

Mikhail Gorbachev replies to questions from *l'Unita*

SOME time ago l'Unita, the Italian Communist Party's newspaper, asked Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, for an interview.

On May 18 Mikhail Gorbachev received in the Kremlin l'Unita Editor-in-Chief Comrade Gerardo Chiaromonte who is a member of the directorate of the Italian Communist Party, along with Deputy Editor-in-Chief Comrade Renzo Foa and the newspaper's Moscow correspondent Comrade Giulietto Chiesa, and presented answers to the questions they had sent him.

Then they had a lively and friendly conversation.

Mikhail Gorbachev: I am happy to greet you, Comrade Chiaromonte, and the other Italian comrades. I got your written questions for the interview and worked a lot over my answers. By the way, you did ask plenty of questions. I answered virtually all of them. But I did leave something for the next interview.

Gerardo Chiaromonte: Thank you very much. As to what was left over, let us here and now join the queue for the next interview. As you know, we Italians are a very inquisitive people. And you Comrade Gorbachev are very popular in Italy. Incidentally, have you ever been to Italy?

Mikhail Gorbachev: I have, twice. I can say that I like the Italian people very much for their love of life and vigour.

My first time in Italy I vacationed with a group of CPSU Party functionaries at the invitation of your Party's leadership. That was a very interesting trip. We were in Sicily, near the small town of Terrazini. We made a bus tour of virtually the entire island, saw Enna, which is known as the "navel" of Sicily, and visited the resort of Taormina. Then we travelled to other Italian cities, attended the *l'Unita* Festival in Turin, and went to Florence and the small town of San Gimignano nearby. I remember best the meetings in small towns and workers' settlements, with Italian workers.

Gerardo Chiaromonte: I would like to tell you a story illustrating your popularity in Italy. Our country is in the midst of an election campaign at present and all parties have submitted lists of candidates. We have presented very broad lists containing a large number of independents, representatives of the intelligentsia, and men and women who profess left-wing views but are not members of our Party. Some papers wrote that we have thus emulated football clubs which every year invite players who used to play for other teams. Comrade Pajetta told me about a meeting attended by him, at which he said that if the law under which Italian clubs invite foreign footballers were applied to elections in Italy then we could have asked Comrade Gorbachev to be a candidate in our lists. Naturally this was a joke and Pajetta's audience roared applause.

Mikhail Gorbachev: Alas, I was in Italy the second time in connection with sad circumstances — the death of Enrico Berlinguer. We had then a very important conversation with a group of members of the Italian Communist Party's directorate. I recall us sitting up almost the whole night and discussing a great number of questions. I told your comrades: how long can we go on talking about the autonomy of parties. You Italians have said a million times that you are independent. We have said two million times, including at CPSU Congresses, that both you and we are independent.

But we feel now how many parties are looking to solidarise and consolidate efforts. The point is to develop political relations between parties, the point is political solidarity, the point is for Communists to give an adequate answer to problems with which time has confronted the peoples. For we Communists express the interests of workers, of working people and it is unbecoming for us to engage in politicking. I think the tendency towards exchanges of views, towards interaction is a healthy one.

Incidentally, we are inviting to the celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the Great October Revolution many delegations from parties and various movements. While they are in Moscow we intend to propose an informal meeting for extensive discussion of the key issues that concern the whole world. And not only Communists but representatives of other parties will be welcome to participate. Without any document whatsoever and without any summing up of results. Many of those with whom this subject has been brought up have given a positive response.

Gerardo Chiaromonte: To be effective and useful such a meeting cannot be limited to Communist Parties. Such is our view. Socialists, social democrats and representatives of national-liberation movements should take part in it. In other words, it should not be a function behind closed doors but rather should be really extensive. Only then can it be useful.

Mikhail Gorbachev: Just so.

I have prepared my answers to your written questions which were given me in advance. I must say I greatly admire the Italian manner of setting questions. First you take up half a page reminding me of what I said before and only then ask the question. A sympathetic style.

Gerardo Chiaromonte: Comrade Gorbachev, we have been inspired by the frankness and

straightforwardness of your speeches.

Mikhail Gorbachev: Perhaps I did not answer all the questions but in most instances I tried to give exhaustive answers. I hope you are satisfied. Of course, it is impossible to answer everything. Besides, this should hardly be done because otherwise interest in the next interview will be lost.

Gerardo Chiaromonte: I thank you once again for consenting to the interview, for the text and for your receiving us today. If possible, I would like to ask several brief questions.

Mikhail Gorbachev: It is possible I have already answered these questions in my written responses. But I am ready to converse with you.

Gerardo Chiaromonte: The ideas of renewal and reconstruction, now set forth by the Soviet leadership, did not just spring up overnight. Looking back over your work as a Party leader, at what moment did the understanding of the need for renewal mature in you?

Mikhail Gorbachev: You are right, Comrade Chiaromonte, that this was no revelation, that it was not something that came all of a sudden, within a single night. There are situations when a decision comes quick, but even then it is preceded by lengthy thought.

I and my colleagues in the Party leadership associate the birth and formulation of the concept of renewing socialism on its own foundation and in all spheres where socialist society is developing, first of all with the 1985 April plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee. Of course, the Party had sensed the need for change and renewal several years before that. Understanding of this necessity even found expression in CPSU documents and decisions, including those of its congresses.

But the trouble was that many very important political conclusions and decisions connected with the development of socialism were in the final analysis merely good intentions. They were not backed up by practical deeds, by practical Party activity. Unsettled problems continued to pile up, society felt it and all this in the long run affected the Party itself. But problems must be solved and ailments treated. If a disease is driven deep into the organism it will only worsen. And it is no coincidence that we even use the term "pre-crisis phenomena" to describe the situation that had formed in the country late in the 1970s and early in the 1980s.

I disagree with what is sometimes said that the course towards the renewal of socialism is personally associated with the name of Gorbachev. That would be a contradiction of truth. The forming of the new course is an expression of the fact that Soviet society and Soviet people have gained an extensive understanding of the need for change. In other words, if there were no Gorbachev there would have been someone else. Our society has ripened for changes and the need for change has cleared a road for itself. These changes demanded certain personnel adjustments. And this has taken place both in the Party's Central Committee and in the government. New people have come to positions of leadership, people who in recent years had acutely felt the situation and formulated ideas about what should be done. There were changes in the Party's top leadership after March 1985 and a plan of action was thought out at the April

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plenary meeting of the Central Committee. I want to say once again that this was no revelation or eye-opener but an understanding of the existing objective need for change in our society. And it was on the basis of this that the course of renewing society and of accelerating its development was formulated.

Gerardo Chiaromonte: Were you pondering these problems when you worked in Stavropol?

Mikhail Gorbachev: This can be said of many comrades who worked during those years in the provinces. We saw the real processes taking place in society and felt that this could not go on any longer. By the way, many of the new comrades who have come to the Central Committee and the government have passed through a big school of practical work in the provinces. So there exists a sort of a synthesis of experience and analysis of reality in both the lower and higher echelons.

Gerardo Chiaromonte: In your written answers is there an answer to the question about resistance to the CPSU's new course?

Mikhail Gorbachev: Yes, I answered that question. I must say that I have dealt with this subject in my speeches as well. We do not have a political resistance to the new course. But we all are children of our time. The past atmosphere, style and method of work, approaches to analysis, to solving problems — all this has had its effect on us as well. And that is why we all, from worker to General Secretary, must now change our attitudes. These are not just fine words but the crux of the matter. I would even say that this is the essence of our more-democracy drive.

The April plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, for instance, achieved a major breakthrough in the methods of thinking, in approaches and evaluations. But let us compare that plenary meeting with the recent January plenary meeting. And we will see how far we have advanced. But the Party is the same. And this means that we ourselves are changing in the course of the renewal.

Gerardo Chiaromonte: When you came to Italy for Enrico Berlinguer's funeral, you said, answering a question from a journalist, that some of Berlinguer's ideas had facilitated your thoughts, your meditation. Is that so?

Mikhail Gorbachev: The most important thing in relations between our two parties, and this is important, is that even in periods of discussion they were characterised by a spirit of comradeship, by a spirit of mutual respect. And this was useful both for the leadership of the ICP and for the leadership of the CPSU.

In his time Vladimir Lenin said (I am not quoting but conveying his thought) that it is important to know not only the position of your comrades in the Party and in the movement but also what is being said about us by the class enemy. Because the latter, firstly, is blunt in its views and, secondly, sees better the weakness in our positions.

So why not speak about the usefulness of exchanges between two parties, two central committees? An active exchange of outlook and information yields rich food for thought, makes for a broader approach to various problems, enhances analysis of international problems and helps deepen and expand ties. A major guarantee that our evaluations and conclusions will be more correct is inherent in this interconnection. This exchange and interconnection is very important in our relations with the Italian comrades too.

Gerardo Chiaromonte: Even when discussions have acquired a polemic nature?

Mikhail Gorbachev: Yes, even then. Because even in periods of acute polemics both the CPSU and the ICP carried and were aware of their responsibility to their peoples and to the working-class movement, in the name of the cause of socialism.

Renzo Foa: May I ask a question of a personal nature? You are very popular in the world, Comrade Gorbachev. And it stands to reason

that people are interested in you. Readers of *l'Unita* would want very much to learn something about how you spend your free time what you read, and what your interests are.

Mikhail Gorbachev: In my country it is not quite customary to speak about such things but I will try to answer.

You see, when people speak about the popularity of Gorbachev they mean apparently not a concrete person but the policy which is pursued by the Soviet leadership. The policy which it has formulated and offered to the Soviet people and Soviet society. In the international sphere this is the policy which the Soviet leadership pursues on the basis of our known foreign policy concepts. Herein, I believe, lie the mainstays of the Soviet policy's authority. If we are consistent in implementing it, both home and foreign policy, the authority will remain and increase. If not, no style, no personal charm will save us. We look soberly at such things and know that precisely this is especially important. By the way, not only for the Soviet leadership. There is no need for exaggeration. One must honestly serve one's people and the cause of socialism and follow the road chosen.

The question of the General Secretary's free time, of course, is an interesting one. I will try to answer it in the following way.

I have always held that my "weakness" is that I have always shown interest in many things in various fields. I cannot even say which disciplines in school attracted my special interest, which sciences I liked more and which I liked less. For instance, I joined the department of law but at first I wanted to enrol at the department of physics. I liked mathematics very much but I also liked history and literature. To this day I remember by heart poetry I learned at school.

One might assent that people who concentrate on some specific field achieve much in life. But still people with a broad outlook are more to my liking.

As to free time, I do not have any now, and not only I but all members of the Soviet leadership.

It is the mission of the present Soviet leadership to utilise all the possibilities and to launch as widely as possible the processes of restructuring. This compels us to deal in effect with everything — economy, ideology, culture, the entire spiritual sphere. This determines our contacts with people, and virtually our entire time is devoted to this. Perhaps such a way of life cannot be described as quite normal but it is dictated by the time, by a situation resembling revolutionary periods when one must give oneself entirely regardless of anything.

