

The Diary of Anatoly S. Chernyaev

1980

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January 1, 1980

The year was crazy. It was hectic at work. It exposed a great deal about the overall situation (in the sense that things are getting worse both domestically and internationally). In all respects it fell short of expectations. Judging by what I see around me and things I hear, people were bidding a gloomy farewell to the year that passed, and saying a gloomy hello to the new year. Stores are empty and over the last few days even stamps and envelopes have disappeared: I personally witnessed a scene at the Central Telegraph on this matter – “sabotage,” “inadequacy,” “whoever allowed this to happen should have his head taken off” and so forth.

January 28, 1980

I haven’t written for a month. And what a month! It’s like at the front: when you are in battle, you don’t have time to write. And after the battle, you don’t want to write about it, you want to write about something “lofty,” about Moscow...

The devil knows what is happening in the world. The whole world condemned and cursed us: in the UN – 104 delegations voted against us and only 17 with us. Hypocrisy? Yes, of course. But we threw a good litmus test – and hatred (or, at best, dislike) towards us came to the surface everywhere. We were condemned by governments and parliaments, all kinds of committees and individual politicians, parties and trade unions. Even some “fraternal” ones like the PCI, PCE, CPGB, the Japanese, Belgians, Swedes. For aggression, for violating all international norms, for occupation, for undermining détente, for provoking an arms race, for encroaching on the Muslim world, non-alignment, and sources of oil that all of the West and Japan depend on, etc., etc.

Yes, of course. Now nobody can tell whether it would have been a second Chile or not (by the way, we came up with this argument at the International Department – Brezhnev’s responses for *Pravda* were mostly written by us: Brutents, Yermonsky plus Tolya Kovalyov, the deputy foreign minister). Then again, it was already worse than Chile over there even before December 27th, long before Amin. It was already there under Taraki. Now, indeed, the executions and massacres have stopped... but for this we sacrificed the remnants of socialism’s prestige and all of détente. Of course, Brezhnev could not forgive Amin for overthrowing and killing Taraki the day after his embrace with Brezhnev in the Kremlin. Somebody used this... but I don’t understand, what for? Or was it simply out of stupidity, a poor calculation. Or maybe a Beria-style provocation?! One Western commentator wrote, “It is either a terrible miscalculation or a terrible calculation.” I’m afraid it’s not even close to the latter. It was simple Russian rudeness in the person who ultimately made the decision: how dare they go against me, I’ll show them what happens when you don’t take me into consideration!

The scary part is that the final = sole decision was made by someone who is completely senile. (Although it was prepared by other people). A week ago, he was shown on TV: receiving the mandate for elections to the RSFSR Supreme Soviet – the first candidate of the people. It was a terrifying sight.

How about “his” responses to *Pravda*. The initiative came from B.N. and Gromyko (which confirms that the MFA is not the initiator of Afghanistan). Both of them, each in his own way, are now working up “crazy energy” to reduce the consequences, talk our way out of the situation, keep whomever we can, etc. I witnessed and partially participated in urgently preparing a text. The initial version, beautifully written by Kovalyev, was rejected by the “Afghanistan commission” (Suslov, Zimyanin, B.N., Andropov, Gromyko) for being too soft. Brutents was brought on. He used the text from the “letter to fraternal parties” that we wrote the day before and hadn’t had time to present to the CC... The members of the aforementioned commission signed off on the “responses” and Suslov (the final signature) ordered to deliver them to Chernenko (the only person who sees Brezhnev in person, along with the stenographer Galya Goroshina). Chernenko seemed to take it “upstairs,” but they were in a rush to go hunting in Zavidovo (it was Friday) and the reading did not take place (“He” does not read anything himself anymore, except for short public speeches. Texts are read aloud to him, and only the ones that someone deems necessary within the “sparing regimen” he is on to avoid worrying him).

Zagladin and I had to observe this procedure first-hand, because B.N. sent us to Suslov’s reception room to intercept the text and take it to Chernenko and use it as an excuse to convince Chernenko to award Ponomarev a second Hero [of Socialist Labor] on the occasion of his 75th birthday. However, Suslov sent his assistant with the text, and Vadim and I were left in the reception room empty handed. We had to go to Chernenko “without a pretext.” He is democratic, plus he knows us closely from joint trips to fraternal congresses. He heard us out and promised to pass it on, firmly promised. But not a Hero, more likely an Order of the October Revolution (and so it happened). While we were with him, we found out from his phone conversations how “the responses” would move forward.

The story of how B.N. asked me to push the idea of a second Hero is a whole separate subject. I will tell it later...

Let’s come back to Afghanistan. All our (Department) work is happening “under the banner” of this event. We are tying ourselves in knots, wrecking our brains, even though it is clear that nothing can be fixed. Another reference point has been added to the history of socialism.

Carter took away 17 million tons of grain (flour and pasta immediately disappeared in Moscow), banned other exports, closed all negotiations and visits, demanded to cancel the Olympics (today the American NOC agreed with Carter’s view... Now what will the IOC say?). Thatcher did the same to us. Portugal forbade us to fish in its 200-mile zone; the U.S. did the same by lowering our catch quota from 450,000 tons to 75,000 tons. Canada and Australia did the same. Almost all Western countries (except France) reduced the level and scope of various exchanges and visits. Planned tours and exhibitions have been cancelled (the Hermitage in the U.S., the Bolshoi in Norway, etc.). Australia closed its ports to our Antarctic vessels. Yesterday, we were censured by the Islamic Conference (i.e. all Muslim countries except Syria, Libya, Algeria and Afghanistan itself) taking place in Islamabad. We’ve been condemned by the European Parliament, social-democratic parties, labor union centers. New Zealand expelled our Ambassador Sofinsky, accusing him of transferring money to the Socialist Unity Party of New

Zealand (our friends). One could hardly have imagined what is happening in the press, on television and radio. They are reproaching and trampling on us in the most shameless way.

Banks have closed our lines of credit. I had a casual conversation with Ivanov, the deputy chairman of Gosbank. He said that not only American, but other banks too, are either completely refusing to give us loans to pay off previous debts (which is how we have been managing for many years), or hiking up interest by almost 30 percent.

They say Tikhonov, who is standing in for Kosygin, had a meeting on this subject. It was reported to the CC. The situation is such that we will have to refuse to pay our previous loans. That is essentially a bankruptcy announcement, and all that it implies...

In the meanwhile (the famous Chekhovian “meanwhile,” “what is this mean... while?” he would ask), the economic situation seems to be awful. I was assigned to speak at a party meeting with a report on the outcomes of the November Plenum. I had to carefully study some materials. My report turned out “critical and harsh.” But that is not the point... We did not have to wait long for confirmations. Last Tuesday, the CC Secretariat discussed the issue of “Theft on Transport.” I practically shuddered from shame and horror... The CC committee worked for three months under Kapitonov’s chairmanship. And here is what they reported at the Secretariat:

- In two years, the number of thefts doubled; the value of stolen goods quadrupled;
- Forty percent of the thieves are railway workers;
- Sixty percent of the thieves are water transport workers;
- Nine-eleven thousand cars are accumulating in Brest because we cannot deliver them to international buyers in this “disassembled” state;
- Twenty five percent of tractors and agricultural machines arrive stripped of equipment;
- Thirty percent of Zhiguli vehicles were returned to VAZ after they were delivered to consumers half disassembled;
- Every day, 14 billion rubles-worth of cargo is left unguarded;
- Guards exist, there are 69,000 of them, but these are pensioners or the people with disabilities, who work for 80-90 rubles per month;
- Annually, losses to theft amount to many billions of rubles;
- Seven times more meat is being stolen than two years ago, five times more fish.

The Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs reported that in 1970, four thousand thieves were caught on the railroad, in 1979 there were eleven thousand. These are only the ones who were caught. How many are there that weren’t? After all, trains stand for three days on the tracks without any supervision, even the driver leaves.

Poor Pavlovsky (minister) again repented, like he did at the Plenum. He asked for forty thousand more people for security. He did not get them...

The discussion (Kirilenko’s grumbling, Ponomarev’s moralizing in the spirit of 1920s Bolshevism – “How is this possible! It is a disgrace! Where are the party organizations, the trade unions, where are they looking...”) astonished everyone with its total helplessness.

[By the way, when B.N. was calling to “mobilize the masses to fight this outrage,” Lapin (chairman of TV-radio), a sarcastic old man, was sitting next to me and said rather loudly: “If we mobilize the masses, then trains will arrive completely empty!”]

This, beg your pardon, “question” is a concentrated reflection of the state of our society – economic, political, ideological, and moral.

Neither tsarist Russia nor any other civilized country has known anything like this.

And we are only talking about the railways. It’s everywhere else, too – newspapers are practically bursting with revelatory facts on how the state and its citizens are being robbed in all aspects of trade, services, health care, culture. Total depravity everywhere. Yesterday on the way home from the dacha I was in a car with an elderly taxi driver, and he complained the entire way: where are we headed? What is happening? How can this be? This has never happened before, what will happen to us? And so on. He mentioned dozens of everyday instances that he either witnessed himself or that were witnessed by his acquaintances...

How will Brezhnev go down in history now? His only asset was “peace, détente.” Now Afghanistan destroyed that.

I am rereading *War and Peace*. It is fantastically grand! From my current “height” I look at any phrase and genius practically seeps out of every turn and every figure and every “thing,” as the author himself put it. This greatness of the past is reassuring.

February 5, 1980

Afghanistan is like a sore that eats away at public consciousness and international life. Rumors are spreading that hospitals in Tashkent are crammed with our wounded boys; that everyday planes arrive with sealed caskets; that in the various departments sending specialists to Afghanistan there are constantly portraits framed in mourning black. Why? For what? For whom? B.N. recently let it slip to Karen: we cannot allow a second Sadat at our border. So what? Should our boys die for this, should we be shamed throughout the world, should anti-Sovietism’s hatred ruin the remnants of our socialist ideal, should even the appearance of respect for national interests collapse?!

B.N., who is fussing more than anyone to justify the Afghan action in the eyes of the international community, understands that it was a stupid mistake. Maybe in his heart he even considers it a crime. On Friday before leaving for a meeting with voters in Saratov, he said: “All of that is fine (talking about routine and important matters). The main thing is how to unravel the Afghan knot. Maybe like this?” He takes a sheet of paper from his desk, written by him. He reads: “The United States pledges not to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan. The Soviet Union withdraws troops...” He asks, “Will they agree?” I reply, “Gladly. But will our side agree...”

B.N.: That’s the thing!

It’s amazing – all more-or-less reasonable and decent people see that a great stupidity has been done... from all aspects. But who did it?

Le Monde writes: in Moscow they are starting to look for the culprit – whose idea was it? Who is the initiator?

I don't know what they mean by "look for." Nobody has said this out loud. But in the apparatus and in Moscow (not in the sense of the PB and Kremlin, but among the public) people are guessing about it. I'm guessing too. Of course, I repeat to myself: they played off Brezhnev's senile indignation with Amin – how dare he disobey and on top of that kill our "best friend." But who made this play? It doesn't seem to be Gromyko, and doesn't look like it was Ustinov either. Clearly not Suslov. There is only one option left – [the K]GB. So once again, as happened before, policy is being formed there.

Meanwhile, the pre-election anointment is in full swing, along with the most vulgar glorification of our senile chief. A big chunk of every speech praises the faithful Leninist, etc., etc. And on the TV and radio quotes of this praise is all you hear. Every day he is greeting or congratulating someone on their success, or the start of work (though he probably does not read his greetings even in the newspapers. But the Secretariat approves stacks of them every week).

On Saturday I visited the famous ophthalmologist Slava Fyodorov in the "Test Pilot" village near Iksha. His estate, beautiful wife, fantastic Russian food, horses, summer quarters, cellars with preserves and a workshop, and so on. He is a significant person outside of politics. Tremendous energy and talent. He presented me with skis.

We are preparing for "the Six" CC Secretaries of socialist countries. They are revolting on their knees over Afghanistan. The Hungarian PB – the majority is against curtailing ties with the U.S. and the FRG despite our demands. Only Kadar's authority prevented a scandal. The German PB headed by Honecker, despite Abrasimov's fierce pressure, refused to fully comply and only postponed the Honecker-Schmidt meeting instead of cancelling it as we demanded. The message: you did not consult with us when you started Afghanistan, and now you want us to sacrifice our real interests by breaking our contacts with the West for the sake of your stupidity and your "higher" interests which nobody understands. Hungary, for example, has 60 percent of its economy tied to the West (through export-import)...

Denes (CC Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party) arrives tomorrow, "the Six" most likely around the 22nd.

February 9, 1980

I'm going through a very tough time morally. Everyone around me, if they do not ask me directly, the expression in their eyes is demanding an answer: "Whose idea was this? (Afghanistan) What for? Who is supposed to answer for this to the nation and to the world?" Fear is abating in the West: it is now clear to everyone that this is not the beginning of nuclear war, and likely not even a "remilitarization of the Rhineland." However, the anti-Soviet campaign remains at the same level. Even our best friends, who publicly politically supported (or did not object to) the Afghan action, do not dare to justify us "morally." If we hold a worldwide referendum, our prestige probably has never been lower than now – in all 62 years.

Most likely the General Secretary does not even know what is happening around us. Reports from Afghanistan are prepared for him to look as if there is nothing but “sheer normalization” happening. The information he gets from the West is probably at the level of *Pravda*, since he has long been on a “sparing regimen.” So, he does not realize what he has done... Then again, it is not just a matter of a lack and skimming of information, it is also his physiological incapacity to understand what is happening.

Sobakin (a consultant in our department) stopped by and told me: “I got a call from Kobysh (a consultant in Zamyatin’s department). ‘What are you doing!’ he said. ‘I’ve been on the phone for two days, calling all the newspapers and such, telling them not to use the phrase “the Carter doctrine.” Meanwhile, Ponomarev’s election speech has paragraphs devoted to it... Understandably, I get the response, “Who knows better, you, Kobysh, or a CC Secretary?!” It turns out the General Secretary said in some conversation: ‘What doctrine? Can scum have a doctrine?!’”

The Hungarians visited (Denes is a dear man). Kadar asked for an urgent consultation. We demanded they cancel their MFA visit to Bonn and a parliamentary delegation to the U.S. And the majority of their PB spoke out against our demands. But Kadar... in a word, no need to explain. However, in exchange, the Hungarians asked to cancel the Warsaw Pact maneuvers that were planned there, especially in connection with the hype in Yugoslavia that Tito’s departure (his leg was recently amputated) could lead to a repeat of Afghanistan in Yugoslavia. All mass media shouted about this for a couple weeks, there were even government statements (England, the U.S., etc.) in support of SFRY. This is how far things have gone, as if to say: the Russians are capable of anything now!

So... Kadar urged us to “consider.” We honored his request (we would not have come up with this idea ourselves). Now Ceausescu is asking us to cancel maneuvers in Bulgaria (for the same reasons, “not to escalate”). He said this to Gromyko at a recent visit. Maybe we will cancel them here too, but again – it was not our idea!

In a word, senility is affecting the entire structure, the mechanism of top-level power, due to the senility of its leader and the average age of the rest of its leadership at nearly 75 years. It is becoming dangerous for the existence of our state, not just for its prestige. But there is no way out. By the way, I am reading a work by our runaway philosopher Zinoviev *Bright Future* (or *Yawning Heights*), published abroad. This work caused a stir about a year or year-and-a-half ago. It is insanely talented and monstrously anti-Soviet. The concept (hopelessness) reminds me of Rudolph Bahro’s *Alternative*. But the latter is German and serious, while the former is Russian and uncompromising and angrily cheerful. I even came up with a blasphemous analogy: if Bahro (for socialism) is like Marx, then Zinoviev is like Lenin (in terms of personality, mannerisms and the emotional revealing of the essence and exposing the corresponding social system).

I spiraled away from Denes’ visit. Ponomarev and Rusakov led the conversation with him. I was an extra. B.N. in his usual style delivered propaganda speeches blaming imperialism for exacerbating tensions. This is despite the fact that Denes said the same thing first, and said it pretty well. Then followed “musical moments”: for example, if Denes said they are thinking of

cancelling a planned summer visit of the Premier to Bonn and Giscard's to Budapest, B.N. "picked it up" in the sense that he would say, "we completely agree with you (!), it would be good to forego."

Rusakov (who, by the way, is a pathetic type – petty, nervous, preoccupied only with avoiding getting slapped for something by the higher-ups) made a speech. He said that economic integration is especially necessary in the current situation, because all these deals with the West, joint ventures, loans, technologies – essentially, they increase dependency, foreign debt, etc. And this is a political issue. We need to rely on our shared resources, etc. In other words, the same thing Brezhnev has been saying for two years to his interlocutors in Crimea. But nothing has changed because we cannot offer anything to replace deals with the West. The Germans, the Hungarians, and the Czechs have told us numerous times that they would welcome the closest integration with us; the loans for Western technology and imports are a yoke for them. But: "Come on, Soviet comrades! Let's talk specifics! If you do not offer anything instead, we cannot give up our ties to the West. We cannot move towards an even further reduction in living standards, etc."

