to talk him out of it. I provided a reference note: half of the European CP newspaper [editors], including from the majority of the NATO countries, will not be able to attend, even the *Daily World* from the U.S., because the Congress of the Communist Parties is taking place at this time. In other words, precisely the people he wants to “educate” will not be there. As for the Latin Americans, or the Danes and Arabs, they are entirely on our side us anyway. But, my arguments were in vain. He is not interested in the purpose or the results. The only thing that matters is that he shows up on the international arena yet again.

A week ago, he made me put together a plan for the implementation of Politburo’s resolution on the ICM. I called all hands on deck. We put it together. Presented it to him. But he lost interest.

He used to bustle near Brezhnev, trying to be visible at all times and to be noticed on every occasion. Now he is doing the same thing with Andropov and Chernenko, again to appear indispensable. And they disparage him more and more openly. It seems they are not doing it out of personal distaste for him (though it might be well-deserved), but simply because they have “more important things to do” than pay attention to Ponomarev. And he tries to attract their attention all day, every day.

The day before yesterday I read Bush’s speech in Vienna (after he traveled around Romania, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. He was, in general, rather obsequiously received there). How much contempt, disgust, and blind hatred towards us, the Soviet Union! How much stupid, unwilling to know anything, ignorant and vulgar (sometimes offensive) demagoguery regarding our past, our culture, our role in world history! Made me furious.

What does it mean if anyone can push us around like that, loudly and in front of the whole world! No! “Isolationism,” withdrawal into ourselves, reciprocal contempt for them, that wild West that has now gathered practically the entire world at our borders! That’s the only way!

When he calls us (using the words of a Polish writer) a wild and primitive country, it is impossible to continue playing a game of common “world politics” with them.

It looks like we are starting to understand this. The PB meeting from the day before yesterday (on the results of Andropov’s announcement) seems to be going in the same direction. But our foreign policy and foreign propaganda apparatus is too huge and influential to give up its “bread” so easily – rebuffing everything, butting in everywhere with its “initiatives,” seeking support and approval from every possible place. In a word, continuing to play the Khrushchev-Brezhnev games on the world comedic stage to the detriment of our national prestige and budget.

October 9, 1983

Today my grandson and I decided to take a stroll in the Moscow suburbs. I chose a very poor route, as it turned out. We were unlucky with the weather, too. It started to rain and we had to walk to the bus stop through the mud. On the way we met a woman and asked her how to get to Alabino. “Come, I’ll show you.” We walked together for half a kilometer. During this time, she told us almost her entire biography, as one does. “You won’t be able to go straight. If it was dry, then maybe, but this time of year a tractor is the only thing that can get through. If every

person gave five rubles, we could have a road. Not to put too fine a point on it, but people could stand to give a hundred rubles a month for the road, they wouldn't be the worse for it. If they weren't drinking, of course!"

There is Russia for you. You will never see anything like it in Czechoslovakia, the GDR, or Bulgaria: for an urban-style town with three large factories to have impassable, unpaved roads, not to mention roads on the outskirts of the town.

There is only one solution: stop the missile production. We have enough already to be considered a superpower. Tell them all to go to hell and work on this, on the issues that are so close to central Moscow streets.

In addition, we passed the generals' dachas: we walked for about three kilometers and the entire time there were these palatial mansions with huge, well-cared for gardens. There are multiple such subdivisions of generals' dachas just in the Moscow region. On what merit do they get such privileges? Because they fought in the war? Everyone fought in the war... and then worked, created something, made themselves even a little bit useful. In the meanwhile, the generals continue to freeload off the people like they always have, corrupting people by the mere sight of such mansions. The more time passes, the more corrupting it will be, because even now these luxurious, custom-designed houses, with garages and outbuildings, are occupied by descendants who have not done even a trace of service to the Motherland!

October 27, 1983

U.S. invasion of Grenada. This is "my" country. I was there when we first established contacts with them: at the Congress in Jamaica I met [Bernard] Coard, he came across as an educated Marxist and a "firm Iskra-ist." Then he visited us; later we established diplomatic relations, etc. Now Coard looks like Bishop's killer, a person who instigated the intervention. However, this is a normal course of development for any revolution, canonized by history. And we should not be the ones to throw a stone at those who wanted to speed it up or at least strengthen it. Especially since we did not do even the bare minimum to help this economically tiny state (with a population that is probably smaller than the population of my Kropotinskaya street), to help it from ending up with 40 percent unemployment in two-three years.

The main thing now lies elsewhere. Reagan proved once again that in his "crusade" he would behave as outrageously as he wants, putting us in an increasingly more awkward position – a "superpower" that is unable to stop him. And since we are following a plan, so it works out: in 1972 the Americans started bombing Hanoi and we received Nixon in Moscow. Right now, they invaded Grenada and will probably do the same in Nicaragua, and what are we doing? Last night Andropov made dramatic proposals for the Geneva talks on medium-range nuclear missiles. The Cubans are honoring and mourning their people who heroically fought in Grenada against the U.S. Marine Corps. The whole world shuddered, even Thatcher "criticized" Reagan, while we seem to be pulling the world's attention to matters that are truly vital for humanity. But morally we are losing, and we look selfish while doing so.

Besides, the humiliating comments will start coming in: Reagan's "firmness" is producing results, because the USSR is again going back to the obvious major concessions.

