

**Transcript of CC CPSU Politburo Session, “Outcome of the USSR People’s Deputies
Elections”
March 28, 1989**

Outcome of the USSR People’s Deputies elections

Gorbachev: These elections were exceptional in all our history. This is a major step in realizing the political reforms and the subsequent democratization of our society. With good reason we can speak of the further progress of perestroika. The progress of perestroika was at the heart of the electoral campaign. Despite all the different thoughts and opinions, the policy of perestroika was never put in question.

Today, I think, we will have a preliminary discussion. There is no simple answer as to whose victory or loss this is. The results are what we have. The outcomes realistically reflect the progress of perestroika.

The outcome of the campaign shows us that at all stages--in the nominations and in voting--the elections went most successfully, with fewer losses and expenses, where people saw the real fruit of perestroika. This is the north Caucasus, and the central Chernozem oblast, Ukraine, and the Altay region.

It is characteristic that not everything came down to financial interests. Non-formal movements--the ones that joined in the general process of change--were able to integrate smoothly into this current. But there were also some surprises.

After all, this is the first alternative campaign! These are the first democratic elections! And I must say that it will be like this from now on in all elections. The people have to understand that we need to act differently now. The working class missed its deputies, and we missed them too, we did not help [the working class] to get them. In Moscow from the six nominated candidates only one worker is left, and even he is a raikom [regional committee] secretary, i.e. a worker only by social origin.

The elections are progressing within the framework of a normal process. And we must analyze everything maturely and calmly. We cannot cover the entire gamut of impressions right now. It is not a simple picture. In any case, right now we must not follow the line of thinking that if someone did not receive support he is not trustworthy or should be dismissed.

We must pay particularly close attention to the outcomes of elections in Moscow and Leningrad¹ The special characteristics [of the cities], the crisis in the cultural sphere, the problems with prices all took their toll. The lineup of candidates was worthy, although there were some who acted for personal gain. This was more evident in the capitals than anywhere else. Some candidates used all the methods of cheek, impudence, demagoguery, and irresponsible promises. And they won in that way. This also requires analysis.

It would be difficult to assume that we would have everything the way we wanted on the first try. But our tactical blunders are not the only reason for that. That would be an

oversimplified and superficial approach. The realistic policies we are conducting do not permit such approaches.

In Moscow and in Leningrad we faced broad dissatisfaction from the workers with the progress of perestroika. Real problems did not receive appropriate solutions here. People might say that the market is in this state not only in Moscow but in the entire country. This is correct. And yet, we have to consider the fact that we give a great deal of our attention to Moscow and Leningrad, sometimes more than to other places. And the market situation here is not worse than in other places, even though there are many problems. This means that the matter lies not only in this, but in the fact that the perestroika processes in general are moving slower than they could be. This is a very serious signal for the government and for the CC, not to mention the gorkoms [city committee] and raikoms. The state of dissatisfaction is what caused the criticism and carping, which was heated up by the press and the avant-garde artists. The seeds they sowed fell on soil that was capable of receiving them. The voters did not give their preference to people we had counted on, which is evidence of the fact that the people wanted to convey their dissatisfaction to the CC and the government. So the matter is not the candidates personally. This is where we need to look. This is a major lesson for the entire party.

We could also say that this is the price of democracy and the result of the mass media's willfulness. Here too, the lack of a general political culture is telling, as is unsubstantiated fault-finding. In some magazines and newspapers it came down to speculation and running people down left and right. But the essence is still in something else. We came across this while traveling around the country. I, for example, saw a different people in Krasnoyarsk. The democratization process has produced its major results. People are beginning to take a stand and do not want to reconcile themselves to the things they come across in everyday life. This process grew and revealed itself in the electoral and reporting campaign, and even earlier--at the XIX conference we saw it during meetings with workers and in other circumstances.

The majority of the people understand the state the country is in right now and because of that they support the perestroika policies. But they believe that in four years more could have been achieved. They see how ineptly issues are resolved sometimes, how good initiatives come to naught. They understand that perestroika's major goals require more time. Yet they know that there are issues that can be resolved right now. But they often come across the old atmosphere, when [the leaders] listen to them for a while but do nothing, and sometimes even reprimand them. Now people do not want to accept this anymore. Our people are prepared to forgive and understand a great deal if they are treated with respect.

Our mistakes were: amelioration [of farm lands] and the anti-alcohol campaign; miscalculations at the level of central organs as well as in the provinces. We did not recognize the depth of the difficult state the country is in.

