

The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev

1978

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1978

January 14, 1978

I was in “Sosny” from December 25th-January 1st. Every day I forced myself to go skiing, swimming, to play tennis. I did all this almost without pleasure, but to fulfill my duty to my body and to take care of my “appearance” as a key part of “human dignity.”¹

I think Leonid Ilyich has become completely senile. He has only made one appearance in over a month – he presented awards to Suslov, Demichev, Rashidov and others. He looks like he is totally falling apart.

Nevertheless, it was announced in the West that he will finally visit the FRG in February, and we are starting to get moving with papers... But what will it be if it actually takes place... Already a year ago in France everybody noticed that he “isn’t quite there”! It is shameful that Soviet people are put in a similar position as the Chinese the year before Mao’s death.

In the newspapers today: “Letter of the Central Committee, the Council of Ministers, the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, and the CC of the Komsomol on socialist competition in 1978.” It is an address, an appeal... to work. It is uncharacteristically self-critical and frank. There is a glimpse of the depth of chaos, ineptitude, indifference, stagnation, and the absence of any real incentives to improve the situation. Only appeals and exhortations.

At work. The struggle against Eurocommunism continues. On December 27th, the CC passed a resolution based on our paper, authorizing the plan we proposed. Our new initiative was provoked by Kanapa (lectures on the ICM published in *Nouvelle Critique*) and Marchais’ book *Let’s Be Frank*. Essentially it presents a more balanced platform of Eurocommunism than Carrillo’s. B.N. must have gotten an order from above and was in a frenzy. However, when the plan was approved at the Secretariat, the reaction to the International Department’s plan was “rather calm and even restrained”... As if to say, there is no way around it now.

We published the article against Azcarate in the No. 3 issue of *Novoye Vremya* and already got a slap from the *L’Unita* and the Yugoslavs.

Kozlov and I completed something that was the embodiment of an old dream of B.N.’s – to create (for him) a brochure on the subject “Is Marxism-Leninism Obsolete?” It even came out sounding relevant and political. But if we dig deeper, this is all just a pathetic verbal retort to those (the ICM) who want to finally, completely break from us, to finish with the old Leninist-Stalinist-Ponomarevist ICM and call it quits with any dogmas and “principles.” They want to do what they want to do, without looking over their shoulder at anyone (especially not at us). Our attempts to reign in the collapse are only accelerating the process of the collapse. By our own hand we are making it more pronounced.

¹ All words and phrases in quotation marks are similarly emphasized with quotation marks in the original. [Trans.]

² Carillo is talking about thousands of Spaniards who were sent to the USSR (many as children) during the civil war of 1936-39. [Author’s note]

³ Unbeknownst to Ponomarev, Zagladin published an article about Cohen’s book *L’URSS et nous* in which he let the Eurocommunists have it. This was just after Berlinguer had visited Moscow and hugged Brezhnev. Zagladin is not a

Last Saturday we had a class reunion. The last one was in 1968. Everyone reported on what's happened to him/her over the last 40 years, since our school graduation. It was all too ordinary, boring, and foreign to me. I think aside from L. Bezymensky and L. Lungina (Markovich) I have nothing in common with them, from the point of view of understanding each other and having an interest in each other. There is nothing there, and can't be.

January 21, 1978

I am taking part in preparations of the parliamentary delegation to the US, headed by Ponomarev. This has once again submerged me in the atmosphere of our impotence (ideological and economic) and the propaganda sham.

However, there are some bright spots: Marshal Ogarkov and top KGB official Bobkov, who advised the delegation. Their calm and intelligent reactions to "imperialist attacks" give confidence that we are on the right path with our disarmament policy (strategic negotiations in the U.S.) and dissident affairs.

By the way, they are both smart, intelligent, and qualified individuals. And this, too, is calming and reassuring. But they are our "defense redoubts," while on the front line – in the competition with the outside world, in state-of-the-art progress, in solving urgent problems in our economy and society – what do we have there? How will it work? Where are we and what can we do at our current level of organization, leadership, and ideological state (more precisely – the state of decline and disintegration)?!

My conversation with Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and Vice President of the Soviet-American Economic Council, V.N. Sushkov (again in the line of preparing Ponomarev's delegation). This guy is also smart and competent, a person with character who deeply understands his work and tasks, a high-level manager. He is also a relentless cynic, of course, because every day he faces our clumsiness, inadequacy, and inability to keep up with the requirements of the "struggle against American imperialism." The major monopolistic giants are in this Council (like General Motors)... "I am on friendly terms with them," Sushkov says. "They tell me, 'Our government does not give you credits and restricts the national banks from doing so as well. But we have just as much money. We are ready to give you whatever credits you need. Name at least a dozen products that you could trade with us. Even if they will not make it to the U.S. or Western European markets... that is not important. We have connections all around the world. We have basically 'compulsory' markets in the 'third world.' We can sell anything there. But give us the goods...'"

"And so," Sushkov continues, "I came back to Moscow and started knocking on the doors of various Ministries. Nobody has any goods for export. We do not have enough for the domestic market as it is. And I'm burning in this Soviet-American Council."

Or: we signed a wide range of production sharing contracts [*компенсационных контрактов*] with major companies for facilities to produce goods we desperately need, including ones related to the military. The companies started developing documentation and invested tens of millions of dollars into these contracts. Suddenly it turned out, when we adjusted

the numbers for our 10th Five-Year-Plan, that we have to either freeze these facilities, or postpone them until the 11th Five-Year-Plan. It was a scandal. As the result we will pay more in penalties than if we had started construction. But we do not have the manpower, the materials, or other funds to start these construction sites for which we made the abovementioned contracts.

They see all of this. Then we get upset when their mass media writes about our economic stagnation, the failure of a planned economy, about unsolvable problems.

Their cynicism: multinational corporations that are members of the Soviet-American Council organize “positive results” of opinion polls in the U.S. – in favor of the development of Soviet-American economic relations... They pay good money for all those Gallup polls to get the results they need.

January 22, 1978

I sent off the Ponomarev delegation to America.

Then I went through Vnukovo directly to Uspenka. I finished watching the 12th episode of the multipart film *Eternal Call* [«Вечный зов»]. It's a good movie. Yesterday, on Karyakin's recommendation, I read an article by a certain Semenova in the *Prometheus* anthology, about “the philosopher Fedorov,” an amazing *starets* [wise man], contemporary of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky. He is the “creator” of the idea of resurrection (scientific!) of all previously living people. He argues that this resurrection is the meaning of life and the purpose of space exploration. Of course, *Eternal Call* does not correspond with this idea, but another one of Fedorov's accompanying ideas – that Russia's fate is to be the first to unite people and nations on a vast territory for a single purpose – to “save mankind,” the purpose of its existence.

The movie presents a spatial view of Russia's greatness and uniqueness: thousands of kilometers from Moscow people are united by one idea – to save Moscow – for one and all, the core and secret meaning of the life – 1941.

January 27, 1978

B.N. is in America. *Pravda* writes about him and publishes his speeches daily. Not every Politburo member (except the General Secretary) gets such treatment! But he managed it...

A scandal regarding the fall of our satellite “Kosmos-954” over Canada. The satellite had a nuclear (power) reactor on board.

It's quiet at work. A rehearsal for what it would be like if we did not have B.N.'s incessant activity, and consequently a bunch of “theoretical” pointless writing. This must be how 75 percent of the Department live their entire life... I am reading and thinking a great deal, mainly about “Eurocommunism” as a theoretically helpless (which will be its tragedy in the future, when the time comes for practical application) but politically insurmountable phenomenon. It is undermining our standing, our socialist face (at the current stage). And there is nothing we can do to stop it. Later on, we will be in a strong position again, but it will be qualitatively different.

February 4, 1978

Yesterday B.N. and the parliamentary delegation returned from the United States. It turned out that the delegation's visit went almost unnoticed in the United States, save for a brief broadcast on TV of B.N.'s meeting with Carter and an excerpt of the press conference. Not a single newspaper mentioned that such an "event" is taking place, except for two spiteful commentaries (couple paragraphs) about the press conference on the issues of "Jews" and "human rights."

Zagladin told me about his trip to Budapest and Prague. They are moving farther and farther apart: the frenzy of the Czechs and the daredevil leniency of the Hungarians. The latter recently allowed duty-free imports of goods from 30 developing countries – a clear violation of the "convention" of the "new economic order"... They agreed to the most favored nation status offered by the U.S. Gromyko and Rusakov decided this is also a violation of solidarity and made a proposal at the Politburo to give them a dressing-down through the ambassador. Following the ridiculous protocol, Balmashnov (Ponomarev's assistant) asked me to sign this note (to say there are no comments). I refused to sign it. He will report to B.N., but I think the latter will not bother to find out why I did that.

February 10, 1978

I spent the whole week at Serebryanyi Bor, 16. A new theoretical dacha, which serves as a hotel for foreign communist delegations when it is not being used as a retreat to write Party texts.

We put together B.N.'s main speech for Budapest (around 30 pages) and seven "small speeches" (on the Middle East, the Horn of Africa, the new international economic order, the south of Africa, the World Trade Union Congress, the Havana Youth Festival, and Latin America). Even though I brought Zhilin and four consultants there, we didn't make much progress. People are tired, they are sick of this meaningless speechwriting. Then there is laziness and a careless attitude fueled by the fact that official reputations in the apparatus are not based on merit, but on B.N.'s whims. He consciously encourages anonymity to make his speeches look like "orders from the Party." He listens to rumors and to several informers. There is the political incompetence of most of the Department's employees. They are quick to throw together an information note, though they are not always well done. But if you ask them to put policy in there – that's solely my and the consultants' responsibility, not to mention turning an information note into a text that is easy to pronounce and would not be embarrassing to give to Ponomarev, who can tell a good product from a bad one. Every year his importance in his own eyes grows more and more and he demands increasingly higher quality, while at the same time he is proportionally losing the ability to think logically and articulately express whatever crosses his mind.

They say the PB yesterday passed a resolution to once again create a Department of Foreign Policy Propaganda...

February 26, 1978

I am going to Budapest today. Once again it will be ideological-didactic babble. All my objections that “this has been said already at previous meetings of this kind” and that “Zimyanin will be talking about this” (before only B.N. made a speech) were rejected. In a word, I had to come up with a new version in two days... Once again I had to go over the “minor speeches.”

Shakhnazarov managed to get a speech for Rusakov on the New Economic Order and wrote it in the spirit of infringement on the Soviet people, who don't get to eat enough meat while Black Africans keep getting all kinds of aid.

He also prepared speeches for Rusakov that look like an outright reprimand for the Hungarians, the Poles, and others: why are they engaging with the West in economic relations and listening to the Chinese' overtures against us. These speeches are for closed sessions, in which we will discuss “Eurocommunism”...

It is shallow and foolish when so-called party intelligentsia supports and formulates such “great power” attitudes and empty fears for the “hegemony” (that is to say, if we cannot organize a good living standard for our people, we won't let you do it either). I do not exclude the possibility that this group of people instigates [these trends] as well.

All of last week passed in euphoria (the 60th anniversary of the Soviet Army) on the occasion of Brezhnev being awarded the Order of Victory. When he was recently awarded the rank of General, then Marshal, everyone thought these were the Pillars of Hercules, it could go no further. He was dressed up in a uniform. All day on TV you would see either the act of presenting the award, or the ceremonial meeting in the Palace of Congresses, where a good part of Ustinov's report was dedicated to L.I. and ovations. In the closing ceremony of the concert that followed, the presentation of the award was projected on a huge screen on stage. The same week, Brezhnev was on TV multiple times in connection with Assad's visit. And speeches, speeches, speeches... given with terrible stammering, for all the people to see. The people both sympathize with him and laugh at him, some are even furious with his inner circle for not wanting to “stop him.”

I wrote one of those speeches for the session of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, at which Ponomarev presented on his visit to the United States. It was uttered word for word, and for three days now, according to the radio and newspapers, it is regarded all over the world as yet another contribution!

Zagladin told me how he wrote a response speech for the Order of Victory award and a toast for Assad's visit. By the way, in connection with the former, L.I. called Zagladin himself. Brezhnev asked, “Do you think all of this is appropriate?” Zagladin said he replied, “You are putting me in an awkward position.” Of course only Brezhnev knows what Vadim actually said.

Not just taxi drivers but even the personal drivers of the Central Committee are laughing at all of this. Some are politely expressing their opinions (in the form of rhetorical questions, such as whether this violates the charter of the Order of Victory).

It feels like we are living in an atmosphere of dense senility... and total contempt for the opinion of the people.

One more creature has been awarded for its merits – Zamyatin (director of TASS). He was made head of a department. A department was “invented” for him on the fly, unexpectedly for all members of the PB. I heard a telephone call between B.N. and Suslov on this subject, the day after the PB where Brezhnev suggested to create a Department of International Information and Foreign Propaganda and appoint Zamyatin as its head. This is a reward for helping to eliminate, by means of propaganda, the “triumvirate” (Podgorny, Brezhnev, Kosygin) and turning the “triumvirate” into a single leader (he boasted about this to me himself at the beach in “Yantar”) and for the screenplay “The Life of a Communist.”

When they find out about this Department in the West, they will have all kinds of theories about Moscow’s new plans. In reality, it is the same operation as appointing Chernenko as candidate member of the Politburo, or replacing Katushev with Rusakov.

I am finishing an amazing diary-novel *Insomnia* by Aleksandr Kron, published in *Novy Mir*. I didn’t get around to it when it first came out and all of Moscow was talking about it. A high-class psychological portrait of the Soviet Moscow way of life.

March 4, 1978

From February 26 to March 2 – Budapest. A meeting of Central Committee Secretaries from ten socialist countries. We expected some animation from the Romanians, and we got it. The same questions, at first glance the same approaches and concerns (for example, the arms race). But everything with a double bottom.

They boasted about abolishing censorship and solving the nationalities question, even though it is all pure demagoguery and hypocrisy: in this sphere they are doing worse than everyone else. In public, the guys (from departments of the apparatus of the CC CP of Romania) accompanying the delegation mindlessly stuck to their guns, without explanations or arguments. When we pressed them outside of meetings, questioning their intellectual personal worth, they laughingly admitted not sharing the views, but they have a “directive”!

B.N. was bustling with activity and again exhausted us with his initiatives: at one point he decided to say the closing paragraphs, even though nobody asked him to do it; then he wanted to give the final statement (as another presiding one), even though it seemed quite inappropriate; then he wanted us to prepare a response speech for him at Kadar’s reception; then he got the idea to give *Pravda* an interview on the outcomes of the meeting. Every time his colleagues – Rusakov and Zimyanin – looked bewildered, rumbled, but he didn’t let anything stop him and always got his way.

The closed session on “Eurocommunism” (without the Romanians and Vietnamese) – the “secret departure” from the Gellert Hotel to visit a party school... across town at 150 km/h, accompanied by police cars with sirens and through the hedgerows of dumbfounded Budapesters.

B.N. was first again: Zagladin and Kozlov prepared his text. The Hungarians and Bulgarians were close to us... Though Zagladin and I did accept all the comments (on our text)

from the Hungarians (Beretz passed them on to us). Our concept was closer to the middle between the Hungarians and the Bulgarians.

Axen surprised everyone by giving an awfully trite speech: imperialism—the Socialist International, Brandt—Brzezinski, verbiage about the CPSU and Brezhnev, the 60th Anniversary of October (this at a closed work meeting!). The Pole – zero. The Mongolian, wisely understanding his place, managed in three minutes. The Cuban made a verbose speech on the topic “this is not right”: “The highest form of internationalism is when one nation sheds blood for the interests of another. Meanwhile, the Romanians did not allow us even to express solidarity with the cause of revolutionary Ethiopia. How will we (i.e. the delegation) explain this in Havana?! Che Guevara (!) said that the mobility and fighting efficiency of a partisan detachment is determined by its weakest and most irresponsible fighter. So do we have to be at Ceausescu’s level? Why do we even need meetings where communists cannot speak openly.” And so forth.

However, Bil’ak (member of the CC CP of Czechoslovakia) was the highlight of the meeting: “Boris Nikolayevich explained to us here that you all will be going to the Congress of Communist Parties in Spain... Carillo and the Western propaganda are calling us puppets, the henchmen of invaders, they say we do not represent our people, etc. Therefore we (the Czechoslovaks) were not invited there. Don’t you think that by going, you indirectly join in this characteristic of Carillo & Co.?! We cannot object to your decision, but think about us. Why are we to blame for accepting your internationalist help?!”

