

# **Mikhail GORBACHEV**

**To Restore  
the Image of Socialism  
Through  
Democratization**

**A meeting at the CPSU Central Committee  
with the heads of the mass media,  
ideological institutions and artistic unions  
May 7, 1988**

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Novosti Press Agency Publishing House  
Moscow, 1988

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**Михаил Сергеевич Горбачев**

ЧЕРЕЗ ДЕМОКРАТИЗАЦИЮ — К НОВОМУ  
ОБЛИКУ СОЦИАЛИЗМА

Встреча в Центральном Комитете КПСС  
с руководителями средств массовой информации,  
идеологических учреждений и творческих союзов  
7 мая 1988 года

*на английском языке*

Цена 15 к.

**0803010200**

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# Opening Remarks by Mikhail Gorbachev

We would like to devote this meeting to the forthcoming 19th Party Conference. We see that society and the Party have been engrossed in the process of preparing for it. Therefore guidelines are necessary.

The press has already introduced appropriate rubrics, and a discussion has in fact unfolded, not only within the framework of the Party, but on a nationwide scale. I think that the mass media have already had some experience in this matter, something must have accumulated, and various questions are also bound to come up. That is why I propose that you, comrades, state your views and pose questions first, and then I will take the floor. If there are no objections let's do it that way.

*A discussion followed.*

# **Speech by Mikhail Gorbachev**

I want to thank you all, and primarily those who have spoken. I saw that the rest of you showed unflagging interest throughout the discussion. Such meetings are very important to us, to the Central Committee, and it is good that we now have such a tradition. There are at least two points that could be mentioned here.

Firstly, the Party's leadership needs to consult you. A policy lacking a scientific basis is doomed to vacillation and errors. We know this from our own experience. A policy without moral foundations can cause, I think, no less harm. And we are equally aware of what this can lead to. That is why this meeting is important to us.

Secondly, I hope that the exchange of opinions also offers a possibility for you, heads of ideological institutions, journals and newspapers, to check your tack and your approaches. For it is common reference points that we all need, especially in the sphere of ideology and consciousness. I think, comrades, that freedom always goes hand in hand with increasing responsibility. Editors, media executives bear vast responsibility at this watershed, when our society has found itself at a crucial phase in its history. Every editor, of course, needs such contacts, such meetings so that he can check his watch, so to speak. This is why I welcome this meeting once again.

You may rest assured that we take in the

entire spectrum of opinions at these meetings with you. After all, it offers food for thought and a basis for understanding things better, for honing ideas and formulating them so that we can realize them later in practice. I find it inspiring, for example, that our meetings are growing more substantive each time and that the dialogue is getting ever more meaningful and profound. This is only natural, since perestroika has also scaled new heights and acquired new parameters.

I said in my opening remarks that we wanted to devote this meeting to the forthcoming 19th Party Conference. Much is expected from this conference by our Party and by our society. Much is expected from our conference by our friends abroad as well. Our antagonists are also making their own plans and calculations. This probably explains the tremendous interest in our conference.

Very many people are anxious about who will be delegated to the conference, who will have the power to decide on vital issues bearing on the fate of our society and of socialism.

In short, people are showing concern for the destiny of perestroika. And this in itself is very good.

The CPSU Central Committee has expressed its opinion on procedures for electing delegates to the conference. Our position is that ardent supporters of perestroika, active communists, should be chosen as delegates. There must be no more quotas, as was the case in the past, specifying how many factory workers and farmers and how many women are to be chosen, etc. The principal political directive is to send active supporters of perestroika to the conference.

We have expressed ourselves in favour of candidates being picked with the participation of

Party organizations and work collectives and of Party committees at district and city levels, in short, by all the people. Some regional Party committees have decided to publish the names of the candidates in the local press even before the plenums that are to elect the delegates, so that the delegates can be publicly discussed. This is the right idea, in our view. It will make it possible to approach candidate selection from the correct standpoint.

The CPSU Central Committee will give its utmost attention to the entire process of electing the body of delegates to the Party conference the whole time. Some 5,000 delegates will be elected, the same number as was elected to the 27th Party Congress.

Comrades, we are positive that the line of the 27th Congress is correct. The three years since the April 1985 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee have shown that we made the right choice.

How do we define the goals of the conference? What is its concept? The conference is to make a thorough review of the progress of perestroika and give it a new strong impetus. The conference is to create political, ideological and organizational prerequisites that will not only guarantee the irreversibility of the processes of perestroika and democratization, but also contribute decisively to the unfolding of these processes and their further development.

We have entered, figuratively speaking, the boost phase of perestroika. And we have already foreseen that the second stage, the next two or three years, will be very difficult. Strategy is being transformed into real policy, into real social processes, and it is affecting all sections of society. We knew that we should expect tension and that a new situation would emerge. And



yet—as was pointed out correctly here—far from everybody has proved prepared for this. Comrades, it is only natural that the strain on the Party, on the cadre and on all society is increasing. This is evidenced by broader glasnost and democracy and by deep-reaching changes in the very foundations, in the management system and in every aspect of life in our society. It is as if doors to a new and unusual environment have opened for us. And it has proved a vast and unfamiliar one in many respects. We are covering new ground, like pioneers, and this means that we're making progress. And hence the varied reactions of people to the processes under way.

We knew we had to be prepared for this, be prepared to think, to act and live in a new manner.

At the Politburo we have compared notes and concluded that the novelty of the problems and the magnitude of new phenomena and processes at the second stage of perestroika have put the whole Party and its cadre in a new situation. We saw that far from everybody was prepared to evaluate the present situation correctly. We found real confusion in the minds of many people—workers, intellectuals and administrators alike. And, let's be frank, not only at the grassroots, but also at the top. So the Politburo decided that the General Secretary should speak on ideological support for the second stage of perestroika. I want to stress that everything that was said on behalf of the Politburo, and that won backing at the February Plenary Meeting, fully retains its significance as reference points today.

I am bringing this up because some people have indeed lost their bearings amid all the current processes. Some people have been taken

aback and panicked. And the panic—and this is very serious—has taken the form of such questions as: Isn't perestroika coming to mean wrecking and rejecting the values of socialism? Isn't it giving rise to alien phenomena? Isn't it destabilizing society? These questions are very serious, to be sure. And I wouldn't, out of hand, consider those who have panicked to be irresponsible or opposed to perestroika.