The day before, when Shishlin (a consultant in Rusakov's department) brought me notes that Rusakov later used for his speech, I told him: "It is shameless and hypocritical to reproach the Hungarians for something that is our own fault." Nevertheless, these things were said. Denes's reaction was: "Of course, of course. All the things we can provide for ourselves through integration we should do, and do as soon as possible. And the things we cannot, well, excuse me, but we have to go to the West." As if to say, it's up to you, the Soviets (this was implied).

February 12, 1980

I was at the CC Secretariat today. Again, as always, mainly Brezhnev's greetings to someone or awards, awards, endless awards. The joker Lapin, who always sits to my side or behind me, almost audibly comments: we talked at the Plenum about criticism and self-criticism, discipline, insistence on high standards, etc. but again we have heaps of medals, awards, and greetings.

Those sitting at the main table of the CC Secretariat "argued" whether to agree with a proposal to award some power plant for putting a unit in operation... Lapin: "Why stop there, they should get a greeting from Brezhnev and awards for each blade." Laughter all around him... And involuntarily, again and again you run into Zinoviev's "analysis."

By the way, issues of the Committee on Religion came up twice: Kuroyedov asked for new staff. The discussion revealed that in the USSR right now there are 6500 priests, 900 Catholic priests, and 300 mullahs (plus 2000 illegal ones). But every other deceased is buried with church rites and every fifth newborn is baptized.

The workload is unbelievable right now (Zagladin is in the hospital, Shaposhnikov on vacation, Ulyanovsky – there is no difference whether he is here or not). In addition to dozens of papers to sign, just today I had: a letter to Schmidt about the Olympics; response letter to

Mitterrand; response letter to Marchais, who objects to our contacts with Social Democrats; assessment of a text for B.N.'s Lenin presentation, which was composed in Serebryanyi Bor under Lukich's leadership – 50 pages of propaganda blabber; preparations for “the Six,” which is scheduled for the 26th. And over a hundred ciphered telegrams from all parts of the world. Every fifth one requires at a minimum to give someone an assignment, ask about something, consult with someone, report to B.N., etc. I only have time to read the abbreviated (“secretarial”) TASS nowadays.

February 29, 1980

Once again, I did not write for two weeks. I get home late, bone-tired, and with no desire to do anything. On one of the Saturdays I did manage to visit Arbatov in Barvikha. He has finally recovered from the heart attack. He is a rare man. The Russian and the Jewish are so intertwined in him that his weaknesses look like flaws, and his virtues make him a truly major figure... His story of wise reconciliation with the possibility of death.

We walked around the park in the dark for an hour and a half, every now and again stopping and expressing our surprise at what our higher ups have done. Once again, the fundamental question here is the same: Whose idea was it? Arbatov is inclined to think that it was Gromyko together with a mix of military men like “little Napoleon,” Ogarkov, but not Ustinov, who, according to Arbatov, does not have a military man mindset and definitely is not a war-monger. Arbatov is defending Yu.V. (Andropov) in every possible way. He even says that the latter was “strongly opposed” and even said that it would be better to “lose Afghanistan.” Doubtful. If this had been the case, the General Secretary would not have resolved to do it, despite all his emotions about Amin. Plus, we all know whose people brought Karmal from Czechoslovakia, who delivered him there and who “made” the coup. Not to mention they were the ones who “organized” the relevant information for Moscow, systematically arguing that there was no other way. While the military held on to Amin, who supposedly improved matters in the army and in general was a “strong person” capable of handling the situation.

Is it possible they are using Yurka, same as Bovin, to spread rumors that will be useful in the future?

Yurka also went through the possible candidates for the top post. Kosygin suffered a severe heart attack and isn't leaving right now only because he does not want to look like a deserter (“precedent”). Tikhonov is shit both as a person and as a professional, and screws things up even more than Kosygin. Ustinov was a good premier for a while, but he was sent down a different track. Romanov will not be allowed, plus he ruined his chances with his daughter's wedding in Tauride Palace and smashed dishes from the Hermitage collections... After this Suslov “gave him a talking to.” Chernenko will be done the day after “He” leaves: this always happens to favorites... Even though he is not a bad guy, on his own. Suslov does not want to and cannot, even though in the current situation he plays a “positive role” by not letting the top fall apart totally... Kirilenko is out – both because he once offered to “help the man Himself” take a break from his duties, and because he and M.A. can't stand each other. In general, the average age at the PB is well over 70, only Romanov is less than 60 years old.

The only one left is Yu.A. But, he is a) sick, b) from “that establishment.” Shchelokov is dangerous, not on his own, but because he is the one in Moscow in control of the main armed forces: two NKVD divisions and the police. There is no garrison in Moscow, only academies and schools, which are unarmed. I expressed doubt: haven’t we grown out of the age when the fate of the country could depend on two divisions? Yurka laughed his sarcastic laugh laced with profanities.

The General Secretary was never the brightest intellect, although he was a good and well-intentioned person. Now he is completely senile. “I,” [Arbatov] said, “always compare him to my aunt. She had all the same symptoms, both external and internal (developing hostility, alienation, animosity even to people she used to be attached to, aloofness instead of her natural sociability, dislike of her former friends)... The Medical Encyclopedia accurately describes all the obvious symptoms, it is called “senile psychosis.” (He looks truly awful on TV, but they keep showing him over and over, and putting him with foreigners, to whom he reads Andryukha’s political verbosity syllable by syllable (i.e. texts prepared by his adviser Andrey Mikhailovich Aleksandrov-Agentov)).

What a tragedy for the country, for all of us?! What will we come to! The devil knows what!

March 1, 1980

Zagladin, who also spent two weeks in Barvikha and talked with various officials, said: “One guy who is informed in this sphere ‘tallied it up’ for me... he said the Americans deprived us of 10 million tons of grain. But that is also how much was lost during transportation of crops from one place to another. And an additional 10 million tons is ‘planned’ to rot and for theft.”

On the 26th we held “the Six” CC Secretaries from Bulgaria, Hungary, the GDR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. It was a secret meeting, without the Romanians, to “compare notes” in the current situation. We prepared a text for B.N. to speak for approximately an hour and ten minutes. It included everything – an analysis of causes, Carter’s line, quasi-confidential information on Afghanistan (carefully concealing that our troops are involved in suppressing rebellion and fighting against “partisans”), what to do with Schmidt, how to deal with the Americans, what kind of policy to pursue with respect to the “nonaligned,” and of course about Marchais’ idea to hold a conference of European communist parties.

Of course, everyone agrees in the name of proletarian internationalism and unity. But they delicately hint that they cannot curtail relations with the West.

The integration that B.N. called for under pressure from Rusakov – sure. Only please replace the technologies from the West, replace the West’s role as a supplier of vital goods, and its role as a market for things that are a dime a dozen – then we are ready. In the meantime, “sorry.” Of course this was said very vaguely and between the lines. But...

Later, Werblan (a new member of the PZRP PB) said all of this openly in a one on one conversation with Ponomarev. So, they will “curtail” minor things in relations with the West, but

the important things they will continue as planned (government-level visits to the FRG, France, the U.S.; exhibits; trade and other exchanges; loans; grain purchases).

Of course, they absolutely do not need Afghanistan right now. Same as the Soviet people, really. The people are disparaging this incomprehensible internationalist action against the background of, figuratively speaking, the fact that there is “nothing to eat”... Even from cities like Gorky, there are “paratroopers” who come on tour buses to besiege Moscow. On the weekend it is impossible to come near grocery stores. These people haul away huge bags of whatever they can get their hands on – from butter to oranges. And it is a shame to think badly of them. How are they any worse than us, these people from Torzhok or Kaluga. More likely they are better, because they probably still produce something rather than just waste paper.

Political jokes are circulating in Moscow. One of them: two people come out of a lecture on international relations. One asks the other: “So, how did you understand our current policies?” “I understood it like this: we need to exchange Sakharov for the Persian Shah, then the Shah for hostages, and the hostages for American wheat.”

And more: “I think this is the situation – some shah had his leg amputated (a hint at Tito) and I think he was sent to Gorky, but it seems he will likely still participate in the Olympics.”

This is how the people, or at least the Moscow intelligentsia, feel about our high politics... what they think of it...

Incidentally, in this very situation, Suslov went on vacation, Gromyko went on vacation, Andropov has been on vacation for a while now. Brezhnev is also resting after an election speech and a meeting with Hammer. And that’s all there is to our politics.

It’s even more delightful at the Secretariat: 80 percent of the time and 90 percent of the issues “discussed” there are Brezhnev’s greetings to various collectives for overfulfillment, with awards of orders and titles. If some American spy got in there, he would probably be in a fix over what to report to the Center – neither the Kremlinologists nor his bosses would believe him, they would think he is tricking them or he lost his mind.

By the way, I find myself mentally projecting onto Zinoviev’s *Bright Future*. At the end he has a chapter called “Hymn to Moscow” – a great city, the center of the modern universe, which has everything, where corruption and major theft flourish, where you can watch any movie you like, read any book, where there are highbrow salons and filthy messes, where there is food that normal households (“those who don’t know how”) don’t even remember the names of, where there are luxurious women for every taste...

A city that could not care less, that can withstand anything, that can do everything. It will go like an icebreaker through everything, laughing dramatically at the leaders.

It is charming that at the end the author became sentimental over his support for communism.

March 3, 1980

The newspapers printed a list of elected deputies to the RSFSR Supreme Soviet. Look at Leonid Ilyich, he made his sonny a deputy too, so he does not have to travel far – in some district of Leningrad. First, he made him first deputy at the Ministry of Foreign Trade, then gave him an award himself. And now he is a deputy... I shuddered.

If a person can do something like this shamelessly, in front of the entire nation, even defiantly (especially the award), it means we can expect anything from him. Except, of course, something that would constitute a personal danger.

Karen Brutents was in the company of some nouveau riche. Among them was the USSR Deputy Minister of Finance. It turns out he knows more about Afghanistan than Karen himself, who “leads” this subject at the CC International Department. For example, he knows that when Amin was summoned to Taraki’s palace in early September (at the insistence and by a personal telephone call) it was not the Afghans who organized and carried out the shots at him, but our guards!

But that is not the main thing. After this deputy had something to drink, he said a bunch of interesting things about his own department. For example, recently it received an order (contrary to all the rules – to consult with the Ministry of Finance – where to get the money) to allocate an additional 23 billion rubles to support the armed forces. It seems Brezhnev’s statement in his election speech about additional benefits to war veterans is connected with this. However, the main reason: since the army is shooting, since we had to mobilize in the border districts in the South, since there are already widows and orphans because of Afghanistan – we need to put a stopper on it, butter them up, prevent – and there you go, 23 billion from the budget.

In the meantime, Gosplan planned 650 million tons of oil production by 1984. But people in the oil industry believe they can only get 625.5 million tons, which means that foreign currency export will essentially have to be stopped. Because we have precious metals in addition to oil, but they have been “depleted” over the last 10 years.

We are really feeling the effects of Carter’s measures. Regional committees are forbidden to “allow” the slaughter of cattle. But this will not increase the supply of meat: they will turn over starving, barely alive cattle... The norms have become ridiculous: for 1981, the planned meat per capita in Rostov-on-Don is... 2kg per year.

The situation is worse than during the War. Back then it was only necessary to supply the cities, now we have to supply the village too. There are demands and requests coming in from all over to introduce ration cards. It is impossible to do not just for political reasons, but also because there aren’t enough goods: we would have to give rationed amounts, but to everyone, not just Moscow selectively.

People are hoarding gold at unbelievable levels. Rings with precious stones that cost 15 thousand rubles are selling like hotcakes. People have no confidence in money. Same as in government: they are afraid of monetary reform. They buy up anything that passes as luxury items. It has become fashionable to buy paintings. Hundreds of artists are flourishing after

having eked out a miserable existence for decades. Nowadays they can throw some paint on a canvas and it sells immediately.

The state suffered heavy losses (14 billion rubles) with vodka. The decision was made to reduce the production of vodka after a poor harvest and the cutoff of American wheat imports. Here are the results. The New Year price increase only brought in 2 billion rubles.

The resolution on improving the economic mechanism is a very good one, of course. But our economy is not ready for it and won't be ready for at least five more years.

To come back to Carter's measures (i.e. the consequences of Afghanistan) – I don't know what some of our industries will do, for example Kastandov (chemical engineering), who planned everything with the expectation of receiving American technologies, machines and apparatuses. All their work will stop. Because the materials they were counting on, the ones they included in their construction projects and plans for supplying the national economy – we do not produce any of them. We had no plans to produce them, not to mention our capability to ensure the required level of quality.

Against this background, my communication with B.N. regarding the upcoming April 22nd presentation on Lenin and his current rants about dynamism, advantages, and achievements... have been nauseating. So far, I have no idea how we will bluff our way into creating something believable on an elementary level for him. Although, nobody cares about this right now!

Something else is important right now... Brezhnev was shown on TV again today – he was presented with the certificate of election as a deputy... And a month ago [he was on TV] for the presentation of a candidate's ID...

Handel on the radio. For some reason it moves me deeply right now, when I'm a thousand times farther from music than I was in my youth, when I was learning to play myself!

March 8, 1980

B.N.'s banal speech congratulating the women in our department. It sums him up – an ossified (bureaucracy-ridden) product of Bolshevik idealism of bygone times.

The editorial board of *Questions of History*. How much ineptitude there is in these people with scholarly diplomas! We were discussing an article for the upcoming World Congress of Historians (this summer in Bucharest). "A Meeting of Two Civilizations" – about the culture of Ancient Rus'. They started up some nonsense: "It's too much – any cultural monument you take, it's either Byzantine, or Eastern or Western influence. Where is the Russian influence?!" These are scholars of history! Showing concern about patriotism. Truly, it follows Zinoviev: ideology turns into ideological cynicism, and official morality turns into immorality. These people don't even know what they think themselves about the subject they are discussing.

I was very forward (couldn't restrain myself): don't worry about Russian heritage. On the contrary, we should be proud that such powerful and diverse influences cooked in the Russian pot and became symbols of "our" unique civilization.

I read the telegrams from our marshals and generals in Kabul. Their assessment of the situation is quite sensible. The subtext is: you started this mess and now we, the army, have to deal with it; we have to engage in completely inappropriate affairs that are not worthy of a great country's great army. The formulas they are providing are clearly standard and clearly ineffective. At the same time, the [K]GB line is sending dispatches in the spirit of "thunder of victory"...

The day before yesterday I was given for my signature a list of people to be decorated for Afghanistan (for the CC apparatus). The list is headed by Ulyanovsky! First the referent brought the list, then a head of a sector from Ulyanovsky's sphere. I burst out cursing and told him to "go somewhere." Here is a case of immorality that everyone takes as real public morality. And it is not just the reason for which they are awarded, but the fact that the person charged with leading this process is a cynical loafer and scoundrel, who even in this matter, which is entirely his job, managed to dump it completely on others.

Richard Kosolapov's article in *Pravda*, "The Life Position of Lenin"... A strong article by an honest and decent person who is concerned about the collapse of moral principles of society and the state. The moral principles for which Lenin laid the foundation. A desperate call to use the moral potential left by Lenin, which is embedded in Leninism. We aren't using it well, he says. He writes about Lenin's stance on "bribes," too... 60 years later. Lenin once wrote about bribes, at the beginning of the NEP. Kosolapov believes that out of the three vices L.I. wrote about with anguish (communist conceit, illiteracy, and bribery), we completely got rid of only the second. Alas! (I understand Richard) Our illiteracy is worse now than it was then. Not actual illiteracy, but an even more dangerous kind: when we swear by Leninism but we don't even know it and don't want to know it. Which of our leaders has ever seriously studied Lenin? Which of them refers to him in his political practice? Who reads Lenin seriously? Or even the materials that our scholars develop "on the basis of Leninism"? Not to mention following Lenin in everyday morality and political morality, they do not want to hear about it! If anyone addresses such a claim to them, he is immediately branded as anti-Soviet.

March 13, 1980

Our group of consultants has now physically fallen apart, too. Four have sprained or broken legs. One had a heart attack, another a toothache, the third has the flu... Zhilin is among this company.

I told B.N. about the situation, he decided to joke about it: we should dissolve this group and get a new younger one. Brutents came over to complain about the consultant group. Let's go to Ponomarev, he said. I am ready to say everything to him myself (!). It's not ok to have some people do all the work, and the others slack off. I said to Brutents: Ponomarev will ask us – "What do you suggest?!" What are you ready to propose? People are tired and they don't care. And they have not developed the reflex (dedication to the job and a sense of duty) that you and I have. They never had it. Plus, the reluctance to keep learning, to be at the level of the information we have at the Department. And there is basic mediocrity, and so forth. And for what?

Brutents: You and I are similar to Ponomarev in that sense.

I: No. At least I'm not. I am fulfilling my duty and trying to do as well as I possibly can the tasks given to me, whether I agree with the essence of the matter or not. B.N., on the other hand, adjusts to others' opinions and acts as if he came up with it himself. Most importantly, he shows off his new initiatives even when nobody asks him to or even when others find his out of place activity annoying.

