

1982**Entries from diary of CPSU International
Department official Anatoly Chernyaev regarding
Soviet policy toward China, summer and fall 1982****Citation:**

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c. 21 May 1982 [1]

The Chinese problem. My clash with [Oleg Borisovich] Rakhmanin. Back in the beginning of May, I, as a member of the editorial board of Kommunist, received a review article written by [Mikhail] Kapitsa (MFA) about a book by [Oleg] Borisov (?). I did not take the trouble to think who that Borisov was [Borisov was one of Rakhmanin's pen-names], but I called [the editor of Kommunist Richard] Kosolapov and told him that I am categorically against such an article. This was nothing but apologetics for the book and curses of China, as if there never was a speech by Brezhnev in Tashkent.

On May 11 another "Interkit" took place in Sophia-a secret meeting of the deputy heads [of relevant Central Committee departments] of the six socialist countries on the Chinese question. We were of course represented by Rakhmanin who first imposed "directives" for his trip to Sofia on the CC, and there [imposed] the protocol (as the basis of propaganda and scientific work in the participating countries and for publicity). However, for the first time the plan misfired. The Germans (Bruno Mahlow) first introduced 100 amendments to the draft of this protocol, and then refused to sign it.

Probably, the same Mahlow reported to Rakhmanin that Honecker "is generally pulling his hair" [rvet i mechet] about this Interkit. He, allegedly, has been preparing for fifteen years [sic], writing down various loud phrases about China (dictatorship, military-bureaucratic regime, alliance with imperialism, degeneration, surrender of position of capitalism etc.), but life goes on. The CPSU, allegedly, made all sorts of mistakes with China, it may be a good time to "apologize." In any case, we have "our own" interests and must have "our own" policy in relation to China. That's how it is!

Having returned to Moscow, Rakhmanin sent a "report" to the CC, signed by the four departments [responsible for foreign affairs]. He called me-and, true to his manner of "quickly quickly"-[said]: sign it, everything has been agreed upon. I read it and decided that I will not sign it, that much I told the assistant who brought the paper.

Instead of this I send it to Ulianovskii. He read it and on the following day sent me his "thoughts"-also against Rakhmanin.

In the evening, Oleg Borisovich "personally" stormed into my office:

- Where is the paper?

- Ulianovskii has it.

- What for? Everything has been agreed upon. The Politburo commission (on China) met today, they basically approved my memorandum, and even instructed to "toughen" I. Aleksandrov's article for Pravda...

He had a threatening appearance, unreceptive to objections.

- I will not sign this paper.

He turned around and slammed the door.

By the way, about I. Aleksandrov's article [2]... It was circulated in the Politburo just before. I made amendments for B.N. [Ponomarev], taking out any mention of the names of the Chinese leaders and some virulent remarks-the atavisms of the "Cold

War" with China. The article was not prepared by Rakhmanin's team but, probably, at Lubyanka [KGB]; it was written in the spirit of Tashkent and was fundamentally different from both Rakhmanin's memorandum and from the protocol. It was in this form that it was published in May 20... In spite of...

Indeed, the same day as Rakhmanin stormed [into my office], there was the Chinese commission. In the morning B.N. told me that, allegedly, they discussed: he (B.N.) and Andropov spoke in favor of improving relations with China ("but of course giving them a rebuff when needed!"), but Gromyko, allegedly, surprised [them] by demanding to push the Chinese, not to let them off lightly. And he was brusque in general, although it seems that as a diplomat he should have been more flexible.

A "worrying" message came from Pyshkov (from the blabbering of the assistants, and more probably from Rakhmanin who is a member of the PB Commission): that the commission took even more rigid positions than that of Rakhmanin's memorandum and of the protocol. However, I returned this memorandum to Rakhmanin, without signing it, although he threatened over the phone that he will report to Chernenko that the International Department is refusing to sign.

However, I thought it necessary (and I had to do it as a matter of work duty) to shortly explain on a note for Ponomarev why I did this.

