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## Restructuring the Party's Work: A Top-Priority Task

Report at a meeting at the CPSU Central Committee  
Moscow, July 18, 1989

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Comrades,

The Politburo considered it necessary to hold this meeting in order to discuss together current problems related to the activity of the Party at the present stage of perestroika. Recent events have pushed these problems to the foreground. They are the main subject of discussion not only within the Party itself, but also within society.

The animated debate about all questions pertaining to the Party's work is an indication of the enormous significance that our people attach to the role of the CPSU, for they understand that their hopes for the success of perestroika, for the renewal of society and for a better life, are linked to the policy and practical work of the Party. This is the main reason for the serious shift in public consciousness to sharp criticism of the work of Party bodies and organisations, and Communists.

Overall, today we need an in-depth discussion. We must give the answers to those questions about the Party which are of particular concern to Communists and all Soviet people today. Our people should be sure that the CPSU will remain faithful to its choice, to the policy of perestroika, and persevere in carrying out revolutionary transformations in our society in the interests of the people.

## I.

Comrades,

We should assess the Party's work at the present stage within the context of the current political situation in the country. It should be said that this situation is highly complex. The country is going through an essentially critical stage of perestroika. All of us are well aware of this; it was also highlighted during the Congress of People's Deputies.

The Congress gave us a deeper understanding of the processes now taking place in society, and made a merciless analysis of our painful, contradictory and intractable problems. Now the extent of the crisis in which the country had found itself by the beginning of the 1980s is even clearer, and we have yet to extricate ourselves from it. Moreover, certain processes in economic, social and political development have even taken a turn for the worse. I am referring to the situation as regards the consumer market, the financial state of the country, certain problems concerning social justice, and interethnic relations.

The Congress brought to light the Soviet people's great concern over the level of discipline and public order, and the way in which crime and mismanagement are being combatted. Giving support to the policy of further development of democracy, glasnost and humanisation, public opinion stands firmly against all manifestations of disrespect for the individual, the law and justice, and against all instances of violence and permissiveness and outbursts of uncontrollable passions and emotions.

The work of the Congress and the Supreme Soviet is in effect opening up a new chapter in the development of socialism. All of us here and, I think, all Soviet people are aware of the fundamental importance of these events, aware that they represent a turning point. This is not only because for the first time the supreme bodies of state authority and administration have been

formed on a democratic basis, and because the main guidelines for the domestic and foreign policy of the Soviet Union have been laid down. Both of these factors are of exceptional importance in themselves. But the most important thing is obviously that a practical start has been made of transferring state power in its entirety to the Soviets, and of creating a new and democratic system of drawing the public at large into the solution of problems that concern the whole state. Thereby from ideas, projections and plans the political reform is translated into real life. The country is changing, and our views and deeds should change accordingly.

I think that in order to assess the political situation and its dynamics, it is essential that we thoroughly analyse **the correlation of social forces that is taking shape.**

The Congress was a driving force, adding new incentive to the process of further increasing public involvement in politics and in the social processes taking place in the country. It showed once more that the primary social forces within our society are committed to the ideas of perestroika put forward by the Party. But it is also a fact that there is mounting criticism within society, and dissatisfaction with the results of perestroika; opinions and moods are becoming polarised and differentiated at a rapid pace.

What kind of specific moods and phenomena are we encountering here?

Perestroika continues to come up against strong resistance from dogmatic and conservative forces, many of which regard steps towards democracy as a retreat from the principles of socialism. Obviously, it can already be said today—this has come to the forefront of our lives—that those who have been unable to adapt to perestroika, to learn new ways are sometimes affected by psychological uncertainty and irritation; they feel a desire to resort to the use of power to solve today's political problems, to make up for lost authority by taking punitive measures against those who disagree and criticise.

Such sentiments among certain Party workers and personnel, their inclination towards authoritarian methods, are supported and shared by some part of the population. We have to be aware of this if we are to retain a realistic policy.

It is my opinion that dogmatic attitudes are nourished not only by conservative patterns of thinking and psychology, but also in certain measure by a lack of understanding of the essence of the processes taking place, by disorientation, and this must also be taken into account.

There has recently been clear evidence of a growth in social elements influenced by radical-left sentiments. They are in favour of more determined action and of forcing the pace of the reforms. Populist ideas and leftist speculations advocating that social justice be equated with crude egalitarianism have become widespread. There are real grounds for such sentiments. Not everything is proceeding smoothly on the road of perestroika. In some areas we are lagging behind, in others merely marking time, whilst in some others there are even occasional reverses. The existence of such forces and sentiments is quite natural, as we proceed from our current concepts that presuppose pluralism of opinions and approaches, differing positions and the proposal of alternative solutions to urgent problems on a fundamentally socialist basis. And it would be a mistake to try to detach them from the overall processes of perestroika. We should consider the entire range of opinions and sentiments existing within society when going about our work.

In order to gain a full and complete picture of the current political situation, we must not turn a blind eye to the increasing manifestations of the most varied forms of extremism within the most varied spheres of society. There are practically overt calls for society to adopt values, alien to socialism, from the arsenal of bourgeois democracy and private enterprise. The task is to consolidate all healthy forces supporting perestroika,

to persistently overcome extremist tendencies and take a firm course towards socialist renewal.

The CPSU has taken the initiative and is relying on the broad support of the working class and the peasantry, and the creative powers of the intelligentsia. At the same time, as I've already said, the Party's work is being actively discussed in society. And this is quite natural, since the restructuring of the political system, the transfer of all power to the Soviets (for which the practical foundations were laid at the Congress) and the renewal of society itself are unthinkable without the renewal of the Party.

Ours is the ruling party. And it cannot evade political responsibility for the state of affairs in the country. Moreover, this responsibility is becoming even greater in view of the great scale of the transformations taking place in society.

We all know that at the current and vital stage of perestroika, the work of certain elements of our Party and our personnel leaves something to be desired. There are plenty of problems here and we cannot ignore them. They demand solution in a way befitting the Party. What is happening should be analysed, in a principled manner and without panic or undue dramatisation. This, indeed, is the main task before today's meeting at the Party's Central Committee.

Some say that the critical attitude in society to the work of the Party bodies and personnel has been caused by the exposure of past mistakes and distortions, a wave of criticism and biased articles in the press, attacks on Party leaders, the labelling of them as bureaucrats, and so forth. Obviously, there is some truth in all this.

The current unfavourable socio-economic background also undoubtedly has its effect, above all the unbalanced state of the consumer market; the growing shortages of goods and services; the acute food and housing problems; the run-down state of the health service; the difficulties that low-income families have in making ends meet; the distortions in the cooperative



movement; and some others. Against such a background, if people see that some Party committee or other is not doing its best to make changes, they cannot but become dissatisfied with the way Party organisations are working.

And here we come to what is, in my view, the crux of the matter: **perestroika within the Party is substantially lagging behind the processes under way in society.** Because of this, there is a real threat that the Party's leading role in perestroika, and consequently, in society itself, will be weakened. This causes growing concern for the authority of the Party, its leading bodies at local and central level, and not only among Communists but among the masses of the working people.

The question arises: what is this—a crisis in the Party? No, not in the Party, but in its past functions, outdated methods and style of work. For a long time the Party was incorporated in the administrative-command system of governing society, and it lived according to its laws. Not only was it incorporated, but in actual fact dominated everything, controlled all state, economic and ideological activities, substituting for and overpowering everything, passing down peremptory commands and instructions to state and economic bodies, and public organisations. In a way, it was easier to control things in those circumstances. But the main thing in the Party's work was lost—its role as the vanguard of society, its living link with the masses. Relying on the power of decisions and instructions Party committees and officials lost the ability to talk to people, to win their trust, to gain their support by force of conviction and argument.