Brutents: He has some career considerations here, but you are right – sometimes his activity is detrimental to him. There is an element of irrational vanity from participating in big politics. Some of it is automatic because of his dedication to the job: somebody has to do it if the people who are supposed to aren't doing their jobs. So he calls Kabul, Tashkent, and squeezes all kinds of papers out of us... Meanwhile, in Moscow, primarily, he is starting to be associated with the Afghan affair. Why the hell does he need that!

Marchais again got excited about holding a conference of Communist Parties. He even set a date: April 28th, for a day and a half. The shuttling between Warsaw and Paris is underway. This morning an adviser from the Polish embassy brought me a draft of an address from the future conference to the men and women of Europe. A pacifist document: to get attention but without discussion. And so Georges can look like a man who can do anything, even things that Moscow cannot.

With Sobakin and Zuyev we added some “snot” to the draft – our remarks in the spirit of Ponomarev: to mention NATO and the U.S., to condemn the military hysteria, and not to forget all our past initiatives. B.N. approved it. He does not like this lean piece of paper, but he understands that the important thing is not yet another paper, which many will not even print, but the very fact of holding a conference of Communist Parties at such a moment. Plus, he wants to go to Paris, show off there.

Very late in the day I composed a telegram to Zagladin in Paris – a directive to work the French in the spirit of our amendments. Tomorrow the Pole is coming to see me. I will convey all of this to him, too. On Saturday the Poles are off to meet with Georges, then to Rome to persuade Berlinguer, who, by the way, completely bankrupted himself with his “soft strategy.”

March 20, 1980

The “Leniniada” continues at work. And it started going downhill since last Saturday – trivialization of the text. When he (B.N.) saw what comes of his attempts to moralize up and down, appealing to the “moral potential of Leninism,” he started to move back towards things he has to say. The usual process when creating his texts.

It takes a toll on my nerves. This time I made a scene over his usual manner of playing several pianos at once (in this case he made Pyshkov the arbiter of our text, because the latter participated in composing Suslov's articles for *Kommunist* and *Problems of Peace and Socialism*). I said this is not how people do things, he (Pyshkov) is my subordinate and respects me to boot, and he does not think, unlike you [Ponomarev], that I write worse than he does. That is why immediately after you, in secret from me, gave him this assignment, the first thing he did

was come to me. As the result, he is in an awkward position, I've lost any enthusiasm to work "on your report." [Ponomarev] made excuses... But really, our behavior was silly and petty on both sides, his and mine. We are in one stinking cart in which anything goes, there is no point trying to stay clean in it.

In the middle of the month there was a delegation from Jamaica led by the same General Secretary Duncan whom I admired when I was there. Here he made a pathetic and unpleasant impression. He came to solicit. If we don't give them what they ask – they, Manley and the government of the People's National Party, the progressive regime, will be toppled at the next parliamentary elections. The leader of the party hostile to them (Labor) went to the U.S. and upon returning announced on TV that he brought back 50 thousand dollars for the election campaign. It seems Duncan wanted to return from the USSR with the same.

However, our Ministry of Foreign Trade and State Committee for Foreign Economic Relations does not just give things away for free. But through the Party line, I, unexpectedly for myself (considering that B.N. doesn't think much of some Jamaica), managed to coax out 40 thousand dollars, and I think I'll be able to get 5 "Lada" cars (after negotiations Duncan asked to talk one-on-one with me and "laid it out" – 1 million U.S. dollars and eight cars, otherwise they will fail).

But this is after their departure. Of course, I could not promise anything definite to them while they were here. They left quite disappointed and gloomy. I was unpleasantly struck by the lack of basic moral and even formal-diplomatic culture from these black mulattos with diplomas from British and Canadian universities. They did not hide their disdain for us, the USSR, and the people working with them, after they realized that all they asked for isn't going to be brought to them on a platter.

It was their first time in the USSR. But they were not interested in Moscow in the slightest, even though they do not know anything about us. They did not want to see Moscow, did not ask about our life, our affairs and concerns.

At first, I was worried and even regretted that they were coming: I knew that we would give them almost nothing. But later, when I saw how they view us (like a big milking cow, they don't care about anything else), it ignited a contempt in me for this Jamaica and everything having to do with it.

Once again it convinced me that I'm right when Karen and I have our long-standing debates. The best policy regarding the outside world, including the "third world," is isolationism. Loudly tell them all to go to hell... and then let them beg us to deal with them. But at the same time, we cannot meddle in their affairs.

Afghanistan. Every day we are dumping enormous sums and material means into this "affair." We supply and provide them with everything. Their Minister of Foreign Affairs came to visit. He bluntly said that the treasury is empty and the state budget is sufficient only to maintain two ministries. The rest we are supposed to give to them. And we are giving it: tractors, cars, bread, radio stations, paper, money, not to mention the maintenance of our troops there, and I

think their troops too. There are practically no signs that the regime is getting stronger. It is hopeless in the sense of creating even a minimally viable political structure. Once our troops leave, Karmal will be gone in a couple days. In a word, we got into a terrible mess.

Whomever you talk to – people are more surprised than angry: how long can all of this go on? Meaning the Brezhnev regime. Mean political jokes are cropping up again.

Yesterday my friend Tolya Kutsenkov came over. We drank. Let off steam. I was surprised by a new trait in him: Russian *pochvennichestvo* [“native soil,” nativism], sadness for the Russian people, who are suffering from internationalism and who are pushed around by various “chuchmeks.” He talks about the opinions of different people (he travels a lot). The general “voice of the people” is – “We are tired of him!” (meaning Brezhnev). But nobody sees or can offer a solution.

I started reading Lenin. Once again – I am under the spell of his conviction and passion that turned his intellect into a powerful apparatus. Once again – I am in the grip of the rationalist class nature of his logic. He can be refuted by current events, but only if you select them at random and superficially. But his logic is irrefutable as a tool of the history of his time.

Simultaneously in front of me I have the myths of irrational national spirit. I am reading *Lunin* by Eidelman – a Jew, without whom we, Russian historians, would not know it so deeply and “directly.” I spoke with Kutsenkov, who reflects the *pochvennik* soul-searching of the thinking and conscientious Moscow intelligentsia. In the latest *Literaturka* [*Literaturnaya gazeta*] there is an interview with Rasputin (writer), who, it turns out, is fond of Karamzin’s *History of the Russian State* and Solovyov’s *History of Russia*. He considers them masterpieces of the nation’s self-understanding. And, by the way, he said: I believe that in 100 years Russians will remain Russian, Tatars will remain Tatar, French will be French, despite all the successes of internationalism. It is no coincidence that he called the Battle of Kulikovo and the Battle of Borodino (against the Tatars and the French) as sacred for Russians.

So once again we are splitting into Westernizers (Lenin) and Slavophiles. Or we are searching for a deeper meaning in both. But *pochvennichestvo* is not an idea. And Lenin’s idea has become trite through subsequent development and now daily turns into a mockery under the influence of Brezhnevism.

By the way, regarding *pochvennichestvo*. I got a volume of Lermontov. Started flipping through it. Once again, I was struck by his genius... At fifteen years old, he writes “The Turk’s Lament,” which in two verses conveys the essence of Russia for centuries to come. At twenty-three, he creates “Borodino,” which has been worn out in school performances, but which contains the entire philosophy and Russian spirit of *War and Peace*. And next to it is the unfathomable, both in form and content, “The Death of a Poet.” At twenty-six he writes the unparalleled work “The Hero of Our Time,” which essentially starts a new era in the development of prose around the world.

And I thought: Lermontov, Pushkin... They came three centuries later than Montaigne, whom I’m reading now with amazement, because he contains all the eternal and unchanging

wisdom of life, despite all the stormy cataclysms of history. Anyway: when we had Kurbsky, Peresvetov, and Ivan the Terrible himself (it turns out they wrote texts like our “consultants” do now), they already had Montaigne, Pascal, Bacon, Shakespeare, Erasmus, T. More, and so on. The distance is simply immeasurable. We started catching up to them under Catherine II. And by the middle of the XIX century we – if rated objectively – already passed them “in this sense.” Our poetry... great names. Pushkin was already above Byron. Tolstoy – above Balzac. It is blasphemy to even compare them. Herzen encompassed and surpassed all the philosophy and political science that existed until that point. In many respects, thanks to Russian common sense and realism, he is above Marx. If we follow this through to the end... if there weren't Lenin, only overachiever students would know about Marx, he would be lost somewhere among hundreds of authors of various theories.

But that's not my point. Russia caught up to the West in a few decades. (Later, after 1917, we had to catch up in the material-industrial sphere too, and we did it in a couple decades). We were able not only to understand all of their culture, but surpassed it. As in Blok: “We understand all – the sharp Gallic sense / And gloomy German genius.”

They, on the other hand, did not understand us. They still can't properly translate Pushkin and Lermontov because they cannot understand things that surpass their own greatness.

They do not even recognize our right to be compared on equal terms. Then again, already Dostoyevsky wrote about the “inferiority complex” that was generated by the refusal to acknowledge that we have this right. This complex may have been one of the psychological factors leading us to periodically be tempted to force them to reckon with us, to recognize us.

Even on my narrow strip of earth – at work. Communicating with Western Communists: they are shallower, more superficial than we are – the people who work on ICM issues. In education and breadth of views, they cannot compete with any of our consultants. All their “theories” and political attempts are babble. And we see that, but we have to play along and not debunk them, as Lenin allowed himself to do. But they are the ones who look down on us. And they have reason, because the CPSU is represented by the likes of Shibayev, Kapitonov, etc. [The Western Communists] long ago figured out their level and essence, and they understood that it is this level that determines the political and ideological potential of the former Party of Lenin.

April 2, 1980

I'm sick. I'm sitting at home and getting a “test drive” of what would happen if I retired. Awful!!!

But I get texts brought to me – the Lenin report, the umpteenth version. I can't say I hate fussing over this text again and again. It's natural: it's a hard-won product and you want it to look good.

The day before yesterday Leonid Ilyich was awarded the Lenin Prize in literature for *Minor Land, Rebirth, and Virgin Lands*. To everyone's surprise he spoke energetically, did not distort words and phrases, did not mumble – as if he went back in time about five years. And it

was a decent speech. Someone in his circle got good at adjusting to his current state. Of course, the performance itself is shameful from the point of view of abstract public morality. Both because these works are being elevated to the level of Tolstoy and Lenin put together. And because the “meeting of the working people” of Moscow came from the same “list” of the public that gets invited to state receptions and so forth: the same familiar faces – ministers, committee officials, heads of CC departments, and so forth. The average age is about 65.

And primarily because it is yet another splash of beautiful and kind words and intentions, but in reality we are in total social stagnation and the beginning of decay (as before every big crisis, which can’t seem to break out), the economy is stopped up, foreign policy is absurd and stupid (we are saved by Carter & Co.’s idiocy). And total uncertainty, loss of prospects. Our society, which was built as an ideological society, finds itself without ideology or a clear goal. At the same time, there isn’t everyday well-being. The entire elite appears in the eyes of the people as money-grubbers – material and spiritual plunderers of the country, and, of course, of Lenin’s moral and ideological heritage, which is brazenly violated by such performances.

I’m still reading Eidelman’s *Lunin*. The book is full of subtexts, but not in a cheap way – all those “allusions” and “reminiscences”... Sometimes it is hard to believe that during that crisis era before “December 1825” people were thinking and going through something very similar to what the current Moscow intelligentsia, at least the Party intelligentsia, is worried about right now. Of course, this “coincidence” could be attributed to the author’s skill. But he cites original documents, their own letters and journal entries by Lunin, Muravyov, Turgenev.

April 5, 1980

Kitson was here once again – the leader of the Transport and General Workers Union of Great Britain, a member of the executive committee of the Labour Party, “our friend.” He wanted to see me “on the Afghan question.” We talked for three and a half hours at the hotel on Plotnikov Lane. He brought more invectives against the embassy and in general against “us,” who don’t know how to “defend ourselves.” I prepared all conceivable arguments on Afghanistan. But he did not want to listen to them: “You don’t need to convince me, I understand everything, but I am ‘labeled’ as a ‘Soviet agent’ and a ‘traitor,’ and nobody will listen to me. And there is nobody from your side that we could listen to. The embassy is not doing anything. And if anyone does come, it is probably to buy ‘another pair of pants’ for himself.” He had been considerably “warmed up” by our trade unionists, so he “cursed and was blunt.” Almost every phrase contained a *fuck* [sic]. I was ironic, made jokes, tried to insert prepared arguments. As he sobered up, it became possible to get some concrete things out of him and come to an agreement:

- a) We will send capable guys to the congress of Scottish trade unions. An audience will be organized for them and they will be able to convey the Soviet point of view;
- b) In London he will try to organize trade union functionaries and the same guys will have a “discussion” with them, too;
- c) I will write a personal letter to Jenny Little (Secretary of the International Committee of the Labour Party’s National Executive Committee, “a pretty bitch, but she knows

how to do her job and she's in love with you" – Kitson's words) and offer an unofficial discussion, either in London or Moscow, at "our" level (i.e. the apparatus).

Behind all the sincere things he said (and he truly has grown attached to us and is unselfishly concerned about how things are going in England, in Europe, and in the relationship between the Soviet Union and the West) – alongside all this he "conveyed" the terrifying hatred they have for us over there. And not because of Afghanistan, which nobody really cares about on its own – Afghanistan is just another excuse, a good opportunity to openly demonstrate this hatred of the Soviet Union, of Russians. So, I left this conversation with a very bitter feeling.

April 13, 1980

I was moved by three stories by V. Kondratyev in *Znamya* No. 3. Last year Leva Bezymensky pointed me to this writer, who suddenly "cut his teeth" at the age of 60. I was struck by the deliberately simplified manner of presenting the war on a scale of a "two-kilometer map" (discussion of the early 60s). And now three stories in the same style.

I often wonder why "our" North-Western front (and the adjacent Rzhev-Volkhov) resulted in so much literature. The front is by far not the main one, without "decisive" battles on an "all-Union" scale, without masses of tanks... There are probably many reasons.

1. After the battle of Moscow, when Demyansk was surrounded and there was hope to inflict a second resounding defeat on the Germans, the units prepared "for Moscow" were thrown there – not cadres, but students, marines, in general with a large percentage of intelligentsia and "people from the capital."
2. Since it was the place where they expected a major battle after Moscow, the poets, writers, and the best journalists rushed there.
3. But the front "came to a halt." And practically did not move until 1944, when the general counterattack began. So, all these "forces" were stuck there, and even though they were mercilessly knocked out, some remained.
4. Specific character: isolation from the large home front due to impassability, mud in the spring and fall. Actually, it is not even impassable mud, it is simply a swamp – I remember horses would drown on the roads. Snow cover of five-six feet in the winter. Hence: constant hunger and everyone left to their own devices.
5. The lack of a solid front: the Germans in the villages and us in the forests and clearings. Deep infiltration into each other's territories, perfect conditions for scouts – "romanticism," the psychology of small battle groups, patrols, troops, ski battalions, etc. Sudden contacts with "peaceful life" – untouched by the years of war, rather rich villages of a few houses hidden away in the forests and swamps.

And much more...

Last week: my talks with Krzysztof Ostrowski (deputy head of the International Department of PZPR) on the preparation of the European Conference of Communist Parties in Paris. And a political-ideological dinner on Plotnikov Lane with Schroeder and Dumling (DKP). A big conversation "about life" with Germans! I got excited myself and brought Schroeder to

tears, too. But overall, it's hard, the German Communists are not with us (the CPSU) because of our ideology, but because they are in a hopeless position as long as they are Communists. The "national question" is present everywhere – from the slightest trifle in a conversation with them, to our communication with this Party in general.

May 4, 1980

The fourth day of holidays. It's a pity I did not record a lot of things here as they happened. From April 16-25th we practically did not budge from Serebryanni Bor. I, Zagladin, Arbatov, Zhilin, Sobakin, Yermonsky, and stenographers. We were preparing the Paris meeting of Communist Parties. (Mostly B.N.'s speech)... He made us "build Mont Blancs" of invectives against imperialism, and, despite Yurka Arbatov's cursing, to channel everything in an alarmist tone: saying Europe is practically on the brink of war.

Zagladin participated in the work very indirectly: he looked through versions and shared some "considerations." He had no time at all, this time he showed truly Caesar-like class: in these few days he managed to go to Warsaw, hold talks with a Romanian who came with excuses (why they aren't going to Paris), give several interviews, including to the Hungarian *Népszabadság*, write articles about the Paris conference for *Pravda* and *Novoye Vremya*.

As for me, I did not make it to Paris. I didn't make it because I refused: B.N. offered twice, persistently (he wanted to thank me for the Lenin report and for the Paris materials). I refused because I don't like crowds, and there was practically nothing for me to do there... And B.N. stopped insisting. He must have decided that it was because of my ambition: since I was not included in the delegation, it would be below my dignity to go as accompanying personnel. But... this time it is not the case. I am just tired of everything.

It's a pity I did not write things down because the bustle over the Paris Conference was curious: the subject of China's return to the ICM (Berlinguer's visit to Beijing and the "rebellion" of local PCI organizations); the subject of Romanians and Yugoslavs, who seriously believe that we can pull an Afghanistan on them; the subject of the Dutch and even those who went to Paris (Luxembourg, Portugal...); partially the Brits, too. If it wasn't for the arrogance of the French and Georges' attitude: how is it possible, someone dared to refuse my invitation! If it wasn't the PCF organizing the conference, it would have been possible to convene 28 parties instead of 22.