To be precise: the memorandum departs from the Tashkent line, its main task (that it proposes to accomplish) is to expose Chinese hegemonism, it rules out reasonable prospects, using propaganda to create an atmosphere, which will undercut the opportunity to establish normal relations. And also because it characterizes the situation in China as a "move toward the right". "Toward the right," I wrote to B.N.-"everyone knows what that means in our party terminology. This means, 'things are getting worse.' But in comparison with what? With how things were under Mao, how things were under Hua Guofeng, a year or two ago?

And, in the end, it is not admissible that Rakhmanin's line blocks the Tashkent line, but this is happening because the implementation of policy has been practically surrendered into the hands of Oleg Borisovich, to whom I always was well-disposed, in personal terms."

I sent this to Balmashnov to pass it on to B.N. when he returns from the Komsomol congress. He [Balmashnov], having read it, and true to the principle of "hope nothing happens," immediately sent me 12 pages on chalk paper, "The conclusions of the Commission of the Politburo on the Chinese question"... Half of the text was devoted to Honecker, with the conclusion: "measures must be taken," especially that he [Honecker] conspires on the German question, and on the Polish one, ... and in general.

About the Chinese-in Rakhmanin's style, but in addition it was advised to call to account [pristrunit] "some Soviet communists," connected to the Chinese problem in the institutes, in the mass media, who incorrectly understand the policy of the party, engage in conversations alleging that the party and the government do not make use of all opportunities to normalize relations with China, etc. That, allegedly, one has to bring into line [literally "conduct work with"] the directors and managers of official agencies...

Therefore, Rakhmanin, with the help of the Politburo, decided to intimidate [prishchuchit] all of his competitors and opponents, establish himself in the role of [Trofim] Lysenko for Sinology.

I understood why Balmashnov hurried to slip this document to me: so that I know my

place and do not stick my neck out, because otherwise I might let Ponomarev down, especially that he is also a member of the Chinese commission, and his signature, like the signatures of Chernenko, Andropov, Gromyko, Kirilenko, Zimianin, Zamiatin, Rakhmanin was also affixed under this "report," intended for the endorsement of the Politburo on Thursday.

On the following day after the meeting of the Politburo Ponomarev called me up. We talked about this and that, in particular about the need to prepare a new edition of Brezhnev's biography for the USA.

- By the way-B.N. suddenly says-about the memorandum on China. The Politburo just met...

- Boris Nikolaevich, I interrupt. I read the report of the China commission. I was surprised by many things there. If you read my little note, I have no need to say again that it (the report) departs from the Tashkent line; in essence there is no policy in it-no direction nor goal to pursue, [no sense of] what we want in our relations with China... And moreover, one should not allow Rakhmanin to make a policies of such importance.

- B.N. in his turn, wanted to stop me but I was carried away.

- I don't know if you are aware of this, but in the last 15 years while Rakhmanin has been responsible for China in the CC Department, and especially after he became the First Deputy, he wrote dozens of articles, brochures and even books (of course, with the help of Sladkovskii's institute and his aides). And all of this is about one thing: how to smash China. He perfectly understands that if relations changed, all of his "literature" will go into the trash bin. But he has already nominated himself for the elections to the Academy of Sciences and has no intention of abandoning this plan. So he will do anything to make sure that our line in relation to China remains such as depicted in his articles and brochures written under his four pen-names. But I think it is not appropriate to surrender this vital area of our state interests to Rakhmanin's personal interests [biznes].

B.N. became alert. He took it with obvious interest: such reasons are especially understandable to him, he likes this [sort of thing]. Finally, he responded:

- Well, take it easy, Anatolii Sergeevich-the resolution of the CC (Politburo) will be completely different, not the same as in the Commission report. Leonid Il'ich spoke at the Politburo-here, I wrote it down-(he took up a piece of paper)... and he said: "We should continue an active [initsiativnuiu] policy toward China, we should improve relations. I think, we should instruct the relevant comrades to prepare new steps with an eye to sorting out relations on the basis of what I said in Tashkent."

Now, that's a twist!

