

**Mikhail
GORBACHEV**

**DEMOCRATIZATION—
THE ESSENCE
OF PERESTROIKA,
THE ESSENCE
OF SOCIALISM**

**A meeting at the CPSU Central Committee with
the heads of the mass media, ideological
institutions and artistic unions**

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MIKHAIL GORBACHEV'S ADDRESS

Comrades,

Though our meeting is taking place at the beginning of a new year, our discussion will not only deal with this year, but also with the one that has just ended. And this is not because it is in exactly this way and light that problems are usually considered at the junction of two years. It is because there is a close interconnection between the past year and the year that has already begun.

We want to talk today in the same spirit of the previous meetings we've had: in a friendly and frank way. The current period will determine the future of our country, and we must pause to take stock. It is for this reason that we are holding such discussions, above all, within the Party and the Party apparatus, as well as with all sections of our people.

Naturally, we want this good tradition to be continued—meetings with the heads of the mass media and unions of creative workers.

We badly need exchanges of views and thoughts and friendly discussion. That is why we attach so much importance to these meetings with you, dear comrades.

I said that we are meeting at the junction of 1987 and 1988. This in itself creates the conditions for assessing the past—what has been accomplished, and for trying to look towards the future.

Another circumstance makes the discussion especially significant. Perestroika's first stage has on the whole been completed and its second stage is beginning. We are, therefore, at a threshold. Of course, this division is relative. In life, everything is interrelated. Much of what has begun is continuing and will continue.

We distinguish between these two stages in order to see more clearly what tasks are facing us. At the first stage,

we had to work thoroughly to make a theoretical assessment of the situation that had developed by the mid-eighties.

It was necessary to analyse the real state of the society in which we live and make plans for the future—not on the basis of superficial and simplistic notions, but with an awareness of our responsibility before the country, before socialism and before the world, taking into account the weight and role of our country.

We have worked out the concept of perestroika and adopted very important and major decisions. Without these decisions we would be unable to act on a long-term basis while simultaneously handling current issues.

Many forces of our society were activated during the first stage of the restructuring—in particular, the Party's potential as well as that of scientists, artistic intellectuals and the mass media. The country was alive, the people were active. They were working, coping with tasks without waiting for the completion of theoretical and political studies.

The difference between the first stage and the next one is that we have found out what has to be done and in what way. This has been a hard task and it remains topical today as well. But now the most complex stage has begun, when the concept of perestroika must come into broad contact with life, with the practical activity of millions of Soviet people. What has been realized by the political leadership and the advanced part of our people must now be realized by all Soviet people, by every section. Without this, without a clear understanding of the Party's policy, there will be no firm belief in the need for it. It is this belief that determines the spirit of the people and their real deeds.

This task is indeed a gigantic one. Man's central role continues, both from the point of view that everything is done for man and from the point of view that people themselves must do everything that we have conceived collectively.

Many things have now come to a head and discussions are becoming more and more pitched. The process of perestroika involves struggle. This is natural. If perestroika is indeed the continuation of the revolution, if we are currently pursuing a revolutionary policy, then struggle is inevitable.

This was the case in the years of all revolutions, it will be so now. We can sense this. The forms of the struggle

and the forces involved are quite another matter. In our country they are not antagonistic, warring sides with opposing class interests. Instead, one can speak about the time-serving interests of groups and sometimes even about ambitions, if the latter can be included into the category of interests.

We are all involved in the great creative effort of restructuring the country. Therefore, the struggle takes the form of discussions and ideological disputes with the purpose of looking closer at the situation and clarifying the tasks confronting us. This is what we, comrades, should concentrate on.

We are emerging from one stage and entering another. The tasks and, especially, the scale of work will change qualitatively. The focus is already shifting into the realm of practical realization, the realm of translating policy into reality. This is a qualitatively new situation. We have all realized this. All of you here at this meeting are connected in the most direct way with the life of our society. Every day you receive extensive information, understand, see and feel the processes under way in the country and their prospects.

In this sense, I would like to again stress that 1987 was a very fruitful year for us. Even by the most stringent of yardsticks, it must be evaluated as a year of great work. Indeed, if the theoretical, political and practical work carried out last year in connection with the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the Great October Revolution had not been done, we would now be two or three steps lower in our understanding of the past and the present stage, as well as of our prospects. We have analysed our society further. We have now a better knowledge of our history. This is exceptionally significant.

One cannot agree with those who suggest that we forget history or remember only a certain part of it. We now fully realize that such a point of view is unacceptable. We must have a deep knowledge of our country's history, especially in the period after the revolution. Knowing our history, knowing the causes of these or those phenomena, the causes underlying our country's major achievements, and knowing the causes of the serious mistakes and tragic events in our history—all this allows us to draw a lesson today as we seek to revitalize society and more fully tap the potential of socialism and its assets. Indeed, we now have a better knowledge of our history and the roots of many

phenomena which in recent years were a cause of anxiety for all of us and were the main reason for the decision on the need for a social restructuring.

At the same time, we did not come to a dogmatic understanding of our history during the preparations for the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution. It will be extended and developed in the course of further research.

Deepening our knowledge and understanding of our history, drawing lessons from the past and working out the future path of advancement—this is what distinguishes our work today. What has been done in that area has enriched the entire political, ideological and spiritual sphere of society's life. That's in the first place.

In the second place, as I have already mentioned, 1987 was a year of major decisions. Let me put it this way: were it not for the decisions adopted at the January and June Plenary Meetings of the CPSU Central Committee, were it not for the Law on the State Enterprise, we would not be what we are today. Our understanding of the situation and our idea of what is to be done now and in what ways to advance further would be different.

Substantial advancement in elaborating the theory and policy of perestroika imparts a conscious, purposeful character to our work. We can now act consistently, proceeding from adopted decisions, on the basis of scientific analysis and broad discussion of these problems in the Party and in society as a whole. This is what makes it possible to move on to the next stage of restructuring.

The past year convincingly showed that the processes taking place in the Soviet Union are of immense significance not only for our country and people, but also for the destinies of socialism, for the entire world situation. We keenly felt that during this past year.

This also determines the measure of our responsibility. What we are doing inside the country, combined with our foreign-policy initiatives, has enabled us to feel for the first time that it is possible to pose real tasks of changing the world situation for the better.

Let us recall: not long ago, on January 15, 1986, we put forward the concept of a nuclear-free, safe world. The initial reaction in the West (especially among politicians and political scientists) was that such an idea was utopian. From the very outset, however, we conceived and prepared the document in such a way that it could not be taken for another clamorous slogan, one perhaps having a greater

tint of pacifism, but still remote from realistic policy. No, it clearly defined objectives, gave specific approaches to handling tasks and took account of balanced interests. We were confident that this document would work. Nevertheless, at first many believed that it only set out a remote goal with no present-day significance.

Now we are seeing how ideas which we have advanced and described as being part of a new political thinking are coming to be accepted—with difficulties and struggle, overcoming existing stereotypes and old approaches, but nonetheless being accepted. You all maintain extensive contacts with various representatives of world public opinion. I think you can confirm that I am not exaggerating. The situation and the feeling in the world are changing for the better. The past year showed beyond a doubt that the world has accumulated much weariness, and many problems that complicate human life. The arms race and military confrontation divert immense resources, human minds and human forces away from the solution of vitally important universal tasks.

That is why our concept, followed by specific initiatives, found itself on fertile ground. The first sprouts have already emerged. I think we can describe the concrete result in the following way: a real process of improving the international situation has begun. No turning point has yet been reached, but a start was made by the signing of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate- and Shorter-Range Missiles. Politically speaking, taking a wide view of the past year, we assess it as one of major events and changes in world development.

The most important thing, in terms of making a political assessment of the course of perestroika, is that people are beginning to play a major role in its crucial areas. They are coming to the fore, taking advantage of the democratization and openness in the work of Party and state bodies and public organizations. Consider how profoundly the working class has been raising issues connected with the life of society and with perestroika, how realistic it has been in advancing demands stemming from the new situation.

On December 31 the Politburo spent several hours discussing the most significant events of the past year. One of our conclusions was that in this last year only some individuals or small groups of people were against perestroika. On the whole, workers, farmers and intellectuals took part in very intense debates and sharp discussions on

various issues of life in the industries and work collectives with a sense of immense responsibility for the cause of perestroika, for the country and socialism.

This, comrades, is a very important phenomenon. It's good that we no longer become frightened or panic whenever people start to think by themselves and make use of the potential of socialist democracy intrinsic in our system. The Party and the cadres are accumulating experience. It is a difficult process: it still happens that we often try to scare one another. We are frequently criticized both from the right and from the left. In the latter case, they say that restructuring has stopped, and call for more resolute measures, for personnel reshuffles and so forth. This was manifested, specifically, at the October Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee.

What did the discussion show? Now that we have made a serious start on perestroika, its implementation, the "ultra-perestroika" rhetoric has proved useless. Advocates of the "revolutionary" slogans have neither the composure, nor the readiness to assume the responsibility, the onus of persistent and prolonged work in order to move our society to new frontiers.

We shall not conceal the fact that the Party's rebuff to this sloganeering was viewed by some intellectuals, especially young people, as a blow to perestroika. This is the greatest delusion, and the people understood that correctly, without yielding to the demagogic rhetoric.