The main topic, essentially, is Arbatov's topic.

May 5, 1980

Tito died yesterday. Jokes had started going around about how he couldn't die, he's been trying for nearly six months.

I'm on vacation: instead of Paris, I asked B.N. for the eight days left over from my previous vacation.

So – Arbatov's topic (the same as the May 1st one – my observations from the May 1st celebration). This again: what are we slowly coming to? What will happen to us, to our country?

A couple times we made it out for a walk. It turns out there are some lovely areas [around Serebryanni Bor] that have retained a little of the appearance of old dachas on the outskirts of Moscow. Even though I've worked at this dacha five or six times, I never had a chance to peer behind the fence from the side of Moskva River. Yurka and I did some walking. By the way, he recently suffered a massive heart attack and now it's like he is renewed, he is more decisive, he is even more impudent in his opinions, but he is also more concerned with the question of "what will happen to us?" "How much longer can Russia be tormented and mocked?!" "You know, Tolya," he said, "It seems like I have everything. I don't want anything more, and I don't need it. But I still worry for the 'common cause,' I worry and get upset, sometimes I don't sleep at night. And it's bad for me to worry now, after the heart attack..."

"The decay is wild, worse than under the tsar, because we do not have the brace of the aristocracy, the concept of 'honor' (nobility, officers), that at least partially held the powerful in some kind of bounds. Look over there, I brought you here on purpose... What do you think they are building?"

I: "Some kind of top-class resort facility or a country villa to receive distinguished guests..."

He: "No! That's Shchelokov building a new palace for himself on the outskirts of Moscow (naturally, he already has a dacha). Of course, the construction crew consists of soldiers who were conscripted to serve their Motherland. He does whatever he wants. He shielded himself with the son-in-law and now no one can touch him."

I: "What son-in-law?"

He: "You don't know? You've probably seen a young lieutenant general at the CC Plenums. A handsome fellow... everyone is staring at him, practically pointing fingers. That's Brezhnev's son-in-law. Where did he come from? He was a provincial mediocre student. Then he was doing Komsomol work and was accepted into the Komsomol district committee. There, at some event or party he met that b... Brezhnev's daughter, who just happened to be in the process of divorcing her latest husband, the ninth or tenth one... And it took off from there. Soon he was in the Komsomol Central Committee. That's where Shchelokov noticed him. He took him as his deputy, and when Paputin committed suicide, he made him first deputy. He is already a member of the CC Auditing Commission, like you... Whatever he wants! They say he doesn't do anything. And Shchelokov doesn't need him to do anything and butt in. He wants him to live by the principle: enrich yourself however you can, steal whatever you want, etc.

"Patolichev (Minister of Foreign Trade) also shielded himself. But this one used his own son. He took that drunkard and thief as his deputy... Now he is the first deputy. But Patolichev has a cover for himself (though in the past he was a distinguished man, you could even say a Bolshevik) and does whatever he wants, maybe for the benefit of the country, I don't know... And he's already been awarded the Hero twice, too.

“While this thief steals [foreign] currency with no shame, and uses his ‘official position.’ Recently his daddy awarded him the highest honor... He did not shy away from doing it in front a TV screen.

“This is happening in the highest echelon. What’s happening below? You know the affair with ‘Ocean’ [store chain]. Now the whole world knows about it... Recently even the *New York Times* wrote in detail about it. And Ishkov was only sent into retirement, he remains a candidate member of the Central Committee.”

May 6, 1980

Arbatov sees Gromyko as the main evil (in foreign policy, including Afghanistan), though now he is more inclined to think that Andropov’s guys are involved too. They “fooled” him and others with false information and fearmongering. In Gromyko’s insolence he sees a certain line that stems from an interest in aggravating the situation.

The logic is approximately as follows: there will not be a war anyway, and we need to build up military power for many reasons, including to keep the Community in order. Some tension with the Americans is even useful, since it allows us to justify the shortage of foodstuffs, consumer goods, services, and so forth. Gromyko directly expressed this idea in a narrow circle (especially the last part, regarding our own citizens).

The noise around Afghanistan is not too bad either, especially now that the rebels are openly getting assistance from the U.S., Pakistan, China... This makes it possible to convince Brezhnev and others, who might have doubted that “there was no mistake,” that “we needed to bring in troops.”

Gromyko really is acting like a he has a monopoly on foreign policy. He confused everyone so much with the SS-20, that now it is quite clear that from the beginning “we” did not want negotiations on this subject, and no potential limits. During the period when SALT-II was on the upswing, he kept repeating in his speeches (and wrote into Brezhnev’s) that the “medium range” will be discussed within the framework of SALT-II. Then in a speech in Berlin (October ’79) Brezhnev said we are ready to discuss any weapons anywhere and anytime. Before the NATO session in December, Brezhnev and Gromyko stated that they are prepared to sit at the negotiating table on medium-range missiles at any moment. Then Gromyko, without even informing the Politburo, declared in an interview in Bonn (after the NATO session) that the basis of the negotiations had been undermined (at the same time, he undermined whatever chance societal forces in Western Europe had to wage a serious struggle against NATO decisions – because the constructive beginning of this struggle disappeared). Now, in April, when he met with Giscard d’Estaing, he came up with his own directives – on medium-range again only within the framework of SALT-III. The same idea is incorporated in the resolution of the upcoming session of the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee (in mid-May). The goal of this deliberate meandering is to sabotage any negotiations on SS-20. Maybe short-sighted?

We are getting into a new round of the race, which will be much, much more expensive than the previous rounds, especially with the increasing collapse and mess in the economy. Or is

this really the last redoubt (military strength) that [our leadership] is counting on to live out their days in comfort and set up their children for years and years to come? And for the rest of us and the country – come what may.

One more example of highhandedness, though in the same vein. At the end of April, a week of French-Soviet friendship was scheduled in Paris. By tradition, Brezhnev was supposed to be taped for French TV. Of course, this speech had to be soothing, friendly, and peace-loving. So, Gromyko convinced Brezhnev not to make the speech. It was easy to do, because Brezhnev is in bad shape and it is physically hard for him. If you add “political counter arguments” on top of that, he gladly refused to do it.

May 24, 1980

I came across Nekrich’s book written “over there” (he emigrated to Israel, i.e. the U.S., in 1976). A kaleidoscope of events from 1946-1976 – familiar people and conflicts, in many of them I either took part or observed from the sidelines (he even mentions me once). These Shakespearean times (though to a large extent post-Shakespearean) look shallow, and not just because the author is already operating through emigrant (anti-Soviet) logic, but also in substance. People were driven by petty feelings and impulses: animosity, careerism – or rather the desire to get a cushier spot regardless of morality and principles, at the expense of others. And especially stupidity, vanity... The book really upset me.

At work. I thought B.N. would calm down a little after the Paris meeting, in terms of his “vigorous initiative.” But I underestimated him once again. He didn’t even thank me for Paris and the Lenin report. However, that’s good, because I find these thanks embarrassing and unpleasant. As soon as I was back to work, he summoned me to assign me to write his article admonishing Berlinguer, who went to Beijing instead of Paris, equating these two blocs. According to the leader of the PCI – NATO is good and the Warsaw Pact is bad.

Actually, speaking seriously, the position of the Italians has lately clarified their strategy. Now they not only do not want Leninism, they don’t want the International Communist Movement, either. Pajetta put it quite figuratively: those who have missiles and those who do not cannot sit at the same table. Their “new internationalism” is also becoming clearer: unite with whoever they can in the fight to save mankind, to replace the two superpowers, which have shown that they cannot correctly analyze the situation and, most importantly, cannot behave appropriately (one in Iran, the other in Afghanistan). I’m paraphrasing Berlinguer’s interview after he came back from Beijing.

We keep trying to shame them, appealing to logic and the ideology of the ICM. But they do not believe us and are convinced that we are acting solely out of imperial (state) interests. In order for them to sit on the fence (between the U.S. and the USSR) they need something more than their own originality and dissent; they need support from someone with real power. That is why they turned to China. And in general, they agree with their (Chinese) assessment of the world situation.

The Paris meeting raised hopes for the possibility of a new world Conference. Many (from the small and medium-sized CPs: U.S., India, Israel, Canada...) are asking us: why is Europe allowed to convene with some members, but the rest of us cannot... Especially since in percentage terms, there would be fewer absences than in Paris. It would seem the logic is obvious. It would seem, in light of Berlinguer's strategy, we should mobilize the entire ICM, rely on our loyal reserves. But this idea got no "enthusiasm" from Suslov when Vilner expressed it in a conversation with him.

They, our faithful friends, who, by the way, are no longer cozying up to us and instead are telling it like it is – they don't know that our "policy considerations" come down to the fact that our leaders are physically unable to tolerate the kind of strain that a Conference would require. Of course, we could prepare and read one beautiful speech. But our friends want more than just a performance, they want serious discussions, a conversation... Everything has changed so much!

June 9, 1980

At work everything again fell on me. B.N. hustled and Suslov assigned us to prepare a draft resolution on the international question for the upcoming CC Plenum on June 23. Yermovsky put something together according to the plan Zagladin and I talked through after receiving the assignment from B.N. Yesterday, Sunday, after dacha, I worked on this text to make it into a resolution-document. After it was retyped, I walked around the room and was pleased with myself. Look at me, a master of the high Party style!

Apropos – Zagladin, the day after the conversation mentioned above, again flew to France and then Holland – for the Party Congress. I was also planning to go, but it was not to be!

There was also an article for B.N. on the two blocs (against Italians: the other day a journalist asked what would the PCI do if the Soviet Union attacks Italy, and Berlinguer himself, not Napolitano this time, responded that he would be fighting on the frontlines to defend his Motherland's independence). This time B.N. decided to "be nice" (saying that the consultants are tired) and assign the projects to scholars. He picked the most experienced, eminent, and gifted ones: Bykov, Diligensky, and Tomashevsky from Inozemtsev's Institute. I warned him. Fine, I said. But I ask you to please read their version as-is, without our edits. He grinned. I brazenly continued: "This will be an experiment, Boris Nikolayevich. All these years you do not believe that scholars give us junk that goes into the waste basket, and everything that eventually goes into the finished product – all of it is done here, by the consultants and with these hands." He gave them a week, and when he read their materials, he cursed obscenely. I laughed and talked him out of summoning them – nothing worthwhile would come of it anyway. I reassured him too, saying that I assigned Sokolov to write the text a long time ago. And this text is pretty decent. Here, read it. And even though he can't stand Sokolov, he took it. Today he had to admit that "the foundation is there." I asked him to summon Sokolov and say the same to him. He did it, though through gritted teeth. My work on the Sokolov version consisted of planning it, outlining the sum of questions, discussing the approach and conclusions, and editing it

thoroughly. I wrote a few pages myself, including the conclusion = “Yet another lesson by Ponomarev on the danger of likening the two blocs.”

The only fun in this was that I think I “taught Ponomarev a lesson.” But it’s all like water off a duck’s back...

On Saturday I played tennis on Petrovka with Andrey Grachev, a remarkably nice person from Zamyatin’s Department. For the first time this year on a clay court. Petrovka has an extraordinary atmosphere – something mysteriously nostalgic, reminiscent of movies about sports and entertainment from 1914...

I read *Hello, Afinogen* by Afanasyev (they say he is a student of Trifonov). A crazy talented book, even though you can feel the author’s inexperience in the composition and some plot moves. The handbook on literature (and art) is one thing, but life and literature about life are increasingly separate from it. They do not connect anywhere. There is no guiding role of the Party, no official ideology (unless it is presented mockingly)...

The same Zinoviev, except without rudeness and all kinds of open stupidity against the authorities.

Sizov called – Chairman of the Auditing Commission that I am a member of. He called me a while back, about two months ago, and said that he expects me to write the introductory pages for his report for the XXVI Congress of the CPSU. I made excuses at the time, said that after the PCC and the Paris meeting, the international situation will become clearer, we will formulate our assessments, etc. He grumbled, but did not argue. At the time, he couldn’t tell whether I was playing games to avoid working for him, or if I was truly taking the task too seriously. Now, when the Plenum is approaching where a decision will be made on holding the Congress in February, his patience ran out. And he told me pretty clearly: “Quit fooling around, who cares about the international situation and so forth. I need the content to be about L.I. Brezhnev, his great work, his historic report ‘which we just heard (almost a year before it is given!), and which gives a deep Marxist-Leninist analysis of the situation and outlines inspirational tasks’...”

“No problem then,” I said, “If that’s the case, tell me when you want it, Gennadiy Fedorovich, and the text will be ready...”

He thought about it, was silent for a moment, and: “Have it ready next week.”

June 21, 1980

Tomorrow will begin the withdrawal of “some military units” from Afghanistan, “whose presence is no longer dictated by the situation” (the last part in quotes is supposed to be the formula for the TASS report from Kabul to include in the letter to our fraternal parties).

By the way, it will begin at a time when the West has been shouting for two weeks about the concentration of rebels, about preparing for a frontal attack on Kabul, about the infiltration of partisans into the capital, about the mutual massacre between different Afghan groups and about

the near suicide attempt by Karmal himself, about the almost complete disorganization of power and the successful rebellion.

But that is not even the point! The waves of various Afghanistan-related campaigns in the West are just another confirmation of the fact that all of this is mind manipulation, which nevertheless has done its job again and again: inciting persistent and irreversible hatred and contempt for our country.

Here is the thing!

Early last week, in the course of one of our “ongoing” conversations, B.N. suddenly informed me: “How about your Arbatov... he went to his former boss and started arguing that we need to withdraw troops from Afghanistan.”

Half an hour later, when discussing another topic, I suggested to B.N. to agree with Dobrynin’s proposal to send Arbatov to a TV discussion in the U.S. He (B.N.) did not object, but remarked, “I don’t know how they’ll view it now!” (meaning “at the top”).

A couple days later at a meeting of deputies, B.N. suddenly (with six people present) mentioned this “action” by Arbatov, and with clear disapproval in his voice. He added: “And he (i.e. Arbatov’s old boss, Andropov when he was head of the CC Department) did not keep it to himself, he reported it...” (and B.N. moved his arms in a circle to let us know that it was in some higher circle, presumably at the Afghan commission, i.e. with Gromyko, Ustinov, and maybe even Suslov present). And he (Andropov) added: “This is the mood of the intelligentsia”... As if to say, Arbatov traveled in Italy, met with his “Dartmouth friends” there (this last bit B.N. might have added himself), and there you have it!

In any case, the way B.N. presented it in front of the deputies, it looked like Arbatov might be done for.

One “psychological” detail deserves attention here, concerning B.N. and many others like him. It turns out (from a conversation with Brutents, with whom B.N. also shared something about Arbatov) Arbatov went to B.N. even before going to Andropov, and talked about the same things. B.N. is sympathetic to the idea and kept repeating to us a phrase that was clearly not his own, “it costs us too dearly!” B.N. did not tell anyone (not even us, me) about “Arbatov’s position.” However, when this position went out into the open among his superiors and was met unfavorably, judging by how B.N. presented it and his impression (this is one more mystery), B.N. immediately changed “his” opinion, at least about Arbatov, and began to treat him as a someone who was written off. And it looks like he told us about it to warn against such “actions” or statements.

Suddenly, yesterday, he summons an urgent meeting of deputies and under total secrecy (not a word! to anybody!) gives us the above-mentioned news – about the withdrawal of units with heavy armaments, “they are no longer needed there.” Maybe he would not have told us, but “we need to work”: urgently write pointers to Soviet ambassadors, fraternal parties, socialist countries, etc.

Judging from his hints, the decision was made on Thursday at the Politburo at Brezhnev's suggestion, he read it from a paper (which means someone prepared the text). It was accompanied by a rather strange exchange of opinions... The first thing we asked B.N. after "carefully" listening to him – will this be published?

"No!"

"?? What is it for then?"

"This question was raised, but Gromyko sharply protested: they will say we are doing it under pressure..."

"Why are we doing it then? We aren't withdrawing all troops, not even the majority. It would seem the favorable noise from this action would be one of the main reasons to do it. Western leaders, including Carter, are meeting on June 23rd in Venice. They are sure to adopt a harsh resolution demanding a withdrawal. It will be worse, from the propaganda point of view, if the world does not find out before the 23rd that there is already a withdrawal."

"They said – no," B.N. cut us off. (But you could see he did not understand it himself and was surprised that people agreed with Gromyko)... It was proposed to send reporters (foreign) to Kabul, so they could give the information to the whole world from there.

"But," Zagladin rightly pointed out, "the units that will be withdrawn are far from Kabul and the reporters will not see anything themselves."

"Yes, you are right," B.N. replied...

Finally, I offered the following consideration in favor of publishing: the June 23rd CC Plenum. Might the West conclude (if we do not publish ahead of time) that the Plenum "corrected" the PB and demanded the withdrawal of troops.