No, comrades, we should treat this seriously, without going to another extreme, without branding everybody who has voiced doubts an opponent of perestroika. And I am especially against the position of those who have put the "enemy of perestroika" phrase into circulation in the press. What does it mean, comrades? This sounds somewhat ominous. This is similar to the allegation which has been floated through *Sovetskaya Rossiya* that we are being threatened by the descendants of NEPmen and kulaks. Just think of it: 70 years on, they're trying to scare us with the descendants of NEPmen, Trotskyites and Dans. Let's rise to the occasion, comrades.

Through perestroika we want to restore Lenin's concept of socialism and lead Soviet society to an altogether new level. We must really bring out the humanist potential of socialism—that is perestroika's task. But this means that at the second stage we should see the overriding goal—a renovated society and renovated human relations in line with Lenin's ideas.

We must work towards this end, using methods marked by humanity, trust and respect. This does not at all mean lack of principles, a kind of eclecticism or reconciling the irreconcilable. We have to restore the genuine, wonderful meaning of the great word "comrade", restore the spirit of comradeship in the Party and in society.

We cannot pursue perestroika, which aims to upgrade socialism to meet the parameters of Lenin's thinking in the interest of the people, through a "free-for-all". We aren't after all destroying the social system or changing the forms of ownership. We will still have the Soviets. Listen to what Lenin said: socialism should be built with the human material inherited from capitalism. We are effecting perestroika with people born under socialism. Does that mean, then, we should renounce a part of them?

No, we can't put the question this way. Our slogan is: unite and rally society for perestroika. This is the most important thing, comrades. When it is necessary, we should discover the root causes of these or other negative phenomena. This approach is proof of our confidence in the chosen path, the chosen aims and the chosen methods. And we have already identified them. This is precisely what, in my opinion, distinguishes perestroika and makes it strong. We should all think it over in earnest. This would be useful, I would even say indispensable, vital for us. I have already mentioned it once, and I want to stress it again: both the Party and all the media are at the service of the people.

It is inadmissible to write of the people's destiny in a formal, bureaucratic, soulless way. Sometimes a true-to-life picture is presented, but the author tends to write as if he or she does not feel the pain of the people. And if there is no awareness of this pain, epithets and metaphors are played with, labels are stuck on, etc. This, I repeat, happens if the author does not feel the people's pain. But if this feeling is present, if you always remember your people, if you write of the grimmest things with an anguished heart, then something will surely emerge which in the long run will contain a lesson and optimism. For

there will be a sense of involvement in the destiny of the people and concern that their life be better. I am not preaching to you, I am simply appealing to your hearts and minds.

Generally speaking, you, too, should have perestroika. The media is an instrument of perestroika. And in order to be an effective instrument, the media must undergo restructuring, just like society as a whole. We say that there must be no monopoly on criticism, that there must be no zones exempt from criticism. So, the press itself cannot be above criticism. You should pose questions in a serious way, truthfully, in the interests of the people, socialism, perestroika. And in this the press can count on the support of the Party.

Why is conservatism so tenacious? This is another theme I would like to discuss with you. What is it that feeds conservatism?

I believe that conservatism is the main factor impeding perestroika. We should not avoid establishing what feeds it because the answer to this question will help the Party and the media to correctly determine the ways to overcome this phenomenon.

We must defeat conservatism in the course of perestroika. Conservatism in part of our society is nourished not only by a dogmatic mentality, the habit of thinking in stereotypes, the fear of everything new, but also by selfish interests. As for the latter, this theme is raised by the press. It is shown how perestroika steps on some people's toes, and those people start resisting, hampering the process of renewal of society. But this is just part of the problem. The main thing for society as a whole is to overcome dogmatic mentality, as it is something shared by the politician, the writer and the scientist. It exists in all who are connected with intellectual activity, and this largely

determines theoretical analysis, the shaping of politics, etc.

There are stereotypes of thinking and action, and they have a grip on the worker, the intellectual and the politician. This is a serious and deep-running phenomenon. We are all products of our times. We have conceived perestroika, but we also possess many of the things that hold it back. To reveal this, comrades, is a very important goal for the media and, certainly, for Party and ideological work. Such treatment of this subject helps man revolutionize his own thoughts and determine his stand.

Indeed, quite often conservatism thrives on selfish interests. But who would mount the rostrum now, or write a letter to a newspaper, and say that he is raising certain issues in order to save his present status and preserve what suits him very well? No one. His stand will be presented as if he were acting to benefit the people, for the sake of socialism. This is something that has to be seen and understood.

And, comrades, there is yet another very important aspect. We often label as a conservative a person who holds his own special point of view. But take a more attentive look and you will realize that he gets into this situation because he has not yet learned how to work under the new conditions. He just does not know how to do it, comrades. This is quite commonplace now! And we see how difficult it is to learn to work in a new way when we have been acting for decades on command-and-administer principles. So, how can we regard these people, who have not yet adapted to the new conditions, as adversaries of perestroika, as inveterate conservatives?

Perestroika is being conducted in real terms through concrete experience, through debates, comprehension and awareness of this process

and self-adjustment as our society is renewed. And these are important things. We give everyone a chance to readjust. We mention this in conversations, and in the press. But sometimes it is understood in the following way: everyone has been given three years for perestroika and that is enough. If you have failed to readjust, get out. But none of us have fully readjusted yet. I shall tell you frankly that we have not yet really readjusted, we are only in the process of doing so.

What is to be done now? Where is emphasis to be placed in Party work, and in the work of the media? The idea was rightly expressed here that, although much is being done along all avenues in the course of perestroika, the main thing—the life of the people, their well-being, their mood, the way they feel—should not be overlooked, comrades. It is not only material well-being and the social environment, but also the way people feel, their dignity, that should be taken into consideration.

The main thing to be done in every sphere of life, including the spiritual sphere, is to overcome the alienation which, deplorably, occurs under socialism when it is deformed by authoritarian-bureaucratic aberrations. And it is only on the path of democracy, glasnost and moral purification of our society that alienation, bureaucratism and formalism can be overcome. In this task we are aware of the vigorous involvement of the enhanced political, intellectual and cultural potential of the entire people.

We also feel the support of our intelligentsia, and this support is growing. How can restructuring be implemented without the intelligentsia? Not only workers and peasants, but also our intelligentsia have played an important role in what has been achieved.

An atmosphere that would guarantee the success of the Party conference should be created in the Party and in society. The merit lies not in being the first to point out some fact or event and to proclaim this the loudest of all. What is needed is for the media to raise vital problems. Perestroika already has its own history, a difficult and complicated history, and it should be revealed. And when we address ourselves to the past, our aim is to get a better understanding of what we need now so as not to repeat past mistakes.

