

PRIME MINISTER

cc Mr. Ingham

You are to give an interview to the Editor of Ogonyok on 28 February. You will find in the folder a telegram about him from our Ambassador in Moscow. He is an unusual and rather controversial figure. The Soviet Embassy are clearly rather sensitive about your seeing him. But he is said to enjoy Gorbachev's personal favour.

The FCO letter in the folder has some suggestions for points you might cover in the interview, dwelling quite a lot on Anglo/Soviet relations.

I don't think this is right. Your "formal" interview with the Soviet press before Mr. Gorbachev's visit is with the Editor-in-Chief of Izvestia. That will take place in March, and it is then that you should set out your thoughts on Anglo/Soviet relations, on the forthcoming meeting with Gorbachev and so on.

It would be better to use the interview with Ogonyok to talk much more about your own philosophy and how you are implementing it in this country. The purpose would be to get over to its readers just how radical your policies are and how much more exciting and innovative they are than the policies of socialism (even as applied by Mr. Gorbachev), and how much more they do for ordinary people. You want to give them your vision of society and underline the enormous gap which remains between Gorbachev's perestroika and a real free society. The purpose is not to be critical of Gorbachev - indeed you will want to be supportive in your comments about him - but to widen the horizons of the readership in the Soviet Union.

In short, I think it should be quite a racy and daring interview, focussing much more on our politics and on you personally than on the normal themes of East/West relations.

C D P

(C.D. POWELL)

24 February 1989



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

CONFIDENTIAL London SW1A 2AH

24 February 1989

Dear Charles,

Interview with the Prime Minister by Korotich,
Editor of Ogonyok, 28 February

Thank you for your letter of 25 January in which you confirmed that the Prime Minister had agreed to give an interview to Vitaly Korotich, the Editor of the Soviet weekly magazine, Ogonyok, on 28 February at 1200. *file with CAP*

Korotich is visiting the UK from 26 February to 5 March as a category II sponsored visitor. I attach a personality // note and a copy of his programme.

I explained in my letter to you of 10 January that Ogonyok, which is a leading proponent of glasnost in all spheres, is by far the most popular weekly magazine in the Soviet Union with a circulation of 3.2 million. Korotich will be targetting his interview towards the general Ogonyok reader who is likely to be interested in the Prime Minister's political career and philosophy.

Korotich has told us that he would like the Prime Minister to talk about parliamentary democracy and about the policies of the Government. He would like to ask the Prime Minister about Anglo-Soviet relations, her attitudes to the Soviet Union and to Mr Gorbachev. He will also be looking for some indication of how she sees prospects for Mr Gorbachev's visit.

The Prime Minister may like to underline that Anglo-Soviet relations are in better shape than at any time since the war. The last few years have seen a rapid growth in the bilateral contacts. Cooperation is developing well both in traditional areas such as agriculture, education and culture and in new areas such as health, drugs, nuclear safety, and management training. Increasingly exchanges and visits are taking place directly between individuals in the two countries with very little government involvement: this is obviously a trend which we are keen to encourage. The massive response of the British public to the tragic earthquake disaster in Armenia illustrated the increasing warmth between the two countries.

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Good progress is being made towards achieving the target set by the Prime Minister and Mr Gorbachev in 1987 of increasing the value of bilateral trade by 40% to 2.5 billion roubles in 1990, although the level of British exports remains disappointing. 13 UK/Soviet joint ventures have been established so far and there are a number of others in the pipeline. A major British Trade Month will be held in Moscow in April.

The Prime Minister will no doubt wish to say how much she enjoyed her visit to the Soviet Union in March 1987 and that she is very much looking forward to welcoming Mr and Mrs Gorbachev to the UK. It is encouraging that Mr Gorbachev has been able to find time for an early visit to the UK, particularly when there is so much happening in the Soviet Union in March and April - including elections to the Congress of Peoples Deputies and Central Committee plenums on the economy and agriculture. The visit will provide a good opportunity to carry forward the frank, high-level dialogue which has developed between the Prime Minister and Mr Gorbachev.