Now about the criticism of perestroika from the right. There are claims that the "foundations of socialism" are being undermined. A legitimate question arises: what is undermining them? People's mobilization, their tackling the affairs of the country, where they are the masters, more confidently? On the contrary, far from weakening, socialism is gaining strength and, through the people's political and social activity, is more fully realizing its potential.

A blow is being dealt to command-and-administrative methods and to those who carry them out, to their interests. To those who fail to understand the times and realize that we cannot go forward without a democratization of our life. But that's exactly what we were thinking of when we embarked on restructuring. That is why we must firmly keep to the chosen path. In this sense, 1987 was a major learning experience for socialist democracy.

These were difficult lessons, I would say, but they have been well learned. We are no longer what we were in April

1985, or even at the end of 1986. We have acquired much. Some might say we have also lost something. We haven't yet lost anything of importance, nor do, I think, we will if we adhere to a principled line.

What remain as the most difficult tasks, what are the pitfalls of restructuring? I would say it would be unrealistic to claim that we have completely done away with all the factors that slow things down, that we have moved onto the tracks of broad socialist democracy and those of the new economic mechanism. We are just starting the perestroika process, our society is just leaving the period of stagnation. The task of doing away with the factors that have slowed us down and hinder the process of restructuring remains today's top priority.

A major accomplishment of the first stage of perestroika is the establishment of a new ideological and moral atmosphere, characterized by broad openness, criticism and self-criticism, by a deepening process of democratization and a growth of the working people's responsibility for the state of affairs in the country. All that needs to be consolidated and developed. The main political result is the people's growing support for the Party's policy of perestroika. Society is coming together around the ideas of perestroika. And that is not merely taking place at meetings or through slogans, but in actual work, in essence.

In general, we chose a correct course at the January Plenary Meeting of the Party Central Committee, the course towards developing socialist democracy. Through democratization, through people's involvement in all processes of society, it is possible to carry out the restructuring, to make it irreversible. I would add at this point that democratization and openness are not merely means to implement perestroika. They are the exercise of the essence of our socialist system, a system of the working people and for the working people. They are not part of a short-lived campaign, but form the essence of socialism; they are what distinguishes socialism from bourgeois democracy which creates, through artful designs, only a semblance of freedom and openness, while moving the people away from real political power, giving them, as Lenin put it, only the opportunity to decide during election campaigns who will be duping them for the next term.

We want to involve people in all processes of management through socialist democracy. And any time we are

pulled towards bourgeois liberalism and its "values", it is a backward movement.

We have made our choice, and we will follow the course begun in 1917. We are seriously tackling the task of tapping our system's full potential, the full potential of socialist democracy. This is Lenin's idea: the proletariat prepares itself for socialism through democracy and after the revolution can govern society only through a broadening of democracy. Let us recall once again the January Plenary Meeting with gratitude: it brought home to us the understanding that a broad democratization of our society was imperative. This means that it was not in vain that we worked jointly to prepare it. Everything contained in its decisions and documents represents also the Party's collective experience and the materialization of the thoughts and proposals put forward by the scientific and artistic communities, by all sections of society.

The following is another important lesson of the past year that must be learned. We hold to Lenin's concept of a political party. According to Lenin, it is a party of a new type performing the role of society's political vanguard. The entire history of the country, with everything it gained and lost, has shown that this is true. Today, we have come to realize with ever greater clarity that no transformations are possible without a political vanguard capable of rallying the best forces of the country ideologically and organizationally, of comprehending the processes taking place in society and applying the results of this scientific analysis. That is to say, they are not possible without the Communist Party.

But the Party must not lag behind the processes taking place in society. Over the past year we have learned this in many ways. Wherever we fell behind, numerous phenomena appeared that would later evoke concern in society. We are learning lessons from this and drawing conclusions. And not only at the level of political leadership and government, but also in republics, regions and work collectives. This is very important, though we cannot say yet that all Party organizations act in this way.

What else can be said about the lessons of perestroika? We, perhaps, have not fully realized how widespread various negative phenomena—parasitic attitudes, levelling of pay, report padding, parochialism, departmentalism, illegal actions—became in the years of stagnation. We are waging and shall wage resolutely and consistently the struggle for

improvement, for cutting short criminal activity, and ridding society of persons with deformed morality. But we underestimated the scope of other negative phenomena that gripped our society.

Take the levelling of pay, or parasitic attitudes. Things have gone so far that requests are sent to the centre—the Central Committee and Government—wherever anything necessary for living—building materials, coal or other things—is lacking. And in a country with a population of nearly 300 million and a large managerial apparatus in the localities, decisions on many, even the simplest matters, have to be taken here, in Moscow. Such are the fruits of stagnation, of unjustified centralization, that we reap now.

There is another aspect. Our notion of social justice has been deformed in a certain measure. This was manifested also in the writings in the press. If views that have gained support in parts of our press were to be realized, there would be a need to iron out our whole society, and reduce everyone to the same level: a talented person and a mediocrity, a diligent worker and a shirker, an honourable man and a thief. Deplorably, a widely current attitude is that one can do a tenth, a hundredth part of the work of others, can do nothing at all and at the same time enjoy all the benefits in the same degree as people who make by their work a large contribution to the country's development.

Our satirists aptly reflected this attitude: "I want to live in a good flat, I wish there were no queues, that there was no crush, that I could emerge from a bus ride with all my buttons intact, I want to have all my wishes fulfilled. The only thing that I do not want is to do something for this."

We are right in criticizing our cadres, our leading bodies. This criticism should be continued and its acuteness should not be lowered. But many problems have accumulated also in work collectives. Our entire society should be made to realize our socialist values more profoundly.

If report padding, levelling of pay, consumerism and parasitic attitudes persist, there will be no progress in perestroika, either in industry or in other areas.

We must live and act proceeding from the socialist principle: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work". There is a high degree of social protection in our country. This is what distinguishes social-

ism. We have free education, free medical services, the right to work, the guarantee of a job, generally available housing (although that remains an acute problem). Socialism protects everyone, but what kind of contribution does society receive from everyone? Much thought should be given to this. The press reported recently that in some collective farms, milkmaids were earning 600 roubles per month, while getting yearly only 2,000 kilograms of milk per cow. When it was attempted to introduce the pay according to work, they assessed this as a blow at their interests. But the wages they were already receiving were not earned. They were possible only through state subsidies, paid at the expense of other members of society.

There are examples of a different nature.

Capable and diligent people working under family contracts, collective and team contracts, for instance Siberians in intensive work collectives, produce 8-10 times more per person than in most enterprises in the country. Their earnings, naturally, grow, too. And this immediately attracts attention. Various commissions arrive to investigate. What can they do with such an amount of money, it is asked. But is this the way to pose the question? They have earned all this. Moreover, while the end result of their work increases many times over, the wages grow only by 50-100 percent. So there is a gain for society. If only things went like this everywhere...

Meanwhile some people are concerned lest this should lead to the development of private-owner psychology.

Are such fears justifiable? A person works on socially-owned land, under agreement with the board of a collective farm or the directorate of a state farm, uses material resources allocated to him. Everything is done with a high sense of responsibility, with talent. So how can he be regarded as a potential private owner? What socialist justice can there be in this or in the previous case?

We should also ponder on the reason why a person who worked honestly to earn his money is at times unable either to build the kind of house he wants or to buy a cooperative flat or to spend his earnings in some other way. The principle of socialism is violated in this case, too. A diligent worker and his family must be aware that money earned honestly brings higher living standards.

Perestroika does not bear only on interests in the material sphere. It also comprises the spiritual, cultural sphere. We are coming to understand our road in the past,

present and future. This is also not a painless process. There are debates about our past. One or other stages of it are being critically analysed.

And this deepens our realization of what has been achieved by our people since the Great October Revolution. At the same time this enables us to assess the difficult periods of our history correctly, in the light of the truth. We must learn to live in an atmosphere of glasnost, of the constant critical analysis of what has been achieved, and what errors have been made.

Openness and criticism are a way for the masses, for all of society, to control every process. They are also the way to sum up the experience we have accumulated, to sense the main tendencies in society, and warn of errors. This is a normal state of affairs, and no one should panic when critical remarks are made.

Let us have a dignified attitude to criticism, let us respect each other. And applying labels is absolutely inappropriate. At present, it is felt that what is written in articles and in magazines is at times determined by group preferences. Meanwhile attention should be focussed on concern for our common undertakings and on concern for people.

True, everybody is now saying they care about the country and about the people's artistic and cultural education. And some use this as a cover for attempts to gratify personal ambitions. This should be avoided. Let us not deny anyone the right to state his viewpoint, even if he held outdated views at some stage in the past. If he is consciously and honestly overcoming them now and joining the ranks of active participants in perestroika, why reject him and deny him the opportunity to contribute to the common cause as best he can?

One should be above personal emotions and attitudes and should give priority to the interests of perestroika. And what words are used sometimes to brand an opponent!

Words can have a great effect, but they should not be used to the detriment of being principled. Those who want to push us onto a different road, to add a different fuel to the fire of perestroika should realize that this cannot be done. The Central Committee will firmly adhere to Leninist positions and do everything necessary to expand the potential of socialist democracy, to deepen the process of perestroika on the basis of socialist values.