Speaking of interests, in mature years I have been more interested in economics, and read and written on these topics. It can be said that I know a thing or two in this field. But I have a continuing interest in philosophical questions, especially now. By the way, this is helping me now in theoretically cognising the current stage of Soviet society's development and the problems and interconnections of the present-day world. This makes it possible to work for an improvement in the life of Soviet people not on the basis of just a desire but on thorough serious analysis and realistic conclusions.

I have read a lot of literature on philosophy, books written in this country and in the West. I can say that a sort of "epoch of renaissance" has set in for the Soviet Union, and the creative spirit of Leninism is reviving. We are rereading and rethinking Lenin's works to get a better grasp of Lenin's method. Understanding of this method helps us in the serious things we are doing. Just quoting him will not help. For if we do not master Lenin's creative method we will not be able to make an analysis of the present and work out correct decisions.

For instance, I often repeat Lenin's words that it would take 70 people like Marx to understand the world economy. And that was

said many decades ago. So just imagine the present situation.

Lenin counted on followers who would be loyal to the cause of socialism, the cause to which he devoted his brilliant life. He had faith that they would creatively develop his teaching.

I am interested, of course, also in the spiritual and cultural life of society, our people. It is very important to understand how the changes are influencing our social thought.

As you see, nothing much has come out of the discussion of recreation and free time.

Giulietto Chiesa: You travel much around the country. What is your impression of these trips? Is renewal causing problems? What is the response among working people to the calls for discipline and social justice? What is the attitude to the privileges that some Party and state officials have? What is the reaction to the drive against drink and alcoholism?

Mikhail Gorbachev: All my trips round our country, including my recent trip to Baikonur, involve extensive contacts with workers, with working people. This is not something new for me, no invention of any kind. I have always worked in this way and here I do not have to remake myself. I think that a Party worker, particularly a worker of national scale, cannot successfully fulfil his duties or work fruitfully if he does not have a resuscitating link with working people, with their lifestyle. It is at this join, at this join of policy and contacts with the masses that both the correctness and the shortcomings of the entire work are seen. If something is being done not quite as it should, adjustments can and must be made on this basis. That is the central element of our activity.

The most important thing at present, I believe, is the support by the working people for the Party's policy and its course of renewal. Our policy would not be worth much without this support. We have seen for ourselves and have become convinced that we were right in opting for renewal and restructuring. But there are also tactical points, matters determined by time. We do not know everything, but we know the main things. This is a process. And that process must be constantly analysed both in the Party and society.

We hear everywhere from the working people — we are for the Party's policy, we are for renewal, we have faith in it and we ask you not to stop. As you see, there is a certain anxiety — do not stop! Evidently there are grounds for such anxiety. The matter is that in the past too there had been initiatives but they were not carried through to the end. People remind us of this.

You have asked an interesting question about people's attitude to discipline and order. The matter is that the working people themselves are calling for more discipline and order. And we must and shall act in such a way as to strengthen both the former and the latter. People demand organisation, conscientiousness and a responsible attitude. If this is lacking, then the whole of society suffers. There should be order and discipline at industrial enterprises, in trade and in the utilities. We will be in need of discipline and order at all stages of the restructuring. But of course the consciousness of people and self-discipline is especially important for this. It is precisely on the basis of self-discipline that the democratic mainstays of renewal can develop. The real participation of people in the processes of renewal is the main element to the new course.

Now a few words about the so called privileges and questions of social justice. The thing is that socialism cannot ensure living conditions and consumption equal for all. That will be under communism. There is a different criterion of distributing social boons under socialism: from each according to his abilities, to each according to his work. There are a whole number of historic gains ensuring socialist society's stability: absence of exploitation, equality of nations,

availability of work, free education, that is access to secondary and higher education for all, free medical services, that is access to health protection, maintenance in old age and virtually free housing for the majority of the population.

Such is the expression of social justice under socialism. By the way precisely this makes our society one of the politically most stable.

When the mainstays of society's stable life are ensured, the quantity and quality of work should be the main criterion in assessing the activity of people. In the past, however, there were deviations from this criterion and levelling tendencies appeared. This meant that a person's income was not linked with his labour contribution, with his creative potentialities. This affected the activity of people. So now the crucial task for us is to overcome levelling. A man's work and the quality and quantity of his work must be respected. But of course there are those who would like to work less while getting more, getting like a prominent scientist, a good specialist, a highly skilled worker or an industrious farmer. Our task, I repeat, is to confirm in full volume the principle of socialism — from each according to his abilities, to each according to his work.

As to benefits, the following can be said. There are benefits instituted by the state. This is connected first and foremost with due account for the quality and quantity of socially useful work done by a specific person, his contribution.

There are benefits which are realised in the economic sphere, in the sphere of science (for example, we look after the needs of major scientists and academicians). People who make an outstanding contribution to socialist construction have special titles conferred on them such as Hero of Socialist Labour, Merited Worker of Science, or Merited Worker of Culture and the Arts. They have certain privileges, including in the distribution of housing. In other words, account is taken of a person's concrete contribution.

I think this has been substantiated. What we have here are privileges which the state finds it possible to grant to a certain member of society in the interests of developing the whole of society. In the future too benefits and privileges will probably remain for a certain time.

But there are also such privileges which are not established by the state but which some established for themselves by virtue of their position. This is unacceptable and we will fight such phenomena.

There is also another aspect to this matter. Various organisations, institutions and enterprises have departments that provide them with services in trade or distribution. Such a form has taken shape in our country. Take, for example, a big factory. For in our country a factory means not only output but services for its personnel.

Incidentally, Comrade Chiesa, you might devote one of your stories to such a factory.

Big enterprises have a system of public catering. And it must be said directly that even if at times some foodstuffs are in short supply in the shops, factory canteens have them. The enterprise foots the bill to maintain the premises for the canteen and other bills, and provides employees with meals at cut prices. This is done by the management and the trade union committee.

There exist medical institutions that service the personnel of the given enterprise. This includes outpatient clinics, and also holiday homes and overnight sanatoriums either next to the enterprise or, say, on the Black Sea coast. Enterprises also have stores, grocery order points, dress-makers, etc.

This exists at enterprises. Now the Academy of Sciences, the Union of Writers or some other such organisation also have their own service departments, and their own sanatoriums, holiday homes, houses in the country. It is thus that the tasks of providing services are fulfilled.

The Komsomol, the Trade Unions (incidentally, the richest organisation in the country) and the Party apparatus also have such services. This has formed in history,

Of course, given the existence of such a system, problems might also arise. First of all it happens when somebody overdoes things in the sense that somebody has advanced too far from the average level. Such phenomena, naturally, are subjected to just criticism by the working people.

The Party struggles for the solution of social problems. Major measures are being taken to improve activities in the social sphere. We are accelerating housing construction. Ten per cent of capital investments earmarked for the production sphere will be switched to housing construction. Serious decisions have been taken on restructuring the public health system. A reform of the higher and secondary school is under way. Measures have been taken to give material assistance to the creative unions, as well as other measures.

We will further realistically analyse the situation in the social sphere. Our approach is based on accelerating development in this sphere. It must be honestly admitted that to date we are behind in this. The main thing is to correctly use socialist principles, and correctly evaluate each person's contribution and the quality and quantity of his work.

Then there is the special issue of our veterans, pensioners, invalids and large families. We have always shown special concern for them and will continue to do so. It is for this purpose, in fact, that the organisation of Veterans of Labour was set up. We are also looking to the specific interests of young people.

Along with this it is clear that in the social sphere, just as in other spheres for that matter, we will resolutely struggle against all negative phenomena, such as bribe-taking, money-grabbing and unearned income.

We will also continue our drive against drink and alcoholism. That social ill is rooted in the deep past, has become a habit and is not easy to combat. But society is ripe for a turn around in tackling this question. Incidentally, the working people have been reminding us not to slacken the drive against alcoholism. But of course not all are happy with the measures we have taken.

Women are demanding the introduction of prohibition. But we understand that such a law cannot be introduced on a national scale. So we answer them: if you want, go ahead and introduce prohibition in your family, village, settlement or locality. In thousands of villages and settlements working people have ruled at their meetings to stop the sale and drinking of alcoholic beverages. The struggle against alcoholism continues. Per capita consumption of alcohol has been halved during the past two years. But illicit distilling has grown noticeably. We will resolutely combat this phenomenon and toughen the appropriate measures if need be.

This is a big problem. And the way to overcome such an evil as alcoholism is to develop the service industry, trade, sport and culture, and democratise all of society's life.

It must be said on the whole that were society to take a negative stand in this issue we would not have got anywhere. All these measures were taken in accordance with views expressed by the working people and are being carried out with their participation.

Gerardo Chiaromonte: One last short question. What is your view of relations between the Soviet Union and the Italian Republic?

Mikhail Gorbachev: Relations between the USSR and Italy are developing quite well. We value our relations with the Italian Republic which rest on long traditions and mutual respect. It is very important that political dialogue and understanding are developing and perfecting between our two countries.

We also value Italy's original contribution to international affairs. We know, treasure and show much interest in the wealth of Italian culture and history.

Gerardo Chiaromonte: And what about visiting us, Comrade Gorbachev?

Mikhail Gorbachev: I keep thinking about this all the time. I have a tremendous desire to visit Italy. Availing myself of this opportunity I would like to convey the best of wishes to the Italian people on behalf of the Soviet people, the Soviet leadership and myself.

Here follow the answers which were presented by Mikhail Gorbachev to the Italian comrades in writing.

L'Unita: You said recently that tourism is not your line of work and so you will only be able to go to the United States if there is a real prospect of signing a disarmament agreement. Can you mention the principal issues which you believe should be agreed upon at a possible US-Soviet summit meeting? Do you believe, in particular, that the prospect of a medium-range agreement with the United States has become palpable?

Mikhail Gorbachev: The tourism remark is to the point. But realism is a mandatory feature which must be intrinsic to every politician.

The whole package of issues of scaling down military tension and confrontation in the world cannot be solved at one fell swoop, but one has to start somewhere.

The issue lending itself most readily to solution now is indisputably the one of eliminating American and Soviet medium-range missiles from Europe and drastically limiting them in the Asian part of the USSR and on US territory.

It is quite feasible to come to terms about this and sign the first agreement in history for a radical reduction and a near elimination of a whole class of nuclear weapons. It is likewise quite feasible to define "basic provisions" on strategic offensive arms, ABM defences and nuclear testing.

Just several weeks ago it seemed that the rapid shift in the Soviet position towards the positions of the United States and its West European allies had brought the agreement within a few steps.

The basic principles to such an agreement were indeed jointly worked out by President Reagan and me way back in Reykjavik. A wish was expressed, especially by West European countries, that we separate the medium-range issue from the overall package — and we did that. Concern arose over a theatre missile imbalance in the European continent — and we agreed to eliminate the Soviet and American weapons of this class from Europe altogether.

Probably not only we but most other people all over Europe and the world were thinking then that eventual accord was, as they say, in the bag.