All this should be done without undue sensationalism. I would put it this way: a good sensation for us is the one our people are waiting for and our adversaries fear—the success of perestroika.

The further development of criticism and the broadening of glasnost are extremely important. It is sometimes asked what the limits of criticism and glasnost are. We have resolved this matter in the framework of socialist pluralism of opinions. We are for broad criticism and glasnost but in the interests of society, of socialism, in the interests of the people. While consistently and resolutely waging a struggle against conservatism, rooting out everything that hinders the process of perestroika, we must no less firmly protect, popularize and uphold everything which promotes perestroika, which is good for the country, for the people.

We need new approaches, new methods, new discoveries in asserting perestroika. Let us recall Lenin's words: do not try to resolve new problems by old methods. Nothing will come of it. Hence we must search for new approaches. And we are doing so in every possible direction—in the economic and spiritual spheres, in science, in education. The mass media must

help the people master new forms, new methods, new approaches.

The February Plenary Meeting set the task of acquiring a more profound understanding of Lenin's concept of socialist society so as to apply it creatively in the present concrete historic conditions. Note, creatively. When the topic of NEP came up here, it was rightly said that we cannot copy, cannot repeat approaches used in the past. No, comrades. We must study Lenin's thinking. It is always very instructive.

Consider, for instance, how Lenin acted in advancing the idea of NEP. At a time when the country was in ruin, Lenin's resolute thinking and decisive policy addressed reality; they were based on reality. Therefore not everyone, not even Lenin's closest associates, accepted NEP at once. Lenin was accused of apostasy. It was claimed that he was pushing the country towards ruin. So I say that we should address ourselves to Lenin's thinking instead of copying the concrete decisions of that period. And there is room for new, original decisions. This is natural. And it sometimes happens in our country that as soon as a new kind of decision is made, an outcry is immediately heard: "Help, socialism is in danger, they are spawning private business!"

Therefore I repeat that we should grasp Lenin's concept of socialist society in order to apply it creatively, taking into account the present conditions. What is needed is not just a return to the past. This would be the worst kind of dogmatism.

Once and for all we should get rid of the view of socialism as a leveller, as a negator of individuality, as a certain minimum: a minimum of material benefits, a minimum of justice, a minimum of democracy.



We are correct in putting the issue in the following realistic and serious way: considering the economic, intellectual and cultural potential accumulated over the seven decades of our history, we should implement a contemporary model of society which would ensure for all its members civilized living standards and various opportunities to meet intellectual and cultural needs, freedom of choice and freedom of expression of opinions. But all this should be implemented in the framework of our socialist choice, in the framework of our socialist democracy and morals. This society will inevitably have more layers but it will remain socialist and it will not abandon the principles of social justice, comradeship and internationalism in any way.

Why do I speak of this? Generally, our entire society is for socialism. The point is that we are now faced with the task of renewing socialism. All of us, comrades, should realize what socialism is and by what methods it can and must be built, renewed and improved. This is a theme all of us should reflect and work on. We should advance our traditional notions of socialism to the level of contemporary demands, so that they should keep up with the science, economic, scientific and technological progress of today and of the future. In short, we must restore socialism's revolutionary character and historic perspective. We should probably establish the criteria of socialism, for as soon as some advance is made and some new features appear, the question arises: Where are we headed, are we not moving away from socialism?

It is necessary to establish these criteria. What is truly socialist and what is alien to the very idea of socialism? It is necessary to rid socialism of everything pseudosocialist, of everything that was distorted and deformed in the

period of the personality cult, the command system and stagnation; it is necessary to give socialism back its truly Leninist meaning. And the role of the media in this cannot be overestimated.

We need this; without it we cannot go to the conference. We cannot go to the conference without a clear idea, without drawing a picture, as it were, of the society we are striving to create. And of course, we should proceed with this work aware of our great responsibility. I repeat: we should look for answers to the objectives of perestroika within the framework of the socialist choice.

And let no journal, no newspaper use the diversity of views to push us onto another path.

Socialism in Lenin's interpretation makes it possible to ensure a pluralism of views, a pluralism of interests and requirements, and to ensure that these interests and requirements are met.

We are going to the conference, which means that we must give reports and sum up results. We must have more discussions at the conference on the history of perestroika. Emphasis should be laid on summing up results. And this is to be done from a standpoint of self-criticism: what has been done and where our weaknesses lie. Then we will be able to outline the perspectives better. The conference must be more businesslike.

The time has come to emphasize the issue of the unity of word and deed, the question of the decisions taken and the course of their implementation. We have taken very important decisions which will ensure major changes in the structural policy in favour of light industry, the food industry, and the social sphere. All this should lead to an improvement in the living standards of the Soviet people.

The decisions on questions of progress in science and technology, in the field of machine-building and electronics, are designed to ensure an accelerated advance, the attainment of new parameters of labour productivity and product quality.

And now about how things stand today. In 1987, our gross national product grew 3.3 per cent. The growth of the volume of industrial output was 3.8 per cent. Over the three years from 1985 to 1987 the average annual growth rates were: national income—3.3 per cent; gross national product—3.9 per cent; industrial output—4.2 per cent; output of consumer goods—4.7 per cent. The average annual gross agricultural output grew 1.9 per cent, the commissioning of fixed assets—3.5 per cent, of housing—3.6 per cent.

We have made progress in the output of goods. Health care and public education have improved.

The creative forces of society have been set into motion. Positive tendencies are appearing. This is exactly what changes life. And this should bring about changes, if we really work on developing these trends.

Take, for example, labour productivity. From 1981 to 1984 it accounted for 86 per cent of the national income growth. And from 1985 to 1987 it accounted for 96 per cent. In 1987 labour productivity accounted for the entire increase. In the first quarter of this year labour productivity in industry grew 5.4 per cent, and at enterprises operating on full cost-accounting and self-financing—6.6 per cent. In the building industry, this growth was 8.9 per cent; and where full cost-accounting was applied in that industry, that figure was 9.8 per cent. Comrades, this is

real progress. If we keep up this trend, I believe that much will change for the better.

Here is an interesting fact. In 1985 the renewal of machine-building products was 3 per cent, and in 1987—9.1 per cent. This is a three-fold increase. Our aim is to hit the 13-per-cent mark. Contract obligations are being fulfilled with greater discipline. Cost-accounting is beginning to produce results in this sphere, too. A positive trend is making headway, overcoming the natural difficulties involved in the transition to cost-accounting, new economic standards, state quality control and many other things which are fundamentally renewing our production sphere.

And now about our diet. What are we lacking? Above all, meat, fruit and vegetables.