Here is, probably, what happened. Andrei [Aleksandrov-Agentov, Brezhnev's foreign policy aide], having received the report of the commission, immediately grasped that it was Rakhmanin's dirty business, and immediately read out talking points for L.I.'s statement at the Politburo. B.N. doubted Rakhmanin's "information" about Honecker etc. And where were you before, members and candidate members of the Politburo? Or the great power complex goes off automatically? In its name [the great power complex's name], one can take for granted anything, even "sanctify" Rakhmanin's monopoly in the Chinese matters, which means that the CC with its own hands is closing the opportunity to receive objective information (and studies) on China, because all of [our] science is already under the paw of Oleg Borisovich!...

10 July 1982

[...]

My war with Rakhmanin has gone up a gear. As I have already written, he managed to get "Interkit" endorsed at the Politburo with a provision-to publish an article in Kommunist on the basis of that same anti-Chinese nonsense [bodiagi], to which the Germans refused to subscribe this time. Having returned after an illness I discovered proofs on my desk (as I am a member of the editorial board of Kommunist) and was shocked once again. In 21 columns (this is about 66 typed pages) there was smacking [dolbezh] of China in all directions. Two thirds of the text are devoted to internal affairs: party, constitutional, the economic situation and so on-and in such a raucous style that we never allowed ourselves anything like this with respect to many imperialist countries, and with respect to France and the FRG-not for the world. Not to say anything about foreign policy.

In a word, complete disavowal of Brezhnev's Tashkent speech.

Because what it said about China's internal affairs - ... any reader will be surprised: how could we even call this country "socialist"[?] Or: if China so deeply (and irreversibly) became mired in an alliance with imperialism, how could one count on normalization with it, on improvement of relations and cooperation[?]

Therefore, Tashkent is either a conjectural (basically hypocritical) tactical move, or our right hand does not know what the left hand is doing, or there is a "struggle" under way in our leadership on the question of China.

The first question they will ask in the West: is Tashkent over with?! And China will have a new excuse to respond with still greater condemnation of our internal politics and "hegemonism." I call Kosolapov. Explain all the conceivable arguments to him. He tells me: there is a PB CC resolution, and Rakhmanin is sitting on my head... And the issue has been sent into print.

I call Ponomarev, he tells me: "I cannot cancel a Politburo resolution."

- But you are a member of the Chinese commission, you can tell Andropov. I am certain that when the decision on the publication was made, none of the CC Secretaries and members of the PB read Rakhmanin's composition. This is a question of big politics. And God forbid if Brezhnev was informed that a mine was being put under his Tashkent line...

- And do you know what the Chinese are writing about us every day? And what a bad speech the Chinese made in the UN?

- I know. But I also know that a lot of what they used to write half a year earlier they no longer write. The whole world sees that. It's enough to glance through TASS. But Rakhmanin is hiding this from the CC. But the main thing is-Tashkent-does it go on or not? If yes, one must not allow propaganda to diverge from policy...

- A lot of water has flowed since Tashkent...

- Huh? That means....

- No, no, you misunderstood me (got scared). What am I suggesting to you? Let Kosolapov, if he sympathizes with you, call Andropov... But in general be careful, one

should not make it look as if we (the International Department) are pro-Chinese, and Rakhmanin is the only one who struggles...

- OK.

Kosolapov, however, did not dare to call Andropov. I, he said, will call my immediate boss, Zimianin.

In the morning I still knew nothing about the results. (I don't like to push... and put people in a difficult situation). And B.N. is already calling: how did this end? [I said:] I don't know. But just in case (I report to him) I myself called Andropov's aide Vladimirov (Suslov's former aide). He, I say, became very worried. And promised to report right away, as soon as the Politburo finishes. Then Kosolapov informed about the results of his conversation with Zimianin. He also became worried. He called [head of the Department, Rakhmanin's boss Konstantin] Rusakov and together they decided to propose to Kosolapov to circulate this article in the Chinese commission, and to remove it from the pending (10th) issue.

This is how it ended for now.

7 August 1982

It looks like the main thing that happened during the days missing in the diary is once again China. A week passed by. It turns out, as Ponomarev told me unhappily, Andropov called him and said: it seems that your Cherniaev wrote up some kind of declaration about this article... It is not good if there is conflict among the departments... Let them hammer it out. I, Ponomarev (apparently scared) responded that Cherniaev, allegedly, never made any statements but merely, as a member of the editorial board of Kommunist (God forbid as a deputy in his Department) spoke up in favor of cutting down... the criticism of internal policy of the PRC.