It now turns out, however, that some West European governments have not yet decided whether they want the Soviet medium-range missiles scrapped if the US ones are scrapped as well.

We noticed that some people are trying to forge an endless chain of more and more linkages. At first they said the medium-range missile issue might not be resolved without simultaneously destroying theatre missiles, then they began throwing in tactical nuclear weapons, battlefield nuclear weapons and finally even conventional arms and armed forces. Generally speaking, all these are serious matters, and together with our allies we have expressed our judgements on them. And we are prepared to discuss and solve them.

But these problems may not, in our view, be used for stone-walling. We nonetheless think that political realism will prevail. Too much is at stake, too significant are the matters in question to all mankind. For those who have not been able to make up their minds, let me quote Seneca: when a man doesn't know where he is steering, no wind for him will be fair.

The chance that has offered itself must not be let slip. An agreement will make it easier to tackle many other problems of stopping the arms race and bringing about disarmament. In the well-known Statement of January 15, 1986 we summarised our ideas on the ways and phases for eliminating nuclear weapons completely by the beginning of the 21st century.

It is guided by it that we have moved on disarmament issues. We have been updating our proposals on every area to assimilate useful ideas and considerations by other countries. Talks are already under way on many of them, and some of these negotiations, for example those on chemical weapons, are at an advanced phase.

L'Unita: In the policy report to the 27th Congress of the CPSU and your subsequent statements you have insisted on the need to realise the interdependence in this age of the systems of East and West as well as those of North and South. This is a new vision of the world which gives priority to co-operation among different social systems. Could you elaborate on your ideas on this issue?

Mikhail Gorbachev: You are quite right. The 27th Congress of the CPSU has drawn the highly important theoretical and political conclusions that:

The four decades of a nuclear arms race have left mankind literally staring the problem of survival in the face.

Even with all its diversity and contradictions, the present-day world is becoming increasingly inter-related and interdependent and largely integral.

It follows that the path to the enduring and nuclear-free peace wanted so badly by nations sick and tired of confrontation, and to a non-violent world where each will keep his philosophical, ideological, political and religious views, is through talks between countries and joint work to hammer out accords on key issues on the international order of the day, most notably the issues of disarmament. This will require that countries update the practice of international relations and diplomacy in conformity with the new mode of thinking.

Many aspects here are out of the ordinary. Recall, for example, how many times disarmament talks opened in the past. But the countries then calmly held that if agreement would be a good thing, failure wouldn't be so terrible. However, we all must see that it would be terrible and that we must not allow mankind to keep marching toward the brink beyond which is non-existence. The call of life is to get together and start moving in the opposite direction.

This is today a categorical imperative in politics and diplomacy. We are shaping our international policy in this very vein.

We are aware, of course, that our drive for change in foreign policy and our call for a new outlook are welcomed by far from all people in the West. Moreover, we can see more and more clearly where the main strongholds of resistance are and who is seeking to raise a front against new attitudes in foreign policy.

Without breaking down the resistance of those clinging to the old positions-of-strength policy and outdated stereotypes in East-West relations, it is hard to expect a drastic improvement in international relations and a lasting and secure peace.

The other side of the matter is that the sharp turn in historical development is giving rise to a multitude of new questions and there aren't ready made answers to each one of them. But given good will and understanding, they can and should be answered, and via collective effort.

Now that the Soviet Union and other socialist countries have suggested building a nuclear-free world, the question is: won't mankind in this case return to the situation existing between the First and Second World Wars when there were no nuclear weapons but military conflicts still broke out and took a toll of many tens of millions of

lives? How, we are being asked, can security and non-violence be ensured in a world without nuclear weapons?

This is indeed no idle question. But we shall never agree that nuclear weapons should be recognised as a reliable means of keeping the peace. It is our conviction that in a nuclear-free world there should be created and function powerful legal political mechanisms for regulating international relations. To fashion them is a common cause for all countries, nuclear and non-nuclear, developed and developing. An important part will belong here clearly to the United Nations whose role and significance should in our opinion keep growing.

On the whole, we would welcome international dialogue on the substance of the entire range of issues concerning a comprehensive system of security in a nuclear-free world, with a sufficient minimum of armaments whose pattern will be determined by purely defensive needs.

Looking at world affairs from the viewpoint of humanity, there can hardly be anything more urgent now than humanising politics.

In effect, nuclear disarmament is also a question of humanism, and even above all one of humanism.

This understanding prompts new approaches to international affairs. Politics have for ages been the domain of the powers that be. They still remain in many ways a business of states and their leaders. But it is no longer limited to states alone. The leading social trend — the shift to greater democracy — is making itself felt in international political reality ever more strongly.

Our time has naturally become a time in which the role of universal human factors in world affairs and an analysis of policies and international relations from the standpoint of humanity has generally been on the increase. It is time to stress man's spiritual and material needs which are basically the same, especially when it comes to preserving the very life and habitat for the Soviet Union, Italy and every other country. We believe that this humanism dominant in politics will win ever broader recognition.

This also reflects the new mode of thinking that makes us see humanitarian co-operation as part and parcel of a comprehensive system of security, along with political, economic and ecological co-operation. The challenge is to ensure protection for man, for the individual. But the social security of a person also needs to be protected. He should feel that his freedoms are not fictitious, that society really needs him, his work and knowledge and that it won't abandon him in trouble or let him die from starvation, that it will provide him with housing, take care of his children and guarantee at least a minimum of welfare.

I think it is here that we can find a common denominator for different approaches to the issues of human rights and the social and humanitarian sphere in general.

No state and no government, of course, have immunity against mistakes. But it is likewise true that the more states communicate with one another, the more open and sincere these contacts will be and the more decisively the new political mode of thought will win the minds of statesmen and the greater will be the confidence in fewer mistakes and miscalculations.

L'Unita: In your statements and the latest Soviet stands on a number of issues we can feel new accents on relations between the USSR and Western Europe. There is no concealing that certain quarters in the West are afraid lest progressing European detente should split the alliance of Western countries and weaken links between Europe and the United States. These are the intentions some people ascribe to the USSR. What could you say on this score?

Mikhail Gorbachev: Relations with West European countries indeed hold a special place in our international policies.

I think it won't be wrong to say that despite

the motley socio-political and national-state arrangements in Europe, one increasingly strong trend there is continuous improvements in state-to-state relations in the East-West context. This comes from a growing awareness of the realities of the present-day world, the high intellectual potential of European nations and at the same time their dramatic historical experience. This also explains why the philosophy of a "common European home" is evoking ever broader response and understanding. We seek to maintain continuity and progress in the CESC process.

As for driving wedges between Western Europe and the United States, this is, to put it mildly, rubbish. While ourselves seeking co-operation with other countries, we also take the view that all states have the same right to co-operate with one another.

The historical relationship between Western Europe and the United States or, say, between the Soviet Union and European socialist countries are a political reality. It may not be ignored if one pursues a realistic policy. A different attitude could upset the existing equilibrium in Europe.

We are firmly convinced that the future of Europe lies in stable security with a minimum of arms on both sides, in broad state-to-state co-operation and in contacts and exchanges in every field and at every level.

L'Unita: What do you think of the outlook for economic and political relations between the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) and the EEC?

Mikhail Gorbachev: I will answer this question briefly. The CMEA and EEC are now jointly seeking a foundation for future relations of co-operation and have moved far in these efforts. Parallel with establishing relations between the CMEA and the EEC, their member countries will start forming relations with agencies representing these associations. The Soviet Union, for its part, is prepared to take this path and enter into a relationship with the EEC. When this happens, many interesting ventures will be possible.

L'Unita: Signs of a new spirit in relations between the USSR and China have appeared of late. Your speech last year in Vladivostok and your visit to India reaffirmed that the Soviet Union seeks complete normalisation of interstate relations with China. Bringing home a certain part of Soviet troops from Mongolia served as an additional propitious indication. The Chinese, however, refer to the situation in Kampuchea as one of the main obstacles to complete normalisation of political relations. What is your opinion on that score?

Mikhail Gorbachev: You are right. The Soviet Union has been moving vigorously in the direction towards complete normalisation of relations between the two largest socialist countries — the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Trade-and-economic, scientific, technical, and cultural relations have developed dynamically of late, and political consultations on some topical international issues have been held.

We attach much importance to the fact that the USSR and the PRC approach a number of big fundamental international issues from similar positions.

Both the Chinese leaders and we emphasise that peace is essential for accomplishing the domestic tasks of social renewal. The two countries have proclaimed they shall never be first to use nuclear weapons. We strongly oppose the "Star Wars" programme. China takes a similar stand. We take interest in everything that is being done in the PRC to regulate and modernise the economy, and wholeheartedly wish the great neighbouring people and the Communist Party of China (CPC) success in this difficult cause.

And still no complete normalisation of Soviet-

Chinese relations has come so far. I would not like to enter into polemics as to why this is so. I will only refer to the Kampuchean question which you mentioned.

This is not an issue pertaining to Soviet-Chinese relations. But, as we see it, both the Soviet Union and the PRC should be interested in a settlement of the problem. We firmly proceed from the premise that there is only one way, a political one, to settle the Kampuchean issue. As we understand it, there is a growing desire for precisely such a settlement. This is very important.

L'Unita: What are the prospects for a political settlement to the Afghan issue, a settlement to bring the Soviet troops home from that country, and a guarantee that for Afghanistan full sovereignty and independence would be ensured?

Mikhail Gorbachev: I shall begin by saying that Afghanistan is a sovereign and independent state right now.

The national reconciliation policy which Afghanistan has been pursuing from the beginning of this year contains all the necessary components for a political settlement inside the country. This, of course, should be combined with a settlement of its external aspects — in the sense of ensuring an end to interference from the outside in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Talks on this score are, as you know, being conducted between Afghanistan and Pakistan through a personal envoy of the UN Secretary-General.

There has been some progress in both domestic and external aspects. If certain forces did not interfere with the matter and if they did not carry out massive deliveries of up-to-date arms to the insurgents, did not continue the training of their combat groups outside Afghanistan, and did not put obstacles to the return of refugees to the country, there would have been more rapid headway.

And still, I repeat, there is some progress.

The Afghan leadership has stated that within the framework of the national reconciliation programme it agrees to co-operating with most diverse political forces, in effect with a majority of them, and is prepared to negotiate for the setting up of a coalition government. Deciding whom a government will consist of is the prerogative of the Afghan people and no one else. This is a bold approach. It manifests the strength of the Afghan national democratic revolution, and not its weakness.

The Soviet Union does not and will not interfere in the matters of where the Afghan comrades will seek partners for the realisation of the national reconciliation programme: in their own country, among refugees and emigrants abroad or maybe in your country, in Italy.

It is sometimes alleged that the Soviet Union will agree only to such a political settlement of the Afghan problem as would leave Afghanistan within its "sphere of influence". This is a profoundly erroneous evaluation. The Soviet Union has no spheres of influence at all, and has no aspiration for such. As far as Afghanistan is concerned, we fully support the Nonaligned Movement position that that country should remain independent, sovereign and non-aligned.