One could argue whether we acted correctly at the beginning of perestroika, whether we had an option to act some other way. We may and should argue about this, and bear responsibility for it. Arguments can be presented in favor of any of these points of view.

For example, people say that Cuba does not give us hard currency for oil and we lose billions of dollars. We could have bought 20 billion rubles worth of goods with that money. We are sustaining enormous losses in Chernobyl, in Armenia, in Afghanistan.

The situation in the market has become aggravated. We will not be able to solve the food problem or any other problem until we stabilize the monetary situation. And everyone present here today has contributed to the acuteness of this problem. We have our errors at the level of the center, and in the provinces. The main error is that we did not realize the difficulty of the financial and economic situation in due time.

Right now we are in a more critical situation than we were in 1985. For a long time we have felt that it is worsening, but we did not react appropriately. We allowed, for example, an increase in capital investment over and above the plan. We did this because it was urgent. Work that has started but not been completed is strangling us because salaries are being paid, but there is no product from these units. And these salaries were also thrown into the market. Our decisions do not have a sufficient economic basis. Gosplan must have a firmer rationale for its activities.

We are most disturbed by the reduction in the rate of economic growth. Have we lost our way here? All of this had an effect on the general situation, on people's state of mind. It is not just the intrigues of Ogonyok, Moskovskie Novosti,ⁱⁱ and Yeltsin. It would be very easy to explain everything that way. We did not resolve the matter ourselves, and everyone here must admit to that. We must take the responsibility. After all, decentralization is only gathering momentum. We could have done more with the unprofitable and low-profit enterprises. They take 20 billion [rubles] a year.

So the criticism we have heard was fair. It provided an argument to those who have been depicting themselves as protectors of the people's interests.

I repeat: a great deal could be remedied by paying attention to the population in the provinces. The mechanism of relating to the people has been twisted over the decades, and I see that it is difficult to break it. And this is despite the fact that during this time we have replaced two-thirds of the regional committee leaders, chairmen of kolkhozy [collective farms], sovkhozy [state farms], and obkoms [oblast' committees]. But the situation is changing slowly.

What should we concentrate on?

The government has to consider the new goals quickly, and intensify the development of the economic-organizational function of Soviet governmental agencies in the provinces. The Politburo will not carry out this function anymore. The party should only provide help. More efficiency, overcome the parasitic attitude and nods toward the center. Decentralization means rights and responsibilities.

Bureaucratism--it is our and the workers' drama.

Control over trade, we need to establish order, give workers rights. We need to pass resolutions on labor control more quickly, we need to write more about this.

We need to intensify the fight against crime, which is getting out of hand. So far everything that has been done about this is only on paper. Crime is raging in Moscow, people

have stopped going on evening strolls. Mobilize the workers' patrol. Present the issue sharply, publicly, so the people know what is going on. They will support us.

I conclude my speech with two assessments.

First: I have come to the conclusion that all problems must be resolved through perestroika--not instead of it, not by digressing from it, and not by twisting the line of perestroika--and in all of its directions. Once again we are lagging behind. The people are once again ahead of us. And again the only excuse available to the party is that it was the initiator of everything and as a result deserves a high evaluation. We must eliminate the stumbling about, the frightening of the people and of ourselves. We are living through the most difficult period--when perestroika touches us all.

Second: ... Perhaps some officials see that they are in an uncomfortable situation, they find themselves face-to-face with the people, they are experiencing a state of uncertainty. And democratization is taking place, comrades, as is the growth of people's political and social activity, even while there are negative outcomes from this process. And here we must keep our heads and not get lost.

Ryzhkov: March 26 was a turning point. We got a realistic picture of what is going on in society. It is one thing when we make speeches, and another when people cast secret ballots. What puts me on guard is that the unresolved questions are falling to the party. We should not panic, but we should also not underestimate this. We have a strong party, a strong state, but we also should take concrete measures.

Moscow and Leningrad did not vote the way they did solely because of the food shortage. We were put too much at ease when everything went normally in 1986 and 1987. Then 1988 knocked us off our feet. We need to explain to people that they can receive only the money they earn. I draw your attention to the responsibility of the mass media. We should call them to order. We have watched as even CC bodies came out against the CC.