October 30, 1983

I finished reading the ciphered telegrams at work. With Sokolov we finished Ponomarev's article for *PPS* and sent it to Prague. I stopped by Zagladin's, he was sitting with Schumacher, the editor of the SPD's theoretical journal (analogous to our *Kommunist*). I got into a discussion about how dangerous it was to be ignorant about Russia and the Soviet Union, especially for the Americans. The bearded man, calling me Herr Chernyaev, supported this idea and railed against Bush and his Vienna speech.

On Saturday morning I was editing Ponomarev's draft for the meeting of editors of communist newspapers. Then I strolled through old Arbat with my grandson. We stopped by a used bookstore and a store of foreign language books. I was amazed at the abundance of volumes with reproductions of the great Italians, Dutch, French – and I considered myself the owner of a treasure-trove!

November 2, 1983

I talked with the delegation of the PNP (Social Democrats) of Jamaica for three and a half hours. Educated and cultured people. They speak well – British training. At the end, in addition to regular requests (radio equipment, cars, newsprint, students, etc.) the General Secretary asked his colleagues to step out and conveyed Manley's appeal to Andropov: give him money for the election campaign. That's all there is to it!

Then I argued with Kovalyov from the MFA about Andropov's reply to Berlinguer (on missiles). Enrico is "insisting" for the second time that we should make concessions. We agree with the MFA that we need to give him the brush off, but we want to use comradely-party language rather than state-bureaucratic language.

I wrote a telegram to the ambassador in London – to the *Pravda* staff reporter Maslennikov, to talk with McLennan and others about the threat of a split in the CPGB and that we are concerned about it.

A conversation with Brutents: an episode worthy of the brush of Aivazovsky. Ponomarev and Brutents received the Mexican delegation with Chernenko. The conversation, apparently, was not too lively. When K.U. said goodbye and headed for the exit, B.N. said to Brutents: "This one is barely walking, too!" Meaning that Andropov is seriously ill now, although he is still involved on some issues. When he was meeting with the Yemeni Muhammad, who was brought to him in Crimea, Andropov needed people to hold him up, like Brezhnev once did in Bonn.

This means initiatives and high intentions are turning to dust. We do not get from words to deeds. [Andropov] probably hasn't enough strength or interest (because of his health) to insist on results, control, to take risks. By God, it is a disaster!

November 5, 1983

We finished a report for Ponomarev. I quarreled with him about yet another one of his real false theories “about the failures of imperialism” (against the background of the defeat of the Grenadian revolution, Romania’s position; disappearing socialism in Poland; Angola breathing its last breath; Mozambique, where Samora is going “around Europe” looking for weapons; the American missiles being installed in Europe; our helplessness to defend Lebanon and Nicaragua; the retreat of the labor movement in the economic struggle; Mitterrand and Nakasone being pulled into NATO; the heaviest blow to Castro’s entire revolutionary strategy in Latin America, and so forth). Either he really does not understand what is happening in the revolutionary process, or he deliberately engages in optimistic demagoguery. Which means either we completely subordinated theoretical substance to ongoing propaganda, or we truly cannot face the truth. However, Lenin did not hesitate to admit such “downturns” (the III Congress of the Communist Party, the CPSU (b), at the XIV, XV Congresses).

Why, then, is he straining to portray the meeting of the editors of the communist press as a mini CP Congress! They will ridicule such cheap optimism, rightly seeing the CPSU’s impotence and theoretical destitution... And we, starting from the November Plenum, promised to “realistically assess the situation.” Though this kind of tone is absent in Andropov’s announcement. Still, B.N. runs the ICM for now. It’s embarrassing.

Kozlov and Veber sympathized with me in the hallway: “You were acting like a soccer player who received a penalty. You cannot argue against fate! He already showed you two yellow cards, but you keep at it. Watch out, he will disqualify you for the next three reports!”

I was at the celebratory meeting at the Palace of Congresses. Andropov did not appear. Romanov’s report was without a shadow of cultism. Without boasting and almost without demagoguery. I can imagine what his report would have been a year ago! Something has really changed in the atmosphere. At least we can feel the Andropov era in that.

I received Chater and Mary Rossett from *Morning Star* today. The newspaper is dying: they are asking for help to save it. In their estimation, the party is also dying as a class-based party.

Dez’ka (David Samoilov) sent me his latest collection and a nice letter.

November 7, 1983

Parade. Very complex feelings: comparisons with demonstrations from my school and university days, echoes of war (soldiers, formations, equipment, music), but behind me the vulgar chatter of jaunty dignitaries – the “ruling class,” for whom nothing is sacred, neither ideas nor recollections or regrets. The marchers were rather cheerful: the devout faithful yelling out slogans; the ironic youth ready for mischief (within the limits allowed on the Red Square). Overall, there is a feeling of forced spontaneity: why not get out in the streets and make some noise! The human chain of militiamen separating the demonstrators from the Mausoleum made an unpleasant impression (especially knowing that many foreign friends and enemies are on the podium). At least it’s good that there were no schoolchildren with flowers or freezing “athletes” waiting for an hour before the group performances.

Andropov was not present, just as he wasn't yesterday at the Palace of Congresses. So, he must be ill. I doubt he will get better, considering what Kolya told me.

I stopped by work twice. Nothing is happening with Ponomarev's report. Of course, nobody is reading it over the holidays. But tomorrow we will have to finish it up, because on the 9th he will be reading it in eleven languages.