No one is above accountability in our country. We have

just put an end to the state of affairs where certain persons in our Party, certain areas have been beyond control, beyond criticism for years. And we shall not return to this state of things now. This applies to the mass media. The Soviet press is not a private shop. Let us recall again Lenin's premise that literature is part of the common cause of the Party. This is a fundamental provision and we continue to be guided by it. We shall remain true to Lenin's ideas. Serving society and the people has always been characteristic of our intelligentsia and our literature.

Editors should have a sense of responsibility. I do not want to give names. We are talking in a comradely way. But it should be remembered that a magazine, a publishing house, a newspaper are not someone's private concern but a concern of the entire Party, of the whole people. And we all are in the service of the people.

Our people are for perestroika. So let us follow our line on perestroika, on the development of socialist democracy together with the people. Let us assert our values together and wage the struggle for the invigoration of society.

When I speak about this, I am stressing time and again: we are for openness without reservations, without limitations. But for openness in the interests of socialism. We answer firmly to the question whether openness, criticism and democracy have limits: if openness, criticism and democracy are in the interests of socialism, in the interests of the people, then they have no limits.

This is the criterion. On this road we do not need anyone else's standards: neither in politics, nor in the spiritual sphere, nor in the economy.

No one will go so far in the development of democracy as we will because this is the essence of the socialist system. We are extending socialist democratism into all spheres, including the economy. Nowhere in the West do they elect directors and foremen, nowhere in the West do work collectives endorse plans. And this is what constitutes our socialist democracy.

We will push forward the process of democratization in the Party as well. You can probably see how thoroughly we are conducting the campaign of reports by Party committees. Things are changing for the better, and very seriously, although here as well there is a lot of inertia and passivity. But ordinary communists, comrades, are not to be blamed. We know full well the way in which many elected bodies of the Party acted. We have done little so far to make

elected bodies play the role which we have conceived and formulated in the CPSU Rules. Everything is still to be accomplished. But if such processes do not take place in the Party, then they will never happen in society.

We will seek new approaches to make better use of the potential of the Soviets. What is the use of talk, comrades, if in many cases Party bodies took over many of their functions? And what was the result? In this respect the Party itself permitted a lag to develop and overlooked many questions because it was overloaded with functions which are not its own.

Now in the new conditions of economic reform and democratization, the Party can really fulfill the functions of a political vanguard. Questions of theory, ideological support, cadre and national policy and international relations offer wide scope for Party activity.

We are thoroughly preparing for the 19th All-Union Party Conference. We are drafting the concept of holding it. We can see already now that the questions of democratization in Soviet society will be key, central issues. We will cover everything here, including the electoral system, reform of the legal system, improving control bodies in the country, and so on.

The mass media must have their say here. How is the drive for perestroika proceeding, what lessons are to be learned from it, what conclusions can be drawn and what adjustments made to the policy of the Party? I am convinced that there will be no shortage of serious proposals.

Now, turning to the questions of economic reform and the change to cost-accounting. I want to draw your attention, comrades, first of all, to the complexity and importance of the nascent processes. We are making our first steps in implementing radical reform in conditions of a five-year plan drafted before the reform. And we are trying to act in such a way as not to wreck the five-year plan. Various enterprises found themselves in different economic and social conditions at the start. The picture is a varied one. Conditions at the start were different. Some have ended modernization, have new funds and are ready and can work successfully while others are only beginning a most profound modernization, which demands forces and time. All this has to be done simultaneously with introducing cost-accounting and self-financing. One can understand that all this is far from simple.

The press, however, sometimes takes an easy approach

to covering the activities of the collectives of enterprises in conditions of ongoing reform. One has to bear in mind that we were fully aware that the old forms and the new methods of cost-accounting would operate simultaneously for a certain period.

Such is the transitional period with all the multitude of approaches. We have to outgrow it and draw the lessons. We already know how people are changing even on approaches to cost-accounting. There are also many others who were lightminded. Now they will start to experience difficulties as was the case with the state-run quality control system. Nevertheless, the process has got under way and people are being retrained and getting involved in management. The reform already covers enterprises producing nearly 60 percent of output. This is tens of millions of working people.

We want the reform to gain momentum so that we can acquire experience and knowledge and be prepared and fully armed by the next five-year plan. Therefore, the task can be formulated as follows: to search and to subject to convincing criticism, both in science and in life, all that runs counter to the reform. People support us and understand that we have to act exactly in this way, to master new methods.

What are we wary about and what should we pay more attention to? To ease the difficulties involved in a switchover to cost-accounting and self-financing, we have created some reserves to keep afloat any enterprise which finds itself in a difficult situation at first and needs time to organize its work along new lines. It will receive credits and aid to pay them back. We will see to it, of course, that the money is not wasted. All branch trade unions closely examined and supported the documents on reform. Hundreds of work collectives were involved in discussion. The reform documents and its principles deserve full trust and respect.

It is inadmissible when one or another article does not convey the painful nature of what is taking place. At times the media easily and even lightmindedly pass a verdict on the fate of an enterprise or a person. This is hardly the way to do it.

Let us put it straight: it took two years only to formulate the economic policy of the restructuring. To translate into life what we have conceived, a great amount of organizational work—patient, everyday and far from simple—will be needed. There are sure to be deviations.

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Today openness must help introduce democratic attitudes and performance-linked methods of management. It is especially important to search for and support everything that is new—new experience and new achievements. Great competence is needed. Involve scientists on a wider scale and not only those with glib tongues. What is important is competence, solidity and everything that helps solve the problems of real life. We are facing a very demanding stage. The next two or three years will decide where the perestroika drive will go. Two or three years! Therefore, one has to be especially attentive to the processes which are under way in society.

It is difficult to suppose that everything can be foreseen. One needs to draw lessons from the past and work to change the situation for the better, so that aspiring and enterprising people who are ready to take risks in the name of perestroika can search for new approaches without fear and can impart acceleration to both thought and practical movement.

The press should find such people and back them, be on the side of those who push perestroika forward and lead our society along the road of rejuvenation. Here our position must be clear-cut.

We are conducting the policy of perestroika so that people can breathe freely in our society, so that human dignity can be respected and living conditions improved, so that the entire country can embark on the road of renewal.

The Party is very interested, comrades, in ensuring that we all feel confident and work to full effect. Our society is very much interested in that. Your stand, your understanding, being transformed through the mass media, through contact with the people, constitute a mighty support for our policy. That is why we are interested even more than at the initial stage in your constructive effort. This includes openness and sharp criticism. What is particularly important is that our press should actively defend people struggling for perestroika.

Leaders of the Party and the Government visited the other day an exhibition of machines. We were shown machine-tools manufactured at the factory headed by A. I. Chabanov, the same man whom the Party Central Committee and our press once defended. I, too, had to raise that issue, as you remember. The man was saved. His

machine-tools sell like hot cakes now, there are waiting lists to buy them. What happened? He made a non-standard move, he disrupted old plans, discarded ancient instructions. Envious people turned up and launched intrigues, finding so many sins—he failed here and there. And they would have ruined him, probably, had it not been for our intervention. It is necessary, comrades, to fight till the end for every person who is actively working for perestroika, who is sometimes held back for showing initiative, for unusual approaches—for every person and, it goes without saying, for whole work collectives.

Izvestia correspondents recently described a collective farm where a third of its members were unable to have a general meeting convened to discuss vitally important issues of the collective farm's development.

The district Party committee joined in, so did the executive committee—all those who were responsible for the farm's performance and even those who were not—to subdue people's initiative, to prevent them from exercising their right. The newspaper was correct in interceding for the collective farmers. Soon a meeting was held, those people's proposals were backed. They were right.

What's of interest here? The initiators of the conflict in that collective farm strongly criticized the management, sharply raised issues, but none of them resigned. They worked well. Many of them are front-rank farmers. They should have been backed. Their spirit should have been raised. We ought to cultivate a democratic atmosphere, not to stop. That does not mean we can loosen responsibility, however.

I sometimes think: what complex developments are taking place across the vast expanses of our country, involving nearly 300 million people. What a great time. If we stopped the emerging processes, got frightened by them, this would have the most serious consequences, for we will not be able to mobilize our people for an undertaking of this scope one more time. But there are still some people who are only watching what is taking place. Deep in their heart, they support perestroika, but they have not as yet become involved in it by their deeds, actions, politically.

We feel that we all are in for a time requiring responsibility. And this responsibility should be assumed, comrades. The Party will assume it, and so should you. I'm sure

that this will be so. Each should be guided in that not by petty passions, but by the fate of the people. This does not blunt the sharpness of struggle, does not narrow openness, democracy. This road must be followed. The process of renewal, democratization and the further unfolding of the humanistic essence of socialism must be deepened and made an irreversible, permanent feature of our society.

A discussion followed.

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV'S CONCLUDING SPEECH

Let us wind up our meeting. When I was preparing for it I asked for the 1985-1987 statistics. What has happened in our economy and the social sphere over these years and what is happening now? The data here speak for themselves. We were always concerned about the growth of the productivity of labour, for example. But in the past three years the rates of growth of the productivity of labour have exceeded the average annual indices for the eleventh five-year period in industry by 30 percent, in construction by 60 percent, in agriculture by 180 percent, in railway transportation by 260 percent. While the growth of the productivity of labour accounted for 86 percent of the growth of the national income between 1981 and 1984 and for 95 percent in 1985-1986, in 1987 it accounted for 100 percent. In industry, this was achieved even though the workforce was reduced.