Vorotnikov: We are all concerned about our colleagues who did not make it. We must not allow people from the staff who were not elected to feel that the attitude toward them has changed. The law about elections before local elections needs to be corrected. People in the provinces are upset. People there are also disturbed by the behavior of the mass media, which fosters negative attitudes toward party personnel. In 14 military districts [the party candidates] were not elected. We should think about a special Plenum, we should not go solely with the election results. The negative attitude toward army candidates for deputy positions is very disconcerting.

Shcherbitsky: An election campaign in general is an important stage. We should conduct the Plenum shortly before the Congress. We should examine the issue of the responsibility of CC CPSU party members who spoke from anti-soviet positions.

Shevardnadze: We should welcome and work with all the officials who succeeded in the elections. The people must be convinced that the party takes its responsibilities seriously and sees its mistakes. We have to dissociate from the past. We cannot save the authority of the party without that. We should use the election results to strengthen the party.

The elections took place during a transitional period. The people have not yet received the material fruit of perestroika. We were punished for the deficiencies and mistakes, for the sugar and the laundry detergent. We were not prepared for the logic and dynamics of the election campaign. The demagogues came to the forefront without our help. The best forces came through the party and civic organizations, but had not mastered the tactics of the election campaign (consultants, training, etc.). Many independent people led the campaign competently.

The elections have provided us with an argument: democratic elections are possible within a one-party system.

The elections showed that we were not able to use what we have won in the process of perestroika. The entire world acknowledges the party's merits in instilling new thinking in the international arena. What breakthroughs we have had: disarmament, leaving Afghanistan, etc! We used this capital inadequately.

Still, we passed through this stage with fewer losses. The elections in the provinces are troubling.

Ligachev: The elections reflect the perestroika process. But we sustained serious political losses. Many objective factors influenced the elections: deficits, reductions in the armed forces, etc. In many places people voted against party officials.

The main cause is the position the mass media took in relation to party history and party work. Negative opinions had accumulated in people's minds, and that is very dangerous. We must remember that in Czechoslovakia and in Hungary (in 1956 and 1968) everything began with the mass media. We need to subordinate certain press agencies to the CC. If we do not move from words to deeds it will become worse. We do not need repression. But we must keep order. And where necessary we should use power. I am speaking of certain newspapers that are well known to everyone. Anywhere I go people speak loudly about this.

Of course, there were major weaknesses in party work. We withdrew support from worthy people who gave all their knowledge, all their power to perestroika. The party will be able to maintain its position only through deeds. We gave way to demagogues who feed like parasites on our difficulties. But we have no other way than the way of perestroika. Stratification is taking place, the poverty layer is growing and at the same time there are excesses. In the mass media we should develop criticism and struggle against excessive enrichment, and we must not allow party workers to be defamed. We need information on the selfless work and moral character of party workers. Take for example Polozkov:ⁱⁱⁱ he does not eat or sleep, he gives his all to the party and the people.

Medvedev: The elections took place in an entirely new setting, when the old political system had already broken, but the new one had not yet been thought through and worked out. Therefore this could not have happened without surprises. What before would have shaken our very foundations now has to be accepted as a normal phenomenon. An electoral system of this kind has never been used anywhere. The regional candidates are nominated not by parties but by individual citizens. After all, it is a paradox when representatives of one party have to compete with each other, promote their programs, etc. It is impermissible for a member of the party to

speak in the name of the party and not defend it but criticize it. And we have often had obkom and raikom secretaries fighting each other for a deputy position. In conditions of a one-party system we have allowed a procedure that weakens party control. And we had to close our eyes to all of this because any interference might have trampled the first shoots of democracy. We have allowed many things to take their own course.

A question: how should a communist behave if he is nominated as a candidate? In the West everything is controlled by party lists.

Gorbachev: There is one party, and if we set off down this road we will clamp down even tighter.

Medvedev: The obkom and gorkom secretaries ended up on the same list. They are competing. We have to either absolutely exclude a party approach, or keep it.

The election campaigns have not been analyzed. What kind of elections are these if they are not evaluated by society and by the press? But it is true that by attacking some programs it would be possible to trample the first shoots of democracy.

A critical attitude prevails, not about perestroika itself but about the way it is taking place. The gap is growing between perestroika in the spiritual and ideological spheres on the one side, and in the material sphere on the other. We have criticized our past but have not overcome elements of the command-administrative system; we have not overcome egalitarian mindsets.

