



V.V. Kossov: The Soviet Union was destroyed by two decisions

The interview with Vladimir Viktorovich Kossov took place on July 25, 2019 as part of the collection of materials for the anniversary publication, the Main 60th anniversary of the Computer Center of the USSR State Planning Committee (MCC, now the Analytical Center for the Government of the Russian Federation). First of all, I was interested in the creation of an Automated System of Planned Calculations

(ASPR), on which the Gosplan Main Computing Center worked in the 60s - 80s, but the conversation, due to the rich life experience and broad outlook of my interlocutor, touched on a whole range of topics, including "kitchen » State Planning Committee, features of the Stalinist model of the economy and the reasons for the departure from it, assessment of the idea of the National Automated System of Accounting and Information Processing, the system of governing the country in conditions of military operations "Kontur", and much more, therefore, given the growing interest in the work of the State Planning Committee, I decided to publish the interview in its entirety. The transcript was subjected to only minimal stylistic editing and was authorized by V.V. Kossov.

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Kossov Vladimir Viktorovich

In 1958 he graduated from the Timiryazev Academy with a degree in scientific agronomist-economist.

The Timiryazev Academy was headed by V.S. until 1948. Nemchinov, who maintained contact with her even after her removal from the post of rector. In his laboratory on the application of statistical and mathematical methods in economics, V.V. After graduating from the institute, Kossov began working as a laboratory assistant, then as a junior researcher.

In 1960, the laboratory became the Laboratory of Economic and Mathematical Research, on the basis of which the Central Economic and Mathematical Institute (CEMI) appeared in 1963. He worked at CEMI until 1966, rising from a junior researcher to the head of a laboratory.

In 1963 he defended his Ph.D. thesis in economics (topic "Reporting inter-sectoral balance of an economic region").

In 1965 he joined the CPSU.

In 1965-66. worked as a consultant to the UN Economic Commission for Africa.

In 1966, he moved to the State Planning Committee to the position of deputy head of the department for the implementation of economic and mathematical methods. After the reorganization of the department, he became deputy head of the consolidated department of the USSR State Planning Committee. When the consolidated department was divided into a consolidated department of annual and five-year plans and a consolidated department of long-term plans, he became deputy head of the department of five-year plans, and after another change in the structure of the State Planning Committee in 1981 - deputy head of the department of prospects for economic and social development.

At the same time, he held the position of senior economic adviser from the USSR in the UN Economic Commission for Europe, and led teaching work (professor at the Academy of National Economy of the USSR, lecturer in the party activity of the USSR State Planning Committee).

In 1968, as part of a group of scientists, he became a laureate of the USSR State Prize for a series of works on input-output balances. In the same year he defended his doctoral dissertation in economics (topic "Inter-industry models: Issues of methodology and practice of construction").

In October 1981 he became a member of the board and a member of the USSR State Planning Committee, and in November 1981 he was appointed head of the Main Computer Center of the USSR State Planning Committee instead of N.P. Lebedinsky.

In March 1984, he was appointed head of the Main Directorate of Information under the Council of Ministers of the USSR with the release of the head of the Main Computing Center of the State Planning Committee of the USSR. At his new place of work, he participated in the creation of the automated interdepartmental system "Kontur", with the help of which the operational collection and provision of information to the top leadership of the country for managing the national economy of the country, including in emergency situations, was carried out (the system was used to organize work to eliminate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident in 1986 and earthquakes in Armenia in 1988).

In 1994-2000 Deputy Minister of Economy of the Russian Federation, professor since 2000 Higher School of Economics.

I'll start early. I know that you have worked at CEMI¹ since the time when it was not yet CEMI.

Yes.

And, if I remember correctly, in 1965 you moved to the State Planning Committee.

Yes.

You mentioned in one of your interviews that one of the reasons was purely material, there was a greater chance of getting an apartment. Apart from that, were there any reasons why you decided that Gosplan was a more interesting place?

In fact, the reason was simple, I told Nikolai Prokofievich Fedorenko, the director of the institute, about this: "You and I, Nikolai Prokofievich, are both internationalists, we both sing the Internationale - the party anthem, we just emphasize different parts of the anthem: Are you interested in "to the ground," and me, "and then."

What did you mean?

¹ Central Economics and Mathematics Institute

You see, at that time SOFE2 was just in its infancy. And it was proven that everything was simply very bad. And I was always interested: "How can I do it better?" This was the first reason. And the second is, of course, housing, because I quite clearly understood that I had little chance of getting housing at CEMI, but at the State Planning Committee I was clearly guaranteed housing. What does "guaranteed" mean? I was received by the first deputy chairman of Goreglyad, Alexey Adamovich, who managed the entire household. He suggested that I write an application for housing. I wrote a statement. He immediately wrote a resolution on it: "Include in the first list." And I received it for three years. That's why I got it for three years. Since I am from CEMI, they demanded that I write articles in the magazine "Planned Economy" that Fedorenko is an anti-Marxist, and in every possible way expose him to this, and I, despite all the ideological differences, categorically refused to do this. To be honest, I didn't understand then what the problem with the apartment was. Goreglyad has decided, but he makes a proposal to the party committee. And the party committee says this: "Either you give me articles, or no article, no apartment." This bad thing lasted three years.

And then they still gave it?

No, then it didn't end that way. My boss, Yakov Antonovich Oblomsky, deceased the head of the department, took me by the hand and led me to the Mossovet to see his old friend from the days of working in the Kremlin, from the pre-war years. Lazar Solomonovich Shub, if memory serves. He was the head of the fishing secretariat. That is, figuratively speaking, neck. I wrote a statement. Oblomsky signed the corresponding letter from Deputy Chairman Bachurin. The fact that the State Planning Committee is asking for housing to be provided against the quotas due to it. And thus I got an apartment past the party committee of the USSR State Planning Committee. I received an apartment from the Moscow City Council.

But does this mean that the confrontation with CEMI, which I observed from publications in the early 70s, was already acute and relevant at the time of your transition?

Certainly. Then everything became simple and clear to me. Nikolai Konstantinovich Baibakov explained everything to me.

Did Baibakov himself explain?

Yes. They poked and poked me until he tutted at them and said: "You're picking on him, can you do his job? Do you want him to leave? Can you do his job? No. Leave me alone!"

Reasonable.

Baibakov told me that when Nikita first arrived, he was the chairman of, I don't remember, some committee, either on chemistry or oil. And Khrushchev became interested in chemistry and ordered him to study the works of Nikolai Prokofievich Fedorenko, who at that time was not an academician. In the words of Baibakov himself: "I read it here and realized that science is on the side here. Basically, this is propaganda for chemistry. Not very convincingly done." That's all

² A system for the optimal functioning of the economy, proposed by the team of the Central Economics and Mathematics Institute, the concept of transition from directive to continuous planning, based on calculations of the relative scarcity of resources and relying primarily on economic incentives. Actively promoted by director N.P. Fedorenko as the theoretical basis of the Automated System of Planned Calculations being created, which caused resistance from the USSR State Planning Committee.

Baibakov expressed this to Khrushchev. He became terribly angry and sent him to Krasnodar to work in the Economic Council. To make it clear, then it was 50 some year.

58 or 57.

Then Baibakov developed a dislike for Fedorenko. It was born then.

In fact, it turns out that the basis for the rejection of criticism on the part of CEMI was personal hostility, and not so much a rejection of an ideological position?

Certainly.

And from the side of CEMI, CEMI attacked the State Planning Committee over and over again, and, as you say, "to the ground." Fedorenko said over and over again that they were doing everything wrong.

Yes.

Why did he do this?

Establish yourself. The easiest way to assert yourself.

They are wrong, and we are right?

Yes. The easiest way to self-affirm is destruction.

That is, Fedorenko had political ambitions?

Certainly.

In 1973, there was a shout out from Pravda, an article about how economists from TsEMI were being insulted, after that in Planned Economy there was a big discussion on the editorial board about whether we were criticizing them correctly or incorrectly. And there were many participants, the Institute of Economics came, there were people from Moscow State University. From different, different academies. It turned out that there were quite a few critics of CEMI, but this did not stop CEMI from continuing.

Certainly.

From which I understand that CEMI had some patrons.

It's not about the patrons. The patron was the simplest, a friend of Nikolai Prokofievich Fedorenko from his student years, Pyotr Nilovich Demichev, who was the secretary of the Central Committee³. As Fedorenko said: "We climbed into the girls' dormitory with him." But it's not about Demichev. Here we need to look deeper. To understand in general the turning point of the end, the second half of 50, the "Khrushchev thaw". What happened? What inevitably happened? My father described this time to me very accurately, he says this: "You see, son, I stopped being afraid at the front." Or rather: "I fought for my own in the war." Here are his words. And so I think the overwhelming majority of those who came from the war thought. They believed that they deserved the right to a good life. These people who conquered and came back from the war, they expected that after the war they would live like human beings. This explains, to make it clear, mass construction, the course of Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev. Who is Khrushchev? A man who went through the war himself. And this philosophy sat in him. Naturally, I sat in it, like in anyone who had gone through the war. And he understood that the further course was the same as it was under Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin - production for the sake of production - this is not

³ Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

will go. That we need to develop the economy, turn the economy towards people. That's how they understood it. We need to keep prices down, lower them. Right, wrong, but it was! There was an annual price reduction. He actually canceled it later. Already under Nikita, the first thing that was proposed was? They proposed mass housing construction. That is, the slogan: "An apartment for every family." And the overwhelming majority of the people lived in communal apartments, and for residents of communal apartments it was light in the window. Small, but unique. Secondly, cash payments were introduced on collective farms. Instead of "sticks", people began to receive rubles. And finally, in 70, passports were introduced for rural residents. These are significant measures that were obviously aimed at people's lives. Then Nikita's slogan goes on: "Let's catch up and surpass America in the production of milk and meat per capita." This is the food problem. At the same time, this problem arose with meat prices, which I already had to deal with at the State Planning Committee. Not so much for meat, but for housing. But I'll also tell you about meat. Housing prices before, I don't know what year, but when I worked at the State Planning Committee, were definitely set in 1926. Therefore, the share of rent expenses, family expenses, was significantly less than 10%. While the standard for developed countries is 20%. Not only for housing, for electricity, gas, for everything in the world. And at this time, I'm already talking about the 70s, when Kosygin was prime minister, he had two goals, two such powerful criteria: meat and housing. Meat per capita, consumption and housing square meters per capita. Two target standards. And I even, speaking at the State Planning Board, said the following phrase: "It turns out that the more we solve these problems, the more meters..."