The question has been raised. Of course there were no conclusions made at the meeting, because at these kinds of meetings problems don’t get discussed, just stated.

The Cuban question also remained unanswered.

In general, a strange situation is developing. Right now, in connection with the 10th anniversary of the events [of Prague Spring], the whole world is picking on and walking all over the Czechs. We are keeping quiet, and other socialist countries even more so. It is not relevant for us, and we don’t want to “stir it up”... In the meantime, “spontaneously” a climate of contempt is forming within the parties of our fraternal countries towards people like Bil’ak and the majority of the Czech leadership. Not just for “more general” reasons, but also because they are all pathetic, dull, stupid, bitter, etc. I felt in Bil’ak’s words that they, the Czechs, understand the position they are now in among the people who made them who they are.

I was going through my bookshelves and came across my article in issue No. 5 of “Modern and Contemporary History” for 1961. I wrote it at the insistence of the late Academician Guber, who was then chief editor and was grooming me for the position of deputy. At the time I had just come back from Prague. I remember I ran into the late Yerusalimsky on the street, and he told me in his typical lightly sarcastic manner, “They say your article has doubled the circulation of the magazine.” Sevastyanov (now a prominent figure in the Institute of History), who, I have to say, was a bootlicker (I had just started at the CC), said: “I reread every page several times, because there are more thoughts than phrases.” I remembered all of this. By the way, back then I was not very experienced in “putting together texts.” I reread it right now. It

is indeed daringly written. Most importantly – whole volumes of scientific literature that have appeared since then have not added anything new to the thoughts and conclusions that are packed so tightly in there. Even today’s Eurocommunists in general (from the point of view of analyzing new conditions for revolution in their countries) have not said anything new: the essay already said everything in strikingly accurate (and brave for that time) form. Nowadays I probably could not write like that, I would not have the resolve.

March 8, 1978

The day before yesterday, a helicopter exploded over Libya, carrying [Werner] Lamberz (a member of the PB SED) and Paul Markowski (the head of the SED’s International Department), whom I had known for 15 years. He was a Silesian, cheerful, smart, clever, open to us, very politically capable (he was fluent in five European languages), and with a blunt German cheerfulness. He was a friend to many of us in the CC International Departments. I last saw him in January, when he came with Axen to discuss the Budapest meeting. I knew Lamberz less. He was the youngest member of their PB. But the acuteness of the news is amplified by the fact that I shook his hand just four days ago in the Gellert Hotel.

B.N. had warned Lamberz in Budapest, “Don’t fly there so often, it is not safe, they will manage without you.” They were in Libya en route to Ethiopia, where the SED is “closely engaged,” mainly by helping to create a “Marxist-Leninist Party.”

The incident with Krivoguz at the CC CPSU Academy of Social Sciences... “Comintern and socialist democracy” at the seminar in Halle, followed by a “denunciation” [«телега»] at the level of Brezhnev-Honecker. It started the process of expulsion from the Academy of Social Sciences and a party reprimand. A fool is a fool. Even Krasin (his head of department) admitted it. There is no salvation. But what about those Fritzes! In due course they installed Bovin, then “removed” Ryzhenko (rector of the Academy of Social Sciences), who is drinking heavily now. And now Krivoguz! Maybe they’ve lost their mind from the “Spiegel” manifesto, and because they have no way out except running forward (even further into the “consumer society” and, consequently, into the embrace of the FRG) they are trying to present themselves to Moscow as ultra-orthodox and ideologically “loyal”?

March 16, 1978

I had a talk with Pertsov. Volodya Pertsov is an adviser in our Department. He has been studying Spain for many years, he knows it inside out, as they say. His gives captivating depictions of the customs and habits in Spain’s different provinces, about its artists and writers, its cities and cathedrals, about Francoists and Communists... He loves that country and they love him there. He personally knows hundreds, if not thousands of Spaniards of all different views and backgrounds. He widely uses the Spaniards’ special attitude towards us, the Soviets, that was born out of our romantic, ardent, sincere solidarity with the Republicans during the civil war of 1936-1939. He is friends with Carillo, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Spain (as well as with Dolores Ibarruri, the Chairman of the Party, national hero).

He just came back from another trip to Spain, and conveyed to me his conversation with Santiago [Carillo]. He preceded it with the remark, “You cannot write this in a ciphered telegram from there – they will not understand and on top of it you could get hell for it.”

“‘In the Soviet Union you are wrong to consider me anti-Soviet,’ said Carillo. ‘If I were anti-Soviet, I would have quite a lot to say and write about you: I have thousands of eyes and ears in the USSR, I know everything about you, and not just what’s happening in Moscow...² ... Things are going badly for you, and getting worse and worse. You do not want to discuss this even internally, amongst yourselves... So I wrote a book (*Eurocommunism and the State*). I wrote it, you might say, amateurishly, I did not have a lot of time and I do not have any real education in theory. But the book is dictated by our needs and tasks that have come to a head. And what did you do? You foolishly criticized the book, and once again called me anti-Soviet to boot! You have a huge number of academicians, qualified people, entire institutes. Why not debate me, why not show me my weak points in earnest, prove that I am wrong, give your answers to the questions raised in the book? You are not doing that. You are not doing it because you are afraid of a real discussion, you do not want it. Just like you do not want and cannot seriously discuss your internal problems...’

“‘And in general, Volodya,’ Carillo continued, ‘It is impossible for a country like yours – great, powerful, with such a past, with such significance for all humanity – to be ruled by frail old men, who are incapable of anything anymore. You had Katushev as a possibility, but even he got thrown out! You will bring your country to a point when you will start to have “Polish,” “Hungarian,” and “Czech” events. That would be a catastrophe. Not just for you... but for all of us! That is why we cannot and will not be silent. If you do not want to deal with your problems and look truth in the eyes – with full and correct knowledge of the matter, in a Leninist way – then we are obligated, even if we are unskillful and unqualified, to rub your nose in it, to try to raise your alarm.’

“‘Berlinguer thinks the same. But he is an Italian, he is gentle and more diplomatic with you. We, Spaniards, are simpler and more straightforward, so we ended up being labeled as anti-Soviets by you. I will confess that at our meeting in Madrid (I – Marchais – Berlinguer) we discussed what I just told you. All three of us were of the same opinion.’”

March 18, 1978

It is boring at work. This feeling spreads very quickly (by some unknown means) to the brain part of the Department when we stop receiving impulses from B.N. His ideas are sometimes absurd (old-mannish, in the Comintern spirit) but they force us to come up with ideas, play with words, debate, create the appearance of intense creative activity, for which the energy conversion efficiency on the subject of the ICM is almost equal to zero.

These impulses stop coming in at times when he, Ponomarev, gets “smacked on the noggin” at the top. Or due to some circumstance, a chance conversation, discussion at the

² Carillo is talking about thousands of Spaniards who were sent to the USSR (many as children) during the civil war of 1936-39. [Author’s note]

Secretariat, the PB, of something directly related to our work. He realizes – alas! for a short time – that all his irrepressible energy, as well as the energy of some other people (if it appears) – is nothing but a hassle. Nobody can appreciate it, nobody needs it. Moreover, people regard it as a desire to put himself forward, to be center stage.

I think that Zamyatin's promotion (who has already taken a large chunk of B.N.'s domain in the "struggle against imperialism") affected the old man. Indeed, despite his outstanding political vitality and activity, he is 73 years old.

In a word, I think he has been low since Budapest. Immediately all our life switched to routine work. And we have less and less routine daily work, since we have less and less use for the communist and national liberation movements.

March 19, 1978

In the morning I read Duverger's article in *Le Monde* about what the PCF will do if the left wins today.

At the same time, I was reading a brochure by [György] Lukács written in 1924, soon after Lenin's death. I don't think I've seen such a clear and profound exposition of the essence of Leninism. As if it was created now, taking into account everything that happened with us and with others, everything that led to Eurocommunism.

I was given this brochure to read by B.P. Likhachev from *Kommunist*. He wants to suggest to print excerpts from this work in the issue of the magazine dedicated to Lenin. He already discussed it with the Hungarians. Our side might not like it though... it is Lukács after all... in 1956 and 1968 he did not behave in the best manner.

March 25, 1978

For a few days we have been puzzling over whether to congratulate the French with the elections or not. Zuyev (head of the sector) immediately took a decisive position: there is nothing to congratulate them with because they are not talking about the victory. They are fighting amongst themselves (with the Socialist Party of France), and besides, they are printing pages in *L'Humanite* on a daily basis, knocking us for stripping Rostropovich and Vishnevskaya of their citizenship. I also decided for myself right away – not to congratulate (imagining Kanapa's expression, him thinking they can spit in our face and we will still maintain the appearance of "proletarian internationalism."). B.N. agreed (we talked with him three times about it) but did not want to take the responsibility. He told us to write our argumentation to Chervonenko (ambassador) and urge him not to insist. The latter kept sending telegrams and demanding in his Ukrainian manner. At that point we ignored his ciphered telegrams.

B.N.'s reasoning is solid: unless we report it to the CC, nobody at the top gives a damn about the French. Because they could care less about the elections, same as about a lot of other things. If we do report, there will be uncertainty, debates. Time is passing. The French themselves have "moved on to regular business."

B.N. worried remotely (from the Crimea) about the visit of a group of American congressmen. They are coming as tourists, but they want meetings with Brezhnev, Gromyko, Ustinov, Ogarkov, etc. Shitikov (member of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium) and Kornienko (now the First Deputy at the MFA, he quickly mastered his boss's boorish manner) decided not to "kiss ass" (this was Shitikov's expression in a conversation with our head of the American sector Mostovets). They even did not want to send our deputies to meet the Americans at the airport, not to mention accompany them to Leningrad and Kiev. Arbatov complained to me, I complained to B.N. He was furious. I dictated to Shitikov what needs to be done and how. He reluctantly complied. Kornienko's response to me regarding the CC Secretary's [Ponomarev's] "corrections": "I consider it completely unnecessary and wrong, but since I see no special political (!) reasons to object, I will not overturn it..." That's how he talks about a CC Secretary's instructions! I raised my voice. But that is not the point. Gromyko's entourage feels so protected that even the highest echelon of the Party leadership is nothing to them.

I had a conversation on a similar subject with Zdorov (head of the engineering department) about sending the new minister (Belyak) to England to study feed production machinery. I was one of the people who had to sign off on this trip, and I know, I've seen it personally, that dozens of our high-ranking officials go there, look, promise, then leave. In a month or two another batch comes and leaves with the same promises. At first the Brits were surprised, then they got angry. The other day, one of [David] Owen's (Foreign Secretary) deputies was instructing a "Great Britain-USSR" delegation, which was preparing to go to Moscow, and directed them to proceed from the assumption that the "Wilson-Brezhnev" documents signed in 1975 can be considered a "dead letter."

So: since this Belyak is planning to go to the same place Kunayev and I went in November, I expressed my concerns. Zdorov, whom I've known for 20 years, told me: "You know, Anatoly Sergeyevich, quit trying so hard. It was always like this and it will continue. Not just in England. Are you aware where this newly-baked Belyak came from, a minister without a department? No? Well I am! And I don't advise you to stick your nose in it..." He "came from" the man "Himself"...

April 1, 1978

This week's claim to fame was my first time speaking at the CC Secretariat on the subject of Esperanto. The subject fell through, because after my (barely intelligible) speech and Chebrikov's (KGB) very detailed speech, Kruglova (SSOD) got up and said that "the issue was not discussed with her and she does not agree with the proposal to create an Esperanto association within her department"...

In general, everyone is fed up and few people can force themselves to really take things seriously. Because the most important work for the country is not being done. And no one wants to just jerk off.

Leonid Ilyich is taking the train across Siberia and the Far East. Maybe it really is to scare the insolent Chinese ("the foolish Khazars"), or maybe to give the appearance of doing "the most important work for the country." In addition to Ustinov, Brezhnev is accompanied by

Zamyatin, who is supplying television, radio, and newspapers with texts that materialize the cult – or rather a repetition of the Khrushchev cult, but this time in absolutely farcical form. Judging from Zamyatin's reports, Brezhnev in Kirov, Tyumen, Novosibirsk at regional committee meetings “expresses instructions” (wording from a newspaper): that in the spring it is necessary to sow well, that machinery must be prepared ahead of time, etc. Then first secretaries thank him for the valuable advice. (But... the irony is that if these first secretaries don't already know that it is necessary “to sow well,” they should have been fired long ago...)

A new cult expression sprang up today (in Krasnoyarsk): “This is my mandate to you” [«Это вам мой наказ»] – Leonid Ilyich said to residents of the city.

Three-quarters of the TV program *Vremya* is taken up by this trip.

It seems like all the Pillars of Hercules of political vulgarity have long been passed, but every new issue of the newspaper brings proof of the existence of inexhaustible reserves in this department.

In the meantime, what are other people worried about? Brutents told me: in a communique about Kirilenko's conversation with the Lebanese, he ordered the name to be used not one time but twice. This is a first time for this type of document (i.e. it does not matter the context, the important thing is to mention the name two times!). Karen thinks it will become the norm now.

April 16, 1978

Yesterday I spent the whole day working on Ponomarev's report for Helsinki (a conference of the Socialist International on disarmament, where one American and one person from our side were invited. The U.S. is sending Leonard – deputy representative to the United Nations, an ambassador at large. We are sending Ponomarev – a candidate member of the PB, CC Secretary, Chairman of the Supreme Soviet Committee, etc.). It is really an unprecedented event – a representative the CPSU leadership at the Socialist International! But a lot of it, as always with us, is just to show off. B.N. wants to show off on the world political stage, like Gromyko. Shaposhnikov got busy and together with Zagladin offered this idea (to go to Helsinki) to B.N. He assigned them to work it out with Suslov. The latter agreed without really taking a closer look. A Politburo decision was the result.

But as it turned out, this conference is taking place (B.N.'s speech will be on the 24th) the day before Brezhnev's speech at the Komsomol Congress, where he will announce unilateral sensational things regarding arms reductions. It is also three weeks before Gromyko's speech at the UN special session on disarmament, and ten days before Brezhnev's visit to the FRG, where they will once again be talking about this...

B.N. cannot even hint at what will take place at the Kremlin Palace on the 25th. So the day after he says his propaganda babble about the Mont Blanc of armaments and the monstrosity of the arms race, the whole world will be talking about Brezhnev's initiatives and Ponomarev will look like a greenhorn in front of the shrewd social-democrat politicians.

Gromyko also will not let him say what he would like to say, because he wants the material to look innovative at the UN General Assembly. As the result, we (the consultants responsible for composing Ponomarev's speech) are wrecking our brains (under Ponomarev's supervision) to come up with something special.

On Tuesday B.N. convened almost the entire group of consultants and deputies. He dictated (with a stenographer recording) almost 18 pages of text. All of it consisted either of intimidation about the American (!) arms race, or verbal-ideological "proof" that we are good guys and people should not be afraid of us, or quixotic, naïve proposals to work together with the social democrats. I repeat, all of this is for hardened politicians, the majority of whom are anti-Soviets and anticommunists.

We essentially had to rewrite the text. The previous version was more sensible – the arguments were less trivial and it wasn't as shrill.

Arbatov, who was brought on board to write this text as an "external adviser," is aghast at Ponomarev's demagoguery. But we are used to it and there is no way around it. Sometimes the verbiage even comes out beautifully.

On top of all this, Blatov is bugging me about Brezhnev's interview for *Vorwärts*. I've given him four versions already. He keeps summoning me... and every time it is hellish torture: the things he insisted on in the previous version turn out to be completely unnecessary; the things I edited according to his comments in paragraphs he already accepted turn out to have been "preferable" in the previous versions...

The conversation goes as follows: for two minutes he mumbles (nothing specific, he doubts everything, even the things he suggests himself. If you show any doubt, he immediately rejects it). For five minutes he talks on one of his numerous phones. As the result, "work" on a single paragraph can last an hour or more.