The press' critical attitude toward us stems from this. We cannot blame it for everything. After all, the press not only forms society's views, and it has plenty of shortcomings there, it also reflects them. It is impossible for the press to think one thing and for the people to think another. Journalists, leading figures of the press, they are all people who live and work together with us. They are not from some other world. If the newspaper pages, radio and television programs express certain attitudes it means that those attitudes exist in society, even though the press might not adequately portray society's views as a whole. Of course we have to work on this, and we are working on it. It is important for the press to act according to the main directions of perestroika and aid these processes.

I agree that the most vivid expression of dissatisfaction with perestroika's progress came in the election of regional leaders. The people who, in the public's opinion, spoke either directly or indirectly against perestroika suffered defeat.

My practical proposal is that at the CC Plenum we need to subject the election results to open and relentless analysis, and that we need to publish them. We need to show that we understand everything and are drawing the necessary conclusions.

Soloviev: Our opponents are directing active work against us. Our press does not oppose it; on the contrary: Pravda maintains that obkoms are the forces of evil.

In Leningrad all seven heads of the party, administrative, and military regions lost the elections. We have an opposition, we do. We underestimated them. And I must say that the election campaign showed that there is a struggle for power going on. Our opposition worked with the youth and the elderly in residential areas in their regions--i.e. with the majority--while we worked in labor collectives.

Our leadership has been widely renewed, and we were not able to prepare it in time. Meanwhile, our opposition recruited psychologists and people who know how to work a crowd.

The press not only reflects, but also forms society's attitudes. Pravda and Izvestiya are criticizing the obkoms. The result is that the majority of attacks is not aimed at specific candidates, but at the party: "No to the CPSU! Out with the one-party system of functionaries, vote for Yeltsin!" In Leningrad, 9 out of 21 people were elected; three of them are communists. The authority of the party organization is declining. Today people do not ask [the party organization] but go [instead] to the labor collective council. In addition to that, we have started electing directors through the labor collective. But they [must be] managers.

Our opposition used to be an informal entity; now it is a clear structure with its own center. There are the democratic unions in Moscow. The prosecutor's office is stalling on the criminal action that is being brought against them. For the first time in 70 years the mass media has so sullied the party that nothing remains. The "heroes" [now] are [Mikhail] Shatrov, Yeltsin, [Vitalii] Korotich.^{iv}

We have to work energetically not to fail in the regional elections. They want to take all the mandates and seize power.

Chebrikov: The colleagues who lost must be retained and supported. In Armenia and the Baltic states they are rocking the boat from two sides. In Armenia there were picket lines against party workers by the voting stations. They made blacklists. The Balts went around the entire country, campaigning against party candidates. They made it as far as Irkutsk! Who gave them the right? Meetings between Politburo members and voters were given four minutes on television, no more. Television should provide more time to Politburo members' appearances.

Gorbachev: Why do we have such spineless people in the Politburo?

The work after the earthquake^v had positive results. The workers did not give in. And the "structures" already worked at the elections.

Chebrikov: The Balts went around the cities of Byelorussia and Ukraine. In Leningrad they posted flyers aimed at local leaders. Politburo members have seven minutes to appear on television, while Yeltsin speaks for the entire evening.

We need to think about the Congress, about the Supreme Soviet's composition. There will be many people incapable of carrying out parliamentary functions.

Zaikov: The press is attacking the headquarters and is not taking a stand regarding discrimination against the [party] apparatus. For example: Onikov's article on democracy and centralism.

The MGK [Moscow city committee] and the raikoms were out of favor. All the candidates for deputy positions took to criticizing party organizations and Soviet society, going as far as to criticize the system itself. If somebody spoke in favor of the party platform, he lost immediately. That means that in essence the attitude was against Soviet power. The raikoms cannot work. The standard scenario is "Are you from a raikom? Take a walk!"

I said that we will deal with it after the campaign. They conducted the campaign so as to undermine the two remaining [candidates] in the three electoral districts and to nominate

Korotich once again. In a settlement where only generals live, 89 percent voted for Yeltsin. The same occurred at the Military and Political Academy.

Gorbachev: The dissatisfaction of the officers and the officer corps with the generals and with protectionism had an obvious effect.

Zaikov: Seventy-four percent of Supreme Soviet and Council of Ministers officials voted in their place of residence for Yeltsin and 90 percent of the diplomats are for him. The mass media has formed the opinion that the foundation of the bureaucracy is the party-state apparatus. They, so to speak, do not know how to work.