The more subsidies needed?

I said this: "The tighter the noose around the neck of the state budget tightens." Vasily Yakovlevich Isaev was a wonderful person, the first deputy chairman who was in charge of construction, he simply said to me: "So are you aiming to conquer socialism?" This is the reaction, you know? This is a completely normal person, as I can tell you. Not parteigenosse. He is a business executive. And I just explained that with prices in 1926, housing and communal services require huge subsidies. And the same story happened with meat. It then cost 2 rubles/kilogram in "boneless beef" stores, and the state paid an additional 3 rubles to collective farmers. Therefore, realistically – 5 rubles.

The more you produce, the more money you need to pay extra.

3 rubles per kilogram, a fool understands. I'll tell you a story related to this. One day I was sitting, working, and Baibakov's secretary called me and said: "Nikolai Konstantinovich asks you to come in." We had quite a trusting relationship with him. He says: "Sit down." I sat down. He says: "You know, Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev just called me." And he retells the conversation: "He asks me: "Nikolai Konstantinovich, is it true that the Soviet Union produces more and more meat every year?" "True, Leonid Ilyich." "Is it true that we are increasing meat imports every year?" "True, Leonid Ilyich." "Then you explain to me why when I come to the Politburo, conversations about meat become more and more acute. If we produce more meat per capita, then why is the problem not getting better, but getting worse? So you go, figure it out and report to me what to do." But the problem is very clear to me. I lay out about 2 rubles, 3 rubles. "Now, if we now raise the price to five rubles. When will the people receive

increase in price by 3 rubles, then it is necessary, so that there are no offenses and worries, give 3 rubles

people." The amount is such and such, we divide it by the population, the additional payment is such and such. So, with this idea I go to Baibakov. He says: "What is this, like a grain allowance?" In 1947, when cards were canceled, and then the prices in the database were 1940, but prices rose sharply, and then there was the so-called "bread allowance" was introduced.

Just compensation.

So I propose the same thing. He says: "So why: do collective farmers also get a bonus for all residents of the USSR?" I say yes". "So they will receive double benefits."

When do they hand over the meat and when do they receive the bonus?

I say: "Nikolai Konstantinovich, you understand what parsley, if, God forbid, the government gives this only to the townspeople, then such discord will begin in the country that then we will not be able to stop this discord with any money. I believe that from the point of view of the goal of reaching agreement, it is better to give the bonus to the collective farmers, and to hell with them, they produce it and also receive an additional bonus. After all, their standard of living is still much lower than the city. The difference will be reduced, so it's no big deal." I made all sorts of calculations. He put this question aside for three months. And I went with Baibakov, or rather, I didn't go with him, but "we were plowing, said the fly, sitting on the ox's neck": he took me with him to Kosygin's meeting, the issues of the five-year plan were discussed.

For strengthening?

No, as a liaison officer. That is: "We need to organize some kind of certificate." Here I am for these purposes, the certificate is there... And so, he goes there, starts the meeting. Then he says: "Alexey Nikolaevich, there is one more question." - "Well, come on, what do you have there?" I Baibakov

This whole theory gives away. There is deathly silence in the hall for several minutes. Grobovaya. Absolutely. I didn't time the time, but it seemed to me that it was dragging on terribly. Then Kosygin says: "Nikolai Konstantinovich, this issue is not on our agenda, we are not discussing it." So you understand how it was.

How do you assess this? Is it a fear of some strong-willed decisions? Why was this so?

Very difficult. I believe that the incitement from the environment played a very sad role Brezhnev against Kosygin. They kept telling him: "Kosygin, respected by everyone, and who are you, Lenya? Who is the most important person in the state? I think that the point is that Baibakov did not tell Kosygin why he was raising this question. I got the impression that this was a complete surprise for Kosygin.

But you say that not only Kosygin refused to discuss, but in general there was deathly silence. Does this mean that they tried to avoid some pressing issues?

Yes. What do you want? I participated several times as a "scribe".

What's this?

How do we write speeches from "Comrades!" to "Long live!" And we were given directives: first: present our shortcomings as untapped reserves. And secondly, when they wrote speeches to Brezhnev, do not use participial and participial phrases containing hissing sounds in the text. That's what happened. This fear, I think yes.

But this is fear on Kosygin's part, if he felt this way. And from everyone else?

My interpretation may be completely erroneous, but I think the point is that they understood that any change in the situation at the top would threaten them with resignation.

That is, these are people who were not confident in their indispensability.

They accurately calculated that then they would be pensioners, albeit of union importance.

Let's say you started the conversation with the fact that Baibakov reined in the Gosplan party committee and said that: "Can you do the work for Kossov? Then don't touch him." It turns out that these people did not feel so indispensable?

He said so to ordinary clerks, and these were members of the Central Committee. They clearly understood that they were sitting here only thanks to Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev. There will be no Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev, they will not be here.

Because he chose based on the principle of personal devotion?

Certainly.

That is, they did not feel that they were indispensable specialists?

Certainly. They are smart people. If they reached these heights, then their ability to calculate the situation was well developed.

But you began to tell this whole story as an illustration that Demichev's support in supporting Fedorenko was not the main thing, and you said that in order to explain, you need to make such an excursion.

Yes. I will explain. The Soviet planning system, as it developed in the 1930s, was ideal for a country living in a besieged fortress. When the number of goals was very small, and all resources had to be concentrated on this limited number of goals, all stages of the process had to be controlled. Here is a planning system with all its belongings that developed, it solved this problem perfectly. When the number of goals became infinitely large, the concept of the main link disappeared.

Why did it disappear?

Yes, because it is important that the store has everything. That's all.

And to what extent was this possible to ensure by standards, rational consumer budget, demand forecasting?

What you said worked for the card system. It worked out great. But for a system in which a person buys, like you and me: we came, we bought what we wanted - it is not suitable in principle. This should be a probabilistic model: these will choose this, these will choose other. Completely different behavior.

But is this calculated theoretically?

Yes. Other methods were needed. And this is exactly what Fedorenko played on - he was carried by the wave born of the "thaw", which is why I said: the front-line soldiers came and made demands. And the state was forced to change institutions, adjust institutions to

meeting these requirements. And one of these adjustments was mathematical methods.

Which should have restructured planning not for a limited number of main goals, but for...

Yes, changing demand.

It's clear. But it wasn't explicit; it wasn't like people came out and said: "We demand this, that, that"? Is this like tacit knowledge?

It was in the air.

But still, when Fedorenko has been opposing almost all economic science for several decades...

Why oppose it? She couldn't say anything.

I could complain. And he was somehow unsinkable.

I was invited to the science department as an official of the State Planning Committee, writing something, quite noticeable, and asked what I thought about the "political economy of socialism." And I said: "What is this? I know what the "political economy of capitalism" is. What is it

"The political economy of socialism" is "the political economy of capitalism" in reverse? Any science that claims to do something has a certain axiomatics. In the "political economy of capitalism" the axiomatics are clear. What is the axiomatics of the "political economy of socialism"? They waved their hands at me. And I sincerely said... What's the trouble? That we tried to squeeze the entire "political economy of socialism" into a model of a political system with one party. Now, if only we had the intelligence to squeeze in, to allow a pluralism of thinking in general, then everything would be different.

And why?

Who decides what is best? A multi-party system, the choice there is clear. Here is Ukraine. They drove these Nazis out, but there is not a single Nazi in Parliament. They were and stopped. The system is understandable, it allows such things. But the one-party system does not allow this. Without political freedom, without political pluralism, there can be no economic freedom.

No feedback.

The system is not working. Therefore, my friends from CEMI, professing these models of choice, willy-nilly, not because they were dissidents, enemies of the Soviet Union, they were forced to come to the idea of the *need* to abandon the one-party system, otherwise

The theory doesn't work.

And it turns out that the fact that they promoted this in different ways for several decades, they were criticized, but at the same time CEMI remained afloat, indicates that a large number of people were latently coming to similar conclusions?

Of course, definitely. CEMI simply articulated this. Articulated in the language of economics mathematical methods.

Is there anyone besides Demichev who clearly supported it?

Don't know.

They also told me, Rumyantsev.

Alexey Matveevich Rumyantsev? From the point of view of political weight, these are different things. Demichev - Secretary of the Central Committee. And Rumyantsev is a student of Ostrovityanov, the main ideologist of Soviet economic science. He was not considered an enemy then. In economics, mathematical methods were not considered an enemy. But he didn't do anything like that for Fedorenko. The whole point is that Fedorenko's idea was management through choice, that's it.

Returning to your biography. Not only did you realize that you were ready to move to the State Planning Committee, but the State Planning Committee also invited you?

Yes, I went by invitation, of course.

Did Oblomsky himself invite you?

Yes Yes.

Why you?

I think of the books on the topic of inter-industry balance, the inter-industry model, a third or more were written by me.

But this was the method implementation department.

So I was invited there as Oblomsky's deputy.

What exactly was this department supposed to do when you arrived?

This is a good question asked. No one could really answer that.

But it was created for some reason.

"We created it, and you guys figure it out further." I had such an episode twice in my life. But then no one said anything to me about this, and the second time they told me to my face. When I asked: "What are my tasks?" - "But we want to hear from you." When I was appointed head of the main information department under the USSR Council of Ministers, I asked Smertyukov: "What is your priority?" So he said: "You'll figure it out yourself." Therefore, the first task is basic, as in any general application of anything -

promotion. Let's highlight this marketing term: product promotion, find interaction with the client. It was very interesting. We first found out what the calculations were. The simplest thing is norms and standards. Gaining time, etc., etc.

Who was the main client?

There were several such directions. The first is the development of a clear task for the USSR, the deployment of productive forces, that is, the placement of factories throughout the territory for a horizon of 15 years. For such transport-intensive products. All industry departments were involved in this. Where to build the plant and what capacity. Vasily Osipovich Chernyavsky was involved in this and headed this subdepartment. A man wrote a book "Effective Economy" in the late 60s. There was a whole resolution, I think, from the State Planning Committee, which listed in which sectors we were planning placements. TO

⁴ Chernyavsky V.O. Efficient economy. - Moscow: Economics, 1967. - 231 p.; Chernyavsky V.O. Production efficiency and optimal planning. - Moscow: Economics, 1973. - 191 p.