The Prime Minister may wish to say that she follows the progress of Mr Gorbachev's political and economic reform programme with great interest and is looking forward to hearing direct from Mr Gorbachev how he sees the way forward. The Prime Minister may wish to underline her support for perestroika and glasnost and say that she hopes that Mr Gorbachev is able to keep up the momentum.

The Prime Minister may also wish to tell Korotich that she intends her talks with Mr Gorbachev to range extensively over the whole East West agenda from arms control to regional questions, the future of Europe and human rights. She will no doubt want to emphasize that although very great progress has been made in all areas, the legacy of suspicion and fear will require an extended period to eradicate.

Korotich would also like to ask what the Prime Minister thinks are the essential qualities of a political leader as they apply for example to herself and to Mr Gorbachev. He is also interested in hearing how the Prime Minister combines her official duties with family life. He would particularly like to ask the Prime Minister how easy it is for a woman to become Prime Minister and how the Prime Minister thinks her role has changed during her years in office.

Korotich has asked whether it would be possible for him to be given an official picture of the Prime Minister for the cover of Ogonyok. I assume that you would be able to meet this request. He has also asked whether it might be possible for a photograph to be taken of him with the Prime Minister which he could then include in the magazine, alongside the

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article. If the Prime Minister is happy for such a photograph to be taken, I shall ask the COI to make the necessary arrangements and to let your office have the details.

Because of his absence in Tokyo, this letter has not been seen by the Foreign Secretary. We shall let you know early on 27 February of any comments he may have.

Yours ever,
Richard Gozney

(R H T Gozney)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

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VITALY ALEKSEEVICH KOROTICH
CHIEF EDITOR OGONYOK MAGAZINE

Korotich (born Kiev, May 1936) trained as a doctor before turning to poetry and writing.

From 1978 to 1986 he was Chief Editor of the Ukrainian journal Vsesvit, which publishes works of literature by foreign authors in Ukrainian. During this time he also held the post of Secretary of the USSR Writers' Union.

In June 1986, Korotich was appointed Chief Editor of the national weekly magazine Ogonyok. He transformed it from a staid establishment journal into the most adventurous and talked about journal in the country and the chief standard-bearer of glasnost. Its circulation has increased to about 3.2 million but its readership is much higher. It is known for controversial articles on such subjects as the Stalinist repressions, official corruption and human rights and was one of the first publications to call for a monument to the victims of Stalin's purges.

Korotich almost certainly enjoys Gorbachev's support and seems to see him quite often. His position in Ogonyok would appear to be secure as long as this remains the case.

Korotich is a controversial and somewhat ambiguous figure. Ogonyok's blend of tough investigative journalism and penchant for taking up sensitive issues has made Korotich one of the folk heroes of perestroika. But he has also made a lot of enemies. He caused a stir at the 19th Party Conference in June 1988, when, in response to accusations that his journal had slandered Conference delegates, he announced that he had submitted the names of several who were currently under investigation for bribery. Most of those he named have since been arrested. In January this year, a meeting to try to have him proposed as a candidate for the elections to the new Congress of People's Deputies was disrupted by supporters of the extreme nationalist group Pamyat. He was eventually nominated in one of the Moscow constituencies for the 26 March elections, but he has now been formally dropped from the list of candidates.



OV2/1718

Programme of arrangements made by the
Central Office of Information for the
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Mr Vitaly A KOROTICH

Editor-in-Chief

Ogonyok Magazine

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

26 February - 5 March 1989

Accompanied by Enid Ackers, Central Office of Information.

Programme Organiser:

Fiona McAdam
Overseas Visitors and Information Studies
Central Office of Information
Hercules Road, London SE1 7DU

Direct Line: 01-261 8291
Switchboard: 01-928 2345 Ext 8291

Sunday 26 February

ARRIVAL
LUNCH ENGAGEMENT

1040

Arrive at London Heathrow Airport on flight SU 241 from Moscow.