November 12, 1983

We held the "mini-Congress of the ICM" at "Pavlov's house" ([Pavlov is a] chief administrator at the CC, the place was given this "popular" name as a mocking allusion to "Pavlov's house" in 1942 Stalingrad) – a new party hotel, which, as it turned out, cost the Soviet people 30 million! But it was done tastefully. Luxurious, but not gaudy.

This time "our friends" were glad to gather. Only the Italians once again showed their provincialism: sent a delegation to the celebration of October, but forbade them from participating in any "collective actions."

B.N. gave a lecture for almost an hour and a half. Then he instructed us to immediately adapt it for an article for *Kommunist*. Afanasiev – an academician and the editor in chief at *Pravda* – came up with a completely pathetic text, which by the way contained the following passage: "A year ago we lost the leader of our party and our people, Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev..." He denied the existence of a new period in the development of Soviet society. No, this is not opposition! Just indifference and stupidity.

Zagladin and I rejected this text. [B.N.] said he would speak without a text. It turned out "candid," simply put. It was not fitting for our press, but it was quite appropriate for our "friends." Still, I had to thoroughly edit it before distributing the translations.

Zagladin distanced himself from all of this – the entire event, I mean: from B.N.'s report, even though B.N. asked him personally to work on it, as well as from organizational and political preparation. Even from participation in the meeting – he was there for a few hours, used this time to write a daily article for *Pravda* on Cunhal's 70th anniversary, and then disappeared. The next day he left for Berlin for a meeting of the deputies of the International Departments of Socialist Countries.

Zhilin managed to take it easy, as he always does when a big project comes around. Even though B.N.'s report, ongoing information about the meeting, and information on its outcomes are all part of his job description and his responsibilities, not to mention editing the relevant texts for publication. He was sick before the meeting; and at the celebrations, during the meeting itself, he was noticeably drunk.

Pyshkov, who was instructed to lead the information group, prepared two embarrassing pieces of nonsense, which I rejected. The last version, which Zagladin managed to approve before he left (I think without reading it), I picked apart in the presence of his entire group (right there in the "meeting palace.") He behaved terribly, interrupting me at every phrase. Finally, I had to bang on the table and make him listen to me. In the morning he presented a better text, but

I still had to essentially rewrite it myself. One guy from his group said, “Since he doesn’t like anything, let him write it himself. Anyway, why try so hard, who cares how it is written, nobody needs it, nobody there (i.e. at the PB) will read it anyway.” The last part is true. Yesterday Ponomarev said the same phrase when he was editing a note for the PB (to which the “information” is an appendix) and was transferring some parts from the information into the note. I started to object, but he talked sense into me, twice: “Who will read this information?!” Even though at the meeting he turned around (I was sitting behind him) and instructed me to “urgently” prepare it and fill it with “interesting” thoughts and statements from the participants’ speeches.

The main irritant for me in this entire episode was the behavior of Pyshkov and Yermonsky. Pyshkov acted like “Ponomarev’s favorite” for whom anything goes. He was clearly demonstrating (including in front of people from other departments) how he could talk with the deputy head. Meanwhile, he has long turned into a parasite who puts together texts for B.N. for an internal audience by taking pieces from our texts for Ponomarev, but “with an international emphasis.” The rest of the time he is boozing, having turned his office into a bar.

Yermonsky is the darling of theoretical dachas (this year he spent three quarters of his time there): there was Zimyanin’s report for the 70th anniversary of the RSDLP, articles for Chernenko for *PPS* and *Kommunist*, then Romanov’s report for November 7th... He is asked to be there, Zimyanin called and asked for him by name. He is indeed a good writer, but not very educated. He used to be a pretty good guy. Now, he acts like he is above doing the regular, menial consultant jobs. That must be done by Veber, Kozlov, and now Rybakov – they are overall a higher class than he, but they haven’t lost a sense of decency and duty to the job that pays their salary.

Why do I react this way even when we are talking about work that no one really needs?

Firstly, because I have to finish up after everyone: Zagladin, Zhilin, many consultants, and heads of sectors. Why do I need to edit and put finishing touches on their work? Why not let it be as-is, nobody would notice. As a craftsman, my sense of dignity for his product will not allow me to do otherwise.

Secondly, because it disgusts me when people neglect and even despise “their work,” when they are indifferent to it and all their thoughts are aimed at “pushing it onto someone else” or “getting it off their hands.” Even though for this work they do not want to do well, they get paid half a thousand a month, they get meals, medical services, a dacha, etc. It’s not ethical, to say the least!

Yes, people are tired and they see the pointlessness of working hard. A lot of energy goes into the wastebasket. So, who is stopping you from leaving? Try to find a job (in your sixties) where you would see a direct result of your work and feel satisfied.

Yesterday I leafed through over a hundred ciphered telegrams from all over the world. One had a troubled postscript by Andropov, in which he instructs “to do everything possible to prevent Reagan’s invasion of Nicaragua (like Grenada), because it will be a terrible blow to

Cuba and Castro's entire policy, and therefore to us – as a superpower, as the bulwark of socialism and the liberation movement.”

This is regarding the idea that “imperialism is suffering one defeat after another” – the theory that B.N. imposed in his speech at the aforementioned meeting. This will be printed in *Kommunist*. I should quietly cross out this section, let him wave his arms at me later. At least I will save the journal from embarrassment.

I am writing about irrelevant things. Maybe I am avoiding writing about myself. I am suffering from sciatica. The pain can be terrible, one day I barely made it to work. I don't have time to treat it, and I don't really want to – I don't believe it. I keep thinking it will pass, it will be fine. I still rely on my body being dependable, as it managed to stay youthful for sixty years.