If Afghanistan goes neutral, too, that again will be up to the Afghan people.

The main thing is to make rapid headway along the road of settling the Afghan issue on an honest and fair basis.

L'Unita: The Middle East still remains a hotbed of danger and at the same time a source of problems which are most difficult to resolve. The USSR has repeatedly stated that it supports the cause of the Palestinians, and has put forward a proposal to convene an international conference involving all parties concerned. Would you kindly specify which path the Soviet Union feels should be followed to this goal. What are the

prospects for resumption of relations between the USSR and Israel?

Mikhail Gorbachev: The Middle East conflict is a drawn-out and very explosive one. To settle it is a major international objective. The idea of an international Middle East peace conference, in which all parties concerned together with the permanent members of the UN Security Council would participate, has been getting increasingly broad recognition in recent months.

An international conference is a universal and flexible form. Bilateral, trilateral and multilateral talks could be held within its framework. All types of contacts and co-operative action between the conferees are appropriate.

Speaking of the substance of the issue and of a principled basis for a political settlement to the Middle East conflict, the central point should be fairness: Israeli troops should be withdrawn from the territories occupied since June 1967; the legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine to self-determination, including the right to establish a state of their own, should be recognised; the possibility for all Middle East countries, including naturally Israel, to live in conditions of peace within safe and recognised borders should be reliably safeguarded.

Important events that have a direct bearing on the evolution of Middle Eastern affairs have occurred of late.

You ask about Soviet-Israeli relations. As far as diplomatic relations are concerned, I have already explained our position in a recent speech. These relations can be restored provided there is real progress in a Mid-East settlement. We have no reason (with the exception of one — Israel's aggressive policy with regard to the Arabs) to regard Israel differently from any other state.

L'Unita: We are all aware of the need for and urgency of establishing a new international economic order. In this connection the question of the indebtedness of the developing countries arises. Numerous proposals have been put forward for solving the problem. What is the Soviet Union's stand? Whence the Soviet Union's fresh interest in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)?

Mikhail Gorbachev: The establishment of a new international economic order, the ensurance of international economic security, and a search for realistic ways to settle the debts problem are what bother us most.

All efforts to build a more durable and reliable peace may yield few results if international economic issues are not tackled simultaneously on a fair basis.

The countries of the capitalist West seem to be beginning to realise the formidable nature of the issues, including artificial restrictions on international trade, indebtedness, non-equivalent exchanges, and so on. But they are approaching the issues with the old methods of neo-colonialism. One can say with assurance that this holds out only further deadlocks, fresh complications, and greater sufferings for millions of people in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, with all the ensuing political consequences.

Global economic problems should be tackled by the whole world, i.e. on the basis of internationalisation. All other methods are only palliatives. It is time we all realised that: for, as a saying in Ancient Rome went, the fire which seems extinguished often slumbers beneath the

The Soviet Union is ready to co-operate with all countries in tackling these acute problems of the contemporary world.

About GATT I shall say very briefly: this is one of those international machineries which can, and, we think, must be used for pooling the efforts of all countries in the cause of improving world economic relations. Hence our interest in GATT and in the multilateral trade negotiations taking place within its framework.

L'Unita: Let us move on to domestic issues. At the 27th Congress you stated the need for a

"radical reform" and for "revolutionary changes" in the economic and social fields with a view to effecting transition within a relatively short period of time to a new phase characterised by "intensive" economic development. New laws and resolutions have been adopted over the year that has passed since. The economic administration of enterprises and ministries has changed. Foreign trade has been reorganised. The Law on Individual Enterprise has been endorsed, and a draft law on the state enterprise (amalgamation) has been put forward. However, not all the main aspects of an economic machinery for reorganisation have been defined. This is what the next plenary meeting of the Central Committee is to tackle. In what directions will this work be conducted?

Mikhail Gorbachev: To begin with, I shall point out that the Party has put forward a task of moving on to a new quality in the growth of socialist society. This task is all about the individual, his initiative and readiness to continue to build socialism and be the true master of his country.

The elevation of the human factor is closely connected with further democratisation of all aspects of societal life. Without democracy there can be no initiative, no direct participation in industrial management, and no social justice. Without democracy, there is no personal involvement in the affairs of all society.

Speaking of transformations in the national economy, we are moving on from predominantly administrative to predominantly economy management methods, and to complete cost accounting. The task of ensuring the harmonious development of state enterprises and organisations and of co-operative and individual enterprise is being set in state planning and financial policy. The unfounded obstacles to commodity-money relations have to be removed and enterprises switched over to self-financing. The policy in wages and salaries is being substantially reorganised to become directly dependent on the results of work. The independence and economic responsibility of enterprises is being ensured. A new foundation is being laid for more active trade-and-economic contracts with foreign partners. This, in particular, could be of mutual benefit to both Soviet and Italian enterprises.

Our main efforts are being aimed at creating a machinery for accelerating economic development on the basis of the socialist principles and advantages which we poorly utilised previously.

L'Unita: Following January's plenary meeting, there is no doubt any longer that a transition to radical reforms is a very difficult thing and evokes counteraction. In particular, at the June 1986 plenary meeting, you specially pointed out "resistance" to renewal, a resistance which has come through in all fields marked out for economic, social, cultural, ideological and ethical changes. One gains the impression that since then the resistance has grown, although in your speech at the 20th Congress of the Young Communist League you stated that the tone was being set by supporters of the reorganisation. You also said that the reorganisation had "no political opponents" and that the difficulties of the present stage "affect us all", for "we all are the children of our time".

An analysis of the resistance could provide an interesting cutaway picture of present-day Soviet society. What is your view of this problem? In what form does the resistance manifest itself? Are there spheres of society in which the resistance is more pronounced?

Mikhail Gorbachev: It would be at best unrealistic to believe that such a major revolutionary turn involving the interests of millions and millions of people and our entire society is proceeding easily.

I want to emphasise that the reorganisation is a long and difficult process. The new exacting

demands being placed upon the cause, upon people and upon their duties at such a juncture are being realised quickly by some and more slowly by others.

What do we mean when we speak of resistance to the reorganisation? It is a question of old approaches, of the inertia of old habits and of fear of novelty and responsibility for specific deeds. We are also being hampered by bureaucratic encrusted layers.

But there is no doubt about one thing, namely that the reorganisation is proceeding in-depth. All sections of the population are being drawn into the process. It involves the interests of practically each and every person. In conversations, letters and speeches people speak and write in support and demand one thing, namely that the reorganisation should not stop, that it should be carried on, and that what has been started be carried through to the end without fail.

L'Unita: "There is no other way". This is your expression. Does that mean that you view certain decisions as "forced", some of which will go through by no means painlessly, and will probably reveal deep contrasts in Soviet society? At the same time you have repeatedly condemned the fact that the necessary and long-found decisions "were not taken in due time". We would like to ask how such a situation could crop up. Did only "subjective" errors underlie it, or, in your view, were they combined with real defects in the functioning of the mechanisms and structures of leadership, decision-making and administration?

Mikhail Gorbachev: The answer to that was already given at the January plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee. I will say the main thing: proceeding along the road leading from the October Revolution, the Soviet people have utterly transformed the political, economic, social and cultural fields. And I believe that I do not have to tell the Italian reader what the Soviet Union is today and what role it plays in the international arena. The difficulties we have encountered in recent years are rooted not in the nature of the socialist system but in the insufficient application of its potentialities, not in socialist democracy but in shortcomings in its functioning.

The reasons for socialism in our country failing to reveal all the potentialities and the whole wealth of its contents are not only subjective, but are also rooted in the historical situation in which we have found ourselves. The objective conditions, in which we were the first to build the socialist society, were too complex, even cruel. Intervention, civil war, economic blockade, the "sanitary" cordon, military provocations and permanent pressure by imperialism and, finally, a most fierce battle against fascism which required the greatest of efforts and sacrifices from the Soviet people. Then followed the reconstruction of the war-ravaged developed regions against a background of cold war forced by the West. That was the specific situation in which the Soviet people lived and fought, building and developing socialism.

Our contemporary plans for radically reorganising all fields in the life of Soviet society are no idle armchair reflections. They are an expression of the objective ripe need for major change. We are gradually shifting the "motor" of socialism's self-advancement into top gear and making the fullest possible use of its creative potential.

L'Unita: In your speeches you always mention and emphasise "democratising Soviet society". Yet, with broad discussion on the issue opened, some people have already started making reservations and expressing doubt, as if "excessive" democracy could pose some danger to the social system. You have said yourself that you did not view that argument as something negative, since "present in it in its own way is concern for society's stability". In what sense can further democratisation involve a risk to stability?

Mikhail Gorbachev: We are profoundly convinced that true democracy cannot be detrimental to socialism in any way. If only because in its very nature socialism means democracy and people's power. The risk to the cause of socialism appears when bureaucratic mistrust of reason and of the political consciousness of the people prevails.

The Party's Central Committee has made a quite definite statement on that matter. The discussion of these questions at Party organisations and work collectives has shown that the policy of democratisation is accepted by the broadest masses. The existing divergencies concern rather the questions of the scale, depth and rate of the process. I believe this to be quite natural. This is what, in the final count, distinguishes a democratic process.

Our disputes of today are those of like-minded people concerned for the success of the reforms started. We sincerely wish further democratisation in society to gain momentum and clearly realise that democracy has nothing to do with unruliness and anarchy. Likewise rational discretion has nothing to do with over-cautiousness.

I will note in passing that the bourgeois press is misinterpreting the process of democratisation taking place in our country. Apparently, some people would very much like to convince their readers and listeners that the Soviet Union has at last embarked on the type of democracy existing in the West. Things are, I would say, quite the opposite. We are developing the initial essence of Lenin's principles of Soviet socialist democratisation with due regard for the accumulated political and cultural potential of Soviet society and people. Socialist democracy is our aim, prerequisite and a powerful vehicle in reorganisation.

L'Unita: Further democratisation can imply absolutely different notions. For example, a change in the practices of holding elections, and a broadening of the powers of the Soviets and of the rights of work collectives up to the introduction of advanced forms of self-government such as envisaged in the new state enterprise law. Further democratisation may also imply new legal guarantees to defend citizens from the omnipotence of the machinery (government and Party) and give them the rights which until now were not found in Soviet society. Obviously, some people believe that Soviet people are unable to assimilate "so heavy" a dose of democracy. You have declared the opposite. How, in your view, should the need be approached for a deep-going change in that field that would ensure full effectiveness of the human factor? Don't you think reorganisation requires a broad reform of government and public institutions? And, finally, don't you think that the contraposition of "social rights" (the right to work, housing, education and material security and so on) and "personal rights" (to free expression and spreading of ideas, to political organisation, to exit from and entry into the country) already seems to be surmountable not only in polemics with the West, but also in the social-legal practices in the USSR today?

