

## Following the course the Congress set

THE value of time is greater than ever before. More and more thoughts and acts occur in a day and in an hour, and the pulse of our life is growing stronger and more intense. It has only been a year since the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union ended. This is a short period by purely historical standards. Yet some years are equal to decades of "quiet" and "routine" development. It is a time of renovation and major change that everybody has been anxiously waiting for. This is the kind of time we are living through.

### Revolutionising work

The 27th Congress adopted decisions of historic importance for the destinies of the nation. It produced a realistic and thoroughly-considered strategy and tactics, called the tune and set the pace of our advance towards an upgraded Soviet society. There is ample ground for saying that the twelve months that have passed since the Congress have proved the course it set to be right and the view it took of home and world affairs to be scientifically correct. The Congress carried forward the detached and all-round analysis, initiated by the April, 1985 Central Committee Plenum, of the negative developments and processes that had subsisted since the earlier years and attended to the daunting task of updating all areas of social life. The lessons of the truth that the Congress taught prompted a dedicated effort to purge our existence of everything that obstructs our advance and holds up social, economic, cultural and intellectual progress.

The year since the Congress has seen the start made in putting through the Party's strategy of far-reaching reform in the national economy and in social welfare and in stepping up the pace of advance; it has been one that has seen initial progress in carrying out the provisions of the updated Party Programme and amended Rules, and in following the Guidelines for national economic and social development under the Twelfth Five-Year Plan and for the rest of this century.

The top priority that the Congress set was to reverse the unfavourable trends in economic growth, make it properly dynamic and give full scope to the initiative and creative endeavour of the masses and to fundamental innovations. This revolutionising work has already got under way. The opening moves have been made for a radical reshaping of the material and technical resources and for a thoroughgoing reconstruction of the national economy in the wake of high technology. The structural and investment

policies have been changing, and extensive measures taken to upgrade management and restructure the economic machinery. The principles of full-scale profit and loss accountability and self-financing have been gaining ground in a number of sectors. State quality inspection has been introduced as standing practice at one-and-a-half thousand plants and factories. Individual enterprises and whole industries are getting wider opportunities for their external economic links. There has been an upturn in industry and in farming.

The Congress declared concern for man, for his working and living conditions to be the top priority. There has been slow but sure progress in redressing a certain imbalance in favour of technocratic trends that was allowed to develop in earlier years. A turn towards a really vigorous and integral social policy has been a distinguishing feature of the operation of the Party, local government and economic bodies in the past twelve months. Wide-ranging measures have begun to be put through to improve things in housing construction and in providing healthier working and living conditions for people and raising the wages of some categories of workers. Unjustified restrictions on self-employment have been lifted, along with a tightening of control over the measure of work and the measure of consumption and the observance of the principles of social justice.

### Socialist democracy

The Congress made a point of noting that faster advance is inconceivable and impossible without a further development of Socialist democracy, of all of its aspects and manifestations and without a consolidation of Socialist self-government by the people. Important steps have been taken during the past twelve months to make the democratic principles of management more effective and to promote openness. Elections of business executives are more and more often reported from various parts of this country. New organisations expressing the interests of different social, demographic and occupational groups have been set up. There has been more openness and greater candour in the people's judgements about the current problems, and fresh incentives have been given to literature and art and to the mass media. Real change in the intellectual life of the community is in evidence: there is a new ideological and moral atmosphere that is arising and the social apathy of many is giving way to truthful assessments, intolerance of drawbacks and a desire to improve things.

The past twelve months have been an important stage in the implementation of the peace-building foreign policy line of the CPSU and of the consistent programme advanced by the Congress for removing the nuclear danger and ending the arms race, keeping and strengthening universal peace and creating an all-embracing system of international security. The events of 1986 showed the validity of the new mode of political thinking—an alloy of the philosophy of making the world safe in the nuclear missile age with the platform of concrete action to rid humanity of the weapons of mass destruction and implant the top priority of the common human values of peace everywhere.

The year after the Congress has been one of asserting a new, creative mode of thinking and acting in every area of community life and Party work. This has been the opening year of reorganisation which has been developing all

along the line, enveloping all the "floors" of our social edifice and the innermost fabric of our existence. Reorganisation is the point of primary concern to the Party today. The commitment to it was given an all-round rationale at the Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee in January this year. The Plenum produced what Mikhail Gorbachev described as the theory and policy of reorganisation. It "has stirred all healthy forces in society to action and given people confidence in what they are doing", the Plenum underlined. "An objective and self-critical attitude to the state of things, a departure from the cut-and-dried, well-beaten ways of going about their work, and the search for new and uncommon approaches to problems have become typical of more and more Party committees, public organisations and work collectives. We feel the solid and decisive backing of workers and peasants, intellectuals in the arts, science and engineering, and of all sections of Soviet society."

### Potential of Socialism

The course for faster advance, mapped out by the April, 1985 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee and the 27th Congress, has proved to be the expression of a vital need realised by the healthy forces of the community and the Party, which found the courage to make a sober assessment of the situation that had arisen in this country, admit the need for radical change in politics, the economy and social and intellectual areas, and set the nation on course towards it.

The January Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee made an in-depth analysis of the pre-April period and reviewed the assessments made at the Congress of the situation that had developed in this country in the '70s and the early '80s. The report "On Reorganisation and the Party's Personnel Policy" dissected the mechanism that slowed social and economic development and hindered progressive change, which had taken shape in that period. That retarding process, it was noted at the Plenary Meeting, was rooted in serious shortcomings in the functioning of the institutions of Socialist democracy, in outdated political and theoretical concepts, which often did not correspond to reality, and in the conservative managerial mechanism.

Looking back at what we had to live through, we see more and more clearly that the process that began in the mid-'60s as an effort to overcome subjectivism and voluntarism, promote more effective collective leadership, totally overcome the consequences of the personality cult and restore the Leninist standards of Party life did not, as a matter of fact, produce the results we expected. Of course, the nation's development did not stop, our material and other opportunities appreciably increased, and the potential of Socialism generally expanded. However, there were some negative processes that were building up, too, and it is their consequences that are still hampering our progress in achieving our targets as quickly as we would like to achieve them.

Now, those unexpected difficulties, unusual for us and objectively unjustified as they were, cropped up in a country possessing unique natural resources, leading the world in the production of oil, steel, mineral fertiliser, tractors and many other things, having one-fourth of the world's scientific workers and the largest national contingent of engineers, and

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one that has demonstrated its ability to resolve problems of unprecedented difficulty both in time of war and peace! So how could all that happen?

The problems that were building up sprang from the absence of major solutions in the economic, social, cultural and other areas in the last fifteen years, and predominance of dogmatic approaches on the theoretical front. In those years, with world development more dynamic than ever before and domestic as well as external conditions of development changing by the day if not by the hour, as the saying goes, political leadership had to be rallied, self-critical, determined, energetic and competent enough to appraise the changes in the situation in good time, reflect them in politics and look for and find new modes of approach. However, the decisions that were long overdue were either not taken at all or not followed up with economic and political work, and so remained mere scraps of paper.

