

Many of Gorbachev's problems could be greatly eased by a strong, expanding economy -- ensuring the provision of better living conditions for a restive working class that is now vulnerable to the growing oppositionist activity of the official trade unions and conservative politicians. Clearly, in these circumstances, Gorbachev needs a strongly positive response from the West to his reforming efforts at home. On the international front, successful cooperation with him in the resolution of regional conflicts and disarmament would enable him to accelerate the present trend of diverting effort and resources from the defence industry to civil industry; (the latest Soviet official statements announce cuts to military expenditures amounting to fourteen percent during 1990-91). On internal economic transformation, it may be difficult at this time to determine how best the West can be of immediate assistance, other than on such matters as the encouragement of joint ventures and the provision of business training and management expertise, including assistance in the creation of an infrastructure for the generation and use of information for economic decision-making in a modern economy. The Soviet Union insists that economic cooperation be mutually beneficial and devoid of charity. But, in view of the potentially expeditious political and economic advantages for Gorbachev, there would surely be a good case for specially favourable financial conditions for shipments of food, household consumer goods and specialized advanced technology. Finally, as an important way of justifying Gorbachev's policies of reform to the Soviet population, the move to a more open, democratic form of society and the "dramatically" improved Soviet attitude to human rights, should be rewarded by the emphatic moral approval of Western governments and public opinion.