There is now a new social situation taking shape. The Party cannot and must not issue commands to state and economic agencies, and public organisations. Our duty is to conduct political work among the masses, to put forward bold ideas and explain them to people, to act openly, to prevent the growth of adverse trends, to energetically assist in all that is new and progressive, to

help find solutions to problems that concern people's lives. This is especially important in the current political and social situation, a situation that is far from simple and characterised by widely differing opinions, the increased political activity of the people and explosion of public initiatives, the growing independence of organisations and the appearance of new movements.

The main thing now, I would say, is to bring the Party out of its state of siege, and impart dynamism to it. To achieve this, every Party organisation should proceed from common tasks and draw up its own programme of action, appropriate to the conditions in which it works. Such programmes should be open to any initiative that would be of benefit to the people.

## II.

In the present situation, comrades, we cannot avoid **giving a reappraisal of the functions and the role of the Party in society** and determining its coordinates in the political system of socialism undergoing a renewal.

Recently some "super-radicals" have voiced something to the effect that the Party should supposedly all but withdraw from the general political scene, confining its functions exclusively to its own internal or educational work. This actually amounts to converting the Party into a sect or a kind of a discussion and educational club. Neither choice is suitable for the CPSU, which is a ruling Party and a political organisation.

Parties everywhere have always formed and acted as instruments of the struggle for power and mechanisms to transform the interests and aspirations of different classes, social groups and forces, and ideological and political trends into a practical state policy. The party of Lenin, the Bolshevik Party, has never been an exception in this sense, nor is it now. By expressing the interests of the working people, and above all, of the working class, and by integrating within itself the most progressive

forces of society, it makes up the political vanguard of the people.

Hence the main functions of the Party. These include the constant development and enrichment of social thinking; the elaboration of the fundamentals of domestic and foreign policy on a scientific Marxist-Leninist basis, with due regard for the current requirements of social development and the interests and sentiments of the masses; ideological and organisational work to make the Party policy the basis of the awareness and the practical actions of the broad popular masses. Finally, the choice of personnel has always been and remains a regular concern of the Party.

The functions of the Party determine the face of the Party, what sort of political image it should have and what sort of methods it should use in conditions of the genuine democratisation of society. First of all, it is obvious to all of us that in a democratic society the Party itself should be the epitome of the highest and the most consistent form of democratism and set an example of democratic development for the whole of society. For that, it should resolutely get rid of the deformities born of the personality cult and the stagnation period, once and for all.

All conditions, including statutory ones, should exist in the Party for a fearless comparison of views and for putting forward alternatives and different approaches to the settlement of any given problem, while preserving unity on fundamental issues and on strategic goals. Indeed, this is how it was in Lenin's days when broad and firm inner-Party democracy was ensured in most difficult conditions.

Next, there should be close interaction between the Party and various public organisations. The Party should accurately sense the whole gamut of opinions in society and promptly react to its changing moods. But it cannot do the impossible and fill the whole socio-political spectrum itself. Here we cannot do without lively contacts and continuous dialogues with public

organisations and movements. The Party will only be able to strengthen its positions if it cooperates with such movements and with the whole of society, engaging all its viable intellectual forces in the development of a common policy and programme of action.

One final point. It is absolutely clear for us Communists that the CPSU is at the service of the people and should be under their permanent democratic control. The CPSU is voluntarily placing itself under the control of the masses, notably through the election of its members to the supreme and local bodies of power and also to trade unions, public organisations, and so on. Through these and other democratic procedures the Party is conducting a continuous dialogue with the whole of society on all issues.

All this, comrades, is a kind of general consideration of the issue under review. It is obvious that now that the Party has come to face in practical terms the tasks of substantially modifying its work methods and its organic involvement in social processes within the framework of perestroika and political reform, some fundamental problems require more specific consideration and discussion.

**The central issue here, of course, is that of the relationship between the Party and the Soviets.**

I don't think I need to explain here that Party organisations and the Party as a whole must act within the framework of the law. This is a political axiom for us. At the same time, the tasks, forms and methods of the Party's work are decided by the Party itself and by its Programme and Rules. We must state with all certainty that the political system of socialism and a radical reform are unthinkable without the active participation of the Party.

In this connection I would like to repeat that the attempts to oppose the Party to the Soviets are totally unacceptable for us and do not meet the tasks of perestroika and the interests of the working masses. The proposals for delegating state functions to the Party or

for subjugating the Party to the state are equally unsound theoretically and erroneous politically. This would be a kind of backward movement and a refaced variant of the old administrative-command system. There is nothing essentially new about this. We must resolutely move ahead, guided by the fundamental Leninist precept on the separation of the functions of the Party, the Soviets and the management bodies. We have embarked on this road and will not deviate from it.

In stating these fundamental approaches, we must openly acknowledge that the former practice of Party diktat over the Soviets at all levels has totally outlived its use. It is unacceptable. As I have already said, new democratic forms and methods of interaction should be based on the clear separation of the functions of the political vanguard of society, on the one hand, and the administrative rule and management which are being passed on to the Soviets, on the other. We must realise this, understand the objective need for this approach and reorientate ourselves politically and psychologically. I say psychologically because some comrades take the transfer of power to the Soviets to mean almost the end of the world. Well, comrades, even if it is admitted, it is the end of a deformed world.

In effect, though, we are dealing with the creation of a new mechanism of interaction between the Party and the Soviets, with the Party using political methods to influence their performance. This implies, first of all, the elaboration of a policy and its implementation through the Soviets. This is not merely a task on the state level. The republican level should have its own policy, and so should the local level. As Lenin put it, policy is wherever the masses are, and the Party bodies can only implement political decisions in the bodies of people's power through persuasion, recommendations and democratic coordination, through Communists working at the Soviets and their executive bodies.

It has to be admitted that we are just making the first steps on this road. This refers to the Central Committee,

its Politburo, the central committees of the Communist parties of the union republics, territorial, regional, city and district Party committees alike. In effect, we still have cases where the Party assumes the functions of the Soviets. Today it can be justified to some extent by the transitional period which we are going through, when the Soviets are still unprepared to assume full power, or to exercise it effectively for that matter. They still lack the appropriate legislative acts and qualified personnel.

In this connection, I would like to answer a question which is often asked by secretaries of Party committees: how should one work today when the Soviets have not yet assumed full responsibility and concern within the limits of their competence? But, comrades, this certainly does not mean that Party committees can continue to work by the old methods, ignoring the radically changing situation in society.

Experience shows that many Party committees in the present situation are exercising their functions fairly effectively, resolutely changing their work style and methods, raising the role of grass-roots organisations, bringing the focus of their organisational and ideological work into the masses, and making extensive use of the mass media for that purpose, too. The same experience shows that such approaches quickly change the atmosphere in the respective districts and cities, bring Party bodies and the working people closer together, and have a positive effect on general moods and on political and economic affairs. This can be demonstrated by the performance of the Krasnodar and Stavropol territorial, the Lipetsk, Rostov and Saratov regional, and other Party organisations.

In contrast to this, in areas where Party organisations do not take the trouble to look for new approaches in keeping with the latest requirements and simply proceed along the old track, the processes of perestroika move slowly and painfully, and this makes people dissatisfied. In fact, some comrades have grown so used to the old ways that since the elimination of the sectoral depart-

ments they have been seeking out and finding all sorts of loopholes for reproducing those functions in organisational and socio-economic departments. This needs no further comment. We won't get far with this attitude to the reorganisation of the work of the Party and its bodies and of their style and methods.

I also want to share with you my opinions on the work of Communists in Soviet governing bodies. Some things here are self-evident and require no special arguments. Party organisations, like the entire Communist Party, ought to strictly and unequivocally demand that the Communists whom the community entrusts with the work in the Soviets display exemplary responsibility for their missions and work with dedication on the major and largely unprecedented tasks of perestroika.