## Progress of Socialism

The progress of Socialism in the last few decades has brought us to new frontiers — it has created not only a new material and cultural standard of life but new conditions for economic growth as well. So it was impossible at this juncture even to keep the gains made by working in the old way. But to ensure further development there had to be new concepts and new methods of work in all areas. Yet instead of that, what came to reign against the backdrop of well-known successes of our society was a climate of smug satisfaction, complacency and permissiveness. In ideological activity, there was an increasingly transparent desire to gloss over the actual state of things and a growing trend for it to be divorced from the march of life. There was an attempt to pass over the facts — whether of the past or of the present — that were not exactly praiseworthy and to pretend they did not exist at all. Such a practice, foreign to a Leninist Party, led, first, to our opponents speaking most willingly about the things we passed over, and that produced in the long run an interpretation of the involved issues of history and modern realities that was hostile to us. Second, the attempts at passing over the negative developments undermined confidence in what the Party said and generated apathy and indifference in the community.

Similar consequences sprang not only from omissions but also from the facts of direct divergence of words and works. Speakers in public urged the crystal honesty of Communists but in actual reality there were growing elements of connivance at corruption, deception of the Party and the State, eyewash, alcohol abuse, which occurred even in the higher echelons of administration. Speakers in public called for the observance of the Leninist principles of staff selection and placement, while in actual fact there was a trend to promote people often on the grounds of personal devotion and dislodge people having abilities and their own opinion, thereby giving rise to a "cult of mediocrity". Speakers in public referred to criticism and self-criticism and to Socialist democracy, but in actual practice it was servility and glorification that were encouraged and the measures that were long overdue to promote self-government and full public information and to check bureaucratic practices were not taken. Speakers in public referred to the truth, yet in actual fact rewrote even what is the sacred history of the Great Patriotic War which millions of Soviet people know only from books. Social sciences were required to produce rhetorics instead of analysis, a "scientific justification" of the successes and achievements, while giving no speaking opportunities to those who could speak from genuinely scientific positions and who boldly raised new problems concerning in particular the acceleration of scientific and technological progress, modification of the machinery of economic management, establishment of top

priorities in social welfare, enhancement of the role of the human being and the human factor, etc. There was support "from above" for a dogmatic treatment of Socialism, convenient for the bureaucrats, and quiet mediocrity in literature and arts.

The harsh reality was that the political, business and moral qualities of some, including top-ranking leaders, did not quite live up to the requirements of the extremely involved and challenging period of development which Soviet society had entered. Neither did those around them — there were careerists without principle, turncoats, moral perverts who put the interests of their own welfare before national and public interests. All that did a lot of damage to Socialist morals and had an adverse effect on the moral make-up of the community. Working people saw that high-sounding speeches about the ways to preserve and build up public property were not followed up either by economic incentives, organisational measures or the personal behaviour of leaders — and made the appropriate conclusions for themselves. Administration officials guessed that the right words were spoken not because they had to be followed by the right deeds but just for the sake of a ritual, and that there was no point at all in doing what anyone called for in public — nobody would ever punish you if you didn't, and there would be nothing beyond a bit of talking and then everything would blow over.

## Reorganisation and acceleration

Years of slowdown reduced many things to a state of neglect. It will take time and strenuous effort to overcome the momentum of growth retardation and stagnation and obtain a tangible effect from reorganisation, particularly in the economic and social areas. In fact, it cannot be otherwise: to gather a crop, you first have to plough up the field and sow it. That truth has been brought out with ample evidence during the last twelve months. There has to be steadfast and persistent work — there is no other answer to the difficult problems we have to resolve. It is particularly important in these circumstances not to stop, not to confine ourselves to criticising shortcomings, still less overdoing this criticism to the extent of demagoguery. A critical assessment of the past must be the starting point for positive action and for a constructive effort. That is what one can infer from the deep analysis of the negative processes which was made by the January Plenary Meeting. While drawing lessons and conclusions from the experience we have — both positive and negative — we must put our energies into a down-to-earth effort of major importance for reorganisation and acceleration. That is what we are actually up to today.

The concept of revolutionary reshaping of all areas of public life, formulated by the Party in pursuance of the strategic decisions of the 27th Congress, has crystallised in the course of its realisation. In June, 1986, the Central Committee Plenary Meeting pointed out that we had entered the stage of post-Congress activity in which we have to show our ability to reform ourselves and to look for new forms and methods, without for a moment resting content with what has been achieved. There was a growing realisation that the prospect for faster advance hinged on a radical reshaping not only of the economic system, but of the whole of society as well. A set of cogent arguments to prove the revolutionary character of the on-going changes was produced by Mikhail Gorbachev when he addressed the Khabarovsk Regional Party conference in July, 1986, and when he met working people of the Kuban country and Stavropol Territory. The concept of reorganisation was shaped by the developing realities, new trends and processes, with due regard for conflicting situations and even opposition from the forces holding on to the old ways. That's the dialectics of reorganisation. . . .

The January Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee gave a clear and full definition of its aim, content and character, showed its part in carrying out the Party's strategic plans and proved that there is no other choice. By reorganisation the CPSU means truly revolutionary and comprehensive reform of society. It is resolute overcoming of the processes of stagnation, destruction of the retarding mechanism, and the creation of dependable and efficient machinery for expediting the social and economic progress of Soviet society. It is reliance on the creative endeavour of the masses, an all-round extension of Socialist democracy and people's self-government. It is the ever greater role of intensive growth factors in Soviet economic development, combining the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution with the plan-based economy and setting the entire potential of Socialism in motion, and applying its inherent expedients of stimulating progress, above all cost-benefit methods. It is a decisive turn to science, the priority development of the social sphere, the ability to combine decision-making on major problems with the needs and requirements of every particular person and concern for his dignity. It is the consistent enforcement of the principles and standards of social justice, vigorously ridding society of any deviations from Socialist morals, cleaning it of the rust of social corrosion and righting its wrongs. The final aim of reorganisation is to renovate every aspect of the life of our society, to give Socialism the most advanced forms of social organisation, and bring out to the utmost the creative potential of the Socialist system.

Even at this point, the reorganisation effort is having an ever greater impact on the situation in this country. It is constantly enriching itself and acquiring new qualitative features. However, it is necessary to realise clearly that we have only just begun. Following Lenin's behest, the Party stands firm on what is the only stable base — reality — without either overestimating or underestimating what has been achieved. "We are just getting into stride, finding concrete approaches in our political line and mapping out ways of attaining the targets we have set ourselves," Mikhail Gorbachev pointed out in his concluding speech at the January Plenary Meeting. "We are just turning on the mechanism and means of reorganisation and taking our first steps in having them swing into action and yield results." But there is yet another point to proceed from. It is that in their majority the Soviet people have said their emphatic "Yes" to the reorganisation drive, and felt the need for it and its irreversibility with every fibre of their soul. This powerful support of the people for the Party's line for faster advance and reform finds itself reflected in the positive changes this country has achieved since the 27th Congress.

