

# Mikhail GORBACHEV

**To Make  
Working People's  
Life  
Fuller  
and Richer**

Bucharest, May 26, 1987



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Speech by the General Secretary of the  
Central Committee of the CPSU at a  
Romanian-Soviet friendship meeting

Bucharest, May 26, 1987

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**Михаил Сергеевич Горбачев**

**СДЕЛАТЬ БОГАЧЕ, ПОЛНОКРОВНЕЕ ЖИЗНЬ ЛЮДЕЙ ТРУДА**

Речь Генерального секретаря ЦК КПСС  
на митинге румыно-советской дружбы

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Esteemed Comrade Ceaușescu,  
Dear comrades and friends,

In addressing you, I first of all want to extend to Romanian Communists and to all Romanian people heartfelt fraternal greetings from Soviet Communists and the Soviet people.

Fine words have been said from this rostrum about the importance of Soviet-Romanian friendship, and a desire has been expressed to develop and consolidate the cooperation between our two Parties and countries. This fully accords with our intentions and our wishes.

In socialist Romania we see a state whose class nature makes it akin to the Soviet Union, one of our allies and comrades in the common cause. And we are resolved to do our utmost to make our cooperation in all spheres of the life of society still more firm and fruitful.

I think you will agree that we have everything we need for this.

We are neighbours, and the chronicle of our relations contains many fine chapters. We were drawn closer together by the joint fight against fascism in the final stage of the Second World War. Particularly strong ties between the Soviet Union and Romania began to take shape in the postwar years.

This was a difficult period for both our countries. The Soviet Union had to make every effort to heal quickly the wounds left by the fascist onslaught. Romania, like most other young states of people's democracy, had to transform its semi-feudal economy and social structure, overcome backwardness, and create a base for steady independent development towards socialism.

These highly complex problems had to be tackled in the context of the Cold War, crude pressure, blackmail and

attempts at direct and indirect interference by imperialism aimed at overthrowing the new system.

Historians will possibly find much justification for criticizing certain decisions in a close examination of the past. However, the course of cooperation, cohesion and mutual assistance to which the Communists adhered from the very first stage of the formation of the world socialist system deserves the highest praise. There is no doubt that without this world socialism would hardly be the powerful international formation it is today.

Literally each of the more than forty years that have elapsed since then is marked by specific manifestations of solidarity and cooperation among the states led by the working class and the Communist Parties, such as assistance in building giant industrial enterprises and developing new industries, the sharing of scientific and technological know-how, the cultivation of extensive cultural ties, and the rendering of support to friends in their hour of need.

Friendship between countries is not an abstract notion. Its guardians and bearers are always real people. Most of the people who laid the cornerstone of the edifice of Soviet-Romanian friendship are still alive. Here at this rally I would like to thank the veterans and wholeheartedly to thank all those who are carrying on their internationalist work. I would also like to urge the young people of our two countries carefully to preserve and augment the legacy of the older generations that is being handed down to them.

I cannot help mentioning that I was sincerely moved by the kind feelings expressed during my meetings with Bucharest working people. They confirm how solid the roots of our comradeship are.

The visit to the plant named after August 23 also took place in a warm and friendly atmosphere. This enterprise produces a favourable impression in all respects—the knowledgeable and experienced managers, the well-trained engineers and technicians, the skilled workers, and the up-to-date equipment. Frankly speaking, we were especially pleased by all this because the plant supplies a part of what it manufactures to our country.

But the gist of the matter not only lies in this. After visiting this plant, one clearly realizes how Romania has changed over the years of socialist construction, how great

is its present production and scientific and technological potential.

It is an impressive result of the many years of your people's selfless work, and evidence of the high level of intellect and talent of Romanian workers, peasants, scientists and cultural workers, of their patriotic concern for their country and their ardent desire to turn it into an advanced socialist state. It is also proof of the immense potentialities of the socialist system.

On behalf of our Party and the Soviet people I want to convey fraternal congratulations to the Communists and all working people of the Republic on these remarkable advances.