It is very important that the situation has improved with the rates of growth of remuneration and the productivity of labour. This was always our biggest problem. Look at the situation in 1981-1984, the most alarming years. The growth of wages of workers engaged in material production was 17 percent higher than the growth of the productivity of labour. In other words, money was paid out, but there were no returns on it.

Now wage increases are tied to growth of the productivity of labour. The economic mechanism has started working, even as though we are only just beginning the reform, comrades. This is the first point.

Second. No less important is the fact that qualitative changes are taking place in the field of scientific and technical progress. The main emphasis here is laid on basic engineering—machine-tool building, electrical engineer-

ing, instrument-making and other industries which are supposed to ensure the solution of scientific and technical problems, the development of the food industry, light industry and the social sphere.

The switching to new products in these industries went on 2.9 times faster in 1987 than in 1985. I must admit that we ourselves were somewhat surprised during a recent visit to an engineering exhibition. A marked change has taken place, even though there are still decisions for us to make and we are only in our second year of working on the program to modernize our engineering industry.

What did that exhibition show? Products were comparable with those meeting world standards and even excelled them. Moreover, while 15 to 20 percent were prototypes which had just been tested, the rest were already in batch production. Once our people—scientists, technicians and workers—started to work, things began to run smoothly.

You know that in the past our engineering was treated in such a way that it found itself simply neglected. The oil boom allowed us to earn foreign currency, and so we thoughtlessly bought foreign equipment to solve production tasks, and purchased spare parts abroad. Meanwhile, we failed to develop our own engineering and science properly. This "import plague", as it was aptly named by Academician Anatoli Alexandrov, actually stifled the process of scientific and technical development.

All this was happening in our huge country which cannot afford to be dependent for technology on anyone at all. We found ourselves literally backed into a corner. A complex turnaround had to be made. And only now have we begun to move forward: computer technology has started making progress, competing collectives of scientists have come close to developing computers capable of handling a billion operations per second. In the next few years they are to be followed by machines with a speed of 10 billion operations per second, and computers with speeds of 30, 50 and even over a 100 billion operations per second will not be long in coming. And the tasks continue growing. Do you realize what potential our society has? The acceleration has begun.

This was reflected by that exhibition which has already been visited by half a million people. That says something about it.

Progressive transformations in agriculture have been taking place since around 1983. This is a steady trend. Productivity in livestock breeding has been growing throughout these years, and the output of all kinds of products is growing now. We inherited a complex legacy from the years of stagnation. Therefore, we are obliged to develop the restructuring on the basis of scientific and technological progress, increased personal interest, and the democratization of social and economic processes. Such is our path.

There is no place for us to retreat to. We have looked at how the national income for various branches of the national economy is growing. The volume of the national income will be less than we were expecting due to foreign trade, the situation with petroleum being unfavourable, and also due to the drop in revenue from vodka sales. But you know that long-term social and economic policy should not be based on circumstantial considerations, the way we have been doing until recently. Therefore, the turns we are making now are very much needed and well substantiated. We intend to open every door to the agrarian sector. We have for all practical purposes already adopted decisions removing all the obstacles to its development. The attitude of managers is the hitch now. The people are ready for initiative, for responsibility, for taking the risks involved in agriculture, for they believe in their own resources and have already proved this all over the place.

We are now giving collective and state farms broad opportunities from the viewpoint of independence, economic conditions and technology. I think we shall achieve stability in the agrarian sector and, in particular, in crop-growing, of course.

And take a look at the interesting processes now taking place in other areas. We have done a lot to enhance the social orientation of our entire national economy. What has this yielded? This turn is still in progress, but the rate of growth of capital investments for these purposes in 1987, for the creation of the material basis of the social sphere, was three times greater than in the national economy as a whole. And what do we have as a result? Take the years 1985-1987. In these three years the average annual commissioning of housing rose by 9 percent, of schools by 28 percent, of vocational technical schools by 4 percent, of pre-school institutions by 10 percent, of hospitals

by 9 percent, of polyclinics by 24 percent, and of clubs by 46 percent. The housing conditions of 32 million people were improved over these years. Interesting figures, indeed.

The consumption of material goods and services by the population has increased. The absolute average annual growth of consumption in 1985-1987 amounted to 18 billion roubles as against eleven billion roubles in the previous three years. Thus, the absolute increase made up seven billion roubles. I dwell on these facts because everything we have undertaken is for the sake of the people and it is the people that have the final say. And the people have responded and supported perestroika with their labour. This is the main thing, for this is precisely what determines our huge potentialities in all areas. Does any other country have such potentialities?

One may ask: how can it be that statistics report the growth of consumption, while we still have a shortage of almost everything? We feel this acutely. Why? The reason for this is that monetary incomes grew on one curve while trade turnover grew on another. Consumption increased but the solvent demand grew even faster. As a result, the gap between demand and supply increased. This is why we are short of everything.

It was mentioned here that new things in economic activities at times give rise to doubts, even suspicions. When work is being done to meet the needs of people, to improve the living standards of people, this should be welcomed. But we must not and will not tolerate any signs of self-seeking. We have economic, social and political mechanisms to protect us against this.

I would also like to make another point. We must promote people's interest in their work. This is what is done all over the world, and it should be done in our country too. Consider the fact that 13,000 various cooperatives are already operating in the country, that more than 300,000 people are engaged in individual labour activity. This is not very much for a country like ours, but it's a step in the right direction.

What are we achieving with our policy aimed at making society, the economy and social climate healthier, including the campaign against drunkenness and alcoholism? Here are some demographic data which are of interest to all of us.

The annual number of deaths in 1986 and 1987 was an average of 200,000 less than in 1984, and the mortality rate of able-bodied men as a result of accidents decreased by 37 percent. Drunkenness leads to safety violations, accidents, injuries. People in their prime were dying. It was not easy to change that trend, but it has been changed.

The birth rate has risen in the past two years. 5.6 million babies were born annually over this period, while the respective figure in 1980 was 4.9 million. It is important that we strengthen the family. People see prospects for the future now and their confidence has grown. First and foremost, we have become morally healthier. We have been working hard to improve public health care. The average life expectancy of the entire population increased by nearly two years and life expectancy for men rose by 2.6 years.

This all is certainly not accidental. I would say this is further proof that the entire society is overcoming stagnation. But these positive tendencies have just started manifesting themselves.

I think the positive processes will continue expanding now that we are bringing economic factors into play, promoting openness and democracy, now that social initiative is being stimulated in every way. Of course, we will still run into problems, and our problems will not be easy, but we shall grow stronger and will forge ahead ever more confidently. The Politburo and the Government are absolutely certain that we shall continue making progress. Therefore, as we enter a most complex stage of perestroika, during which we will be confronted by many new problems, we will not panic and will not get nervous. Perhaps we will even have to retreat a bit in certain places if it turns out that we made an error somewhere. The undertakings we have embarked on are not simple, and we are not afraid of mistakes. We will firmly advance along the charted road.

Of course, we need to make fewer mistakes. It is believed that he who does nothing makes the fewest mistakes. But doing nothing is precisely the gravest of mistakes.

I wish to thank you sincerely for responding to the invitation to share your views on perestroika. I see that we are in full accord, that we fully realize the responsibility and historic significance of the stage we are now at. This is extremely important in itself, I would say. This realization should be transformed into deeds, into actions. This is the first point.

Secondly. Everybody understands that we are in for a lot of work. It would be very good if we brought that understanding home to our people. We managed to do a lot in this area in the past year. Perestroika gave rise to a kind of revolution of expectations. But initially those expectations were as follows: a good man will come along, everything will start going smoothly, and boons will fall down as manna from heaven. The people now realize that we will have to traverse a rocky path before we'll achieve tangible positive results for society, for each family and each individual—both in the moral and material sense.

Everything we have planned should be carried out on the basis of perestroika and new approaches, on the basis of preserving and upholding the atmosphere that has been established in the country. This understanding should be further supported and fostered. It is necessary to boost the morale of the people, comrades.

To put it bluntly, people need the truth. When they are told the truth, they do everything in a selfless way, despite all hardships. When lies wrapped up in rose-coloured paper are palmed off upon them, apathy is generated. People are very sensitive to kind treatment, they see in untruths disrespect for themselves. Our nation is highly educated and knowledgeable now, probably one of the most educated and knowledgeable nations in the world. People are highly sensitive not only to honest earnings, but also to a good atmosphere, to a respectful attitude towards them, to honour and fame for their conscientious work.

Recall our history—how ready our people were to make self-sacrifices. This must not be forgotten. But this must not be abused either. By the way, about our history. Many issues were raised here. I'll touch upon just a few of them. The principled stance on issues of our history was formulated in Party documents connected to the 70th anniversary of the Great October Revolution. We should expand our understanding of historical processes and review those processes on the basis of those documents. But there should be no excess here. I ought to tell you that the Central Committee's commission, set up in accordance with the decisions of the October 1987 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee to consider many complex issues of our history, is busy working. Some of the first results of its work will probably be published before the 19th Party Conference.