Yesterday I looked through a book about Landau. I haven't finished the Einstein book yet. I picked up Byron today (*Manfred*) after seeing a program on TV that showed his notebooks as part of the school curriculum. I haven't turned to his diaries in a long time, same as Blok's. I should refresh myself, or I'll forget how to write my own.

There was a banquet after the meeting of communist press figures (essentially CC representatives) at the same “Pavlov's house.” B.N. made a toast, it was a good thing he read it from a paper we prepared for him, although he did add a bit about Lenin's *Iskra*. He possesses a quality that amazes all of us – he sincerely believes that all the reports, speeches, toasts, articles, statements (after they are delivered) were prepared by him. After standing in the presidium, I went around and caught up with Berecz (now the editor of *Népszabadság* (the central organ of the party), formerly a head of a CC MSZMP department), an American, a Jamaican (who made a very good speech at the meeting by the way), an Australian, a Frenchman from *L'Humanité*... At this point I was called to the phone. Ponomarev, who already “departed,” was calling me from the car. He said we needed to add to the communique that at the end of the meeting he made a final speech (no need to mention that it was at a banquet!), that he expressed the “political essence,” and that the Czech gave a reply on behalf of everyone.

I stepped aside and jotted down two paragraphs on the couch. I gave it to Afanasiev, who handed it to a lad from *Pravda*. Even though it was 10pm already, they stopped the copy and added it in.

November 14, 1983

Volkov, a junior referent from Dzhavad's sector, was sent to Geneva for training as a candidate international official for the WHO through the Ministry of Health. He departed on November 4th. On November 12th he got drunk at a bar, refused to pay the bill, was taken by the police to the embassy. When he woke up there, he declared that he did not remember anything, and was put on the first available flight to Moscow. In the 6-7 years that he's been at our Department, he never got into any kind of trouble, especially drunkenness. He has absolutely no talents; he is quiet, polite, inarticulate. He himself said that he would not even make it to referent, asked to find him a position somewhere outside the Central Committee. I may receive a reprimand along the party line for this.

Pushkin's well-known poems on the evening radio. Touching. Only now, in my seventh decade on earth, do I feel every word of the poem and what lies behind every word.

November 15, 1983

A very stressful day:

- Draft article for Ustinov about our rebuff to the American threat. Distribution to the Politburo, remarks for Ponomarev.
- Page proofs for Ponomarev's article for *Kommunist*. When he speaks, his language is passable, but when you prepare it for print it is really no good. So, I have to use some tricks.
- Gorbachev is meeting with an American figure, the heir of Khrushchev's former Garst (Crystal). A memo, materials to complement his own "philosophical" thoughts about the two "superpowers" and the fate of the world.
- A memo for Ponomarev, who will be reporting to the Politburo on Thursday on the outcomes of the meeting of the communist press.
- Various papers and notes on daily matters.
- Up to a hundred ciphered telegrams, carrying out and assigning various tasks based on them.
- Reception for the Guyanese delegation (special representative of President Burnham, commander in chief, two members of the leadership of the ruling party). They brought a message for Andropov and explained that after Grenada, Nicaragua and Guyana were next in line. Therefore, they need help: economic and military.

I pulled the wool over their eyes with promises and sent them off to the department to have a "concrete" examination of their requests. Prior to that, I received Ponomarev's instructions: we will not give military assistance, that would mean making them a target for an American attack, "and we cannot do anything"...

- A meeting at Ponomarev's: Epishev, Chebrikov, Kryuchkov, and some lieutenant general from the 7th Directorate – based on Andropov's approval of B.N.'s idea to start working "with enemy troops," i.e. with American troops abroad. [Ponomarev] bored these professionals very much with his memories of working "among German troops" during the war (he was doing this work in the Comintern back then). Everyone agreed, but politely made it clear that we are not at war and that American troops are contractors and get paid very well. Furthermore, the GDR will not permit releasing balloons with leaflets into the FRG's airspace, and in response our troops in the GDR would be flooded with leaflets and radio intrusion... However, Ponomarev "was right" as always and everyone received instructions. It was embarrassing to listen to his tales.

The American sector, headed by Mostovets, is worthless. I had to redo everything myself or assign it to Menshikov and other consultants. The referents there are just like their boss.

November 17, 1983

Gorbachev asked me to be present at his talks with the American [John] Crystal. And even though it took extra work and time, I do not regret it. Gorbachev did a great job. With his lively mind, he virtually attacked the American with the force of his conviction, his knowledge, arguments, and his fluent grasp of the material – particularly in economic affairs, of course. The American was impressed. With people like that at the helm, the Soviet Union could actually achieve the things it proclaimed and promised.

When I told Ponomarev about my impressions of Gorbachev, he was very displeased. He cannot accept the fact that someone is smarter than him, especially since I “innocently” tried to tell him how aptly Gorbachev handled the international relations part of the conversation.

He is jealous, petty, and corrupted to the core with bureaucratic cowardice and careerism. It is sad and disappointing.

Yesterday he discussed with us (deputies) Andropov’s new note to the PB about what to do after the missiles are installed. But more about that later. When I got home last night, after a very difficult day at work, I drafted some ideas for my talk in France, where I am going on Sunday.

November 29, 1983

I was in France from November 20-27. A delegation for the party exchange plan. But I have no energy to write about it. And there were almost no everyday impressions. Discussions took up all of my time.

