

Khrushchev, Bukharin, and even Trotsky) are beginning to emerge from the shadows, long-banned films have been released, social ills such as drug abuse and prostitution have been discussed in the press, the much-vaunted health system has been sharply criticized, and long-sacred economic practices (such as guaranteed employment, heavily subsidized housing, and centrally controlled prices) have been questioned. Autonomous social forces are beginning to stir, especially among the various nationalities of the Soviet Union. Opposition to Gorbachev's restructuring has begun to surface and, no less remarkable, to be discussed in the Soviet press. As Robert C. Tucker, one of the deans of American Sovietology, has written: "History is on the move again in Soviet Russia."¹¹⁶

Gorbachev has sanctified and stimulated this process. At the Party Congress, he again and again hammered away at Soviet conservatism and called for fresh approaches. Gorbachev warned against "any attempt to turn the theory by which we are guided into a set of ossified constructs and recipes. . ." ¹¹⁷ He called upon Party officials to develop the "ability to transcend habitual but already outdated notions."¹¹⁸ He characterized the most recent period of Soviet history as a time when "the practical activities of Party and state agencies lagged behind the demands of the times and of life itself. Problems in the country's development grew faster than they were solved."¹¹⁹ In his view, "a peculiar mentality began to gain the upper hand: How can things be improved without changing anything?"¹²⁰

In his speech to the Central Committee on 27 January 1987, Gorbachev again returned to this theme. He decried past practices that produced a climate in which "lively discussion and creative thought disappeared from theory and the social sciences, while authoritarian evaluations and judgments became indisputable truths

¹¹⁶ Tucker, "Gorbachev and the Fight for Soviet Reform," p. 179.

¹¹⁷ *Kommunist*, 1986, No. 4, p. 7.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*