## Marxist-Leninist science

The entire domestic policy of the Communist Party and of the Soviet State has been essentially updated in pursuance of the decisions of the April, 1985 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee and of the 27th Congress of the CPSU, which provided both the political and scientific rationale for the strategy of acceleration. Some of the updating was done at the January Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee. It is V. I. Lenin's ideas of how to build Socialism, restored in their full integrity and force and creatively combined with current assessments and inferences reposing on a profoundly realistic, truthful and critical analysis of the state of affairs in each sector of Socialist development, that make up the theoretical framework of this policy. The Party's new ideas, embodied in the strategy of acceleration and the concept of revolutionary reform, are a major contribution to the Marxist-Leninist science of Socialism. The top priorities prompted by the

ultimate requirements of the economic and social progress of this new society of ours have now come to occupy their proper place in the theory and practice of Socialist advance. Many of these priorities were singled out before as the most important, but little was done to actually meet them; work in this sense was slack, inconsistent and unproductive.

Since April, 1985 and especially during the twelve months that have passed since the Congress there has been a real breakthrough in the making: a vigorous effort to bridge the gap between words and acts, between ideology and practice, a gap that equally disgraced both. The decisions taken no longer look like nice and right declarations with no effort to make them work, but make up the ideological base of the thoughtful, persistent and well-organised work of Party, local government and economic management bodies, associations of working masses and production groups. They have "come down" to the "grass roots", so to speak: people have taken them for what they are; they see these decisions not only as correct but also as valid and effective; they have taken them as imperatives, and supported the Party's new course by their efforts and by their work.

### Stimulating the human factor

As a result things in the national economy have, no doubt, improved: witness the first year's performance under the current five-year plan. The success is encouraging, of course. But it would certainly be wrong to rest content, as was the custom in recent years, with a "feeling of profound satisfaction". That would be out of step with the reorganisation effort now under way and with the Party's new tack since April, 1985. These are just first steps along the acceleration road, perhaps the first approach to the required acceleration. While setting a model of truly Bolshevik inquietude, business-like approach and consistency, the January Plenum focused on the unresolved problems and on the need to make up for what we failed to do in 1986. It was by taking a detached look at the actual state of things, by critically analysing what had been done and the reasons why something was not done or was bungled, and by adopting well-considered measures to mend matters without delay that the Party struck last year's balance, and that is what it wants the Communists, executive staffs and all working people to do.

Improved economic performance is no excuse for complacency and self-satisfaction. Faster progress of high technology is, of course, the best way to faster economic growth. But we are so far at the start of this road: there are departmentalism and bureaucratic practices that block new ideas; many plants and amalgamated factories have yet to earn their retooling and modernisation investment. What they need is not only the means and not only the new machinery but the faster vocational and general efficiency training of all workers to turn it to good account. Occasionally some high-performance machinery, including imported machinery, stands idle just because there are too few hands to operate it or none at all.

The Party's idea about stimulating in every way the human factor of modern production is not yet translated into reality everywhere consistently and persistently. Of course, neither business managers nor other executives deny its importance. On the contrary, they do recognise it. However, it is the state of social priorities and the extent of satisfaction of the social, cultural and domestic requirements of the working people that prompted the January Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee to state with so bitter a reproach and concern that "the weight of the outstanding problems in this important sphere is too great and we are still too timid in tackling them." The "residual" principle of financing the construction of housing and social welfare and recreational facilities is still

present in major industrial projects and sometimes in whole population centres. The share of manual labour is still too great at many factories and in whole industries. There are still some business executives who regard the improvement of working conditions, let alone of welfare facilities, as a matter of secondary importance; numerous community organisations, including trade unions, are not sufficiently active in the enterprising resolution of these problems.

### Principles of Marxism-Leninism

The implementation of a vigorous social policy is a matter of common concern to the nation and to the people, one that is basic to the stimulation of the human factor. It is the greatest untapped reserve of acceleration. Nobody has the right to lose sight of V.I. Lenin's precise formula: the worker, the working man is the main productive force of society. The only way to actuate new technology — embodied labour and embodied knowledge — is by combining it with living labour. The ultimate potentialities of any machinery and the real productivity of social labour are determined only by the quality of work of the people who have to handle that machinery — their occupational skill and general efficiency, the level of organisation of their work, the provision of appropriate productive capacities and social welfare and domestic services, by the measure of their interest (material and moral) in their overall performance, and hence by the art and desire to work to the best of their abilities, and by the close-knit collective action in the process of production. As a matter of fact, all these issues combined were put forward at the April, 1985 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, at the 27th Congress and in other Party documents in a perfectly concrete and politically articulate form; an innovative approach to resolving them has been put at the base of the State (Amalgamated) Enterprise Act.

The turn of the economy to the human being that is being made in accordance with the Congress decisions and the call for stimulating the human factor in every way respond to the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and make it possible to tackle the issue of consistently upgrading the relations of production by proceeding from strictly scientific principles (not from those of pure propaganda, as was the case before). The Party has taken the initiative in revising the scholastic interpretation of this fundamental concept of Marxist-Leninist theory, which used the category of "production relations" as no more than a theoretical abstraction of the highest level of generalisation, applicable only to society as a whole or, at best, to its classes and groups. That is how the relations of production look in textbooks, popular pamphlets, reference editions and many scientific papers. Such bureaucratized treatment of an issue of fundamental importance to Marxism is contrary to the concept of the founders of our world outlook.

Marxism's starting points are different. In "The German Ideology", Marx and Engels wrote: "The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity." ("The German Ideology." Marx & Engels. Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1938, p. 6-7). The decisive turn of the Communist Party's social and economic policy to the interests, needs and aspirations of the working people means, therefore, upgrading the rationale for this policy, both ideologically and theoretically, to enable a sound scientific ground to be laid for stimulating the human factor in every possible way.

The reconstruction of the true sense of the category of production relations, characterising

the main aspect of the economic system of society but always denoting human relations, enables a proper understanding of the task of upgrading Socialist production relations: not only as a "technical" and organisational task, or as one of streamlining them, etc., but as a socio-political task requiring the primacy of resolving such issues as the consistent application of the main principle of Socialism (From each according to his ability, to each according to his work), the requirements of social justice, and the increasingly distinct articulation of the substance of these relations as relations of Socialist collectivity, comradely mutual assistance and co-operation. Without a neat and clear characterisation of production relations, one cannot understand their actual content. That was the underlying premise of the revolutionary inferences of Marx's Capital and that of the precept that V.I. Lenin stood by in characterising the new relations of production and the new social connection between people, established and consolidated after the victory of a proletarian revolution — as the process of Socialist change went on — as a new type of organisation of work and a new kind of conscious and comradely discipline.

### Democratic centralism

This makes clear the outstanding theoretical and political significance of the substantiation and elaboration by the 27th Congress of the CPSU and by the subsequent Plenary Meetings of its Central Committee of the task of overall democratisation of the whole fabric of life of Socialist society, including production. The pursuit of democratisation as the sum and substance of the reorganisation effort now under way in this country — that is exactly what the January Plenary Meeting called for — is connected with the basic content of Socialist (and, of course, production) relations and with the major trends of their development.