At one of its recent meetings the Politburo discussed the issue of what *Essays on CPSU History* should be like. Great interest is being shown in this. It is necessary that the "Essays" be truthful. For a truthful word about our history, comrades, is our common heritage, our strength. It is, therefore, a tremendous undertaking to write a good, truthful book which could become a textbook of the CPSU history. We think that this task can probably not be resolved now without the Central Committee's assistance. It is necessary to set into motion all of our potential so as to cope with the task to the best of our ability. Of course, it is up to scientists, who have the necessary scientific background, to do the bulk of work. It is necessary to get together a good group of authors that would include creative, principled and competent people. Yes, there must be a group of authors, but there should probably also be a commission of the CPSU Central Committee.

The work ahead of us is big and important. This is our history with everything that it has. We studied, grasping new values in the economy and culture, and moved forward along the path of progress. We studied, made miscalculations and errors, drawing lessons even from difficult, tragic periods of our history. We will not tolerate any part of history being smoothed over. History has already been made. It must only be truthfully depicted. For this we need honesty and responsibility and scientific approach. We appreciate everything that is great about our history, but we cannot forgive those who perpetrated lawlessness, not to mention crimes.

I see no reason for us to cut ourselves off from any of our roots. There is only one truth. We cannot divide it into periods. Our history happened, and it should be known and analysed in a real way.

History is the richest science. The more we address ourselves to it, the more we understand what we must do today and tomorrow.

We live on this earth but once. The attitude to man, to his life and to all his work must be the most respectful and honest, especially as regards those who bore on their shoulders the brunt of struggle at the sharp turns of our history. We must not allow an individual, or an entire generation for that matter, be treated with injustice and disrespect. That would be a crime. And if our system has withstood all the trials that befell the Soviet people,

including those that hit us all like bursts of submachine-gun fire from the past—this means it is a durable system backed by the population, a system that we should try to portray truthfully in all stages of its emergence and development.

A dialectical approach, rather than wavering back and forth from black to white, is required. Nothing is black or white in life—everything is mixed together, in struggle and in interrelationship. I would like very much to see us totally understand that—one half-truth should not be replaced with another half-truth. All that is our history, with all its achievements, losses and tragedies.

We take pride in our history, each day of it, because even when people, the glory of the Motherland, unjustly perished, even during those hard times factory workers, farmers and intellectuals worked, pushed ahead and raised the country to new heights of progress. That's why when we talk of history, we don't want to exalt or overthrow individuals, but give the people, the decisive force in history, their due.

The dialectics is not easy here, comrades. But this is the only way we can move forward, while honestly analysing history and drawing conclusions for today. At the beginning of our meeting I touched upon that subject only briefly. You raised this issue, so I found it necessary to speak out once again on the topic of our history.

Returning to the topical tasks of perestroika, I want to stress once again that the main thing now is to boost the morale of the people, to back their struggle for restructuring. It is necessary to show perestroika in the real struggle of social forces. People want changes, they want to take part in the restructuring drive, but in many cases they simply don't know how to do that. They don't know how—that's horrible, comrades. It is necessary to help people master new approaches. It is also necessary to address oneself to past experience, to draw from it everything that could help us in our cause. We should act, so to say, using the method of dialectical negation: to absorb everything that is best, that has worked and has served us at all stages. Everything obsolete and outdated must be discarded and replaced with new things. Such is our formula.

The CPSU leadership pins great hopes on those who are present here in the handling of the new, major tasks of the next stage of restructuring. Let us move forward con-

fidently and firmly. And you should have no doubts: we shall not give up our stands in the policy of restructuring. We are committed to this policy till the end. The choice has been made, we shall not swerve from it. But it is necessary, comrades, to get the entire society, the entire country, involved.

I wish you success!

DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE MEETING'S PARTICIPANTS

The Editor-in-Chief of *Moskva* magazine, **Mikhail Alexeyev**, was the first to take the floor. He described the signing of the Soviet-American treaty on the elimination of intermediate- and shorter-range missiles as one of the highlights of the end of the past year. It had been a historic step of major psychological significance. Mankind had already approached the brink of the nuclear abyss and after shuddering, as it were, drew back to common sense. For the inevitability of nuclear war is impossible to accept.

Alexeyev said the struggle for survival on earth had now assumed yet another, ecological, aspect. He was concerned that arable land, including in the Soviet Union, was shrinking like a piece of chagrin leather.

Describing his impressions of a trip to the Saratov region, he expressed misgivings whether the changeover to cost accounting would not make the poor farms even poorer, for they had very little cash with which to pay their workers. But previously a cooperative or state farmer did not feel that his enterprise was poor—he was accustomed to getting guaranteed pay under any circumstances.

The speaker considered the role of the press in covering the country's past. Mikhail Alexeyev observed that somehow people in the Soviet Union knew more about the history of Britain, France or Germany than about their own. It is impossible to bring up a conscious patriot by denying the people their historical roots. The speaker said that *Moskva* magazine intended to publish *A History of the Russian State* by Nikolai Karamzin in full.

You see what happens, the speaker remarked? We do know the history of the Soviet period, but what is to be done about the other thousand years? From whose hands did we receive this one-sixth of the Earth bearing the brief

name of "Rus"? What are we building our socialist homeland on?

Mikhail Gorbachev. By the way, we sometimes forget the very important meaning of that. Lenin said that "you can become a Communist only when you enrich your mind with a knowledge of all the treasures created by mankind". And since we're talking about all of mankind, then, needless to say, we should at least know that part of it which is our own.

Mikhail Alexeyev. Indeed, we should not deprive history of its right to take part in our contemporary affairs, in educating our people.

The Editor-in-Chief of *Ogonyok* magazine, **Vitali Korotich**, who spoke next, emphasized the need to consolidate the ranks of those working in the mass media in the struggle for the success of perestroika.

The restoration of confidence in the world should be linked with the restoration of good, humane relations inside our country, the speaker said. This is an extremely important process which is only beginning to gather momentum. It seems to me, he added, that it would be wrong to speak of an established climate of confidence. I think we can speak of an established weather of confidence. Many good things have been accomplished here. There have been mistakes, of course, but they were not aimed at a deliberate destruction of perestroika.

That is why, the speaker observed, the tone we sometimes encounter in conversations among ourselves is inadmissible. We should not replace a debate with a dressing-down. Yet sometimes we do permit ourselves, especially, in discussions on literary subjects, to use a terminology which suits only those fist-fighters who used to sew lead in their gloves. The speaker was worried about accusations which now sound like labels, as for instance "liberal terror", etc. People engaged in one and the same work cannot and should not use such formulations. The problems of our consolidation, of our unity have now assumed strategic importance. Regrettably, we cannot say yet that we have finally got rid of all those people who did so much harm to us in the past. And one should be outspoken and merciless toward those who, when it comes to removing an opponent, are not particular about the choice of means. The old method of applying political labels, attempts to speak for the people and on behalf of the people, for instance, which are sometimes made

nowadays without due reason, now by one writer, now by another, seem to be both harmful and dangerous.

One of the main troubles and one of the main problems of perestroika is our dividedness, which continues to be very serious. Evidently, our magazines would not print so many statements hostile to one another if editors simply worked out some form of regular meetings, discussions, of "letting off steam" in the course of human discourse. While working for a common cause, each of us has retreated to his own corner. The fact that we communicate so seldom with one another gives rise to unnecessary problems. If we communicated more often, perhaps many ambitions would not have been blown up like bombs on the pages of newspapers and magazines.

So the problems of consolidation, of the climate of confidence exist on the home front too. Many problems are rooted in ourselves. And much will depend on how we are racking, remaking and changing ourselves.

One more thing. The report about the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution opened very many doors and gates, set up very many exact reference marks. We understood the destinies of people, and the direction of our work. A commission was set up to study the most difficult biographies, the destinies of the makers of our country. Wholly realizing the importance and complexity of the commission's work, I, as one of the editors, should like the rehabilitation to be carried out more intensively wherever it is deserved. No matter how much material we might print in *Ogonyok* concerning past leaders, we do not seek to touch upon those factors which are within the terms of reference of the purely Party bodies. I am not going to go deeper into this problem. But I should like very much to mention it, considering its importance and the interest shown in it both in our mail and at meetings with readers sponsored by *Ogonyok* when we receive thousands, literally, thousands of letters and notes on these subjects. The idea is to make sure that the initiative taken by the Party, in such a lofty and upright manner, is developed with the same firmness and sense of principle.

The Editor-in-Chief of *Novy Mir* magazine, **Sergei Zalygin**, spoke about the usefulness of holding discussions on priority social and cultural issues. A striking case in point is the fate of the project to divert a part of the water of northern rivers. It was a test of our civic consciousness,

of the activity of the intelligentsia and all the strata of the population.

Mikhail Gorbachev. We adopted a decision on these issues a week ago. We issued instructions to develop a project based on conserving water as a strategic raw material and to put things in order in the use of water in the countryside, in industry, and in town—everywhere. This very important decision will and must be comprehensive.

Sergei Zalygin. The new water supply programme seems to contain paragraphs which fully cancel our own decision on changing the course of rivers.

Mikhail Gorbachev. The draft programme on the use of water makes no mention of a diversion of rivers.