December 3, 1983

The inertia of camaraderie, the desire to complain to the former elder brother – among the simple workers in Lyon. Overall, it was just serving the diplomatic norm of our relations – an exchange of information rather than an engaged conversation of like-minded people as it was just 15 years ago. The entire week in France I could not shake the feeling that we are strangers to each other and neither they nor we care about what the other is doing (except for the academic and theoretical aspect).

Marchais’s interview in *Le Monde* (November 22) rubbed me the wrong way. He expressed “total” support for Mitterrand’s foreign policy. Not even because it tramples on internationalism and can harm the anti-war movement, the anti-imperialist solidarity of communists (as I wrote in the ciphered telegram). It is for aesthetic reasons, you could say: it is disgusting when people spit on their own principles, when they demonstrate their opportunism so cynically. This internal selling out is repulsive. Things happen, but when an entire party so shamefully smears its communist face, it makes you sick to your stomach. It is especially vile when the PCF, which used to be the party of Thorez, applauds a president who ordered the bombing of the national liberation forces in Lebanon and justifies it by the need for “retaliation”...

I said all this to Maxime Gremetz (member of the Politburo, CC Secretary who inherited Kanapa's seat). He huffed and puffed. Then casually asked me to "understand them": you are smart and subtle politicians, he said...

Incidentally, political opportunism leads to a decline in the intellectual level of cadres. Over the traditionally long French meals, I had discussions with several CC members. Their competence "in the field of philosophy," their attempts to philosophize about their politics are pitiful. I repeatedly had to stop myself from embarrassing them in front of their comrades, but the bareness of their thoughts was really striking.

This does not mean that I had something to offer them. But if I were, or we were, in their place, we probably would behave differently. The main shortcoming of their moral nature is the Ponomarev type of communist – bad (and even dangerous), but our guy is even worse.

From a tourist point of view, the trip had no substance. I did not go anywhere, I did not see anything except the Central Committee of the PCF, the metro, restaurants and one movie with Belmondo. Because we had discussions morning to night. I did not even see Lyon, where we spent an entire day.

I had one free evening and tried to head in the direction of Place Pigalle, but didn't make it because it was late and a little creepy on the completely deserted streets lined with cars.

We also ended up having very little money: the referent gave all our hospitality allowance to the embassy and we were left with pennies from the per diem money.

I returned to Moscow to the same thing: Ponomarev's ideas with propaganda of the truth about our good foreign policy. Yet another emergency meeting of the CC Secretaries of socialist countries – in light of the installation of American missiles in Europe and our pulling out of Geneva. Even though Andropov's explanation letter was sent to everyone and anyone, and the mass media is explaining, implementing, and convincing morning till night.

I am mystified once again: does Ponomarev really believe that we can convey something, convince someone through our hyperactivity. Or does he simply have no personal alternative, no other way to remain in big politics.

At Rhône-Poulenc I asked the young communists (party organization activists at this factory: 25,000 workers, 9,200 are PCF members) how they feel about our foreign policy. "We don't know about it," they replied frankly and in unison. They explained: the things we say and write do not reach them. Only 20 percent of communists read *L'Humanite*, the rest (not to mention non-party people) do not read newspapers at all, except for sports and entertainment. The general public is convinced that participating in the pacifist movement equates to "working for Moscow."

That's how it is! And we are spending millions on Novosti Press Agency (APN) alone. The embassy people say without hesitation: we put this junk in storage, to save ourselves the embarrassment.

So, we are writing another report for Ponomarev – on the consequences of “Pershings and cruise missiles in Europe” and “what is to be done” in this new situation for everyone, everyone, everyone! In reality, nobody knows what to do and Ponomarev least of all. But he does know that he needs to explain Andropov’s statement and “prevent” the decline of the anti-war movement in Western Europe.

Meanwhile, our friends from socialist countries are coming here (once again!) in the hope of getting at least a glimmer of a practical program... beyond the “retaliatory measures” they already know and that we need to convince everyone of their necessity, especially in Czechoslovakia and the GDR, where (as our TASS guys are reporting) there is rather widespread discontent and fear.

I walk along my bookshelves sometimes and look over them. It is staggering how much I read in my life, how much of that is forgotten, and how much enjoyment came from those pages, never to return again! How many thoughts have been forever lost, both mine and of others. And what else? Is there anything else to be had from books? It is like with the history of culture: I once picked up a volume of Montaigne, leafed through it, and was once again dumbfounded. All the motives and mechanisms of human relations were discovered and analyzed in the XVI century. There has been nothing new in 400 years, only the outer presentation changes. The same in one’s personal relationship with books... It seems you do not need anything more from them, there is no use for it: not for work, not for self-enrichment, not for communicating with others.

Andropov is still not back in public. But he is constantly present: notes to the PB and the Secretariat, instructions, phone calls, etc. It is too bad. He started out so well. We started to hope. It is unlikely that he will get better. And then what?

The Plenum was postponed several times, but finally scheduled for December 26th. It could not be postponed any longer; we need to approve the plan for 1984.

December 4, 1983

I did not sleep well. In the morning I rushed to edit Ponomarev’s report: with a fresh mind! My ridiculous conscientiousness for my “craft,” which provides, if not pleasure, at least a sense of satisfaction.

December 6, 1983

Today I finished up B.N.’s report for the meeting of CC Secretaries of socialist countries. The report is now even more meaningless, along with the meeting, after yesterday’s press conference by Ogarkov-Kornienko-Zamyatin. Then again, nothing new was said at the press conference, either.