The continued refinement of Socialist democracy, the widest possible involvement of working people and of all citizens in the administration of the State, production and society, and the creation of a well-proportioned system of people's Socialist self-government are the major conditions for stimulating the human factor. The State (Amalgamated) Enterprise Act, now published to be discussed nation-wide, is intended to repattern the conditions and methods of management in the basic sector of the economy and legitimise the new forms of self-management produced by the creative endeavour of the masses. The planned and effective implementation of the common interests of the State and of the people presupposes a consistent mobilisation of individual and collective interests, and to this end their most balanced satisfaction. It is only on this socio-economic and political base that all forces of the community can be brought into closer unity and galvanised into a full-scale effort to achieve the general short-term and long-term objectives. In this context, democratic centralism, enriched in its content, brings out its role as the fundamental principle of organisation of all life in a Socialist society, including the economy, and not only its social and political aspects; in this context, promoting industrial democracy is a major factor in the extension and refinement of Socialist democracy in general.

The very process of democratisation today also proves to be a universal notion. It is not only fuller, more competent, conscious and active exercise by citizens of their rights (in conjunction with just as full, competent, conscious and active fulfilment of their duties), not only observance and enrichment of democratic procedures in all areas of public life. It is likewise an indispensable condition for the increased efficiency and viability of the entire system of social (starting from production) relations and their growing stimulating impact on the progress of the Socialist

system as a whole and of all areas of its life. The basic directions of this democratisation process were specified in M.S. Gorbachev's Report at the Central Committee last January.

Openness is one of the most important prerequisites of success in expanding and refining Socialist democracy. The new type of society and State, V.I. Lenin said right after the victory of the Great October Revolution, are strong "when the people know everything, can form an opinion of everything and do everything consciously" (Coll. Works, vol. 26, p. 256). The finding of the 27th Congress of the CPSU that the period we are living through is a turning point both in national life and in international affairs has provided a clear political guideline: speeding up social and economic advance is not just a desirable improvement of the existing state of things — it is a task of vital importance to Socialism, the only way for us to move from the present into the future. With this finding to go by as its starting point, the Party has dramatically and boldly laid bare all the shortcomings and difficulties that had built up in the preceding period and raised the problems before us in their full magnitude. The Party has brought an unmercifully realistic, precise and complete critical analysis both of the achievements and deficiencies and even setbacks home to the large mass of working people, without hesitating to tell them the bitterest truth, but, on the contrary, calling for an outspoken assessment of the state of things in every area of our development, in every production group and in all sectors of public life.

Of fundamental importance for promoting openness are the principles of the 27th Congress and the January Plenary Meeting on criticism and self-criticism as a tried-and-tested instrument of Socialist democracy, on the need to encourage a critical mood in society, and, at the same time, on the need to counteract those suppressing criticism or acknowledging it in word only. "Such an attitude to criticism," M.S. Gorbachev emphasised, "has nothing in common with our principles and ethics. At the present stage, when we are asserting new approaches in socio-political life, and in the cultural and intellectual sphere, the importance of criticism and self-criticism grows immeasurably. People's attitude to criticism is an important criterion of their attitude to reorganisation, to everything new that is taking place in our society." The Party calls for bold and consistent criticism of shortcomings and for new issues to be raised in all areas of life of Soviet society without any fear. Every primary organisation must contribute in every way towards cultivating this kind of mood and climate in work collectives.

### Criticism and self-criticism

While promoting democratisation and openness, the media, public relations bodies and the Party press have a particularly important role to play in encouraging criticism and self-criticism. They are called upon to serve as powerful instruments of reorganisation, above all to be conducive to a change of mentality and encourage people to think more and do more about making the strategy of acceleration work. Many newspapers and other media have unequivocally committed themselves to this effort, taking a close searching look at the pith and marrow of the on-going processes, flaying the shortcomings and spotlighting the pressing problems of our development for a public scrutiny. Many, yes, but by no means all, or, as was said at the Plenary Meeting, far from all. In fact, their inadequate contribution to the reorganisation effort is quite often due to the failure of Party committees to use their influence properly, with some even pinning them down, pure and simple.

The staff of the press, television, broadcasting services and other media as well as many leaders and full-time members of Party committees at different levels have yet to develop the attitude to

criticism that the reorganisation process requires. That is due, in part, to the not infrequently low quality of criticisms. There has to be bold and in-depth analysis of topical problems, well-grounded and perfectly impartial assessments, a high sense of civic responsibility and accuracy of findings.

There is an urgent need for working out a new type of criticism responding to the challenge of the times. Whatever shortcomings may still be discovered have to be named, as have the culprits. However, to confine all criticism to pointing up "negative" things would, in the context of the maximum freedom of criticism, mean getting unwelcome "side effects" or even results opposite to those desired. Some media have been overdoing this kind of outmoded criticism sometimes. An uninformed reader may get the wrong impression of shortcomings and difficulties ever piling up and may and does sometimes take a pessimistic view of the actual course of life.

### January Plenary Meeting

M.S. Gorbachev has clearly formulated the tasks before the media and public relations bodies in the context of the on-going reorganisation as he conferred with media representatives in the CPSU Central Committee. Criticism must be constructive. It must equip the Soviet people with experience gained in effectively overcoming the difficulties and shortcomings. Nor, in fact, can the demonstration of the ground already made in the process of reorganisation be confined to mealy-mouthed "positive" reports: you cannot do without a critical analysis of the circumstances in which people, work collectives and organisations operate, and without showing their efforts. What we need now is not to warn against criticism, nor limit its scope, nor tone down the rising combative mettle, but on the contrary to intensify the reorganisation drive and provide better coverage of this drive. And of course it is the effect, the benefit we stand to gain from criticism that we must look for, first and foremost.

Frank discussion of most tricky and thorny issues, build-up of publicity and encouragement of criticism and self-criticism are essential for the unobstructed promotion of democracy in every area of our public life and for yet greater mass energy and initiative. That was made quite clear at the 27th Party Congress and at the January Plenary Meeting. Openness is a matter of particular importance for progress to be made in such most influential areas of cultural and intellectual life in our times as science, literature and art. A different set of circumstances would simply hamper the emergence of new scientific ideas and artistic values: it is a climate of open debate, constructive, well-intentioned criticism and self-critical assessment of what has been achieved that can favour scientific and artistic creativity. It is just as essential to collate what has been done against what has been achieved before and against the possible ideal paragons of the future, because a determination to identify the prospect and to work towards it is an indication of genuinely scientific and artistic creativity foreign to hack-work and uninspired execution. In this context, one cannot fail to see how much has yet to be done in the field of mental production to make a climate of sound and uncompromising criticism and self-criticism, fruitful discussions, bold and productive creativity prevail in every area of scientific cognition and all types and kinds of literature and art. There must be a full-scale reorganisation effort in this field as well.

Democratising public life, including mental production, means setting a whole series of ideological priorities in a new way. Beyond doubt, democratising discussions, moulding and expressing public opinion may give rise to a certain number of misjudgements. We must be ready for a public confrontation with them. And that means we must steadily and consistently

upgrade the professional, intellectual, ideological and theoretical level of our criticism, bring the art of polemics to perfection, make our arguments against wrong concepts perfectly convincing and quite clear to all those who follow the public debate on the dramatic issues of community life. It is necessary to raise in every way the prestige and influence of our political principles and intensify the political education of the Soviet people.