Sergei Zalygin then touched upon the problem of Lake Baikal, expressing his concern over the future of this unique gem of nature. It is necessary to cross the t's and dot the i's in the endless discussions on Lake Baikal, they must have some effect after all. But he was not saying that there has been no progress on these matters—Lake Baikal, Lake Ladoga, and the diversion of rivers. It is an unprecedented thing, after all!

Mikhail Gorbachev. We are restoring the Caspian, the Azov Sea.

Sergei Zalygin. I made several statements about the Lower Ob twenty five years ago. And, you know, there was no one by my side, just two or three people. And now we have public opinion behind us.

Mikhail Gorbachev. Yes, in general the concept of hydropower stations involved flooding land. Ten to 12 million hectares of the best land went under water! But it was a basis for livestock farming. And now we are doing land improvement work to have the same land and fodder as before.

Sergei Zalygin. While we are on this subject, I'd like to point out that we are setting up a committee on environmental protection. It is vital to approach this matter with care and tact because the very same ministries functioning in those fields are now turning over their environmental protection agencies to the committee. Take, for instance, the water protection service, which has made such a mess of things. It is going to be incorporated in the committee. What can we expect of it?

Mikhail Gorbachev. When we were discussing this question, the problem was what kind of committee it was going to be, with or without its own facilities? Everybody

had his say, and your opinion was conveyed to us. The committee should not have anything of its own. It should be independent even if subject to control, and besides its own staff it should have a huge entourage of experts and be able to draw public figures, that is, everyone concerned with the conservation of nature, into this noble venture.

Sergei Zalygin. Senator Bradley visited our editorial office yesterday. He and I got into conversation, and he said to me, well, those departments are the same around the world, for indeed we have not yet learned to this day how to regulate the use of natural resources.

Sergei Zalygin also spoke about weaknesses in the carrying out of a decision of the CPSU Central Committee concerning the work of artistic unions. In the speaker's view, the unions themselves were above all to blame for that.

The Editor-in-Chief of *Znamya* magazine, **Grigori Baklanov**, observed that a period of radical change in the country was indeed of crucial importance. There is some weariness, he said—not from work, for that would be a joy, but from fruitless work, from the fact that people had not seen the results of their effort for years and decades. Clearly, the press is also partly to blame for that. Evidently, much has been said, but the main thing—that people should realize that this is our last chance, that there's no other way for us but to either fall back or remain a great country which the world would follow—has been being said only recently.

Mikhail Gorbachev. A halt would be disastrous for us. This should not be allowed to happen under any circumstances.

Grigori Baklanov. Many are anticipating such a disaster. But you see what happens? People are for perestroika, but so many are still simply waiting to see what will become of it. If so many people were sitting on the fence during the war, we would not have won it. We should all get moving. And here, I think, the press should make a bold and profound analysis of what is happening, of its economic and political aspects and its prospects. It should be such an analysis that the people would at last realize the whole importance of the historic task.

It was feared several years ago that if some facts were reported in the press, it would shake the foundations of our system. At present everybody speaks openly and nothing happens. The foundations have not been shaken, and it has

become easier to breathe, although there is still a lot of inertia. People read a story, discuss it, recognize that the problem has been raised correctly, and do nothing about it. Or they start doing things in such a way that everything gradually comes to a halt.

The speaker stressed the need to preserve historic and cultural monuments. Among other things, he raised the question of turning over Leo Tolstoy's estate in Yasnaya Polyana to the USSR Academy of Sciences and of the need to cultivate respect for the memory of the Soviet patriots fallen in the Great Patriotic War.

The next speaker, **Kirill Lavrov**, Chairman of the Board of the Union of Theatrical Workers of the USSR, described the first year of work of this new artistic organization, its active role in perestroika, the intellectual renewal of the life of the Soviet theatre. Not much has been done so far, the speaker said, but a quest for new ways and the process of overcoming mistakes are continuing. The ideological and artistic quality of works is becoming the main criterion in this activity. Interesting meetings of people in the arts are being held. Major efforts are being made to assist local theatrical organizations. And any pomposity, any bureaucratic habit in that activity are out of the question.

It seems to me, the speaker pointed out, that the gravest danger to our work now comes from too much talk. We need fewer words and more action. This concerns us and also local cultural bodies. Very often people there repeat from habit what has been said at the top about perestroika and then no one bothers to lift a finger. And the situation in many regional and city theatres remains marked by difficulties and neglect.

In conclusion, Kirill Lavrov spoke about creative contacts and cooperation between Soviet theatrical organizations and their foreign partners.

The Editor-in-Chief of the *Izvestia* newspaper, **Ivan Laptev**, proceeding from an analysis of the work done by the press over the past year and the readers' opinions, focussed on characteristic trends in public life. People are becoming more and more confident that the chosen course is correct. Life has shown that democracy and glasnost are the true levers of the restructuring, its instruments and stimuli. The striving for change, far from weakening, has become even stronger. However, there has also appeared some reluctance to speak about our problems.

The year 1988 should become, first of all, for the mass

media, a year of defending the ideas and practice of perestroika. It will be particularly difficult in view of the enormous work that has just begun to restructure the economy. What is necessary is not to make any fuss but to work calmly, seriously and sensibly.

Speaking about the importance of popularizing positive experiences, Laptev emphasized that what was required was not merely to describe new ventures or new machinery. It was vital to show how new relations, new forms of the organization of labour, that is, technological experience, are asserting themselves.

Mikhail Gorbachev. You have started well by showing in the newspapers without any embellishments how the new is born in a struggle, how these problems are solved.

Ivan Laptev. The problem of regulating legal relations in the economy and the observance of the Law on the State Enterprise are assuming paramount importance today.

What is vital is for the press to find ways of holding people's attention in this situation and to keep up the high morale of society today. However, we are facing enormous difficulties. The difficulty lies not in simply writing or not writing about something, but in not sustaining illusions, let alone sowing them, not indulging in cheap clamour, in chasing something tantalizing, so to speak. Readers' mail shows that questions of the economic restructuring, questions of the organization of production, wages and salaries, price formation, democratization, and the organization of elections in a new way—these important questions are of the greatest interest today.

Mikhail Gorbachev. When all that is shown through discussions, through a struggle. A newspaper or a magazine is a public concern. And if they have only one point of view present in them, if there is no exchange of views, what is going to come of it? So will it be a clan against a clan, a group against a group? It is necessary to rally around the people's destiny, around the people's joys and worries.

Laptev further touched upon the problems of raising the quality of journalistic work, journalistic skills. He underlined that these questions had now assumed a political character and, therefore, special importance. For one or other newspaper story may literally stir up millions of people. In this connection it is necessary seriously to get

down to studying the real influence of the mass media on readers, viewers, and listeners. It is necessary to put into action in all earnest such a powerful reserve of glasnost as the local media.

The speaker also called the attention of those present to the problems of perfecting legislation, of the legal status of the mass media, and of ensuring that they have a proper material base.

The Vice-President of the USSR Academy of Sciences, **Pyotr Fedoseyev**, said that the primary condition for and key element in the restructuring effort was the theoretical and political elaboration of the urgent problems in home and foreign policies carried out by the Party over the past few years. Approaches based on new thinking are of fundamental importance here, the speaker pointed out. This is a new, fresh look on our society, on the world, on history from the viewpoint of Marxism-Leninism. The documents issued on the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution are a vivid manifestation of the new thinking. This is a truly new look on every sphere of Soviet society, the socialist countries, the developing countries, the capitalist world, on the problems faced by the entire world. For there were certain dogmas which were a hindrance both in external and domestic policies. The fact that the April Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee, the 27th Congress and subsequent Party documents put an end to those dogmas is of enormous international and internal political importance.

For instance, there was a widespread dogma to the effect that peaceful coexistence was a form of the class struggle and that it helped promote the class struggle in the capitalist countries. And when we were speaking about peace and peaceful coexistence, we were not believed very much. What kind of peace, what kind of peaceful coexistence was it, people would say, if it helped the class struggle in our countries?

Of course, the absence of that provision in the documents of the 27th Congress of the CPSU and in the Party Programme, one might say, has untied our hands in foreign policy and put everything on the right track. Peaceful coexistence is a sphere of inter-state relations and it implies non-interference in internal affairs. And, indeed, we are for peace and cooperation among states. And as for questions of the class struggle, they are an internal affair of every country concerned.

Or take another dogma, the speaker said. It used to be said that under socialism the relations of production fully corresponded to the development of the productive forces. And we kept repeating this formula for a long time without stopping to think that, of course, they do correspond at some stage, and fully at that, but that later they come into contradiction with each other. But social scientists had neither the will nor the resolve to draw logical conclusions. It was only the April Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee and the 27th Party Congress that eliminated this dogma too.

Social scientists are working in every sphere being affected by perestroika: the economy, social relations, culture, and public consciousness. And I should like to emphasize, the speaker observed, that man, the problems of humanism, are at the centre of our attention. The correct understanding of these problems and their coverage in the mass media are of paramount importance.

We, scholars, are being justly criticized for our slowness and our lagging behind. This particularly applies to the elaboration of concrete approaches and strategies. We have quite a few general statements on economic reform and the expansion of democracy. But how one is to operate these main levers of perestroika has yet to be sufficiently explained. Nor have the complex strategic problems of economic reform been sufficiently elaborated. We realize all that.