We understand your pride in your achievements. We also take your concerns close to heart. We know that your country is facing a number of serious problems and that there are difficulties affecting everyday life. But we are confident that the Communists and working people of the Republic will overcome them and reach new heights in developing and perfecting socialist society whose supreme aim is to make the life of working people richer and more meaningful.

We wholeheartedly wish you, dear friends, to accomplish the tasks set by the 13th Congress of the Romanian Communist Party and to elevate your Homeland to a new stage of economic and social progress!

Comrades, with your permission I would now like to tell you briefly about what is currently taking place in the Soviet Union. A restructuring of all aspects of society's life, unprecedented in scale and revolutionary in character—this is what is now motivating the deeds and thoughts of Soviet people.

The concept of the changes which we started after the April Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee is not an expression of someone's will, but a result of the Party's collective thought. It did not emerge in a ready-made final form overnight.

A great deal was thought out, nurtured and gained through much suffering in the whole course of the USSR's development. It is not today or yesterday that the awareness of the necessity for change began to take shape in various strata of Soviet society. The further the process of reassessing the realities went, the clearer it became that it

would be wrong to confine ourselves to cosmetic repairs, so to speak, and that fundamental, radical reforms were needed to cast off the fetters, eliminate the causes that were hampering our country's progress and accelerate its development.

In this world, as they say, everything is relative. If the results of our development are measured by a historical yardstick, if the 70 years that have elapsed since the October Revolution with all their successes and failures are assessed as a whole, it has to be admitted that our advancement was fast and that we have made simply enormous progress. Today the USSR's economic might, its social gains, the high level of its culture and science, and the wide scope of public education—all these are real and acknowledged achievements of socialism.

I must say, comrades, that though I am well briefed on our progress in the peaceful exploration of outer space—and my post implies a knowledge of everything that is going on in this field—I was thoroughly impressed by my first-hand acquaintance with Baikonur, the place from which Soviet rockets and spaceships engaged in the peaceful exploration of outer space are launched. One sees from the equipment involved, and, particularly, from the people developing and handling this equipment, what impressive achievements we have scored and what a vast potential we have.

Frankly speaking, the contrast between the levels of development of different sectors of the Soviet economy that in the past few years had become acute was especially striking against this background. It is only fair to say that there were objective reasons for such uneven development. The state had to concentrate its resources in particular fields so as to resolve the most crucial tasks at any cost. These included development of heavy industry, strengthening the country's defence capability, and attaining military parity with the United States in order to ensure reliable security for the Soviet Union and its socialist allies.

On top of those forced measures the recent period witnessed a lag between the level of economic management and the requirements of the time, as well as human errors. As a result, our development began to slow down, and the entire immense potential of socialism was far from being used to the utmost.



Under such conditions, the Party set forth the task of restructuring, and determined the decisive link in a chain of the most crucial and diverse tasks. The individual is the goal, means and central character of our entire policy. The revolutionary task of restructuring has been set forth for the sake of people's welfare and progress. And people alone can accomplish it.

But for this to happen people's initiative must be promoted. There is only one way to do it, and that, as was pointed out at the January 1987 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee, is greater democracy. We are resolutely stamping out red-tape and are creating conditions for a broad and conscientious involvement of the people in economic, social and political affairs. We are guided in this by Lenin's idea that "Socialism cannot be decreed from above. Its spirit rejects the mechanical bureaucratic approach; living, creative socialism is the product of the masses themselves". (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 288.)

For a number of reasons democracy in our country had been seen mostly in terms of representing the interests of the classes and large social groups. The present level of our socialist society's development, however, necessitates further advance. We have set the task of bringing democracy closer to the individual and furnishing the broadest possible opportunities for the realization of the civic and creative potential of each person. So that there are real guarantees safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of every member of society. So that each person sees himself not as an insignificant part of the state machinery but as an active creative force, and enthusiastically joins the struggle for the attainment of the lofty goals set by our Party.