### Expanding democracy

In previous years we all heard more than enough of general pleas for higher standards of political culture and political understanding. Yet neither the slogans nor siren academic enlightenment will produce them. The experience gained in the opening stages of the reorganisation effort shows that people's allegiance to correct political positions grows as they get more involved in public life and, at the same time, as they have fuller information about the essence of the present period and link their perception of modern theory and politics of the Party more closely with their own immediate experience, with the changes in their own life and with the state of public opinion around them. Publicity is not only an opportunity for open criticism of shortcomings but increased and extended information, cultural standards and competence.

One example of reverses in store for ideological work if it is not on a proper professional level, if it disregards the complexities of life and the real picture of current moods, and if all that is compounded by misguided decisions and mismanaged acts, was provided by the incident in Alma-Ata last December. It exhibited serious flaws in educating into the spirit of internationalism and in the scientific elaboration of the problems of inter-community relations (notably, a shift of emphasis in some research studies from an analysis of the dialectical processes of internationalising public life of all national communities to ethnic relations issues pure and simple) and attempts to paint all developments and processes in rosy colours, shutting one's eyes to the misconceptions and ill feelings if only of a small group of people. Where, one might wonder, could wrong views and ill feelings come from in our society, in this country which has long since become a united commonwealth of equal peoples, a bastion of their unbreakable friendship? Processes of stagnation, negative developments and elements of social corrosion, which the Party is now combatting in the most decisive way, could not fail to affect inter-ethnic relations. Some backward groups and some executives revived parochial interests, a tendency for ethnic isolation and ethnic arrogance and alienation.

Failure to make a thorough analysis of the actual social-economic and intellectual processes, and a dull and void teaching of Soviet patriotism and of the Socialist type of inter-community relations arose from rather low standards of political culture and inadequate political thinking of quite a few ideological staffs and social scientists, and even of a certain proportion of executives, and their cut-and-dried, uncreative attitude to work and to their duty to make out well the complex problems of life and to work for change.

The more complex type of activity that has to be carried on to promote greater democracy involves not only ideological staffs, although it is in this sphere perhaps where the reorganisation drive should be particularly vigorous. It was stated in no uncertain terms at the Central Committee Plenary Meeting last January that the Party officials are under obligation to learn to work in the context of expanding democracy, adopt new forms and methods of work and approach the new situation in the community with a proper sense of imagination. That applies to all sectors and to all forces not only within the Party but also within the State and community

organisations. The new tasks arising from the growing involvement of the Soviet people must encourage the officials rather than discourage them: they can discourage only sluggish persons having no sense of what is new, accustomed to think and act in a well-beaten way and unable to keep pace with the quickening march of life of the advancing Socialist society.

The vigorous and persistent reorganisation effort applies to the Party's personnel policy, too, meaning that it has to work for fuller employment of priceless human material built up over the seven decades of the fight for and construction of Socialism, and bring the wealth of human resources in every stratum of Soviet society into the job of leadership and administration. The Party calls on each and every one of its organisations, committees and their staff, on all forces to rebuild and reinforce the bond with the masses, diversify the forms of mass work persistently overcome all formalism and bureaucracy, and go to the very grass roots — into the primary units of the Party, production groups and the general public. This is immeasurably building up the Party's bond with the masses and its influence, contributes to the training of personnel and serves to test their political maturity while enhancing their sense of responsibility. A major standard of reference by which to judge staff performance is their ability to create an atmosphere of friendly confidence and exacting attitudes in any sector, a climate of creativity, of striving for what is new and of an irresistible urge to forge ahead. That brings with it the increased import of the unity of words and acts and of the effort to assure a truly partisan, Leninist style of work, constantly upgraded and conducive to rallying the masses around the Party and making the nation-wide effort to speed up our society's advance more concerted and more productive.

### Human factor

It is a keen sense of what is new that is most essential. We have to remember that the wider the diversity of general practical experience and the more effectively the energies, abilities, intellectual power and expertise of as many people as possible are involved, the more active the human factor will be. This line of work is opposed to stagnation in every area of public life. It creates additional opportunities for the employment of reserve forces and for proper staff promotion. In this area, too, it was noted at the January Plenary Meeting, there has to be more of a dynamic approach and more adjustment to the requirements of the quickening advance of Socialist society. The reshaping of the Party's personnel policy in the light of the decisions of the Plenary Meeting is a major element of the progressive democratisation of Soviet society, one of the powerful instruments of the continued switch-over of social consciousness and of all our public life to the track of accelerated development of Socialism, which is

so essential for the Twelfth Five-Year Plan and for years beyond. Yet the reshaping of personnel policy must in no way be confused with any staff "shake-up" or reshuffle that would create no more than a semblance of a vigorous manning effort. It is extremely important in this field to rely on science and on the Leninist principles. There has to be full publicity, encouragement of democratic practices and large-scale actual involvement of Party organisations and production groups.

### Principles of Communism

In short, all forms and directions of the activity of the Communist Party its committees and organisations, and of all Communists must follow a creative and business-like approach to whatever they do, high efficiency in their own work and in the management of economic, political social and cultural affairs and in ensuring a clear improvement of the conditions of life and work for millions. Reliance on Marxist-Leninist science and on the political principles and priorities of Communism, on the constant assimilation and generalisation of all valuable practical experience must be combined with Bolshevik persistence, will and consistency in implementing, step by step, the decisions of the 27th Congress of the CPSU and in steadily moving ahead.

The year that has passed since the Congress has been a year of the Party's intensive theoretical activity. It has outlined the major current priorities for research in social sciences and the ways to update them in the documents of the Congress, the decisions of the subsequent Plenary Meetings of the CPSU Central Committee, in the Central Committee's resolution "On the Journal *Kommunist*" and in M.S. Gorbachev's speech before the National Conference of Social Science Chairs early last October. The emphasis in this updating is on bringing science closer to the realities of life, the needs and problems they generate. The January Plenary Meeting once more stressed the importance of a harder theoretical effort and the need for scientists to get more involved in resolving the most urgent problems dictated by current practice. It is becoming more and more imperative for social, natural and engineering sciences to work in close co-operation and play a more prominent part in the process of fundamental change going on in this country as reorganisation proceeds and major national economic growth programmes are drawn up and put through. It is not by chance that a business partnership of science and practice with the aim of achieving high overall performance and an ability to base any initiative on solid scientific ground, readiness and commitment of scientists to give full backing to the Party's course for the renovation of society should have been singled out as one of the essential features of the reorganisation effort; at the same time, this is concern for the advancement of science, promotion of its staffs and their full-scale involvement in the process of change.

The actual tasks and urgent problems are not only pressing matters, but reach deep into the fibres of life, that is those of its phenomena and processes that cannot be understood in all their complexity without using a powerful theoretical arsenal. For, indeed, a correct theory of social science is concentrated experience. Now, the application of this experience for resolving the major problems of today is necessary also because, as stated at the January Plenary Meeting, "the business of reorganisation is more difficult and the problems which have accumulated in society are more deep-rooted than we first thought."

Fundamental research in social sciences, more particularly on Socialism is still making too slow headway. The habit of looking back over one's shoulder and sticking to by-gones dies hard indeed. Many social scientists tend to limit

themselves to commenting on the points made in the Party documents and harping on what has already been approved by public opinion and has become widely known. But the main concern of a scholar is to advance science, not to imitate its advance by means of all kinds of verbal exercises, to advance science by posing new problems for solution. In actual fact, theory, notably political economy, is falling behind the fast changing practice, the latter often constrained to hit-and-miss tactics. There has to be particularly close attention given to the dynamics of production relations — property relations, economic inter-relationships and the issues of distribution.