In this work, industry design institutes were involved in substantiating the standards. They were preparing options for where to place the points. Moreover, the number of options was twice as high. If it is necessary to build five factories, then they prepared options for 15 places. In the Main Computer Center⁵ of the State Planning Committee, these tasks were solved at a minimum of given costs. Against a well-done job, an option made by qualified designers, solving the problem in the Main Computing Center gave a gain of about 10%. If the gain is greater, then the designers are simply lousy. And with good designers you could win up to 10%. This was the first direction.

The second direction was related to what you said, with demand, demand forecasting. With the goods turnover department. There is such an indicator - the structure of retail turnover of state and cooperative trade. This is what was predicted for the future. There was a very interesting situation there. The goods turnover department was the customer. The boss was Vasily Tyukov, I'm afraid to lie, maybe Pavlovich or Petrovich. Who point-blank did not want to admit all this. The Gosplan people were different, he was stubborn and stupid. And he had two deputies. Lokshin Rafail Alexandrovich, who was involved in trade turnover and Korovkin

German... And the middle name popped up. We are still friends with his son. A well-known economist, he writes by work. Andrey Korovkin. I worked with them. In our department, Vladislav Shvyrkov was doing this... Sorry, it's still a memory... It was...

50 years ago.

Yes, yes, 50 years, that's right. These two deputies assisted and promoted in every possible way. With these They worked soul to soul.

What did you think, how did you predict? Because I have a transport task I understand how to decide.

No no. The transport problem was there.

And here?

Classical statistics, classical regression.

Did you have a reporting database?

Reporting, of course. There were reporting time series. And forecasting using time series. Heteroscedasticity and all that. According to the classics. Although I now understand that statistics work when the market is saturated.

Because when they are not full, they take what they have.

We divided the goods into groups, but it is clear that it is very difficult to build a good forecast, especially for those items for which demand is not saturated.

If the State Planning Committee had a department that dealt with demand forecasting...

Not a department. This was one of the tasks of our department.

But did demand forecasting also take place in the turnover department?

No, they didn't have any predictions. They had a direct account.

All the same, you were another department of the State Planning Committee, but did you do this task for them?

⁵ Main Computer Center

Absolutely exactly.

Why didn't your forecasts help fight the deficit? Is this because they were not included in the current plans? Did you not provide the required amount of resources? You have already predicted, you know what is needed. Is something else going wrong? What?

Great question. I'll just tell you what actually happened. Work is underway on the five-year plan. Nikolai Konstantinovich Baibakov calls and says: "Listen, the board is discussing it endlessly. For trade turnover you need so many rubles of commodity resources. Here's your capital investment money. Prepare proposals."

Where to distribute?

Yes. "Give us capital investments for goods." I figured out how much we lack goods - numerator. How much investment I have is the denominator. Divided one into another - received three rubles. This means that if we give one ruble to some industry for a five-year period, then at the end of the five-year period we should receive an increase of three rubles. A clear philosophy?

Yes, I understand.

And I announce to my partners and colleagues in industry departments the cut-off price.

"Find some kind of consumer goods production with such returns."

Yes. I am ready to consider a proposal to increase the mass of goods so that there are at least three rubles of goods per ruble of capital investments. If anyone has anything, come and let's talk." I let everyone through, collected the list and reported to Nikolai Konstantinovich. Then it was all brought before the board. It didn't go underground. Each department head assigned not just a deputy, but all deputies with directions, each came to me with his own direction, if there was something to come with. I accepted, and then it was included in the plan. That's what happened. Now what's next? I told you at the board meeting: "The more meat and housing..." That's what it all boils down to. It's good when tights or something else where the turnover tax is high, the highest is on alcohol and tobacco. Then, for the budget, everything just poured raspberries. What if these are fundamental goods? There is no turnover tax either. There are complete subsidies. The disproportion is strong in prices, it acted as a strong brake.

But still, look, on the one hand, did you forecast demand, what do people need?

Yes.

On the other hand, did you have a lower bound on efficiency for the product coverage to converge?

Yes.

To what extent were you able to balance this matter?

Overall, it was a success. Then here's what happened: this is the plan. And then reality began. And then the term, they were offended at me, I said that: "There is a sacred cow in economics." In fact, the entire economic herd is different.

I read this from you. Cows "Military-Industrial Complex and Agriculture".

Yes.

And how did this affect the implementation of the plan?

Directly. Because they were given resources, exposing other areas.

It turns out that this demand forecasting could only be used to a very limited extent for the actual distribution of capital investments?

Do you understand what parsley is? I had good relations with everyone, including Yuri Dmitrievich Maslyakov, now deceased, who was then first deputy and was in charge of defense. I counted how much explosives were used in World War II and how many died, and divided one by the other. And I got a coefficient for how many tons of explosives it takes to hit one person. Then he multiplied the amount currently accumulated, taking into account atomic bombs, by this standard. It turned out that this is many times more. And I say to Maslyakov, I say: "Yuri Dmitrievich, a person can be killed with one shot, the second is the control one. But I don't understand why take 5-10 shots? Explain to me why more?" - "Well, you don't understand..." These requests... This is a complex topic. I can't say that they were all lunar. This is, first of all, a competition for stars, etc., etc. But the fact that they spent too much on defense and a lot of it in a stupid way - I have no doubt about it. The second is agriculture, well, first of all, I knew agriculture professionally.

Because they graduated from Timiryazevskaya?

Yes, that's why I looked into it. This is amazing. It is impossible to imagine such a waste of resources. Impossible.

And why?

Why is clear. Stalin created an ideal system of mobilization economy; he destroyed the village as an independent life. Created collective farms and state farms. Now it's all the same. Even Soviet times will seem like paradise, what is happening. And in that system it all lived. When Nikita made concessions when he came to power, the agriculture of the Soviet Union leapt with giant strides. The progress was gigantic, gigantic. I found a time when I was working at the State Planning Committee, when there was nowhere to put butter. Nowhere.

What year is it approximately?

66-67.

Nikita was already removed then.

Nikita was removed, that's right. But the system has been created... In general, the dawn of the Soviet Union - this is the end of the 50s.

I've heard this from a lot of people.

This is the end of the 50s, the beginning of the 60s. Nikita was too stupefied by power. It wouldn't have been removed. And talk about Nikita's failures... Agriculture took a leap under him. Housing jumped. Qualitative changes were taking place. Now, coming back to this, what was holding you back? Disproportionality of trade. Or rather, not so much trade, but the entire system. When they began to stimulate "primazine" - the principle of material interest, it was necessary

manage the budget of the cash expenditure structure. This is Volodya Mayer, first of all, if you read him. Natalya Rimashevskaya - yes, on the backing vocals. And so - Vladimir Fedorovich Mayer. Abel Aganbegyan, this is it. I already said then that in developed countries 20% of income is spent on housing. With housing at 26 year prices, nothing can be optimized at all. After all, why did Togliatti, the plant, appear?

Recycling of the money supply?

Yes, the five-year plan was not focused on the future. We needed a lot of finished goods. Here he is. But that didn't solve it either. It was clear that without normal payment for housing, which costs 20%, we would not be able to solve anything. And then, at the same time, when the share of housing increased, other consumer goods fell sharply in price.

Why was it not possible to simply maintain the level of wages so that people would not accumulate excess money in their hands?

No, sorry, this was just something that was held sacred. It was held. There was, I don't remember what year, when they canceled it, [and before that] we had an ironclad standard. The relationship between wage growth and labor productivity. Wages have always lagged behind labor productivity.

I thought that the increase in the deficit was due to the fact that periodically wages grew faster. People received more in their hands than the product coverage grew.

These were isolated mistakes. In general, the Soviet Union was blown up by two decisions, destroyed: this is an anti-alcohol campaign - one, and the second is precisely the abolition of this ratio, this is the law on social enterprises, when directors were given the right to set salaries. "The Law named after Abalkin," I call it. These two decisions, from my point of view, completely ruined the economy of the Soviet Union.

But there were shortages before that. Look, on the one hand, you say that some of the goods were under-priced, objectively under-priced.

They have always been in short supply. These are all animal products, animal origin and housing.

But if people had fewer rubles left in their hands in the form of wages, then the gap would also be smaller.

Do you understand what parsley is? This is true, yes, absolutely. But here there is Maslow, the theory of preferences, and the pyramid is growing. The front-line soldiers and their pre-war standards did not suit Soviet life in principle.

I think I understand. If you don't raise your salaries, then, in addition to the fact that this is not good, your work motivation will simply drop. People won't work.

At all. They didn't fight for that.

Fine. Returning to the tasks of the department. You forecast demand. Something else?

Direct counting problems.

When you arrived there, did the ASPR6 idea exist in some form?

No, there was nothing. ASPR appeared much later.

Did you work together with Nathan Kobrinsky?

He left when I arrived. But we are very familiar with him.

I ask about him for this reason: now there is a bit of a gap in historiography, because Glushkov left behind an institute named after him, relatives and a fairly large number of fans, not all of whom are historians, but many of whom are nostalgic, which is why a narrative was created that: "Glushkov proposed a way to solve the problems of the Soviet Union. Stupid people did not listen to him, and because of this, economic problems began to grow." And this narrative, it is very tenacious. The period of the early 1960s, when Glushkov quite actively participated in all sorts of meetings and commissions on the creation of a unified computer network, is now described in some detail in historiography. Somewhere in the mid-60s, Glushkov was pushed back a little. Therefore, he loses interest and says almost nothing in his memoirs about the later period. And all the followers, all modern historians are exactly the same... That is, it turns out that the first half of 60 is described in detail, and then it's as if nothing happened. I know that the first commission that worked on the EGSVTS projects was led by Kobrinsky, and Glushkov was a scientific consultant. So I wonder ⁷, worked under what happened next?