We need to change the tone of the propaganda, we need to show the party's role in perestroika, and stop discrimination against the [party] apparatus, especially since it is the new apparatus. Offenses occurred against the flag and the Soviet anthem. Tricolor flags appeared.^{vi} There were demands to convene a CPSU Congress ahead of schedule in order to elect a new CC. This is also in L. Onikov's Pravda article.

In enterprises non-conformists are being pulled into the leadership of labor collectives while party organizations are ignored.

Crime is on the increase in Moscow.

Pugo: There were many attacks on the party. And there is a danger that the election outcomes will begin to be portrayed as a defeat of the party. We must not allow such an assessment to spread. Party organizations are not growing. The party is being drained; the number of those leaving the party is growing. Young people are not joining the party. The party is losing authority. Its unity is being blurred by the election campaigns of party-member candidates for deputy positions. In the Baltics the popular fronts have achieved everything they wanted. A nationalistic August is approaching^{vii} (the 50th anniversary of the incorporation of the Baltic States [into the USSR]). We need to find political answers to stop dangerous processes, especially those related to republic-level elections.

Yakovlev: There must be no word of any defeat. Eighty-four percent of voters came to vote and 85 percent of communists have been elected. This is a referendum on perestroika. The results of this referendum are clearly not favorable to the CPSU (he cites Die Welt).

We were a little scared. In reality the Soviet people voted for perestroika, against stagnation and the command-administrative system, against negligence and slovenliness. Socialist democracy has advanced to a new level.

We are at a difficult stage; there are problems in the economy, etc., but even in these circumstances society has shown great maturity.

I agree with Shevardnadze that it has been demonstrated that democracy can develop within a one-party system. Let us not rush to conclusions. Elections provide good insight into the current moods of society. We should accent the fact that democracy also has to be defended legally.

I am more concerned by something else: when a newspaper writes 10 times about the same thing there is no reaction from the party organs or any other organs. Letters have not been

answered. We should check the press for the promises made by “bawlers” [krikunov] and ask them to deliver.

Razumovsky: We have spent too much time with documents. We shouted “Ivanov, Sidorov!”^{viii} in congress halls and registered people arbitrarily. The Department (of organizational party work) and I overlooked a great deal. Thirty obkom and gorkom secretaries were not elected. There will be new elections in 200-plus regions.

We should not dramatize the outcomes. And we should not accent the fact that some of the leaders were not elected. In a number of cases (Chelyabinsk) there were no surprises. Some were too involved in their campaigns and missed the region’s politics as a whole. We need to develop [new] procedures and remind people of CPSU regulations, of party discipline and responsibility. If a communist takes the floor, he must remember that he represents the party.

Slyunkov: This is a normal process. There are losses. That is natural. There is anxiety about the party. We allowed the situation to be portrayed as if everything was the fault of the party. History comes into play here, as do the goods that are missing from the store shelves. Attacks on the party and the government are really picking up. We need to strengthen the ideological support for perestroika, and opposition to attacks on the party.

We should hold the Plenum before the Congress.

Shalaev: People’s deputies from civic organizations always were and will continue to be our tower of strength. And they themselves have stirred, but regrettably they participated very little in the regional elections because they were busy with their own election campaigns. In the work environment the atmosphere is demanding, but good. There is one wish: follow through with your promises. The mass media revealed very little of what was done over [the past] four years.

We did not give anything to the population before the elections (in terms of food and goods). In some places people were not even paid their salaries.

Mironenko: A politician cannot take offense at his people. Many party committees were simply not ready to work on a broad front. The habit of sending commands through organizational departments was telling. In the provinces this habit is very strong. To the youth, the elections are a symbol of perestroika’s success. We need a clearer line to strengthen the Komsomol’s organizational independence. Members of the Politburo should give interviews to the youth press.

Lukyanov: One-fifth of the party organizations’ secretaries did not go through. The reasons for this are economic, especially the falling standard of living for pensioners and the poor. Now it is being said that the CC set the party organizations adrift, that it left the party committee secretaries to be devoured by demagogues. We must take measures against “Memorial” and “Pamyat’.”^{ix} They are close to becoming anti-soviet organizations.

In nine months there have been over 1,200 mass demonstrations encompassing 13 million people. The mass media’s colossal attack on the party cadres set off a discussion of the possibility of an alternative party. Party workers feel that the CC is not protecting them. It is

significant that the majority of the military voted against the party secretaries. Even in the KGB graduate school 80 percent voted for Yeltsin.