Welcomed on arrival by Miss Fiona McAdam, Overseas Visitors and Information Studies, Central Office of Information.

Continue by car to the St Ermin's Hotel, SW1 (Tel: 01-222 7888), where accommodation has been reserved.

1300

Lunch as a guest of the Hon Robert Rayne, Central Television.

Also present:

Mr Richard Creasey, Central Television

Ms Veronyka Bodnarec, Film Producer, Central Television

Mr Igor Iakimenko, Ogonyok Magazine

(Details of venue to follow).

Monday 27 February

PROGRAMME DISCUSSION
FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE
BRITISH LIBRARY
LUNCH ENGAGEMENT
HEINEMANN LTD
BBC RADIO FOUR
EVENING ENGAGEMENT

0915

Met at the hotel by Mrs Susan Fasken, Head, Europe Group, Overseas Visitors and Information Studies, Central Office of Information and Miss Fiona McAdam, Programme Organiser.

Miss McAdam will discuss the programme arrangements.

0945

Leave the hotel by car with Enid Ackers who will accompany the visitor to his appointments.

1000

Arrive at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, King Charles Street, SW1.

Received by the Hon William Waldegrave MP, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

Monday 27 February cont'd

1030 Leave King Charles Street by car.

1100 Arrive at The British Library, Great Russell Street, WC2 (Information Desk).

Met by Dr Christine Thomas, Curator of the Russian and Soviet Collection and continue on a tour of the Slavonic and East European department.

1230 Leave Great Russell Street by car.

1245 Arrive at Simpsons in the Strand, 150 The Strand, WC2.
for
1300

Joined for lunch by:

Mr Charles Wilson, Editor, The Times

Mr Edward Mortimer, Foreign Editor, The Financial Times

Mr Dan Triesman, News and Features, The Daily Telegraph

Mr Stephen Crawshaw, Soviet Union and East European Editor, The Independent

Mrs Susan Fasken, Overseas Visitors and Information Studies, Central Office of Information

1430 Leave the Strand by car.

1515 Arrive at Heinemann Ltd, Michelin House, 81 Fulham Road, SW3.

Met by Mr Tom Weldon, Senior Editor and Mr Piers Russell Cobb, Publicity Director for discussions.

1715 approx Leave Fulham Road by car.

1800 Arrive at the BBC, Broadcasting House, Portland Place, W1.

Met by Mr Frank Smith, Editor of Radio Four's 'The World Tonight' Programme.

Introduced to Mr David Sells, Presenter for a brief interview.

1845 approx Leave Portland Place by car.

1930 Arrive at the Palace Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue, W1.

Monday 27 February cont'd

Attend a performance of 'Les Miserables'.

2245 approx

Leave the Palace Theatre by car for return to the hotel.

Tuesday 28 February

THE PRIME MINISTER
LUNCH ENGAGEMENT
BBC RUSSIAN SERVICE
ROYAL INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Morning

Free

1200

Arrive at 10 Downing Street, SW1.

Received by The Right Honourable Margaret Thatcher FRS, MP, The Prime Minister.

1245

Leave Downing Street.

1300

Arrive at Rules Restaurant, 35 Maiden Lane, The Strand, WC2.

for

1315

Joined by:

Mr Peter Snow, Presenter, BBC2's Newsnight Programme

Mr Andrew Taussig, Controller, BBC European Service

Ms Masha Slonim, Presenter of the "Argument" Programme, BBC Russian Service.

Later

Leave Maiden Lane by car.

1500 approx

Arrive at the BBC Russian Service, Bush House, The Strand, WC2, with Ms Slonim.

The visitor will take part in an interview for the BBC Russian Service programme 'Argument'.

1630 approx

Leave the Strand by car.

1715

Arrive at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House, 10 St James's Square, SW1 (Henry Price Room).

The visitor will participate in private discussions with the Institute's members.