Mikhail Gorbachev: Your question contains an interpretation of some matters which I would have to disagree with. In particular that we are democratising almost from scratch. This is certainly not so. The October Revolution itself has opened up a new period in asserting the rights and freedoms of the individual, equality and justice. But could the people accomplish, contrary to their will, the fundamental revolutionary transformations, uphold their independence in the fight against fascism, restore a destroyed country, and rise to the modern peaks in social and cultural progress.

Sure there have been setbacks, errors in our history which impeded the development of socialist democracy, and there has been violation of socialist laws and democratic norms.

These are realities of our historical path and this is the way we evaluate them. Reorganisation covers all fields of life. We are proceeding with it by absorbing both the accomplishments in social development and by learning the lessons of the past. Reorganisation stands for the deepening of socialist democracy and the development of administration by the people. The point at issue is not a break-up of our political system, but fuller and more effective use of its potentialities.

Next in turn are fresh important steps. Legislative acts are being prepared for giving the process of democratisation greater stability and irreversibility. The aim is one: to strengthen even more consistently the power of the working people, give them full freedom of creativity, and broaden the whole system of the guarantees of political and civil rights and freedoms of the Soviet citizen. It goes without saying that the vehicles for ensuring and defending these rights and freedoms are our Soviet laws and broad socio-economic guarantees. This fully accords with the international covenants on human rights.

L'Unita: Addressing the recent Congress of the Young Communist League, you said there can be no socialism without democracy. Doesn't it seem to you that there is a certain analogy between this statement of yours and the pronouncement once made by Enrico Berlinguer on democracy as the "universal value"?

Mikhail Gorbachev: It is quite natural that politicians who have devoted their lives and activities to the fight for the Communist ideals thought much about the significance and role of democracy in general, in the course of socialist transformations in particular, and inevitably approached it from different angles with due regard for the place and time and the specific political context. Their approach deep down is unequivocal. It dates to Lenin who stressed: "There is no other road to socialism save the road through democracy, through political liberty". I will add to this that there is no other road to perfection and renovation of the socialism built in our country save through deepening democracy.

Democratisation is of an independent value since through it — alongside creating material boons — lies the way to conditions for all-round development of every individual whereby he is an active citizen and responsible.

At the same time democratisation is real when it rests on a solid basis of social ownership and absence of exploitation, whereby it ensures the mobilisation of all of society's intellectual and spiritual forces with the aim of reorganising it and lending the most modern forms to socialism.

By virtue of that, democratisation appears in all fields as the main vehicle and guarantee of the whole reorganisation effort.

L'Unita: The Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee has ultimately rejected the project for diverting a part of the flow of some Siberian rivers, and announced open competition for the best design for a Moscow monument to the Victory over nazism and fascism. It was openly emphasised in both these cases that public opinion had brought the results. These are interesting and important signs. What steps do you regard as necessary and possible at the present stage — above all in the information area — to get the public expressing its views, involved in decision-making and intervening directly in the course of the most important events?

Mikhail Gorbachev: We are convinced that our socialist society, which has resolutely taken the road of reorganisation and democratic renewal, is extremely interested in everyone — worker, collective farmer, scientist, or person of culture — making an independent, individual and original contribution to discussion of plans and decisions, and to the effort for them.

The media has been playing a vast role in this. It is, naturally, not the only channel for the manifestation of the will of the people. But it is

the most representative and massive rostrum for openness. And the Party is eager that the civic voice should resound from that platform without any "disturbances", that it should not only announce debates held in the country, debates for which there are no taboo areas, but should also be a guarantee of democratic control over the correctness of decisions, over their accord with the interests and needs of the masses, and, subsequently, over their implementation. The Central Committee requires that executives at every level should answer promptly and in a business-like way questions in the press and criticism directed at them. A law on the press is being drafted now. Its adoption will strengthen the legal status of mass media still further.

It is quite natural that the effectiveness of public opinion largely depends on how far it is competent, and whether it has truthful information. We are confident that a society which is consciously and actively fighting for its physical and moral health has no need to conceal its ills, for that would only make recovery more difficult. The CPSU regards greater openness as a powerful means of engaging public opinion in the interests of social, economic and cultural renewal of our country.

L'Unita: The Soviet intelligentsia, with its obvious diversity of views have readily responded to the renewal and identified with it. The congresses of the Unions of Cinematographers, Writers, and Journalists demonstrated increased vigour and a will to fight. Nevertheless, it seems to us that a lot of problems remain in the area of freedom of self-expression, as well as in the correlation between the steering role of the Party and creativity of workers in culture and art.

What is your appraisal of this complex of questions?

Mikhail Gorbachev: I have knowledge of the debates that were held in our creative workers' unions, and I must say that I have not seen in them attempts to set the intelligentsia off against the Party. Quite the contrary, creative workers, just as all the intelligentsia, have given vigorous support to the Party's course at reorganisation and democratisation. The interests of the intelligentsia and the aims of the development of Soviet society coincide. Artists and the Party advancing the same goal: renewal of society on the socialist basis.

Heated and at times fierce debates are held among writers, artists, composers, theatrical workers and film-makers. People, among them intelligentsia, must get accustomed to living and working in conditions of expanding democracy. And problems and clashes of viewpoints must be resolved in the course of the democratic process by its participants, among whom Communists must hold a place worthy of them.

The reorganisation has revealed in our intelligentsia a vast potential for confidence in socialism, and readiness to battle for its ideas and values and augment them by creative activity. We feel real support for the Party's course toward reorganisation. Therefore we have no doubt whatsoever that Soviet intelligentsia will pull their weight in the reconstruction of the country.

L'Unita: The 1977 Constitution assigns to the Party the role of the steering force of society. But you said at the January plenary meeting that "the forms of organisation of society that emerged in practice became absolutised in a way. Moreover, such ideas were actually equated to the essential characteristic of socialism, viewed as constant and presented as dogmas which left no room for objective scientific quest". We regard this assertion as highly significant. Does it apply to the concept of the party?

Mikhail Gorbachev: The Party comprehends from Marxist-Leninist positions the processes taking place, is working out strategy and tactics, and is organising ideological work. It is on the Party's initiative that the reorganisation has been started, and it is being conducted under the Party's guidance, and this is the most important

precondition for the success of the reorganisation and for it being in keeping with the interests of the working people and socialism.

We have learned the lessons of the past, and not only in our country. We know that the Party cannot count on momentum in implementing its steering role. This is fraught with serious consequences. If the Party lags behind in comprehending objective processes in society, if it fails to sense the burning problems in time, if it tarries about their solution, then difficulties in the development of the Party and the country are inevitable.

This is why the Party must constantly develop itself, must always be conducting a quest, renewing the forms and methods of its activity. This is why the Party has started the reorganisation processes with itself. All-round development of inner-Party democracy, and the implementation of collective leadership at every level and of the Leninist principles of selection and placement of personnel assume special importance. The powers of primary Party organisations have widened. The personal responsibility of every Communist for the task at hand is increasing. And not only for the task at hand. The invigoration of society and a clean, upright image for every Party member are inseparable.

L'Unita: You have recently been to Czechoslovakia and you mentioned the events of 1968. May I ask your opinion on that matter?

Mikhail Gorbachev: The evaluation of the 1968 events in Czechoslovakia is above all a matter for the Czechoslovak comrades themselves.

The leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia headed by Comrade Gustáv Husák has carried out vast work since that time. Czechoslovakia has made considerable advance in many directions. I personally became convinced of this during my recent visit. We have seen that the Czechoslovak comrades, proceeding from their own conditions, are also looking for ways of upgrading socialism. They have their own problems and are tackling them.

L'Unita: A year has passed since the Chernobyl tragedy. What thoughts did it suggest to the USSR and what conclusions have been drawn in the area of energy policy, information and international politics, capable of ensuring a maximum of safety?

Mikhail Gorbachev: We have learned much from what we have lived through. We have seen once again that reliability and safety of technology, discipline, order and organisation in the maintenance of intricate equipment are priorities in conditions of the scientific and technological revolution.

The events in Chernobyl put on the order of the day the urgent question of standards of international safety in nuclear power. We have proposed a special IAEA general conference in Vienna. An international mechanism that makes it possible to resolve most important questions of the safety of nuclear power is forming. Intensive international co-operation is absolutely necessary in this now. And we are ready for it.

Let me add one more thing. We have not only learned much from the Chernobyl accident. It continues teaching us, making us think, analyse, draw comparisons. It actively stimulates a new outlook, a vision of the world from viewpoints of the global problems of the present. The lessons of Chernobyl are important for all humanity. It is important for all of us to remember those lessons. It is they precisely that have brought into focus the responsibility of all states for preventing nuclear war.

L'Unita: What should be the perception of relations among the progressive forces of the world today, as they set about overcoming old aims and forms of ties? In what ways can internationalism be manifested now?

Mikhail Gorbachev: Relations among the progressive forces are today multiform. They quite often read different ideological and

political contents into the very notion of progress. At the same time their interaction is widening now, one might say on a planet-wide scale, before our very eyes.

I am sure that solidarity and co-operation are now needed more than ever, since more and more new problems are assuming a universal nature and requiring international approaches.

As far as the Communist Parties go, each of them developed on national soil. But, expressing the vital interests of the working class and the working people of their countries, they have the common goal of peace and socialism, and that is the main thing that rallies them. At the same time internationalism is always specific. Its efficiency is determined by practical co-operation. No special mechanism, much less "centre", is needed for such in contemporary conditions. Moreover, it is not advised. I have no knowledge of any party having plans or making proposals for its revival. The definition of the policy and forms of activity is wholly in the competence of every single party. And it is only on a voluntary and equal basis that their very co-operation is possible.

Frankly speaking, I see no reason for the caution that exists in some quarters of our movement with regard to proposals for multi-lateral meetings of the Communists of the world. And this at a time when other political forces, even those far from progressive, actively hold international meetings. We believe this question must be approached in an unbiased way, old concerns and stereotypes being discarded and a fresh look at the new situation being taken.

As far as relations among all progressive forces of the present are concerned, it is the issue of preventing nuclear war that, in our conviction, must be their basis, their core and their pivot. And, to our mind, all other considerations must be secondary.

I have had numerous contacts, for instance, with representatives of socialist and social-democratic parties, from Western Europe to Japan, in the past two years. There was no loss of face during those contacts, and, it seems to me, a common language was found on a number of key issues.

We have very strong ties with many revolutionary-democratic parties and national liberation movements. We have established contacts with "Greens" in a number of countries. We have good relations with such influential political forces as the Indian National Congress. Our public organisations meet systematically with representatives of dozens of anti-war and other movements of various kinds.

Dialogue is the order of the day and the manifestation of the interdependence of the world.

The world today is really complex, contradictory and variegated, multi-colour we might say. It can no longer be painted in just two tones: black and white or red and white.

We are convinced that the world should be viewed with open eyes, without bias. We must look for everything that brings progressive forces and parties closer, without, naturally, glossing over differences or contradictions. There must be real respect, and not merely in words, for the right of others to independence, their own point of view and the quest for time-off paths to the truth. And one's own such right must be likewise respected. □

Mikhail Gorbachev STATEMENT

January 15, 1986

On the Soviet Union's programme for complete elimination of all weapons of mass destruction by the year 2000.