Masliukov: We are missing something. Why are the people filling up with dissatisfaction? We see the results of our disorganization. We must prepare people for the fact that inflation is inevitable, that rising prices are inevitable, that difficulties with foodstuffs and the freezing of salaries are inevitable. In order to normalize the financial system we need draconian measures and at least 50 billion [rubles] worth of goods. Machine building and defense would increase the production of goods for the people by 40 percent.

Gorbachev (concluding): We achieved a major political victory in extraordinarily difficult circumstances. Defeat is out of the question. We are in the most acute stage of perestroika right now. We touched everyone--workers and peasants, scholars, and military men. The countryside is experiencing a drought, and on top of that there is Chernobyl, Armenia, Afghanistan, oil prices and pressure from the West. And despite everything we received active support in this situation. This is how we have to look at it from the political perspective, otherwise we could get lost, especially if we consider how Western propaganda works: saying that the empire is crumbling, the Politburo is being torn by opposition, etc. And [even] in this situation people came and voted.

On the CPSU. This is a major subject. To say that the people voted against the party would not be right. Let's not compare apples and oranges.^x What kind of unity do we need in the party? [A unity] based on perestroika and new approaches, under conditions of democracy and glasnost, i.e. not on the basis of force, or fear that you will be dismissed and punished. Unity only on the basis of the perestroika platform. This does not exclude, of course, the need to provide a reminder of the communist's traditional duties. And we are shy about talking about it. Communists must feel like they are masters [of their own party]. The committees are there for them, not the other way around. There can be no socialism without a party that has a socialist program.

The party built up its authority through the policy of perestroika, not through threats and fear but by going to the people openly and calling for criticism of itself.

But this is authority at the first stage. Now we need to win authority at the stage when we solve practical matters. And we cannot make anybody shut up; authority is not won in that way. It must be won by activity and closeness to people.

Perestroika must mainly be defended by continuing perestroika; by real actions, first and foremost in the economy; by working with people, through the staff.

A great deal right now comes down to the staff. The elections reflected that very clearly. We need to consolidate the best party and non-party powers, including information organizations that support perestroika and are not just after a pay check. Our party worker receives a salary and asks the CC to protect him, while he should himself plug into the process and begin to act.

It is a very critical time for us in the Center. Much depends on us. Politics are developing in the direction of the people. We should not lose time in worry and self-analysis. Let us act calmly and with confidence.

We have to go to the CC Plenum with a profound analysis of the political outcomes of the elections. Do not hand over the initiative in interpreting them.

The Congress begins on May 25. Yeltsin says that he is already looking at which deputies he can include in his group. Additional elections are on May 14.

[Source: Archive of the Gorbachev Foundation, Fond 4, Opis 1. On file at the National Security Archive. Also В Политбюро ЦК КПСС... По записям Анатолия Черныева, Вадима Медведева, Георгия Шахназарова (1985-1991) [In the CC CPSU Politburo... From the Notes of Anatoly Chernyaev, Vadim Medvedev, Georgy Shakhnazarov (1985-1991)], Eds. A Chernyaev, A. Weber, V. Medvedev. (Moscow: Alpina Business Books), pp. 460-466. Translated by Anna Melyakova.]

ⁱ In Leningrad all party and soviet leaders, as well as the commander of the military region, failed to be elected. In Moscow almost all party workers lost. Yeltsin, on the other hand, received 90 percent of the votes. [Footnote in the original, see source below.]

ⁱⁱ Ogonyok is an illustrated weekly magazine, Moskovskie Novosti a weekly newspaper.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ivan Polozkov, chairman of the Communist Party of the Russian Soviet Federative Republic.

^{iv} Shatrov was a playwright who had supported dissident causes. Korotich was editor of Ogonyok.

^v The Spitak earthquake, in which more than 50,000 died, occurred on December 7, 1988, while Gorbachev was at the U.N. General Assembly in New York. The tragedy exposed abuses of power and corruption in the region, and resulted in the removal of a number of party officials in Armenia.

^{vi} The traditional Russian colors--white, blue, red.

^{vii} The 50th anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. [Footnote in the original.]

^{viii} Typical Russian names, the equivalent of "Smith, Jones!"

^{ix} Memorial, a non-governmental human rights organization, was established in 1987 to uncover information on, and build a memorial to, the victims of Stalinist repression. Pamyat', founded in the same year, was a Russian nationalist group especially active among college students.

^x The Russian expression here is "Ne putat' Bozhii dar s yaichnitsei." Literally, "Don't confuse a gift from God with fried eggs."