

Session of Politburo of CC CPSU  
25 September 1986

Chaired by cde. Gorbachev M. S.

Present: cdes. Aliev G.A., Vorotnikov V.I., Gromyko A.A.,  
Zaikov L.N., Kunaev D.A., Ligachev E.K.,  
Chebrikov V.M., Scherbitsky V.V., Dolgikh V.I.  
Yeltsin B.N., Soloviev Yu.F., Talyzin N.V.,  
Biryukova A.P., Dobrynin A.F., Zimyanin M.V.,  
Nikonov V.P., Razumovsky G.P., Yakovlev, A.N.,  
Kapitonov I.V.

1. About the Results of cde. M.S. Gorbachev's trip to Krasnodar and Stavropol Provinces.

GORBACHEV: The trip to Krasnodar and Stavropol provinces [went] beyond the prepared framework. The intention was as follows: in the Krasnodar province to find out how the agro-industrial complex is working in the new conditions, and in the Stavropol province to [assess] how agricultural enterprises were implementing the switch to economic self-sustainability in practice. However, the conversations with working people, the issues they raised during those conversations, forced us to go beyond those topics. People were saying that they support the policy of perestroika, that correct decisions had been made, but that they don't always reach down to them.

We were impressed by the growing engagement of the people, their desire to speak out and take clearly defined positions on all issues of the life of the party and the country. They were saying that we must overcome industry-specific approaches and parochial interests. Finally, in the meetings and conversations they raised issues of organization of party work in contemporary conditions. How party committees function also affects the progress of perestroika.

What political conclusions can be drawn from these meetings and conversations? The most important political conclusion is that support for the party's policy among the people is growing stronger. People say openly that we cannot stop in the middle of the road, we must go boldly forward. [...]

[...]

GORBACHEV: Cde. Guzhenko addressed a letter to the CC CPSU. He is asking to be allowed to retire and connects his request with the tragedy of "Nakhimov." He is

suffering deeply over what happened. I think it would be the right [decision] to satisfy his request.

POLITBURO MEMBERS: We agree.

GORBACHEV: I asked Viktor Mikhailovich [Chebrikov] to tell us what kind of people are serving sentences for crimes that Western propaganda classifies as political.

CHEBRIKOV: According to our legislation, these crimes are classified as especially dangerous state crimes. Altogether, 240 individuals have been indicted and are currently serving their sentences. These are people convicted of espionage, crossing the state border, dissemination of hostile leaflets, currency manipulation and so on. Many of these people have made statements that they would cease their hostile activities. They explained their statements by reference to the political changes that followed the April Plenum of the CC CPSU and the XXVII Party Congress.

It appears that we could release one-third at first and later one-half of these people from the penitentiary. In that case, only those who retain positions hostile to our state would continue serving their sentences.

GORBACHEV: It appears that we could support this proposal.

CHEBRIKOV: We will do it in a reasonable way. In order to be sure that the named individuals do not continue to engage in hostile activities, we will initiate surveillance of them.

SCHERBITSKY: How can we explain that comparatively few people [now] receive criminal sentences for committing especially dangerous state crimes? Because of perestroika?

CHEBRIKOV: It can be explained by the emphasis that the KGB organs put on prophylactic work [профилактической работой]. Many individuals are discovered, if one can put it this way, just as they approach the line beyond which they would be committing a criminally punishable act. To pressure them we use all [means] available to the KGB as well as to society.

GROMYKO: Which of the crimes are [considered] the most dangerous and what kind of punishment is imposed for them?

CHEBRIKOV: Espionage. The punishment for that is execution or fifteen years of incarceration.

Polishchuk was executed for espionage. Yesterday, Tolkachev's sentence was carried out.

GORBACHEV: American intelligence paid him generously. He was caught with 2 million rubles.

CHEBRIKOV: This agent handed over very important military-technical secrets to the enemy.

GORBACHEV: Let us agree that we support the considerations expressed by cde. Chebrikov in principle. Let the KGB introduce their proposals in the established order.

POLITBURO MEMBERS: We agree.

[handwritten signature]  
A. Lukyanov