But most importantly – what is he preoccupied with! His table is covered in ciphered telegrams. The phone calls he gets appear to be from Galya (his confidante and stenographer) who persistently remains near L.I. and calls from the dacha (Zavidovo, I gathered). Blatov immediately dictates a few things to her (what he deems most essential) – minimum minimorum [sic] from just a few telegrams. To report... if she gets a chance... For example, he told her, dictating slowly: Stoph (Prime Minister of the GDR) is reporting in secret from Honecker and his other colleagues that the SED Politburo made a decision (without him, Stoph) to propose to the CPSU to do away with preferred pricing for the stay of our troops in the GDR, to raise prices for uranium ore that is supplied by the "Bismuth" plant to the USSR...

Or: in a conversation with Katushev, Zhivkov makes a dramatic appeal to save Bulgaria from financial bankruptcy. He says that in order to pay off the debts to the West, Bulgarians need to increase their annual export by 33 percent. That is unthinkable. He says he knows his Soviet comrades are getting the impression that the Bulgarian leadership cannot cope with its obligations, it is ruining the economy, etc. Let that be as it may. But whether it happens with or

without them – they are ready to leave (!) – the multi-billion-dollar debt remains, and Bulgaria needs help.

How many of these issues come across his desk every day! They are wrapped up in ciphered telegrams, and maybe a hundredth of them get reported. They contain issues of historic significance, the fate of the commonwealth and so forth. But if you watch the TV, for example, Brezhnev presents awards to cosmonauts and it is dumbfounding: he looks like he does not understand even what he is talking about, he cannot hear the words coming out of his mouth, much less make colossally important policy decisions.

All of Moscow is saying (even in the trolleybuses) that his trip to Siberia and the Far East is nothing but bluff for the TV.

One detail really got me worried, it came up inadvertently in conversation with Blatov. I already know there will be an important discussion on disarmament at the Komsomol Congress and the interview will take place afterwards, so I asked Blatov how to approach it. Blatov started to mumble that a text was sent to the PB a few days ago, but there has not been any reaction yet. “It contains important proposals, it is not clear how they will be received...”

What is happening? Since when are there doubts that anyone would not support a proposal in a text that comes from Brezhnev himself??

And then I realized: it means the situation has reached a point where Aleksandrov, who is the main author of the text, did not even have an opportunity to read it out loud to the speaker himself, as he usually does. It is possible that the speaker does not really know what exactly he ordered to be sent to the Politburo for the Komsomol Congress.

If this is the case, it means the dementia is entering the final stage. And it is no longer “personal” at all. It is society’s problem.

Yesterday at 6pm together with Arbatov and others we were meeting Egon Bahr in Sheremetyevo – on the eve of Brezhnev’s visit to the FRG. Officially, Bahr is here for the “scientific-theoretical part” but in reality he is here to show everyone that the SPD and he personally know how to arrange a deal with us...

April 29, 1978

Looks like I will be coming along on Brezhnev’s trip to the FRG. This is because Zagladin (it’s his country and party, and he went last time, in 1973) happened to be in Spain at a congress of the CPI from April 16th. Before that, Vadim was either sick or traveling in Belgium and Switzerland. Aleksandrov made a comment to B.N.: your Zagladin is either sick or abroad. Irritation about this played a part in choosing me.

This puts me in an awkward position with Vadim, plus I do not really want to go: I do not like to participate in such grandiose affairs where you feel above your station, humbled.

The work with Blatov is exhausting. He is fiercely punctual and responsible, and he is an unbelievably slow thinker (which does not mean he is not intelligent, quite the opposite). He

turns every word inside out... And his gestures when he is looking for the right expression – as if he is conducting an orchestra of his own thoughts and his slowly churning gray matter.

The main idea of all the materials (conversation with Schmidt, Brandt, Shelley Strauss, Kohl, Mies, Genscher...), interviews for newspapers and television – is to pull West Germany towards us, so it chooses us as its No. 1 partner, not the U.S. Then we can consider the world “made,” at least until the year 2000, until China becomes a superpower. Plus, closeness with the FRG is the most reliable thing from an economic standpoint. All of Eastern Europe would be “between us two.”

I think we sincerely want to be friends with this “most terrible enemy” of ours. And this is right. But... we do not want to, and cannot, pay for this closeness and “preference,” in essence. And their price is high: to recognize the unity of the German nation.

They see our “game” and they are afraid of it, although something is attracting them too. They understand that the only way for them to realize their great-power tendencies is in alliance with us. With America – never. There are forces at play here that surpass even economic competition.

Yesterday it became evident that they started moving away from the Declaration for 2001, which Bahr negotiated here. They added human rights, West Berlin, a hint at the Horn of Africa, and so forth to their “counter draft” – things that signal this initiative is getting derailed.

We shall see... There were big ambitions for the visit, but now it looks like it is waning.

The XVIII Congress of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League took place. It was dedicated entirely to Brezhnev. The apologia is spreading at a rate unseen even in Stalin’s times, and at a very banal, vulgar level for the XX Century.

After *The Small Land* there is now *Rebirth* – about Denpropetrovsk after the war (in issue No. 5 of *Novy Mir*, today the central newspapers started printing it too). There are ideological conferences happening around the country, led by first secretaries of republics and cities. The conferences are about the study of these works, about developing various patriotic and communist sensibilities (including modesty) in the Soviet people on the basis of these books.

As for the military initiatives that were supposed to appear in Brezhnev’s speech at the Komsomol Congress, the most important aspects were cut out: the withdrawal of the army units and 1,000 tanks from Czechoslovakia and the GDR, the delineation of borders with China along the mid-channel of the rivers. Once again all we have left are appeals and assurances, including that we will not produce a neutron bomb if the U.S. does not. To this Carter replied that the Soviet Union does not need a neutron bomb because it is designed to combat superiority in tanks. So we only exposed ourselves with that statement.

They say the “unilateral” initiative did not pass Gromyko and Suslov. Apparently Ustinov was “for” it. More importantly, it means the draft formally sent out by the General Secretary (everyone knows that assistants are not allowed to do it) was edited “along the way.”

The text that was approved at the Politburo in Brezhnev's presence was the substituted one, and he did not realize that he "sent out" a completely different text.

Ponomarev's Helsinki's Mont Blanc brought forth a mouse. He did manage to make some noise, but the cunning social-democrat leaders once again saw that if you give him an inch, he'll take a mile. So, they politely let him know that it will not work. *Pravda* published deafeningly victorious reports from Helsinki, B.N. sent optimistic telegrams. In the meantime from Bonn we received a message that Bahr protested to Falin (ambassador): Ponomarev's proposals were unexpected for us, they are making us look like we are leaning towards the "united red front," which the right wing will seize on and we will be forced to publicly distance ourselves from the CPSU.

Upon reading this, Blatov and I added some calming tones to the memo for L.I.'s meeting with Brandt.

May 8, 1978

I ended up going to the FRG as a part of the group accompanying Brezhnev after all.

Brezhnev and his main circle lived in the Castle Gymnich – 35km from Bonn, the rest (including me) in Castle Gracht, 10km from Gymnich.

My role consisted of making sure the inconsequential (though mandatory) meeting with the leaders of the German Communist Party took place more or less smoothly and in a manner least offensive to them, the modest Cinderellas in this undertaking. I managed it: firstly, I successfully insisted that I should go to Cologne for the meeting of the DKP in honor of the visit. It was not even mentioned to Brezhnev. Falin was very hesitant but Blatov reluctantly agreed. Around 2,000 people gathered there. It would have been completely inappropriate not to have at least someone attend the only public event in honor of the visit. How much effort and goodwill went into once again demonstrating their "loyalty," even though it is detrimental to their standing in the eyes of the overwhelmingly philistine public. It might have gone completely unnoticed... Brezhnev, for example, did not notice the nearly 200 people with banners and flags that greeted him near the airport. They were all communists! We did not report to him about the meeting either, and even if we had, he would not have absorbed any of it.

So, I imitated his personal attention to the DKP, same as Aleksandrov and Blatov imitated for the duration of the talks that it was actually Brezhnev himself who was conducting the negotiations, even though sometimes it put them in rather awkward situations. Right in front of the Germans they had to "on the fly" edit the memo that the General Secretary was only capable of reading (and even that he did clumsily).

At the meeting I only greeted the audience when they introduced me. Later I had a long conversation with Mies at a restaurant. He was using me to practice his speech for the meeting in Gymnich. Then we greeted artists of the Arkhangelsk ensemble who came to the restaurant, they had performed after the meeting for the same audience, in honor of the visit. I thanked them for doing an outstanding job carrying out "the Party assignment" and noted that they were promoting the same policies as Brezhnev, in their own way.

This interaction, as well as the concert itself and the contact it provided with the Germans was quite touching. It made me think about our two nations.

Later, I was able to arrange for a reception with Brezhnev and members of the Central Committees from both sides (seven people, by the way). That is how it was presented in the communique. That said, the initiative came from Aleksandrov, and I think he made it happen (and passed it through Brezhnev) not for the sake of the DKP, and definitely not “for me,” but because he needed the ministers (members of the CC) to make an appearance in the media so he would show up not as an adviser, but as a candidate member to the CC.

I warned Mies when we were in Cologne not to expect a substantive conversation. The meeting with Brezhnev would only be a demonstration and would have to be brief.

In the morning of May 6th I came out to the courtyard in front of the castle to meet them... But they were not there. I had planned to take them into an adjoining room so they would not meet face to face with Strauss, whom Brezhnev was receiving immediately before Mies & Co. from the DKP!

It turned out they were not allowed to pass through the gates at the end of the alley... I soon found out why. Brezhnev had come outside to see Strauss off! Nobody had received such an honor before. The group of us standing there literally gasped. But it did not end there. Brezhnev, to the sound of the guard clicking their rifles, went down the steps together with Strauss and walked him to the car. A pack of photographers and reporters was buzzing around them. Indeed, it was an unbelievable sensation. Nobody could have imagined anything like it.

We stepped aside. Brezhnev said long and “warm” goodbyes to Strauss (the “pro-fascist,” as our press has been calling him for a decade) and then went back inside. Strauss immediately, standing next to the car, started giving interviews left and right.

I later asked Aleksandrov: “Was that accidental or supreme wisdom?!” He gave me a sarcastic look and said, “Leonid Ilyich just wanted to get some fresh air before meeting with communists!”

Within the scope of my personal goal to please the communists, the meeting went as well as possible (considering the General Secretary’s condition and his attitude to this additional strain). Brezhnev read our four-page memo, to which I managed to add a line thanking the communists for the meeting in Cologne and the hundreds welcoming him “along the journey.”

Before reading the memo, Brezhnev tried to joke by calling on everyone to smoke... It did not really work out. Not everyone understood the joke.

Mies presented his thoughts, in a less coherent manner than he had to me in Cologne. He tried to imbue his speech with more enthusiasm but without going overboard on loyalty, so the authorities and the Eurocommunists would not have something to latch on to. Suddenly, he brought up an unexpected topic: he started to praise Brezhnev for sending a representative of the CPSU to the conference of the Socialist International in Helsinki. He expressed how important it

was that we entered the socialist-democratic platform, that we are engaging the socialist-democrats in certain matters, etc.

Brezhnev did not know what he was talking about and looked around, then loudly asked Aleksandrov, “Who is this?!” (i.e. who went to Helsinki?) Andrey replied: “Ponomarev.” There was no reaction.

So, we exchanged “speeches” and the matter seemed to be coming to an end. But Andrey decided to “liven it up.” Since Mies touched on the subject of social-democracy, he (Aleksandrov) slipped a page to Brezhnev and the latter immediately started reading it out loud. The next second I understood it was the memo for the meeting with Brandt...

Brezhnev finished reading it and paused... The Germans were completely confused: nobody could understand why this was said. Then Andrey jumped in himself and said in German (simultaneously translating for Brezhnev): “These are the words Leonid Ilyich said to Brandt yesterday!” (The gist of it was – if you do not want to cooperate with your communists, you do not have to, but why persecute them. It only plays to the reactionary forces.)

It was yet another objective indicator of the fact that Leonid Ilyich, to put it mildly, is not very aware of what he is saying or what is happening at any given moment. I think the incident with Strauss was the result of him slipping from under the control of his advisers.

Later I observed this numerous times, to my horror, although I expected something like this.

It was especially embarrassing to experience all of this during the closing remarks with Schmidt before signing and during the signing itself. The Germans foresaw and, apparently, knew about the “limited capabilities.” I won’t even mention the newspapers and TV programs, they spent most of their time looking for the relevant moments in his behavior, the slightest manifestations of his physical infirmity: on the airplane ramp, when getting up from the couch, during receptions when he would look around in confusion, etc.

Schmidt behaved magnificently (I specifically watched him). At the reception I was seated just a couple meters away from him and Brezhnev and could see everything that was happening. But, first and last, about Schmidt’s speech at this dinner. A German hasn’t spoken like this about Germany and Russia in a hundred years. Schmidt eclipsed everything Brandt said in his time (during this visit, Brandt ended up in the background, and I heard he behaved poorly during a conversation with Brezhnev: he harped on about “North-South” and annoyed his interlocutor terribly!).

Back to Schmidt – there was not a single smile or facial expression to betray that he “sees everything” and understands that Brezhnev is nothing but a prominent figure who is moving in a certain direction by inertia and the efforts of his advisers and Gromyko. He behaved respectfully (though not obsequiously), and this respect was not so much for the “great power” as for Brezhnev’s old age and seniority. I think his self-control betrayed him only once: when publishers brought books to Brezhnev (his “Biography” published by Simon & Schuster) so he could present them to Schmidt, Scheel and others... And Brezhnev started signing them. Slowly,

slowly he wrote out his name. For a moment, in the Chancellor's big green eyes, behind the glasses flashed irony and sympathy, closer to pity and forbearance. The irony was not only about how Brezhnev played his role, but also about how he was forced to perform it: Falin had approached him earlier and whispered something in his ear. Then the publishers approached with the books (when they got the signal!). Brezhnev once again did not understand why they were there. Falin bent down to Brezhnev's ear again and started explaining loudly (hard of hearing), and extended his arm. Only then the "process" slowly started. And all of this had been reviewed and "agreed upon" with Brezhnev back in Moscow and again in Gymnich.

The same story with Wehner and Mishnyak. A mistake was made at the very beginning, back in Moscow: no plans were made to receive the chairmen of the ruling coalition factions in the Bundestag, unlike Kohl and Strauss, the chairmen of the two oppositional-reactionary parties. When the mistake was discovered, it was decided to make up for it by "bringing them" to Brezhnev "after the meal" and after Scheel and Schmidt's departure. I happened to be by the door as they were leaving. Brezhnev walked the president and chancellor to their car and then the protocol officers started dragging him back inside so he could shake hands with Wehner and Mishnyak. But Brezhnev was asking. "What for, what am I going to do there? Why do I have to go back?" They barely managed to persuade him, even though just ten minutes prior Falin had whispered all these details to him, and then approached Wehner (who was sitting next to me) and told him where to wait...

The worst of it was at the closing remarks before the signing. Schmidt, in an elegant manner and smoking his pipe, said a few words and suggested that the ministers should first "report" on their negotiations. Gromyko executed his part very well – weightily, clearly, only the essence, with assessments and definitions in a very friendly tone, without a paper under his nose. Genscher was markedly weaker, he tried to nickel-and-dime us. Then the opposite – on economic matters, our Tikhonov (Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers) turned out to be primitive and muddled, especially compared to Graf Lambsdorff (Minister of Economics) who spoke after him.

Then Schmidt (here he made a mistake, he could have foreseen that it would put us in an awkward position) suggested to Brezhnev: "Mr. General Secretary, how should we proceed? We can call the press right now and both give our remarks with assessments of the outcome, or we can first speak without the press, and then go down to them and make statements after the signing."

Brezhnev was clearly confused and said, "Whatever you prefer..." He did not have a "memo" for this situation.

Schmidt: "Then I suggest we speak here first... Would you, Mr. General Secretary, like to speak first?"

Brezhnev: "I would like to hear your assessment."

Schmidt: "Very well." And he started speaking freely, giving an assessment that we did not foresee in Moscow. He was much more positive than we anticipated. He finished, it was

Brezhnev's turn. There was a memo in front of Brezhnev that Blatov and I prepared back in Moscow, and we wrote it in a rush because this whole agenda item was decided just before departure. But this memo was prepared for the public appearance at the signing, in front of journalists!

