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Prime Minister (2)  
This is on the outer  
fringes of glasnost.

MR POWELL

14 February 1989

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SOVIET INTERNAL SITUATION

Very recently the Leningrad journal 'Neva' published an article by a young scientist which is the most outspoken yet in its attack on the Soviet Communist Party and to some extent on Gorbachev himself. I attach a copy of a minute by Mr Murrell in Foreign Office Research Department which sums the piece up. I think the Prime Minister would find it worth reading.

The attack on the Party as bearing prime responsibility for the sorry state in which the Soviet Union finds itself is of course the logical conclusion of the present more open debate and in some ways it is surprising that it has taken so long for the intellectuals to get round to making the point in public. Their Chinese counterparts were quicker off the mark during the "Peking spring" of 1978-79. Gorbachev should be able to weather this kind of criticism and to dismiss it as politically unrealistic. However, it is a further example of the polarisation of the debate and it could be more dangerous to him if it provokes, as is only too likely, a counter-blast from the "right" wing.

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PERCY CRADOCK

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From: G D G Murrell  
Date: 9 February 1989

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#### GLASNOST AND THE DEBATE ON POLITICAL REFORM

1. The first issue for 1989 of the Leningrad journal "Neva" has published an article by a young scientist which sets a new benchmark for outspokenness in the debate on political reform. The article entitled "The Structure of Power and the Tasks of Society" is remarkable not so much for its arguments, eq in favour of an eventual multi-party system, as for its tone of condescension almost contempt in discussing the role of the Party, and its unceremonious treatment of statements by Party spokesmen including Gorbachev himself. The author, Sergei Andreev (absolutely no relation to Nina Andreeva) is a candidate of biological science who works as a senior researcher at the Geological Institute in Tyumen.

2. Andreev's initial thesis is that the economic-managerial apparatus, which exceeds in numbers the kolkhoz peasantry, has developed into a "new class" whose existence is dependent on extensive economic development and thus threatened by reform. The Party apparatchiki, whose careers depend on the economic indicators of their region, have fully identified with the managerial bureaucracy and become an instrument of this "new class". Thus the Soviet state is not run by its elected people's representatives but by the dictatorship of a new class which pursues its own and not the national interest: "which means that perestroika has every chance of ending in failure". Andreev advances the proposition that since perestroika is described as a revolution, the active opposition to it should logically be termed counter-revolution; and he refers to resistance to economic reform which looks like "well organised sabotage".

3. According to Andreev the task of society therefore is to return real power to the Soviets and destroy this new class. In principle the Party is the power which should undertake this task but a it is presently organised it is incapable of doing so. Andreev notes that according to the Constitution the Party is "the guiding force of Soviet Society and the nucleus of the political system". Following the logic of this article of the constitution "one must acknowledge

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That it is precisely the Party leadership which has lead the country to economic crises and moral decline. Having gradually ceased to serve the people, and expressing more and more the interests of the industrial managerial apparatus, Party organs have by political measures led society into an unacceptable path. There are no constitutional principles by using which the people could correct the Party apparatus in the event of its carrying out an incorrect state policy". The Party had retrospectively admitted the mistake of the Stalin cult and then put Khrushchev on a pedestal. It removed Khrushchev and the figure of Brezhnev appeared. "Again the Party restrospectively admits its mistakes - but it would be better not to make these mistakes". Moreover there are no guarantees either for the Party or the people that another such personality will not appear.

4. The problem is thus to make the Party accountable to the people. Andreev proposes that the policies for the country's development should originate from the Supreme Soviet and that its decisions should form the basis for the Party's activities, rather than the other way round.

"If today we do not allow the people to govern themselves and help to establish such a process in a democratic way - tomorrow the people will take that right by force smashing all obstacles in their path".

5. Andreev's principle specific proposal is for setting up a popular Alliance or Front with its own newspaper. To possible objections that such an organ would become the centre of opposition Andreev replies that constructive opposition is necessary since in the Party press there is no real criticism of the higher echelons. "The Council of Ministers never figures in this context and the General Secretary is an untouchable and exemplary figure and so it went on for 3 decades until it "suddenly" turned out that ministers needed to be replaced and in some cases shot for the "correct" policies which we had just been approving". The General Secretary begins to look either like a voluntarist or a short-sighted politician and the Party apparatus, which had been working like a well-oiled machine, for some reason needs to be completely replaced from top to bottom. All these "suddenlys", this mass awakening, is so damaging to the psychology of Soviet people that the arrival of a new political figure is received with an understandable scepticism."

6. Turning to the organization of the Party itself and its relationship to society Andreev criticises Article 61 of the Party Rules, which stipulates that Party groups should operate within all organizations and associations. Andreev suggests that this is unwarrantable interference "in view of where the Party leadership, not overburdened with outside criticism, has led our economy and ideology". Andreev proposes that the Popular Front should operate on an equal footing with the CPSU. The problem is that only an outside power can force Party organs to act as they should since the Party lacks the power itself.

7. Andreev also proposes that workers, peasants and the

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intelligentsia should form associations to defend their interests which would be an intermediate stage in the development of political Parties which would like other major organizations operate on an equal footing with the CPSU. It would represent a "form of co-existence and mutual help for the CPSU on the basis of equality with major public organizations".

8. Gorbachev gets short shrift for his remarks in his report to the Party Conference criticising what he called the exploitation of democracy for anti-democratic ends "from re-drawing frontiers to setting up opposition Parties". Changing frontiers, Andreev agrees, should be only within the competence of the Supreme Soviet. "But setting up new Parties in the circumstances, as people like to say, of the one Party system which has developed historically" - this is a normal question of normal democracy and to forbid raising it in principle means in principle to forbid democracy. A lot of things have developed "historically" with us including the administrative command system which the Party itself headed by Gorbachev is now getting rid of. Therefore references to history sometimes turn against those who resort to them". The Obkom First Secretaries Kalashnikov and Mesyats who also attacked calls for a multi-Party system at the Party conference are dealt with by Andreev even more tartly.

9. Andreev firmly rejects the idea of combining the leadership of Party committees and Soviets, especially the idea that one person should be General Secretary and President, which he describes as "impermissible".

"The whole history of our society shows that excessive concentration of power harms democracy. Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev... are there not enough examples of this kind." It is he adds "characteristic" that there was no mention of this proposal in the Theses of the Party conference; and suggestions for a referendum on the issue or the experimental introduction of the idea in some areas which were made at the Conference were ignored. "The conference, alluding to lack of time decided to proceed headlong in pursuit a single aim - the strengthening of the Party role as the avantgarde of society".

10. Elsewhere in the article Andreev notes that to raise the question of the Party sharing power with the people is bound to rouse the fury of many Party officials brought up for decades in the belief that it is not the CPSU which serves the people but the people who serve the Party. He also makes the remarkable observation that should the threat of a "sharp departure from Leninist norms" again arise it would be urgently necessary to set up a new political force which would be bound to take the form of a Party. Such a force would be needed inter alia in order to protect communists from "unjustified repressions" since history suggests that they would be the first to suffer.

11. Andreev scarcely troubles to disguise his thesis that the Party is incapable of leading the country out of the mess it has created and that new political forces must be created to push and guide the

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Party in the right direction. He does not go quite so far as to say that the Party should stand aside but he does indicate that if it fails to mend its ways people will take power by force; and he also warns that in the event of a new threat of Stalinist reaction society would have to create a new political force to prevent it. Even in these days of rampant glasnost his ideas are strikingly far-reaching and very bluntly expressed. He may prove to be right when he anticipates at one point in his article that it will in due course be subjected to "devastating criticism".



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