After lunch I received a delegation from the Irish Workers’ Party led by General Secretary Seán Garland. We tried for several years to get O’Riordan’s consent for us to have contact with this party. We never got it. But I persuaded B.N. and we got a CC resolution. I took it upon myself to tell them that from this point on, we can consider inter-party ties between the Workers’ Party of Ireland and the CPSU established.

It is a serious party with deep national roots and a sincere desire to learn from the experience of pre-revolutionary Bolsheviks. Without a doubt, they have the future in their hands. And O’Riordan will be left behind completely.

But for us, it is one more signal: the ICM is being undone not just by “Eurocommunism” and the Chinese, but also by the emergence of such parties. They are free of the burden of mistakes and unfulfilled hopes of the communist movement. They have no formal obligations to the movement, but they are taking on the burden of the revolutionary process.

It is good that we have enough common sense to take them seriously and recognize them without delving into the nature of this phenomenon.

December 7, 1983

Ponomarev got another snub. When he was preparing us to write his report for the upcoming (day after tomorrow) meeting of CC Secretaries of socialist countries (on what to do after the Pershings and Tomahawks are installed), he spoke with enthusiasm that we should strengthen the political (governmental) aspect of our report, to raise it above the purely propagandistic nature of these meetings. We got excited and got ready, although without going too far since we knew that B.N.’s ambitions would be tamed by the MFA. Still, he said he would go to Chernenko and discuss it before the draft was distributed for review.

The main question is the negotiations. It is clear: we are closing them all; Vienna... But the whole world is demanding [to continue] negotiations. Anti-war movements, our friends and social-democrats are warning that the USSR would “lose face” if it “gets stubborn.” The more so because [the USSR] itself argued long ago, even at Congresses, that the principle of negotiations is the only way to prevent a nuclear catastrophe. Furthermore, we already have “experience”: in 1979 after NATO’s decision, we also declared through Gromyko and all our propaganda that there would be no negotiations if they did not rescind their decision about “retrofitting.” But then we went to Geneva anyway!

It is clear: tactically, we need to stay “tough” (for prestige). But then what? It’s fine if the MFA guys at their meetings (they have a committee of deputy ministers of socialist countries, they have an “institution” of ministerial conferences) keep pressing their point. But if CC Secretaries, PB members, our “loyal friends” are meeting, for the first time without Romanians (who refused to come), we could finally talk in a truly friendly, confidential manner.

What Zagladin and I added to the text for B.N. was not much: our departments are now reviewing the entire arms race issue, taking into account the installation of American medium-range missiles. The work is not finished, but the goal is to develop a new platform, which, with a strict observance of the principle of equal security, will be offered to the West. (That’s the gist of it, not verbatim.)

When this was distributed for review, Gromyko crossed out all of this, as well as the expressed positive attitude towards “Brandt’s plan.”

All that was left was once again propaganda. Simply put – calls to support and explain, propagandize, justify and substantiate the Soviet retaliatory measures. From the point of view of “socialist internationalism,” this is shameless. It is a cynical great power move, a demonstration of the fact that the commonwealth countries have to “turn” at our beckoning, without the right to share their worries even confidentially or show a minimum of initiative.

When we return to the negotiating table, they will have to explain with the same zeal to their people and to the entire world that this is right, just as our current refusal to negotiate is right.

But this is the so-called “big politics.” And what about our Ponomarev! He is now convincing Zagladin and me that it is impossible and “would have been wrong” to consider any negotiations at all. Reagan & Co. are gambling on the fact that we will be forced to return to Geneva despite the installation of missiles. Therefore, we need to show them that they will not be able to reassure their public. As if Zagladin and I were born yesterday, we don’t know anything, and did not hear him say he was “determined” to have a politically serious discussion with our friends at this conference.

He really did go to Chernenko. He even sent him the text ahead of time, to get Chernenko’s consent before Gromyko got to it. But the former held on to it for two days, did not read it, and allowed it to be distributed for review. In other words, he put Ponomarev in a position to get a slap in the face from Gromyko.

As for Gromyko, he created a monopoly on foreign policy and is playing diplomatic prestige games as if we were in the 1930s or 50s. If Andropov continues to tolerate this, we may come dangerously close to the nuclear threshold.

December 9, 1983

It is around midnight. We held the conference. All my grumbling turned out to be pointless: everyone is happy, everyone checked their boxes (both in front of their superiors and in front of Moscow). Everyone agrees on everything, including in condemning the Romanians, who are “turncoats” and “capitulators,” but we should not break with them, we need to “work” on them. And in general, we will fight back and rally all those who are for peace. Short-wave communication [*коротковолновое общение*] one-on-one with the delegations (the Hungarians, Bulgarians, Germans) demonstrates clearly that everyone understands the rules of (our) game of nuclear diplomacy and strategy very well. They also understand that it can’t be helped and they need to quietly adapt and carve out for themselves whatever they can get away with.

We, the apparatchiks, did our job quickly and professionally: speeches, the report, communique, transcripts, notes, information on the outcomes, final speech, and this time also a letter to our party (on why the Romanians did not come), and to the socialist countries’ fraternal parties (on the same subject). The conference was over at 4pm, by 8pm all the “resulting” papers were ready.