While Schmidt was discussing the abovementioned procedural questions directly with Brezhnev I could see Blatov fidgeting in his chair in horror, and Aleksandrov, who was sitting on Brezhnev's other side, dashing between Blatov and his seat. But it was impossible to fix anything at that point.

Brezhnev energetically started to read the materials that were meant for the press. By the way, it did not sound bad, a match for Schmidt. However, we were terrified about something else: what would he say to the press?!

I saw Aleksandrov feverishly writing something. When Brezhnev finished, Aleksandrov jumped up, handed it to him, and started explaining loudly (otherwise you don't get through). Brezhnev studied the note – Andrey's scribbly handwriting! I, too, cringed with embarrassment and inner panic, even though it seemingly did not concern me "personally."

Andrey composed a memo for the press "on the fly." A few phrases. He tried to convince Brezhnev to memorize it, so he would not have to take out the paper and read it in front of the reporters.

Later, when we went downstairs to the tables for the official signing, the tables across the room, arranged in tiers, were packed like sardines with of hundreds of photographers and various correspondents...

Brezhnev said the "memo"... consisting of three phrases, and he did not finish a single one of them (he forgot the endings). He could not finish his "speech" at all, he just gestured with his hands. People saw this in Moscow on TV!

Then we flew to Hamburg. Boeing 707.

May 21, 1978

On May 8th first Blatov, then B.N. notified me that together with the MFA I will have to urgently prepare a draft PB resolution on the outcome of the visit. In the morning of the 9th, Victory Day, I sat down to write the text. There was not a soul at the MFA, of course. I think I only found Kovalyev the next day. He said, "The CC always prepares these kinds of drafts..."

I composed the text in about an hour and a half. It went through the MFA, B.N., and Suslov, and almost without any edits was passed by the PB and published in the newspapers. Although there was one significant edit: Suslov replaced the word "historic" with "important political" visit!!! He commented to Ponomarev – "There is a visit to Czechoslovakia coming up, is it also going to be historic???" The day before yesterday he seemed to be reproaching B.N. over the fact that we always use both titles – "General Secretary" and "Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet." Even when talking about purely Party matters. It is not necessary. It should be corrected... B.N. was pleased, of course, and tried to "explain" that all

around the country there are currently discussions of *The Small Land* and *Rebirth*. But Suslov did not accept the explanations. And what's the connection? There is a connection, however. B.N. probably wanted to say that the glorification has gone so far that using just one of the titles won't change anything!

May 10-11th – frantic finishing of materials for the congress of the Swiss Party of Labour (communist). On the 12th our delegation, headed by Kapitonov, flew on a special plane to Geneva.

The congress is quite “Eurocommunist,” only without anti-Soviet provocations (it would not be beneficial for them: we still pay quite well, including for the congress itself). The Swiss Party of Labor will keep following the Italians and French. I did not find anything new or surprising there.

I was, however, dumbfounded by the level of incompetence of our head of delegation. What competence can we even speak of? He is simply intellectually drab, nondescript, ignorant, and on top of everything a very stupid person. He never managed to grasp what was going on. He was genuinely surprised by the cool reception he got on the podium when he read his speech and presented a gift to the congress – a large, encrusted portrait of Lenin. (On this account the sharp-witted Muret, member of the Politburo of the Swiss Party of Labor, said to me, “Are you hoping to stop the renunciation of Leninism with this portrait?”) Kapitonov especially could not fathom why not only was there no standing ovation when he conveyed personal greetings from the General Secretary, Chairman of the Presidium... etc. There was not a single clap to be heard. When he got back to his seat after the speech, he kept pestering me – why did this happen...

The degree to which he mispronounced the names of Swiss leaders, with whom he worked the entire week, was embarrassing. He mangled them so badly that even the language barrier could not conceal it from the Swiss.

After I wrote the ciphered cable report to the CC on the outcomes of the congress, he agonized over my “analysis” (about 70 percent truthful and critical), syllable by syllable. He obviously did not like it, but he could not “articulate” what exactly did not suit him. The ambassador helped him out when he furiously intervened after taking the criticism of the Swiss Party of Labor as a personal affront. (He was saying he's been in Switzerland for only six months and how is it possible things were ok before but got worse when the new ambassador arrived). He was instilling a similar idea in the CC Secretary: it is unthinkable that a “bad” congress could take place when the Soviet Union sent such a delegation, with such a head of delegation. It cannot possibly be bad. The Swiss Party of Labor immediately became better when it got such a delegation for its congress. They won't understand in Moscow how it could be otherwise.

Kapitonov latched on to this and decidedly rejected my text, despite my fierce resistance and arguments, including: when we get back to Moscow and read in the newspapers that the new General Secretary of the Swiss Party of Labor Magnin protested over the trial of the dissident Orlov, how is that going to make us look? It had no effect. As the result, the ciphered cable was very whitewashed, practically false.

This is dangerous not just because lies (misinformation) do not lead to anything good at such political levels. It is dangerous because we are dragging out, nurturing the illusion in ourselves and our friends, that the CPSU is capable of stopping the “Eurocommunism” process, that nothing is really happening, that the ICM remains “ours.” However, when I spoke to B.N. about it in Moscow, I did not get any support from him. But for another reason – he says if things are going badly all over the place they will say Ponomarev’s department is falling apart.

Kapitonov and his closest circle – the assistant, doctor, adjutant, guards and interpreter – lived at the UN residence, with Zoya Vasilievna Mironova (our representative at the UN Headquarters). She convinced Kapitonov to give a speech. He agreed and invited me to take on the international part of the conversation. But he changed his mind the next day. As the result he spoke alone in front of our highly qualified diplomats. A whole hour of dreadful incoherence, monstrously primitive. An entire fifteen minutes was devoted to “Brezhnev personally”...

It was extremely embarrassing. I looked at people’s faces (since I was sitting in the presidium): a mix of expressions of official respect, surprise, and ridicule.

Yesterday, on Saturday, already in Moscow, I went to the CC because of some texts Kapitonov was demanding for his report to the PB.

However, when I was there I got a call from Aleksandrov. Communists are being executed in Iraq. They are asking for Brezhnev’s intervention. So I started composing a paper on this subject, without being fully plugged into all these Arab affairs.

I dictated some ideas on how to consolidate and develop the results of Brezhnev’s visit to the FRG.

Lev Bezymensky [stopped by] with a heap of West German newspapers following the visit. Mostly about Leonid Ilyich’s illness.

The dissident Orlov has been sentenced to seven years. There is a pandemonium over it all around the world. *L’Humanite* and *Morning Star* already came forward with decisive and vicious condemnation of our action. B.N. started fussing – we must refute and explain. But he feels the futility of this. He tells me, “These courts (!) should have asked the CC how to proceed. Now they went after him to the full extent and we have to face the consequences in the ICM and the world community! Strange!”

The Orlov affair has been happening for a year and we’ve known about campaign in the West on this issue for a long time too. It would not be difficult to guess for certain people what results it would have for us...

May 27, 1978

This week we are fending off statements from “fraternal parties” about the trial of Orlov. We composed appeals to conscience for the Great Britain CP, Belgian CP, signed a letter to *L’Humanite*. Italians and Swiss are next in line... B.N. invited me to his office, paced the room – what to do with the ICM? He is especially concerned about the French. There is an

uncontrollable stream of “renunciations” of the CPSU, the disappearance and extermination of love for the homeland of communism.

June 4, 1978

Beautifully written (putting them to shame) reprimands for the Belgian CP passed the CC (on the Orlov case). But a dressing-down for *L'Humanite* did not pass through Suslov. Bogolyubov called me (deputy in the General Department) and said (these people are always happy when the superiors do not approve someone's text) in the form of a reprimand: “Mikhail Andreyevich ordered to archive this paper of yours. What are you doing, anyway – giving notations, lecturing, reprimanding. Look at what's happening in the ICM! Marchais is in a rage, and what are you doing?” And so forth. The blabber of a man who fundamentally does not know anything at all.

I asked him: “Is this the opinion of M.A.?”

“Yes, of course.”

“Can I pass it on to Ponomarev?”

“Yes, of course...”

So, Suslov stopped our rebuke of *L'Humanite*. And that is very good. But will it teach Ponomarev anything?!

I thought to myself: what if this is not just a manifestation of fatigue and indifference, but of real political wisdom?! What if we (the CC, Suslov) are truly starting to understand the new realities and the worthlessness of our previous relationship with the ICM?!

However, even if Suslov thinks so (which would mean a lot already) he cannot do everything at once.

It was a slight to B.N., of course. But he recovered quickly. And... despite my objections, including in written form, he made me write a protest in response to the letter to Brezhnev from the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party (with demands to release Orlov). He ran to Suslov with it. It seems the latter did not want to give him a refusal to his face. He kept the paper. B.N. rushed to inform me that M.A. “voted for it.” However, we found out an hour later that Suslov put the letter to the Secretariat, for Tuesday.

Brutents explained all of this as follows: Suslov does not have to “distinguish” himself before his superiors... While B.N. has to constantly run around, showing that he is “taking all measures” to organize the mess in his department. Suslov can afford to proceed from the substance of the matter. Ponomarev, on the other hand, has to constantly look over his shoulder, which makes him lose sight of the essence of things, the sound political sense.

June 11, 1978

Meeting with O'Riordan, who was on vacation here. I explained to him the entire international situation. The main thing: how to interpret the NATO session in Washington – as

the end of the “former détente” or maybe the U.S. is turning sharply toward anti-Sovietism for internal reasons. I also explained everything about the PCF, PCI, the Spanish congress, etc.

Generally speaking, there is a problem: is there really a turnaround, or are they simply drawing a “global” conclusion from the experience of détente, or rather from their offensive on us on the basis of détente. In fact, together with the communists, they managed not only to shake but to destroy the “image of the Soviet Union” as a major positive and progressive force. This image emerged during the war, and was reinforced under Khrushchev and for a while during the early 1970s (the “Peace Program”). Now they want to switch to a “suppression” attack, and they want to do it together with the Chinese, adopting the ideological literature of the Chinese against us.

Judging by the reports from the session of the General Assembly, Gromyko and his MFA don’t think that anything special is going on. Indeed, the general situation does not seem threatening if you judge by the Europeans, who are pretty tired of the Americans and now have a big opportunity to turn up their nose.

However, for now it is still the Americans who are shaping the “major policies” with us. But our relations with them are getting worse and worse.

B.N., with his propagandistic mindset, started sounding the alarm. In our circle at first. But he did not stop there. He got through to Brezhnev and “alarmed” him. The latter assigned him to prepare a “little text” to say at the PB, where Gromyko’s report on his meetings and the UN General Assembly in New York overall was supposed to be discussed.

B.N. called me and asked to edit the materials he prepared for Brezhnev. There were some of his own ideas that he expressed at the meeting with deputies and some of our ideas: that the Warsaw Pact should make a statement on the NATO session, that Ogarkov should give an interview, that we should send a letter to the U.S. Congress and the parliaments of Western Europe, that we should appeal to the communist parties and the Socialist International.

B.N. was glowing when he returned from the Politburo. “Everything worked out.” Gromyko’s “self-assured” calmness was checked. Apparently, Brezhnev said that we cannot “passively” react to what is happening, and supposedly he presented everything B.N. suggested. I’m not sure. It will be clear when the text of the speech comes out in a couple days.

There is an exhibition of Glazunov at the Manege, second week now. What is happening there! I haven’t been yet. People say you have to get in line before daybreak. One of the Central Committee drivers told me about it in detail. He did not understand a lot about it, but he was very intrigued and enthusiastic. I heard a great deal from other people too. In general, regular people are going there in droves, not just connoisseurs and regulars. Glazunov is like a counterpart for Yevtushenko, only in painting. It is a fascinating phenomenon of our modern life: hunting for books (the black market is enormous), for unorthodox music, overcrowding at all galleries exhibiting anything with even a hint of originality, etc. Is it a search for spirituality? A reaction to the emptiness and trite grandiosity of the official sphere, which now does not even raise

people's curiosity. People brush it off with jokes – they do not struggle against it, they just brush it off.

June 25, 1978

Pravda published an article – “On the Current Policy of the U.S. Administration.” The noise continues, but now from our side, because the Americans started a “rollback” (through Vance and Carter himself). Their attack on us – it was an “internal” affair. If Gromyko's line had prevailed, our reaction accordingly would have been at the level of Yuri Zhukov. However, Ponomarev's alarmist line took over temporarily. And the day before yesterday there was a message from TASS on the situation in Africa. But B.N. was barely able to push through the letter to fraternal parties. The Secretariat was skeptical, forced [us] to cut the text... B.N. managed to at least partially gain the upper hand through his audacity: the letter has been reduced by more than a third. Now our letter to Brandt, which Veber and I composed, is out of the question.

A delegation from the DKP was here (Mies, Schroeder, Weiss). The official meeting took place in the building of the CC Secretariat. Suslov did not come to the meeting. (B.N. had earlier told me, “He gets tired, he cannot do it...”) B.N., Dolgikh, and I were present. Mies presented a rather interesting analysis of West German society, especially about the “spiritual crisis”: “There will not be war, but unemployment resulting from the Scientific-Technological Revolution and pollution of the environment is making the young people question – where are we going? What will happen to us? What will happen to our children?”

B.N. responded with his usual rubbish, his trite *idées fixes*, which I've been listening to (and every time like it's a new discovery) for decades now. It was embarrassing to sit there and listen to him. He reminded me of a little drab assistant from the Department: you call him over to tell you about a situation in “his party” and he starts to mumble about when the party was founded, how many members it has, and what the last election results were. Ultimately you've wasted your time, because it turns out you know and understand more about the subject than this expert-specialist, who gets a decent monthly wage to work on nothing but this subject.

It was very boring for the Germans to listen to something like that at this level. But for the first time we had an interesting discussion “in the waiting room,” without our superiors. Alas! They are “good” and will be quiet about it, they might not even “analyze” amongst themselves such meetings at the CC. As for others, who are prone to “Eurocommunism,” they are only becoming increasingly convinced (after this sort of contact) of the CPSU's theoretical and general intellectual impotence, its inability to comprehend the enormity and complexity of what is happening, to penetrate the core concerns of Western Communists.

July 2, 1978

I saw the Glazunov exhibit. It was disappointing, even compared to my expectations (I had a more or less adequate idea about it based on what others told me). The “philosophy” – Solzhenitsyn on canvas. And in strikingly frank form. The artist is one of those people who do not wish to be difficult to understand. At the center of the exhibit is “The Return of the Prodigal

Son.” Honestly, I did not expect that anti-Soviet sentiment could be demonstrated like this, in the center of Moscow, with thousands of people attending. The execution of the paintings is vulgar, poster-style, using techniques that are hackneyed in the West, but here they seem new and shocking to our inexperienced public. There are, however, some pieces with artistic merit (still within the framework of the same philosophy – “what has the Soviet regime done to beautiful Russia!”) For example, “To your health!” [«За ваше здоровье!»], “The Blizzard” [«Метель»], “The Horse” [«Лошадь»], and the weaker but brash pieces “The Staircase” [«Лестница»], “A Portrait of our Elevator Operator” [«Портрет нашей лифтерши»].

Anyway, the “epic” and “historical-iconographic” Rus’ (all the Ivans the Terrible, Godunovs, murdered tsareviches, Prince Igor’ and numerous Rublevs) is incredibly vulgar both in execution and “informational value.” The “idea” here is the same: these are simply illustrations for “program” pictures.

The “famous” portraits are all done the same way, with the same “Glazunov-style” eyes. Illustrations for Dostoyevsky, Leskov, Melnikov-Pechersky – they are all secondary or even tertiary. In general, you walk around the rooms (there are 400 paintings, after all) and you can’t shake the feeling that you’ve seen all this before, many times – this manner, these images, these subjects, and even the range of topics covered.

On the whole, he gave a big slap in the face to the Ministry of Culture, which washed its hands and was forced to admit publicly that everything is allowed here, short of walking out into the street and yelling “I am against the Soviet regime!” or making abstract art (which, incidentally, is absolutely harmless, because nobody understands it, but it shocks such “virgins” as Popov (Deputy Minister of Culture) and others like him, because Stalin forbade everything of the sort).

Glazunov totally evened the score with Popov for not letting him exhibit his “[The Mystery of the] XX Century” [«XX век»] on Kuznetsy Most.