Yet new issues arise here. We must not close our eyes to them, but take them fully into account. Every People's Deputy who is a Party member has dual responsibilities: to the Party and his electorate. Naturally, we cannot free Communist deputies from Party discipline: it is their duty to implement Party decisions. Yet it would be entirely wrong to reduce their work as deputies to giving an official form to the instructions they receive from the Party. In my opinion, it is the duty of all Communist deputies to elaborate a common platform on the cardinal issues which follow from the Party's political strategy, and from the decisions of Party bodies at the relevant levels on basic questions. In all other matters they are entitled to full freedom of initiative, opinion and voting.

The recent election campaign found us without due clarity in matters concerning the Party ethics of Communist deputy candidates. Some behaved as independent candidates. In my opinion, a Communist should, above all, defend the Party's election platform, with the essentials of his own platform conforming to it, and enrich it with his practical proposals and obligations.

To a considerable degree, the above happened due to

the fact that Party committees did not take clear-cut stands during the election campaign. The new, democratic situation caught many committees unawares: they were not prepared to work in the atmosphere of elections, although the issue had come under discussion at the plenary meeting of the Party Central Committee. We knew full well that the coming election would be unique and that we ought to be prepared to face all kinds of surprises. The Party elaborated its election platform with due consideration for this particular campaign, with all its specifics. You, perhaps, remember the wide public response it received. Many deputies, even those who were extremely critical of the Communist Party, included premises from its platform in theirs.

The electorate justly displayed negative attitudes towards, and resolutely opposed, the Party committees who clung to outdated patterns and attempted to impose their opinions on the public, when they should have developed joint stances and proposed candidates together with the people.

The situation put some Communist candidates in a dilemma, although they enjoyed the voters' respect and support. Tensions arose here and there. Many Party functionaries chose the wrong way and kept aloof of the election campaign, despite its tremendous importance and the hopes we pinned on it to solve critical issues at the initial stage of our political reform.

All this gives us ample food for thought. I know of debates which are still under way in district, city, regional and republican Party organisations. We must bring together for the future all the lessons the campaign has taught us. This is essential, considering the tasks which will arise during the next stage of the political reform.

I don't think anyone doubts that the coming elections of people's deputies to the republican and local Soviets will again bring mass political activity to a peak. The Party should be prepared to actively involve itself in this. Its organisations can't afford neutrality in the pre-



election debates. They should speak out and try to convince the electorate. They must be ready to canvas the population under all kinds of circumstances, some unprecedented.

The forms and methods of our work may vary according to the arrangement of political forces in different parts of the Soviet Union. Yet we can list the tasks common to all localities: the elaboration of election strategy; public opinion polls; selection, instruction of candidates and their nomination (over two million deputies will be elected); platform elaboration; intense ideological effort, including propaganda and politically oriented canvassing; and, last but not least, financing and many other technicalities.

We have every reason to expect severe tests of our efficiency, beginning with the formation of the electoral commissions, to say nothing of candidate nominations. There is a major point to bear in mind here: the People's Deputy election results subjected the Party to well-deserved criticism from the working class and peasantry, whose representatives had been granted insufficient attention. This is the reason that Party committees have fallen in the estimation of work collectives and primary Party organisations, and possibly why debates are taking place in many Soviet regions about a guaranteed representation of work collectives.

Our past caused us to forget that elections imply acute political clashes, which is now, at last, the case. We must fully understand this fact and prepare the Party in this vein for the coming election campaign. We can no longer afford the laxity that was evident in the previous election—otherwise the Party is headed for major political losses.

I should like to dwell on another area of concern on the elections to republican and local Soviets. There is an active public debate over whether Party committee secretaries should combine their duties with the local Soviet chairmanship: a matter hotly debated at the 19th Party Conference, whose political premises on this score

remain to be decided. At any rate, we should make decisions concerning combined offices depending on the current political situation in each given instance. Any deputy may head a local Soviet irrespective of his post and Party membership, provided he enjoys sufficient support. As I see it, this approach is in accordance with constitutional principles and the spirit of democratic change at its present stage.

We must update our views on Party relations not only with the Soviets but with other parts of our political system, above all, with public organisations. We have to say aloud and directly that we can no longer accept the old arrangement when, in fact, the Party directly ruled their work and they had almost no independence to speak of—even in purely internal matters. We must now put an end to this anachronism.

What I am saying refers mainly to the trade unions. No other organisations in the Soviet Union have such massive memberships as they have. The dire results of the distorted Party relations with them are still felt in their work. This is one of the main reasons that trade unions are too slow to respond to the spirit of change ushered in by perestroika. The manner in which they carry out their responsibilities—the expression and protection of labour interests—leaves much to be desired, so problems are stockpiled and nothing is done about them. Look at the latest events in our country. Many acute issues concerning working and living conditions, social patterns and the environment have been left unattended for too long. Finally, they have boiled over and led to conflict.

The working people are sharply critical of the trade unions for their passivity in these matters, which stands out against the current dynamic nature of social life and the overall situation. All our society is interested in updating the trade unions. All labour and social issues should be promptly considered and resolved. Otherwise we shall never escape major conflicts.

This is primarily the concern of the trade unions

themselves: of their activists, functionaries and all members, for that matter. Yet the Party cannot remain indifferent to the fate of such a vast, mass organisation. Therefore, we have every right to make Communist trade union activists accountable for poor work. We must remind them of their responsibilities to the public which has placed great trust in them. From now on, we should recommend for trade union work only the most capable Communists who enjoy a great deal of respect—not those who have proved their incompetence at other jobs.

Our relations with the Komsomol also need to be changed. The 27th Party Congress and the 19th Party Conference gave direct instructions concerning this and the Central Committee also adopted several resolutions on the issue. Now we must again return to this, because the Komsomol, which unites the most dynamic section of the Soviet public, is sluggish in implementing perestroika. The pace and scope of its restructuring aren't what they should be. The Komsomol is stuck on debates, sharply critical but with little practical bearing on the reforms it needs. We Communists are concerned about this important political organisation and cannot remain indifferent to its problems, because the Komsomol's future is closely linked with the future of the Party and perestroika.

In fact, one current urgent task is to restore the Komsomol's prestige among young people and, indeed, in the society as a whole. Yet this cannot be achieved without changing the internal structure of Komsomol organisations and the manner in which they function. Its present organisational structure and work methods have led to bureaucratic practices, reducing young people's interest in it and prompting them to adopt what actually amounts to nihilistic attitudes towards their organisation.

Yet, for all the critical assessments of Komsomol activities today, there is no doubt that the country needs a political youth organisation closely connected to the

Party and working under its guidance and ideological influence. This is the stand taken by adults and young people alike. Young people are strongly attracted to socialist values, just as they are to political activities.

The prevailing opinion among young people is against the abolition of the Komsomol. It can and must actually become a strong and dynamic political organisation which expresses the interests of the younger generation. If it is to evolve into such a major political force, the Komsomol must be part of all processes taking place in society and also be involved in the formation and operation of political power and government bodies at all levels.

As we see it, the main thrust of the change is to ensure that the Komsomol has full organisational independence and acts on its own. The very process of forming its ranks should include, on a voluntary basis, the most active, creative and politically imaginative forces of our young people. It seems that there is no need for all young people joining the Komsomol, as was the case until recently.

We must watch carefully everything that is taking place in the Komsomol, we must show the utmost consideration to young people who are committed to our common cause, perestroika, and have a higher sense of responsibility for the future of the Komsomol. However, the past excesses, such as unjustified meddling, commands and petty tutelage should not merely give way to indifference and a lack of consideration for the Komsomol, which is already the case in some places. What is needed today as never before is closeness and comradely cooperation between Party and Komsomol committees, between Party and Komsomol organisations, between Communists and Komsomol members. Perestroika is a revolution, and the young people will constitute its active and imaginative force.

