

Mikhail Gorbachev's concluding remarks at Communist Party Congress

Mikhail Gorbachev made the concluding remarks at the 28th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party on July 14:

THE Congress has ended its work. The agenda has been completed and I have only this to say in conclusion.

It is as yet hard to assess fully the impact the 28th Congress will have on the Party and society. But I believe one thing is clear – the impact will be great and lasting. What directions has the Congress adopted for the Party and what signals does it send to society?

First of all, it is the determination of the Soviet Communist Party to bridge the still existing gap between Party organisations, Party committees and workers, farmers and intellectuals and organise an active everyday feedback with the country's work collectives and, on this basis, to increase the Party's vanguard role in society and make an even greater contribution to achieving the aims of our revolutionary perestroika.

The Party intends to radically change its attitude to soviets, reject the attempts to substitute their activities, intensively assist their formation and help people's deputies resolve problems connected with meeting vital demands of the population.

The Congress expressed its readiness to face other social and political movements and organisations. We now need to prove in practice that the idea of a broad coalition in the name of overcoming the crisis and carrying out deep reforms, which was stated in the resolution on the political report of the Central Committee, is not a tactical move but a serious proposal guided by the interests of the country and people.

It is not easy and I see that it will not be easy, but we have made a choice. I believe it is a right and necessary choice, dictated by the course of perestroika. We extend our hand to everybody who supports democracy and socialism and call on them to co-operate.

The Congress gives another important signal to society. The Congress has taken extremely important steps to move the Party out of crisis. We honestly exposed mistakes, resolutely denounced crimes that were committed under the banner of socialism and rejected everything that bound creative endeavours of our people.

At the same time, we resolutely refute all attempts to cross out everything positive that was done for the country by several generations of communists. Those who demand repentance from the Party, want to square accounts and declare it all but a criminal organisation, imply try to remove it from political life and hit the cause of revolutionary renovation of society. We consider it this way.

To put it in a nutshell, we recommend those who use such methods to stop the anti-democratic and instigating activities. And as far as communists are concerned, they should get rid of all complexes and enliven their activities. People will judge the Soviet Communist Party by its deeds.

(continued from previous page)

The Presidential Decree stipulates that the functions of state-run television and radio broadcasting "should be performed independently of political and social organisations and should serve an impartial and all-round coverage of processes taking place in the country."

The decree also contains instructions for a transition of studios and television centres to a contract-and-competition system of labour agreements and for the upgrading of the material and technical resources of television and radio. □

During these days, much was said here on ways for perestroika and on its priorities. Finally, we agreed that priority should be given to the development of the countryside, the solution of the food problem, the elaboration and signing of a new union treaty, the improvement of the situation on the consumer market, the radicalisation of economic restructuring and the strengthening of discipline and order. These are the things to be tackled at once.

As for me, I want to assure you that I shall use all constitutional powers of the Soviet President to implement this. We would not allow anybody to break perestroika.

There are many tasks for us in international affairs. I would like to use the rostrum to express satisfaction with the statement of Western countries' leaders that they no more consider the Soviet Union an enemy and extend their hand of friendship and co-operation. To be exact, we were the first to offer our hand, but let us not argue on priorities in such a case. It is important that an end has been put to the "cold war".

At the recent meeting of leaders of seven Western countries in Houston, they discussed the possibility of economic support for the Soviet Union. What is our position in this respect? The very fact that such a question is raised not only by the public, but by Western countries' governments, is evidence that our striving to overcome the self-isolation and to integrate ourselves into the world economy meets a positive response.

We are ready to co-operate and will be grateful for assistance. We come out not as applicants but as partners who do not want to take anything gratis. At the same time, I would like to stress that any attempts to put forward any political preconditions for such co-operation should be excluded. It can and should develop only on an equal and mutually advantageous basis.

Now, about the Party itself.

First of all, we should inform communists of the results of the Congress and help them to understand in depth that the Party has entered a period of radical restructuring. Let me formulate three conditions for the Party to manifest its vital capacity and really acquire the vanguard potential.

Next, it should resolutely and without delay restructure all its activities and all structures on the basis of the new rules and the programme statement of the Congress in order to take on its role as a vanguard in new conditions. We should do everything to establish Party grassroots' power in the Soviet Communist Party on the basis of all-embracing democracy, comradeship, openness, glasnost and criticism.

Second, if there are differing opinions and even platforms on some political issues or practical activities, the majority should show respect for the minority. We should learn to listen to, and not to put pressure on or intimidate one another. Let the right deed show its worth by the results.

Third, it is necessary to learn, comrades, and to raise our culture. If we choose this way, it will be easier to communicate and contact with other forces. And working people and their organisations will have more confidence in us.

The Central Committee and me personally, as General Secretary, will do everything to help republican communist parties acquire, as soon as possible, a new independent status that will lead not to dissociation of communists and nations, but to a new internationalist unity of the Soviet Communist Party on the common ideo-

logical and political basis in the interest of integrity of our great multinational state.

And there is one more thing I would like to say in conclusion.

It is no secret that before the Congress and even during its work, especially at the beginning, there were apprehensions in this country and in the world press that the Soviet Communist Party has lost its ability for renovation and it cannot break with dogmatism and sectarianism that penetrated it and that it is doomed to a split and retraced from the political arena.

We can say confidently that these apprehensions were not justified. Those who counted that it is the last Congress to be held and the funeral of the Soviet Communist Party, were wrong again. The Soviet Communist Party lives and will live. It will make its historic contribution to the country's progress and the progress of the world civilisation.

A serious step has been made to renew the Party. The 28th Congress was not an easy one. There were heated discussions and, I should say, dramatic clashes until its very end. But, finally, it adopted important decisions, meeting the spirit and aims of perestroika.

This is, maybe, the most important thing that we can daringly state with deep satisfaction as people who are anxious about their Party, socialism, our people and their today and tomorrow.

Now, we should hold the right note, not to return to old habits, to the beaten track. This would mean death for the Party. We simply have no right to thwart the hopes of millions of Soviet people who believe in the Party as a political force that is capable of expressing and defending their interests in new conditions.

Let us prove that the Soviet Communist Party, restructuring itself, can come up to expectations of the people and then it will restore its prestige and become a real vanguard party whose power lies not in ordering about, but in its influence on minds.

Let me in conclusion wish all of you good health and success and thank you for the work we have done here, at the Congress. □

IN THE SERIES Perestroika

**PERESTROIKA as seen by
a Writer**

**PERESTROIKA Through the
Eyes of a Co-operator**

**PERESTROIKA as Seen by
an Economist**

**PERESTROIKA as Seen by
a Mathematician**

**PERESTROIKA as Seen by
an Economist**

*The above booklets are priced 30p each and
are obtainable from:*

*Soviet Booklets (SN),
3 Rosary Gardens,
London SW7 4NW.*