I’m personally not against exhibitions, they should show whatever they want. But I am against *Pravda* publishing a generally laudatory article about Glazunov’s exhibit (obviously pretending that nothing is happening and clogging people’s minds with their absurd interpretations of the artist’s intentions) and stopping the real discussion in other newspapers, and not just newspapers. However, this is a more common problem. Yesterday I read a small article in *Novy Mir* about the relationship between Pushkin and Chaadayev. It cites Aleksandr Sergeevich: there is no public opinion in Russia, he says. Depending on what you consider to be public opinion today, maybe it exists, but how is it treated! You would think, at least in the artistic sphere we could talk openly. The case with Glazunov is precisely one of those times when for the sake of Helsinki the authorities are consciously covering up something vulgar (turning a deaf ear). More than that, they are expressing solidarity with it, which throws the “public” into total confusion.

Crowds of thousands of people continue to stand by the Manege, day and night. When I was there (on one of the exhibit’s “days off,” a large group of teachers – members of the All Union Congress, plus a group of about 200 people from the Council of Ministers were allowed to

visit) – these provincial teachers moved from painting to painting with square eyes. They dutifully wanted to believe what they saw (since it is officially allowed and appreciated by *Pravda!*) but they were utterly perplexed.

However, it will be even worse if it gets to the top (for example, someone like Andrey Mikhailovich stops by the Manege...) And the heads will start rolling. Helsinki won't stop them.

July 9, 1978

It was a substantial week. The CC Plenum on agriculture took place. It had been in the works for a long time, about 5-7 years. It was impressive. I think to a great extent thanks to Karlov (the Head of the Agricultural Department of the Central Committee) – a strong, calm, “from the plow,” intelligent and brave guy. He is not a handsome man, but has expressive, serious and kind eyes.

A novelty: two-three days prior to the Plenum, members were given two thick volumes (a compilation of the latest CC resolutions on agriculture and a compilation of statistics). Brezhnev's report was about 20 minutes – it was essentially a summary of a detailed written report that was handed out at the same time. It was quite candid. You start to understand the deep currents of the process after listening to the speeches. Along with the standard, checkmark “reports-oaths,” there were some very strong speeches that evidence the fact that our oblast committee leaders are truly cadres capable of doing great things. Some of them reminded me of the people during the war who transported all our industry to the East, organized military production from scratch and surpassed the Germans in weapons power. I especially remembered Gorbachev (Stavropol), Ignatov (Voronezh), and one woman – a secretary of a rural district committee from the Volgograd region...

The most acute problem, as I understood it, is the fact that the “transition of agriculture to an industrial basis,” i.e. increased mechanization and chemicalization and so forth, led to a huge transfer of the major resources that went into agriculture after the March 1965 Plenum back to industry.

Staggering figures were given, when collective farms, state farms, the regions, and entire branches of agriculture of a given oblast would yield twice or three times as much as the Plan, would exceed the Plan by 30-40 percent, but every year they became increasingly less profitable and ended their annual balances with huge deficits and fell in ever greater debt to the state. Because a new tractor, for example, is about 15-20 percent more productive, but costs twice as much.

The situation is the same with centralized transportation, fertilizers, and other such “services” provided to the rural agricultural areas by industry, or, more simply, by mechanized units that do not directly belong to the collective farms.

A new “Scissors Crisis” has developed. Moreover, the incomes of those who “service” agriculture are not impacted by crop failure due to natural disasters, any calamities, or anything else. They increase profits year after year. And the collective farms have less and less means to pay for all of this.

Aside from material consequences, there are also moral consequences to all of this – these were rarely talked about without a glance over one’s shoulder. Everyone welcomed an increase in purchase prices starting on January 1, 1979. Many demanded to do it immediately, in July, so the prices would increase on September 1st, i.e. for the current harvest. But Suslov deemed these proposals as “insignificant” and to the cheers of the apparatus swamp, which is far from any agriculture or conscience, voted for the draft resolution as a whole.

Anyway, I am only in favor of giving an explanation to members of the Plenum: why this or that is impossible. It is not so difficult to explain: metal, coal, oil, chemicals are becoming more expensive, etc. But against this background the opportunism and clumsiness of those who use “objective” reasons to simply rob the agricultural sector would be more obvious.

Now, from a distance of several days, in the atmosphere I exist in day by day (international affairs), one can see more clearly the main reason why these wonderful people who work in the field, who are truly our “golden fund,” still have not been able to literally flood the country with food and such – because of military expenses and the colossal unproductive expenditures at every level of the bureaucracy.

July 14, 1978

All of the West is going crazy over Sharansky and Ginzburg. From Carter to the French communists, who for the first time took their protest against us “to the street” and participated in a mass anti-Soviet demonstration together with Zionists, Trotskyites, fascists, socialists, and various democratic and anti-democratic organizations. Their slogans were: “Hitler-USSR,” “Down with the Anti-Semitic State,” “New Nazism,” etc.

Today I talked with Bert Ramelson, an old Jew from Vinnitsa who has been living in England since 1913 and was a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain until their last congress. He is our faithful friend, he is wise and always has all the answers. His conclusion was, “I can still understand you, I can put myself in your shoes. But I can no longer convince a regular working guy here in England. However, same as the regular working guy, I do not understand: if you are certain that you are right when you put dissenters in prison, then why do you not allow foreign journalists into the courts? If you do not let them in, the West will never believe you...”

Ramelson, same as Turf (Deputy Chairman of the Communist Party of Belgium) with whom Zagladin and I talked two weeks ago, spoke about the worst part of it: “The reality is that the majority of our population has an anti-Soviet outlook. The new generations do not know and did not experience your great historic achievements. The intensive and smart propaganda, using powerful modern tools, has created an unpleasant image of your country in the eyes of the middle-aged and young generations. They are not even bothered by a comparison of your country to Hitler’s Germany. That is why anti-Sovietism is easily taking on such an all-encompassing, universal character following your persecution of dissidents. There are no arguments you can make that could change anything. Your former prestige and revolutionary charisma among the youth, your heroism in the war against fascism – all this has long been swept away, it has become ancient history. It does not reach people and cannot stop anything. An insurmountable barrier has been created and there is no going back. Their reasoning is: yes, we

may not have it so great under capitalism. But it is worse, much worse in the USSR, and God forbid we should have what they have.”

I read a strong and original article by Aleksandr Pankov in *Novy Mir* Issue No. 6 – “about love” in Soviet literature of the last two-three years.

From my recent reading: “The South American Option” [«Южноамериканский вариант»] by S. Zalygin in *Nash Sovremennik* (Nos. 1-2, 1973), K. Vorobyov’s “And Now Enters the Giant” [«Вот пришел великан»] in English, S. Krutilin’s “Pustoshel” [«Пустошь»] in *Druzhba Narodov*, F. Iskander’s “Sea Scorpion” [«Морской скорпион»] in *Nash Sovremennik* (Nos. 7-8, 1976), V. Tendryakov’s “Eclipse” [«Затмение»] in *Druzhba Narodov*, M. Roshchin’s “Recollection” [«Воспоминание»] in *Novy Mir* (Nos. 5-6, 1977).

Right now, I am reading Semyonov, “Street Lights” [«Уличные фонари»]. Our modern prose is at a very high professional level!..

Reading this literature – prose that is overall top-class – again and again leads me to think about the ever-growing distance between politics and the everyday flow of life in our country. It’s not just that there isn’t a single mention of “the party and government,” “the building of communism,” “enthusiasm for labor,” or even the role of the authorities in general. These concepts are not just absent in the literal sense. They are totally absent. There are no events from daily political life; people’s lives are not connected to these events, which [in real life] are constantly present in the press, on the radio, on TV, at meetings, etc. It’s just like in Chekhov and Kuprin’s times: the government was “somewhere” doing “some kind” of politics, the history of the country was somehow forming, but literature was separate from it. It occupied itself with people’s inner lives and “interpersonal,” as we would now say, relationships. It turns out these relationships and inner lives are now very far away from politics and “official” life in general.

So, no matter what they say in the West about the Party controlling the spiritual sphere, whatever our information media might write, the literary process (and artistic process in general) is forming again according to its eternal laws, and overall spontaneously. Everyone is used to it by now, even the authorities that are supposed to “direct” it. Now they just tolerate it and make sure there is no blatant anti-Sovietism.

Things are slow at work. Yesterday I met with Kashtan (General Secretary of the CP of Canada). He acts high and mighty, but he doesn’t have a party or a policy. He was on vacation for a month and a half, first in Bulgaria, then in Romania (same as he did here last year – with his large family, three generations of Jewish-anti-Soviets). Now he spent a week with us (but already sans family), then he will go to Vietnam. Kulyshv (a referent) and I put together a big fact sheet on his party. B.N. did not read it. Unnecessary frustration. He does not need a CP in Canada, he needs a “loyal voice” in the ICM. We know what Kashtan’s colleagues are saying about him: he just needs to “survive” by getting money from the CPSU, of which he hasn’t once shared a kopek with any party organization of his party. But that is all just by the way.

On a more serious note – we sent Professor Koval’ (Deputy Director of the Institute of International Labor Movement) to the “Communist University of London,” at the invitation of

the CPGB. The day before yesterday he told us in detail about this, in his view, anticommunist and anti-Soviet university. In general, it is a confirmation of what I already wrote about: they do not recognize us as a socialist country. And they do not think the CPSU is a communist party. There is an atmosphere of open hatred and hostility toward everything Soviet. The proposal to organize a public international trial of Soviet leadership for the events of 1968 in Czechoslovakia was met with thunderous applause. Our “dissidents” are being portrayed as a handful of revolutionary intellectuals who, like in Lenin’s times in the late XIX and early XX centuries, are cut off from the people, which is why “it is so easy to imprison them.” Their idea is that they need to help the dissidents to “bring (as Lenin taught!) their ideas to the masses,” help them to obtain the support of the Soviet people (this is the CPGB’s internationalist duty), so later the question of “changing the USSR’s bureaucratic regime” can be raised in earnest. And so forth.

Depressing situation.

August 31, 1978

Woddis and Costello (two members of the CPGB) were in Moscow.

The scenario was as follows: Costello came earlier (he had been on vacation in Bulgaria) and Dzhavad told him, in his own name, what Koval’ had said about the London University. Costello stayed up, waiting for Woddis, and at night they locked themselves in a hotel room and discussed the situation. In the morning Woddis announced that he won’t go to any CC and won’t speak to any Ponomarev without meeting with Chernyaev first. I expected this. They rushed to me. Woddis was completely wound-up, pale, “If you think I am an anti-Soviet, then I have no business being here. I will leave immediately...” and more along those lines. I started off with all kinds of flattering statements. I said we know him in the Soviet Union, not just “in general,” but personally. We translate his books, we meet whenever he wants, and ask his advice on the ICM. Members of our leadership have known him for a long time and hold him in high regard, etc. But... here are the facts. Professor Koval’ had no apparent reason to make false accusations against you. We could not believe our ears. However, if you say that it did not happen, then so much the better. Let’s stop there. The most important thing is that you personally resolutely dismiss what you supposedly said at the meeting of the London University.

He calmed down a little. I told B.N. all of this, of course. He was pleased: we provoked them to “declare their love” for us. He decided not to touch any of “this” in his conversation. He really handled the matter “wisely.” He talked about the responsibility for détente, the Chinese threat, the great problems of the revolutionary process, etc. Woddis was glowing. He also got into global topics, and among them his refrain about China was curious: what shall we do with China? What can we do? What do you, the CPSU, suggest? I watched Woddis and periodically he glanced at me and I physically sensed his fear that any moment, any moment now Ponomarev would mention the London University and Woddis’ attitude towards dissidents... But B.N. made no mention of it.

All ended well. However, despite the “agreement” of positions on all international issues, the Brits refused to send out a communique (a modest, minimal one). They said it would look

like a joint political statement, and they weren't authorized to make one. Then again, the question of the communique was also discussed at our level, not B.N.'s.

Then we had lunch on Plotnikov street. It lasted almost three hours, we drank. Dzhavad and I laid out everything we thought about "Eurocommunism"=anti-Sovietism and the behavior of our brothers – the British Communists.

I was quite warmed-up by the time I said my concluding words: if communists have not completely abandoned scientific socialism yet, then is it really so difficult to understand that we (the USSR) are the way we are, the way history created us. This is our specific character, which they cherish so much at home. They are ready to close their eyes to the specific character of the Chinese, with their thousands of publicly executed people, but they do not want to recognize our specific character. We also need to be accepted the way we are. If they do not want to accept us – it is the end of the Communist Movement. It is nothing without us. And with the end of the ICM end the roles of the communist parties in "any specific country." So when you yield to anti-Sovietism out of moral considerations, you are signing a death warrant for your party.

They did not have a leg to stand on. They mumbled things that were not worthy of political figures.

So: they, like many other Western CPs, are afraid of a complete break with the CPSU because they understand the abovementioned points. But they do not want to identify with the CPSU, they do not want to be in the same moral-ideological company. This shocks them.

It shocks them because they are no longer representing the working class, which could care less about all these dissidents. They now represent that very middle class, which integrates public opinion and the workers. They represent the very category that is called "the public" in the West.

By the end they both kept saying: on this visit we once again became convinced that there are problems between us (the CPSU and the CPGB) and they will persist – since you are sticking to your positions and build illusions about the true attitude towards you of the Western working class.

Later (already in Jurmala), I kept thinking about the "outcomes of this meeting." And again, I came to my old conclusion: that right now we could really use a good dose of isolationism from the ICM, and from the "revolutionary movement" in all those Africas. The most tactically correct thing to do would be to let them know that we are sending them all to hell. Actually, this applies to international politics in general. The atmosphere would change radically in 5-10 years. The anti-Sovietism is fueled by the fact that we are sticking our nose everywhere, and often interfere by useless (or very outdated) means. They are afraid of us, they do not trust us and they will not, until we "retreat into ourselves" and devote all our energy internally. This would be the best thing we could do right now for progress in the world, including to preserve peace.

We ought to scorn those who rail against us instead of being offended and angry. The latter is unworthy of a great nation.

It seems we might be starting to see clearly on this subject, judging by our, TASS', reaction to Hue Guofeng's embraces with Ceausescu and Tito, which I read about in *Pravda* only when I got to Jurmala.

September 3, 1978

Who are we under Brezhnev? I thought about it for a long time in Jurmala. I will try to put it into words.

So: I, Zagladin & Co. – we are apparatchiks of the Khrushchev-Brezhnev era, i.e. people who are unable to come up with any new ideas. Khrushchev's ideas turned out to be illusions or pipe dreams. Under Brezhnev we have no ideas at all: just adaptation, slow and difficult adaptation to the changing domestic and international reality. However, this may be the highest wisdom for a period of such uncertainty that you cannot even call it a transitional period. Our society is not pregnant with anything new, conception hasn't even occurred yet. We are barely able to solve current issues. And life is developing in terms of depth, but not distance. The prospects seem to be purely quantitative: more and better quality. Nobody is trying anymore to figure out what is beyond that.

“Depth” means more complexity and at the same time a release from the bonds and norms of the past in human relationships, a rapid spiritual growth – with simultaneous moral and cultural impoverishment of a large segment of the population. The extreme expression of the latter process is drunkenness (on an unprecedented scale in Russia) and hooliganism. And less conspicuous but even more widespread – the socio-political indifference, and public cynicism among the youth.

We can observe the “depth” in the real blossoming of our literature, especially prose. And in some truly outstanding films. In the irrepressible interest in reading, which has been happening for a few years now and at times resembles some kind of social hysteria. Moreover, it applies not only to the professional and intelligentsia sections of the population.

But I digress. Yes, we are not carriers (and not generators) of new ideas. For two reasons: society does not need such ideas; and we have been taught too well, we know that new ideas are simply revamped or well-forgotten old ones. The Eurocommunists, on the other hand, have a weak education and superficial knowledge of history, of Marx and Lenin. We know it all inside out. When they enthusiastically create all kinds of “new” theories we just laugh. We studied all these things in our university days. And we are certain that all these “new” theories (if we talk about the ICM, for example) are nothing but a repetition (sometimes verbally coinciding) of Bernstein, Kautsky and others like them who contributed nothing of substance and served only for the survival of opportunistic pragmatism.