The meeting ended on that note, we left with assignments to prepare urgent information for socialist countries, Soviet ambassadors, and some fraternal parties. However, just ten minutes later he called me and said that he talked with Suslov and they agreed to prepare information for the press – in the form of (?) a brief message for TASS reporters. I composed it and gave to B.N. I think he rushed off to get it approved at the top.

There is another foreign policy component here. Gromyko also rejected a suggestion (whose?) to inform Giscard d'Estaing, considering his courageous act – to meet with Brezhnev in Warsaw. Otherwise, Schmidt will take all the winnings when he comes to Moscow on June 30th. Schmidt does not hide the fact that he will raise the Afghan question, on the contrary, he is talking about it everywhere. He has been asking us for a long time through confidential channels to make a "gesture" – withdraw some unit from Afghanistan, preferably an airborne or a tank unit, or at least change their uniforms, to show the West that we have no intentions of advancing to the "warm seas" or capturing Middle Eastern oil...

The whole world will say that we prepared a present for Schmidt's visit, since he is coming to sign an extensive program of economic cooperation...

However, Gromyko, apparently, weighed everything and took command, taking away the “exorbitant power” [«непомерную силу»]...

Let’s get back to the main question: who prepared Brezhnev for this initiative. Brutents is being vague, but he knows something... In any case, he is sure that Arbatov was “there, too”...

I offered another hypothesis: B.N. misunderstood Andropov’s reaction to Arbatov’s idea. Moreover, he (Andropov) went to Brezhnev himself and suggested to do this, maybe even referencing “the mood of the intelligentsia.” There may be another option: Arbatov did his thing, but the decision formed earlier, also in the depths of Andropov’s department. This version is supported by the fact that the decision was made on Thursday, and on Sunday the units (and heavy units, at that) are already starting to move home – is that not too little time for tear-down (replacement with other, light units), etc.?

Whatever the case may be, Yurka proved once again that he is the real deal!

The rest is the same as always... I wrote and sent in an article “The Pact of Peace and the Pact of Aggression” – another opus for the collected works of Comrade Ponomarev.

We whacked Pajetta in the June 20 *Novoye Vremya* issue for his May interview in *Der Spiegel*.

We are writing a report for B.N. for “The Six” (European socialist countries – CC Secretaries, without Romania, secretly) on what to do with the WFTU and the communist movement after the Paris meeting. Mainly – how to view the position of Berlinguer-Beijing.

I wrote the introductory part for Sizov’s report for the XXVI Congress of the CPSU. I took it to him myself. He read it in my presence... “I like it,” he said.

I wrote a memo on the communist movement for Rusakov, for his conversation with the Yugoslavs. He is going next week.

I sent the last chapters from Galkin & Co’s book about the two reformisms – the bourgeois and the Social Democratic – to the “Mysl” Publishing House. I cleaned out a lot from there.

I was at the editorial board meeting of *Questions of History*. Spoke about five times.

June 22, 1980

On the way back from dacha I stopped by “Lesnye Dali” to visit Arbatov. He called me at work and in a voice that was half-questioning and half-affirmative, but definitely cryptic, said: “Good news... We should meet.”

We walked down the alleys (that place is even more of a bureaucratic clique, mostly from the MFA and other various types from the Council of Ministers). I told him what I knew of his affairs. He told me the things I only guessed about. He really went to Andropov. The latter was welcoming and encouraging. Advised Arbatov to seek an appointment with Brezhnev. Yurka cursed obscenely when he found out that Yu.V. (Andropov), firstly, “publicized” the fact that

Yurka visited him, and with the “mood of our intelligentsia” embellishment. And secondly, if B.N. read the situation correctly – Andropov was ready to rat out Yurka if the visit to L.I. had been unsuccessful.

It turns out that Yurka asked Zhukov, with whom he went to Pugwash in Italy, to take him along to see L.I. In a way, that is surprising to me – I did not expect such courage from that guy. Brezhnev was in good shape. It was only the three of them talking. They proposed not only the Afghanistan withdrawal, but a packet, including Vienna, i.e. SALT (not to argue over SS-20) and so forth. Brezhnev said: alright, write me a paper. They had the paper with them. (Later Blatov asked Yurka for it – a copy to make a memo for the Politburo).

Today *Pravda* already published a TASS report from Kabul, which I wrote by hand on Friday and gave to B.N. So, common sense prevailed – to publish. That means Suslov was sympathetic to this entire affair from the beginning, despite Gromyko, who was supported at the PB. And he managed to get the publication. Moreover, Yurka told me today that a notification about the withdrawal was sent to d’Estaing right away, also despite Gromyko...

June 28, 1980

I can’t manage to write about the CC Plenum (June 23).

Leonid Ilyich again was in good shape. He opened the Plenum without looking at a paper, without muddling words and mumbling... a miracle. Moscow is full of rumors about some Georgian woman who uses her hands – their warmth – to heal practically everything in sight. She has already been transferred to Moscow.

Gromyko’s report on the international situation – superficial, shallow, propagandistic. I would say his report exemplifies the role of the Plenum as a body that is not dignified even with frank information, not to mention decisions, directions, and so forth. The debate proceeds accordingly: praise for L.I. and a small account of one’s activities. Chakovsky’s speech was especially trite. He had no scruples (or maybe it was something else) about retelling his own article in *Pravda* in shrill-cliché tones (from two weeks ago: about bats that hang upside down, and see their environment accordingly, and so forth).

But “our” resolution was presented with authority. Brezhnev gave the floor to Suslov, who came down to the main podium and had a look that said – you can forget everything you just heard from the Minister’s mouth, listen here. And he ceremoniously read the text that, despite all the Ponomarization that was done to it after us, still sounded respectable, impressive. Especially against the background of Gromyko’s report.

Mythology works, after all: oh, how nice it was to hear your words and phrases presented by such a speaker, to such an audience, and for such a purpose – for history!

And one more episode from last week. Brezhnev awarded “a number of prominent state and Party leaders,” including B.N. – rather he was giving out medals. He said something about each of the awardees. Then, completely unexpectedly (considering that earlier I personally heard him talk about “the damned academician,” “who-cares-about-it scholar,” etc.), he announced to

the whole world that B.N. “combines the talent of a Party leader with [the role] of a prominent scholar who offers interesting Marxist-Leninist studies.” In other words, B.N.’s golden dream came true: he was recognized as “the theorist of our Party”...

By the way, in his reply, B.N. did not say a word about Brezhnev, unlike the others (Kunayev, Rashidov, Tikhonov, Rusakov) who primarily praised him. Later, in a conversation with me, he regretted it... he said “he was nervous and botched it.”

July 13, 1980

“The Six” is meeting in Budapest on July 15th. I’m not going, of course, even though I worked on it more than anyone.

Zhilin prepared a draft of Brezhnev’s Olympic toast to leaders of Communist Parties and revolutionary-democratic parties that will be in Moscow at the time. But it sounds like there will be no reception.

Olympic Moscow: long lines of bus convoys with guests from the republics, empty streets that have been cleared of private cars, too. And paired police patrols everywhere. For example, on our street, Kropotkinskaya, they are stationed at every 25 meters. Employees at enterprises and institutions are being told not to enter into conversations with strangers, not to gather in groups, especially crowds, to opt for above-ground transportation rather than metro, etc. There were rumors “among the people” that during the Olympics, Moscow will be flooded with foodstuffs and consumer goods. None of this is noticeable yet. And in the provinces – in the Urals, on the Volga, in Siberia, not to mention the north – stores are empty. In Riga (!) there isn’t even milk and cheese. And this is in Riga, which, by the way, is receiving the Order of the October Revolution right at this time. The Western press is full of articles about an unprecedented food crisis in our country and unrest in large factories (including Togliatti, Gorky, Kamaz). I think it was *The Guardian* that made the following conclusion from this: The Soviet worker hasn’t believed in Communism and other ideas for a long time now, but until recently he believed that life will improve from year to year (or at least in the foreseeable future). Now, if he loses faith in that, what then?!

At the same time, corruption continues to rage. I read another bulletin published by the organizational department of the CC and the Party Control Commission... The Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions – the profiteering in the sales of Zhiguli, Volga, Moskvich [cars] has reached immense proportions. And the people involved are workers of district committees, executive committees, city committees, heads of all kinds of business organizations and associations, i.e. the ones who can put themselves and their relatives at the front of the queue to buy cars from quotas for the region, city, etc. They make a ton of money on this. And the “consequences” are usually a reprimand or a severe reprimand... Only one (a deputy head of the Murmansk Propaganda Department) was expelled from the Party – he “worked” too boisterously in the public eye.

Yegorov kicked Loginov out of IMEL after 30 years of working there... for violating fire safety codes. Bovin came to see me about this. “It was revenge,” he said, “for his active attitude

to life.” The Soviet-Finnish film about granting Finland independence (together with Shatrov), the novel *February* (about the February Revolution), consulting on all kinds of Leniniana questions – developing it in “nontraditional” ways, the long friendship with Lyubimov. In other words, the kind of lifestyle where you get your salary from one place (the Institute), but you work and earn acclaim in other places. Naturally, this could not but inspire hatred among his milieu and Yegorov.

Bovin went to Zimyanin. The latter summoned Yegorov, but... Volodka did not get his job back. However, Zimyanin called Zagladin and asked to “find him a place somewhere.” I’m the one who found him a place – at the Lenin School.

July 19, 1980

Today is the opening of the Olympics. I was given a photo ID on a long chain, for the guest box. But for one person. I ended up having to find tickets to my favorite sports – swimming, athletics, volleyball...

Because there is so much stress and fuss about the Olympics, the event started to feel hollow even before it started. The fact that for the Soviet people it is a “Potemkin village,” and the fact that Moscow really has been turned into a big ghetto (as the Westernizers write), and the fact that everything is overorganized and even the IOC could not budge our bureaucracy from the best seats in the stands (not counting, of course, the legitimate government box).

In our “higher” spheres, the Olympics once again highlighted the fact that most things are done to cater to One man – and to disturb him as little as possible.

The reception for CP leaders who are coming for the Olympics – a reasonable comradely event with a very short toast by Leonid Ilyich, which we almost prepared – was cancelled under the pretext that “we decided not to mix sports and politics”! In reality, it was cancelled “not to overload” him.

It was even decided not to invite “our” guests (from communist parties) to the government reception for the IOC, so He would not be displeased: as if to say, “I did not want one reception, so they (there in Moscow, without me) came up with a replacement.” In other words, so it wouldn’t look “out of spite,” not to upset him and, God forbid, not to bring his anger down on yourself. And Kirilenko is the inveterate supervisor of all this, he is currently “in control.”

Receptions of some leaders (Marchais, Cunhal) with L.I. – essentially just ceremonial, but important for their big politics at home. Also cancelled. Cunhal was very upset. I met with him on Thursday, we were on Plotnikov Lane till midnight. An amazing man, a truly outstanding political leader of our time... He said, “I understand the situation, but I do not need a detailed conversation or a discussion with Brezhnev. I will get everything I need to navigate in international affairs and the affairs of the ICM from you, Ponomarev, Zagladin, and other comrades. And I will tell you everything you’d like to know about our affairs. All I need is a press release saying: ‘Brezhnev met with Cunhal!’ The Americans are bowing to me now, for the first time they invited me to an embassy reception for some American holiday; major figures

from the ruling camp – reactionaries – are trying to make contact with me; the cardinal came up to me for the first time for a friendly chat; for the first time after the revolution the Chinese appeared at our CC, they want to ‘exchange opinions’; the President consults with me all the time. The country is on the verge of parliamentary and presidential elections... the Party is growing, the Party is strong... And we may be just a little short of achieving major national success. This is why I need a meeting with Brezhnev.”

But what’s most important for us is “not to disturb” him! And after all that, anti-Soviets and anticommunists keep shouting about the “hand of Moscow,” that we are inspiring revolution everywhere, teaching everyone how to undermine foundations, etc.! If they only knew how things really are.

Kirilenko lashed out at Ponomarev for publishing a message (two lines) about Cunhal’s arrival in Moscow. “You are causing Him to have unpleasant emotions...” He wouldn’t have known about it and it would not have been a problem, and the fact that Cunhal asked for a meeting would have quickly been forgotten. In other words, it’s barbaric in the spirit of old Russian boyars.

For two days after returning from “the Six” in Budapest, all that Ponomarev, and, I think, the entire Politburo headed by Kirilenko, was concerned with were the seating arrangements at the opening of the Olympic games. You see, it is impossible for Zhivkov and Tsedenbal not to sit in the main box of the Politburo. On the other hand, what would Marchais and others like him say if they saw that those guys got seats, but they did not. And, of course, we have to avoid anything worrisome. Even having tea in the PB member break room together with CP leaders, even just some of them, is out of the question: “people will start talking,” “this and that,” “what to talk about,” etc.

An article by Sturua in *Literaturka* on the Watergate tapes. Americans: “Who is leading us!?”

On Tuesday I was at the Secretariat. Unpleasant feeling for me personally. Kirilenko took advantage of Ponomarev’s absence to lecture me in front of everyone – we need to save cash and cut the plan of relations with the Japanese Socialist Party by half. But he saw at the top of the page, “In Favor. Ponomarev.” What could I mutter in those conditions?

There was a discussion of the issue of robots and manipulators as the basis for production automation. It lasted over an hour; different ministers participated. Three hundred types of robots have been invented to date. We only have forty. The quality does not compare to the American and Japanese ones. We do not have a specialized production base to create them. Meanwhile, the addition to the labor force in the 1970s was 9 million people. In the 1980s it will be 1 million. The number of people engaged in manual labor in the 1970s did not decrease, it increased. The Head of the Machine Building Department Frolov reported that currently 800,000 machines are standing idle because there are no operators.

July 20, 1980

I read the manuscript of Anatoly Rybakov's new novel, *The Children of Arbat* – about the 1930s. For the first time, Stalin is presented as a literary figure, such as Napoleon or Alexander I in *War and Peace*, for example. A terrifying thing. I was in the grip of some kind of emotional panic as I was reading it. Most likely it will not be approved for publication. I hear Ananyev is fighting to publish it in his *Oktyabr'*. Rybakov wants to talk to me. I will advise him against rushing, not to scare them off right away.

July 26, 1980

On Sunday I met with McLennan and Halverson (Chairman of the CPGB). On Monday they met with B.N. On Tuesday I saw them off. We were pleased with each other. McLennan did not press us on Afghanistan, and his trump cards were few: he does not know what is really happening there. B.N. overwhelmed him with his “authoritative version.” We talked a lot – about the Chinese, why the ruling class in England does not put forward “realists” like Schmidt, etc.

I was shocked when leaders of England's CP and leaders of the Swiss CP met in Sovietsky Hotel and did not recognize each other (even face to face). When I brought them over to the Finns, they pretended to know each other. So much for “international power.” In the 1960's, this would have been unthinkable.

B.N. is fired up over yet another idea – to lead a delegation to the “Parliament for Peace” in Sofia (in September). So, I have to write yet another paper. By the way, speaking of papers. He instructed the Department's sectors to summarize the work each of them did in the period between the XXV and the XXVI Congresses. The consultant group too, of course. And you know what? Among everything else there is a six-page list naming just the brochures, articles, reports, speeches, and presentations by Ponomarev. No academic institute can boast such productivity. I showed it to Karen. He remarked sarcastically, “Imagine there was a ‘well-wisher’ who took this list and sent it to Kirilenko, for example, or Brezhnev... How Brezhnev manages to combine state party work with writing a literary volume per year – that is a different question of course. But how Ponomarev manages it, and who allowed him!...”

By the way, even though I took part in writing 95 percent of these papers, and many of them I predominantly wrote myself, I was surprised when I saw the list. So here is where all my energy goes! And what do I get in return? It is not even for the Party. Because if the “Party” found out the real state of affairs, it would appreciate my work as mentioned above.

Aleksandrov-Agentov called B.N., asking whom we'll send to work at the dacha to prepare the Report for the XXVI Congress. B.N. summoned me to consult. I suggested Veber – the most competent, skilled, educated, experienced, and conscientious of the consultants. B.N. deflected and almost started to “criticize” Veber in his usual manner. I got angry and contradicted him quite sharply. Because I was sure that he was guided not only by his personal antipathy towards Sashka, but also considerations about “what will they say” (!) – he has a strange last name, he might be Jewish, etc.

He named Pyshkov, whom he favors. He is clever, but rather mediocre and unlikely to come up with something new, plus he never had any serious knowledge. I didn't argue against Pyshkov.

The next day B.N. called me, saying that Aleksandrov is asking for specific names – whom are we sending. “For your information,” B.N. informed me, “I named Pyshkov and Brutents. Even though he works on the national liberation movement, he is well-rounded, he can work on anything...”

I interrupted: “Aleksandrov knows Karen very well and does not need references for him.”

Next week the group is leaving for Serebryanni Bor, probably for six months, until Zavidovo begins.

I met with Gus Hall's wife. His granddaughters are charming. These 13-14-year-old typical American girls look like they're 20. I saw them in the Olympic pool, and then on Plotnikov Lane. With Elizabeth we talked about the possibility of Gus receiving an order for his 70th anniversary and my summer trip to the U.S. with Timofeyev's academic delegation.

July 29, 1980

Volodya Vysotsky died. The bard of our time. He was born in 1941 [sic *41-20 zoda*]. At night, without waking up.