I tell him (insolently): nothing of this nature, Boris Nikolaevich. I generally spoke against the publication of such an article because it contradicts the Tashkent line, wrote up a fairly sharp review and sent it to Kosolapov.

B.N., however, attributed such a "limiting" action to me in his conversation with Andropov because he played along [poddakival]. Andropov told him that he demanded from Rakhmanin to "sharply reduce the internal part" and generally cut down the amount of virulent remarks. To my insolence, which was followed once again by elaborations on the account of Rakhmanin's composition, B.N. declared that he will not deal with this anymore, and does not advise me to.

In the meantime, [head of the USA and Canada Institute Georgii] Arbatov and I ended up in the Theatre of Satire, at the "Imposter" by Erdman, 1930. Constant hints and "associations." After this until 2am Arbatov dragged me around the Arbat lanes around his house and again cursed all and everyone for greater power policy in relation to the Comecon countries. [...] I for my part told him about the Chinese affairs. In response he, cussing Rakhmanin and co., offered his services: I will, he says, call Laptev (this is another of Andropov's aides), perhaps Blatov, who is in the South near Brezhnev and carefully let them know that, he says, Kommunist may again publish the wrong thing... And you send me your review, which you sent to Kosolapov, so that I have the arguments. This was on Friday night.

On Monday I sent Arbatov a copy. In the evening of the same day I had the aforementioned conversation with Ponomarev, from which it followed for me that my subsequent actions may be viewed as an attempt to weave intrigue against a

Politburo resolution, and as a violation of party discipline. On Tuesday I called Yurka [Arbatov] and told him not to do anything with my paper... It turns out he already spoke to Laptev and Shishlin who was going South that day to help Blatov. But I (Arbatov) did not send the paper to anyone, everything was oral. In the meantime, for I don't know how many days I have the second proofs from Kommunist sitting on my desk. Kosolapov sent it to me, so to speak, in violation of instructions, because it was ordered to send it only to the members of the Chinese commission of the Politburo. In essence, nothing was changed there, perhaps it was cut by about a fifth, and even Andropov's direct instruction was in fact not implemented. The circular, naturally, came to Ponomarev, as a member of the commission. Balmashnov, the aide, sent the circular to Kovalenko (another of our deputies who deals with the East)-in order that he reports his opinion to B.N. He reported, as is the norm in these cases. Balmashnov put this [report] on B.N.'s desk. The latter responded: "I said I will not deal with this anymore, and I ask not to waste my time." Having received a usual slap in the face, "San Sanych" (Balmashnov Aleksandr Aleksandrovich) came back to his office and, of course, called me, knowing about my engagement in this matter and also because he had sent the material to Kovalenko with an addendum: report to Cherniaev. In any case, Balmashnov did not dare to go to B.N. again with the Chinese question.

What is to be done? On the one hand, one has to neutralize the accusation of violation of discipline, especially if Arbatov's intervention reaches Andropov's ears (additional downside: plugged in a person from outside the apparat, even if he is trusted and "accepted" at large courts and even at Andropov's. Yurka frequently comes to his place, back from the times when he was the head of a consultants' group in the Department, which was run by Iu. V. in the 1960s). On the other hand, one cannot allow for the article to go forward in Kommunist-there is State interest at stake.

I call Sharapov, Andropov's aide, who handles international relations, and with whom I had a conversation earlier, in relation to the first set of proofs, after I understood that my conversation with Vladimirov on this subject was futile: he [Vladimirov] handles domestic questions and at least promised to report to Andropov about my concerns that the article in Kommunist goes against Tashkent. He probably did not do that, or asked Sharapov to do it.

So I call him [Sharapov]:

- Are you still interested in the Chinese question? (as if joking).

- Yes, didn't you promise to send your opinion about the second proofs. On the first, as I told you, Iu. V. called Rakhmin and ordered him to "sharply cut down the internal part and then let it go out."