However, we see something else, too. Behind these theories there is a policy of distancing from us, from the CPSU, from the Soviet Union. Besides the initial foolishness present in this intention, it is evident they want something new. But they do not see what this new thing could be. And we definitely cannot help them on this score – not with experience, or

our own perspective, or new ideas, which we also do not have because our life does not provide resources for them.

Recently I read *The Next 200 Years* by Herman Kahn, W. Brown, and Martel. Realistic futurology. No interceptions... on the basis of budding or already existing possibilities. It is optimistic (they reject the idea of the end of the world due to lack of energy sources, raw materials, food, or due to pollution, etc.). But it is bleak. They admit it themselves. Evidently the prospect is not to lose the ability to develop in “depth.” There is great danger though: removing tension in material well-being can eliminate the need for spiritual development.

Time and again I find myself dumbfounded by the thought that I do not understand anything about the simplest things. I do not see the point of a basic newspaper text, I do not understand the meaning of well-known, popular words and phrases in connection with the realities they are supposed to denote. This happens more and more often when I’m reading ordinary political texts. Today I experienced this when I was reading Suslov’s speech at the opening of the new CC CPSU Academy of Social Sciences. It scares me. What kind of political person are you, if the meaning of the symbolism of political texts is disappearing in your consciousness?!

This is partly due, it seems, to the fact that these political texts are deteriorating and by now mean something quite different from what they meant when the Soviet political dictionary was forming. They are becoming a ritual “Our Father”... in which the only important thing is faithfulness to the canon, the (real) meaning of which has also long been forgotten... But what if I am the only one who is “forgetting” the meaning? What if the main cause of this is that I’m getting old?!

September 30, 1978

I haven’t written almost all of September. I came back to work on the 5th and immediately had to do two big things – transform the draft of Ponomarev’s report (for Sofia) into a readable format, and quickly get ready myself for the trip to Belgium.

From September 12-19th I was in Belgium with a delegation headed by Voss (First Secretary of the CC CP of Latvia) at a meeting with the Belgian Socialist Party.

The strongest impression: we met with people of all levels – from the chairmen [sic] of the Belgian Socialist Party and ministers to municipal officials and rank-and-file functionaries – nobody reproached us for dissidents. Meanwhile, the leaders of the Communist Party, with whom we had a two-hour conversation at their Politburo, once again raised this issue as an obstacle to cooperation with the CPSU, referencing public opinion and the country’s working class. The Belgian Socialist Party has 250 thousand members and the Communist Party of Belgium barely 9 thousand. In a word, I was convinced once again that the dissident issue is an organized weapon of struggle against us – any struggle, both imperialist and communist. The majority of regular people and the truly national forces in capitalist countries couldn’t care less about this issue.

One more general impression from interacting with socialists and communists. The former are busy with work, they are a solid, “irreversible” power, natural and ineradicable in its home. The latter are an afterthought, they fuss, develop hang-ups, act important, flaunt their independence, and all the while nobody needs them. And they have nothing to do. One episode from the embassy reception stuck in my mind: a group of PB members from the Communist Party of Belgium having a discussion like armchair politicians about world politics, about German unification (a threat!), etc.

Maybe Ponomarev is right for caring only about the PCF, PCI, PCE... because they are reality. The rest in the ICM (perhaps with the exception of Japan and India) are lifeless little groups, which have torn off the umbilical cord – Moscow – and are living out their last generation.

Three conversations in the Bureau of the Belgian Socialist Party (including their agitprop), a day in Antwerp, a day in Waremmes and Nieuw. Negotiations in the ministries of labor and economy.

Sunday trip to Amsterdam... However, less impressive than the one in 1972, when we were there with Gorbachev (from Stavropol).

I ended up not going to Australia for the Congress of the Socialist Party of Australia [SPA] because of the Belgium trip. Ponomarev strongly opposed it because the report in Sofia was coming up. There was a lot of discussion after the first draft, which of course he rejected, after his vacation and before the trip to Afghanistan (he went there with a secret mission – to warn Taraki that if he keeps slaughtering people who made the revolution, we will turn away from him. Already people are pointing fingers to blame us for the mass repressions. People’s anger is turning towards Soviet specialists, whom Taraki invited by the hundreds).

Ponomarev’s ideological plan is tied to “rebuffing” Cohen & others’ book *L’URSS et nous* [The USSR and Us] (it just came out in Paris, approved by the PB PCF and will be used as the basis of the pre-Congress discussions at the PCF). After all, the main idea of the Sofia conference is to show that real socialism is good, while keeping in mind that our former best friends no longer consider it good, at least not good enough to associate themselves with it and oppose it to the abovementioned (in Belgium) Western public. For us, the executors of the idea, the task is almost like squaring the circle: everything written by our academics, political writers, and career politicians no longer works. That means we have to come up with something special and talk about it in such a way to at least get them to listen.

I am reading Cohen’s book *L’URSS et nous*. The book is weaker than Giuseppe Boffa’s on the history of the USSR... but it is not anti-Soviet libel, it approaches the understanding of us (and the idea of us) that overall is not that different from what we started to think and write about ourselves after the XX Congress and during the XXII Congress. But unlike the latter, we are no longer able to stop and reverse what is happening in the heads and books of our “friends.” So, we have to adapt to what they think of us and who they think we are. We have to adapt in the broadest sense of the word, not just in the “ideological struggle in the world arena.” For – though we are a major reality ourselves, which allows us to impose certain ideas about us, this cannot

continue for much longer. Other realities are growing around us, which we cannot adapt to ourselves with our old methods.

October 8, 1978

Rasul Gamzatov as head of the delegation of the Union of Soviet Friendship Societies to Canada. He was drinking heavily. The hosts were in utter shock when at a reception in Montreal he moved close to the wife of the Deputy Chairman of the CP of Canada Walsh and said, "My queen, marry me, leave him... I am not handsome, but I am rich. You will have a good life." He fell to his knees and crawled over to start kissing her feet.

He did the same thing with an old woman – the wife of *Pravda* correspondent Bragin at a reception in Ottawa.

The only speech he was capable of making at a meeting in Toronto was reduced to him saying that when he gets back to Moscow he will ask to become a member of the USSR-Canada Society. The kicker is that all of Canada long knows that he, Rasul Gamzatov, has been the chairman of this society for many years.

In Vancouver at a meeting with Slavic studies students he could not remember a single line from his poems. And so forth.

Maybe it's true what Boris Slutsky once told me: "Gamzatov is a completely inflated figure. He was made by the "translators" – Kozlovsky, Grebnev"... It seems very believable.

Meeting with G. Tovstonogov before his trip to the U.S. as the head of a group of our prominent directors. I "explained" to him how to behave if the conversation touches on politics, especially human rights and Jews. I think we clicked. Mostly I advised him to just be himself. I said it's the best game plan.

He told me about an episode that happened recently with the Maly Drama Theater in Leningrad. They were performing Drutse's play about L.N. Tolstoy. At one point, a character says, "The Russian man is a coward"... This was the last performance of the tour, the entire Leningrad governing elite, headed by Romanov, was present. This was after a triumphant two weeks of performances with "dithyrambic" press.

There was movement in the box after the aforementioned phrase. When the second act began, Romanov stood up in his "royal box" and flung to the stunned hall and the actors on stage, "No! The Russian man is a not a coward! That's right!" loudly moved the chairs and left theater.

What happened!

Of course, all the flowers and words, all the honors planned for the end of the tour were cancelled.

Tovstonogov laughed, saying this episode will go down in the history of world theater.

As it became known later, Romanov ordered to “investigate” the incident. By the way, the person who said the phrase from Lev Nikolayevich was none other than Igor’ Ilyinsky.

October 29, 1978

The breaks in my diary are becoming longer and more frequent. I’m losing the urge to write. Maybe because I don’t want to repeat myself, and my thoughts are all the same. Come to think of it, the facts (mostly) are the same too. For example, Brezhnev is openly being called “the great leader of the Party and the people” at the 60th anniversary of the Komsomol. And he sits there – on the TV screen – pathetically and stupidly smiling, apparently not understanding what is happening. He looks around at his colleagues in the Presidium and claps when he is being extolled and glorified – if they are applauding then that’s what he will do too. It is obvious to everyone that he does not understand what he is reading off a paper, which was dictated by Aleksandrov from a crib of the corresponding organization.

And in general – festivities, celebrations, “personal” congratulations to one, another, to entire organizations, undertakings, conferences, and awards, awards, awards...

I was in Prague from October 23-27th. A working meeting of deputy directors of CC departments of socialist countries within the framework of the annual meeting of CC secretaries. I went with four other people.

I was the head so I had to speak a great deal, even though I insisted this time that they “divide up” so each member of the delegation would talk about his own sphere.

At the closed meeting (without Romanians and Vietnamese) I talked about Berlinguer’s visit and the importance we attach to the Sofia conference on real socialism.

They took us to a new town near Prague, in the Melnik district – Neratovice – which grew from a large chemical plant. They are building a lot and well: a sports complex and hall, swimming pool, club, housing. Everything is modern. They are well-off and well-fed. They have 86 kg of meat per capita per year. The most in the world. Stefanek (deputy head of the International Department) said that their PB is discussing the possibility of increasing meat consumption by 1.5 kg per year. But their Ministry of Health came out against it – it would be harmful to the health of the nation... While in Poland they recently introduced a rationing system for meat and sugar! There is integration for you. Our meat per capita is 56 kg. And even that is probably just in theory.

I read I. Grekova’s “The Department” in *Novy Mir*. She is talented... she is paving the way in stylistics, though many are mastering it now. When the plot and even characters of the story or novel are not the driving force but merely the grid used by the author to organize her thoughts and aphorisms. To keep it from appearing monotonous, these thoughts are uttered by different characters.

That’s not what I meant to write about though. Once again, I am convinced of the phenomenon I wrote about earlier: our literature, same as many other forms of art, is breaking

free from the dictate of politics (or rather, politicians) and acquiring its own logic – critical and independent reflection of reality.

The week before leaving for Prague I put a lot of nerves and skill into Ponomarev's text for Sofia. I rewrote (to my heart's content) 90 percent of the text so that I started to like it myself. We discussed it. B.N. noticed some merits. But then he went back to his rubbish, like a broken record – “new” ideas about the struggle for peace, which have been published at least five times in his previous reports and articles.

However, I noticed from his intrusions into the text that he does not tolerate even technically objective mentions of Gromyko's accomplishments in détente. We have known this for a long time. But what specifically can we write about SALT-2 and all the twists and turns without mentioning Gromyko's meetings with Carter and Vance? I'm also noticing that Ponomarev is increasingly trying to minimize mentioning Brezhnev. I think this explains his constant desire to show our struggle for peace starting with the Decree on Peace, rather than over the last 10-15 years, especially connected to our latest campaigns.

October 30, 1978

I quote the following from today's issue of *Pravda*, from yet another trite article by Yu. Zhukov, who is using (unchecked) *Pravda* as his personal cookbook for half-baked considerations on a variety of subjects.

Here's the problem. The Parisian magazine *Le Point* asked itself the question: “Are we currently at the origins of New thinking?” The entire issue, which was well advertised, was devoted to answering this question. The magazine wrote that they involved “all editorial departments” and the columnist Pierre Billard summarized the work done for this issue.

Here are some quotes [from Zhukov's article]: “The French feel that ideologies are bursting,” “a great shuffle” is taking place and “everywhere as a manifestation of common sense the taste for the practice and art of the possible is reviving...” “Our convoluted era, our convulsive society seem to be moving to the grave. Voices are singing from all sides that we are living by the last fires of the era of decline... Perhaps! But what if we are, on the contrary, meeting the dawn of a new era, entering a new stage in the development of human thought? What if this is a turning point when mankind, tired of speeches, theories, lies, crimes, wars, tyranny, genocide that have been cultivated by three thousand years of the cult of man and three hundred years of the cult of reason, is crossing out its mistakes, restructuring its language and redesigning its thinking in a new way? Convulsions or a renewal? It still remains to be seen...

“It seems on the other side of traditional ideological boundaries new thinking is forming, without taboos (restrictions) and without prejudice”... It is possible to outline the main directions of this new thinking, which is making a path for itself. Tomorrow may be disappointment, but today is oppressive. Well... we are left with the past, which we have to win over and preserve once again... This return to the past, this search for roots takes on quite a variety of forms, starting with the publication of numerous recollections and testimonies about the past and ending

with a true invasion of books, films, magazines, television programs dedicated to history. This, of course, does not happen by accident...

New thinking stipulates the rejection of “politics” and must be accompanied by a return to the religious principles in social life.

Yuri Zhukov, the “golden pen of *Pravda*” filled with garbage, really put on some ideological cancan with these ideas. But I thank him for the interesting quotes.

Yesterday I read an abstract of an essay by a currently famous Trotskyist Mandel. A quite Leninist concept of the impending revolution in the West. He believes that right now (not in 1917, or 1920, or 1945, or even 1968) the West is able to repeat the pattern of the Soviet revolution. With an emphasis on the role of the Soviets, dual power first and then the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In any case, as they say: if we continue to build relations with the revolutionary forces of the West on an ideological basis (and we cannot get rid of this) then the only company for us are the modern ultra-educated and intelligent Trotskyists.

B.N. told me today: we need to think... we are always afraid of a split in the PCF, PCI, the ICM... But maybe such a split would actually be advantageous for us... for our interests?!

I do not think that either scenario is “advantageous” for us. Both parties are indifferent to us. Herein lies the horror of our isolation – we are a “military superpower” and nothing else.

November 6, 1978

I read Anatoly Rybakov’s *Heavy Sand*. It is an event, considering our Jewish problem. He is essentially rehabilitating what we achieved before the war in the elimination of anti-Semitism and the creation of an internationalist atmosphere in society. He is reminding us about it persistently and “impudently.” Without any hints (unworthy of a great artist) just by facts alone he is reproaching us for “what we have now.”

It was an emotional read. I got teary-eyed twice. This has been inside me for a long time – at first fear, and then hatred for anti-Semitism. I remember when I was a young kid, a pioneer at “Koreshek” (a factory in Maryina roshcha district – I could see it from our windows, it was always smoking and stunk of non-ferrous metal fumes). Around 1930, maybe 1932-33... I was watching a movie at the factory club. A silent film. “Cain and Artem,” based on Gorky. It really got to me. This was before the time when my best friends became Lika Gordon, Esya Cherikover, Lilya Markovich, Dez’ka Kaufman (the great poet David Samoilov). Lika’s friend Nora (by the way, later she was a partisan together with Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya) was madly in love with me – a black eyed, narrow-faced beauty from a super-intellectual Moscow family. She would come to my apartment building late at night, accompanied by Lika, and throw little stones into my second story window. There were no phones back then... But I avoided her, I was shy. “I did not reciprocate her feelings.”

Anyway, before all that happened, before “Gorky Pilot School No. 1,” there was this movie.

The film impressed upon me an ineradicable feeling: Russians are big, strong, and kind. That is how they must be in relation to the weak and offended. They offended the Jews for a long time, not the Russians themselves, or rather not all of them – but someone on their behalf. And the bad among them. (I remember with what disgust and pain I reacted to my parents' joking or ironic “manifestations,” as people say nowadays, of anti-Jewish (I wouldn't say anti-Semitic) sentiments!)

The Russians are big. It is their duty to protect the Jews, to compensate with their large-heartedness and pliability for the offenses the Jews have suffered for so long.

I was struck by episodes in the street, when a simple Russian guy would stand up for a Jew, sometimes even with his fists. I remember an episode from Fedin's *Brothers* (though I do not remember anything else from that novel) when a Russian worker, a Bolshevik, ran into the street with a revolver and tried to stop the pogromers alone, risking his life.

I will always remember the words of a sapper, a Jew from my regiment, who had been clearing a passage for our attack and was blown up on a mine. I came up to him, bent down... He looked at me, or rather past me, at the sky, and said: “There you have it, Comrade Captain, you had one brave Jew in your regiment and now even he is... done for.” That was in March of 1945. Just before the end of the war.

And now this novel. Of course, the fact that it was allowed for publication means something in this bacchanalia of emigration, hatred, injustice towards Jews at every step. When they are not hired for good jobs, when they are not allowed into universities... when the powerful machine of Zionism is active in America and Israel and is permeated with a visceral anti-Sovietism.