Price 20p
Available from Soviet Booklets (SN), 3
Rosary Gardens, London, SW7 4NW.

Mikhail Gorbachev's speech at dinner in Bucharest

Here follows the full text of the speech made by Mikhail Gorbachev, at a dinner given in his honour in Bucharest on May 25 by Nicolae Ceaucescu, General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party and President of the Socialist Republic of Romania:

Esteemed Comrade Ceaucescu,
Esteemed Comrades,

The first day of our stay in the hospitable Romanian land is drawing to an end. Already from the first hours of our stay we could feel in Bucharest an atmosphere of hospitality and friendliness. There is ground for satisfaction with the way the business side of the visit is proceeding. During the conversation held today Comrade Nicolae Ceaucescu and myself have briefed one another on how things are going in our countries, how the decisions of the Party congresses are being implemented. We have also discussed a number of topical international issues.

Quite understandably the main attention at the talks was devoted to Soviet-Romanian co-operation in all of its diverse aspects.

Broadening contacts

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Romanian Communist Party are unanimous that over the past years a solid foundation has been laid for co-operation between our countries both in the field of material production and in the field of the superstructure. Soviet-Romanian relations can successfully develop on that basis, acquiring an increasingly full-blooded character and contributing towards the resolution of the tasks confronting both our countries. This co-operation fully accords with the principles of the internationalist relations characteristic of the socialist states and their parties, which are guided by one world outlook, and work for common aims.

While positively evaluating what has been achieved, we and our Romanian friends, naturally, think first and foremost about where and how an improvement should be achieved, a qualitative change in the mechanism of co-operation be ensured and be brought into line with the requirements of the times. A number of areas can be singled out where we have made considerable headway, yet alongside them there are areas where progress has been, so to speak, medium or even poor. Meanwhile, today it is difficult to hope for considerable success through breakthroughs along separate directions. This can be achieved only by broadening ties along the entire front.

To be specific, this concerns, for example, the fuller study and use of each other's experience, the broadening of contacts between Party organisations and work collectives, deepening ideological co-operation and exchange of spiritual and cultural values as a whole.

Impressive progress has lately manifested itself in the field of economic co-operation. In the current five-year plan period it will grow almost 80 per cent — such a pace is not frequently observed in world practices. But this is not the limit.

Yet with all the significance of the quantitative indicators, the qualitative criteria are assuming an increasingly growing role today. Since in the

final analysis the point is not simply to exchange goods. The effectiveness of co-operation in present-day conditions is increasingly determined by whether it leads to the output of products of a higher class, to mastering progressive technology, in a word, to progress in science and technology. Hence specialisation in production and co-production, the pooling of the material and intellectual resources aimed at a sharp acceleration of the whole production process have become the leading trend in the field of economic co-operation.

It must be admitted that our countries are somewhat lagging behind in that respect, and now our task is to make up for the time lost. The leaders of the fraternal countries are unanimous on that score. This is the key in which the work is done to deepen the whole integration process within the framework of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance.

It is precisely in that area that we hope to ensure considerable progress and enhance the effectiveness of Soviet-Romanian co-operation. The first steps have already been made: it has been agreed to establish direct production ties between a number of industrial plants; projects to set up joint ventures are also under discussion. But we are ready to go even farther: in particular towards co-operation in the field of science and technology. There is nothing more fruitful and advantageous today than joint work by scientists and designers in the crucial and most advanced areas of progress in science and technology.

In a word, there is every opportunity to broaden co-operation and specialisation, a concentration of efforts. There is, as has been again reaffirmed, the corresponding political will. The point now is organisation.

Disarmament and development

Now a few words about international affairs. For us, as for the leadership of Romania, of the other socialist states, the paramount issue is how to stop the arms race and prevent nuclear catastrophe.

The arms race is becoming an increasingly heavy and unbearable burden on the peoples of almost all countries and continents. But the glimmers of hope for speedy disarmament, which appeared after Geneva and Reykjavik, time and again alternate with waves of fear of a build-up of the weapons arsenal, which is a threat to humanity's very existence. The rapid growth of military spending diverts enormous resources, hampers economic and social progress. Humanity is faced with many a burning problem which could be resolved or at least whose solution we could tackle jointly, if we succeeded in ending the arms race. Among these problems are the eradication of illiteracy and the stamping out of diseases, protection of the environment and harnessing new energy sources.

The only feasible and sensible approach to the global problems of the present is expressed in the now well known formula: disarmament and development. It epitomises the new political thinking, which rejects militarism and the cult of violence in the international arena, is directed towards co-operation and mutual assistance in the present-day interdependent world.

The pursuit of the phantom of military superiority has continued for more than 40 years now. We believe that it is clear to everybody that

neither of the sides is capable of gaining advantage over the other. Hoping to reach such an advantage is tantamount to harbouring illusions, but a policy based on illusions never did any good.

We hope that this indisputable truth will, at last, be realised in Washington and in the capitals of other states of the North Atlantic Alliance. Then the possibility will open to make the first real steps on the way towards disarmament, will give humanity a chance to sigh with relief.

The Soviet Union, Romania and the other Warsaw Treaty member states have covered probably much more than half of their way for the sake of attaining that aim. Lying on the negotiating table before our Western partners are valuable proposals on the entire, if we may say so, "quintet" of modern weapons: strategic nuclear weapons, medium-range missiles, theatre missiles, chemical weapons and conventional weapons.

It goes without saying that in preparing these proposals the security interests of all the allied socialist countries were most carefully considered. At the same time it is also easy to see in them the wish to meet the other side as much as possible, to take into consideration its wishes and interests. This is particularly evident in the example of medium-range missiles in Europe.

Common approach

We do not lose hope that common sense will prevail among the NATO member countries, and use will be made of the truly unique chance for disarmament, that the settlement of the problem of medium-range missiles will be followed by some kind of a chain reaction, as a result of which Europe will gradually cease to be the venue of the concentration of the most monstrous amount of weapons in mankind's history. And this, in its turn, will give an impetus to a broad development of co-operation on the continent, from which all European nations and not only European nations would gain.

I wish to stress that the Soviet Union and Romania have a common approach to these burning problems. We value the contribution of our Romanian comrades to the joint efforts made by the socialist countries for strengthening their security and preserving peace, we will further closely co-operate on these issues.

May the fruitful Soviet-Romanian co-operation further develop, the interaction of our socialist states deepen and the friendship of our peoples strengthen. □

Warsaw Treaty New Initiatives

Documents of Meeting of Political Consultative Committee of Member States of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, Budapest, June 10-11, 1986 (includes Address to NATO Member States, All European Countries with Programme of Reducing Armed Forces and Conventional Armaments in Europe)

Price 20p.

This booklet from Novosti Press Agency Moscow is available now from Soviet Booklets, 3 Rosary Gardens, London, SW7 4NW (01-373 7350).

Mikhail Gorbachev's speech at friendship rally in Bucharest

"WE regard Socialist Romania as a state kindred with the Soviet Union by its class nature and as one of its allies and companions-in-arms in the common cause. And we are resolved to do our utmost so that our interaction in all fields of public life become ever stronger and more fruitful," Mikhail Gorbachev told a Romanian-Soviet friendship meeting in Bucharest on May 26.

"The concept of reorganisation, which we took up after the April plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, is not an expression of somebody's personal will but a result of the Party's collective thought. It was conceived not at once in a ready and finished form."

"The idea of the need for change began ripening in different sections of Soviet society not today and not yesterday. And as the process of reappraisal of the realities proceeded farther, it became ever clearer that we should not confine ourselves, so to speak, to face-lifting, that we needed fundamental and radical reforms so as to throw off the fetters and eliminate the causes which impeded the country's progress, and accelerate its development," Mikhail Gorbachev stressed.

Democratisation

"Using the historical yardstick to measure the results of our development and evaluate as a whole the 70 years of Soviet power which have passed since the October Revolution, with all of their successes and setbacks, it must be admitted that our movement was speedy and the progress we made was simply gigantic. Today the USSR's economic might, the social gains, the high standards of culture and science and the broad scope of public education are all real gains of socialism which are obvious."

Mikhail Gorbachev said that against the background of these achievements one could keenly see the unevenness in the level of development of various branches of the Soviet economy. Such unevenness first originated from objective causes. The state had to concentrate its efforts on separate sections in order to resolve, whatever the cost, the most urgent tasks — establishing the heavy industry, strengthening defence, achieving military parity with the USA, ensuring reliable security for the USSR and its socialist allies.

Yet, added to these forced measures during the recent period was the lag in the level of management and administration behind the requirements of the times and subjective miscalculations. As a result, our development began slowing down and the vast potential of socialism was far from being fully used.

"Under these conditions the Party put forward the task of reorganisation and defined the decisive link, by catching at which it is possible to pull out the chain of the extremely complex and diverse tasks confronting us. Man is the objective, the means and the protagonist of the whole of our policy. This task, which is revolutionary in its character, is posed in the name of his good, his development. He and only he is capable of resolving that task.

But to this end it is necessary to give full play to the initiative of people. There is one way here — democratisation, as was stressed at the January plenary meeting of the Central Committee. We are resolutely removing bureaucratic

barriers, and creating conditions for the broadest and conscientious participation of the people in production, social life and politics."

"For some reasons, democracy in our country was viewed chiefly as representation of the interests of the classes, of big social groups. The present-day level in our socialist society's development demands that we should go farther. We aim at bringing democracy closer to man, and opening the broadest scope from the realisation of the individual's civic and creative potential. So that every member of our society should have real guarantees for the defence of his legitimate rights and interests. So that everyone should feel himself to be not simply a tiny cog in the state machinery, but a personality and creator, who joins conscientiously and with interest in the fight for the implementation of the lofty ideals put forward by our Party."

"In unfolding reorganisation, the CPSU proceeds, naturally, from the Soviet Union's specific conditions, from our understanding of the theory of socialism and takes into consideration the Soviet people's requirements and will," Mikhail Gorbachev stressed. "At the same time, we are following with close interest the experience of our friends and their quest in the field of the theory and practices of building socialism, trying to use broadly everything which suits our conditions. And in our turn, we are glad if the fraternal countries find something useful in the creative effort under way in our country.

"We believe that it is this way and only this way that relations between the socialist countries should be built: full independence in deciding their policy and collective responsibility for the destiny of world socialism, broad, mutually-useful sharing of experience and equitable comradesly co-operation.

All-round intensification

"As a result of the understanding reached at last year's working meeting of the leaders of fraternal parties, the socialist countries took a course towards all-round intensification of the integration process, towards switching co-operation over to predominantly economic methods, and towards establishing direct production ties and setting up joint enterprises and science-and-production associations. It was recognised advisable seriously to improve the activities of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA).

"A regular meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty member states is to begin in Berlin the day after tomorrow. As usual, the situation in Europe and in the world will be jointly analysed at the meeting, and joint foreign-policy actions which have become ripe will be agreed upon.