Later

Leave St James's Square by car.

1945

Arrive at the Comedy Theatre, Panton Street, SW1.

Tuesday 28 February cont'd

Met by Mr Tom Weldon, Senior Editor, Heinemann Ltd, Mr Piers Russell Cobb, Publicity Director, Heinemann Ltd, Mr Victor Borlich, Agent for Best of Ogonyok and Ms Kathy Porter, Translator for Best of Ogonyok.

2000 Attend the performance of 'A Walk in The Woods'.

2200 Leave Panton Street by car for return to the hotel.

Wednesday 1 March

RANK XEROX LTD
CHANNEL FOUR
LUNCH ENGAGEMENT
WILTON PARK CONFERENCE

0830 Leave the hotel by car.

0900 Arrive at Rank Xerox Ltd, 16 Westbourne Grove, W2.

Met by Mr Ralph Land OBE, General Manager, Eastern Export Operations for discussions on the company's experience of doing business in the Soviet Union.

1000 Leave Westbourne Grove by car, for return to the hotel.

1030 Met by Mr Dan Triesman, News and Features, The Daily Telegraph, who will interview the visitor.

1115 Mr Triesman will leave the hotel.

1145 Joined by Ms Sue English, Foreign Editor, Channel Four News.

The visitor will take part in a brief, recorded interview.

1230 Leave the hotel by car.

1300 Arrive at the Traveller's Club, 106 Pall Mall, SW1.

Lunch as a guest of Mr D J E Ratford CMG CVO, Assistant Under Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

Later Continue by car to Wilton Park, Conference Centre, West Sussex.

The visitor will attend the conference on 'Reform in the Soviet Union: Achievements and Problems for Perestroika, Glasnost and Democratisation'.

He will also lead a panel discussion on 'Glasnost and Perestroika: A Balance Sheet'.

Thursday 2 March

WILTON PARK - LONDON
FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
LUNCH ENGAGEMENT
THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH
AFFAIRS
BBC WORLD SERVICE

0900 Leave Wilton Park by car with End Ackers for return to London.

1145 Arrive at the Palace of Westminster, (St Stephen's Entrance), SW1.

Met by Mr David Howell MP, Chairman, Foreign Affairs Committee and continue discussions with Committee members.

1245 Proceed to the Harcourt Bar for pre-lunch drinks.

1300 Joined for lunch in the Harcourt Grill Room with members of the government and opposition parties.

Later Leave Westminster by car.

1600 Arrive at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, King Charles Street, SW1.

Received by The Right Honourable Sir Geoffrey Howe QC, MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

1645 Leave King Charles Street by car.

1750 Arrive at the BBC World Service, Centre Block Reception, Bush House, Aldwych, WC2.

Met by Ms Sue Waldram, Producer, The World of Books programme.

The visitor will take part in a brief interview.

1830 Continue to Room 834, Centre Block.

Met by Ms Kari Blackburn, Editor of the 'News Hour' Programme.

Introduced to Mr Oliver Scott, Presenter, for a brief interview.

1900 Leave Aldwych by car.

1930 Arrive at The Travellers' Club, 106 Pall Mall, SW1.

Met by Mr Brian Beedham, Editorial Consultant, The Economist, for informal discussions.

Thursday 2 March cont'd

Later Continue to dinner as a guest of Mr Beedham.

Later Return to the hotel by car.

Friday 3 March

FREE

Saturday 4 March

LONDON - OXFORD
OXFORD - LONDON
CHANNEL FOUR

0830 Leave the hotel by car.

1000 Arrive at the Randolph Hotel, Beaumont Street, Oxford.

Met by Sir Bryan Cartledge KCMG, Principal of Linacre College.

The visitor will have discussions with various Soviet experts and will also give a brief informal talk to a group of graduate students. (Details to follow)

1630 Leave Oxford by car.

1800 Arrive at ITN, 48 Wells Street, W1.

Met by Mr Nigel Gardiner, European Correspondent, Channel Four's 'World This Week' Programme.