Today, we also need to discuss approaches to what are known as informal organisations and popular movements. They continue to grow, becoming increasingly

active and often seizing the initiative in influencing public opinion. How should we view all this?

Alternative ways of dealing with the country's vital problems allow for a more profound understanding of particular developments and causes, and help to take effective practical action. The mere existence of informal movements prompts Party, government and economic management bodies and local authorities to be more active, flexible and efficient.

Regarding the various informal groups, organisations and movements, Party organisations must exercise different approaches depending on the groups' place and role in social and political affairs. Drawing upon practical experience, at this point we can safely say that the absolute majority of informal organisations support further reforms, greater democracy, proper environmental control and standards, and the development of our historical and cultural heritage. They are sincerely concerned about the future of particular cities, towns, districts, regions, republics, and the country as a whole. Of course, every group has its own point of view and its own methods of achieving its objective, something which often causes suspicion. However, we must remember that, objectively, their positive priorities coincide with the goals of perestroika. In fact, this provides a basis for dialogue and cooperation, and we must act accordingly.

But we must take an equally clear-cut stand in regard to the destructive elements present in some independent organisations and public movements. We cannot put up with their anti-socialist views and anti-social actions, and must make a timely and proper assessment and counter them. But this is only part of the issue.

We must realise that destructive elements are taking advantage of our present difficulties and many outstanding problems, those matters of vital concern which receive inadequate attention from local government and economic management bodies and go unnoticed by

Party organisations. This necessitates certain conclusions for one's work.

In short, comrades, we cannot afford to fall behind the rapid changes taking place in our life. There is a need to gain momentum, to take the lead in the efforts to effect political reforms, and to work closely with all public organisations, imparting a constructive thrust to their activities and involving them in the general constructive endeavour.

Now let us consider **the changing role of the Party in the social and economic spheres in the context of reform.**

It is my firm conviction that neither in the future, nor even less at this juncture, can the Party afford to remove itself from the economy and stop exerting political influence on social and economic affairs, absolving itself from responsibility for the state of the economy, because the welfare of the Soviet people depends on this.

We all feel that the pressure of economic difficulties on the political situation has greatly increased of late. Social tensions have their genesis in the economy, and it is here, first and foremost, that the Party must look for a way out of the situation. I will not present a detailed picture of the present state of the economy. It has received full consideration at the 1st Congress of People's Deputies. The Congress, as you know, requested the Supreme Soviet and the Government to take appropriate action.

Chiefly, this involves drastic, I would even say extraordinary, measures to normalise the situation in the consumer goods market. Special emphasis has been placed on the need to meet the demand for basic necessities, which are supplied irregularly or rationed. This is the major reason for public discontent. The Government is now dealing with the problem in practical terms, drawing on all the country's available resources and importing an extra 10,000 million roubles' worth of goods in high demand.

While acting on these pressing issues, the Government is drafting the plan and the budget for 1990 and the 13th

five-year development plan with due consideration for the current situation. In both cases, the task at hand is to turn the economy around, regearing it to the social needs of man and improving the food supply, first and foremost, building more housing, upgrading health services, and coming to grips with environmental problems, i.e. all that is fundamental to the daily life of the people. Specific proposals on this will be debated in the USSR Supreme Soviet and then put before the 2nd Congress of People's Deputies.

Party organisations must concentrate their efforts on the need to bring about a radical improvement in the economy. Let us see to it that Party organisations and the public in general search for the latent potential in republics, territories, regions, cities, towns, districts and villages—in fact, wherever it might be present. Furthermore, we receive information that the public in major industrial centres is disgruntled at the way the authorities handle issues related to people's daily life; take, for instance, my trip to Leningrad a few days ago. Frankly, people are taking a very critical line, refusing to put up with delays, sluggishness, irresponsibility and indifference on the part of local government, economic management bodies, and Party committees.

People know that there are problems in this country whose solution will require considerable resources and a certain amount of time. But they do not want and will never reconcile themselves to the absence of headway in those issues which can be resolved by using opportunities which are available even today. Both the centre and localities must be well aware that we have little time in which to alter this situation. Such are the realities. And we should proceed from this in our work.

I would also like to raise for discussion here the question of the content of Party's activity at all levels in the sphere of economy in the context of the delineation of the functions of the Party, government and economic bodies and the political and economic decentralisation which embraces all society.

We are living through a type of transition period which is characterised by the coexistence in this country, whether we want it or not, of both the old forms of organisation of economic management and political life and the new approaches that are gradually gaining strength. Therefore, the old and the new intertwine in the work of Party, state and economic bodies. Precisely therein lies the difficulty and contradictory nature of the present situation. But this is nothing unexpected or surprising. Nevertheless, even today, let alone in the future, it is essential to fully comprehend what role the Party should play in the economy under the conditions of perestroika, to comprehend so as, step by step, to give up the old methods and make way for the new. This will not happen by itself. Moreover, past habits, which are deeply rooted in us, will constantly make themselves felt. And you and I are already feeling that.

Principled views have already been expressed in regard to this. The role of the Party in the economy is irreplaceable, because it must equip society with a scientifically grounded, socially oriented economic policy. It seems that everyone agrees with this, this is indisputable. But it is necessary to reveal the meaning of this principled proposition with reference to the specific activity of Party bodies at all levels.

There's no concealing the fact that up to now many believed that economic policy was a job for the centre. No, comrades, developing policy is something that should be done at every level of the Party. Indeed, within the framework of a general economic and social concept, there arise the tasks of relating it to the conditions of the republics and the various regions. This is all the more vital and indispensable in conditions of the transition of our entire economy (not only production collectives but also all the republics and regions) to self-management, cost-accounting and self-financing. I would say that each republic and region should have a well-considered programme for economic and social development.



Substantiating such an approach, we base ourselves, first of all, on those real processes which are already underway. It is good that some Party organisations understood this in time and are acting appropriately. It is precisely as a result of such approaches that very interesting proposals have been developed at the Uzbekistan's Central Committee of the Communist Party. These are now being considered by the country's planning bodies. We know that the Baltic republics and Byelorussia have taken the initiative for converting to republican cost-accounting beginning as early as next year. For this they have done a great deal of work, which has been examined at the USSR Planning Committee and is now being considered in commissions and committees of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

The experience of the work of Party organisations, which is already producing tangible results, is, however, particularly valuable to us. Those who have been to Vitebsk Region ask this question: why are there more goods in the shops there than in other regions, and why are food shelves not empty? At the same time, people are particularly interested in what happened, because they know that not so long ago this was one of the most neglected regions. What did happen then? There is an answer to this question, comrades. The key to understand what happened lies in the position of the regional Party committee. A few years ago, the Party organisation succeeded in creating a programme to economically and socially revive the region which was warmly supported not only by the leadership of the republic but, what really matters, by all working people in the region. Its implementation has become their common job. Resources have been obtained for the social development of cities and villages. All enterprises, irrespective of their departmental subordination, are involved in deciding these questions. In particular, much has been done in the countryside. And the main thing is that all this has happened during the past few years of perestroika. Here is one approach and you can see its results.

I could further illustrate this by citing other examples of the deep changes taking place in the entire activity of Party organisations. But, I think you know where these changes took place, and many of you have had the opportunity of personally studying the experience. But, as the saying goes, one swallow, or even several, does not make a summer. The same also holds true here.

Many Party committees are slow to become involved in perestroika, are taking a lot of time and effort to think things over, hoping that something will come along. I understand, of course, that in many regions the economy is in a bad way, and that this is not easy to rectify. And yet, comrades, the changes taking place in such regions as Kaluga, Orel, Ryazan and Vitebsk show that there are realistic possibilities for effecting substantial changes even in the most difficult situation.