Indeed, science, first of all, the social sciences, more than anything else, need to be dynamic. We have plenty of phenomena marked by stagnation and conservatism. People are restructuring themselves slowly, and some do not believe that they have to do any restructuring at all, for they have been working well as it is. That is why I should like to stress again in conclusion that we should be more dynamic.

The greatest difficulty we have encountered, said the Editor-in-Chief of the newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, **Valentin Chikin**, is a persistent demand from readers to talk less about the restructuring and print more data about its results. They want us to publish concrete results of the last two years, to highlight the best experience, etc. This is the most complex and difficult task arising before every editorial board. It comprises several problems.

First. We still do not have so many concrete experiences. It should be pointed out that people in various areas,

organizations and individuals, are now very restrained about having somebody else study their experience, generalize it, and give them good marks. This is a time of self-criticism as well as of many undertakings and no one is yet in a hurry to register this or that result as a victory to his credit. Yet the demand for these experiences, the demand for some practical results is enormous.

What is more, I think that we journalists do not yet have a very keen vision, we fail to see many things, we fail to discern and single them out. And hence arise superficial assessments and views.

Reports on perestroika are now being heard by numerous conferences and plenary meetings. We have published a substantial amount of material on this matter, but as yet we have not heard of that many places that are actively involved in the process. In general, these reports are very interesting: they show that there are many new forms of activity, and they raise acute issues. They were listened to very attentively. For instance, we have had recently this material from Yaroslavl...

Mikhail Gorbachev. Actually, that was a very good piece, and your publication was also most informative. In general, you have printed many interesting reports, especially those with dialogues and containing differences of opinions. They are most interesting and useful.

Valentin Chikin. There is one more thing I would like to touch upon: one of the most valuable aspects of our new experience is reporting on perestroika by presenting personal views of people. We published a series of feature stories on perestroika activists—about thirty or forty in all, but we don't think we're capable of coping with the task single-handed. We tried to interest some of our professional writers. Some of them willingly cooperate with our newspaper, such as Ivan Vasiliev and Vladimir Sitnikov. Unfortunately, we cannot assign any Moscow writers to the "front line" of the perestroika the way we could in the 40s.

Mikhail Gorbachev. You have used a word from the "command-administrative" vocabulary—"assign". Did you try to ask them? There must be someone in Moscow whom we can ask to go, I'm sure.

Valentin Chikin. I agree, it would be very beneficial. Yet, writers are now more concerned with publishing something they wrote some 15 or 20 years ago and couldn't publish then.

Now, when we are discussing present-day developments, it is essential to link them with our entire concept of socialism. "More socialism" is a recent but very apt formula, flexible, yet precise. More socialism means to accelerate our development. Any present development is rooted in our past. Team contracts, the cooperative movement, cost accounting and other phenomena stem from the essence of socialism, and we should not interrupt this continuity in the socialist movement. By aptly showing superficial and stagnant phenomena that hampered our progress, we should focus on the socialist principles so dear and vital to man, something that is an inalienable part of his life. A lack of ideological principles should be regarded as impermissible.

It is well known that our ideological opponents try to convince us that we should resolve our problems by re-establishing private owners, capitalists, rather than by promoting socialism.

The great historical optimism of the report on the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution produced an enormous impression on everyone, myself included. It laid solid foundations for us. We should concentrate on the present rather than probing deeper into history, the way we are doing now. I am sorry to say that press reports often fail to be done in this spirit. The mass media seem to fuss too much, especially about history. I'm referring to publications that create negative attitudes in people's minds. For instance, the Politburo's resolution to restore the names of Naberezhnye Chelny and Novye Cheryomushki was published only yesterday. It is an aptly worded, well-balanced document. We are aware that people want to think this over and discuss it. The newspaper *Izvestia* published a short but very good item on the matter, dealing with important political aspects of our life and doing this most tactfully and sensibly. But another newspaper printed an article on the matter in an entirely different spirit.

Voice from the audience. You mean the newspaper *Moskovskaya Pravda*.

Valentin Chikin. I do indeed. Some of the things written there sound blasphemous, if I may say so.

Mikhail Gorbachev. I'd call it sensationalism. Should our press stoop to this at all? It should write seriously about the most delicate issues, present or past, but it should write responsibly and scientifically, so as to describe even the

most sensitive issues appropriately. Mistakes, when they are made, should be corrected, even the gravest ones. Don't we have the courage to do that? We have undertaken a revolutionary cause aimed at doing away with stagnation on a nationwide scale. I think we should have the courage to discuss our problems and be unanimous in our decisions and actions.

I am all for the triumph of the principles of socialism, democracy, openness, criticism and honesty. We should act in the interests of the people, and not for the sake of cheap sensationalism.

We have courageously analysed our mistakes. Has there ever been such an honest assessment of facts since Lenin's times? I mean a comprehensive and thoroughly grounded analysis. I am sure that you know how many striking examples we could quote to illustrate our serious conclusions and ideas on any issue. I question whether facts should be used to trigger emotions. I don't think that's the direction we should go in. Our task is to build and update socialism, to develop our society. To do so we must absorb everything from the roots going deep into our own history, especially the history of socialism, by cutting out everything negative we have inherited from the 30s and 40s and, of course, from the recent period of stagnation.

We should move forward and look ahead, and our frank discussions are meant to leave an imprint in our souls. Therefore, we must not go back or retreat—our task is to move forward, always forward!

Valentin Falin, Novosti Press Agency Board Chairman, said:

Among other specific features of our times I would like to mention the growing cultural and intellectual aspirations of all peoples and the increasing role of this factor in the life of every nation and state.

All the mistakes we have made throughout our history should remain in the past. We have no right to repeat our old errors or commit new ones and then to have to correct them in, say, 10 or 15 years.

Figuratively speaking, we have exhausted the credit of confidence, or are very near to exhausting it. Today, we must write only the truth, the whole truth. If we are incapable of speaking the truth, we had better refrain from speaking at all for the time being, until later when we feel we can really tell it the way it should be told. Speaking about history, we have often recently indulged in breast-

beating. As far as history goes, we tend to be involved only in the history of the Soviet state and Russia. Yet it cannot be limited to us alone. Many things that happened in our past echoed, in fact, the developments resulting from our relations with other countries, projected from the outside onto our own reality.

Today, if we take a close look at the Western response to perestroika and the Washington summit, and at what is to follow this summit, we can't fail to realize that the Western quarters have begun to emphasize such aspects of our development that were not the most typical of the last year, or the year before last. There is no more admiration for our policy of reform, greater democracy or openness. Now it's quite the opposite.

Mikhail Gorbachev. And most of all they seek to cause a feeling of uncertainty among our people. All the information poured into our country in Russian and other languages is aimed at making us doubt the ultimate victory of perestroika.

Valentin Falin. That's one side of the matter. Another side is that they try to stir up the existing doubt and fuel it with new material. I think, that's a very serious intent, indeed. After the First World War the Americans took such a hostile stand against us because the US servicemen returning home from the front were rebelling against their own social system. After the October Revolution the American worker demanded more social rights. After the Second World War the US attitude towards the USSR changed not only because the Americans were unwilling to share the credit for the victory with us. The US Administration feared that their people's friendly attitude towards the Soviet Union would have an impact on their country's domestic and foreign policy.

This was admitted by Sulzberger in 1946, and many contemporary scientists of high repute admit it now. That's an actual fact. We know of an American intelligence document which in 1943 advised the USA to withdraw from the alliance with the Soviet Union and join Nazi Germany in order to fight with it against the Soviet Union. This was in August 1943, soon after the battle of the Kursk Bulge. Therefore, if we take a closer look at what is going on in the USA now, we should regard this new attitude as an indicator of very serious changes likely to occur soon, and be prepared for them...

Dwelling upon the reserves of the Soviet press as far as

perestroika, glasnost and greater democracy are concerned, the speaker pointed out that a great deal can be achieved through expedient, purposeful and systematic action. The consequences of a particular publication should be commensurate with what is printed. Yet, it is not always so. It sometimes happens that a newspaper publicizes a striking fact, and the readers expect an appropriate reaction to it, yet there is no reaction. If that's the case, why disturb the public at all? Thus the entire meaning of glasnost gets reduced to the mere right to say something that formerly was not allowed to be said, and the consequences of criticism remain outside the scope of vision. The speaker drew the attention of those present to the fact that perestroika has already bred some new inhibiting mechanisms as well.

The next speaker was *Pravda's* Editor-in-Chief **Viktor Afanasyev**. He said:

The Soviet press, our paper included, have worked efficiently at the first stage of perestroika, when it was essential to take stock of our achievements, drawbacks, errors and faults in order to decide which direction to take. And all of us have become apt critics. But later on, after a thorough consideration of the resolutions adopted by the 27th CPSU Congress and Mikhail Gorbachev's statements, we came to the conclusion that criticism alone was not enough to carry out perestroika. This is where we came up against the greatest difficulty. Frankly speaking, on some occasions *Pravda* was just not up to the task. For some time it seemed to lack a firm stand, for which it was rightly criticized at a representative conference. We drew all the necessary conclusions and took some urgent and efficient measures to improve our work.

