

embarked upon a journey of almost unprecedented risk, challenge and promise. He has undertaken to re-make Soviet society — initially from the top down and eventually from the bottom up.

This is an effort of *almost* unimaginable proportions. For *any* leader, *anywhere*. For we are not talking here about tinkering. We are talking about massive, structural change across the board — in all sectors and in all walks of life. And we are talking about changes in attitude and spirit as well as the concrete components of a society.

But this task is even more difficult for a Soviet leader.

The Soviet Union is a society of immense potential wealth — a massive territory, a large population, a storehouse of resources. But it is a society drained of spirit; an economy bereft of initiative; a populace deprived of freedom and driven to conform.

Not only does Mr. Gorbachev have to reform his society; he must teach his people to *want* reform: to replace complacency with initiative; conformity with variety; defeatism with optimism; and collectivism with individualism.

What is Mikhail Gorbachev up to and why?

In my view, he has discovered a simple but profound truth: the Soviet system of the past has not worked, will not work and *cannot* work. It has failed, and failed miserably.

He also realizes that to change it requires more than a slogan, an adjusted 5-year plan, a special Party Congress or plenum.

It requires a revolution.

And so we have *elections*. For the first time, millions of Soviet citizens freely voting for multiple candidates. Real election platforms; candidate debates; differences of view. And the results? Reformers elected. A fired Politburo member, Boris Yeltsin, swept to victory in a landslide. And the old guard rejected in many areas through an extraordinary act: the crossing off of their names by a majority of the voters, even when they were the only candi-

date. A Canadian politician trembles at the thought.

Of course, this is not a Western democracy. The Communist Party still rules. The limits remain severe. The flower has barely shown buds.

But it is a beginning, a spring. And an important beginning at that, for once given the opportunity to express their views, the people are difficult to humble.

The Soviets are also engaged in fundamental *economic reform*. New words are being heard: decentralization; privatization; and the hallmark of capitalism — profit. It is here where the stakes are highest and where the difficulties are greatest. It goes to the heart of the structure of privilege, corruption and complacency which has characterized the Soviet nightmare. It also demands that choices and opportunities not only be made available, but that they be treated as valuable by the worker.

Gorbachev has embarked upon a journey of almost unprecedented risk

This call to initiative, this exhortation to work harder and with pride is where Mr. Gorbachev's greatest vulnerability lies. For there is a *quid pro quo*. Soviet workers want *evidence* that their new efforts will be rewarded. They have to be *enticed*. Their attitudes will not change overnight, nor will they change because others want them to. They must be *convinced*. And the proof so far has been remarkable largely by its absence.

The dilemma is clear: the Soviet economy will not improve until attitudes and behaviour change. But attitudes and behaviour will not change until the economy improves. That is the most urgent test of Mr. Gorbachev's revolution.

There is another basic change, less publicized, but equally important. Mr. Gorbachev wants to reform the *legal system*. Much of the work is underway, largely quietly and behind closed doors. It is of abiding importance. For it demonstrates that Mr. Gorbachev wants to make his society less arbitrary, less capricious, less cruel. He seeks, in

effect, to make it a society of laws, laws which many of us would still find repugnant, but laws nonetheless — with due process, with rights, with duties and responsibilities. If he fails, he will not gain the confidence of his countrymen that the system has changed. And if he does not safeguard the progress he has made through legal guarantees, his own grip on power becomes more tenuous.

And throughout, history is being re-written. Just as the present is precarious and the future uncertain, the Soviet past — once graven in stone — has been shattered. Old idols have been discredited. Joseph Stalin is now seen as being at the root of the Soviet economic failure. Leonid Brezhnev is now judged to have institutionalized stagnation. Unmentionable events are now documented — whether the bloody purges of the pre-war period or the Stalin-Hitler pact to dismember Poland. Criticism is encouraged. They say in Moscow that the most difficult problem today is 'predicting the past.'

It is in light of this multi-faceted revolution that we must evaluate the new reality in East-West relations. Mr. Gorbachev believes that prosperity and progress at home can only be purchased through peace abroad. That is not simply a question of reducing the stranglehold of the military on scarce resources. It is also a matter of seeking stability and prestige abroad to foster stability and prestige at home. And, eventually, it is a question of trying to benefit from the energy and resources of the Western economic system to help pull the Soviet economy out of its 19th century doldrums.

Throughout the arena of global politics, Mr. Gorbachev has established new rules, new goals, and new attitudes for Soviet foreign policy. The withdrawal from Afghanistan, a more constructive approach to Southern Africa and the Middle East: all testify to a willingness to compromise, to seek realistic solutions, and to back away from the trouble-making and obstruction of the past.

Reform in Eastern Europe is not only being tolerated, but encouraged. Poland and Hungary are moving toward a form a pluralistic democracy, without let or