When I say this, I am thinking first of all of the Krasnoyarsk, Chelyabinsk, Gorky, Novosibirsk, Kuibyshev and Zaporozhye Party organisations. Each of these regions has a vast potential, and the task of the Party organisations is to rely on Communists and on all working people in order to use these possibilities for improving the socio-economic situation in their regions.

The new role of Party organisations in the economy above all concerns such a major task as the economic reform. There are heated debates going on concerning the reform. Different, sometimes opposing, viewpoints are being expressed. Some hold that the reform has yielded nothing and that we should return to pre-perestroika economic methods. Such people are ignoring the facts, and refusing to draw lessons from the past and from practice.

Another extreme is to place full reliance on the market, to hope that the market mechanism will automatically balance demand and supply, the rate and scale of production. This is a simplified way of looking at it. In conditions of an unbalanced economy, an unpredictable market can lead to grave consequences, spur run-

away inflation, intensify speculation, and cause other undesirable results.

Generally speaking, an uncontrolled market is an anachronism, a stage which states with a modern economy have passed. In order to create a socialist market we must restructure the finance, crediting and tax systems, put an end to monopolism, and adopt new principles of price formation. All this should be part of the economic reform.

We believe, there are no grounds for rejecting the accepted concept of the reform. On the other hand, it should not be regarded as something untouchable or ossified. It must develop, absorbing experience and new ideas. But the main thing is to move on more boldly and consistently, overcoming resistance, inertia and incompetence, something about which much has been said.

The reform is being justly criticised for ambivalence. The law says one thing while subordinate acts passed by central departments, branches and intermediate management links are blocking the reform. People everywhere complain that they are bound hand and foot. I think that the Central Committee should analyse the problem and assess the activity of the Communists responsible for carrying out the reform.

But there are also difficulties in implementing the reform at the main link. There, too, all kinds of pretexts are used to hold back the transition to new forms of management, cost-accounting and self-management. This is happening at industrial enterprises and construction sites, on collective and state farms. I must say that people are starting to think that there are forces at various levels of state administration which are deliberately slowing down the economic reform. Workers are asking straight out at meetings if we shouldn't establish committees in defence of perestroika and for the advancement of the economic reform.

Dissatisfaction with the solution of issues pertaining to the development of independence and self-management in work collectives has been most graphi-

cally expressed in the Kuzbass coalfields. The miners have openly said that their numerous addresses to regional, industrial and central management bodies regarding the unsatisfactory progress of the economic reform met with neither sympathy, nor support. People see that the situation in the country is tense, that the government has no resources to spare. Proceeding from this, they are asking for a chance to work independently and to earn money for the solution of the social problems which have become terribly acute in the Kuzbass. As you know, in light of the dramatic situation in the Kuzbass, a commission including Comrades Slyunkov, Voronin and Shalayev has been sent there to meet with the miners' representatives and work out a solution to the problems.

Comrades, the accent has shifted to the practical implementation of the reform. It has now become especially important for Party organisations to gear public opinion and the operation of all governmental and managerial organisations to a restructuring of economic relations on the basis of a multitude of forms of social property, the strengthening of the socialist principle of distribution, and the formation of a controlled market. This is the most difficult and important task.

Of course, much has to be done to improve the economic legislation and change the operation of central management bodies. This is being tackled by the USSR Supreme Soviet, the government and economic departments. But it must be frankly stated that if we fail to buttress the economic reform with diversified, persuasive and consistent organisational and ideological work with the people, the reform will not go forward, or at the most will move falteringly and painfully, causing dissatisfaction among the people.

At the same time, comrades, we have to remember that the reform, seeing how radical it is, was not designed to make for us a life of ease with a guaranteed payment. We all should understand this well. For the reform to make even slight progress a change of attitude

to one's work and innovations are needed, which means that the established comfort will be disrupted. This often makes people wary of the new, and they start reporting to the centre instead of changing their own way of working. The problem is that the adoption of a new economic mechanism was not preceded by political or ideological preparation.

Meanwhile, the essence of the reform is to encourage initiative, economic enterprise, innovative quest, and conscientious work. And those who work shoddily and unconscientiously, who stick to the old methods, should see this reflected in their income.

So far, the principle of earning one's wages is not being used to full advantage; it has not been brought home to many workers. Over the long years of the domination of the old economic methods, parasitism and wage-levelling have become deeply rooted in people's minds. These attitudes must be gradually eradicated; we must not allow a misinterpretation of the principle of social justice to hold back work collectives and the entire society. We must protect the reform from all kinds of distortions, self-seeking attitudes of groups, and the attempts of enterprises to exercise their right to higher incomes not by working better, but by raising prices.

Another phenomenon has recently developed—categorical demands for higher wages and the solution of social problems irrespective of the end result of an enterprise's work. Or take cooperatives. We are for cooperatives that somehow improve the people's life. I must mention that one of the demands of the Kuzbass miners is to close down cooperatives in public catering, medicine and the processing industry. Closing down is simple. It is the easiest way out. But is it the best? Didn't we decide to give republics, territories and regions the right to elaborate mechanisms and a system of taxation that would be locally controlled?

We are strongly against profiteering, against those who strive to get rich at the expense of others by taking

advantage of the shortages of goods and services—especially food shortages. We must put things in order in this sphere right away. We have to stimulate the areas in which each particular region is interested—set preferential taxes, help with building materials and equipment, and so on and so forth. In other cases, we need to put limits on income, and if a cooperative is violating the principles of our social policy, it should be shut down. These are things that the local Soviets can cope with very well.

All these negative developments have political overtones and because of that are of concern to Party organisations. It goes without saying that the causes of such developments lie in the imperfections of the new economic mechanism. But even the most perfect economic mechanism cannot automatically handle all situations that may arise in the social and economic spheres. There is a lot of work that still needs to be done among the people—harmonising the relations within each collective, between it and the society, and between different social groups, while taking the interests of each of these entities into account. These and other issues should be in the focus of attention of Party organisations.

Now that economic units and the republic and local government bodies have far greater economic independence, Party committees should resolutely end what they have been predominantly doing for many years—fulfilling the functions of the industrial managers and of local Soviets. They should change from the practice of issuing directives and instructions to a system of exercising political influence on the economy through organisational and ideological work in the collectives; through the economic interests, moral values and psychology of the people; and, of course, through all members of the Party engaged in the economic sphere, above all, through local Party leaders.

**The new concept of the Party's ideological work** must be adequate to the new social conditions, the new

experience and the present-day character and level of public awareness. Its elaboration and implementation is as complex and difficult a task as bringing about radical changes in the economy and in the social sphere. Perhaps it is even more difficult, for it entails a change in mentality. The Party needs to be able to anticipate possible developments in its ideological and theoretical work.

Freeing Party structures from functions that are not specific to them will finally allow the Party to make ideological work the prime direction of its activity. It is obvious that in the years of the personality cult and during the stagnation period Marxist-Leninist ideology and the principles of organisation and the means and methods of ideological work were thoroughly deformed. Ideology used to be adjusted to transient interests and put in the service of current developments. It was deprived of its revolutionary and critical essence, and its function of renewal and persuasion was depreciated; ideology was distanced from people and turned into the domain of officials and study groups. All this stands in glaring contrast to the traditions of Bolshevism begun in Lenin's time.

We must frankly admit that the weakening of ideological and theoretical work among the people led to an overall slackening of the Party's activity.

This manifested itself most dramatically at a crucial time, when our society embarked on a course of profound change. Dogmatised ideological work has not stood the test of perestroika.