December 10, 1983

Another volume of the *History of Marxism* from the “Progress” publishing house (distributed through a mailing list). Ambartsumov, the author of the prefaces, is creating (for the elite) a new style of criticism of anti-Marxism and non-Marxism. Along the way he is also rehabilitating Bukharin: nothing like this has been printed about him in Soviet publishing houses in 50 years! Paradoxically (though to be expected), Ponomarev – the author of the textbook on the CPSU, which is reprinted almost every year and used by all the students – has no idea that through such publications, the majority of Soviet intelligentsia (at least the thinking and interested segment of it) has obtained factual information about the true history of our party. Maybe it even reaches students.

December 18, 1983

Yesterday I met with the Irish again. The outcome of our theoretical discussions was that they asked for money... They said their former sources of “funding” practically dried up due to the tightening of security of banks and improved electronic protection. Their “head of the technology department” (as they call their group in charge of robbing banks for the needs of the party) was recently killed during an operation... Money is running out but they need to “build” the party, they need to print newspapers and literature, they need to participate in elections.

Naturally, I told them that it was a difficult and sensitive issue with many complex aspects... But to myself I thought: it’s not going to happen, dear comrades.

Today I met with Clancy. He is a heroic man. He became blind, but he is full of courage and energy to create a united, new Communist Party of Australia. I was nice to him, cheered him on. I think we might be able to help him, mainly through the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions. However, this entire “objective” process of centralization of leftist forces will collapse as soon as Clancy is gone.

I’m going on vacation in a few days, probably to Pushkino. It is somewhat unnerving to go somewhere where I’ll be physically alone and trying my endurance in skiing and swimming after everything that happened. It’s been almost 10 years since I vacationed there...

December 29, 1983

I’m at Pushkino. The weather is damp, skiing did not work out.

I went to the Plenum. It took place in a new location, specially built for this purpose: built into the Cossack house opposite the Sverdlovsk Hall. Crystal, white marble, straw-colored wood, post-modern armchairs. This must be Pavlov’s legacy. He was walking around there yesterday, already as a retiree. It looks like he got off easy: he should have been kicked out of the party.

Andropov was not present. He sent in his speech, which was distributed. It is good they did it that way, as opposed to how it was done one time with Brezhnev. Brezhnev’s speech was distributed but the participants were asked to keep quiet about the fact that the speaker himself was absent. The newspapers published it as if he was there.

A very calm, serious text, reaffirming the “new era.” Moreover, it was only about domestic affairs. It looks like things are moving, but only just. This could be seen from the

speeches, too. The “spectrum” of the speakers was broader than usual. The majority were self-evaluation reports and commitments by secretaries of regional committees and ministers. By the way, all of them followed the example set by Grishin, who spoke first and still considered it necessary to inform the CC Plenum that “Comrade Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov is the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR.” Only Gorbachev, Tikhonov (their speeches were innovative too, at least compared to the last 10 years), factory directors and one milkmaid departed from this “norm” and called Andropov either just “Comrade Andropov” or “Yuri Vladimirovich.” That said, there was almost no personal praise (again with the exception of Grishin and Bagirov, Aliyev’s heir in Baku). But there were get-well wishes for Yu.V. followed by applause. This was well-received.

Something else left over from the Brezhnev days was the “tradition” to stand and applaud when the Politburo appeared in the presidium. Like school children in class. And vice versa: unfortunately, a good party tradition has been lost – not to clap after every speech, like in theater or a ceremonial meeting. This started during Brezhnev’s time I think, and not right away but only from the early 1970s, when the phrase “and personally” started to be used and the quasi-cult of Leonid Ilyich began.

Frankly speaking, I was surprised by the election of Solomentsev and Vorotnikov to Politburo membership, even though the former makes sense in the current environment of tightening control over party morals (or rather, “non-party behavior” of officials), and the latter is simply good for Russia. People say Vorotnikov is a smart and independent man, though not very ceremonious.

Chebrikov as candidate member of the PB – also understandable. I heard about this even before the Plenum, same as about Ligachev’s election as CC Secretary. By the way, this means Kapitonov is being completely removed from personnel matters.

Gorbachev’s and Tikhonov’s speeches were “to the point,” without idle talk, without demagoguery and boasting, with concrete economic and other ideas. This is also a new phenomenon, something that had been long-forgotten under Brezhnev. In general, even though not much was new in terms of substance at this Plenum, there was no longer an atmosphere of a palace ritual focused on one person. Of course, the general political ritualism remained (in the sense that the Plenum is not a platform to work out positions and make decisions – everything is prepared ahead of time).

There were some outstanding speeches; they showed that we have cadres who are capable of doing their job well. I especially remembered the young and handsome director from Magnitogorsk Iron and Steel Works, a secretary from the Kamchatka regional committee, and the Chechen-Ingush secretary...

Arbatov consulted with me all the time about his three ideas, which he told me about it in Barvikha when I was visiting him:

- About the grain agreement. Andropov read it, handed over to Patolichev to conclude, and the latter completely botched it.
- A draft of Andropov's new statement on missiles. [Arbatov] showed it to me, I had some specific comments, but overall, it could be a way out. Andropov read it and "sent it out" to the MFA, the General Staff, Blatov, Aleksandrov. He mentioned that the text was Arbatov's work, i.e. he introduced a "personal" aspect into the readers' perception of the text. So far, Arbatov says, the predominant reaction is – the Americans won't accept it! Most of the readers have not yet given their reaction on the substance of the proposals to Andropov, except Andrey it seems, who is, of course, indignant.
- The draft for the electoral speech has not yet been submitted.