However, I don't think this is the swallow that is the harbinger of spring. [Allowing the publication of the book] is just an action either to avoid yet another mini-scandal at the international level, or the opposite – to cover up our real policies towards the Jews. We (who are – we?) probably regret going this far. And I think after the XX Congress it might have been possible to make sure Israel did not turn into our mortal enemy. It would not have been easy... but we could have done it.

And we should not have taken the 1967 war personally... Our concern about the Arabs was a bad bet. It gave us nothing but a hassle, diplomatic defeats, and wasted millions.

Returning to Rybakov, I can say that he did a good, honest deed. He said the right word, which can help us to someday get out from our “anti-Jewish” situation and restore our good name – of a great and calm nation, a big and large-hearted defender of the weak and offended. And most importantly – it could help to revive the atmosphere of internationalism in public morality. It so happened that historically, the latter is impossible to achieve without ending anti-Semitism.

November 13, 1978

I am tired today, but I have to write – things are just too awful.

B.N. gathered deputies of the Supreme Soviet with whom we will be receiving American senators, headed by Ribicoff, the day after tomorrow. The most senior experts were invited, including the Chief of the General Staff Ogarkov. He straightforwardly described how we are playing hardball with the Americans over how many missiles to allow on one bomber: 25 or 30. To encode or not to encode all the parameters of missile test launches, etc.

Arbatov described all of it in one phrase – “f***ing posturing, while...” He said it as he walked into my office after the meeting was over, to get it off his chest...

Brezhnev refuses to meet with the American senators. However, on the same days as their visit he will be talking with the Ethiopian Mengistu. This is not even a question of what’s more important – to have Ethiopia at our side or to have an agreement with the United States on limiting strategic weapons (i.e. at least some easing of the arms race that is mangling our economy, and not just the economy). The problem is that by refusing to receive the Americans while embracing Mengistu at the same time, we are giving such a slap in the face of the Americans that the prospect of a treaty instantly moves far, far away.

Yura and I were discussing why this is happening. I gave my “hypothesis”: because Smolenskaya-Sennaya (the MFA) is more powerful than Staraya Square (Gromyko vs. Ponomarev)... But it is impossible that Gromyko “doesn’t understand.”

“However, besides Gromyko there is also your neighbor on the right (I am hinting at Ogarkov, who at B.N.’s meeting was sitting next to Arbatov).”

“Yes, that’s true. But I still think something else is going on here,” he points at his heart and adds, “my gut tells me that Gromyko is posturing at the SALT negotiations to make sure Brezhnev does not go to the U.S. Right now, Gromyko and others do not want to “show” him, that is why the meeting with senators was cancelled.”

“Is it very bad?”

“Yes. We were invited on Thursday (Arbatov and others are currently working at Serebryanni Bor, preparing Brezhnev’s speech on the economy for the upcoming CC Plenum on November 28). He is very bad. He can still read off a paper. But if there is a Q&A session, then... Though I could have prepared Ribicoff not to get into a discussion...”

“And how are things at Serebryanni Bor? (I reminded him of his phrase ‘f***ing posturing, while...’).”

“Things are bad. And nobody wants to openly look the facts in the face. They do not want to know anything. Everything is fine. Everything is wonderful. Nothing but successes and achievements. Suslov did not even allow our calculations at the PB, not to mention the Plenum. But look at what is happening...”

“On meat. Rostov-on-Don: after deductions for nurseries, kindergartens, restaurants, etc. the retail sales for meat come to 1.5 kilograms per person per year! There are better areas, but the amount does not go above 7 kilograms per person annually anywhere.

“We feed about 100 million tons of wheat to cattle. But because we do it without appropriate feed additives, 40 percent of it is wasted. And we import a lot of wheat from the United States.

“There are 120 billion rubles in savings accounts, plus about 40 billion rubles people stash under their mattresses [*в кубышках*]. The mass of commodities covers about 40 percent of that. How is this mass calculated? By the cost of goods! But a considerable part of it is never purchased, it remains on the shelves.

“One way out of the situation continues to be the increase of prices for goods of “narrow” consumption – gold, crystal, cars, etc. As the result, the rich get richer (because gold that is bought today becomes even more expensive tomorrow, same with cars and other such goods). The prosperity gap is growing, as well as discontent and irritation. Most importantly, these price increases haven’t had any impact on our finances in the last few years. They did not improve anything. Moreover, during the last Five-Year Plan prices overall were lowered by 840 million rubles, but over the last two years of the current Five-Year Plan, prices have increased by 1,400 million rubles. Everyone felt it.

“If the first increase in oil production by 120 million tons required an investment of 17 billion rubles, a further production increase by 120 million tons already required an investment of 28 billion rubles, and the upcoming increase in production by just 40 million tons will require an investment of 48 billion rubles.

“In 1982 the labor force will add just 300 thousand people due to population growth, and most of that will be in Central Asia.

“For the last 5-6 years there have been numerous discussions of the fact that we need to improve quality and effectiveness. But there is no progress. A mechanism has not been found to solve this problem.

“We need a radical restructuring of our entire system; we need to get rid of the planners and get new people; we need money, at least as much as SALT-2 would cost. But as you can see, we are ‘f***ing posturing’ over how many missiles to put on one aircraft, as if otherwise the U.S. would go to war against us tomorrow.”

November 18, 1978

What came of the incident with Zagladin?³ B.N. told me that Suslov called him. The pretext was not Zagladin’s article but the fact that just prior B.N. had again, for the third time, despite the CC Secretariat’s summer decision to “postpone,” forced *Pravda* to set in type the article written on his orders – “What do monopolies want from Eurocommunism?” B.N. imposed the page proofs on Suslov, so he could read them over the holidays and “return to the question of publication.”

³ Unbeknownst to Ponomarev, Zagladin published an article about Cohen’s book *L’URSS et nous* in which he let the Eurocommunists have it. This was just after Berlinguer had visited Moscow and hugged Brezhnev. Zagladin is not a man from the street, he is an insider. Everyone understood that embraces with Berlinguer were a hypocritical façade, and in reality the CC CPSU shares Zagladin’s point of view. [Author’s note]

M.A. said: “You see what a storm Zagladin’s few phrases caused, and you want a whole article! Anyway, how did this happen? Did you (Ponomarev) approve this article? Why are such things published without the CC’s knowledge?”

B.N. said to me, “I did not want to get Zagladin in too much trouble.” (I never figured out what he actually replied to Suslov.) “However, he really played a dirty trick on ‘us’ (!).”

As I understood it, the dirty trick was not the fact that Zagladin railed against the Eurocommunists, but that he got in the way and made it impossible to publish Ponomarev’s treasured article.

Thank God for it! It’s a blessing in disguise!

As for Ponomarev not wanting to get Vadim in too much trouble, it seems it is more important to him to appear as master of his domain (how could it happen that without his knowledge his first deputy published crucial things in the central organ of the CC!) than as a man who allowed excessive criticism of opportunists.

Yesterday we had a report-and-election Party conference of the entire CC apparatus. It was ceremonious and disgustingly bureaucratized. The CC Secretaries headed by Suslov came to hear the report and attend the meeting until the first break. The auditorium greeted them standing up, like school children at the entrance of a teacher. When the candidacies for the Presidium were being listed, every time a Secretary’s name was announced it was accompanied by applause (top-down, from Suslov to Rusakov). Later, when the list got to the “as well as” part, i.e. members of the Presidium like us, naturally there was no more applause.

Every mention of Brezhnev in the report, or in a speech, even in a passing phrase, was marked by applause.

The report itself consisted mainly of general propaganda talk about the country’s affairs in general. Nevertheless, there were some interesting data in the debates.

Yastrebov (head of the Department of Heavy Industry): we produce 795 million tons of coal, 575 million tons of oil. Western Siberia provides 90 percent of the country’s energy resources. Out of 250 million rubles allocated for housing construction and social needs in Western Siberia, only 34 million rubles have been utilized.

Bochkov (head of the Department of Light Industry): the state lost 11.2 billion rubles on the markdown of goods.

Simonov: train cars spend 1/5 of their time in motion, and 4/5 standing idle. Railroads have been extended 15 percent over the last 20 years, while freight turnover increased 4 times. Incomplete construction of the railroads – 90 billion rubles.

Anyway, everything was coordinated and “figured out” ahead of time – how many members from each department would go to the Presidium, who goes to the editorial commission (for some as compensation). The draft of the resolution was printed and bound and was distributed to all the delegates five minutes after the editorial commission was elected. Who was

assigned to announce something (this is an honor too), who was elected to the new membership of the Party Committee (two-three people changed out of seventeen).

In short, it was a circus parade, ceremonial, and deliberately, openly formal. It clearly has the purpose of demonstrating the overwhelming authority of party membership (over each individual). Tellingly, neither A.M. Aleksandrov, nor other high-ranking officials in the apparatus allowed themselves to ignore this meeting. The abovementioned A.M. kept running off but coming back: during this time Brezhnev was meeting with American senators, a meeting that he, Andrey, persuaded the General Secretary to take.

Then again, there is something to that – in this now almost irrational power of party membership – something from the Bolshevik tradition (although the content has radically changed: these kinds of meetings, like all our party organization under the Central Committee, do not have any real significance for our cause).

November 19, 1978

Yesterday on TV there was a concert from Ostankino, featuring Mironov, a film and theater actor (Moscow Satire Theater), the son of Mironova and Menaker. He is extraordinarily talented. He is versatile and smart at communicating with the public. He is physical and fluid, like a dancer on ice or a ballet dancer. But that's not the point, the point is the content. And the content is defiantly rebellious, especially in the first, serious part of the concert. Quotes from Ostrovsky, Saltykov-Shchedrin, Beaumarchais, from Mayakovsky's "Bedbug." The quotes are selected in such a way that they are no longer a subtext but direct text against the seemingly unshakeable rules of our cultural-ideological and every other kind of order. For example, from Ostrovsky: young people should not lose hope to be honest, and maybe they will see a better future. From Gogol: there is a Khlestakov in every one of us, but he is dangerous only in the atmosphere of general fear. From Beaumarchais: you can write about anything, so long as you do not touch the political foundations of the state and certain people, under the supervision of three censors. And more along those lines. It is significant that this is being broadcast to an audience of many millions: our censors are also increasingly inclined to turn a blind eye to everything but political foundations and the key players.

I also recently read an interesting article in *Literaturka* (approximately along the same lines). It said that moral issues are raised more fully and sharply in the stream of contemporary Soviet prose. Good versus bad (in intentions, actions, behavior, character traits). But, the article says, what's completely disappeared in the depictions of good people is why they are good, in the name of what, what "big" social ideas they represent, what "big" purpose they are fighting for, ultimately! In other words, they are talking about precisely the phenomenon I think I wrote about here earlier: "the building of communism," "the leading role of the party," and all the slogans that one encounters daily, morning till night, in propaganda and political literature are completely absent in fiction.

Last night I read in Blok's diary (in connection with his work for the state commission investigating the activities of royal dignitaries) – 1917:

“The old Russian regime was split into responsible and irresponsible factions. The former was responsible only to the latter, not to the people.

“This order required people to be faithful (faith in anointing), courageous (no ambivalence) and honest (the axioms of morality). With Russia’s overwhelming development in depth and width, the order required one more quality, even more imperiously – genius.”

Incredible! And the thing is, right now it is the same, down to the last word, if we replace “anointing” with “party membership” and faith in the party’s exceptional calling to lead the people to the ideals of communism.

He goes on: “The power holders in Russia have not had these qualities in a long time. The elite degenerated and corrupted the lower classes. This went on for many years.” The words of a genius!

November 25, 1978

The meeting of the PCC (Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact) took place. The Declaration ended up being unexpectedly (for me) tough: class terminology, formulas from the “cold war” days – about imperialist aggressors, revanchists, etc. In a word, such terminology has almost disappeared from our official diplomatic vocabulary (newspapers). What about the proposals? A compilation of everything we put forward over the last two years.

On Kulikov’s (Marshal) suggestion a closed document was adopted on improving cooperation in the military sphere. Ceausescu refused to sign it. I was told that he took the floor several times on this subject, trying to postpone it, “to move it to the working level,” “discuss it one more time,” etc. But each time other members (Husak, Kadar especially) drove him into a corner by saying: if you don’t want to sign it, you don’t have to. Nobody is forcing you and compliance is not mandatory for non-signing parties.

Ceausescu did not applaud at the end, and people say when he was riding in the car afterwards he cursed everyone and everything in Romanian, called them brownnosers and cursed his advisers for not stopping him and letting him sign the Declaration, which is good only to wipe one’s ass with. (By the way, ironically, the Romanians were the ones who insisted on using tougher language on imperialism. They were probably doing it with the expectation of putting us in an awkward position with the U.S. or creating a confrontation with “soft” countries like Hungary and thereby derailing the whole document. Instead, we went ahead and accepted their edits right away).

The Romanians flatly refused to mention in the Declaration solidarity with Vietnam (against China) and about Camp David.

I received the Minister of Culture and Deputy Chairman of the Party (ruling) of Jamaica – Bertram. A tall black man, with an Oxford diploma and so forth. He brought with him the ambassador and Prime Minister Manley’s secretary. He came to establish inter-party relations, among other things. He made many requests – to help them with ideological education of cadres (“although we are not Marxists-Leninists, we are not communists!”) with education and

culture... He was especially concerned about our views on two communist parties (a few dozen members in each) that appeared in Jamaica.

My false position. We organized his visit – the International Department, after I visited their Congress with our delegation. Formally, his visit was through the Ministry of Culture and he was received by Demichev, Lapin, Khatuntsev, etc. When he came to the CC he was suitably reverent – like he was at the very top. He raised all the questions, including the construction of an embassy, and the fact that our MFA is delaying inviting Manley (there have been two requests already), etc. But what can we, the International Department and B.N., do here? We will be embarrassed to even “remind” MFA officials about this, not to mention to Gromyko. Our opinion is worthless in this matter.

Today I read Arbatov’s interview in the *International Herald Tribune*. They are presenting him to the Western reader as something between Vance and Brzezinski. A politician, the main source of information for Brezhnev, an instrument of camouflage for Moscow’s true intentions.

He handled it skillfully. The other day he dropped by my office and told me he is going to the FRG with his wife. The program is – Schmidt, Wischnewski, Brandt, Bahr, Apel, etc. He told me how difficult it was to “balance on a log” for five hours. And the risk, he said, the risk!

However, he did not say anything special [in the interview]. The weight of this interview is only from the weight of his “persona” and “position,” not from the substance of what he said. But still, he did well! He really is doing important work, but not at all how the Americans imagine it.

November 26, 1978

Yesterday at tennis on Mokhovaya Street I ran into Romanov from Leningrad (we were in Chile together in 1972, met with Allende. Back then he wasn’t a PB member yet and was quite a democrat). Even though in the following years, after he became a PB member, he completely ignored me, this time he stopped and struck up a conversation like we are old buddies.

- How’s life?
- The usual. Working!
- Did you work on the PCC?
- No, that’s our fraternal department.
- Ohhh... How are things in Iran?
- ?? – I moved my head as if I could not hear because of street noise.
- What’s going to happen in Iran? – he almost shouted.
- I don’t know. The Americans will probably overthrow him. He does not suit them anymore...
- I see. Come visit us (in Leningrad).
- Thank you.

... All of this took place in front of the guards and adjutants, who were standing in the distance, shifting from foot to foot.

I keep running into him. During the last Plenum when he was also in Moscow, I ran into him on Granovsky Street (going to the cafeteria). But that time he pretended not to see me.

Maybe he will be the “First”! Anything is possible in Russia!

Yesterday I started to complain again about the bacchanalia over [Brezhnev’s] *Virgin Lands* (at a conference with reports by first secretaries of regional committees and Central Committees of the republics, recollections by the heroes of *Virgin Lands*, letters from readers and youth, studying it in school, in the Komsomol and party organizations... and in all the mass media, morning till night). It was one thing in the 1930s, when we had childlike naivete as a society and were rather ignorant in general. Back then we still believed in all of that (about our Father) – for the sake of our big and bright idea... But now! When nobody believes in anything anymore, when people are shrewd and know what’s what and why (for whom!) these things are done... One only has to look at the faces in the room where the General Secretary’s works are being praised (on the TV) to be convinced what people are thinking...