"Interaction, cohesion and unity are our great gain. It has largely been due to joint efforts that the socialist countries have managed to uphold their security and sovereignty, and blocked the road to military venture-seekers. In tackling common tasks, the socialist community help to uphold the interests of each of its members.

"The post-war borders of Poland and Czechoslovakia were determined through the energetic concerted actions of socialist countries. The international legal recognition of the German Democratic Republic was ensured, the blockade of Cuba was broken and great assistance was rendered to Vietnam in the fight against US aggression.

"The countries of the socialist community stood at the source of the collective security process on the continent. It was here in Bucharest

that the initiative for an all-European conference was advanced."

"All countries are now faced with the question: how to avert the war threat? Various answers are being given. Security through deterrence, nuclear deterrence in the first place — this is how the question is being put by the ruling circles of the United States and by the leaders of a number of capitalist countries. Our approach is a fundamentally different one: security through advance to a world without weapons and violence.

"We suggest the real way to attain this goal: a programme for the reduction and complete elimination of nuclear weapons and of other types of weapons of mass destruction, the prevention of the spread of the arms race into outer space and the cessation of nuclear tests."

"The issue of eliminating medium-range missiles in Europe is now on the agenda. Some state leaders of NATO countries have said in their latest statements and talks with us that the USSR's suggested radical solution to the issue was possible in principle.

Peace and security in Europe

"However, following the pronouncements, numerous 'buts' began to appear. There was talk that medium-range missiles could not be eliminated without a simultaneous solution to the issue of shorter-range missiles. When we agreed to eliminate this type of weapon, too, our Western partners got alarmed and stated that they would be left defenceless in the face of an ostensibly overwhelming might of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation.

"Then they made it a condition that the hundred warheads which, as agreed upon in Reykjavik, were to be left by the Soviet Union in Asia and by the United States, be given up too.

"Several days ago we are known to have stated that that was not ruled out either. But even after that, various kinds of obstacles are being put up."

"Well, at least now it should be clear to everyone who is for a nuclear world and who stands for a nuclear-free world. It should be also clear how mendacious is the myth launched by anti-communists about the allegedly aggressive intentions of socialist countries.

"At this extremely crucial turning-point, the peoples have a right to demand that playing the cat-and-mouse game should be discontinued at last when tackling such most serious issues as nuclear disarmament and the strengthening of peace and security in Europe.

"One would like to believe that goodwill and political realism will prevail when final decisions are taken in the West, and that as a result of that it will be possible to conclude already this year a treaty on the elimination of medium-range missiles."

"Almost a year has passed since the Warsaw Treaty member states addressed all European countries with a specific programme for cutbacks in the armed forces and in tactical nuclear weapons and conventional arms in Europe — from the Atlantic to the Urals.

"Some NATO members seemingly agree to hold talks to this effect but are against discussing the issue of tactical nuclear weapons at them. One would like to know what should be done about those weapons if most of them are of 'dual purpose', i.e. intended for use as either conventional or nuclear munitions? It seems to us that it will be logical to consider the issue of these weapons in conjunction with conventional arms.

(Continued on next page)

Meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee

THE Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, at its regular meeting, considered an item on measures to refine the activities of the Council of Ministers of the USSR in conditions of work for the acceleration of the country's socio-economic development.

It was pointed out that in accordance with the decisions of the April (1985) plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee and the 27th Congress of the Party, the government has taken large-scale economic and organisational measures directed towards a steady dynamic development of the national economy and towards overcoming the stagnation phenomena.

At the same time the formation of an effective economic management system has not been completed. With this end in view, the necessary measures have been determined to refine the management of the complexes of interrelated sectors and methods of their activities and to improve the work of the central economic ministries and departments and the councils of ministers of the union republics.

Proposals on improving the forms and methods of the work of the staff of the Council of Ministers of the USSR were endorsed.

Having considered the course of implementation of the resolutions of the CPSU Central Committee on overcoming drunkenness and alcoholism, the Political Bureau pointed out that a considerable amount of work was being done in the centre and locally to assert a sober way of life and to create an atmosphere of intolerance to drunkenness. This promotes an

improvement of the ethical atmosphere in society, stronger labour discipline and law and order.

The Political Bureau endorsed the results of Mikhail Gorbachev's talks with Nguyen Van Linh, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam. Special attention during the talks was devoted to the processes of reorganisation and revitalisation of various aspects of life, which are being effected in the Soviet Union and Vietnam in accordance with the decisions of the 27th Congress of the CPSU and the Sixth Congress of the CPV.

Of great importance is the understanding reached by the two sides about taking measures to raise the effectiveness of Soviet-Vietnamese co-operation and to switch it over to new advanced forms. Agreements on specific areas of co-operation were signed.

Complete unity of the CPSU's and the CPV's views on the discussed matters of bilateral relations and international life was pointed out with satisfaction.

It was emphasised that the Soviet Union would continue closely to co-operate with the SRV in its efforts to assert peace, stability and good-neighbourly relations in the Asian-Pacific region.

The results of the Soviet leader's conversations and talks with the Prime Minister of France were considered. It was pointed out that the present state of Franco-Soviet relations did not meet the requirements and resources of the two countries, either from the point of view of their mutual interests or from the viewpoint of their role in European and world affairs.

The need to carry on and deepen Soviet-French political dialogue was reaffirmed, and hope was expressed for France's constructive

approach to ensuring international security on the road of reducing nuclear confrontation and cutting back all types of arms and armed forces, those in Europe in the first place.

The appropriate departments were instructed to take measures together with the French side to implement the ideas and proposals, expressed during the talks, about making bilateral contacts more active.

The Political Bureau heard a report by Mikhail Solomentsev on the CPSU delegation's participation in the work of the 12th Congress of the Communist Party of Greece as well as on Mikhail Solomentsev's conversation with Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou.

It was pointed out that the CPSU delegation's visit to Greece contributed to further developing friendship and co-operation between the Soviet and Greek peoples.

Information by Pyotr Demichev about the visit to the People's Republic of Bulgaria, and by Vladimir Dolgikh about the visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at the head of delegations of the USSR Supreme Soviet was considered at the meeting.

The Political Bureau heard information by Vadim Medvedev on the CPSU delegation's participation in the work of the Eighth Congress of the Socialist Unity Party of West Berlin.

The Political Bureau discussed a report by Georgi Razumovsky on the results of the meeting of the secretaries of the central committees of the communist and workers' parties of the socialist countries in charge of organisational party work. The CPSU delegation's activities at the meeting were approved.

Some other domestic and foreign policy issues were also considered at the meeting. □

(from previous page)

"It is also appropriate to say here in Bucharest how we evaluate the situation in the Balkans," Mikhail Gorbachev said.

"It is known that for centuries this region has been reckoned the powder keg of Europe. That peaceful relations are maintained between the countries situated here is undoubtedly to their common credit.

"However, no one has any doubt that the Balkan countries will feel much more confident and calm if the ideas of making the region a zone free from either nuclear or chemical weapons are implemented.

"There exist proposals on that score advanced by Romania and Bulgaria. As far as we know, other countries, too, regard them positively. In this connection I would like to say that in the Balkan area we do not have either nuclear or

chemical weapons and that the Soviet Union is prepared to give the necessary guarantees concerning their non-deployment and non-use. It seems it would be worthwhile to go farther than that by ridding the Balkan peninsula of any foreign troops and military bases.

"We regard the Balkan countries' efforts to make their region a zone of peace and co-operation as an integral part of the all-European process.

"Relying on the existing rich traditions, the Soviet Union is ready to develop co-operation with all countries situated here and in every way to promote the formation of a stable, sound atmosphere in the Balkans.

"I would like also to draw attention to the co-ordinated proposal by the Warsaw Treaty member states to freeze for a year or two the military expenditures of the member countries of the two alliances. This measure, as is known, has been initiated by the Romanian comrades.

"The implementation of the known proposal, put forward by our friends from Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic jointly with the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), to establish a nuclear-free corridor in Central Europe will contribute to reducing military confrontation.

"Poland's comprehensive plan for arms cuts and the building of confidence in the centre of our continent was also made public recently.

"All these proposals once again reaffirm the importance of the contribution of each socialist country to strengthening peace, and of combining the initiative of each of them with the socialist community's agreed-upon line in international affairs," Mikhail Gorbachev emphasised. □

JOINT VENTURES

THE potentialities for setting up joint ventures with foreign firms on Soviet territory were discussed at the international seminar in Moscow on the role of chemistry in food production.

The USSR Ministry of the Chemical Industry, a spokesman for the ministry said, is examining the proposals of 26 foreign companies. Talks are under way with the British firm John Brown to set up a joint plant for the production of polymer materials. By this summer a number of documents are to be signed on setting up joint ventures.

The time has come when trade relations should be complemented with new forms of co-operation between the socialist and capitalist nations, said Woerner Veith, a spokesman for the Committee for the Chemical Industry of the UN Economic Commission for Europe.

Woerner Veith put forward the idea that permanent machinery be set up for a regular exchange of proposals on promising forms of East-West co-operation. In his view, the setting up of a data bank, where all initiatives displayed by the organisations of the socialist countries and Western firms could be deposited, would be of essential help in broadening and deepening trade and economic relations in the field of the chemical industry.

It was stressed in a number of speeches that the development of co-operation aimed at increasing food production is of great humanitarian significance, since it is directed at improving the living standards of peoples. □

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Soviet academician on the new rocket Energia

ACADEMICIAN Guri Marchuk, who is President of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, has granted an interview to a TASS correspondent in connection with the inaugural test launch of a new Soviet multi-purpose booster rocket called Energia.

TASS: What is the role of Soviet cosmonautics in advancing the country's science, technology and economy?

Guri Marchuk: Soviet cosmonautics plays a big role in expediting scientific and technological progress today. It takes advantage of achievements in key areas of research and engineering and, for its part, stimulates their development by making exacting demands on the pace of efforts to improve the technical standards and quality of products, instruments and equipment.

Space systems have acquired growing significance as a lever for raising efficiency in many sectors of the national economy.

Space communications, television, and navigational and meteorological systems, which seem to have brought nearer the various parts of our fatherland and all other countries in the world, have firmly asserted themselves as part of our lives at work and at home.

Studies of natural resources on Earth from space have become an important practical task helping in many ways to speed advances in such areas as geology, map-making, geodesy, forestry, fisheries, agriculture and related industries.

Since the space age was ushered in 30 years ago, Soviet cosmonautics has come a very long way.

A successful effort has been under way to fulfil a wide-ranging scientific programme for exploring outer space and celestial bodies, and satellites have been used extensively in the interests of different sectors of the national economy.

Several generations of satellites, manned orbital stations, spaceships and interplanetary probes have by now succeeded one another.

The long flights of the Soviet orbiting stations Salyut and Mir and the successful international Vega project have been given high marks by world public opinion.

TASS: What is the role of booster rockets in space exploration?