In OGAS, your humble servant was the boss of the very top part of OGAS, which had two halves: an open, civil economy, in which there was no upper link of OGAS, and a closed one: "the country in case of war." It was called "Contour", and exists to this day. So I was appointed head of this farm. They created the Main Directorate of Information under the Council of Ministers of the USSR, and your humble servant was appointed just like that. To my great surprise, I had no intention of leaving the Main Computer Center anywhere. Why am I saying this? That I understand quite well what we are talking about. How did Glushkov buy it? A wonderful idea, technocratic – to increase labor productivity through technical means. Which is impossible. Fedorenko said that in order to increase labor productivity, it is necessary to carry out institutional

⁶ The automated system of planned calculations of the USSR State Planning Committee was created in the Main Computing Center of the USSR State Planning Committee since the mid-1960s; the official decree of the USSR State Planning Committee on the creation of ASPR was issued on August 20, 1972.

⁷ Unified state system of computer centers. On May 21, 1963, the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the USSR adopted a resolution "On improving the management of the introduction of computer technology and automated control systems into the national economy," which provided for the development of proposals for the creation of the Unified State Computer and Computer Center. Responsibility for preparation was assigned to a newly created body: the Main Directorate for the Introduction of Computer Technology under the State Committee for the Coordination of Scientific Research Works of the USSR (GUVVT). The head of the GUVVT created a working commission under the leadership of the deputy head of the Main Computing Center N.E. to prepare proposals for the Unified State Computer Center. Kobrinsky. The commission was supposed to prepare an analytical note on the concept of the Unified State Scientific and Information Center and submit it for consideration to the Interdepartmental Council, the head of which was appointed V.M. Glushkov. Thus, V.M. Glushkov was not the developer of the EGSVTS concept, but the head of the selection committee, which assessed the work done. After a number of modifications, on the basis of the EGSVTS project, the concept of OGAS arose - a nationwide automated system for recording and processing information. The State Planning Committee has repeatedly emphasized that it considers ASPR to be the core of the future OGAS. The history of work on the EGSVTS is described in detail in the articles and dissertation of A.V. Kuteynikova.

changes, multi-party system, etc., etc., which caused rejection. Like this -
break down? Glushkov did not say anything about this and proposed a seemingly simpler solution. That's
what I used to bribe him. Naturally, when they tried this, it didn't work.

Where did you start trying?

In OASU8.

In industry?

In all ministries. Local problems were solved, but as soon as it came to complex things, someone's interests
were stepped on, and everything stalled.

But still, Glushkov put forward this idea, but at the same time, as I understand it, he did not take a direct part
in either ASPR or Kontur?

No no.

How did it happen that the main ideologist was not invited?

What was the ideology? Combine cars into a complex?

Yes, but he also seemed to be a good technical specialist.

No, but look, what does "unite the machines" mean? This is all yes, a complex engineering problem, it is not
so simple. But, in principle, try, formulate what Viktor Mikhailovich Glushkov proposed, some kind of
Glushkov's postulate?

For example, now statistics are collected periodically.

Yes.

If there is an information system, information from below can be given out,
receive in real time.

Before Glushkov, Vasily Vasilyevich Leontiev, a Nobel Prize laureate, told me somewhere in the early 70s
that in the New York Times newspaper, for a fee, you can find out the line of the interindustry balance sheet
based on the processing of bank transactions. "IBM" still had tubes, the Americans were already using them,
processing bank transactions, who bought from whom, and compiled the lines of the inter-industry balance
sheet. Now my question is: why did Mr. Putin praise our Mr. Taxman? For doing the same.

However, the project of this unified network was entrusted to Kobrinsky. And he then moved to the same
department where you worked, and you then began to work on ASPR. Was there any transfer of ideas from
Kobrinsky to you on this topic?

To be honest, I perceived the idea of ASPR as a kind of "hat".

Why?

I really didn't consider this task as a system. I enjoyed every single task. That is, I was given a task, you
must solve this problem. Probably, this is the nature of the work; I have an implementation department. I
can't implement something I don't understand. I can implement something tangible that has a beginning, an
end, a customer and

⁸ Industry automated control systems.

etc. Therefore, just the nature of the work, I needed very specific things do it, I enjoyed doing it.

How long did the department exist when it was disbanded?

It's hard to say, I'm afraid to lie now.

Why was it reorganized? It worked, you found your niche...

I will not say.

Unknown?

No, firstly, it was another reorganization. And so, in the next reorganization, it was reorganized. I didn't get into it, it's not interesting. My task was to establish relationships with traditional state planners so that they would be our customers.

Did you do the calculations yourself or did you ask the Main Computer Center?

Main Computer Center, of course. We didn't do any calculations.

If we use modern terms, you were the marketing department of the Main Computer Center, which began to work for him?

Or they are under our contract.

The department was reorganized and you went to the consolidated department?

In summary.

Was it then led by Lebedinsky?

Lebedinsky resigned from the post of head of the consolidated department, head of the Main Computing Center.

First he left, and then you came?

Volodya Vorobyov came, I came to Volodya Vorobyov.

Do you know why, when Kovalev died, they chose Lebedinsky?

I think because Baibakov wanted to make Volodya Vorobyov the boss.

That is, Lebedinsky had to be removed somewhere?

My subjective opinion, it may be wrong. In my opinion, Volodya Vorobyov is a cut above. I just know both of them. Just in terms of the system of thinking, in terms of skill, just a cut above. Therefore, for me Lebedinsky, the head of the Main Computing Center, is classic "impact sublimation".

How?

"Impact sublimation." The Peter Principle.

Is it to be raised to such a height that a person cannot cope?

Remove a person to a higher, but less significant position.

Is it because Baibakov was dissatisfied with Lebedinsky as a specialist?

Yes.

Or some personal ones?

No no. Nikolai Pavlovich was an official, and Baibakov needed a thinker.

Because there are memories of Lebedinsky, they say that, in general, he understood things.

But I'm not saying that he didn't understand. Understanding and thinking are two different things.

In fact, under him, this work on ASPR began.

I can say he had absolutely nothing to do with this.

Who then?

Volodya Bezrukov.

So Lebedinsky is like an umbrella? What was its function?

Umbrella, umbrella. It was Volodya Bezrukov who did everything.

Fine. So you came to Vorobyov. This was around the time when work on the ASPR was already underway, a decree had already been issued, was it already underway?

Yes, yes, that's it.

How did you begin to interact on the issue of ASPR?

I interacted with them as I interacted. The transition from one office to another had no effect on this.

But before, you gave them specific tasks.

What's new here? I interacted with Yakov Moiseevich Urinson, with the group that dealt with inter-industry balance, because for me it was a tool. With them at all times. Now I will explain, simply in pictures. A meeting is taking place in the Politburo. Baibakov arrives from a Politburo meeting and gathers a small circle. And he tells us what happened at the Politburo and what we need to think about. No decisions have been made yet, because he says: "The protocol will come, then we'll decide." One of the central questions is what growth rate. So, he makes such and such assumptions, growth rates, etc. "We need to think about it." I come to my office, call my wife, say: "Klavdyush, prepare two thermoses of tea and sandwiches." I stop by, pick up two thermoses of tea and sandwiches and head to the Main Computer Center.

Around 8 pm. And this team: Valera Dolgov, now deceased, is still there... We are pushing these computers and models to the limit. Basically, the dynamic 18-industry inter-industry model of Yakov Urinson. What could be the pace? Then we'll take a nap somewhere. It was relatively close to my house. By morning we already have

option is ready. And around 10 o'clock I usually tell Nikolai Konstantinovich what we have counted. And then he tells all this to Kosygin. So, when I said that he took me with him to meetings, this was the work. Then somehow at one of the meetings Kosygin said: "Nikolai Konstantinovich, you have completely tormented us with your options. Let's do something differently now." Now they began to offer something, and we began to shortchange what they offered. Then it ended with him saying this: "This is no good either. Now that's it, these experiments are over. Now tell me what we need." This all went through 18 industry models. Practical people. We set a five-year plan. In my opinion, 81-85. Naturally, the maximum was determined, everything is fine. The Central Committee of the CPSU had a department of planning and financial bodies, and I was there, like

other officials were called in to provide information on the progress of the plan. I say: "That's right, we have calculated the options - maximum growth rates are possible under such and such conditions." They ask me: "How much for agriculture?" I say "18%".

Yes, I read it too. What does 27% need?

Yes.

Yes I remember. Have you interacted with the Main Computing Center on narrow tasks: an introductory note arrives, and you need to calculate the options?

What's the introductory one? Baibakov expressed his understanding of what was happening in the Politburo. Here I am Based on this, I built my design.

Yes, it's even a little similar to what we do, but we don't have the tools. When there is some kind of introductory political thing that you would like, and you start you think.

We had an instrument, remarkably tuned by Yakov Moiseevich Urinson.

The idea of ASPR is that: "We automate planned calculations to the maximum."

No. No one will automate them, this is not true.

What was the idea then?

This is why I ended up in the leadership of Kontur. Exactly for this. I'll retell it: Baibakov tells me: "You know, I once went to see Smirtyukov..." Smirtyukov Mikhail Sergeevich, a legendary figure. Manager of the Affairs of the Council of the Minister of the USSR. For more than 40 years I sat behind the Kremlin fence, and did not get caught in any shit. And there people were stained with blood, and he didn't even touch this product. This is a unique person in history. Prime Ministers come and go, but Smirtyukov remains. He has a book called "The Soviet State Apparatus," which I strongly advise you to read. This is an apparatchik, I tell you, of the highest class.

And he?

And Baibakov says to me: "You know, I once went to Smirtyukov, and he said to me: "Nikolai Konstantinovich, how interesting it turns out, before we finalized the national economic plan, when we approved it, in three weeks, and now in three days let's manage. And the most important thing is that protests about the plan have sharply decreased: "It's not written like that, it's not written like that." Who set it all up so well for you?" Vanka is lying around. His son worked for us in the State Planning Committee as the head of a general department and knew the life of the State Planning Committee very well. But he puts on such a performance in front of Baibakov. And he says: "And I'm pleased that my organization was praised, so I'm telling you, I have a Main Computing Center, there is such and such..." And Smirtyukov says: "And now we have the Kontur complex, let's move this comrade from your Main Computing Center to our "Contour"." What did the Main Computer Center do? From three weeks, the process of finalizing the plan ultimately took three days.

"Ultimate completion" – what is it?

Here's the plan. One copy of all forms and extracts from them is one and a half meters high. So that every enterprise gets what to do.