How do we tackle these tasks?

In the economy, we are doing this through cost accounting, self-financing and self-management of work collectives, election of economic managers, assertion of economic methods and improved planning. This is what underlies all our efforts to build an integral system of national economic management. This will be the chief item on the agenda of the forthcoming plenary meeting of the Central Committee.

In the political sphere we are doing this by perfecting

the institutions of socialist democracy and by truly enhancing the role of the elective bodies and their control over the state machinery.

In ideology, we are doing this through creative development of Marxist-Leninist theory on the basis of an objective in-depth analysis of real life; a scientific substantiation of policy with due regard for both internal and international conditions, the lessons of the past and the forecasts for the future; and a sharp activization of the human factor and release of the people's intellectual energy.

As is generally known, a mandatory condition for the development of democracy is greater openness. That is where we have started the process of socialism's renewal in our country. Openness is a strong guarantee against the stalling of that process somewhere in mid-course.

Do we have everything going smoothly and without problems in that department? Certainly not. This is because openness and criticism affect the interests of particular people. And there is another aspect to this matter as well. All of us cherish socialism and want to enhance its appeal. But when some shortcomings are deliberately hushed up they inevitably accumulate and become worse. A half-truth is worse than a drug. It can muffle or remove from the sight unpleasant phenomena for a certain period of time but never really cure them, which means that it interferes with normal, healthy development.

This applies both to contemporary problems and to the history of our society. In both cases we need the truth. Unity between words and deeds, and candour and openness in all our policies—that is the key to accomplishing the difficult tasks facing us.

Today we have every reason to say that the atmosphere of openness, resolute efforts to eradicate negative phenomena in the life of society and a critical approach to end results of Party work have added to the prestige of the Party and increased trust in its policy. We understand that this trust is not given once and for all, that Communists must constantly back it with deeds and personal example.

In setting before Soviet society a large-scale programme of action, the Party has begun with itself. The style and methods of Party work are being modernized to focus on bold quest, collective effort and open decision-making.

Great attention is being paid to personnel policy, to promoting competent honest people of principle, Communists and non-Party people alike, to leading positions. Another side to the issue is removing those who are incompetent, who cannot keep pace with the time, and particularly those who show a lack of principles and honesty, who cultivate nepotism and seek personal gain, and whose moral make-up is no longer that of a genuine Communist.

We all have to learn to work in conditions of greater democracy. The practice of electing managers at all levels is becoming increasingly widespread. We regard it as an important lever for raising the social activity of the people and a method of fighting bureaucratic tendencies in personnel policy.

Restructuring is a tough test for the personnel. But it is also a school which brings forth new leaders, makes it possible to unveil the talent and willpower of those who are in the vanguard, who have completely involved themselves in the struggle for socialism's renewal. Their example has a growing influence on the moral and political climate in the country.

In short, the work which the Party has launched is a large-scale restructuring of society so as to bring about its renewal on the basis of greater democracy and social justice and people's further intellectual and cultural development.

I must say that during this work we have to review and correct many traditional attitudes. Take the inter-relationship between the economy and social policy.

It would seem that it long ago became clear that the way people live depends on how they work and, vice versa, the way they work depends on how they live. Meanwhile, for a long time we believed that we should channel our greatest efforts and means into the development of production, and that social problems could be dealt with somewhat later. That approach resulted in a double loss, because both the interests of people and those of production itself were injured. New plants and production premises were built, but people did not go to them because they did not want to work where their needs were not properly looked after.

Now we are working to remedy the situation. We have adopted an active social policy, a policy aimed at tackling

production tasks in close connection with the task of satisfying the working people's vital needs.

~~We are accelerating the construction of housing.~~ This work is being done both by the state and by work collectives. Cooperative construction, and especially youth housing projects, is being encouraged. A series of measures aimed at improving the health care system, at setting up cultural centres, developing public transportation and the production of consumer goods, and at improving the consumer services have been charted. We constantly keep our attention focused on the task of realizing the Food Programme. In doing so, we make use of various organizational methods—from setting up large agro-industrial firms to encouraging family enterprises.