Arbatov is not upset at all, he is even upbeat and cheerful. Even if nothing passes, he said, he did his job and he will not go unnoticed in this regard. In other words, he is less interested in the essence of the matter, in the real consequences of his initiatives. That is not what is most important to him. The main thing for him is to show in a timely manner "his presence" in big politics. He thinks of himself in terms of the state. Even his private affairs he considers appropriate to solve at Chernenko's level, rather than Chazov's level, if we take medical issues for example.

Zagladin was withdrawn (we saw each other during the break on the second day of the Plenum). He only perked up when Pribytkov (Chernenko's adviser) approached him and asked to prepare two pages for some speech or official paper. He understands that it is not the time for foreign policy initiatives, even though at the meeting of deputies in B.N.'s office, he defended the same ideas that are present in Arbatov's drafts. But neither he, nor B.N., took them anywhere.

I noticed that almost no one said a word about ideology and culture. Though Andropov did mention ideology as one of the means of fulfilling and overfulfilling the plan...

I stopped by the office. Rykin managed to inform me that I have already been assigned to make a report at the party meeting on the outcomes of the Plenum.

In the evening I spoke with Karen [Brutents] about all sorts of work matters during these weeks, about Ponomarev. Karen happened upon him just after the meeting where Ponomarev was again bypassed (for PB membership) and saw how B.N. gathered himself, on the spot, and again set a course of action as if nothing happened. On a personal level, I am sorry for him. But on the other hand, there is nothing to "reward" him for with a Politburo promotion. Moreover, there would be nothing to gain from promoting him – it wouldn't advance our cause in any way.

I am enthusiastically reading André Maurois *From Aragon to Montherlant* and Yuri Levitansky.

Postscript to 1983

The “volume” dedicated to this year – from today’s point of view – appears more “personal” than other years. For the most part, it deals with the author’s concerns, his dissatisfaction with the work he was doing as the deputy head of the CC CPSU International Department, and especially with his dislike for and almost total disagreement with his boss, B.N. Ponomarev.

Today, this subject matter seems somewhat trifling at first glance, not deserving of public attention. However, looking more deeply at the specifics of that era, the author thought: the exasperation of a high-ranking official, which the author was, his thoughts and reflections may be of some interest to those who are interested in, or even studying, the pre-*perestroika* period.

The author is unhappy with Ponomarev’s reaction to what is happening in international affairs and in the communist movement.

In the case of international affairs, the harm caused by Ponomarev is insignificant, because he was not given access to the important issues. But if we take into account the incredible output of this CC Secretary in foreign policy propaganda and “instructing” the ruling parties of the socialist community, Ponomarev’s negative role is visible and not without consequences.

As for the communist movement, the author’s indignation on these pages is of a more narrowly professional nature. He believes that matters could have been handled “more properly” and “better.” For example, we could have been more open towards Eurocommunism, we should not have taught the fraternal parties in the spirit of the Soviet experience that was essentially unsuitable for them. We should not have imposed outdated dogmas and rules, we should have freed them from the forced labor of defending the USSR and “protecting” it from imperialism. Ponomarev saw these two functions as the main task of fraternal parties and the main reason for their very existence.

In other words, we should have given them the opportunity to transform into a national force (which the Eurocommunists tried to do despite resistance from the CPSU).

However, the author’s position is paradoxical and even absurd, because by this time (and for a long time before that) he did not believe in the viability of the communist movement. Whether we “improved” it or not, the result would be the same (which was soon revealed, only 5-6 years later): the ICM had long become a politically insignificant force in the world process and would completely disappear from the historical stage.

It is instructive that the author filled his notes with facts and information about his discontent. They testify to the fact that the CPSU leadership began to feel the hopelessness of the degrading communist movement, the loss of even its apologetic capacities in relation to Soviet socialism. According to some officials in the CC and the government, the communist parties even became somewhat burdensome as a certain component of Soviet state “realpolitik.”

We understand it now, but at the time the author could not clearly articulate this conclusion: as long as the ideological component of great-power foreign policy was preserved, the CPSU would not refuse to support the communist movement, would not stop the “upkeep” of fraternal parties.

The exasperated characterizations the author gives to his colleagues take on a completely different meaning now. Rather than being just a statement about a lack of personal discipline, laziness, or “dishonesty” of the people mentioned, these symptoms – shirking responsibilities and sloppy performance – were the result of a complete loss of faith in the cause they were working for. There was a loss of respect for the people leading this cause. But even now, while understanding the underlying cause of their behavior (the decay of the socio-political system as a whole), the author is not inclined to justify it. Almost everyone had lost the faith by then, but only some people “slacked” and shoved their work onto others. Unfortunately, this was done by a significant segment of the cadres. In this the author sees signs of the moral decay of the apparatus and the loss of professional skill, which later had a detrimental effect on the formation and work of the state forming under Gorbachev. It contributed in no small part to the undoing of *perestroika*. The loss of work ethic, selflessness, and honesty in the work for which you receive a good salary and benefits became characteristic not only for Chernyaev’s colleagues in the International Department, but for the apparatus as a whole.

The year 1983, judging by the records of a person who was close to the top and had access to classified information, shows the accelerating and dangerous deterioration of the situation in the country. At the same time, it gave reason to hope for improvement. The illusion, as always happens with us, was based on the personality of the new General Secretary, Andropov. The author of these notes also partook in these illusions. But he was one of the few in the apparatus who sincerely cared about the fate of the country, regardless of how this “change for the better” would affect his own career. Soon from this group of people would appear those who put themselves at the service of *perestroika*.