Newsletter?

Mailing, extracts. They had to be printed. This is one copy for each. Everyone had to make statements. These are several suitcases. Or, let's say, if we talk about national income, then it should be one in all forms, one number. It cannot be that in one project, in one form - one thing, in another - another... But it happened before all the time.

Typos.

Why Voznesensky was fired from his job - exactly for this. In 1949, Voznesensky was removed and then shot precisely because different forms contained different indicators, different meanings of numbers. This is "fleas", so to speak, but in the end it cost the man his life. Stalin wanted to remove him, and found a way.

By the way, do you have any personal idea why? Because Stalin seemed to be happy with him for a long time?

Yes.

What then?

Stalin had the imprudence to call him his most likely successor.

And they started digging under it?

Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria.

Did Stalin believe it?

It's a difficult question. That's a very difficult question. It is extremely difficult to talk about Stalin. Even Baibakov, who called himself "Stalin's People's Commissar," couldn't say anything... [couldn't say?] My understanding: the people who bore the stamp of victory - Zhukov, the same Voznesensky - became a hindrance to Stalin. They began to greatly overshadow him in the eyes of the Soviet people. This is my version. Not because they are bad, but because they have begun to obscure greatly. Stalin was not at the front.

I know that, let's say, Lebedinsky started working with Voznesensky?

Voznesensky is a Gosplan legend.

I wanted to ask about this: to what extent did the State Planning Committee preserve its working methods or the memory of it, or anything at all? What is the perception?

When I found it - veneration, legend. Well, everyone who spoke spoke extremely respectfully. I definitely say this. Extremely respectful. Although he was despot.

And at the level of methods there was something that said: "Voznesensky worked like this, but now we've moved away from it in vain?"

No.

Was it just a symbol?

Voznesensky had a quality that ensured survival - responsibility. The man literally answered with his head.

What happened to this later?

As with everything else. It cannot be one way in the State Planning Committee and another in the whole country. It's the same everywhere.

That is, responsibility was reduced?

Certainly.

Have you tried to do something about this?

But it's impossible, you understand. Time. It's like frontline soldiers. They introduced a style of planning change, they changed for them. Time has changed.

Planning has changed, but what does responsibility have to do with it? The goals of the plans are different, but there should still be responsibility for execution.

Under Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin, leaving a major post was always, almost always, associated with parting with life. Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev was the first to break the trend. Under him, people began to leave the post without losing their lives. Here's my answer.

And because of this, responsibility began to fall?

Including.

Still, methods of control, verification, why has it become worse to work?

Now about the methods. One of the instructions I was given was to introduce a system for monitoring the execution of instructions coming to the State Planning Committee. I report to Nikolai Konstantinovich about the system of cards with edge perforation, this was then, before electronic machines. Such a new control system. I tell Nikolai Konstantinovich: "You-you-here, that's the percentage...". He listened and listened, then tremblingly said: "What are you telling me? Mehlis checked me!" And he uttered the words "Mekhlis checked" with a shudder. He said when the "second Baku" began, Stalin sent him to make a second Baku and admonished him: "There will be oil, there will be Comrade Baibakov. There will be no oil, there will be no Comrade Baibakov." Any good advice? And then he said: "Well, what are you telling me? I'm Mekhlis..." And he pronounced the word "Mekhlis" with a shudder. That is, it was such a bastard! Cosmic scale. I never heard anything else from Baibakov in such a tone. Here is the control system. "Mekhlis

checks."

Now about Mehlis. When I was appointed head of Kontur, I had the opportunity to work with Colonel General Valentin Dmitrievich Sozinov, now deceased. During the war he commanded a battalion. There was then the famous, infamous landing in the Kerch region in 1943. So he commanded a battalion that covered the rearguard. This is me telling what Valentin Dmitrievich told me. There he was a member of the military council Mehlis. And Sozinov is informed that a member of the military council is calling. He says: "I'm taking the sergeant major with me," - this is the front line, by the way. And he goes there, talks with this Mehlis, then he tells him: "That's it, you're free, go to your place." And he says to his guarantor: "Here, see off Comrade Major." They go out with this man, Mehlis's guarantor, his sergeant-major is walking behind him, and Sozinov hears from the sergeant-major

click, the machine gun is cocked. The military, they instantly record. Then they went to their place, Sozinov asked the foreman: "Why on earth are you a machine gun for 20

Have you deployed a combat platoon? And he says: "You see, Comrade Major, while you were there with a member of the military council, I talked with the guys here, and they said: "If yours comes out with such a person, his task is to bring him to the demarcation line, and there put a bullet in the back of his head." And the foreman decided to fight him off. The sergeant-major brings up the rear, and the guarantor Mehlis hears. That the sergeant-major, if he fumbles with his revolver, will hit him with a machine gun, and that's all. Therefore, Sozinov says: "He saved my life." What Sozinov told me, It was based on the fact that "Mehlis was checking me." I realized that Baibakov's fears were more than justified. The control system was intelligible, everything was very simple.

Surely there must have been thoughts about whether it was possible to maintain the level of responsibility without shooting the leaders?

Of course it is possible. I want to tell you an example from Soviet practice. Again memories of youth. Abramtsevo, the dacha of my late teacher Vasily Sergeevich Nemchinov, I am still very young, having just come to work. The Nemchinov family is sitting, and the grandfather is sitting there with them, a bald old man in such round glasses, very simple. And we sit there, side by side, and Marya Borisovna treats us to tea. And this old man said: "Lavrentiy once called the three of us," I'm conveying exactly, "and said: "In six months you'll do it, you'll be a hero, you'll be a laureate, you'll be a deputy. If you do it in a year, you will be a hero, you will be a laureate. If you do it in a year and a half, you will be a hero. If you don't do it in two years, you'll go to prison." I remembered it for the rest of my life. Of course, I didn't understand a damn thing who was calling whom. Only later did I find out that this old man was three times hero of Socialist Labor, Yakov Borisovich Zeldovich.

Was it Zeldovich?

Yes. And the second two were Khariton and Kurchatov, respectively. And Lavrenty, of course, do you understand who he was? - Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria. So I told you, without shooting, so the incentive system was drawn up.

Fine. Intelligible.

It was then that they decided which bomb to detonate: a Soviet one, one of our own design, or a one-piece one. They blew up a solid one. Beria decided that...

More reliable.

Certainly. Beria understood that he would fly if he did not explode.

Returning to the beginning of 70. This is the task that the Main Computing Center set for itself, to increase the level of automation of planned calculations; as I understand it, at first it required us to generally understand how these planned calculations are carried out. As far as I understand, the initial stage was drawing up network diagrams, how information flows, how everything goes.

This is one of the topics that the department dealt with.

Your?

Yes.

Tell me how it was? Was it really necessary to approach each planner and find out how you work?

Firstly, an order was created on the development of the plan, which outlined the deadlines.

The timing is clear. Who thinks so?

The network was clear about who was sending what to whom. And then there was the calendar, then it was a matter of technology. The network was specified in the order, but no one invented it.

It was impossible to write everything down there.

Everything was written down. A plan is forms and indicators. This is a completely finite number of forms. They transmit, people exchange forms.

As I understand it, the problem was that not all the methods for obtaining these indicators were formalized?

Of course not. Not everything can be formalized.

But the work in which the department participated, what exactly did it consist of?

Establish exchange... The most difficult thing in all this work is to establish information flows.

What did it mean to "establish information flows"?

Know: this is work done, this work is not done.

How is that? It was you who went so that different departments knew that they belonged to each other... I didn't I completely understand what this means specifically.

If everything is concrete, you will understand that the product of each official participating in the plan is a certain form or indicator of form. That is, for one there is an indicator, and for the head of a department, at the level of the head of a department, there is a form into which the indicators are included, for the development of which the department (or a subdepartment within the department) is responsible. This is the form he hands over to someone. If this is a balance sheet department, then it transfers it to the consolidated material balance department. One of the greatest merits of the Main Computer Center was that it was purely programmers that they created the "Document" system for processing forms. Lozinsky is there... I don't remember now all the document developers. The Document system perceived the document as a hieroglyph. And the whole plan then consisted of hieroglyphs. And the whole question is: is there a document or not? The network diagram highlighted and revealed which documents were missing for today. Because if there is no one document, then there will be no plan. His task was to sift, to find where.

So this is a system that improves controllability?

Yes. Highlighted bottlenecks.

What is your help in creating this whole thing?

Mine is nothing.

You say that the department was also involved.

Organization has been greatly improved. Because there was no hiding there.

We said that under Voznesensky the State Planning Committee worked quite clearly, and now we say that this "Document" system made it possible to improve the level of organization. So it means that it is somewhere between the conventional 1945 and the conventional 1970s, has it sagged a little?

You see, firstly, of course, the very fact that the war ended, of course, relaxed people. It's naturally. It would be funny if it weren't. Secondly, the goals have changed a lot. This: housing, meat, sausage...

So it's not the State Planning Committee that has relaxed, but the system that is objectively becoming more complicated?

The system has become different, the goals and plans have become different.

At 50, the State Planning Committee was divided, then reassembled, then...

Certainly.

Were there any decisions about reorganization that the planners directly said: "This decision is wrong, it has greatly worsened the work"?

This could not have happened at all, in principle.

Not discussed?

No.

Even unofficially?

No. Gosplan handled the details.

No, I mean the decisions regarding the reorganization of the State Planning Committee itself, that "here it was in vain that we were divided then..."

This was done according to such incomprehensible ideas and ideas! Unfortunately this monstrous gaps, taste. Each leader did it for himself. And I don't dare to find any serious laws there.

Often, if a company undergoes a reorganization, employees discuss: "Well, we had a reform of our organization. This reform was done in vain." Was it not the case that in the State Planning Committee some reforms in relation to the State Planning Committee itself caused such deep discontent?