There is one more vitally important aspect of the Party's work—the international education of the working people and the strengthening of international friendship. For us this is an important issue. The significance Vladimir Lenin attached to everything that has to do with relations among nationalities is well known, as is the fact that he demanded great tact and delicacy in dealing with such issues. I think Lenin's behests in this regard are still topical today. And we will follow them.

This is a short account of the work we have started. We speak of it openly and are well aware of the fact that we are still at the very outset of the process of restructuring which was begun at the initiative of the Party and under its leadership. Life has taught us to evaluate the situation realistically and has made us sort of immune to excessive enthusiasm about our successes. The work ahead of us is even more demanding and complicated. However, the Soviet Communist Party will not deviate from this path because we are motivated by a lofty feeling of responsibility for the Soviet people and for the destinies of socialism.

Comrades, in developing the restructuring process, our Party naturally proceeds from the specific conditions in the Soviet Union and from our understanding of the theory of socialism. The Party furthermore takes into account the needs and the will of the Soviet people. At the same time, we study with keen interest the experience of our friends, their searches in the theory and practice of socialist construction. We try to make wide use of everything which

suits our conditions. And we are glad if fraternal countries find something useful for themselves in the creative work going on in our country.

I think that relations between socialist countries can and should be based on this principle and only this principle: a socialist country's full independence in determining its political course and collective responsibility for the destinies of world socialism; broad, mutually beneficial exchange of experience and comradely cooperation.

I must say that, when starting the radical restructuring of our society, we did not for even a single moment forget about this aspect. Don't think of this as bragging, but Soviet Communists and Soviet people are brought up in such a way that we would never set our Soviet interests apart from the common interest of the community—the world socialist system, the international working-class movement and—in broader terms—the prosperity and progress of all humankind.

If we go from these great political principles to practical deeds, it will become clear that the accelerated development of the Soviet Union will have a beneficial influence on our cooperation with other socialist countries and hence the conditions of their development. Karl Marx used to say that in the capitalist system the gain of one state is a loss for another. In the socialist system it is just the opposite: the gain of one state benefits all.

Here the issue is what each of us can do for the common good. But there is another task of no less importance: what can we all do together in international cooperation? The latter is acquiring ever increasing significance for each fraternal country. Today a growing part of social output is produced on the basis of cooperation and is intended for foreign trade. This is a progressive trend. By taking part in the socialist and international division of labour, countries are offered the opportunity to complement each other's production potentials, to gain scientific and technological experience from one another and, on this basis, to raise the level of their development.

Of fundamental importance here is that as a result of an accord reached last year at a working meeting of the leaders of the fraternal parties, a policy was adopted aimed at intensifying the integration process in every way, at emphasizing economic incentives in cooperation, at es-

establishing direct production links, and at setting up joint enterprises and science and production associations. Calls have been made for major improvements in the work of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, an organization which has served our countries well and must be commended. But our times demand new methods of collaboration and modern management methods that would improve economic cooperation considerably and secure more benefits for every party concerned.

In using continued integration to deal with a wide range of issues the fraternal Parties are putting special emphasis on more rapid scientific and technological progress. Microelectronics, biotechnology and other high-tech industries will provide a key to resolving the outstanding economic and social problems now facing the socialist countries, a key to consolidating their positions in the international arena and enhancing their contribution to the progress of world civilization.

The CMEA countries have adopted a Comprehensive Programme for Scientific and Technological Progress up to the year 2000 and have started implementing it. But, frankly, this effort is not yet energetic enough. In our view, this exceptionally important undertaking can and must be expedited.