I first met him sometime in 1966-67, I remember it was at someone's home on Pushkinskaya Street, in a small old apartment. I heard him there for the first time. There were 5-6 of us... I think D. Samoilov was there. I was struck by his talent's ability to resonate with someone from another generation, my generation. To capture the essence of a time that was not his own.

The funeral turned into a city-wide mass mourning – in the midst of the Olympics. The line to say goodbye started forming at night, from the Taganka Theater to the bridge, along the embankment, to the Rossiya Hotel. He was driven to the Vagankovo cemetery through a crowd. General Trushin himself was in charge of keeping order – he is the chief policeman of our capital. Fortunately, there are 34 thousand policemen from all over the Soviet Union in Moscow right now. The Secretary of Krasnopresnensky district committee Bugayev met them at the cemetery, at the head of a crowd of 10 thousand. He spoke at the grave himself. Telegrams of condolence were sent by Grishin and... Andropov. But in the newspapers, only *Vechernyaya Moskva* [*Evening Moscow*] and *Sovietskaya Kultura* [*Soviet Culture*] published “boxes.” One intelligent old man in the crowd said: “Like Mayakovsky in 1930.” And I think that's right. He was not really a dissident; he was talented, but not universally recognized. Some people “up there” even think he's “not one of ours.” Even though everyone listens, admires, cries. In the crowd of 10 thousand by the cemetery there were dozens, if not hundreds, of tape players: Vysotsky was sent off to his own songs.

August 17, 1980

Over the course of this past week I was filling in for Ponomarev. He left me to prepare his reports for the “Parliament for Peace” in Sofia and the Berlin conference on the national liberation movement. And I still think he hopes to get a stronger foothold and higher place in the leadership with these “international scenarios” with him in the main role. But for some reason, he cannot understand that he is only damaging his “career.”

The very next day after his departure, an agitated Rusakov called: “I was told that Zhivkov’s mention of the ‘Parliament for Peace’ and Honecker’s of the Berlin conference during conversations in the Crimea made Him irritated. He asked what is this assemblage? Why doesn’t he know about it? Why are CC Secretaries always going somewhere and organizing something, etc.” By the way, they also “revealed” to Brezhnev that a CPSU delegation (i.e. Ponomarev) at the last meeting of “the Six” in Budapest in June threw out an idea for an international meeting of Communist Parties... Both of them (Zhivkov and Honecker) supported this idea. And Brezhnev said to them both that now is not the time, we have other things to do. We will think about it after our Congress...

When B.N. called from the south I told him about the irritation at the highest level... Dampened his spirits. But two days later he called and asked me to go to Chernenko (“since you know each other”) and talk about this...

Here is what happened among serious matters...

On Tuesday we received a note from Brezhnev on medium-range missiles. One page. The gist of it: the idea Brezhnev proposed to Schmidt is starting to fade. It is clear why the Americans would try to suppress it. But we cannot allow it. We put this idea forward not for propaganda, it is serious, and I demand that people take it seriously: namely, we should propose to the United States to officially begin negotiations, and if they sabotage it, we should publish this proposal. Turn to other NATO governments. Activate the public. And use propaganda to keep this idea at the forefront.

Kirilenko, who is currently leading the PB, sent this note to members of the Politburo and Secretaries of the Central Committee, and formed a committee consisting of Andropov, Zimyanin, Kornienko, Zamyatin, Ogarkov, Chernyaev. He tasked us to present a draft resolution based on Brezhnev’s note at the PB session on Thursday. Andropov had us meet twice in the “Walnut room” (that is in the Kremlin, between the premises of the Politburo and Brezhnev’s office). We put together and signed a draft for the PB: what is already stated in the note (to the U.S. and NATO). And for us, the International Department – a letter to Brandt, to some social-democratic parties, West European CPs, as well as a number of nongovernmental organizations, i.e. all kinds of international fighters pro and against.

On Thursday I was called to the PB. This question was the first on the agenda. Andropov reported “from the committee.” Naturally, it was approved...

Gromyko’s directives for the next UN General Assembly were also approved. Before that, Kirilenko asked me to give an assessment of the MFA draft. And to talk about it at the PB. Kornienko (First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs) started to get on his high horse over one of

the comments. Kirilenko did not put him in his place because he himself had stated the comment inappropriately and he gave this Ukrainian from the MFA an opportunity to object to his “version” (about the connection between medium-range missiles and SALT-II). But on another issue – informing our fraternal states about the issues we are introducing at the UN General Assembly – he was “made to sit down,” and Andropov started it by referring to the fact that NATO members all coordinate and discuss in advance, while we keep our friends in the doghouse and do not inform them on what we are going to propose until the very start of the Assembly. Yet we demand their support.

Kornienko tried to refer to longstanding practice, and the fact that there might be a leak from the Poles, but he was shut up.

The PB session started with Kirilenko informing about Kosygin’s illness (second heart attack). And “on the advice of Brezhnev” Tikhonov was appointed to be the acting Premier.

August 19, 1980

There are protests in Poland: what Lenin would call a universal crisis of the regime.

Marchuk’s report on the Scientific and Technological Revolution for the next Five-Year-Plan. It is constructive, but judging by his analysis, we have such a backlog that it is very doubtful his ideas can be realized.

We are writing letters to Brandt, other socialist-democratic leaders, Communist Parties about medium-range missiles and Carter’s “new nuclear doctrine.”

Zhukov wrote a euphemistic article against Berlinguer (regarding his interview for *Corriere della Sera* and *The Washington Post*).

Dozens of big and small papers per day for the CC, today there was also the Secretariat with seven of our questions. Twice I made explanations: it did not help.

September 19, 1980

Exactly a month. Turns out this is a long time. I went to the FRG in the meanwhile.

This was just at the beginning of the “Polish events” and over in the FRG, Poland was the main topic of conversation (both on television and in newspapers). In fact, the events raised all conceivable political issues – from the theory of Marxism-Leninism, to real socialism, morality, the future, propaganda and ideology, international relations, nation and internationalism, Poles and Russians. And for us – all our sore spots. It’s no coincidence that in connection with the events we restarted jamming the Voice of America, Deutsche Welle, etc., for which we were formally, at the level of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accused of violating Helsinki.

What about their substance?

Depends how you look at it. On the one hand, the Poles couldn’t care less how anyone looks at them. They are tired of living worse than others (Westerners), and they do not care where the system, the government which has been praising itself for everything for so many

years, will get what's necessary for the Poles to live like the Germans or Brits. If the Soviet Union organized a "1968" for them, they would have fought fiercely. These are no Schweiks. It would have turned into a bloody massacre worse than 1939, with consequences for millennia not only for the centuries-old Russian-Polish problem, but for the entire "revolutionary process." And surely, nothing but Irish-Maltese rags would be left of the ICM.

As far as I know, nobody over here considered repeating "Czechoslovakia." On the contrary, we gave them a loan that is quite substantial for us. And we did not publish it. But the Poles, of course, published about it, and the whole world published it. We can't even tell our people about their selfless internationalism...

The situation with food in our country is very bad. It is especially striking after the Olympics. The lines have gotten longer. But there are no potatoes, no cabbage, no onions, no carrots, no cheese. The sausage, as soon as it appears, is wiped off the shelves by out-of-towners, who have flooded the capital once again.

Yesterday, Gostev (Deputy Head of the Department of Planning and Finance) spoke at the meeting of the active lecturers-propagandists of the CC apparatus. He is an acrimonious, critical, vicious, furious man. He spoke mockingly and without looking back. We barely made 50 percent of the Plan. This year, the production of meat is decreasing every month. August was especially bad. When it comes to vegetables, don't expect anything even in Moscow. Soon there will be trouble with milk and dairy products. "So," he joked, "you, propagandists, take this into account and figure out what to do. As for how – Georgy Lukich (Deputy Head of the Propaganda Department – Smirnov) will tell you now."

This is at the level of the apparatus. Now at Brezhnev's level. Yesterday was a session of the Politburo. B.N. shared with me and Zagladin how it went. They discussed Poland. Brezhnev said (for some reason B.N. kept emphasizing that Brezhnev was speaking from a paper, a prepared text): "This is a new format for the advance of the class enemy (?), not like in Hungary and Czechoslovakia. This is only the beginning. Things could get worse. We need to write a letter to other socialist countries and a letter to our most active core." As he put it, we will have to not "help Poland, but extricate it from it." Overall, everything is ambiguous and vague.

We have to make conclusions for our own work:

- Look at trade unions and make them active;
- Be sensitive and attentive to the needs and requests of workers;
- Fight against arrogant and bureaucratic attitude towards business affairs;
- Work on our shortcomings...

Following this there was a discussion of the draft plan for 1981. Tikhonov presented. Ponomarev told us about this "in a soothing tone." I had told him about Gostev's report beforehand, and he kept convincing me and Vadim that things are not as bad, that Tikhonov's report does not support Gostev's grim picture. Of course, we did not fulfil the Plan, but not by 50 percent. That would be catastrophic. We are short by 2-5 percent, and in some areas may be 13

percent. Brezhnev ordered not to cut housing construction. “Indeed,” B.N. commented, “it is our only trump card now.”

B.N. lamented that we have not had a real leader of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions in a long time. Sounding like an old man, he reminisced about the power and authority factory committees had “in his day.”

Then he moved on to other business. And that business is familiar, Ponomarev-style, propaganda work. We finished preparations for the “Parliament for Peace” in Sofia. We wrote a beautiful text for B.N., with which he will intimidate and urge to save the world from the nuclear threat... His concerns are: that nobody “at the top” finds fault; not to scare our own people (for this we are preparing two versions: one to give “over there,” and another one for publication in *Pravda*); that it be at least 15 printed pages; that the “Novosti” Press Agency does a good job of getting it out to the world, etc.

Once again, I had to flex all my literary abilities and all my awareness of the latest trends “from over there” and “from above” to make it all in a tip-top shape. Again, I strained B.N.’s nerves and my own trying to prove that some of his so-called “ideas” are, if not harmful, laughable.

This work took up two weeks after my return from Germany. And since Zagladin was sick for 10 days, I again had to carry the whole Department (B.N. returned from the south only towards the middle of the month).

By the way, I persuaded Suslov to let B.N. head the delegation to the “Parliament for Peace.”

And every day there were moments when I kept coming back to the leitmotif of my current existence: will I ever really live? Will my whole life consist of 10-hour workdays, when it is impossible to step away at all!

October 6, 1980

I was in England from September 26-October 3. Communists invited me, but I had a plan to get to the Labour Conference. It turned out to be far from ordinary: most importantly, they cancelled the practice (from 1907) of choosing a leader only from the parliamentary faction.

A conversation at the embassy about tactics: Communists invited us, but they do not really want to talk. Later, already in Blackpool (the Conference of the Labour Party was held there) Dick [sic] Costello said to someone: “For some reason, they (i.e. the CPSU delegation who came at the invitation of the Communists) really wanted to get to the Labour Conference. We arranged it for them... They don’t need anything else from us.”

In the afternoon we went to the Central Committee of the CPGB. The usual sorry sight. We were met by the same Bert Ramelson, a Vinnitsa Jew who left in 1913. Now he is not even a member of the executive committee, he’s retired. It seems he was “filling in” for the late Woddis. A strange, noncommittal conversation, we vaguely agreed to talk with the CPGB leadership on October 1st, i.e. after returning from the Conference in Blackpool.

Dinner at the embassy. Kelan, Bykov (Gromyko's son-in-law). In general, London is a nest of children of "gifted parents." Suslov, head of a department at the MFA, once grumbled to me: "I've turned into some kind of agent of cronyism: M.A. Suslov's grandson, Gromyko's son-in-law, sons of three deputy heads of CC Departments – Kiselev's, Solovyov's, Shcherbakov's..."

On Sunday we drove to Blackpool. We wanted to take the train but it was very expensive for us. Stopped by Birmingham. Empty on Sunday. We walked around downtown. From the interchange you see a boundless sea of brick two-story houses and factory buildings.

Downtown Midland, which I studied in books 30 years ago, when I was writing my dissertation.

We arrived in Blackpool at around 2 p.m. A resort town, but a simple, proletarian resort. Fair atmosphere and crowds of people.

The owner of the hotel where we stopped is a Pole who was a pilot in the Royal Air Force during the war. The walls are covered with photos and paintings of airplanes.

Yekimenko (first secretary at the embassy) rushed to figure out our status: after all, we were not officially invited to the Conference, only as "guests" on the occasion of our being in London. The Czechs were not invited either, like us, also because of "human rights." As for us – it was specifically because of Sakharov and Afghanistan.

The National Executive Committee. Response to the Central Committee letter on medium-range missiles. And they changed their position on our "delegation": we were admitted like everyone else – as observers.

In the evening there was a reception at the transport workers union. Jenny Little even seemed beautiful, but she is too thin. She tried to sit me next to Callaghan, but he walked by me as if I were a lamp post. Her attempt, which was obviously out of place, embarrassed her. But then Atkinson and his wife immediately came over to our table (he is the Labour Party's national treasurer, he was recently in the USSR and was then persecuted for being "Moscow's man." Our side was genius, too! They pried an interview for *Izvestia* out of him, then of course edited it... and it went from there). He embraced me in front of everyone. Courage! He was again chosen to be treasurer by an overwhelming majority.

In the morning – walk to the Conference. The hall. Everything is different from us – the manner in which the meeting is conducted, the discussion, debates, resolutions from the floor – the framework of the Conference.

In the evening, there was the National Executive Committee's reception for foreign guests. I didn't go. Sent Yekimenko and Dzhavad. Reasons: a) I'm tired; b) I do not speak English well enough to communicate freely; c) they did not include us in the guest list distributed at the Conference, i.e. they were still discriminating, though *de facto* they treated us like everyone else.

Dzhavad brought details about the discussion of the CC letter to the Executive Committee, about Hayward's plans (the General Secretary of the Labour Party). He had a good conversation with Hayward overall. He rehearsed the international part of his speech for tomorrow, going off the meeting with the Yugoslav ambassador he had just had. The ambassador told him about the just-published memoir of a former Yugoslav ambassador to Moscow. There is a part about Khrushchev, his habit of choosing some ambassador at a reception as a whipping boy and saying to him what he wanted to say to others. He also remembered about the shoe at the UN, but he said he didn't have the right personality or the right leadership to allow himself such things. He joked, in a word.

Overall, though, same as the speech at the Conference the next day, it was mainly in our favor, or at least against Thatcher's militaristic hysteria. In the meantime, I was sitting at the hotel, glancing at the TV and recording my impressions and considerations for ciphered telegrams to Moscow that I would have to compose when I got back to London.

Speaking of TV shows: their entertainment programs are very vulgar and not funny at all. But the programs on technology, lifestyle, agriculture, other educational ones are at a high level and well-made. The international information is better than ours also. The documentary materials for this information simply do not compare. For example, you get complete visual representation of the Iran-Iraq war. They even report from the front lines.

On the sidelines of the Conference I ran into McLennan, the General Secretary of the CPGB. At this Conference he is just a nameless back row observer. He invited me to visit him on King Street (the CPGB's headquarters in London) between 3-4p.m. It was clear that he wasn't able to "get away" from us like Costello... It looks like for talks with us, McLennan "appointed" McKay (the new head of the PB) and once again Ramelson, who, though he's not a member of anything, essentially was in charge. Our talks came down to them asking me to give the CPSU's point of view and tell them "what they don't know" on the Labour Conference; on China; Poland; the Iran-Iraq War; the ICM. For two-and-a-half hours I spoke rather effusively on all these subjects, touching on others along the way. I picked the following method of "scoffing at them" for some of their positions, such as Poland: let's beat on an easy target to send a signal on the tough one.

Although I gave my best and was happy with myself, I felt foul after the "talks" were over: they, the Communists, mean nothing in England. They are on the sidelines; they are only observers in the labor movement and in general in the country's public life. That is why they worry about our dissidents, our democracy, Afghanistan, "Eurocommunism"... (By the way, they couldn't find a better time but right in the middle of the Labour Conference to publish Azcarate's (one of the leaders of Spain's CP) article on "Eurocommunism" in *Marxism Today*. Who cares about it in England? What is all this lifeless fuss for?).

After that, I went to the embassy to write a ciphered telegram to Moscow about the Labourists, even though the Conference had just entered its boisterous stage that day.

In the evening, Kelin and Sozin (party bureau secretary) hosted dinner in the "Rasputin" restaurant, paid for by the People's Bank (Soviet). We were the focus of attention and clearly

inspired the orchestra. They were playing one Russian song after another, nonstop. There was music of White emigres and NEP tunes and songs, but also many Soviet ones, the best tunes. Their performance deserves the highest praise. There was almost no attack of bogus stereotypes. At the guitar – a gypsy, at the piano – a young Russian woman. They sang in Russian (he sang with gypsy charm), almost without an accent. They did it for us with such enthusiasm that it was touching. Once again, I had the feeling that inspired Mayakovsky to write a poem about “The Soviet Passport.” We hold mystery and power for “them.” We attract them, they are curious, and it is strange and unclear what else can be expected from these Russians.