We are concerned, very concerned, about the food situation. We have to look for cardinal measures so as to resolve that problem faster. It is necessary to keep shops, public catering establishments, markets and cooperative shops stocked with foodstuffs.

Now about housing. Over the past three years, ten million families have had their housing conditions improved. This is a considerable growth. There was no growth in housing construction for several five-year-plan periods.

About trade turnover. It has grown 13 per cent. And that with a more than 50-per-cent drop in liquor sales over the past three years.

The growth is evident, but the shortages are evident, too. Comrades, this means that we must have far more of everything, of everything including the services. And their volume is insufficient. The opportunities open to cooperatives in that field are huge.

Every year the country's population increases by two and a half million people. These dy-

namics should determine the growth of the rates of production of foods and commodities.

The economy is at a difficult stage right now, a very difficult stage. We are introducing reform, enhancing state quality control, mastering cost-accounting. Half of the country is running on cost-accounting while the other half is not. This is, indeed, an unusual situation. To rectify the errors that have been made, a decision is now being prepared on state orders.

Comrades, these are the realities of perestroika. I would like to ask you to display more competence in covering the processes of perestroika, whatever fields those processes may concern. This requires depth, responsibility and a well-balanced approach. While criticizing conservatism and shortcomings, we should actively support everything that is progressive.

In general, comrades, we should raise all of these questions both at the preparatory stage and at the conference itself from positions of principle.

We have something to say at the conference, as regards both results and prospects.

We should come to the conference with major proposals for our society's political system, which is also in need of a fundamental restructuring.

We should understand the role of the Party as the political vanguard at the current stage. We are not abandoning Lenin's concept of Party as society's political vanguard. We believe that at the stage of perestroika the Party's role in perfecting socialist society, in carrying out far-reaching transformations, grows even more. This requires that it outline a scientifically-grounded policy based on correct appraisals and forecasts. This requires a great deal of ideological and organizational work.

Only a Party equipped with the methods of scientifically-substantiated Marxist analysis can cope with this task. Therefore, far from calling in question the guiding and leading role of the Party, we believe, on the contrary, that we should acquire a more profound understanding of that role. And that role should, undoubtedly, be a different one, one that carries more weight in exactly that area I am talking about—in the implementation of the functions of the political vanguard.

In this connection the question arises of dividing up functions among the Party, the Soviets and economic management bodies. Mixing functions resulted in the Party taking upon itself the task of resolving many economic matters and specific issues, including even daily affairs.

This brought about a weakening of the Party's functions as the political vanguard. This also resulted in a decline of the responsibility both of the Soviets and of economic management bodies.

We must also reappraise the structure of the Party apparatus. This will reveal the enormous potentialities our Party possesses. If, at the same time, we do everything necessary to make each and every communist more active, to make each and every primary organization, all of our cadres, work more energetically, things will start moving. We plan to advance a number of proposals on that score at the conference.

And naturally, comrades, in connection with the reappraisal of the functions of the Party as the political vanguard, the role of the Soviets should be interpreted in a new way. It is necessary to enhance the role of the Soviets, the significance of the work of the sessions of the Soviets, of the commissions and of the deputies. The activities of the Supreme Soviet should also

be reorganized. We should all give this a good deal of thought.

We should create a mechanism, a democratic mechanism to function permanently, which would contain everything necessary to ensure the irreversibility of perestroika, the active involvement of the people in it, a mechanism which would nominate the most active persons for leading offices, would be aware of public sentiment and would make the necessary corrections in the work. Comrades, if we fail to do this, the economic reform will get bogged down and other processes will get bogged down with it.

If we take a closer look, we will see that the key to everything is democratization, involvement of the people in all of society's affairs. Therefore the aim of perestroika is man, and the means of perestroika—mobilization of the human potential. Through that and, naturally, through the cultural field, through the strengthening of the people's spirit, we will press ahead with perestroika.

We must complete the creation of the legal system in our socialist state. Therefore we will also need a judicial-legal reform. And this should also be put forth as an objective at the conference.

This is a turning point, comrades. We are now creating the prerequisites on which our society will function for decades. This determines the degree of our responsibility today. Therefore, when we are told that we are being indecisive about something and are reproached for that, we say: no and once again no. The most costly mistakes are political ones. The best results come from well-prepared political decisions. In general, comrades, we want to see the 19th All-

Union Party Conference take responsible decisions that would give our perestroika a second wind, and open up before our society an even wider road of democratization, of socialist development.



**Discussion  
Between the  
Meeting's  
Participants**

The first to speak was **Nikolai Gribachev**, editor-in-chief of the magazine *Soviet Union*:

The Soviet people are expecting a lot from the Party conference. It seems to me, however, that there is currently a certain passiveness among Communists. Some of them are waiting to see how things go.

It is the fashion nowadays to float along the rivers of history. Allow me to do the same. My point is that the Party prepared the revolution, the Party carried it out under Lenin's guidance, and it is the Party's task to continue the revolution. But this is impossible without the unity of the Party's ranks and serious responsibility of every Communist; it is simply impossible, dear comrades. Lenin raised the question of Party unity many times. I think that this question will inevitably arise in one form or another at the Party conference as well.

I would now like to say a few words about the press, of which we are representatives. The press' role is immense, and this also concerns the preparation for the Party conference. It is particularly important to know now whether our journalistic corps is fully in order. Do we always fulfil our duty with due responsibility?

The speaker developed this thesis by stressing the necessity of viewing historical facts in a principled and honest manner, from Party positions, of avoiding simplifying them and taking a

wholesale approach to very acute problems. He added that, unfortunately, such approaches are by no means rare in the country's journalism.

It is particularly important, the speaker went on, that journalism be fully truthful and rely on accurate and verified facts. It can and does happen that distorting one or two minor facts leads to an undermining of the trust in the material on perestroika.

I personally believe that no administrative measures are required here. Let people work in a calm manner. What is more important is, first, the education of journalists, which should be deepened and strengthened. Second, every contribution to the press should be appraised from Party positions; we should always be concerned and think about the unity of the Party's ranks and be more demanding of ourselves. Then we will have fewer "snags" in our work.

**Sergei Vikulov**, editor-in-chief of the magazine *Nash sovremennik*: The results of our work, which we call perestroika, will certainly be discussed at the upcoming Party conference. The readers' mail to all the mass media testifies that the people are looking for an answer to this question and want to know the real results of this work.

These results cannot be evaluated in a banal way, only from what may be called a commonplace point of view. We must not forget even for a minute about the main thing: the human soul, the human factor.