- I am prepared to give my opinion to you. The article, even though it has become shorter, but the essence and the tone remained the same. Would you like for me to express my opinion on paper?

- Please.

I sat down and composed two polite but quite resolute pages, insisting that until the Chinese congress at least one should not come out with this article. I sent it. Three days passed by. Did not hear a word about it. In the meantime, Kosolapov's deputy Bugaev calls me, Kosolapov decided to slip out to a vacation, out of harm's way.

- What am I to do, Anatolii Sergeevich? I only received comments on the second set of proofs from [Dmitrii] Ustinov (PB member, Minister of Defense). Well, [he] weakened the virulent remarks here and there, and sharpened them in some places... But no

one else... Then, he says, it turns out that Rakhmanin (as the secretary of the Chinese commission) made sure that all amendments are sent to him, and not to the editorial office, and he will send us the final text.

- I don't know what to do, Evgenii Iosifovich... I did all I could and now I don't even have the right to send you my comments on the second proofs.

- By the way, I received a phone call from... (here he broke off, did not say the last name but I understood that he was talking about Zimianin). He started yelling at me in his, you know, "comradely" (fraternal) style: "What, two Politburo decisions, and one of the CC Secretariat, are not enough for you?! Why are you not publishing the article? And so on." I tell him calmly: I have nothing to publish. Rakhmanin took everything, I don't even have the text, and I am not receiving any comments. Besides, Mikhail Vasil'evich, until I receive a text, endorsed officially by the PB commission, I will not publish anything. Because the editorial board has in fact been removed from this affair at a time when all members of the editorial board without exception are against this article (here he added: I, Anatolii Sergeevich, fully, 200% support your opinion, Kosolapov showed me your review). For this reason neither I nor the editorial board will not take the responsibility in this important question. I am an old party man and will not go against my convictions, and I am convinced that our policy will suffer a big blow.

I don't know if this is what he told the CC Secretary (on the other hand, he could well do, he is a direct, confident, beaten and honest man), but he received a response: "Well, beware, beware. [smotri, smotri]."

After this conversation with Bugaev I decided to call Sharapov after all. He: I reported to lu. V. (Andropov) but sort of on my own behalf...

- Why is this? Why didn't you think it possible to refer to me. After all, I am not hiding, I just did not feel it appropriate to call myself...

- Well, that's how it is. I decided this would be better.

- Ok, and what?

- He said that... and repeated the same thing-that one needs to cut down the internal part and let it go out. (Only later did I understand what the problem was-but more on that in the finale.) However, your comments to the actual text are useful in my view.

- But I don't have the right to send them even to Kommunist!

- But try to hand them to Boris Nikolaevich. He is a member of the commission after all.

- Ok, thanks!

I write a memo for Ponomarev: I say, I talked to Sharapov-I cannot say if he reported the general considerations to Andropov (attached!), but comments to the text he found "substantial" (also, attached!).

Two days passed by. Balmashnov calls me up: Boris Nikolaevich returned me your comments, your memo and your copy of the article, without saying a word. I will send it to you... In other words, the same "policy" as with Kovalenko: I told you I will not deal with it and that's it! I understood that it is also useless to knock myself against

other walls and decided to wait submissively for the article to appear in the next issue of Kommunist.

But yesterday the following happened.

B.N. called me up (today he went for a vacation): he says, we should talk before his departure. I come over. He is a-shining. I come to the desk. He throws me some text, saying: Take it and read it. You have won!

I read: a note by Brezhnev addressed to Andropov, very short, one paragraph. I am attaching, it says, a note by my aide c. Golikov on Chinese affairs. I think it has some reasonable ideas. I request that it is discussed at the Chinese commission of the Politburo.

And Golikov's memo, about 15 pages in length, contains the following: one gets a sense that the significance of normalization with China is being underestimated. Our propaganda weakly supports the Tashkent line, and sometimes it comes out with materials, which in fact undermine it (there is a reference, among other things, to the article in Pravda dated 20 July). No one wants to see the changes in China but they are taking place. Our main enemy is US imperialism, therefore the main strike should be directed there. Otherwise, it looks like in terms of negotiations, contacts, exchanges we allow many things with the US (even at a sharp time like now) which we do not allow with regard to China. One needs a strategic, Tashkent-like approach to the problem of China. One needs to do everything possible every day in order to remove tension, develop cooperation, achieve mutual understanding, not to push China in the direction of the USA. And so on.