If we speak not from the position of dogma, but from the position of substance, what was the central flaw of the State Planning Committee, which, I believe, is deadly even now? This is too much passion for current tasks. The State Planning Committee began with the GOELRO plan and a vision of problems on the horizon of more than 20 years, and then the main work of the State Planning Committee was reduced to tactical regulation of the economy in the annual cycle, which is a deep mistake. Instead of transferring the current regulation to automatic mode and working on the mechanisms that support this state of homeostasis. Instead, they were engaged in manual control. After all, in essence, the plan is manual control, an annual plan. What is happening now is generally an apotheosis. But even then, even an annual plan is still abnormal, a normal five-year plan. And the annual one is already an interference in current activities, which should not have been done. This should have happened automatically, which is why the ideas of cost accounting and an economic mechanism arose. These are just ideas about not interfering with current regulation. Then questions about demand, supply, etc. disappear. and so on. Current regulation throughout the year leaves no room

homeostasis.

But since this was not done, since the State Planning Committee continued to deal with ongoing regulation, is it because the ideas of self-regulation, in principle, could not be brought to fruition?

Yes, definitely.

Didn't you manage to figure them out, didn't you succeed at the theoretical level?

And at the theoretical level it's the same.

That is, they haven't come up with a mechanism?

They didn't come up with it.

Then it turns out to be some kind of fundamental defect?

Yes, I told you, "Where is the political economy of socialism?"

Did you have any personal ideas about what could be done to make it work at the micro level?

More or less yes. Moreover, I even wrote a brochure on this topic.

Which one?

It's called "Fundamentals of Socialist Reproduction". It was given in the Knowledge Society as a popular lecture. It was just reproduction. If you don't find it, I'll give it to you then.

And if the big flaw of the State Planning Committee is too much passion...

This is not a flaw of the State Planning Committee.

I understand he had to. Then the question is a little aside: the interaction of the State Planning Committee and the Comprehensive Scientific and Technical Program progress.

A very interesting question.

Was it supposed to be long-term?

Everything is correct, moreover, I was appointed as a liaison officer from the State Planning Committee in this program. The interaction was all the more simplified because my comrades, Sasha Anchishkin and Yuri Yaremenko, were playing on the other side. It was a pleasure to work with them. I was delegated there by my boss, Vladimir Petrovich Vorobyov, and I went to see the guys there in Maronovsky Lane, where they were located, and interacted with them in every possible way. I met Vladimir Aleksandrovich Kotelnikov and was filled with the deepest respect for him. I knew this thing well. This idea was wonderful. And very correct. This idea, it seemed to return us ideologically to the GOELRO plan. That is, in my opinion, this idea with NTP is a direct continuation of the GOELRO plan. And with competent political management, it should have played the same role that the GOELRO plan played in the formation and development of the USSR.

Strategic?

Strategic. A plenum was planned there, a plenum of the Central Committee on scientific and technological progress, where they were going to dot all the i's. But the plenum was never held.

What kind of plenum?

On the restructuring of the economy, to management subordinate to the achievements of technology progress.

Should they have somehow institutionalized this comprehensive program on scientific and technical progress?

Yes. Not the program itself, but the activities in the country on this. Such a plenum was planned. What was the whole program written for? Think for yourself, how much work was done, in the name of what? It is a holy thing to hold a plenum on the basis of all these developments⁹.

When did you want this?

Even under Brezhnev.

If you say that this is the end of the Brezhnev period, then the first comprehensive NTP program appeared earlier, and, as I understand it, it was supposed to be the master plan of the five-year plan issued on its basis?

Yes.

What did you manage to do there and what didn't?

Firstly, this is the rationale for increasing labor productivity. The second is commodity coverage of trade turnover. What to saturate with? Because we were regularly short of goods when it came to prospects. It turned out that there was no longer enough imagination to name the goods with which to close the trade turnover plan. This is not just the "factor 3" that I talked about. There was not enough for the future globally, global imbalances arose. That is, the problem could not be solved without institutional changes. This is precisely one of the reasons why it was necessary to increase housing fees, etc., etc. But the reaction was: "Why are you encroaching on achieving the five-year goal"?

How did the State Planning Committee use this comprehensive program?

Through productivity. Direct cost coefficients of the interindustry model - times. This is mainly Yakov Urinson and Felix Klotsvog on the other side. And secondly, this is the justification of labor productivity by industry.

⁹ During the discussion in the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee on June 20, 1985, the results of the meeting that had taken place a week earlier on accelerating scientific and technological progress, M.S. Gorbachev noted that "for the first time, the question of holding a plenum on scientific and technological progress was raised in Brezhnev's speech when presenting the Order to Ukraine in 1973. Since then, this issue has come up several times. The last attempt to hold a plenum on scientific and technological progress was, as you know, made at the end of last year. But it was not completed." *In the Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee... According to the records of Anatoly Chernyaev, Vadim Medvedev, Georgy Shakhnazarov (1985-1991) Comp. A. Chernyaev (project manager), A. Weber, V. Medvedev. M.: Alpina Business Books. 2006. P. 17.* L.A. Voznesensky told me that every time when preparing the Plenum, the ministries crossed out all the specifics, all the obligations from the draft documents, and holding the Plenum became meaningless. Under Gorbachev, the plenum was also not held. According to the recollections of a member of the working group for its preparation, O.I. Ozhereleva: "everything sounded very ordinary: "strengthen", "improve", "speed up", "deepen"... This has already been said dozens of times before us! But how to do this was not formulated. ... Then it was proposed to postpone the holding of this plenum - there was nothing to bring to it - levers for solving fundamental economic issues were not found." *Krotov N.I. Akela missed, launch Berlaya. An attempt to understand the meaning of the economic reforms of the 1980s. M.: Partnership of scientific publications KMK. 2019. P. 78.*

What, besides the plenum, was missing from the comprehensive program to become a truly strategic vision?

It wasn't enough for her. Two "sacred cows" were crushed.

That is, the groups who were responsible for agriculture and the defense industry were not ready to share at all?

Certainly.

Even for a promotion? Departmental egoism?

Certainly.

Hard.

Even easier. This is what I argued with the agricultural department employees about. Money for agriculture: "Guys, is it really not clear that for this money we can build either palaces for cows or normal housing for people? In my philosophy: let's build normal living conditions for people, and let them provide housing for the cows themselves. With your worries, there are palaces for cows, but people have a bad life. Nothing will happen!"

It seems to me that Yaremenko's ideas should have been close to you.

And I had the best relationship with Yura¹⁰. After Moscow State University, he graduated from a university in China. When we were getting ready, we went for a walk, he told me about China, I told him about the Soviet Union. It was clear to me, as a person who grew up in a rural area: if there is a road from a village to a city, the village lives, something is built there, if there is no road, the village dies out. Who will take care of the cow? But a fundamentally different direction was chosen. It did not motivate people to be highly productive.

Please describe in general the interaction between the State Planning Committee and the Main Computing Center?

The easiest. Gosplan is the customer, Main Computing Center is the executor. A work plan is drawn up. I, perhaps, was in such an exclusive position: my comrades worked there, so in principle I had no problems with the Main Computer Center. Therefore, I am not quite an ordinary customer. When I became the head of the Main Computer Center, a problem arose that it took 40 minutes to complete one average task. And the machine could withstand operation without failure for 30 minutes. My task was to organize the process so that when the calculation failed, I would not start from the beginning, but continue with some intermediate result. Rollback points were set up.

This is when you were already the head of the Main Computer Center.

And while I was in the State Planning Committee, it was a well-functioning system. Plans, each customer is registered, there is a performer. The customer is responsible. Again, understand, the language of communication is form. Any department submits the form for processing. Form plan. This means that it was necessary to indicate the tree of indicators as an indicator of such and such a form. Let's say national breath ("national income" in planner jargon). It occurs in several forms. It is written "national spirit". And then the form, columns and lines in which these numbers are indicated

¹⁰ Yuri Vasilyevich Yaremenko is a Soviet and Russian scientist-economist, academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences, director of the Institute of Economic Forecasting of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Author of the theory of a multi-level economy, one of the consequences of which was to explain the low returns from high-tech investments directed into low-tech industries.

stood. It was clear who could change the indicator. Let's say Dorovskikh¹¹ changes. Everyone else did not have the right to change the national income indicator. If you change this indicator, then everything will change automatically. This means that everyone is given information that the indicator has been changed - you recalculate yours. It was actually a revolution. Voznesensky was removed due to the fact that there were different indicators in different forms. Everyone passes on the form, the exchange takes place in form. And there you can see which form is missing, which form is on the critical path. They call the person in charge and say: "Hurry up, you're holding everyone back." This is some kind of technical work. Typical control room. And since, in addition, the State Planning Committee and the Main Computer Center were in the same party organization, therefore the relations there were very simple.

Why did this matter?

General meetings are the same. At all meetings the Main Computer Center and the State Planning Committee are joint party meetings.

Are you saying that this helped to get things done?

Because they all communicate with each other. They will criticize this one and this one will be caught.

Were people afraid that they would be criticized at the party meeting?

Nobody wanted it. I wouldn't say they were afraid, but no one wanted it.

You are now describing it as if there really is no ASPR.

In general, yes.

The Main Computer Center itself and Lebedinsky and others are constantly in the same "Planned Economy", that ASPR is important, it will be a system for raising the level.

And so it was. Okay, listen, well, they called it ASPR...

But it turns out that ASPR is the entire work of the Main Computing Center?

Certainly.

Why was this brand needed?

This is not a question for me. Moliere wrote: "He never suspected that all his life he spoke in prose."

Fine. What is the division, what part of the work was done by the State Planning Planners, and what part of the work they transferred to the Main Computing Center?

These are basically different things.

Tell me.

The job of the State Planning Committee is to justify the value of the indicator.

How did they do it?

But here, in a sense, you don't give a damn. Not everything can be formalized.

Was there no task?

It was not installed.

¹¹ Head of the National Economy Balance Department Anatoly Borisovich Dorovskikh

But one of the State Planners knows something, he then retired, and some of his knowledge was lost?

Yes.

Was this not perceived as a problem?

Perceived. A person was hired to work for a person who worked with someone whom he would replace after some time. That's how we were raised, that's how it's done everywhere, but it can't be any other way.

It's possible to issue methods that say: "We calculate this indicator in such and such a way."

No, firstly, there was a hefty "brick". Methodical instructions.

'74, red.

Yes.

But it is quite high-level.

However, all significant indicators are described there.

What is the work of the Main Computer Center?

Bring everything together into a single plan.

That is, the Main Computer Center answered so that there were no contradictions?

Yes. System "Document". She simply solved this problem.

And if there were contradictions, did you return it to the State Planning Committee?