I believe that the first and most important result of perestroika is that we all, the whole nation, have changed from what we used to be. People have found a voice, they speak and speak demandingly, sometimes angrily and even indignantly, of what stands in the way of perestroika. And, most importantly, people speak

not from the positions of their personal interests, but from the state's positions, from the positions of their homeland's interests. Even those who have never been concerned with public affairs are today beginning to think in the spirit of perestroika.

This can be seen from readers' letters in which they are frankly expressing their opinion, sometimes disagreeing with what they have read in our publications. They offer profound conclusions and very sound proposals. These letters are a font of the people's wisdom and experience, as well as a sounding board of the people's soul. It is a great pity that we are not able to work with these letters thoroughly enough. These letters are in fact a nationwide referendum where people answer questions themselves and open their souls, and it is absolutely necessary that their voices be listened to. The departments that handle letters of many editorial offices are unfortunately too small to deal with such vast quantities of mail, while some literary and artistic journals have no such departments at all. In our case, for instance, no one works in the mail department, for this job is simply not included in our editorial office's list of personnel.

We know that whole institutes are engaged in the study of public opinion in the West. Why shouldn't we, comrades, think in terms of making a more profound study of public opinion, of setting up appropriate institutes now that we need to know with total accuracy what people think of what is going on in the country?

The speaker went on to discuss further the Party's role in perestroika and emphasized the need for a decisive struggle against bureaucracy. He pointed out that the mass media play quite a weighty role in this struggle, the results of which are being awaited by everyone.

It is necessary at the same time to raise in the press the question of placing stricter demands on Communists, of cleansing the Party ranks of those who disgrace the lofty name of Communist. I think that the Party conference should discuss this. Let the Party be built on the principle: "better fewer but better". This I regard as one of the ways to raise the Party's prestige.

Touching upon the role of the intelligentsia and of the masses in the changes that are gathering strength in society, the speaker stressed that the purpose of the entire work of perestroika as regards the human factor is to finally overcome indifference, to inspire the people. We have the courage to admit the mistakes of the past. The people have been waiting for this courage for a long time, they are the heart and soul for perestroika.

The important thing now is to square our shoulders, proudly raise our heads, roll up our sleeves and get down to work. The main task of the mass media now is to awaken in people a sense of pride in their country, of confidence in the success of perestroika.

**Sergei Zalygin**, editor-in-chief of the *Novy mir* magazine: We are now living through very serious, crucial times. We cannot say that everything is fine with us, that success has been ensured. I don't think it has been ensured. Very serious steps are required to ensure it. We must not think that those whom we call the masses—the intelligentsia, the working class, the farmers—that all of them have accepted perestroika with delight. We must not ignore the life of society, which very often bypasses us. The fact is that we are not very capable of heeding and being guided by public opinion. Look at what is occurring. How many demonstrations and pickets have been held, how many com-

plaints there have been in connection with new construction and the felling of trees. This is not only a matter of trees, of forests. If we do not meet those who demand that nature be preserved halfway, we shall break our ties with them. They'll no longer believe us.

There is very definite contact between the Party leadership and the public. But that contact is upset as soon as medium-level managers intervene. How can one help returning to ecological questions! Everyone has become aware that there may be no prospects left in this area in another five or six years. After that we may very well speak of perestroika, or of anything else, but the resources will be ruined. And people realize this.

The speaker went on to stress the importance of correctly selecting personnel. It is wrong to think that everything will be fine now that two or three persons have been removed. No, these people were part of a certain milieu, they could not exist singly. This means that we should dig deeper to find out who was linked with whom and whether these links have been cut.

**Mikhail Gorbachev:** The personnel question is, incidentally, a far from simple subject. Now sixty-six per cent of ministers, 61 per cent of first secretaries of regional Party committees and chairmen of regional executive committees and 63 per cent of first secretaries of city and district Party committees are new. That's how much of a change has taken place. Many of them have already shown what they are like, that they have correctly understood the times, taken upon themselves a special burden, are sensitive to the new changes and are eager to meet people halfway. They are quite numerous. But there are people who bear the mark of the past, though they have not committed any transgressions punishable by law.

New and often unexpected persons are now coming to the fore. They are noticed and supported by the people. That is why we should pledge allegiance to democracy, to the democratic process. Mechanisms are required that will constantly promote through public opinion talented, energetic and really capable people to all echelons of leadership. This is a better and more reliable way than making appointments from above. This is democracy.

Democracy will also have its mistakes. It will, comrades. But I don't think that anyone can offer us a more correct approach. That is why this process will grow. Reality is reality, and it is multidimensional. For example, recently I received a letter from a good person. I am your supporter, he wrote. During your recent speech, Mikhail Sergeevich, I noticed that you began to get nervous. I must tell you that this is a luxury for subordinates, not for leaders.

People have begun to talk freely. This is good, comrades. This is within the framework of glasnost. Nothing can compromise a leader more than an attempt to deal harshly with a person for criticism, as was the case in the bad old days.

We must live according to Lenin. How much passion and health he gave to unite and consolidate people on a principled basis! This is how we all should act, giving everything for the sake of perestroika.

**Sergei Zalygin:** So here we have come with our concerns.

I think that the role of the public should be enhanced. For instance, a certain ministry gives a report to the CPSU Central Committee or the Council of Ministers of the USSR. Why not form beforehand a public council of people familiar with the subject so that they could come to the

meeting and put questions to those who are being heard?

We have set up all kinds of societies which have developed such bureaucratic mechanisms, and such an amount of correspondence started that we again had something we did not bargain for.

**Mikhail Gorbachev:** Unfortunately these public organizations are also staffed with people having stereotypes and complexes from the time before perestroika. Their first concerns, correspondingly, are a government telephone, good offices, a car, etc. There should also be personnel, of course, as objects of guidance. This often is where the activities of some public organizations end. Things may go so far that these officials regard the slightest criticism against them as disrespect for those whom the public organization unites.

This is a very widespread phenomenon. Many pursue their selfish, egoistic interests, passing them off as concern for the people, for socialism.

I personally am inclined to respond wholeheartedly to a person who is sincerely striving for the best, who feels keenly the pain of the people and who cares about our life. He may even go astray and make a mistake, but still I think that such a person should be understood and helped.

**Sergei Zalygin:** Why not hear the accounts of two or three societies? We could look into the activity of a society founded, say, a year ago...

