

27, 1987: «The main cause of the difficulties that arose in the seventies and early eighties was that for subjective reasons we could not realize in time the need for change, the danger of mounting crisis phenomena in society, and work out a clear strategy to overcome them. No Party leader rejected the bedrock principles of the Leninist teaching on socialism, but there have been many deviations from it. The result has been stagnation in the economy and social relations.»

GLASNOST'S DIVERSITY

There is, then, a direct connection between perestroika and glasnost. In step with restructuring on the economic level, socialist renewal is sweeping all fields of life in the Soviet Union, generating new topics and experimental forms in film, theater, literature and public debate. In this context, glasnost is not a question of concessions to dissidents; nor is perestroika bowing down to individual initiative, as some western commentators like to insinuate. Both are part of a conscious strategy for further politicizing Soviet citizens

and upgrading their activities in all fields from factory work to political participation to cultural endeavor. Glasnost is actually a strategy for strengthening the party's role, emphasizing its political leadership while eliminating bureaucracy and interference in the daily affairs and decision-making of various associations and enterprises. Simultaneously, glasnost is a strategy for having the state serve the people better, delegating more freedom and responsibility, so that cadres and other citizens can more effectively and creatively perform their duties and exercise their rights.

SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY

Glasnost is not just a slogan, or an impetus to verbal debate. It is being embodied in political reform, in the creation of new institutions and the reactivation of others. The role of the Soviets, the original base of the revolution and socialist democracy, is being reinvigorated. Grass-roots women's councils, which were prevalent immediately after the revolution but then became inactive, are being formed

again in all localities. Associations of creative workers, such as the National Theater Workers' Union formed in December 1986, have been assigned an equal status with state cultural bodies in their field. A broad electoral reform is underway, beginning with this summer's local council elections which featured choice of candidates in some districts and secret balloting.

The Soviet leadership is aware that the changes contemplated require time -some officials estimate a five-year period before real results emerge. Also, like any revolutionary process, glasnost and perestroika require political, ideological and real struggle, even conflict and personnel changes in the party and state aparati. All revolutionaries stand to benefit from the current Soviet experience, learning how such struggle unfolds and is resolved in a developed socialist society where classes and private property, the sources of antagonistic contradictions in the capitalist society, have been abolished. In this respect, Gorbachev's remarks at the June plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee are enlightening.

Comrade Gorbachev makes an impromptu visit to a Moscow neighborhood.