The visitor will take part in a live interview.

Sunday 5 March

DEPARTURE

1030 Leave the hotel by car.

1140 Arrive at London Heathrow Airport.

1245 Depart on flight SU 242 to Moscow.

24 February 1989

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CONFIDENTIAL
FM MOSCOW
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 338
OF 231349Z FEBRUARY 89

1 cc Mr Powell No 10
2. Dade Wm
R.S.

VISIT OF KOROTICH
SUMMARY

1. KOROTICH IS A CONTROVERSIAL POLITICAL FIGURE WHO, TOGETHER WITH HIS MAGAZINE HAS BECOME ONE OF THE SYMBOLS OF GLASNOST. HE IS THE MAN THE TRADITIONALISTS LOVE TO HATE. HIS VIEWS WILL PROVIDE A USEFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR THOSE WHO MEET HIM TO GET A VIEW FROM THE FRONT LINE OF HOW PERESTROIKA IS GOING.

DETAIL

2. VITALY KOROTICH, CHIEF EDITOR OF OGONYEK, WILL BE PAYING A SPONSORED VISIT TO THE UK FROM 26 FEBRUARY UNTIL 5 MARCH. HE WILL BE CALLING ON YOU ON 1 MARCH AND WILL HAVE A 45 MINUTE INTERVIEW WITH THE PRIME MINISTER ON 28 FEBRUARY. THIS IS LIKELY TO BE PUBLISHED IN OGONYEK IN THE SECOND HALF OF MARCH, BEFORE GORBACHEV'S VISIT. I HAVE ALREADY GIVEN AN INDICATION OF THE GROUND KOROTICH WILL WISH TO COVER IN THIS INTERVIEW IN MY TELNO 206. IN THIS TELEGRAM I OFFER SOME BACKGROUND ON KOROTICH AND HIS POLITICAL ROLE WHICH I HOPE WILL BE OF INTEREST TO YOU AND OTHERS WHO ARE TO MEET HIM.

3. KOROTICH HAS BEEN A WRESTLER, A POET, A JOURNALIST AND A SENIOR OFFICIAL OF THE UKRAINIAN WRITERS UNION. HE TOOK OVER THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OGONYEK IN THE SUMMER OF 1986 UNDER GORBACHEV AND IN THE PAST TWO AND HALF YEARS HAS TRANSFORMED IT FROM A STAID ESTABLISHMENT JOURNAL INTO THE MOST ADVENTUROUS AND TALKED-ABOUT MAGAZINE IN THE COUNTRY, WITH A CIRCULATION OF 3.2 MILLION AND A READERSHIP THAT IS MUCH HIGHER. UNDER KOROTICH OGONYEK HAS LED THE WAY IN DEBUNKING STALIN AND IN EXPOSING PRESENT DAY CORRUPTION AND BUREAUCRATIC INCOMPETENCE.

4. OGONYEK'S BLEND OF TOUGH INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM AND PENCHANT FOR TAKING UP SENSITIVE ISSUES HAS MADE KOROTICH ONE OF THE FOLK-HEROES OF PERESTROIKA. LAST YEAR A 1500 SEAT THEATRE WAS FILLED TO CAPACITY JUST TO HEAR HIM ANSWER QUESTIONS. BUT HE HAS ALSO MADE A LOT OF ENEMIES. AT LAST YEAR'S PARTY CONFERENCE OGONYEK CAUSED A MINOR SENSATION BY ALLEGING THAT A NUMBER OF DELEGATES HAD BRIBED THEIR WAY TO THE CONFERENCE. KOROTICH WAS CALLED TO THE CONFERENCE PLATFORM TO ANSWER FOR HIS ACTIONS. HE WAS LATER VINDICATED: BUT IT WAS ALREADY APPARENT AT THIS STAGE THAT FOR THE BUREAUCRATIC AND TRADITIONALIST CULTURAL ESTABLISHMENT HE HAD COME TO REPRESENT THE

UNACCEPTABLE FACE OF PERESTROIKA.

5. OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS THE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE LIBERAL AND TRADITIONALIST CULTURAL ESTABLISHMENTS WITH KOROTICH AT ITS CENTRE HAS BROADENED OUT INTO OPEN WARFARE CONDUCTED THROUGH THE COLUMNS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE JOURNALS. SIX PROMINENT RUSSIAN WRITERS DESCRIBED OGONYEK IN A LETTER PUBLISHED IN PRAVDA LAST MONTH AS THE ''SCUM'' BUBBLING FORTH ON THE CREST OF PERESTROIKA. A FEW WEEKS AGO A GROUP FOR THE ANTI-SEMITIC PANYENT ORGANISATION BROKE UP AN ELECTION MEETING AT WHICH KOROTICH WAS PUTTING FORWARD HIS CANDIDACY. GORBACHEV ATTEMPTED TO CALL HIS TROOPS TO ORDER IN HIS SPEECH TO THE INTELLECTUALS IN JANUARY (MY TELNO 36) BUT IT IS STILL SMOULDERING. ONLY THIS WEEK VIKTOR AFANASIEV, THE INFLUENTIAL CHIEF EDITOR OF PRAVDA, TOOK UP THE CUDGELS WITH KOROTICH OVER SOME UNFLATTERING REMARKS THE LATTER HAD PUBLISHED ABOUT AFANASIEV'S ROLE AS A PROPAGANDIST FOR THE BREZHNEV REGIME.

6. KOROTICH ALMOST CERTAINLY ENJOYS GORBACHEV'S SUPPORT AND, I BELIEVE, SEEM HIM QUITE OFTEN. I WOULD JUDGE THAT HIS POSITION AT OGONYEK WILL BE SECURE AS LONG AS THIS REMAINS THE CASE. BY THE SAME TOKEN, IF HE IS UNSEATED IT WILL BE AN IMPORTANT SETBACK FOR GLASNOST. KOROTICH'S RELATIONS WITH LIGACHEV ARE STRAINED. BUT HE TOLD ME WHEN I INVITED HIM TO LUNCH RECENTLY THAT HE SAW LIGACHEV, FOR ALL HIS CONSERVATISM, AS A DECENT ENOUGH MAN. LIGACHEV HAD APPARENTLY RUNG HIM ON NEW YEAR'S EVE WITH BEST WISHES AND HAD PRAISED HIM FOR BEING A BONNY FIGHTER.

7. KOROTICH IS AN ENGAGING AND WITTY CONVERSATIONALIST. HE IS OF COURSE A HIGHLY PARTISAN SUPPORTER OF GORBACHEV AND PERESTROIKA. BUT YOU AND OTHERS WHOM HE MEETS WILL NEVERTHELESS FIND HIS VIEWS ON THE CURRENT POLITICAL SCENE, GORBACHEV'S POSITION AND THE STRENGTH OF PRO AND ANTI-PERESTROIKA FORCES STIMULATING AND WELL INFORMED. HE TOLD ME AT LUNCH THAT HE DID NOT THINK GORBACHEV WAS UNDER ANY PARTICULAR THREAT AT THE MOMENT. BUT HE HAS ALSO EXPRESSED THE VIEW RECENTLY TO MY US COLLEAGUE THAT ''MARCH COULD BE A VERY CRUCIAL MONTH'' GIVEN CURRENT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, THE ELECTION PROCESS AND FORTHCOMING CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM ON AGRICULTURE. KOROTICH HIMSELF IS LIKELY TO BE STANDING FOR ELECTION TO THE CONGRESS OF PEOPLES DEPUTIES ON 26 MARCH, BUT HAS TOLD US THAT HE SEES HIS FUTURE AT OGONYEK WHERE HE HAS MORE INFLUENCE RATHER THAN IN THE SUPREME SOVIET.

BRAITHWAITE

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