I think you will agree, comrades, that although perestroika was triggered off by life itself, it actually began in the sphere of ideology with attempts to overcome the crisis in that sphere. We can argue as to what we have managed to accomplish over this period of time and where we have failed, but one thing is perfectly clear: if it had not been for the Party's work as regards the theory and ideology of renewal, perestroika itself would simply be unthinkable.

We have managed, and I don't think this is an exaggeration, to make very important and broad theoretical generalisations and conclusions about the present-day world, the world we are living in, and about the preceding stages in the development of Soviet society. I would say we have begun a kind of breakthrough in the sphere of theory and ideology. But we have not yet used this achievement of ours to launch a frontal attack. And the lag in this area of our work is being felt not only by Communists, but by the entire society.

We need to answer the most fundamental questions. What kind of society are we striving to build? What are we discarding? What have we inherited that can be used, through perestroika, to build a qualitatively new model of socialism? At present, only the most general outline of this society can be seen. The revolutionary transformations call for a developed concept covering all the aspects of the future society.

These issues are evoking a growing interest not only among theoreticians and social scientists, but among broad sections of the intelligentsia, the Party and society as well, and the need to sort them out is being felt more and more. If we lag behind, the resulting vacuum is immediately filled with all kinds of hypotheses, ideas and concepts that are often quite unscientific and far from being in the basic interests of the working people.

One can also observe a desire to limit ideological thought to a critical analysis of the past. But it is senseless to analyse the past if we are only motivated by simple curiosity or self-flagellation; it is senseless unless the intention is above all to learn the necessary lessons in order to comprehend reality and, most importantly, to develop ways into the future.

However complicated our current problems may be, we must not lose sight of our chief beacons even for a moment: we have no right to neglect theory and the development of social thought. Some points of departure in assessing the qualitatively new state of society



are gradually taking shape and receiving a measure of recognition from our academic community and the public.

It is described as a society of free people, a society of and for the working people, built on the principles of humanism, socialist democracy and social justice.

It is to be a society based on a variety of forms of public ownership that will enable people to be the masters of their own lives and give full play to their initiative and abilities. And economic development will be based on self-regulation, with the economic centre playing a coordinating role.

This is to be a society in which the people will have absolute power and all human rights, a society based on the finest traditions of Soviet democracy and the experience of mankind's democratic evolution.

This is to be a society in which all nations and ethnic groups will have equal rights, a society giving full scope to their comprehensive development and the harmonisation of inter-ethnic relations within the Soviet federation.

This is to be a society having a rich inner life and a high level of culture and morality, a society with a multitude of outlets for talents, for unhampered self-expression.

This is to be a society that is open to the world, to cooperation in the interests of building new international relations based on free choice, equality, security and universal values.

I repeat, this is nothing but a general outline that needs to be developed thoroughly and in detail. Today, it is vitally essential that we do this. Unless we sort out general theoretical questions, we will not be able to resolve specific issues of social practice successfully, or preclude mistakes and miscalculations.

This is a broad field for exploration by our social scientists. At the same time, there is reason for concern as regards the present-day state of affairs in the social sciences. We have to admit that our social scientists are

having trouble getting out of the state of crisis and onto a new theoretical level. I wholeheartedly welcome the first steps along this road. I'm speaking about the efforts to produce new textbooks in the social sciences and about the discussions at the Soviet Academy of Sciences that are beginning to be held on a regular basis. I believe that a number of serious works by our social scientists that have appeared in theoretical journals have not gone unnoticed. But all of this is still a long way from meeting our needs.

There is another, equally important aspect of the Party's ideological work, comrades. I'm referring to the practical work of Communists engaged in the field of ideology and of all Party organisations aimed at creating a level of public consciousness in keeping with today's realities, the tasks and the goals of perestroika. In this field, too, perestroika is proceeding with great difficulty and very slowly. To a large extent this stems from the fact that some of our ideological workers and leaders are still living in the past, relying on outdated and sterile forms and methods of work. This became quite obvious during the election campaign, when the ideological apparatus was largely hamstrung and, in a number of cases, paralysed. In the new political situation, with its broad democracy, people's social active-ness and diversity of opinion, the ideological apparatus is trying to rely on the antiquated method of issuing orders. When it transpires that the old methods no longer work, the ideological workers become passive or they panic, make excuses, citing general political trends, or sometimes lapse into overly critical attitudes and nihilism in assessing the changes under way.

To put it briefly, we must fully realise the need for serious changes in the Party's ideological work through strengthening the ties with the masses and initiating a lively discussion on all of perestroika's current problems. People are waiting for this and are telling us quite openly that the local Party organisations are unable to answer many of their questions.

I'd like to mention the tremendous role the mass media is playing. Lenin described the newspaper *Iskra* as the scaffoldings for the construction of the Party itself. Times are different now, but Lenin's thought about the press playing a creative role is also true today. Our own experience has convinced us of the wisdom and profoundness of Lenin's statement.

In the past few years our press has done much to support the policy of restructuring the Party's work and make it a concern of the public. Our press is doing a superb job in furthering the democratisation of Soviet society, glasnost and civic initiative in the campaign against everything standing in the way of the process of change. This is not to say that all is well with the press or that it does not run into any problems. The weak points of the press are being felt acutely, especially its poor coverage of the complex and difficult efforts to master new ways of living. Our mass media still shows a lack of constructive initiative, although we have discussed this matter more than once.

In all likelihood, this is due to our common shortcomings as well, because we do not have enough ideas or expertise when it comes to effecting political and economic reforms and updating the forms and methods of work of the Party itself. That is why we must more firmly raise these questions before the press and the Communists working in the media. The public expects effective action from Party, government and economic bodies, from our cadres. This should now be the main focus of our press. We should give more decisive and consistent encouragement to the constructive initiative of the media.

This meeting should throw more light on a very important issue that has to do with Party officials, the press, and the general public. I mean the relationships within the triad comprising the public, the Party and the press.

The experience throughout world history, especially the more recent of this, confirms that this powerful

social institution, the press, nowhere can be independent of the public. Lenin was right in saying that the press always advocates the views of this or that political party. It always expresses the interests of one social force or another. This fully applies to our society and to our time in general.

As the ruling party and the nation's political vanguard, the CPSU has done and will be doing everything for the press to promote the people's interests, socialism and humanism as effectively as possible. And, of course, to further these interests with regard to the real issues we are handling at this crucial stage of our history. This is our reply to those who would like to tear the press from the Party. Concerning our principles, there can be no concessions. The press should treat our political line and fundamental guidelines with respect. Aside from that, Communists and non-Communists alike who work for a newspaper, magazine or publishing house should be absolutely free to write whatever they want, to address issues and uphold their views creatively and responsibly.

Most of our publications are headed by Communists, and many journalists are also Party members. Nonetheless, we should see if Party committees are doing everything to give journalists their ideological bearings, to help and support them and, naturally enough, to place stringent demands on them. No areas should be closed to the public eye or criticism. And this is fully true of our mass media.

Party officials at all levels underestimate the media's ability to make their opinions on topical issues known to the public. The resulting gaps are often filled with substandard materials. Party members should take the initiative here. The Central Committee has learned that some organs of the press refuse to publish authors whose views differ from those of the editors.

May I remind members of the press that pluralism presupposes an exchange of views, a comparison of opinions, and discussion, and that they should proceed

from principles rather than personal likes and dislikes.

What has been said here about the relations of the Party, the state and public organisations with the media reaffirms the need for a law on the press. A draft law will soon be presented to the USSR Supreme Soviet.

### **Now about activities within the Party.**

Four years ago the Party made its choice and began the difficult ascent to democracy. Our choice has proved correct, and we have become even more convinced that making the Party's entire activity more democratic is the most effective cure for the Party's ills.