The important objectives of providing the theoretical rationale for the radical reorganisation call for Soviet social sciences to make a close study of advancing Socialism and of the dialectical unity of the economic, social, political, cultural and intellectual aspects of its life. As one can see from a review of our recent past, an underestimation of the development of a particular aspect of public life and its retardation held up progress. The perception of Socialism as a whole was notoriously static, too. Now it is necessary to go beyond the fossilised image of Socialism as it formed half a century ago. That fossilisation of thought not only hindered the comprehension of the entire complexity of the new problems of societal development, but widened the gap between what was said and what was done, between the goals proclaimed and ways to attain them. It was clearly shown at the January Plenary Meeting how that ideology and practice of stagnation had adversely affected the state of social science, culture, literature and the arts. But the most important thing was that they had adversely affected the resolution of practical issues in all areas of public life.

### Creative endeavour

The approach to the uneasy situation in social sciences and to the facts of stagnation and ideological dogmatism should be the same as that which the Party follows in assessing other omissions and mistakes of the past years. While meeting media people and public relations officers at the CPSU Central Committee, M.S. Gorbachev said: "If we only stopped . . . in our earlier modes of approaching things if we confined ourselves to criticising, analysing, without proposing a constructive programme, without saying the main thing, that is, what should be done and how, what forces should be brought into play, and how to scrap the braking mechanism and create a really new one of acceleration, we would once again be marking time." That means that, in considering the present-day objectives of Soviet social sciences, too, we must not confine ourselves to stating that research falls behind the march of life but look for ways and means to stop this falling, find and boldly support the creative-minded people and better organise the work of economists, philosophers, historians and lawyers so that it will augment the existing intellectual potential to the maximum. We note the uncommonly increased social demand for a scientific elaboration of a mass of new, big and complex problems, requiring innovative perception. But the main thing is to do something to meet this demand. It is necessary to translate the fair criticism of social sciences into practice and support the sprouts of things which have appeared since the 27th Congress. Standing on the side-lines would do no honour to anyone, still less to a social scientist. We have to work, not indulge in abstract admonitions. A particularly great responsibility devolves on the leading scholars who must reaffirm their leadership by what they do all the time. The Party invites the social scientists to engage in a creative endeavour and to do serious and thorough work so as to bring science as close to practice and to the actual current requirements as possible.

#### Expert Opinion

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There are a good many sound forces in our social sciences, and they did refute in the past, with tangible evidence to support them, the allegations of Sovietologists about the "collapse of Marxism-Leninism", by their effective studies on relevant problems and appreciable research findings. The Party has used everything valuable in the elaboration and in the ideological and theoretical substantiation of its innovative strategy. The task now in hand is to take all of our social sciences a stage ahead. Following the April, 1985 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee and the 27th Congress, the substantial change that has taken place in the life of our society has had its effect on social sciences as well. Scientists and scholars of Academy institutes, universities and Party training schools, and local groups of scientific societies have become appreciably more active. The task now is to rally forces within each branch of social sciences, better rearrange them and coordinate their activities, and make the revolutionising spirit of reorganisation strike root within their ranks, too. The effect will certainly not be long in coming in science as well as in teaching and in manpower training. All that is required, as Mikhail Gorbachev said, is for everybody to work a bit harder. Speaking at the Tallinn Polytechnic, he stressed the need to intensify the intellectual impact and emotional appeal of the literature on social sciences, notably the textbooks — "we must have textbooks that could really attract the young people".

## Socialism

The purpose of research on social problems is not only the advancement of society. There is one more objective for it to achieve — that of advancing humanity. And if it is correct that any society is, in the final count, an objective condition and an historically definite form of human activity created by man himself, for a Socialist society this truth has a quite particular humanistic meaning. Under Socialism, the working man becomes for the first time both the object and the vehicle of societal development. Being dependent as he is on social conditions, he himself operates as the main factor of their improvement and the doer of historical progress. But it is necessary to investigate all this scientifically and produce practical recommendations. We do not see, however, any change in this sense, say, within the system of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

Socialism is creative endeavour of the working masses. All the greater, then, is the significance and responsibility of science which is, like the community as a whole, in the very opening stages of the present reshaping process. Next in line is not only an effort to overcome the outdated stereotypes of thinking and acting, but to work out theoretical propositions based on the realities of modern times and thoroughly grounded scientific foresight. Only under such circumstances shall we avoid stumbling over general issues in each particular case and will be able to count with confidence on the very effect we expect and impart a consistent and deep-going character to the changes we make.

At its 27th Congress, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union produced an example of a carefully balanced and considered approach both to the perception of the most complex problems of modern world development and the formulation and implementation of a consistent and effective foreign policy. "If we want to follow a correct, science-based policy," it was pointed out in the Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee, "we must clearly understand the key tendencies of the current reality. To penetrate deep into the dialectic of the events, into their objective logic, to draw the right conclusions that reflect the motion of the times, is no simple matter but it is imperatively necessary." This approach to an analysis of the events in international affairs and to an assessment of the

major trends in world development in general has been explicitly reflected in the documents of the Congress, in the updated Programme of the CPSU which it adopted and in the entire international political activities of the Party and the Soviet State.

The past twelve months have vindicated the justice of the fundamental assessments and conclusions of the 27th Congress, which were based on a scientific and dialectical analysis of the major trends and contradictions of the modern world and its socially heterogeneous components and elements. Social progress, gaining ground inevitably in the context of struggle, has such powerful sources to draw upon as world Socialism, the national liberation struggle, the international Communist and working-class movement, the general democratic movement for peace. It is necessary, Mikhail Gorbachev has pointed out, "to put an end to the alienation of politics from the common human principles of morality" so as to avert the threat of a nuclear catastrophe and preserve civilisation and life itself on Earth. This is the keynote of the new political thinking and the intellectual base for the only possible policy in our time, that of ensuring a lasting peace and international co-operation.

## Programme for nuclear disarmament

The fruitfulness of such an approach was confirmed, in particular, at the international forum "For a Nuclear-Free World, For the Survival of Humanity" which met in Moscow on February 14-16. Its participants welcomed the hope expressed at the forum that each positive step forward in relations between States "will build up confidence and open up further horizons of co-operation. And to help them there must be a more democratic mode of thinking at international level, and equality and self-determined and active participation of all nations — large, small and medium — in the affairs of the world community." Saving humanity from the danger of destruction is a matter of common concern to all nations. Mikhail Gorbachev's speech at the forum was another major political document in line with the strategy of peace proclaimed by the 27th Congress of the CPSU.

The programme for nuclear disarmament by the year 2000 that General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee M.S. Gorbachev set forth in his Statement of January 15, 1986, as well as the proposal of the 27th Congress for an all-embracing system of international security, the 18-month unilateral moratorium on underground nuclear explosions and the package of far-reaching proposals at the Reykjavik meeting are far from a complete list of the international political initiatives of paramount importance by the CPSU and the Soviet State. All progressive and revolutionary forces, all honest and realistically-minded people on Earth support the Soviet Union's consistent and persistent foreign policy full of patience and self-possession. And we see this as reason for hope for the new political thinking to be established as arising from the realities of our age and for the triumph of the idea of general security which has no alternative. We never pretend to know the ultimate truth in our foreign policy proposals and we welcome any constructive ideas. But neither do we ever detach our own security in our proposals from that of anybody else.