In the morning of the day before our departure, I again was writing a ciphered telegram, this time about the meeting with McKay and Ramelson. At 10 a.m. I had an official meeting with Bernt Carlsson, the General Secretary of the Socialist International: exchanging minutes of last year’s Moscow meeting of the CC CPSU delegation and the Socialist International working group.

October 11, 1980

In the afternoon, at 3 p.m., a meeting with McLennan, again on King Street. This time, mostly he spoke. About the Labour Conference. He said, “I left the conference (where, by the way, he looked lost, miserable, an outsider) with a mixed sense of satisfaction and sadness. It’s good that there was a shift to the left in the Labour Party, it’s good that there are such resolutions on peace and détente. On the other hand, I once again saw that no one wants to know or acknowledge us (the Communist Party). We know many Labourists, they know us, we are acquainted and communicate. Our people are in the trade unions, they make an impact. But nobody recognizes us as a party. We do not exist as a worthy political force. We feel like observers in the Labour movement.”

He is right. Later, after returning to Moscow, Zagladin and I discussed this subject. He was building yet another one of his lecture schemes. I said: No, Vadim, things are clearly moving to a new alignment – to final confirmation of social-democratic parties as an integral part of the mechanism of modern capitalist society. The large communist parties like the PCF, PCI, JCP are already advancing to these positions. Ultimately, they will comprise a more-or-less homogenous political force on the international stage. At the same time, the process of the disappearance of small communist parties will accelerate, or they will lose any political significance at home and on the international arena.

I spoke with Gordon [McLennan] for two hours. He complained that after Woddis’ death he has no one left to rely on.

At the same time, he gave a very mature, objective, deep assessment of the processes taking place in the Labour movement.

I returned to the embassy after the meeting. Again, sat down to write a ciphered telegram to Moscow.

In the morning – Heathrow with Kelin, Yekimenko, and Maslennikov (*Pravda* correspondent).

And on the 4th it was back to the routine, on the outskirts of actual world events. First thing in the morning I was at the CC Secretariat (awarding Gus Hall – Suslov), again preparing for B.N.’s departure for the Berlin conference, reports, texts...

I plunged into information on Poland, about their VI Plenum. Kania’s report and debates. Events that are sending shockwaves through socialism. So far, our reaction has been to issue a CC resolution prohibiting the distribution in the USSR of *Trybuna Ludu* and other Polish newspapers and magazines. Indeed, now they openly, sharply, honestly speak about things that are present in the USSR in even greater and more acute form... Precisely about what led Poland to such a crisis. But because we are Russia, we can stay in such a crisis and idiocy for decades. I am sure that considering the sparing regimen of our Chief, and others too, no one in our leadership read Kania’s full report, not to mention the transcript of the Plenum that was transmitted through the white-page TASS under the heading “Top Secret.” I think even B.N. hasn’t had the time, he is busy with little papers from all over the world. And what do they need it for? Nobody here has any plans to change anything. We worry about one thing only – to preserve the health, well-being, peace of mind and other greater goods of the General Secretary and a few other people around him – this is truly (like in ancient times) the highest state interest. Everything is subordinated to it: from the extraction of coal and oil, to signing an agreement with Syria.

Editorial board of *Questions of History*. Calm discussions. They still listen to me. I can’t tell whether it’s because of me, or my position.

Suslov ordered B.N. to reduce the number of foreign delegations at the Congress, because we cannot overstrain Leonid Ilyich. And overall – the Congress will now be 5 days, instead of 9 (like the XXV). So, it turns out, the Congress is for Leonid Ilyich, not for the country or the Party. And at such a moment. Poland, Afghanistan, missiles – the race that is leading to disaster (firstly economic)! It is some kind of criminal madness, and a madness that is routine, ordinary, quiet!

October 18, 1980

I just saw Ponomarev off to Rome for the funeral of L. Longo. From there he will go directly to Berlin for a conference on the national liberation movement, which I ended up having to prepare anyway, despite the fact that there are now three “Third World” deputies.

Brezhnev is hugging either Assad-of-Syria or Karmal-of-Kabul. Newspapers and TV are brimming with this, meanwhile the situation (economic) in our country is no better than in Poland. The crisis is growing there. Yesterday I read the “Solidarity” trade union’s appeal, which we received through our military, to the people of Poland and all peoples. There is a distinctively new, anti-Soviet note: it’s time for us, the Poles, to stop paying the internationalist bills that come from the East – Cuba, Vietnam, Ethiopia, Kampuchea... If they need it, they can pay... It’s time to stop suffering from the shame brought on Poland by 1939 and 1944...

On top of that, they again are making economic demands that exceed economic possibilities tenfold. The people behind Wałęsa are not making direct claims to power, but they

are moving things towards economic chaos, so that the current government would leave on its own. They are promising to respond to force with force. Meanwhile, manufacturing is down, workers are standing at their machines engaged in discussions, trust is not being restored, and the first thing “Solidarity” demands in the appeal is to legalize official political opposition.

Our people know almost nothing of what is happening in Poland. They will find out when we send our tanks there. And that is not out of the question, if the current leadership cedes or begins to cede power to “Solidarity.”

I’m still reading Boffa on the history of the CPSU after the war. Everyone knows everything about us! It’s all been written (despite the fact that we are carefully hiding our archives and the things we know and see). Those who wanted to have read everything already. So why are we huffing and puffing! Our traditional position – “if we do not acknowledge it, it does not exist or should not exist” – hasn’t persuaded anyone in a long time. Our moral-ideological prestige is below any conceivable level. It keeps falling due to our lies. We keep lying to our people, to ourselves, to all other peoples and parties. And whatever does not fit the lies, we consider anti-Soviet, enemy machinations, or revisionism.

Even such a generally superficial fact, this Berlin conference – our leadership really couldn’t care less about it. It was only our little intrigue, at B.N.’s instigation, to get to Honecker through Ambassador Ott so he would call Brezhnev upon finding out that Ponomarev is not being allowed to go to Berlin. Only this petty game made it possible for B.N. to go. But that’s not the point. The report we worked on for three months... Yet another “teachings of Ponomarev” consisting of eight points, this time on what a country of socialist orientation is... This cheap propagandist cliché cannot be projected even onto the “best” such country.

This is not even the most dangerous or the deepest lie that we serve.

Yes, Poland could become a stumbling block for all post-war socialism.

October 21, 1980

The CC Plenum will begin in three hours. On Sunday I met with Bovin. He is “rehabilitating” from something at the Herzen Sanatorium, and before that he spent about a month at the hospital. And even before that, he spent nearly the entire summer at the “dacha” in Volynskoe-2. As usual, he was there with academicians Arbatov, Inozemtsev, and adviser Tsukanov, preparing the “internal” part of the Report for the XXVI Congress. In September they were transferred to work on Brezhnev’s speech for today’s Plenum. The Plenum is primarily dedicated to the plan for 1981.

They were thinking of the events in Poland as they prepared the speech, and the nearly desperate situation in our own economy. (Bovin told me about his conversation with Baibakov as part of the prep work. The latter said: “I simply do not know what to do!”) Sashka was tight-lipped about the content of the “first draft”... But the gist of it was something like this: “Unlike in the past, I will not talk about everything, I will not give general assessments of our achievements. Let us first talk about the most important issue – the food shortages. How could it happen that we find ourselves in this situation. We had excellent policies outlined in the

September 1965 Plenum... But we essentially forgot about it and we are pumping huge sums into agriculture, while getting less and less in return.” And so on, with specific data on agriculture, transport, and industry.

The three aforementioned guys (without Bovin) took this text on October 10th to Brezhnev for a read-through and commentary.

For the first time in the 13-15 years of “collaborative work” the text was flatly rejected. Moreover, L.I. said four times that it irritated him, and twice called it damaging. Nevertheless, our General Secretary’s usual tactic is to get “collegial” support – he sent it to some PB members and some Secretaries, phoning them ahead of time. (One can imagine what reaction they would have – he told everyone about his irritation). However, a few people he wasn’t able to reach for whatever reason: Gromyko, Ustinov, and Kapitonov. These guys sent back rave reviews, praising it to the skies, as they say. For example, Gromyko: “This is a truly Party approach, a Leninist approach. How well and powerfully you raise the main issues. Indeed, how long can we endure such a situation. Look at America: over there, California alone feeds the entire country with fruit and vegetables. And here... Why cannot Moldavia and Georgia, for example, fulfill this role.” And so forth. Kapitonov expatiated about the depth of the Marxist-Leninist analysis, well-deserved sharpness, etc. Ustinov fully approved “the approach,” albeit calmly. These are the people who “didn’t know the text caused irritation.” As for those who knew – Suslov, Andropov, Tikhonov – they blasted it mercilessly. Suslov carefully crossed out all the openly critical places, i.e. the ones not balanced out with achievements. In the list of words: “bureaucracy, boorishness, conceit” he crossed out “boorishness.” Andropov, in addition to crossing out parts of the text, filled it with Komsomol enthusiasm about grand achievements. Tikhonov hacked the text and took out anything that had to do with management, planning, organization of production.

As the result, as Inozemtsev put it today, “they cut off our balls”... [I must explain: the things I wrote on the previous page already include information I got from Inozemtsev and Arbatov at the Plenum. We arrive to the Plenum well in advance, to “reserve a seat.” So, as soon as I sat down, Inozemtsev came up to me, dragged me behind a column of the magnificent Sverdlovsk Hall and started venting. Then Yura Arbatov came up to me, dragged me to the hallway and for half an hour related to me “how it was.” By the way, in his “soldier’s mannerism,” he described Suslov’s actions as follows: “Mikhail Andreyevich always knows where the balls are. No matter how you hide or cover them up, he sees them immediately and... snip, he cuts them off.”]

Bovin especially railed against Andropov: “He must know everything! It can’t be that they are lying to him, too! To such an extent! Or does he not understand where it will lead us?! Unthinkable! When I recover, I’ll ask for an appointment and I’ll throw him a tantrum.”

Arbatov is swearing at Tikhonov, and Bovin is too: a slug, ass-licker, scum. All he thinks about is how to “live out” his time in his position. Total mediocrity. As for Party spirit, ideas, or concern about 260 million and... that’s never been anywhere near him. Kosygin is ill, subjected, he hasn’t been capable of any independent action or initiative in a long time. But at least he knows the economy, he is competent, he sees the danger and, maybe by inertia, still he cares

about “the interests of the state,” not just his own butt cushion. But the former – he is just a bastard, a schemer, senile trash. Brezhnev despises him too, even though has practically made him the “second-in-command” (Arbatov). Then again (Bovin), Brezhnev despises everyone, he doesn’t take anyone into account, even his Chernenko. The only person he respects is Suslov (the ideological Rebbe) who must have won the General Secretary’s undivided trust through his clever politics of endless awards and praises. There is also Kosygin, whom he doesn’t respect but fears somewhat: after all, he has been a member of the Politburo since Stalin’s times, a Stalin-era people’s commissar. Plus he has some kind of “authority among the people,” possibly also from those times.

Inozemtsev says the plan that will be discussed today (for 1981) and the Five-Year-Plan are total shams. Nothing is balanced. The situation in key sectors is hopelessly bad. Nobody wants to see it, or rather they don’t want people to notice that they see it. Look: how many discussions have there been about a tractor fleet and combined harvester-threshers, at numerous Plenums. Even if timidly, we keep talking about it. And what of it? Baibakov cannot give funds for modernization. In the meantime, our best “Niva” harvester has a grain loss of two hundred kilograms per hectare, compared with average American machines.

Or: around the world, nobody manufactures trucks with gasoline engines anymore. Our “GAZ” and “ZiL” trucks will remain on gasoline even for the 11th five-year period. We are losing 25 million tons of oil per year because of this. Just the amount that, if we exported it, would give us enough funds to flood the entire country with Western consumer goods. We need 2 billion rubles to convert these two plants to diesel engines. But Baibakov does not have that either.

Brezhnev put forward a food program. Essentially it is not a program but a directive, a promise to feed the people with meat, and milk, and vegetables, and fruit. Of course, everyone supported it, but in essence the speech was sugarcoated. There is a striking difference even with the June Plenum. In June there was anxiety, concern, there was a stern tone towards departments, there was sharpness. Now it all disappeared. Has the situation changed for the better? Has there been a break in the clouds? Not at all. It’s just that since then, Brezhnev and others got scared of self-criticism, and Poland scared them completely: why appear as a larger-scale Poland in the eyes of the whole world! We’ve had enough for our time! Russia won’t collapse in five-six years, so why thump our chest, why attempt risky changes?! And the people will endure – they have no other options anyway, plus, “they aren’t hungry” (this last bit, by the way, Brezhnev himself said to Arbatov).

October 25, 1980

The Plenum is over. The session of the Supreme Soviet has passed. A feeling of bewilderment, bitterness, anger. And although Bovin probably wasn’t just boasting when he told me that he tried to keep the critical “spirit” the academicians incorporated in Brezhnev’s Plenum address, it was still more upbeat than the one at the June Plenum. This makes it look like there was a significant improvement over these four months. But in reality, it is the opposite. Though the Western mass media and our observers “on the other side” are saying that if you read

carefully, you will see in almost every paragraph an admission that things are bad. However, everyone has the right impression: there is no plan to get out of this situation.

Against the backdrop of Poland and everywhere else, including us and the GDR, Hungary is probably the only country where a solution has been found. There, they admitted long ago that socialism following the “model” and track set in the 1950-60s would lead to a dead end. So, little by little they started to look for a new model. It is working already, at the very least it is not disgracing the country.

Our reaction, even to Poland, is unequivocal: counter-revolution, revisionism, the instigators should be put in jail and everything would be settled. Ponomarev, inspired by Honecker’s reception, became a sponsor of summoning a closed meeting of “the Six” at the level of General Secretaries to discuss the situation in Poland (with Kania’s participation). However, as B.N. indignantly informed me, at the PB, Rusakov opposed it: are we arranging a flogging for Kania? What can we offer him right now? So, this idea was postponed... until the outcomes of Kania’s visit to Moscow. I asked Ponomarev directly: what do you mean? Our troops?

“No, nobody is talking about that. But the Poles have to take it upon themselves... their army needs to speak up. And in general – if Jaruzelski (Commander of the Polish Army) was made First Secretary, he would quickly restore order. They’ve gotten too soft. Wałęsa makes speeches in Krakow, says the devil knows what, and nobody pushes back. They could have prepared five-six good communists, so they would knock him back from the same podium.”

Then he started reminiscing how in 1922, he and his friends in the Party cell at the textile factory rebuffed the troublemakers who were trying to provoke a strike.

I asked him: “What rebuff could they give, if Wałęsa is urging people to work and says that it is necessary to seize cars and dachas from those who got them illegally? What is there to say?”

B.N. looked at me suspiciously and changed the subject.

Glorification of Brezhnev was in full-force at the Plenum. Everyone began with frothy enthusiasm about Leonid Ilyich’s speech – the deepest Marxist-Leninist document, a plan of action for the entire historical period, permeated with Leninist wisdom and a scientific approach, genuine Party-spirit and so forth; it inspires, elevates, we now have a real Leninist strategy. Everyone thanked “our Leonid Ilyich,” everyone committed to him personally to fulfill the tasks he assigned. The glorification reached its moronic climax in Brezhnev’s own speech at the conclusion of the Supreme Soviet session, when he took the podium to replace Kosygin with Tikhonov. He twice referred to himself using the full titles, in connection with outgoing Kosygin’s expressed confidence that a Party rallied around and led by Brezhnev will achieve new successes.

By the way, no one expressed gratitude to Kosygin, not Brezhnev himself, nor the chair (Ruben, Latvian), not on behalf of... And I thought to myself, wouldn’t it be good if some delegate, a combine operator or a lathe operator, would stand up and propose: “The Supreme Soviet of the USSR expresses gratitude to Alexey Nikolaevich Kosygin for the many years of

honest work”... followed by the usual clichés on such an occasion. What would happen to that combine operator for such an initiative? Nothing. “They can’t send you further than the front lines (i.e. the combine or a lathe).” But nobody thought of it, or didn’t dare. Such is our public morality.

When Brezhnev announced Tikhonov, it was as if something snapped in the room, like a quiet “oh!” swept through the audience. Behind me were some fellows, workers, delegates from the Altai region. I heard one of them loudly whispering to the other, “They couldn’t find anyone younger!”

The delegates and members of the CC are agitated. During a break in the session, when delegates usually go to have a snack, two men at my table were talking: a Turkmen secretary and a second secretary from Tambov. The Tambov man says, “It’s embarrassing that we cannot feed the country. If I were given free reign, I could feed my region and there would be something left for the rest of the country, too. For example: every year we give a certain amount of meat to the national reserve and every year, in the spring, we ask the national reserve to give us a certain amount of meat. And they give it to us, sometimes more, sometime less, but they do. Firstly, there are losses during transportation back and forth. Secondly, transportation costs money. And thirdly, the people have no incentive since they know that everything, or almost everything, they produce they must give away. As the result, we don’t have meat, you don’t have meat (he pointed at me as a representative of the capital and central government). But the national reserve can report through the Central Statistics Administration that they collected such-and-such an amount compared to last year, and so forth.