More democratic Party practices concern not just the Party itself. We must have more democracy if we wish to rebuild our society and create a law-based socialist state and a society which really honours its citizens. It is only democratic principles that will allow Party policy to embrace the aspirations of all population groups, rally them around national objectives and interests, and ensure national accord. What makes this all the more important is the specifics of our one-party system.

Overcoming the view of the Party as a rigid hierarchic issuer of directives and the sole director of public activities as soon as possible is a must for the consistent and profound democratisation of the Party itself. We must recreate the democratic character of the Party as a self-governing socio-political organisation.

It is from this angle that the Party should take a serious look at itself, strictly review the work of all its components, conduct critical self-analysis of the activities of all Party committees, all Party officials, and all Communists, rally its ranks, and breathe new life into the Party and all its activities.

If this goal is to be achieved primary Party organisations should live a full life that would meet the demands of today's atmosphere in society, and the acute problems, requirements and expectations of the people. Comrades, we cannot ignore the fact that while passions are boiling in our society, opinions clashing, and rallies raging, many Party organisations sit back and do noth-

ing. Communists in Leningrad spoke about this with concern and bitterness. To satisfy their interests and express their opinions on the most urgent issues, they attend all sorts of discussion clubs and rallies. There is nothing bad in this, of course, except one thing: they cannot discuss all these issues and society's concerns in their Party organisations.

Members of the elective Party bodies are effectively staying aloof from the burning issues. Speakers at the plenary meeting of the Leningrad Regional Party Committee, including representatives of worker collectives, dwelt extensively on this problem. These are serious matters, for there are five million members of elective bodies, and the majority of them enjoy the respect of Communists, have extensive political experience, and earnestly wish to do something to contribute to the common cause. What's more, these bodies were elected less than a year ago.

Why would this be happening? Is mental inertia, or a fear of all new things and difficult decisions the reason? Or is it the old custom of deciding everything behind closed doors, in a narrow circle and according to instructions from above? Let us discuss all these things frankly. We simply cannot let the Party remain as it is at this stage of profound change, with society undergoing the process of further politicalisation.

We have the review-and-election campaigns in many primary Party organisations yet to come, while others—meaning those having Party committees and bureaus, as well as district, city, regional and republic Party organisations—are to hear progress reports. These must be held in an atmosphere of comradely partisan discussions; work on attaining the tasks of perestroika should be considered substantively, and with Party exactingness. In this connection, we should resolve well-ripe personnel issues by promoting to positions of leadership those who are really convinced and active proponents of perestroika and who are able to think and act in the modern way. Some Communists propose

holding Party conferences that will concentrate fully on the importance of the moment, and the complexity of problems facing the Party and society. This does not contradict the Rules, and there are no reasons not to hold such conferences.

I would like to propose for the consideration of this meeting a number of other issues which today are very urgent and call for clarification.

Both in the Party and society, there are many debates concerning the correlation between the freedom of opinion and the unity of action. Communists are seeking a democratic solution.

For many years and in many Party organisations, even the most important issues were resolved as if they were an automatic process, by a simple show of hands, and without any deep analysis of the different viewpoints. This practice made Party life insipid and created an atmosphere conducive to major miscalculations, arbitrariness and, in some cases, lawlessness. There is no justification for this practice, and the only explanation for it is the fact that it suited perfectly the administration-by-command system. It is now our task to revive the genuine, Leninist view of the correlation between the freedom of opinion and the unity of action, between democratism and centralism.

Constructive debate and the consideration of all alternatives practised by the Party in society, imparts a definite logic to Party life. Today, we have no need for a sham show of unity. It is neither possible, nor necessary. Genuine unity can only be attained if the Party guarantees the freedom of discussion, the freedom to debate the issues of the Party line on the basis of alternative proposals, the right of the minority to express their viewpoint, including their views on decisions passed by the majority, so long as the minority necessarily subordinates to the majority.

In short, we must concern ourselves with creating an atmosphere of Party comradeship in order to make it possible freely to uphold one's position, discuss prob-

lems and compare views. No less important is an active, concerted effort to implement the adopted decisions. Both things are equally important for Party life. Together they constitute the dialectical method.

The issue of Party discipline is closely linked with the above. I believe no one doubts that discipline is vital for society and the Party in particular. Moreover, I would say that the state of discipline in the Party and in society deeply worries us all. We must act with determination both in the cities and in the provinces to rectify the situation. But how can discipline be promoted? In the current complex situation some comrades speak of the need to strengthen discipline and at the same time dream of a "firm hand"; they are calling, in essence, for the Party "to tighten the screws".

We may stand for higher exactingness, but I do not think we can totally agree with this approach, for it contradicts the spirit of the current transformations in our society. Is this the example that the Party should provide for the whole of society to follow? It would spell the preservation of the machinery of the administration-by-command system, which is rusty beyond repair. It would inevitably exacerbate the crisis, from which we have to emerge as soon as possible. I am convinced that we should display determination and conviction in raising the issue of conscious and comradely discipline resting on the high sense of Party duty. Far from freeing each of us of responsibility to do the work entrusted to us, it should add to our sense of responsibility. This is the way the issue should be tackled; this is the way to act in Party organisations.

The on-going democratisation of the Party inevitably makes us think of the relationship between the Party centre on the one hand and the Communist Parties of the Union republics and local Party organisations on the other. During the time when the command-administration method of management flourished, Lenin's idea that the struggle for the unity of the proletariat of all nationalities must be combined with



the autonomy of local and regional organisations, was often passed over in silence. Such an attitude was no mere coincidence, but reflected the practice whereby the ethnic and other specific features of different regions were not given due attention and Party work with people of different nationalities was not flexible enough.

Under the current restructuring drive we must give more freedom to the Communist Parties of the Union republics and to the local Party organisations. We find this particular approach to the problem by the Communist Parties of a number of Union republics to be quite legitimate. Moreover, comrades, we can start tackling these problems right now, without waiting for the congress, because our Rules give us ample opportunity for this. In getting rid of everything that is restricting the initiative of Party committees, we must give them the right to deal with many organisational, structural, personnel, financial and other issues.

The local leaders' habit of coordinating even the most minor of decisions with the centre can no longer be tolerated. This breeds nothing but parasitic attitudes and red tape. Emphasising the need to solve long-overdue problems and to specify the relationships between the centre on the one hand and the Communist Parties of the Union republics and local Party organisations on the other, I would like to alert the Communists to the danger of making erroneous judgments that go against fundamental Leninist ideas concerning the structure and functions of the Party.

All Communists must be aware that we cannot mechanically apply the structural principles of our federal state to the Party. "We are **against** federation in the structure of our Party," Lenin said, "we are for the **unity** of the local (and not only central) organisations of Social-Democrats of all nations." Here I would once again like to underline the central idea involving the Party's role as the political vanguard, the creator of major policy targets and the main exponent of the working people's international interests, as an indis-

pensable and vitally important factor for the consolidation of society in achieving the goals and tasks of perestroika.

Comrades, the entire set of problems arising from the re-evaluation of the Party's work and from the understanding of its new role in the present conditions, including democratisation and the mastering of political methods of work, is largely linked with the work of personnel and with personnel policies.

The recent eventful years that have been marked by profound changes in the Party and in society, have had a great impact on personnel policies, seriously altering the make-up of personnel and the ways in which they work. In short, these years have not been wasted, and that also goes for personnel matters. However, as a Party member, I must say that restructuring our work methods and those of personnel has not been easy, and not just because some individual workers are against perestroika and change. It is not this that's important.

What is important is the power of inertia and old habits, adherence to the old stereotypes, the difficulty of adjusting to the new life, which demands new analysis, new vision, resolute restructuring of the forms and methods of work, and new energy. For many basically committed and honest Communists this is indeed a real drama. Thoughtless judgements and sweeping actions on the part of Party committees are inadmissible where this is concerned. One cannot ride roughshod over people.