The world's peoples see that the CPSU and the Soviet Union do not threaten anybody. It is the CPSU and the Soviet State that come up with constructive initiatives for preventing a thermonuclear war and curbing the arms race. It is increasingly difficult for the anti-Sovietees to stand by their dirty lies about the USSR as an "evil empire": the facts are that it is the Soviet Union that is adamantly opposing the evil and upholding the good and justice in relations between nations and peoples.

At this juncture, the Soviet Union is attracting special attention by its revolutionary re-

organisation effort. "The whole world is looking at the Soviet people today," Mikhail Gorbachev has pointed out, "to see whether or not we shall hold out and meet as we should the challenge to Socialism. We are to meet it in a worthy way by the things we do and by our steadfast work."

The January Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee and the changes going on in this country have attracted the close interest both of our friends and of those whom we can hardly call our well-wishers. In perusing the documents of the Plenum, the measures to democratise national political life and upgrade economic management, including that of our foreign economic relations, the West has been wondering: "What kind of a Soviet Union do we want to see in 20 or 30 years from now?" They pin certain hopes on such a "liberalisation" and changes in the Soviet system as would have the effect of destabilising society and "diluting" the basic values of Socialism. However, the more farsighted Western analysts have to admit that the "programme of democratisation does not mean creating a Western type of bourgeois democracy and that its propositions do not mean any change of the social system." Full publicity, criticism and self-criticism, frank and open discussion on the most dramatic vital problems, these are the birthmarks of advancing Socialism which are getting new impulses today. To develop them, we do not need to borrow any specific forms or institutions from bourgeois democracy — the historically more advanced standards and principles of democracy inherent in Socialism are more natural to us.

## Great October Revolution

Socialism has quite a large stock of experience, rich history and no less vibrant and diversified present, an immense potential of real democracy and a wide range of opportunities for everyone's effective involvement in the affairs of society and the State. The radical, truly revolutionary measures for the promotion of democracy and Socialist self-government by the people and all-round reorganisation are directed towards a radical renovation of society and its further advance towards Communism. In the year of the 70th anniversary of the Great October Revolution Socialism is demonstrating, by its actual performance, its historical advantages as a system working for the good of man, his social and economic interests and his intellectual elevation. □

(Kommunist No. 4, 1987. In full.)

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# Meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee

THE Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee at its meeting on April 2 heard a report by Mikhail Gorbachev, Nikolai Ryzhkov and Eduard Shevardnadze on the results of their talks with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

They pointed out the great significance of the talks in bilateral relations and in international terms. Under the new conditions which have taken shape in Europe and in the world, the dialogue was continued with a major Western power, a permanent member of the UN Security Council. It enabled us to set forth frankly our views on relations between states with different social systems, regional conflicts and other important problems and, what is particularly topical, the prospects for disarmament. Stands were profoundly compared and the intentions of each other were made clear.

Agreements have been signed on specific issues of bilateral relations. Hope was expressed that Margaret Thatcher's visit will be followed by an intensification of bilateral economic and cultural relations.

The talks have shown that both sides recognise the importance of resolving the problem of

## Nikolai Ryzhkov's greetings to UN session

THE Soviet people support the UN's efforts aimed at attracting world public attention to the problem of the homeless and to the strategy of providing all residents of the world with housing by the year 2000, says a message of greetings from Nikolai Ryzhkov, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, to the tenth session of the UN Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation.

There are no homeless people in the Soviet Union. The right of the Soviet person to housing is sealed in the Constitution of the USSR. Nikolai Ryzhkov says. To accelerate the solution of the housing question is a matter of special social significance to us. Large-scale work is under way in this direction. More than 10 million flats were built and about 50 million people had their housing conditions improved in 1981-1985 alone. Housing will be built on a still bigger scale in the current five-year period and in the near future, both with state money and through wider co-operative and individual housing construction.

One of the most important problems of the present, which can be resolved only in peace, is to create conditions for human habitat which would promote development of man's creative potential. Stockpiled weapons and slums, the billions of dollars devoured by the military-industrial complex and the acute shortage of resources for building at least shelters for the homeless — this is the intolerable contradiction of our times.

To cut this Gordian knot, Nikolai Ryzhkov stresses, it is necessary to put an end to the arms race and channel the efforts of all states towards creative aims. □

medium-range missiles, albeit Britain continues attaching strings to its approach to an agreement: they are expressing preparedness to eliminate chemical weapons and lead things to lessening military confrontation in Europe — from the Atlantic to the Urals — enrich the Helsinki process and contribute to a political settlement of regional conflicts.

Divergences in principle remain on the fundamental problems of world development. The Soviet leadership reaffirmed its strong disagreement with the stand according to which the conduct of international affairs and national security are thought of in terms of reliance on nuclear weapons, although this encourages their proliferation and threatens a universal catastrophe.

The Political Bureau is convinced of the need to continue and deepen the political dialogue with Britain and other Western states in the spirit of new thinking, for overcoming the existing distrust and improving the international situation.

The Political Bureau discussed the results of the meeting of the Foreign Ministers' Committee of the Warsaw Treaty member states, which was recently held in Moscow, and expressed support for the steps collectively outlined for eliminating the nuclear threat, banning chemical weapons, promoting the Budapest initiative on a cut in the armed forces and conventional weapons in Europe, developing the all-European process and perfecting the foreign policy co-operation of the allied states.

The Political Bureau heard the report by Mikhail Solomentsev on the results of the visit of the delegation from the Party Control Committee of the CPSU Central Committee to the People's Republic of Bulgaria. It was pointed out that the meetings and contacts held during the visit contributed to a mutual enrichment of

the control bodies of the CPSU and of the Bulgarian Communist Party with experience in each other's activities.

Information by Anatoli Lukyanov was examined on the visit of the CPSU delegation to Denmark at the invitation of the Social-Democratic Party of Denmark, and by Georgi Razumovsky on the attendance of the CPSU delegation at the 26th Congress of the Communist Party of Austria.

The Political Bureau examined the course of work under way under the programme for the elimination of the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. It was pointed out that the first two power generating units of the station are functioning in a stable manner, and decontamination of other facilities and populated localities in polluted areas is continuing. Apartment houses and every-day service facilities for the evacuated population are being built on a large scale. The Political Bureau took note of the fact that corresponding ministries and departments are carrying out additional measures to build up the rate of that work, accelerate construction of the city of Slavutich and ensure reliable protection for water resources during the spring flood period.

The Political Bureau examined the question of the protection and rational utilisation of the natural resources of Lake Baikal, and gave a principled evaluation of the unsatisfactory fulfilment of the decisions on that issue. A package of organisational, scientific, economic and technical measures has been outlined in order to improve fundamentally the ecological situation in the area of Lake Baikal.

The meeting also discussed some other questions of state construction, personnel policy and the development of co-operation with the newly-independent countries in the fight for peace and social progress. □

## USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs protest to France

THE Ambassador of France in Moscow was summoned to the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs on April 4 where a resolute protest was made to him in connection with the provocative action against a number of Soviet representatives in France.