Yes. It was like this: "The indicator doesn't beat."

So this is internal quality control?

Well, in general, yes. If there is no master plan, then you cannot understand why the number is what it is.

In 1977, the so-called first stage of ASPR was adopted. In 1980, a large book was published, summing up a certain intermediate result, "ASPR", edited by Lebedinsky. Then the decision is made that "We like everything, we continue to work, the second stage of ASPR is starting." It looks like everyone is happy with the work done. But in 1981, Lebedinsky resigned as leader. This

looks illogical.

I do not know why.

You don't know what happened?

Don't know. Frankly speaking.

It seems that the person showed himself normally, the system was made, they reported, they decided continue, but change the leader.

Don't know.

When you were offered to lead, did you expect it?

Naturally.

Because you interacted with them more?

Firstly, I essentially knew the methods. Secondly, I worked with the overwhelming majority at the Main Computer Center. He even raised some.

You have arrived at the Main Computer Center. You found yourself inside the organization, what was it like then?

I came to a very well-established organization, otherwise it could not exist. Naturally, there were some relationships that were established by the boss. And I first of all saw my task as increasing the reliability of work. I said: the machine works without failure for 30 minutes, but 40 are needed. Every day I carried out operative reports: the result of the work over the past day. There was an indicator for assessing the quality of work: the total time of delay in issuing results in minutes. A payment schedule was drawn up for each day, indicating the issuance of forms accurate to the minute. By shift, the time of delay with the issuance of forms was calculated in minutes. As always, first excuses... In general, after three months, maybe six months, all this died away. The system has improved. I managed to build a control system so that the problem for 30-40 minutes disappeared. This bottle neck has come loose. Well, I mainly took up the intellectual part, all sorts of calculations. Including writing notes to Gorbachev. Through Valery Ivanovich Boldin, Gorbachev's assistant, who ordered them for me. I and my guys at the Main Computing Center counted and wrote notes on how to increase the growth rate of the USSR.

Do you have any of these notes left?

No. Why aren't there any left? This was strictly confidential. Moreover, it was strongly recommended not to talk about it, not to tell anyone. Well, it's clear that when Baibakov says something, we take it for granted.

Did the Main Computing Center team somehow help you with these notes? Or yourself?

No, by myself. But, of course, I attracted Urinson, Dolgov, there were guys on models of something counted.

This was the period when it was written on paper that the implementation of the second stage of ASPR was underway.

I had nothing to do with this. This is the first part that I built - organized trouble-free execution of calculations.

But what had to be agreed upon in order to receive information from other OACS via communication systems in machine form?

This was not relevant at the Main Computer Center.

Why?

Because that didn't happen. This was relevant to me at Contour.

I read that the main task of the second stage of ASPR is to establish machine-to-machine interaction.

It's like a perspective: if you "fix it" there, then for the "circuit" it was everyday work. It was implemented there. And there I was faced with a task: a number comes, whether to believe it or not. The first thing I encountered was that the numbers were coming in every day. We are building the so-called "gates", that is, each number is the last one in a given

dynamic series, therefore, values are predicted based on the previous members of the series, and "gates" are set. If an incoming number hits the gate, it goes into the base. If it does not enter the gate, a message appears: "Check, either correct the number, or put a second signature." If they put a second signature, then it goes into the database. It is clear that in relation to the previous ones it will be an outlier. But this release is not accidental, but deliberate. Otherwise you will clog the database. After all, it was necessary to filter at the input, and not retroactively edit the readings, as the CSOs do now, or rather, as they always do. "In a year

We'll find out."

"Kontur" and ASPR were somehow interconnected?

Absolutely not.

Was it a completely autonomous system?

Absolutely. Moreover: from the point of view of the quality of processing economic information, the Gosplan Main Computing Center was two or three heads higher than what was done in Kontur. It's just a different century.

Was the Main Computer Center better?

There's not even a comparison. Because when I got acquainted with what was in "Contour", I became scared - it was so antediluvian that it was just some kind of horror. The Document system was the high-tech of its time.

You were asked to transfer, as they say, the best practice?

Yes, in its purest form.

And besides you, anyone else?

Much later I learned that other people were going to lead Kontur. Position in minister rank! How many applicants were there? I didn't know anything. I come to my office, the secretary says, "So-and-so called you on the turntable, asked to call you back," and gives his last name: Lupov. Who it? Don't know. I opened the directory. It turns out that this is an assistant to the Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR Smirnov, who is in charge of the military-industrial complex. I was terribly surprised. I have the 10th floor, which counts the defense industry. I don't even touch these calculations with my fingers. I called: "What do you need, what materials?" "No, it's okay," he laughs, "you need to have your head with you." Okay, I'm here. What about him... Smirnov, my memory fails me. "Here, there is a proposal to appoint you as head of Contour." I say: "Wait, but I work at the Main Computer Center, everything is fine there. I must report to Nikolai Konstantinovich Baibakov." "Report, he knows." I come and call: "Nikolai Konstantinovich?" He: "You know, I accidentally sold you." I had no idea

about it.

That is, you worked for almost 15 years, more than 15 years at the State Planning Committee, then at the Main Computing Center, and you did not know about the existence of a parallel system?

Absolutely. I wasn't involved in defense.

Who was the customer for the 10th floor?

I didn't touch it.

That is, you were the head of the Main Computing Center, but you did not know what was happening on the 10th floor?

Absolutely, and didn't want to know. This is secrecy. Why should I climb?

Did they process the tasks of the State Planning Committee?

Yes, of course, 10th floor. They sat with us on the 10th floor and there on the 10th floor.

That is, in the State Planning Committee the military floor was also 10?

Yes.

And everything was parallel for them, they didn't come into contact with you?

No, they communicated with our people on the 10th floor, and that's all.

They still had to request resources from outside?

And they were given it. It's not a question. It stood out for balance, that's not a question.

Purely technically, did the forms come from the 10th floor to the rest? "We need this and that"?

Certainly! Yes.

Could the answer be written: "Sorry, I don't have that much"?

No, there is priority. This is a "sacred cow".

That is, you didn't know what they were doing, how they were planning, but you were obliged to give them the amount they requested?

Yes, sure.

What if they ask for all the resources?

This did not happen.

It's clear. It's hard, of course. This "Kontur" system, when I found a mention that you were its leader, was the first time I heard about it. There are only two or three articles on the Internet. Brief. There is nothing about Contour.

This is the OGAS system, which was actually created.

Was it created?

Glushkovskaya, she was really created.

Does anyone even know that it was created?

Don't know.

Then I would probably ask you to meet separately. Tell me something about her. I would like to ask you for a separate story about this "Contour", what was it all about?

I'll just say: this is a system for governing the country in case of war. If a nuclear strike is carried out on the country, I will call a spade a spade, then how can I assemble a working system from what remains.

What could she do?

I don't want to be specific, because I didn't develop it, I inherited it. So-called complex tasks. They were put on combat duty, that is

filled with information and all that. My goal was to create a system. Yes, when N.I. Ryzhkov, as the Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, whom we knew from working in the USSR State Planning Committee, recommended for this position, he told me: "Keep in mind that if the system does not work, you will be shot." Such a parting word. But I didn't want to become a target. I tried to work in such a way that the centers worked automatically. And I succeeded. But for this it was important for me to practice, to find any snag in peacetime. Because this practice made it possible to establish interaction with the executors in the Government apparatus - once. And secondly, to work out the interaction within the computer centers themselves and with each other. Because this could only be done on live material. At first we began to work in support. First of all, in the fuel and energy complex. Chernobyl, I fought my way to win the right to work on Chernobyl, I asked myself. Chernobyl, monitoring the situation at the station, finished working on the construction of the city of Slavutich. And then the Spitak earthquake. Ilyin probably described all this. Nikolai Ilyin, my student and successor, was just sitting in Chernobyl, doing this.

He described that the system worked, but it is not clear what the system was? Was it a network of centers?

No, she collected data from all over, from the Union republics.

Who gave her this information?

Differently. The earthquake in Spitak was organized one way, in Chernobyl another way. Because Chernobyl was mainly interaction at the level ministries, ministries provided information, ministries of the USSR. And Spitak was the help of the union republics. There, information was provided by the State Planning Committees of the Union republics and the Councils of Ministers of the Union republics.

Did you give information machine-to-machine?

Inter-machine.

Not a stack of papers?

No. It's only machine-to-machine.

That is, you managed to establish machine-to-machine communication?

Undoubtedly.

Did you set this up or did it already exist?

I got the system.

But you said that there it was in some ways worse than at the Main Computer Center?

This is a completely different level. More primitive level. Poor.

I do not understand what it means.

"Contour" is feeding from a teaspoon. They will feed you with a teaspoon. And the "Document" system is a full-fledged large volume. Do you notice the difference?

That is, "Contour" provided a small amount of information?

The input system and information processing system were built on individual indicators. The Kontur system processed each indicator separately. The "Document" system processed a matrix, a table, so its productivity was fundamentally greater, structurally, fundamentally greater. But the Kontur system solved one problem that, in my opinion, no one had solved; it had powerful input control. We set up the "gate". And in the Main Computing Center this task was solved by double hand-to-hand combat.

What does it mean?

Each indicator was entered twice.

Protection against typist error?

Yes.

And the gate is not a typist's mistake, it's a mistake so that you don't get screwed.

Yes.

Did the Main Computing Center meaningfully check the incoming information so that they wouldn't mislead?

No, it came out later. At the entrance - no. And then it came out.

When did something not beat?

Yes.

How did you deal with this?

They find out, direct, it is known who is responsible for what, he corrected it.

Why didn't the Main Computing Center implement the same input control?

Kontur received information daily, and the plan was made once a year. We received 365 indicators per year, here – one. The flows are different.

In your opinion, the Main Computing Center did not establish a direct machine connection with the OASU of ministries and departments?

No, but I was at Kontur.

But with mini-computers, Iskrovsky terminals were installed in the State Planning Committee?

That comes later.

Late 80's?

Yes, that comes later.

What did Kontur provide as an output, what kind of information did it collect?

