

survival of the Soviet Union. If survival were ever really threatened, this could give impetus to the replacement of Gorbachev by a coalition of sceptical politicians, soldiers and policemen.

### The Role of the Party

The revitalization and reorganization of the Soviet Communist party in the spirit of democratization is one of the most urgent projects on Gorbachev's agenda. The conduct of the parliamentary elections and subsequent discussions in Party meetings, as well as in the parliamentary sessions, have revealed wide scale disarray and ideological confusion within Party organizations and among Party members. At one such Party meeting Gorbachev was accused of an impetuous, impatient style of leadership that was causing chaos in the Party, and in the economy and administration of the Soviet Union in general. From the outcome of Republican and local elections many Party members fear a further loss of control and influence that will lead to the replacement of the Party's leading role in the life of the country by the newly democratized representative institutions. This fear would seem to be fully justified by the comprehensive package of radical initiatives that he launched at the February Plenum.

In proposing a new model of socialism that downgrades the theme of class struggle in favour of the theme of common human values, in preaching the advantages of cooperative relations with Western countries and of the adoption of a number of Western ideas and practices -- particularly where they undercut traditional doctrines on the functioning of the economy and the treatment of property relations -- Gorbachev is asking a great many Party members to accept revolutionary changes in thinking and political conduct that temporarily, at least, leave them disoriented and uncertain about their actual responsibilities and status in these changing circumstances. In addition, the emphasis on *glasnost* and democratization, and their anticipated impact on the newly prescribed, future, multi-candidate elections to all Party posts, strikes a specially radical and awe-inspiring break with past Party practices.

Gorbachev is seeking to show that the Party, by assuming a politically activist and educative role that enlists all the people in participatory political processes of