**Mikhail Gorbachev:** Two or three magazines.

**Sergei Zalygin:** This is very easy. Magazines are there for everyone to see; magazines have been printed.

**Viktor Afanasyev,** editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Pravda*, spoke next:



There is both a hidden and open debate going on among journalists, writers, media people and political educators. Which is more important: unrestrained criticism of what has been and what is, or some positive proposals and the elaboration of the forms, ways and means of resolving the pressing problems facing us? We believe that as important as criticism is, including criticism of our history, it is more important that creative work be done now. I think that we must rely primarily on facts, when dealing with historical issues, not on all manner of reminiscences and inventions. By doing the latter we will only confuse public opinion and confuse history, we will only bring disorder into the minds of our young people.

Talking of the issues, to be considered at the forthcoming Party conference, the speaker said that the first thing to do would be to again point out, clearly and precisely, the Party's leading role. Why? Because now under the flag and slogan of democracy, which are sometimes very good, there have been direct attempts to dissolve the Party among the people or some other organizations.

Another important issue is the structure of Party bodies. Many letters addressed to *Pravda* make proposals to this effect. It is suggested, among other things, to abolish, to remove the sectoral departments and reconsider the positioning of Party bodies.

A very complicated issue would appear to be the issue of control. Our readers and some scholars propose that the Central Control Commission in the Party be reestablished. The logic is quite interesting: we have no opposition party, yet we talk of socialist pluralism, and the Central Control Commission would be part of the Party too; hence we would have socialist

pluralism and there would be very precise and strict control over the work of our leading Party comrades.

The most complicated problems we have are those of the economy, agricultural production, and consumer goods. We have adopted a radical economic reform. But let's be frank: the reform is not working too well. In the first place, the administrative and management apparatus remains far too large. It does not produce anything but paperwork. It keeps writing, commanding, issuing directives, making a lot of checks and inspections. Apparently, we need to take more determined action to reorganize our management apparatus.

Here in the centre we can see: a ministry is reduced while nearby some institute is organized. All the functionaries from the ministry join the other establishment. I have not heard of a single foremost engineer giving up office work to operate a machine tool at a factory. People's mentality needs to be changed. This is a complicated and difficult thing to do, but without it we will not go very far, and apparatus redundancies will produce no results. We, at *Pravda*, have written of this and will be writing more.

Two words about criticism. It is bad again. Some time ago criticism seemed to work, criticism was answered. Now again critical remarks are being eluded. We raise a point, we raise it again and again but there is no reply.

Needless to say, we still have faults and are making a lot of mistakes. Sometimes we criticize the wrong person or defend the wrong person. We all recognize this. We are combatting it as best we can. We are combatting it in earnest.

**Anatoli Ananyev**, editor-in-chief of the magazine *Oktyabr*, spoke about the problems involved in studying the history of the country

and the history of the revolution. He cited specific examples to show that these studies were often conducted in a poor and superficial way, noting that there were quite a few such instances.

**Mikhail Gorbachev:** When I was preparing the report on the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution, I was given a list of documentary films about the major stages of the country's life from the film library. We have a lot of documentary records which in themselves, without commentary, constitute forceful political-education material. It needs to be better used and be made more known to the people...

**Anatoli Ananyev:** It is necessary to teach the people, with the help of historical parallels, to feel like the masters of their land, their country. But there is not even a law on land. And there must be one, just like there is a law on the environment. It happens sometimes: a bulldozer leaves with black soil underneath and clay on top. Who is responsible for this?

The speaker suggested that a special commission be set up to consider the problem of agriculture in all its aspects in a most radical way. It is necessary to create all the conditions for a person—master of the land, a working man—to be able to live by farm work so that his children and grandchildren can continue his work. A farmer must not be allowed to turn into a nomad. It is from these positions that lease contracts should be promoted.

So far, contractors take up a land lease for only one season. They are ready to take everything they can get out of that land. There is no telling if they will have the same or different land the following year. This is an exceptionally important problem, perhaps, the most important...

**Mikhail Gorbachev:** I agree. This was dis-

cussed at a recent meeting of the Politburo. I too have the impression that we have not thought this out to the end. The result is that the farmer cannot do his work in a genuine way so that he can feel and realize his potential as master of the land, as an independent person. If the idea of lease contracts is realized correctly and completely within collective farms, colossal advantages can be gained. All contractors need to be given every opportunity for manoeuvre, including with the help of machinery. The lease agreement must guarantee this.

There is such a huge pyramid pressing down on the farmer. We do not yet trust him all the way. But we should. People can size up the situation in a mature way. I heard that on a collective farm in the Ulyanovsk region, which has fully moved over to contract operation, the farmers have refused to admit ten specialists to any of the teams. They know that these people are good-for-nothings.

It must be recorded straight out: if a person wants to lease a piece of land and work under a contract, nobody may refuse him. So far they refuse. The contractor needs to have his hands untied.

**Voice:** In the Krasnogorsk area of the Moscow region, 1,000 families are working on a family contract basis...

**Mikhail Gorbachev:** I think that if there is a small town near a collective farm or a state-owned farm, town residents wishing to work the land should not be refused to do that. Let them grow vegetables, fruit. Let them work the land.

We live under socialism, we have a socialist economic system. But what needs to be solved is how best to combine personal and social interests, and to decide what kind of relations there must be today. It is obvious that we are on the

right track. A person must come into his own. He has grown tired of being bossed around by no matter whom or for no matter what. A machinery operator in the Pskov region has taken a lease. He has built a house and rebuilt a tractor and a combine harvester. In explaining why he has done that, he says: "I'd had enough of it. Everybody was coming and telling me what to do. During work I would have to stop, report on the work I'd done, and maybe the visitor would even get angry. I got tired of it. They took me for a fool but I felt there were many fools around me." I support that machinery operator. People need to have their hands untied, and be given the opportunity of living and doing their work on the land.

**Voice:** To untie people's hands, there must be a law protecting the worker...

**Mikhail Gorbachev:** There must be indeed. I know that a farmer, a rural person has to be given real work. And this work must be protected by law. The same applies both to industry and construction.

**Ivan Laptev,** editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Izvestia*: What is important to us, as journalists and ideologists, is how we do the work entrusted to us—how we promote the policy of glasnost, how we develop it and support it, and what we have achieved. The policy of glasnost has already struck such deep roots that it cannot be turned back.

Not only the Soviet people but the whole world today view the policy of glasnost as an indicator of the progress of our perestroika. People link both their own future and the future of the entire country with it. Little wonder that any threat to glasnost arouses such a response, such a reaction among all people.

But problems have surfaced in the policy of glasnost itself. We need to talk of this while preparing for the conference. For instance, we have proved to be poorly prepared for reporting and analyzing the new problems and new facts we are getting from the very process of democratization and from life itself.