We believe that the main task facing the press at the second stage of perestroika is to look for the best experience that has been acquired in perestroika, to publicize and support that experience in the human, technological and socio-psychological planes. To be up to the task, we should maintain close links with Party bodies, as well as with the departments of the CPSU Central Committee and its leadership. This will provide us with names and addresses, as well as give us suggestions and advice.

Furthermore, we have failed thus far to look for positive experience purposefully, and, in some cases, we don't know how to look for it. Why? I think, it's because we journalists are not prepared to work in the new conditions

and resolve the new problems typical of our times. Take commodity-money relations, for instance—we have never focused upon them before, and neither have scientists. The same is true of the cooperative movement and individual labour activity. Or take the human, socio-psychological aspects of our life. They, too, have remained outside of our scope. Well, we have learned something and started involving more scientists specializing in those matters in our work, but, I'm sorry to say, science is not always a big help. Suppose we want an interesting article, one which raises acute and topical issues. We apply to all the research centres and phone every academician, but they can't produce the article we need. Sometimes we have to turn out what can be described, perhaps, as superficial writing, and we are justly criticized for that. And so we must learn how to handle the problems that arise. Obviously, our social science should also think seriously about catching up with the times.

Viktor Afanasyev pointed out that the press has again started putting a brake on criticism recently. Readers sometimes receive formal replies to their letters. In some other cases, the measures taken after a criticism is published prove inadequate. Administrative reshuffling also takes place. The most popular method, however, is to find a tiny fault in a critical article, a minor thing, and then try to axe the whole article, although it may be, in principle, quite objective. Besides, we cannot say that the respective local Party bodies always support our efforts.

The issue of the "blank spots" in our history, continued *Pravda's* Editor-in-Chief, was bluntly brought up in the report on the 70th anniversary of the Great October Revolution. The report said that those blank spots must be filled.

Viktor Afanasyev went on to say that some authors writing on such subjects lack the needed knowledge and sense of responsibility. And they are writing about the history of our great nation and Party. Here a writer needs to be exacting, adequately grounded and precise. In this connection the speaker made some critical remarks about Mikhail Shatrov's play *Further... Further... Further!*

Viktor Afanasyev called on his colleagues to always abide by the Party principles and adhere to them in pursuing the policy worked out by the CPSU Central Committee, the 27th CPSU Congress and the Central Committee's subsequent plenary meetings.

Elem Klimov, First Secretary of the Board of the USSR Union of Film Workers, spoke about film-makers' striving to promote absolute glasnost and maintain open dialogue in their own work. He emphasized that this is the main means of consolidating all our forces. We must learn how to communicate, to argue and to listen to one another. For this purpose our union has set up a scientific centre which includes sociologists among other experts. The results of the broad polling of virtually all our members are thoroughly analysed and used to improve our work.

On the subject of reform in cinematography, the speaker said that such reform is running into difficulties. Today we can see much better what used to be "under the surface" not so long ago. The reform has infringed upon the interests of many individuals, thus revealing things we had no idea existed a short while ago. This is typical of perestroika in all spheres and throughout the country.

Is this good or bad? Well, I think it's much better to know what has risen from the depths than to be ignorant of it. Are there any opponents of perestroika in cinema? There are some, and they openly call for returning to the times when it was up to a particular official to decide what film-maker should launch a picture, and what kind of picture he should produce. They want to continue the practice of keeping a waiting-list for directors so that they would take turns making films, at the state's expense, of course. I don't think that art is a sphere where one can take turns. Our reform is based on creative competition. Only an interesting, truthful idea implemented by talented artists has the right to be screened. Today, as perhaps never before, there is a huge interest in living and working in a new way.

The speaker also dwelt upon the copyright on films. If a positive decision is reached, he said, it will become impossible for foreign distributors to cut the running time of Soviet films by 45 to 60 minutes, as was done with the film "Agony" in France and the USA, where all political scenes from that film were removed.

Elem Klimov said that the State Committees for Cinematography functioning in the constituent republics are unnecessary because they are an inhibiting factor. We have a proposal ideal for the current reform—to set up a network of cost-accounting production associations. The big constituent republics support it, the speaker added. As for the rest, they insist on merging with the local ministries of culture and setting up institutions and committees, which

would include representatives of the film industry, the State Committee for Publishing, Printing and Book-Selling as well as the Ministry of Culture. In my opinion, we need one industry responsible for all cinematography in this country.

The speaker drew the audience's attention to one more problem, that of setting up Roman Karmen's museum which is to display war cameramen's works and other documents. We believe that such museums should be opened, while the Moscow City Soviet disagrees. Meanwhile, it completely ignores the numerous publications on this topic in national periodicals and "Perestroka's Spotlight" programmes.

Such meetings at the CPSU Central Committee are a good lesson in openness, confidence and responsibility, **Mikhail Nenashev**, Chairman of the USSR State Committee for Publishing, Printing and Book-Selling, said. They have a tremendous impact on the character and content of our work. I have recently read in a periodical that for social changes to become possible, two basic conditions must be observed: major goals must be set and greater resistance must be offered.

Our goals both social and political are great indeed. They are, in fact, revolutionary. On the other hand, there is a certain resistance, and we have no right to underestimate it. I raise this issue in view of the problems facing our publishers today. We understand that mindless obedience has done our book-publishing the greatest harm. I mean the rigid centralized control over what can be published and what cannot. Today our main task is to make the publishing process more democratic. Indeed, a new author with fresh ideas too big for the old stereotypes finds it hard to get his books published: he has to overcome formidable barriers, go through endless reviewing of his works and other bureaucratic procedures. That is why opinioned and sharply polemical books evoking the reader's response are still rare. Yet we have undertaken some radical measures with the support of the CPSU Central Committee. For example, we have decided to give every author the right to complete independence in his ideas on or interpretations of any specific aspect of life. In the preface to a book, the publisher may state his disagreement with the writer's views, pointing out that he has decided to publish it so the reader could draw his own conclusions.

Dwelling upon publishers' prospective plans, the

speaker admitted that no changes have occurred here yet. There are many monographs that were written two or three years ago, and they don't contain any new ideas. The problem is that it is easiest for the publisher to act according to instructions. The reform in publishing is understood by many as a new system of orders, being that, as they see it, the old system was incorrect and the new one resulting from perestroika will be more sensible. It is clear that every publisher should be able to decide what books to publish. We should develop a strategy for publishing, based on big ideology rather than on petty administrative considerations.

The speaker touched upon some problems linked with the consolidation of the industry's material and technical foundations. Thus he remarked that lack of paper often hampers the work of those editors whose publications are in high demand. They ought to be happy, but they feel bitter because they don't know how to get the paper to meet the swelling demand for their publications, he said.

I would also like to emphasize that our printing industry is just about the most backward in the country. It can't get any worse, he said. Yet, the new decisions aimed at its updating are not being fulfilled. Neither the machine-building ministries, nor the construction ministries, the ministry of timber and paper industry have done anything to improve the situation. We are quite willing to put out adequate numbers of history books, for instance. There was a time when we published books on history in such a way that people found themselves deprived of the opportunity to fully understand and duly assess Russia's socio-political thought. Today we have worked out a programme for printing this kind of literature and started its implementation. Yet, our possibilities are so very limited that if an extra 10,000 copies of a book are put out it presents a problem that's often hard to resolve. Well, we have decided to increase the printings of Solovyov's and Klyuchevsky's works from 50,000 to 200,000 copies, but the demand is still far greater than that. I am sorry to say that we cannot meet it because our potential is so limited.

We want substantial aid because ours is a cause of public significance. Our printing-equipment industry won't be able to give us anything better within the next five to seven years. The problem of paper supply should also be resolved as soon as possible.

Vladimir Karpov, First Secretary of the Board of the

USSR Writers' Union, pointed out the growing respect for the written word in the country. All journals have increased their circulation, he said. For example *Novy Mir's* circulation has more than doubled, that of the *Druzhba Narodov* has gone up five times and that of the *Literaturnaya Gazeta*—by 700,000 copies. Their circulation has soared not only because of the editors' promises to print hot, sensational stuff, though I admit that this might have influenced some of the subscribers.

A voice: Some? Ninety per cent, I think!

Vladimir Karpov. It may well be. Many readers wonder whether the artistic standards of this stuff are high enough. Yes, *The Children of Arbat* and *Robed in White* are topical and interesting all right, but what about their artistic standards? May be they are just topical, but their artistic level is low? Our readers warn us against the emergence of a new time-serving system in literature. They do not want a few words on Stalin's purges and other negative phenomena used only to force through some 300 pages of mediocre writing.

Now a few words about the cost-accounting system. My judgement is, it should be used universally. Why can't the Writers' Union introduce it too? As a matter of fact, we have long been living according to this system.

Mikhail Gorbachev. Cost accounting exists side by side with the taxation policy.

Vladimir Karpov called on newspaper editors to promote cooperation with young writers and send them on fact-finding missions. In conclusion the speaker said it is essential to deal with the paper shortages as soon as possible.

This was followed by the concluding speech by Mikhail Gorbachev.

Михаил Сергеевич Горбачев
ДЕМОКРАТИЗАЦИЯ—СУТЬ ПЕРЕСТРОЙКИ,
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