Guri Marchuk: Systems for putting space vehicles into near-Earth orbit have an important role to play in realising the large-scale

programme for space exploration with peaceful aims. The principal phases in the work of exploring outer space and meeting new challenges in this area have been connected with the development of boosters and their entry into regular service.

The launch of the first satellite and the first manned flight to space, carried out with the help of the Soviet Sputnik and Vostok boosters, are historic landmarks in Soviet and world cosmonautics.

A large part of the vast programme of space studies involving satellites in the Cosmos series has been implemented thanks to a cost-efficient and simple-to-service booster of the same name.

The launches of space vehicles to manned stations on crew rotation and supply missions, including flights by international crews under the Intercosmos programme, are done by the Soyuz carrier rocket which boasts high performance, efficiency and reliability.

The development of the heavy-lift Proton booster in 1965 has come as another important achievement in Soviet rocket building and turned over a new leaf in space exploration.

That booster has been responsible for lifting off unmanned expeditions to land on the Moon, Venus and Mars and deliver lunar rock back to Earth, launching communications satellites into geo-stationary orbit, and orbiting long-life space stations including the Salyuts and the third-generation platform Mir.

The international Vega project for all-round studies of Venus and Halley's Comet has been another major accomplishment evoking an enthusiastic international response.

The new tasks of industrialisation in near-Earth space make significantly greater demands on space transportation systems, as it has become essential to increase freight flows to space, cut net transportation costs, further increase the margin of safety, be able to bring heavy payloads back to Earth, and make cosmonauts' home-coming from space more comfortable.

TASS: What is the new multi-purpose Energia launch vehicle all about?

Guri Marchuk: Energia is a two-stage rocket of a "package" design, with a strap-on payload. The first stage consists of four strap-on booster engines, while the second stage is the pivot which is 60 metres tall and eight metres in diameter.

The first-stage engines are fired by an oxygen-kerosene mixture and the second-stage ones by an oxygen-hydrogen fuel.

Energia has a launching mass of over 2,000 tons and can boost off a payload of more than 100 tons.

A multi-purpose system, it can orbit either reusable spaceships or other large-sized space vehicles for research and economic purposes.

TASS: What is the outlook for Energia's use?

Guri Marchuk: The commissioning of the multi-purpose heavy-lift Energia booster opens a new chapter in Soviet rocket construction and the programme for space exploration with peaceful aims.

The Energia booster rocket is the basic element of a reusable space transportation system being created in the USSR. We regard such systems as promising means of transportation and study matters connected with their effective utilisation for large-scale research and for rendering outer space habitable on a systematic basis.

As is known, Soviet scientists regard manned orbital complexes as the main direction of the

exploration of outer space. Wide experience in the operation of stations in the Salyut series has been gained. It confirms the correctness of the chosen direction. The Mir manned complex has become a new step on this road.

The first of five specialised modules — the astrophysical laboratory Kvant — is now functioning as part of the Mir complex. The development of new large orbital stations and of large-sized modules for them is under way.

This is why, during the development of our reusable transportation space system, provision is made for the possibility of its joint operation with prospective orbital manned complexes.

The use of the multi-purpose Energia booster rocket will enable us substantially to broaden work for the peaceful exploration of outer space, including putting heavy communications satellites into geostationary orbit, launching automatic interplanetary stations into deep space and towards the Sun, assembling versatile orbital complexes consisting of large-size modules and structural elements, and placing experimental solar power plants in orbit with a wide area of solar-cell batteries for use in space production. So a prospect opens up for the industrialisation of near-Earth space.

However, we do not intend to give up reliable booster rockets which have accounted themselves well and which we shall continue to use in future, too, for the transportation of cargoes into outer space.

An optimum combination of booster rockets of various classes, spaceships, inter-orbital tugs and other space technology will make it possible to create a high-performance Earth-space-Earth transportation line which is an objective necessity for the further development of cosmonautics.

TASS: How can you describe the level of development of Soviet present-day space technology?

Guri Marchuk: Soviet space rocket technology is developed through the labour and the exercise of the talent of our people.

Academicians S.P. Korolyov, M.V. Keldysh, M.K. Yangel, V.N. Chelomei, N.A. Pilyugin and other outstanding scientists, designers and prominent specialists in many branches of science and technology stood at the rise of our space programme.

The high-powered potential of the results of the work of research and design organisations and industrial enterprises has been concentrated in cosmonautics.

Satellites of the Earth, spaceships, orbital stations and interplanetary spacecraft which have been made by these collectives constitute our country's space research fleet which is being effectively used to tackle the fundamental problems of science and the national economy.

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Soviet-Vietnamese Statement

THE common approaches of the CPSU and the CPV to pressing questions of socialist construction and international politics are confirmed in a joint Soviet-Vietnamese Statement published on May 21 on the results of the official friendly visit to the USSR by Nguyen Van Linh, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

The leaders of the CPSU and the CPV expressed the resolve of their parties to expand co-operation at various levels, the statement says. The exchange of views confirmed the unity of views of the CPSU and the CPV on pressing international problems, the resolve of the Soviet Union and Vietnam actively to interact in the cause of strengthening international peace and universal security, their solidarity with the struggle of the peoples for national independence and social progress.

The Soviet Union and Vietnam are firmly committed to the idea of turning the Asian-Pacific region into a region of peace, stability, good-neighbourliness and co-operation through joint efforts by all states of the region and an all-round approach to the problems of ensuring its security. The realisation of this idea would be facilitated by a just settlement of existing conflicts by political means, the non-buildup and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in the region, a scaling down of naval activities in the

Pacific, the implementation of practical measures to establish nuclear-free zones, cuts in armed forces and conventional armaments, and the creation of an atmosphere of mutual trust.

Both sides stressed the importance of reducing tension in South East Asia as soon as possible. The Soviet Union supports the resourceful policy of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea directed at improving the political climate in South East Asia and developing friendly relations with the ASEAN countries and other nations in the Asian-Pacific region.

The USSR and Vietnam identify with the national reconciliation policy of the Government of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, whose realisation would meet the vital interests of the Kampuchean people and their right to decide their destiny themselves and help restore peace in the region.

The Soviet Union and Vietnam believe that the search for ways of settling the international aspects of the Kampuchean problem by political means should be conducted with regard for realities in the region and with the involvement in this or that form of all sides concerned. The Soviet Union and Vietnam are strongly for giving Kampuchea its lawful place in the United Nations and other international organisations.

The leaders of the CPSU and the CPV stressed the constructive nature of the Afghan Government's policy aimed at achieving national reconciliation in the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan and a political settlement of the situation regarding that country and of the

Afghan people's efforts to build a sovereign, independent and non-aligned Afghanistan.

The participants in the talks pointed to a desire by their countries to normalise and improve relations with the People's Republic of China, which would be a major positive factor for stronger stability in Asia and in international life in general. They would also welcome China's active involvement in the search for ways of solving the complex problems of the Asian continent. The Soviet side supported Vietnam's initiative for holding Vietnamese-Chinese talks with a view to settling contentious issues as soon as possible.

The conviction was expressed during the talks that improvements in the situation on the Korean peninsula would be facilitated by the realisation of proposals by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for resuming dialogue between the North and South of Korea and creating a nuclear-free zone there.

Solidarity was confirmed with the proposal made by the Mongolian People's Republic to create a mechanism excluding the use of force in relations between states of Asia and the Pacific region.

The Soviet and the Vietnamese leaders welcomed the active role of the Non-Aligned Movement in the struggle against imperialism, neocolonialism and racism, for ending the arms race and eliminating nuclear weapons, for peace and the security of peoples, the statement notes. □

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At the meeting with the working people of the town of Leninsk, Mikhail Gorbachev specially emphasised that the entire space technology beginning from the most sophisticated space launch facilities, test benches and laboratories to high-powered booster rockets and spacecraft, with their life-support systems and provided with up-to-date computing equipment — all these are Soviet-made and are of high quality and are manufactured at modern engineering level.

Nowadays cosmonautics can be regarded as the branch of new technology which sets the example to all branches of the national economy.

This is the example which we need very much now that Soviet society has risen for the accomplishment of new tasks which cannot be solved by using old methods, the old level of knowledge and professional training.

The experience of cosmonautics is convincing and inspires confidence that it is within the power of Soviet people to accomplish the grandiose plans mapped out by our Party for revolutionary reorganisation.

TASS: What are the the further plans of the Soviet space programme?

Guri Marchuk: Our space programme is based upon the deep conviction that the development

of large-scale international co-operation of outer space is the constructive alternative to plans aimed at spreading the arms race over to outer space.

Magnitude and realistic nature are the distinguishing features of our programme. These manifest themselves in the stage-by-stage implementation of large-scale exploration plans within specified periods of time.

The programme is intended to combine the efforts of as many countries as possible in the peaceful exploration of outer space on the basis of and with due regard for the present-day development of space technology and prospects in this field, as well as the realistic requirements of the countries participating in the co-operation.

The Soviet Union intends to participate most actively in the implementation of the suggested programme at all its stages. We are prepared to exchange our achievements in space research with all countries, to launch peaceful-purpose spacecraft of other countries and of international organisations using Soviet booster rockets on mutually beneficial terms.

Thus, the Soviet programme presupposes the use of the achievements of cosmonautics for the benefit of our country and of the whole of mankind. One should say, however, that a further trend of our space programme will be determined in many respects by the actions of the US side.

The planned international space flights of Soviet cosmonauts with citizens of Syria, Bulgaria and France are confirmation of the peaceful nature of our programme for the coming five-year period.

Large-scale projects include the exploration of Phobos (a satellite of Mars) and a number of other complex scientific programmes being implemented by the USSR together with socialist countries, India, Austria, Britain, the Netherlands, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Finland and other countries, and the European Space Agency. □

USSR-Australia: co-operation

SOVIET foreign trade organisations and Australian firms will take further steps to broaden bilateral trade and economic relations, it was pointed out at the third joint meeting of the Soviet-Australian Trade Promotion Committee and the Australia-USSR Businessmen's Council in Moscow on May 26.

The Soviet delegation there made proposals that could help increase bilateral co-operation, including, among other things, supplies of Soviet ships, machines and equipment to Australia, the use of new Soviet ideas in metallurgy at Australian factories, and the import of Australian wool, grain, sugar and meat products.

The sides will later look into the possibility of Australian involvement in modernisation projects in Soviet industry.

The meeting paid much attention to examining prospects for co-operation between Australian firms and the Far Eastern region of the Soviet Union.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the USSR earlier arranged a trip by a delegation of Australian businessmen, which took them to Khabarovsk, Nakhodka and Vladivostok.

Speaking at the meeting, they pointed to the processing of sea foods, mineral resources, the production of building materials, joint ventures, and the tourism industry as possible areas of co-operation.

The wide range of measures discussed at the meeting should help increase Soviet exports to Australia, which are as yet significantly smaller than Australian exports to the USSR. □

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

Mikhail Gorbachev Young People Are the Creative Force of the Revolutionary Renewal Speech at the 20th YCL Congress April 16, 1987

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