**Mikhail Gorbachev:** That is true. The Party, too, has proved insufficiently prepared, and so has the press, and all of society. But this, it would seem, can be explained.

**Ivan Laptev:** We can also speak of the problems facing our young people, and of history, and of what people have been saying and writing about the problems of ethnic relations. We did not expect many of these things. For instance, journalists and correspondents, especially those from leading newspapers, passed through Nagorny Karabakh very many times. But they failed to see many things.

As a result, we have been unable to assume an effective approach to these problems, have lost the initiative, and somewhere lost control. What kind of conclusion should be drawn from this? We must say to ourselves clearly: if things or events of this kind strike a blow against perestroika, our silence of these things and events strikes an even greater blow, or at least a no lesser one.

This is very important. Because otherwise the seriousness of our intentions is questioned, and so are our ideas about the role of public opinion and the role of the press in the present-day world. I would also draw the following conclusions from this: not a single fact of public life, once it has happened, can be passed over in silence today. It is impossible. Nobody can do it.

Silence is harmful. It breeds rumours, inventions, uncertainty. Sometimes one piece of in-

formation resolves the problems. The speaker then referred to a number of concrete examples from issues of *Izvestia*. Many things and events, he said, require a quick and broad reaction and a bold approach. Such situations will emerge because they are bred by the process of democratization.

We realize that the Western propaganda reaps a harvest from these sorts of events. Of course it does. But the less we talk of them, the later we begin talking, the larger is the harvest. Isn't it time we stopped justifying our own blunders and setbacks by referring to the intrigues of our ideological opponents? So far such attempts have been made quite often, but they only underline our shortcomings, including those in the policy of glasnost.

Many important decisions and new laws have been adopted over the past three years. I think that major decisions will be made at the forthcoming Party conference. But it would be a good idea to look at how the adopted decisions and laws have been complied with. If we face the truth honestly, we must admit that very soon after the decisions are adopted, many of them begin to be revised.

Who is to blame for this? Indeed, the functionaries, the bureaucrats. We have already talked of this here. But, to my mind, the cause of it is that the decisions being adopted nowadays are half-hearted ones.

This is especially evident in the economic sphere. And that is the focus of perestroika. People want to work. This desire is reemerging in them. They are saying, shouting: let us work, rid us of the countless irresponsible drivers, infinite paperwork and reports, rid us of the checks, admonitions, conferences and coordinations.

Now what is really happening? We are criticizing the bureaucrat at full blast, so to speak, but he doesn't seem to care.

We are preparing for the conference by running various columns and publishing various commentaries and materials. In my opinion, the main issue bearing upon the whole of our perestroika and the country's future can be briefly expressed in a short imperative: "Let people work."

**Grigori Baklanov**, editor-in-chief of the magazine *Znamya*: The great demoralization, the great dependence, and later on the black-market economy broke people of the habit of working. And many of them are still unwilling to work, for it became part of their mentality. Bureaucrats love order and create it, but life is not order, it is a spontaneity. So, who is there to disturb the bureaucratic order? The intelligentsia, in the first place. It keeps cudgelling its brains in an attempt to identify the underlying causes, to understand which course life should take and where its regularities lie. Voices can be heard saying that our intelligentsia has grown philistinish and that it hasn't shown its worth in the struggle for glasnost and perestroika. That it is flabby and spineless. How can one possibly say that the intelligentsia hasn't shown its worth in the struggle for perestroika? If not the intelligentsia, who has been running the country's press so far? I think that the intelligentsia has shown its selfless worth.

The speaker went on to say that it was necessary to uncompromisingly raise the question of complete fairness and personal decency, with personal decency coming first. There must be no situation, whereby the size of an edition of a modern "leading" author should exceed an edition of Dostoyevsky.



The bureaucratic machinery has been forming itself for years. It has poisoned thinking, and is multiplying and will continue to multiply in the future. Bureaucratically-minded people ascribe personal failures to the failure of perestroika. That is a very serious and harmful practice. The foes of perestroika are defending a system which enabled untalented and incompetent people to occupy leading positions and to adapt life to suit their level. However difficult we may find it, and whatever obstacles may confront us, we have no alternative but to march on, and in a more resolute way, too. All of us have read the figures from the press: over the past decade we have lost from 25 to 40 per cent of fertile chernozem lands; the contamination of soils has led to certain lands being dropped from use in crop rotation. This is comparable to a part of our Motherland having been alienated from us.

**Valentin Falin**, chairman of the Board of Novosti Press Agency: The conference has indeed been going on for a long time. As a matter of fact, it began the day after the 27th Party Congress ended. As far as I can see, it has been moving in two main directions: the elaboration of ideological and practical criteria by which to generalize the experience gained in the three years that have passed since the April Plenary Meeting and two and a half years since the Congress, and preparation for the conference by way of drawing up a programme of expectations. What are the expectations for this conference and what hopes are being placed on it? What does the population expect of this conference? What do our friends in other socialist countries expect of it? Our ideological foes are also waiting for it.

Our foreign-policy initiative is known to everyone. To the rest of the world today, even

the most foreign, if I may say so, policy is our domestic policy. It is by the latter, by how steadily and consistently our programme for domestic reform is being realized, that the trustworthiness of our foreign policy is being judged internationally.

**Mikhail Gorbachev:** Perestroika has become a reality. It is freeing the potential inherent in socialism and is portraying our country in a different way, including both the people and the Party. Generally speaking, the "enemy image" is being broken down.

This image has long been the pillar of the entire concept of the ideological confrontation against the Soviet Union and its policies, both domestic and foreign. We have suggested a new way of thinking as the basis of a resourceful foreign policy, which invites everyone to cooperate. There have been attempts, however, to put pressures on us and to order us about.

**Valentin Falin:** I want to back Viktor Afanasyev, who said: When you wish to fill a vacuum of time with what you think must necessarily be done, try and reach the secretary of a regional Party committee, or the secretary of a republic's Central Committee, or a minister. We need from five to ten times as much time to organize a plan for a good journalist, as he himself needs to do his job, because we have to climb a tall hierarchical ladder to coordinate things. The time we spend is not commensurate with the result. Plenty of time, years in fact, are wasted to finish with a trifling question, not to mention to prepare a response concerning acute and very topical issues.

In issuing daily constructive information about current events and developments, the Party must demonstrate the outcome of the practical endeavours, its leading role in society.

The mass media must have a clearly defined common strategy in providing coverage of the entire period leading up to the conference, of the conference itself and of the period after.