The memo does not say a word about the article for the Kommunist, or about Rakhmanin's line, but it is of completely anti-Rakhmaninite essence. About Ponomarev's reaction to this-he is completely transparent. He tells me: I sent this text to Kovalenko. You know some time ago we prepared a letter for the fraternal parties about the China question, now it needs to be amended in the spirit of this note by Leonid Il'ich. Andropov almost agreed to our draft but now he is asking to "have a look at it" again (the letter, of course, although it is not completely in Rakhmanin's spirit but almost... And the basis was written by Rakhmanin's team, and our [team] only edited-"weakened" Rakhmaninism). I called Kovalenko right away. We sat down, the three of us, and B.N. even left his desk and sat next to us, at a small add-on table. I became completely insolent, saying: B.N., perhaps we should not send it at all? What's the point, if we are for normalization, how can we talk the others out of it?...

- No, no, don't get carried away!

And he went into the editing.

While Kovalenko was on his way, B.N. managed to tell me the "details"... Andropov called him... telling him in this connection-in some context, of course: "Rakhmanin is not behaving himself correctly. I warned him. If nothing changes, we will have to look for another place for him. And I told his Sharapov-they are friends with Rakhmanin, at one stage they were in China together, or even studied together: either you carry out your responsibilities as an aide as you should, or you should leave the apparat."... So that's how it is! And I knocked at Sharapov's, hoping for understanding and support. It turned out that each word and paper of mine were immediately made known to Rakhmanin!

But who inspired Golikov? Or, perhaps, he is the source of the Tashkent line. And "came up" with this note "independently," perhaps even without the knowledge of the article for Kommunist. But he could not not know about the "Interkit"... The main

thing is that his intervention came in at the right time!

And look at my Ponomarev! "I will not deal with it anymore!" A political figure equal to a minor apparatchik, who pulled tricks all his life just to stay in the cabriolet! [...]

11 September 1982

[...]

An episode with the paragraph cursing China in Ustinov's speech at the award of an order to the city of Kuibyshev. Aleksandrov immediately grasped it: this is even despite Brezhnev's note and the decision of the Chinese commission! If this is of Rakhmanin's doing, his head will roll! Checked it: indeed, the circular did not have this paragraph. This means it appeared after "comments." Turned out that yes, exactly Oleg recommended to restore it!

But this is already just an episode. At the first PB meeting chaired by Brezhnev after his vacation, he made a statement on all "questions under discussion". About China (along the lines of his note) and to the effect that one should be calmer and more skillful in the appraisal of the international situation: "there is no negative without positive."... [...]

2 October 1982

[...] B.N. made a report [on] "Lenin's strategy of peace" in the Column Hall at the readings [held by the] M[oscow] P[arty] C[ommittee]. He is happy.

In the circular, Rakhmanin (as in the case with Ustinov) tried to put some of his Chinaphobia into his report, but B.N. this time rejected it resolutely, surprised by the stubbornness and insolence of Rakhmanin. He and others cannot wait for the Chinese to pull something to cause Leonid Il'ich's "wrath", in order that the whole Tashkent line and, especially, the Politburo course adopted in August after Golikov's note, go to hell. There is a complete inability to think in historical categories, lack of understanding of what state policy is. But the fact that we and the Chinese were at each other's throats [tsarapalis] for an extra 7-8 years is Rakhmanin's deed, an obvious mediocrity. [...]

Footnotes

[1] 29 May is given in the original but this is definitely a mistake, for the entry refers to events that happened between 15 and 20 May (approximately), and is followed by an entry dated 24 May.

[2]The reference here is to the article by Igor Aleksandrov [pseudonym], published by Pravda on May 20, 1982. Translation in "Pravda: Soviet-Chinese Differences 'Will Have to Be Removed,'" BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, May 21, 1982. SECTION: Part 1 The USSR; A. INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS; 3. THE FAR EAST ; SU/7032/A3/1.