The Tambov secretary continued: we have a powerful thermal power station near Tambov, it gives a lot of heat and water. I’ve been asking the ministry and the CC for years to allow us to build greenhouses near the station. I could flood Tambov with vegetables. No, they say, it’s impossible because we cannot find the manpower to build them. Even though I’m offering my own, and partially even my own materials. There is not enough manpower to build, once and for all, a facility that would provide more produce than the labor of the two hundred workers the thermal power station sends every year for two months to work on collective farms harvesting fruits and vegetables.

Overall, one would think: if we look past the Brezhnev glorification and really think about some of the numbers and facts brought by the Plenum participants, the subtext is obvious: “give us the freedom, give us a minimum of materials, and we will move mountains, we will feed the country.” This idea came through quite clearly in some of the speeches.

November 1, 1980

There is a lull at work – in the sense that B.N. does not currently have ideas to write yet another theoretical paper. He doesn’t have any because lately he has been publishing twice a month. And he himself can feel that it’s too much – it could cause displeasure at the top.

Karen (Brutents) was laughing the other day while visiting me. “When B.N. is speaking in private with some third-world leader, he often remembers his youth, asks about the work of

the army, warns against any illusions about ‘peaceful paths.’ In a word, he is a big revolutionary. But when things get heated somewhere and it comes to armed struggle, his only reaction is to come out with an essay.”

It was precisely thanks to such an approach that we lost Jamaica yesterday. How hard I insisted, asked, persuaded to give it real aid. B.N. was dismissive, even laughed about it. I rang the phones off the hook at various departments, clearly exceeding my authority, but all I got was five passenger cars for Manley’s party. From B.N. – forty thousand rubles as inter-party assistance. Meanwhile, the CIA worked on Manley’s opponents daily, along with millions injected in the form of weapons, food, and so on.

It is pointless to look for logic. We pour several million into Afghanistan daily, and daily we pay with the blood of our soldiers. What for – nobody can explain. Meanwhile, numerous “points” would need minimal support from us, in completely “honorable” form, to give us political dividends and help our prestige.

As for Jamaica, I’m afraid that Manley’s fiasco in the elections yesterday will act as Chile 1973 for the entire Central American and Caribbean region.

It would appear that for the diary (the “future reader”) it would be interesting and important if I would simply write about the facts I learn every day. But I don’t want to write about that, plus I don’t have time to write out everything I learn daily. I don’t have the energy, either. I get tired. And I want to write about myself, about all sorts of worries and “thoughts.” They flicker and disappear. How many of them fly through my mind in one day! You can’t collect them in the evening. And the atmosphere at home isn’t always conducive. This confusing internal state has lasted for quite some time. I have no desire to read fiction. I enjoy studying Boffa or Carr more than Trifonov’s *The Old Man* (which is fashionable) and other pieces in magazines. It is likely more than just subjectivity, information overload at work, and a lack of faith in literature’s usefulness. There also seems to be a counter-process here: literature was always a powerful, ideological, and political locomotive of social development in Russia. Now it seems to be losing this quality. In part, because it is deprived of the possibility to take on the social problem as a whole, also because the problem our society faces (the dead end) is too big for literature to be able to help... even just to make sense of it.

Poland. Kania and Pinkowski visited. Met with Brezhnev. It’s not clear what actually took place. But the crisis there is growing and there is no end in sight. It is fundamental – a crisis of the leading role of the Party. The Party either lost its ability to use force and scare tactics, or it made the decision not to use them. But having done so, it became powerless to lead society. Therefore, it no longer has real, moral authority. It’s the same here. But we won’t repeat their experience because we will not refuse to use force. Tragedy is being postponed. It will strike when we decide that we are “losing” Poland. I wonder, did Kania make it clear to our side that there will not be a repeat of Czechoslovakia-68, even if he, Kania, does everything possible to help us in that direction.

It’s scary to think about what would happen if our side decides to take that step. And they might, because the person making the decisions does not have the necessary information (he

cannot even read what's at his fingertips) to assess the consequences. But even if he was physically capable of reading everything, he would hardly be able to comprehend the significance of his decisions and actions – because of dementia. However, someone near him really wants such a decision to be made. The day before yesterday, someone blew up Aeroflot offices in Warsaw. Who did it? There are suspicions “among the people” that it was the KGB. There is also a persistent rumor in Moscow that Masherov's accident was arranged. Absurdity. Philistine nonsense. However, what is the leadership worth, if it is suspected of such things, even by philistines.

The fact that all of socialism is going through (some kind!) of critical period is evidenced by the strike movement in the Soviet Union. Yes, yes, we can call it that. After the scandal at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant near Kiev, when Brezhnev shouted at the PB: “You are far from the working class! You drifted away!” Kapitonov and Dolgikh were assigned to study and report on negative phenomena of this kind. And on October 15 they presented a note to the CC. Here is the factual content.

Of late, there has been an increase in instances of work termination and other negative displays. The reasons: rate of pay, improper accrual and untimely payment of salaries (especially bonuses), poor working conditions, lack of attention to complaints.

Examples:

Nizhneisetsky metal work plant. In one workshop 100 people did not appear for work, in other – 57.

Alytus cotton mill in Lithuania. One hundred sixteen weavers refused to work.

Went on strike:

Ordzhonikidze Factory in Zlatoust.

Construction train No. 15 in the Chelyabinsk region.

Workshops and shifts at the Uman Pilot Plant for Agricultural Engineering.

Zdolbunovsky Mechanical Plant in Ukraine.

Children's clothing factory in Ashgabat.

Tartu Agricultural Equipment Plant.

Karachaevsky Condenser Plant of Stavropol region.

Separator plant in Makhachkala.

Kopeysk Machine Building Plant.

Yemanzhelinsk Auto Enterprise of Chelyabinsk region.

Aluminum casting workshop at a factory in Togliatti.

Due to nondelivery of raw material to the Voroshilovgrad diesel locomotive plant, the rolling shop was stopped from September 3-10th. The Vasilievsky refrigerator factory near Kiev was stopped for nearly two months for the same reason.

A particular cause of dissatisfaction is the failure to comply with obligations and activities recorded in collective agreements. In 1979, 500,000 such points were not fulfilled. Half of them relates to wages, 21 percent – health and safety, 14 percent – housing and living conditions.

Overtime and weekend work. In the coal industry, for example, most holidays are work days. In the mines of the Kemerovo region, miners worked 26-28 out of 30 holidays over 7 months.

Another reason is the collective responsibility for the state of labor discipline. Brigades, shifts, workshops are forced to assume the obligation: if one person makes a violation – everyone loses their bonuses. At the Nizhnedneprovsk Pipe Rolling Plant, 600 workers who did their jobs conscientiously were stripped of their bonuses because of a few violators.

In 1979 there were 300 “recorded strikes,” in which over 9 thousand people participated. In recent weeks, the number of such strikes is growing. Some of them are creating disastrous conditions for production. For example, at the “Severonickel” plant, workers did not remove metal from the electrolysis baths for three days.

This is what’s happening. However, it is important that no “use of force conclusions” have been made. In general, the note’s authors suggest to “improve,” “pay attention,” “show concern,” “organize morale building,” etc.

Even under Nikita this would have hardly been tolerated without the use of the relevant organs and troops.

But we have no real means to end the strikes, because we have neither meat, nor order, nor justice.

And *Pravda* produces articles nearly daily that make one’s hair stand on end. For example, yesterday – about the restaurant service in long-distance trains.

December 9, 1980

From November 28-December 2 I was in Malta with Sharif (head of a sector in the International Department). December 2-5 in Rome. During a stop in Rome en route to Malta, I was invited to the Central Committee of the PCI. A conversation with Pajetta and Rubbi. Two main questions: 1) the earthquake in Italy; 2) Poland – they demanded to convey to Moscow the PCI leadership’s resolution, warning that intervention is unacceptable. On the first point – it’s a shame and a disgrace. All the newspapers are reporting: even in absolute numbers, the USSR’s aid was less than Iceland’s and Ireland’s. My interlocutors outlined the four components of the recent crash of USSR’s prestige in the eyes of Italian communists:

- Jewish emigration;

- Afghanistan;
- Poland;
- Earthquake.

The guys from the embassy who met us at the airport said they are embarrassed to speak Russian amongst themselves in the streets or in shops – they are immediately met with unkind looks or even insulting remarks.

The same day we flew to Malta.

In the evening, in Parliament at the Grandmaster's Palace, we waited for two hours while Prime Minister Mintoff finished his four-hour-long parliamentary speech. At eleven o'clock in the evening he received us together with Trigona (a leader in the Labour Party) and all the main ministers. I "made" our policy on the go towards an entire state (!), without asking anybody and having no directives and authorization.

In Rome I mostly enjoyed its greatness. There were several friendly heated discussions with Italian leaders.

Returning to Moscow, I was swamped with work and information. The PB passed a resolution based on my information from the meeting with Pajetta and Rubbi: assigned to draw up a letter scolding the PCI CC, so they stay out of Polish affairs.

I managed to scare B.N. about Italy's reaction to our pathetic aid to victims of the earthquake: the Italians are rubbing our nose in it – "You teach us about internationalism, but look how you behave!" He understood and took action to give them more money. We have one million for them (NB). The Americans gave 50 million.

December 19, 1980

It's Brezhnev's birthday today. National holiday. Yesterday I turned on the program "Vremya" and felt ill... I was hysterical while I masochistically watched the program, I exhausted my entire supply of curse words. The entire "top" was gathered as Suslov awarded him the Order of the October Revolution and said all kinds of words about Lenin, the Great October Revolution, concern for the welfare of the people, the entire people's love for him, the powerful development of the country and great achievements in building communism.

All this against the background of Poland; in a situation when in Kharkov, Rostov, etc., etc., people have to queue up at 6 a.m. to get a liter of milk; when in Chelyabinsk there is nothing to be had at all. When a CC Secretary sends a letter to oblast committees and all republics' CCs to "take every measure" to improve the situation with the supply of meat, because in most places the situation is disastrous and is being called political. When the other day Chernenko's note was sent out (by the decision of the CC Secretariat) about the appalling situation with household heating all around the country (hundreds of collective letters) because there is not enough coal and firewood. When paper machines at the largest mills stop or work at 60 percent capacity, because there is no raw material. When 60 percent of ships spend months off the harbor because there are no cars to unload into... not even for bread that was bought for gold, etc., etc.

So, this ugly, cynical performance in front of the whole nation. I do not know and cannot imagine a Soviet person who would not feel hatred, bitterness, rage while watching this scene, who would not be cursing... Today anyone you meet asks, "Did you see it yesterday!"

It seems our leaders made up their minds: "Fuck them all, let them say whatever they want, they won't do a thing against us!"

The day before yesterday the PB appointed several new deputy chairmen of the Council of Ministers and several new ministers, sending the very ancient ones into retirement. All of them are Ukrainians, one (Bodul) is Moldovan. In connection with this I was somewhat surprised to learn that Tikhonov is Ukrainian too! Ukraine is steamrolling Russia...

Meanwhile, Moscow is filled with rumors that Kosygin has died. But it is not being announced, ostensibly so as not to spoil the birthday. All the people who share these news with each other are expressing their sadness, regret... It is a form of opposition, a form of expressing contempt for those who "did not let him finish his time at his post in peace."

The crisis in Poland has taken on an all-encompassing nature, everything is spilling into the open. What they are writing about themselves – about the Party leadership, about power, about the entire social and government system, about order and disorder – all of it (without exception) is the same here. But, as their academician Shchepansky correctly noted, the difference is that Poland in the 1970s essentially dismantled the repressive style (if not the apparatus), therefore they can no longer control the movement. In our country it was the opposite, it was consolidated to an extraordinary degree – precisely in the 1970s. So, nothing will happen here for now. But the strikes might become widespread.

December 26, 1980

I was at "Sosny" again, since December 20, on vacation. Dreary and slushy. It is zero degrees outside. I only went skiing twice. But I did explore the outer suburbs of Moscow.

The Istra River is beautiful, its banks are lined in trees like an alley... And the village is well-cared-for, there is a livestock complex nearby. When I was walking back, a group of men were walking home for lunch. Not a sober one among them. And the main thing that once again stunned me: a war memorial near the church – the standard figure of a woman with an olive (?) branch in her hands, a wall a little distance behind her with names of the fallen. I read them, crying (especially because there was nobody nearby, there is no people's trail through the snow!). One hundred fifty people. That's just from one village! An entire marching company. For some reason, in moments like these I always feel bitterness towards Brezhnev & Co. The connection is complex, I won't go into it here.

The next day I went in the opposite direction – towards Zvenigorod. I got as far as the village of Aksin'ino (5km beyond Nikolina Gora). The same story with the church: from a distance it looks grandiose and enticing, but when you come closer it is small and dilapidated, practically just a small chapel. Near the church there is again a "wall" with the names of the fallen, here there were 57 people, but the village is smaller too.

By the way, this resonated with my state of mind brought on by Bondarev's *The Choice* and Aitmatov's *The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years*. Very different pieces, but they reflect the new trend in our modern literature, which made its presence felt boldly. This trend is unshakable, and, I think, will not be intimidated: the insignificance of all this ceremonial fuss in top-level leadership when compared to the mystery of life and death of a simple person, with the meaning of his existence, with his natural and truly human ideas about good and evil, and about what a person needs and what he does not.

In this respect, the congress of writers of the RSFSR is also characteristic. There clearly emerged a system of values that is far from, and even internally opposed to, the official system of values. This is despite the fact that they are denoted by the same words: labor, homeland, honesty, responsibility, duty, truth, etc.

The things being published every month in literary journals have far surpassed (in depth, skill, and the critical acuteness of the subject matter) the things presented by dissidents and emigrants who left under the pretext that, don't you know, they don't have creative freedom here. In reality, they didn't have the guts, plus they wanted Western stuff and scandalous fame!

On that note, I recently read Rudnitskaya's article (for *Questions of History*) about *Kolokol* being published in French (1867-68). Once again, I marveled at Herzen's greatness. These pygmies – our dissidents – have no right to reference him. *Kolokol* in this (foreign) version came about because Herzen and Ogarev decisively disagreed with “Western democracy,” which at that time took up the trend to vilify and trample (gathering all forces “against”) Russia. *Kolokol* was called upon to tell “them,” to fling it in their face: you are too insignificant to judge her, you are stupid for identifying Russia with its rulers.

My God! Is this really an “eternal problem”?!

Kosygin died. It was announced three days later, so as not to spoil Brezhnev's birthday (the old man got his revenge after all). But in Moscow, people found out about his death before it was announced. And the rumors started spreading: what kind of funeral will he have? Is it possible they will “wrap it up” like they did with Masherov? After all, he was removed from his post without even a thank you, only later they came to their senses and printed in the newspapers what did not happen in real life.

It seems there was a day of hesitation at the top. And then they did everything “first class,” as if he passed away “on the job.” Looks like they did not dare to do otherwise. They knew that Kosygin (though he did not quite deserve this reputation) was a symbol of modest authority, he considered himself to be in the service of the people, he didn't just talk about caring. Moreover, they must have realized that after turning the “birthday” into a national holiday, and again – with an order (every year it is either another Hero or an order), they can't mock the people's opinion regarding the deceased, who was respected... more than that: people secretly contrasted him to Brezhnev, considered him to be undeservedly pushed aside!

Postscript to 1980

In this “volume” the diary’s author makes his final verdict on the Brezhnev-Soviet regime – severe, merciless, implacable. The starting point of this verdict was the criminal venture in Afghanistan, which brought together all the vices, all the stupidity, and the social baseness of the regime.

The entries contain stunning depictions of the leadership’s and the General Secretary’s senility, their inability to either comprehend what was happening and where things were going, or to make decisions which would have at least a shred of common sense and a sense of responsibility towards the country.

The regime’s lies reached Homeric proportions. The economy was stagnant, collapsing, and disgraceful. The financial situation was awful, there were shortages of everything everywhere, empty shelves, queues to obtain the most essential items. Strikes, no longer a singular occurrence, began – an unthinkable thing in the USSR since the 1920s! Meanwhile, at the top, there was a disgusting and abhorrent endless bacchanalia of congratulations, awards, including of each other. Nearly every day the General Secretary was sending greetings to collectives, enterprises, institutions, regions, and persons for obviously fictitious successes.

In the fall, the “Poland problem” appeared. In Moscow it smelled like a repeat of “Prague-68.” The diary captures the moods in the Politburo, rumors, conversations, speculations and fears – “what will happen? How will we behave? Might we fall into a criminal path again?” The author and his colleagues reflect on the events in Poland on a big scale: after all, they revealed and exposed, much more sharply and more frankly than Prague Spring, the failure of the “socialist empire” – the socialist community, but also socialism as a whole – the system as it developed since the days of Stalin.

There are curious observations of the situation in the top leadership – not only the General Secretary’s advanced dementia, but the relations among the main personalities near him – those who used the General Secretary’s condition to make “their own politics.”

As always, the topic of international relations is present – from the perspective of the Soviet Union’s shameful and dangerous politics, and in connection with the Olympics in Moscow. A good amount of space is devoted to the author’s, who is a rather high-ranking Party official, attempts “in the line of duty” to embellish the image of “the Party and the homeland” from the position of “doublethink.”