They think we decided to humor the old man before his end, let him revel in his importance and irreplaceability, his kindness and the immensity of what he did for the people. This is how we are expressing, essentially, epitaphic gratitude.

Maybe so. But somehow I do not really believe it... We never do these kinds of things “so deliberately.” It is more likely to be bad inertia created in memorable times, which in turn created likeminded people. Now they are guided by only one thing – do whatever it takes to keep their seats. They created a “fear of God” for themselves and at this point there is no specific person to embody it, but this fear is somewhere among us, and nobody dares to be the first to say – what are we doing?!

And absolutely nobody cares about its corrupting effects, and what harm it is doing to the living forces of society.

December 3, 1978

An important week. But I didn’t get a chance to even touch the diary.

The CC Plenum was on November 27th. The plan for 1979 was discussed. Again, the pessimistic Baibakov and the optimistic Garbuzov. Brezhnev spoke after them. Some distressing but circular facts and all the same conclusions: let’s keep at it and work hard. Nothing decisive. In the meantime, things are bad, judging by everything Arbatov told me. He had been working at Serebryanni Bor on the preparation of the Plenum. Things are bad with metals, bad with fuel – oil, coal... Bad with roads and especially railroads.

And the situation with meat is absolutely dismal. And there is no way out in sight.

Organizational matters:

Chernenko! He is moving up with cosmic speed. Right away he took a spot in the Presidium between Brezhnev and Kirilenko.

Gorbachev, Mikhail Sergeyeovich – First Secretary from Stavropol was made CC Secretary for Agriculture (replacing Kulakov)... This is a good candidate. A few years ago, I went to Belgium with him. We got along. He is smart, brave, extraordinary. He sees everything. He is concerned and devoted to his work. He is not an official. He can speak from the heart. I remember he charmed the Belgians. It's a good thing that such a man was promoted. Morgun (First Secretary of the Poltava region) told us later that Brezhnev called the new Secretary over and said just one thing to him: "Take care of meat. This is your main priority. This is why we elected you."

Shevardnadze and Tikhonov became candidate members of the PB. Mazurov – the scene of expulsion from the PB was oppressive for everyone. But before the Plenum closed, Brezhnev suddenly said a few words of gratitude to him "for his work in the PB" and the auditorium went wild. Ten minutes of thunderous applause... I think not only out of a sense of justice, but also thinking about themselves: you work and work, and then you are kicked out without even a kind word...

I am reading Kasvinov's sensational book *Twenty-Three Steps Down* about Nicholas II. At the same time, I resumed daily reading of Herten. Together, this creates such an associative mix that it's sending shivers down my spine: nothing is changing in Russia, in the very core of its national existence. Minor, mundane daily analogies and details are simply dumbfounding and... depressing.

December 10, 1978

An article was published in *Le Monde* on December 2nd by two French communists. They demand "total" exposure of the USSR as a "superpower" dominated by chauvinism and anti-Semitism, a superpower that drowned Hungary in blood and strangled Czechoslovakia, a superpower that has no democracy, only the dictatorship of the party which calls itself "communist." [The authors say] it is inappropriate to call the USSR and other socialist countries "socialist." When the term "socialist" is used to describe a country, it is invariably given in quotation marks.

December 11, 1978

An article (page proofs) in *Kommunist* by a certain I. Andreyev for the 100th anniversary of *Anti-Dühring* (compilation "The Round Table" on historical materialism, *Kommunist* No. 17). Just five years ago, Party membership would have been revoked for such liberties. They boil down to a heavy demand for a "creative approach" to everything, including historical materialism, because supposedly it has not been developed in a long time and it is not a sum of stiff categories... In general, if you read everything that is being published right now on so-called questions of theory, you can find many articles like this one, and they are at a decent literary level. Their point is in defending the right (and even the obligation) for creative evolution of theories and various social sciences. But that is just the first step (which is mostly being looked past) from the stiff canon – from ideological dogma to theoretical exploration of realities. A gingerly permission to engage in theory, and not just burn incense and faithfully bow to "the theory of Marx-Engels-Lenin." We will see what happens when "Young Turks" from

universities and other places take this permission seriously and begin to develop historical materialism in earnest.

I am reading and reading Kasvinov's *Twenty-Three Steps Down* about Nicholas II. The subtext is present all the time. Sometimes I just want to burst out laughing... over how the dignitaries and Duma members allowed themselves to speak with the autocrat, long before abdication. For example, when they advised him not to assume supreme command of the army in the summer of 1915. Today, no one would allow himself something like that, in any way, either in tone or in substance, say, on the occasion of our "autocrat" being named Marshal or awarded the Order of Victory.

December 16, 1978

On Thursday I was unexpectedly summoned to the Politburo. The issue of publishing an article against the book *L'URSS et nous* was under discussion, among others.

Brezhnev presided.

The first item on the agenda were the outcomes of talks with Saddam Hussein – the second man in Iraq. But that's not the point...

My main impressions:

- The General Secretary's total incapacity, he often does not understand, cannot grasp the essence of the matter at hand;
- The competence and mental clarity of the other old men from the Areopagus (Kosygin, Ustinov, Suslov);
- Petitionary, but persistent and interested (not indifferent) nature of the participants' speeches. These people can sometimes influence the outcome of the discussion, although on all issues the decisions are prepared in advance and "agreed upon" with the General Secretary;
- The enormous and dangerous role of assistants, especially Aleksandrov, who is very subjective, categorical, self-assured, and now he's lost all sense of moderation in an atmosphere of indisputability.

When opening each new agenda item, Brezhnev reads "his" opinion from a piece of paper prepared by Aleksandrov. His speech is tongue-tied, unclear – it gives the impression that he does not understand what he is reading. The decision on the issue is predetermined in this opinion note. However, fortunately, there are exceptions because Brezhnev's opinion is followed by free discussion, without papers (although with a departmental tinge). The General Secretary clearly does not follow the discussion, and then helplessly asks (this happened several times): "So, what are we deciding?" At moments like these, Bogolyubov (deputy of the General Department, Chernenko's deputy) runs over and slips something to him, evidently an articulated summary – the "decision." It must be said that the General Secretary does not insist on his original opinion, which is laid out in Aleksandrov's paper. He easily agrees with the decision formulated after the discussion. This is his natural wisdom. But nonetheless. These "arguments"

come up only as a last resort, only if Aleksandrov's paper goes far beyond the bounds of the reasonable or possible, or if it crosses the "interests" of some big department.

So, Saddam Hussein.

From Aleksandrov's fortunately very short paper, one could understand that Brezhnev spoke sharply about the repression of Communists. But it seems nothing followed Hussein's "clarifications." He emphasized Hussein's statement: whatever situation develops, even a military situation, we (Iraq) will always be with you (USSR). (Although it is not clear what this means. I think it is the usual eastern cunning to draw more out of us). Overall: Brezhnev's relations with Iraq are developing normally.

Then Kosygin spoke about his meeting with Hussein in Moscow. His presentation was clear and simple, with logic, assessments, and the necessary accents. It seems he really let Hussein have it for the repressions against the Communists. Hussein started to make excuses that the Communists are not being persecuted because they are communists but because they work in the army. Kosygin told him firmly, Comintern-style: you should meet with the leadership of the Communist Party instead of going through mediators. After all, you have a "patriotic," or whatever you call it, common front – so agree on order and let everyone observe it. If you continue to torture people, we will not look on indifferently. Be advised!

Kosygin got the impression that Hussein did not come with a specific list of requests. The questions Hussein raised were not as pushy as the Syrians, for example. The Syrians say: if you don't give us this and that, then relations between us as a whole will be called into question...

Ustinov agreed overall that the Iraqis behaved less impudently than the Syrians but outlined some details that are very characteristic for both. For example, they say, "Give us the newest T-72 tanks, and not just a few of them but 500! We don't need the 'old ones.' Give us a missile like the American 'Pershing' (surface-to-surface, 800km)." "We don't have one like it," Ustinov tells Hussein, "We only have a nuclear missile of that type." "You have it," the Iraqis respond, "We will adapt it to a nonnuclear warhead ourselves." "And that's how we negotiated," Ustinov said.

Or: "Give us the latest 8-inch howitzer" ("How do they even know about it?" Ustinov mused) "I tell them – we do not have one." "You do," the Iraqis object. And so forth.

Ustinov's description aroused indignation. Voices called out for a tougher approach.

However, Gromyko and Andropov urged everyone to take into account that if we refuse to give them anything, especially the Syrians, they will break away from us. And they really will not take "junk." Here Brezhnev said, "We have to give them something but emphasize that 'we are not giving this for offensive uses.' I said this to Hussein."

An interesting debate unfolded between Kosygin and Ustinov on another issue – training construction personnel in vocational and trade schools. The project included some benefits to attract young people to this industry, which is so necessary right now – including a 2-year deferment of military service after graduation. Ustinov spoke categorically against this (unlike

the others, when he speaks he always gets up and goes to the chairman's table, saying every time "so it will be easier to hear").

"With the demographic situation (the birth rate in 1960-61), who will then serve in the army, in the internal troops?" Ustinov appealed to Kosygin.

Kosygin calmly but firmly objected, "I am not suggesting we should exempt them from military service completely. But if we take them out of the profession for two-three years right after they finish school, they in effect lose that profession and we have to teach them all over again. Let them work for two years, then go to the army, possibly to the special construction units and so on."

Ustinov: "And who will serve during these two years, who will fill the contingent of troops? We are not talking about increasing [the number of troops], just maintaining the current level."

Kosygin: "And who will work? Who will fulfill the Plans? Who will build in the non-chernozem zone, where we are not meeting Plans precisely because there are not enough people for the construction projects?"

Solomentsev supported Kosygin. It was evident that many sympathize with him. The new Secretary Gorbachev ran up to Brezhnev and showed him something in a folder. You could hear he was saying "collective farm construction"...

Andropov took Ustinov's side.

The new PB member Chernenko joined in, saying, "Let the Council of Ministers find resources for conscription into the army through 'redistribution.' Then we can meet each other halfway."

At this point Brezhnev again said (although he already read off a paper at the beginning that the project is important and should be approved): "So what are we deciding?"

The decision was to return the project to the Council of Ministers for revision.

Neither Suslov nor Kirilenko uttered a single word during this stormy discussion.

Our issue – the book *L'URSS et nous*. Brezhnev reads off that [the article] is important and well prepared. But it should be published in the journal *Kommunist*.

(I saw that coming. Deputy of the sector Zuyev warned me that Aleksandrov called him the day before and praised the article very much but said that he will firmly insist on publishing the article in *Kommunist* as well as in *Novoye Vremya*. My first impulse was to call Aleksandrov and explain why B.N. and the Department chose *Novoye Vremya* and not another outlet. But I immediately stopped myself – it would just lead to another heated conversation with him, but the result would be the same.

(Meanwhile, B.N. discussed this question with us many times. We considered it from every angle. We initially preferred *Kommunist*, but ultimately decided to go with *Novoye Vremya*

– not only because circulation would be easier and “more natural” in France and abroad in general. Mainly, [we chose *Novoye Vremya*] for political reasons. *Novoye Vremya* already established itself as a magazine that comments on “Eurocommunism”... with opinion pieces. Of course, the whole world understands who is behind it. Still, it is not a CC organ, and the things it publishes could be the official line, or personal opinions, or warning shots for which the CC can indirectly “apologize.”

(In short, if necessary, the CC can always maneuver to take advantage of any opportunity to improve relations with a party that is offended by *Novoye Vremya*. This happened with the CP of Spain, with Carillo. But if a CC organ knocks a party like that, i.e. from the major caliber gun – if it does not lead to a break, then in any case it is an action that would be difficult to use for “strengthening friendship.”

(Aleksandrov either does not sense these subtleties, or he couldn’t care less about them. To him it seemed “more important” to publish in *Kommunist*, and he wrote that in Brezhnev’s paper.)

Suslov signed a note on this matter together with B.N., i.e. he brought this question to the CC and agreed that we should publish in *Novoye Vremya*. I think he heard this “differing opinion” for the first time. He did not object. I think if Ponomarev had been at this Politburo (he is in Sofia) he would have tried to oppose it. Suslov suddenly argued that we should publish it simultaneously in *Kommunist* and *Novoye Vremya*.

Many voices immediately supported him: yes, yes, yes. It should be published in both places, so not only the PCF leadership sees it, but others like them too. So it was decided. Brezhnev agreed – at least he made a sign that this question is closed, and Bogolyubov right away read the amended draft. (In the original, submitted by Suslov and B.N., it was just *Novoye Vremya*. Now they added *Kommunist* in front of it.)

And here – a musical moment – Brezhnev had not finished reading the paper prepared by Aleksandrov and when the noise subsided and everyone already decided that the issue was resolved and we were moving on to the next question, Brezhnev suddenly continued: “This does not mean the same material cannot be published in *Novoye Vremya*...”

The audience was respectfully silent, but one person did not understand what was going on and said, “I thought we already resolved that one...”

But that’s just an aside... Whereas the fact that Aleksandrov spoiled our tactical plan, that is serious. Now the French will get terribly pissed off at us. And our relationship will spiral down once again. Meanwhile, precisely in the last few weeks there have been signs that Marchais & Co. are making an effort to restrain themselves regarding us: his conversation with Chervonenko (unprecedented in atmosphere for the last 3-4 years), his speech in Vitry on December 9th at a meeting of the PCF CC with intelligentsia.

There we have it.

I’m going to Vnukovo-2 to meet Ponomarev arriving from Sofia.

Postscript to 1978

The year did not bring anything new. The economic collapse continued. Looking back two decades later, it is even more surprising that everyone saw what was happening – from district committees to regional committees to the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers. But nobody knew or offered a way out – a real solution that could be called political. Even the experts tasked with “analyzing” the situation and writing speeches for the top leadership. This meant that the Marxist-Leninist theory (in its Stalinist format, we haven’t had another one since the times of NEP) which was the foundation for ideology and economic management, which made abuse of the population “legitimate,” and at one time even fueled “the enthusiasm of the masses” – was completely bankrupt.

The mid-level cadres (district committee leaders) were growing impatient. There were some “strong guys” among them who were ready to “move mountains” at least within the limits of their competence. They appealed to common sense, to a recognition of local capabilities. But the “system” and ideology made it impossible to bring their experience and abilities to fruition.

This was superimposed with the completely lifeless state of the top leadership. It assumed an ugly, grotesque character in the person of the “chief” – the General Secretary and quasi-president. There was no longer any policy worthy of the name – neither foreign, nor domestic. There was the protective fuss of Andropov’s department over dissidents and the “exodus” of Jews, which was used as a bargaining chip in relations with the United States. (Andropov turned this into a career path that took him to the very top). There were arguments with Eurocommunists, who increasingly this year refused to recognize the USSR as a “socialist country.” There was inertia of formal, “diplomatic” peacefulness, connected to Brezhnev’s widely known determination to prevent a world war (more on that in the previous “volume”). No one could encroach on Brezhnev’s will, though in 1978 it was more of a mythical element. Later, at the end of *perestroika*, it became clear that the prerogatives and official authority of the General Secretary of the CC CPSU was the last redoubt of the Soviet system. This conviction was always present in the CPSU, even if it was not conscious.

Brezhnev’s visit to the FRG impressively demonstrated the senility of Soviet leadership. The description of this spectacle is the most amusing and the most depressing page in the records of 1978.

Nevertheless (and again, from the hindsight of the present day), in the turmoil and often absurdity of what happened during that visit one can see the signs of the normalization of Soviet-Russian-German relations. The “Eastern policy” that Schmidt and Brandt smartly and delicately imposed on the Soviet Union showed its effectiveness. Our leaders, again by inertia, counting on trade and economic benefits and closing their eyes to the consequences, welcomed it (it ended up benefiting both nations, as well as Europe and the world).

This “volume” is full of international contacts. The author’s impressions from these trips, as well as their actual content, are interesting even from a purely human point of view – mutual understanding trumped ideological taboos and conventionalities.

The volume contains many sketches of everyday life and cultural events. The conclusion: mass consciousness was increasingly alienated from the regime and the existing order. The irreversible break of spiritual life (literature, art, the private life of the intellectual part of society) from ideology and anything officially imposed became more and more clearly marked.

Not a single honest and more or less reasonable person could refute the fact that the Soviet Party power was becoming discredited.