There must also be a strategy in elucidating historical issues. It rules out a competition between publishers—as to who produces the most sensational stuff from history. In this, too, we need to coordinate efforts and synchronize action. Finally, it would be very helpful, if the textbook on the Party's history and other documents were to be more quickly produced.

**Kirill Lavrov**, chairman of the Board of the Union of the USSR's Theatrical Workers, said that the media must be honest—always and everywhere—pointing out that this was the essential condition for winning popular support for the tremendous constructive effort to renovate Soviet life. He moved for drawing up fundamental principles which would guarantee the irreversibility of perestroika, adding that this should be done without fail.

This also includes the earlier mentioned legislation. Care must be taken that these laws are not ambivalent, but are given full power of legal enforcement. Therein lies the guarantee that our onward movement will not be reversed. I am very willing to have those persons who by way of their life and actions have proved that they are for perestroika, admitted to the conference, and, vice versa, have those persons who are in opposition to it, who impede its advancement, not be there.

**Mikhail Nenashev**, chairman of the State Committee of the USSR for Publishing, Printing and Book Trade, spoke of the role of the popular masses in perestroika. While noting the growth of social activity of the working people nationwide, he said that there was still an opinion that

perestroika could be accomplished "downwards"—through the government machinery.

Meanwhile, the main distinctive feature of perestroika is that it cannot be accomplished without the participation of millions of people. This is why *Pravda's* intervention was well-timed. It caused a nationwide response, an outburst of public opinion. The most interesting feature carried by the newspapers today is readers' letters—so much frankness and straightforwardness. These letters are proof of perestroika's irreversibility.

This is a major political lesson, a demonstration of the people's tremendous trust on the eve of the forthcoming Party conference.

I don't think we have moved far enough in exposing the causes underlying the period of stagnation and we must by all means do that. For it will confirm the main thing: society and the country have no other alternative. This must be made plain to everyone.

I also think that it should be made clear from the conference's rostrum just how much the period of stagnation deformed us: both as regards the overall moral climate and the morals of the younger generation. It won't be easy to overcome the decades of social passivity, of irresponsibility and the habit of being ordered from "above", which leads to mindless obedience. We must get rid of these things. Otherwise, we shall not be able to advance, to develop socially.

It also appears to me, that we need a big discussion about the Party. It is to be a Party conference, but I don't feel we have yet had anything like a broad and earnest discussion. In any case, there has been nothing about this in the newspapers. One is bound to think that the Party apparatus is unwilling to talk about it,

which forces some people to conclude that there must be a reason for that—either they have nothing to say, or they are not in favour of change. I think that discussion of the Party and its role in perestroika is an urgent necessity today.

**Gennadi Seleznyov**, editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*: I have the impression that Communists and non-Communists, Young Communist League members and probably even the Young Pioneers, veterans and young people, are discussing one and the same problem: what are we all bringing to the 19th All-Union Party Conference?

Not only those who speak at meetings, but also readers in their letters are bringing up dozens of questions, big and small, as to which way our democracy is moving, which course shall we adopt, and what socialist pluralism generally is. The eagerness to find out displayed by young people should not be held back or stopped: let them pose sharp, difficult questions.

Day-to-day practice convinces us that young people are getting actively involved in the processes of perestroika. We have started a column in our newspaper titled "Trust me with a real job".

Indeed, the price of a concrete action is rising. We, journalists, had no idea that the column "I'm moving to the country" devoted to rural life in the Russian Non-Black-Soil Region, which is not at all easy, would cause so many people to migrate to rural areas to raise the economy there. More than 100,000 wish to go and live in the countryside and over 20,000 young people have already moved.

Admittedly, the new villagers run into all sorts of minor unpleasanties, although the host-farms generally make the necessary preparations for accommodating the arrivals. Special care should

be taken not to let the young people get disappointed, which, regretfully, often happened before. Being has at all times determined consciousness, and we, therefore, cannot possibly let down the persons who have responded to the nation's appeal for reclaiming Russia's Non-Black-Soil farmlands.

**Irina Arkhipova**, chairwoman of the Board of the All-Union Music Society, who spoke next, dwelled on the important role played by cultural enlightenment in the process of social changes. She pointed out that, though the USSR has many splendid musicians, music is being largely overlooked, and that this often starts from early childhood.

The Society's activity is aimed at producing a tangible impact upon the country's musical life. Regretfully, the mass media has been giving insufficient coverage of the Society's aims and scope.

The formation of a harmonious personality is a crucial task. And it should start from childhood.

Meanwhile, in our country, pre-school artistic education is drifting on its own, and music education in primary and secondary schools is thoroughly bad. If we don't cultivate a taste for good music in children, such as folk music, or patriotic songs, this vacant "space" will soon be taken up by some variety of rock-music, or simply by some ugly music, which can be found today in abundance.

The speaker concluded by appealing to the mass media representatives in attendance, asking them to remember that music was an important, ideological art needing society's constant care and attention.

**Vladimir Karpov**, first secretary of the Board of the USSR's Writers' Union: Glasnost is a powerful instrument of perestroika. It should be

used in a most principled way. What we have seen so far, however, has often been unfair play. A newspaper, or a magazine would bring sharp criticism against someone, leaving the object of criticism with no chance to answer the charge. I think this is wrong, and this practice should be changed.

The speaker suggested that parties involved in any discussion covered by the press should be provided an equal chance to give a substantiated reply. He said that this would compel the media to choose and check on facts more carefully.

**Afanasi Salynsky**, editor-in-chief of the *Theatre* magazine, stressed that society does not provide a full opportunity for the realization of human faculties and potentials. Nor does it sufficiently promote human will, effort and aspirations. It would seem that socialism should enable the greatest possible realization of human gifts and talents. But we are still being governed by the old formula, which was expressed by the young Gorky before the Revolution—a lack of self-evaluation ruins more people in Russia than consumption. Indeed, we often fail to realize the great potentials that man is endowed with nor, in his turn, does man realize his potentials. Society's duty is to make man aware of his own capabilities. We have not done that so far, because for a long time we were dominated by the dogmatic principle that the collective was always right. That is an exaggeration, for it is not always the case.

A serious-minded, original and thorough-going personality is in many ways the one who sets the pace of things, whereas a collective often follows a well-beaten path, an orthodox pattern. Every worker, scientist, artist, composer, and farmer has a great creative potential that should be given a chance to unfold.

Afanasi Salynsky concluded by noting that the Party conference will only be a success if it becomes a sort of a nationwide referendum in support of the ideas and practices of perestroika.

*-After this the meeting was addressed  
by Mikhail Gorbachev.*





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