It was a system designed for operational problems. I will say this: in 1989, when the USSR began to fall apart, State Statistics Service information was floating around, and your humble servant, receiving information about loading on railways and electricity generation, built operational tracking of the state of the Soviet Union. And he wrote all sorts of certificates. Ignatiev, the head of the Central Bank before Nabiullina, later said that when he worked at the Ministry of Finance, they used my certificates to determine what was going where, how things were going. Because everything else falls apart. And Gaidar, before writing reviews in Pravda and Kommunist, always came to my office, I told him in detail

told the situation in the USSR on the date. That's why he has a lot of references to my various notes in the book "The Death of an Empire." This is an operational cardiogram.

"Kontour" was loading?

Transport statistics.

What did Kontur collect, besides transport statistics?

All ministries provided information.

And what? Volumes? Did you give industry output volumes?

Yes.

What else?

Each to their own.

They have thousands of indicators, what did they give?

So what, what difference does it make if there are thousands?

This computing power must be large.

She was big.

Were there any main indicators?

They're all in charge. I mentioned two (information about loading on railways and electricity generation) because it was enough for me to assess the state of the country.

It turns out that you, in fact, did not need the CSO.

My relationship with my friend Misha Korolev, now deceased, deteriorated because of this. He was the head of the Central Bureau of Investigation. And I was obliged to provide information about what was happening in the USSR at the Government meeting at the end of the month. And the Government meeting at the end of the month was held on the last days of the month. At that time, the CSB did not yet have the results. And I calculated based on my ranks. And Misha reprimanded me many times for crossing his path, and I said: "Misha, where should I go?"

Why was the CSB really needed if they created a system for promptly obtaining primary information?

I didn't process the content indicators. The CSO is primarily responsible for the content of the work. I processed, I had a kitchen, but I did not have a grocery store. Yes, I had a kitchen.

For example, what are the indicators?

I was getting the values. But I haven't dealt with the rules that define these values.

And, that is, CSO as a methodology. You really should have merged.

Certainly. They define. And I, of course, had a better processing system than theirs. Firstly, I had a network. I generally had dedicated channels. Generally a luxury. No glitches, no interference. That's why now the State Automated System "Elections" is the sister of my system. The GAS "Elections" has been made – this is a direct copy of the "Contour". Same chief designer, same principles.

It turns out that if you did this with a little less autonomy, with a little less secrecy, then in an amicable way you would be a department of the Central Statistical Office. You would be a good primary source, and they would give you a methodology and collect summary indicators.

This is not a department. This is a computer center. And there is a very big problem of reliability. The machines duplicate each other.

Were your machines the same as those at the Main Computer Center?

Yes, EU, the same type, EU-60. Machines duplicate each other, and centers duplicate each other friend.

Was the second center redundant?

Yes, they work together.

Were there two computer centers?

Yes, in different places geographically.

To avoid being hit with a rocket?

Yes, you can't break two at once.

It's not just the scale of this system that excites me. Another thing that I found out about her on the eve of the interview, in fact. Despite the fact that this is not the first month that I have been studying this topic, Soviet computing systems. Interesting, very interesting. Does it continue to work in some form?

Certainly. She is now in the Federal Security Service.

And you, as I understand it, worked there after perestroika until '94?

They invite me to their anniversary. I was the first boss. The portrait hangs there.

Do they have any public publications?

There are open ones.

Can you help me choose something?

Fine. Sorry, I'm starting to get tired.

Thank you very much, it was very interesting. It was especially interesting to learn about the Gosplanovskaya kitchen how decisions were actually made.

You can also read it in Baibakov's memoirs. I am proud to be part of his "narrow circle," to use modern language. Baibakov himself writes about this, this is not what I imagine awarded this title.

Was Baibakov an oil worker for the first half of his life?

He remained so until the end. Why "was"? He was an oil worker all his life.

To what extent is a person who is an oil worker to the core suitable for the role of the head of an agency who should not, in an amicable way, single out any one industry?

I think he understood his task very well. Another thing is that he had a purely engineering approach to everything.

What does it mean?

It was important for him that the car worked, and where to go with it was more or less all for him equals.

So he didn't try to set goals?

Yes.

Could this not have played a role in the fact that the comprehensive scientific and technological progress program, which was supposed to formulate long-term goals, was left a little out of work?

He had nothing against her. He himself intuitively understood all these things, but he was still Stalin's favorite people's commissar. It must be clearly understood that he is a man of the 30s, the heyday of his career was the 30s, the war, when he was responsible for supplying the front with fuel. Why did he interact very closely with Voznesensky? He is a man of that era. It's just that, as an outstanding personality, accustomed to solving any problems, he, of course, is at this... [was he a master?] I observed him against the background of his colleagues in the government. Sorry, but these are different scales. Just fundamentally different scales. Although formally in the same position. That's funny. It was funny to me then. I looked at them all together in the hall, which delighted me, that they sat for hours like bags of sand, and my ass froze from it. I was happy when Baibakov sent me to call, I got up and warmed up. And they are like bags of sugar, they were imprisoned...

I envy you a little.

I'm happy with my life, I have an interesting life. I had to work with wonderful people.

Still, I'll ask one last thing, although it's completely off topic. After all, this perestroika with the collapse of the country: all information systems were in place, statistics were working, forecasting things were working, the planning mechanism was debugged, that is, it would seem, the tools for smooth reform...

There is, everything is there.

Why didn't anything help?

I will say this based on personal experience. I am one of the most loyal considerations, the most, I emphasize, loyal ones, tried to explain to Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev, then only the Secretary of the Central Committee for Agriculture, that the Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee was not supposed to talk nonsense. This was specifically about this: Here is "27%", you read it, right? This is exactly what was discussed. He was instilled with the idea that the greater the share of agriculture in national income, the richer the country. I tried to explain to him that it was exactly the opposite. He brought graphs, calculations, everything in the world - he was not understood. I was at a meeting and was not understood. This situation is described by Valery Boldin in the book "Toppling from the Pedestal." Boldin is his right hand. He wrote this book while sitting in Sailor's Silence. It just doesn't have my last name, but it's easy to read between the lines that it's about me. Not entirely accurate, but you can read and understand the environment in which all this happened. I thought that I would be kicked out of work. He went, Nikolai Konstantinovich told him, he said: "Well, what are you doing, you're in vain." I say: "You see, Nikolai Konstantinovich, Russian people are structured in such a way that they are inclined to compromise,

but up to a certain limit, after which it rears up." So, I stood on my hind legs. That's why it didn't work? I tried, I personally tried to explain this to him, that this was wrong, that this was a mistake. Baibakov tried to explain to him, this is Baibakov himself

He said that there is no need to do this very anti-alcohol campaign, there is no need to do it the way he is doing it, it will undermine the budget. It ended with Gorbachev inviting all old people to voluntarily leave the Central Committee. "We signed up," as Nikolai Konstantinovich Baibakov told me.

Why did they sign up, they understood that their hands would be untied?

But every single one of them signed up, including Gromyko.

Why?

This is not a question for me. It wasn't me who signed, it was they who signed.

Did he explain it somehow? "Every single one of us signed up"?

Yes, let's discipline.

I heard the same thing from Bezrukov.

Here you go.

That is, they freed his hands voluntarily.

Yes. There was only one person he listened to, Raisa Maksimovna Gorbacheva. Everyone he didn't listen to the others.

Why did the recruitment system work this way?

The question is not for me. This brings us back to the beginning of the interview. For example, today's Ukraine. The bear stood on its hind legs. They don't want to see, they don't want to see anyone from the old ones. This is today's Khokhland, this is what she showed. Obrydli. We are little different from them we are different.

Do you think that, in general, it is a personal factor that this happened?

Certainly.

That is, all these economic prerequisites were all problems that could be solved?

No problem.

And when the political confrontation began with Yeltsin, why did it reach such an acute phase?

Because the mistake was in inviting Yeltsin to Moscow.

He was called to Moscow, here he began to acquire the qualities of a public politician, and he was not pushed aside, he was allowed to become strong enough so that he could already lead the political struggle.

Gorbachev wanted to use it as a battering ram. Against people he doesn't like.

Gorbachev did not understand that he could not control this?

You know what parsley is like? You cannot do serious work according to the "DPPR" principle: "Let's try, then we'll figure it out."

"DPPR." Need to remember.

A well-thought-out plan is needed. That's why I said about the GOELRO plan. It was a well thought out plan.

But after all, the TsEMI workers, even under Andropov, made a project for the transition to the market, that is, there were some developments.

Of course there were.

How well did they play?

I'll tell you more. Gorbachev invited Kolya Petrakov as an assistant ¹², who was the most market-oriented. The most market man, he took the coolest market man as his assistant. I ask Kolya Petrakov how often they see each other, he says: "No way." He took it for furniture. Moreover, no one knew this matter better than Kolya Petrakov.

These homemade preparations from the previous time were also not particularly used, if I understand you correctly?

By whom? Gorbachev? Certainly.

Pure improvisation?

You see, read, if you want to understand, Boldin. Because this is the person who described it from close range.

Fine. But the law on state enterprises that you mentioned. The fact that he is destroying the planned economy is absolutely obvious.

Why did I say "to the ground" and "and then". I've always been interested in "and then."

The people who wrote it, didn't they understand it or did they do it consciously?

You see what's going on. Theoretical ideas are one thing. I believe that a person who has not undergone practical work cannot be appointed prime minister.

So the prime minister was the long-time director of Uralmash N.I. Ryzhkov, is this not enough practice?

Sufficient.

Who are you talking about?

Lenya Abalkin. A wonderful person.

So who was the author of this law?

Abalkin.

That is, he deliberately decided to destroy it, or did not understand?

We had this practice in the State Planning Committee under Baibakov: if we wrote some kind of project resolution, before sending it somewhere, we tried to conduct an economic experiment.

¹² Petrakov Nikolai Yakovlevich - Soviet and Russian economist, academician of the USSR Academy of Sciences

Smart practice.

First, an economic experiment was conducted, it was generalized, and then it was introduced. And here it is: without any experiment, on living people. Let's go, it's already time.

Thank you, sorry. Got carried away.

The interview mentions articles by V.V. Kossova:

1. On planning the social and economic development of Russia - a platform for society. Conclusions from consolidation the experience of the USSR State Planning Committee <https://elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=20406626>
2. Revival of the inter-industry balance in the USSR <https://elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=21674324>
3. Vasily Sergeevich Nemchinov <https://publications.hse.ru/books/191643855>