

HOOVER INSTITUTION

ON WAR, REVOLUTION AND PEACE

Stanford, California 94305-6010



April 5, 1989

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Permanized

Dear Prime Minister,

A point about the recent Soviet elections which has been rather neglected is the unexpected maturity shown by the voters: for over 50% of them (and without any real organization) to cross out the names of the lone official candidates in various constituencies, argues a sophistication which must make us think again about their readiness for real democracy. As to the political result, I would agree with those who argue that it greatly strengthens Gorbachev's hand -- one only hopes that it will not drive his opponents to desperate measures.

He is in much the same condition as previous such rulers wanting change -- that they have to break the resistance of their own apparatus: the Soviet historian Edelman tells me he is writing a book to show the parallel (which I have earlier made myself) between Alexander II's struggle over the Emancipation of the Serfs and Gorbachev's circumstances today.

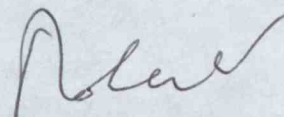
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Or again, though with opposite intent, Mao Tse-tung was concerned to break the Chinese Party apparat by raising up outside forces against it in the form of the Red Guards. So Gorbachev is calling the press and the populace into political existence to undermine the bureaucracy -- I don't know that it is typical, but a member of the Izvestia board told me last week that he had moved there from the International Department of the Central Committee because (he felt) the seat of power was now in the press ...

I mentioned before that they are serializing my book The Great Terror in Leningrad, and that I was interviewed for Moscow News -- they have now printed this latter, a full page with photograph and all. Meanwhile I have just been asked by the main historical journal Questions of History if they can publish excerpts from The Harvest of Sorrow ... It really looks as though the hard line on truth has, as it were, driven them to the intellectual conference table, in a small way paralleling your own and Reagan's success in the foreign policy field!

The description of me in the 'box' in the Moscow News interview mentions, among other things, that I have on occasion advised you. I hope you don't mind -- I know there is no secret involved, but I have always been careful not to thrust it forward. (They seem to know a lot about such Western matters).

with warmest wishes, as ever,



Robert Conquest

CF?
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Zie Minister

COS

5 April 1989

10/4.

Dear Charles,

thank you for your letter of 20

March. The forthcoming - by the time you get this ,
forthcome - meeting between the Prime Minister and
Gorbachev sounds as if it might be of great importance.

perhaps "bygone"!

I'm enclosing a letter to her,
with a couple of points I think I ought to make. (In
the Moscow News interview I mention, they even asked for,
and printed the answer to, "What do you think of Gorbachev")

Summer,

Looking forward to seeing you in

yours ever

BR



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

4 April 1989

BM As a follow-up to my letter of 20 March,
just to let you know the Prime Minister can
see you at 1730 on Tuesday 4 July. I do hope
this is convenient.

Charles Powell

Robert Conquest, Esq., O.B.E.

MRS. PONSONBY

Mr. Powell

Can we suggest
1730 on

Tuesday 4 July?

AP 4/4

Bob Conquest will be over here from 6-12 June
and 2-8 July. The Prime Minister will certainly
want to see him, with preference for the
later dates. Can we fix something please?

C.D.

(C.D. POWELL)

20 March 1989



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

20 March 1989

Thank you for your letter and its enclosures. The Prime Minister was equally glad to have your letter to her and the excellent paper. There is certainly a great deal of interest happening.

We look forward very much to seeing you in June and/or July.

(C.D. POWELL)

Robert Conquest, Esq., O.B.E.

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