Without any reasons unfounded charges without any proof were brought against them. They were accused of activities that were at variance with their functions and status and it was suggested that they leave France. The Soviet side regarded those actions by the French authorities as an openly unfriendly step obviously of a political nature aimed at poisoning the atmosphere of Soviet-French contacts, at sowing mistrust of Soviet people, at hampering the growth of positive interest of French people in the home and foreign policy of the Soviet Union which has embarked upon the path of radical rejuvenation of its society, which is demonstrating bold and novel approaches in international affairs. This step taken by the French authorities runs counter to the statements of their official representatives on the desire to develop relations with the Soviet Union on a constructive basis. Responsibility for the inevitable negative consequences of this action rests with the French side.

The statement of the USSR Ministry of

Foreign Affairs says that it was pointed out to the French side on more than one occasion that a number of French workers in Moscow did not observe the rules of conduct of foreign representatives in the USSR, that they engaged in activities incompatible with their status. In these conditions the Soviet side deems it necessary to demand that a number of French representatives leave the Soviet Union.

According to the statement, the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs expects the French side to discontinue its attempts to create an anomalous atmosphere for the work of Soviet representatives in France and to put up artificial obstacles in the way of the development of mutually advantageous Soviet-French co-operation that meets the interests of the peoples of the two countries, as well as the broader interests of peace and security throughout the world. □

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## Pravda on Soviet-British talks

"THE Soviet-British talks held in Moscow were a continuation of our country's dialogue with this big Western power, a permanent member of the UN Security Council."

"The talks were held in the new conditions that have taken shape in Europe and in the world, and it is only natural that their results cannot but affect the course of the current CESC process and prospects for ridding the continent of nuclear weapons."

This is how Sunday's *Pravda* evaluates the results of the visit to the USSR by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Britain. During the visit, there was an exchange of views on a wide range of international issues and on matters connected with bilateral relations.

"The Soviet-British talks, as the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee pointed out, made it possible to set out views frankly on relations between countries with different social systems, on regional conflicts, on other important issues and — which is particularly topical — on prospects for disarmament," *Pravda* continues.

"There was an in-depth comparison of positions and clarification of each other's intentions."

The newspaper points out that "the Soviet-British talks showed that, firstly, the two sides admit the importance of solving the issue of medium-range missiles, although Britain continues to accompany its approach to such an agreement with reservations."

"Readiness was expressed to eliminate chemical weapons, to steer matters to reducing military confrontation in Europe, from the Atlantic to the Urals, to enrich the Helsinki process, and to promote a settlement of regional conflicts by political means."

"Secondly, and this is what all commentators draw attention to, principled divergences of opinion over cardinal issues of world development still remain."

"Mrs Thatcher, still a captive of the 'nuclear deterrent' strategy, comes out in favour of keeping nuclear weapons as a certain panacea in preventing a new world war."

"The reality of the nuclear age indicates something else: there is nothing more dangerous for the destiny of mankind than to keep or — all the more so — to build up these weapons of mass destruction."

"During the talks the Soviet side reaffirmed the

Soviet leadership's resolute disagreement with the position that the transaction of international affairs and international security are not visualised otherwise than as relying on nuclear weapons, although this encourages proliferation of nuclear weapons and is fraught with an all-out disaster."

"Time imperatively dictates the need for practical actions to end the nuclear-missile arms race. The Soviet proposals on medium-range missiles open up a unique chance for Europe to set an example in this respect."

"Reaching agreement on this issue as soon as possible would mark the beginning of a process which is being so hopefully awaited by the peoples of the whole world: transition to the stage-by-stage reduction and then complete elimination of nuclear weapons."

"The chance to enter the 21st century without nuclear weapons should not be missed!"

"The Soviet Union," *Pravda* emphasises in conclusion, "is ready to do everything possible in the name of this great and lofty goal."

"Our country is convinced of the need to continue and deepen the political dialogue with the countries of the West in the spirit of the new thinking, with a view to overcoming the existing distrust and improving the international situation as a whole." □

## Izvestia on nuclear axis for Europe

FRANCE is now spearheading those forces which would like to intensify the integration processes in Western Europe and priority today is being attached to military aspects, *Izvestia* says in its issue of April 6. Europe-building was modified in this way after the Soviet-American Reykjavik meeting, which demonstrated the opportunity of achieving an accord on nuclear arms cuts, and especially after

the Soviet proposal for the elimination of medium-range missiles. In the view of a prominent politician, the newspaper notes, that proposal had an "electric shock effect". After a series of consultations, the allies led by Paris decided to launch countermeasures.

France views "Eurodefense" not as a substitute for the North Atlantic Alliance or the US military presence in Western Europe but as an additional mobilisation of military resources, a "mini-NATO". Naturally, the Americans are

following the development of European military structures with interest and voicing approval and support. Washington hopes, and with good reason, to keep "Eurodefense" under control.

What strikes the eye is the ambiguity of the approach of Paris and other West European capitals to a number of key problems of our time, especially the problems of war and peace. The French leaders often make statements in favour of disarmament and cuts in the nuclear arms arsenals to the lowest possible level and have taken a positive attitude to the Soviet proposals for the elimination of medium-range missiles. But in reality nuclear and conventional weapons are being energetically upgraded and a course has been assumed for the military integration of Western Europe, directed against the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

If "Eurodefense" is established, it will become another barrier on the road to peace and disarmament, and the West Europeans are hardly likely to warm to this prospect. □

## US public delegation visits USSR

"A LETTER to an American friend" from Moscow schoolchildren will be taken home by delegates from the Centre for Soviet-American Dialogue. That symbolic message will consist of a number of letters from Soviet children, offering American children friendship and joint efforts for happiness and world peace. Officials of the Soviet Peace Committee handed the delegation from the Centre a sheaf of letters from Soviet children on Monday.

In the delegation, which started its tour of the USSR last week, there are 72 activists from the Centre, among them scientists, businessmen, workers in culture and religion, physicians and teachers. They meet representatives of the Soviet public every day to exchange views on various areas of bilateral co-operation. Monday's dis-

cussion was devoted to children as the makers of the social discoveries of the 21st century.

We have already made one discovery for ourselves: the Russians are not people to be feared, a schoolgirl from California pointed out. She said that American cinema and television lie shamelessly about the Russians.

Our life needs a thaw after so many years of cold war, clergyman Paul Loran said, and that is why we decided in our parish to go to Moscow: the more such visits, the better for us all.

Lisa Pellaio, a cashier, said the following about the purpose of their visit to the Soviet Union: people have looked up to the diplomats with hope, believing in the success of their mission and that an improvement in relations is just around the corner. But one gentleman merely hands lies in gift wrapping to another, and neither believes the other. One of the ways of changing the world is to change thinking. The time has come for individual diplomacy: each of us is first and foremost a citizen and should stand up for the interests of mutual understanding at his or her level. There is a rather influential group of people in America who believe that any contact with the Soviet Union is a crime. It is to spite them that we have come here, paying for the trip with our own money. □

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(N.B. The cross-heads in this bulletin were inserted by Soviet News—Ed.)