And yet, while resolutely defending well-balanced approaches to personnel policies, we cannot rank the interests of individual workers higher than the interests of society and the nation. After all we must never forget that we have a great deal of work to do, profound changes to bring about and a country to lead out of a grave situation. We must keep this in mind as we deal with personnel issues. Therefore, we cannot postpone the solution of long-overdue personnel problems. All the more so as the past few years have brought to the

forefront many new people who have acquitted themselves well, and demonstrated their devotion to the cause of perestroika and an ability to run affairs efficiently and to work with the masses.

Perestroika will succeed where personnel problems are solved correctly and where an inflow of fresh forces is ensured. And this, comrades, depends on the personnel policies for which the CPSU bears responsibility before the country and the people. I must say in this connection that much depends here on the first secretaries of the Party committees. Without their committed involvement and democratic approach, it would be impossible to assert new tendencies in personnel policies and to do away with authoritarianism and arbitrary decisions.

The current democratisation drive demands that the Party resolutely do away with formal and nomenclature approaches to personnel matters and with the self-isolation of the personnel corps, which derives from them. Changes in personnel should not be made by shuffling and re-shuffling, in which case we are bound to rely on the same limited choice of people, which keeps the doors closed to fresh forces.

It has to be said that Party committees also lose a great deal by doing this, and they lose their ability to work successfully in a changing situation if they draw their personnel from the same closed circles. We need to fill the ranks of Party officials with creative energy, we need to give the green light to those Party members who are able to bring something new to the work of the Party bodies, and ensure the success of perestroika.

An effective way of approaching personnel matters, of selecting able people, is to ensure that there is more than one candidate for each post. As is well known, the January 1987 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee issued unambiguous instructions on this score. It has to be said, however, that this principle is being introduced into the Party very slowly, and yet it is the Party that should be setting an example to all of

society where this is concerned. Even during the course of the recent review-and-election campaign, only half the secretaries of primary Party organisations were chosen on a multi-candidate basis, even less at district committee level, and only a handful at regional level. In this respect the Party has been far overtaken by the Soviets, numerous public organisations and workforces. We must resolutely overcome this unjustified and virtually inexplicable conservatism of Party committees where this is concerned—this is what Party members think, and what they say at meetings.

And, comrades, another important observation. We should influence people not by commands, but by prestige and persuasion. Party committees should unite around themselves all intellectual forces and the best minds, of members and non-members alike. We have to turn Party committees into the “place to be” for today’s capable and thinking young people, thus paving the way for a real rotation of personnel. This is not a simple task, but neither is it superhuman. More than that, in the current democratic climate, it is simply essential.

Comrades, it is very important to ensure representation of various nationalities at all levels of the Party apparatus, and in all elected bodies. The same applies to state and economic agencies and public organisations. This question has been neglected for a long time, which has caused various extremes to arise; this is detrimental to our cause and has brought with it justifiable criticism from workers of various nationalities. The Central Committee should, of course, set an example in this respect, and although it has recently taken certain measures, they are clearly not enough. We have to recognise this has been a fault of our making.

I think that at this gathering, where we are discussing topical issues affecting the life and work of the Party in the current conditions, we must not pass over the issue of the Party apparatus. Whether we like it or not, the

situation is such that the Party apparatus and Party officials have become the target of much ungrounded criticism. We must state our point of view on this question to the Party and society.

First of all, I wish to state categorically that we reject all attempts to defame the Party apparatus. We do need an apparatus, but we need a new one that is capable and qualified to carry out its functions, to give comprehensive assistance to the elected bodies, and we have recently been creating such an apparatus. It has recently received an influx of new personnel dedicated to the cause of perestroika, capable of originality in thought and initiative in action.

In order to ensure a constant stream of new and fresh talent, so that the life of the Party apparatus should be consonant with the processes taking place in the Party and in society, what is necessary first of all is a democratic approach to its establishment. Of particular importance here are the opinions of Party members on this or that worker, on his political, professional and human qualities. We have nothing to fear from competition and more choice. I think that we should introduce assessment tests on a regular basis, arranging them for elections to Party committees.

As is well known, major steps have been taken within the Party to cut and alter the structure of the Party apparatus. This has been done as a matter of principle, in order to make it correspond to the new conditions for division of functions between Party, state and economic bodies.

In doing this, we wanted at the same time to strengthen the apparatus, and attract the best-qualified people to it. With this aim in mind, it would be expedient to channel released resources into increased wages for Party officials, the more so since in recent years their wages have seriously lagged behind those categories of workers which contribute the personnel corps of the Party apparatus. The Central Committee has issued instructions to the appropriate departments

in connection with this matter, and by the end of the year necessary measures will have been taken.

Now matters of training and retraining Party workers are acquiring a new nature. The central point should be instruction in new and modern methods of work. Accordingly, we should restructure the training system used at the Academy of Social Sciences of the CPSU Central Committee, and the Party Higher School. The Party development and personnel department, and the ideological department of the Central Committee of the CPSU have been slow to implement this idea. We need urgently to organise a network of courses and seminars for young workers who have joined the Party apparatus in recent years.

### III.

These, comrades, are the questions that we considered had to be discussed at today's gathering. They do not, of course, cover the entire range of problems connected with the restructuring and renewal of the Party, taking into account the changes in its functions and the profound and revolutionary transformations taking place in society. But, by taking into account the discussion that will take place at this gathering, I think that we will have the answers to the main problems that are today worrying the Party and society.

As you will have noticed, this report contains no detailed account of problems facing the nationalities policy in the current situation and the consequent tasks facing the Party. This has been done on purpose, since such matters will be discussed at the next Central Committee Plenary Meeting.

As you know, the other day the Politburo discussed the Party's draft nationalities policy for the present situation. Lengthy and serious work in preparation for this Plenary Meeting has brought forth its conclusions. I can say that in the main this document has been

prepared, and, with the results of the discussion taken into account, it will be dispatched shortly, before the end of the month, to the Central Committees of the Parties of the Union republics, to Party territorial and regional committees. Bearing in mind the enormous significance of this document, we consider that we should meet once more to discuss it, and then, in September, submit it for discussion at the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee.

In conclusion, I would like to say the following. You know that there have been calls for a special CPSU Congress. I think that we should assess these calls within the context of the current situation.

The 19th Party Conference took place only a year ago, and discussed vital issues concerning the Party's work and policy for the immediate future. In my opinion, the political instructions decided on at the Conference have lost none of their significance and remain fully in force. Following the Conference there were reports and elections in the Party covering primary, district, town, regional and territorial organisations.

Before us are major political events—the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee on the nationalities question, the Second Congress of People's Deputies, and in spring the elections to the republican and local Soviets. These are important landmarks in our political reform. It has to be said directly that enormous work has yet to be done in connection with them, which includes the Party, the Soviets, public organisations, in effect, all of our society.

In August the review-and-election campaign begins in the Party, and we should make full use of it in carrying out the task of activating internal Party life and all its work.

And most important of all, at the next Party Congress we will have to renew the Party Programme and adopt the new Rules. Without this, holding a Congress would be unjustified. You yourselves understand that in order

to draw up proposals for the Programme and the Rules a great deal of hard work and time is required. We need to set about this job now, without delay.

None of this favours the convocation of an extraordinary Congress. But there are evidently grounds for discussing the possibility of bringing the next, 28th Party Congress nearer. Perhaps we can hold it in autumn 1990. Let's consult on this matter.

With this I would like to close my report.



Михаил Сергеевич Горбачев

**ПЕРЕСТРОЙКА РАБОТЫ ПАРТИИ — ВАЖНЕЙШАЯ КЛЮЧЕВАЯ ЗАДАЧА ДНЯ**

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