We discussed all these issues with Comrade Ceaușescu yesterday and today, and agreed that both Romania and the Soviet Union would stand to gain from greater cooperation in production, in particular, from the new forms of this cooperation. We have all it takes for faster progress in the sphere of scientific and technological links. More Romanian scientists and people with special skills could take part in the extensive basic and applied research under way in the Soviet Union, and more young people could be sent to study in the other country, thus creating what could be called a human base for Soviet-Romanian cooperation in science and industry.

I am sure that fundamental shifts in cooperation will not only result in material gains but will also improve Soviet-Romanian relations as a whole. They will help improve the friendship between our peoples.

Comrades, another conference of the Political Consultative Committee of the Member States of the Warsaw Treaty will open in Berlin the day after tomorrow.

As always, it will analyze the European and world situation, and agree on joint foreign-policy measures to be taken on urgent issues.

Interaction, cohesion and unity are our great gains. It is largely due to our joint efforts that we have been able to defend the security and sovereignty of socialist countries and to block the way of bellicose adventurists. As our community has tackled its common tasks, it has defended every member's interests. Active teamwork by socialist countries consolidated the Polish and Czechoslovak post-war borders, secured international legal recognition for the GDR, broke the blockade of Cuba, and rendered major help to Vietnam as it fought back against US aggression. Socialist countries were there at the source when the process of collective European security began to unfold. The idea of holding a European conference was first proposed here, in Bucharest.

We do not at all think that all our joint steps have been totally successful. But there is one thing we can say for sure: a concern for peace has always inspired us. To save the human race and prevent a nuclear holocaust is the main objective of our policy.

Today, all countries face the question of how to ward off the threat of war. The answers given to this question vary. The US ruling circles and the leaders of certain other capitalist countries are for guaranteeing security through deterrence, particularly nuclear deterrence. Our approach is quite different. We want to achieve security by working for a world without weapons and violence.

We have proposed a realistic way of achieving this: by beginning a programme for the reduction and elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, by not allowing the arms race to spread into outer space, and by putting an end to nuclear testing.

A major issue today is the elimination of medium-range missiles in Europe. In their recent statements and talks with us some NATO statesmen have said that the radical solution on this issue proposed by the Soviet Union is, in principle, a real possibility. But a lot of "buts" have been coming up. They've started saying it's impossible to eliminate medium-range missiles without simultaneously settling the shorter-range missile issue. When we agreed to eliminate this kind of weapon too, our Western partners

declared in alarm that they will be left unarmed in the face of the formidable strength of the member states of the Warsaw Treaty.

Then another condition was made—that we give up the hundred warheads which, according to the Reykjavik accord, were to be retained in the Asian part of the country, while another one hundred would be retained by the United States. As you know, a few days ago the Soviet Union announced that this is also a possibility. But we come up against ever more new obstacles.

Well, now at the very least it should be clear to everyone as to who wants a world with nuclear weapons and who wants a world free of such weapons. It should be just as clear that the anti-communist accusations made against socialist states about their aggressive intentions are totally false.

Nations have the right at this very crucial moment to demand that the cat-and-mouse game should at long last come to an end in tackling the very serious issue of nuclear disarmament and the strengthening of peace and security in Europe.

I would like to believe that when the West reaches its final decision goodwill and political realism will prevail and that it will consequently be possible to sign a treaty abolishing medium-range missiles before the end of the year.

Nearly a year has passed since the Warsaw Treaty member states put forward to all European countries a specific programme for reducing armed forces, as well as tactical nuclear and conventional arms in Europe—from the Atlantic to the Urals. Some NATO participants appear to be willing to hold talks, but they are against holding discussions about tactical nuclear weapons at them. Let me ask, what's to be done with them if most of these weapons are "dual-purpose" weapons, that is, designed for using both conventional and nuclear ammunition? It appears to us that it would be logical to handle the issue of these weapons in a package with conventional arms.

Here, in Bucharest, it is also relevant to say how we assess the situation in the Balkans.

For centuries this area was regarded as the powder keg of Europe. And if now relations among the states here are peaceful, then they all share the credit for this. But no one



doubts that the Balkan countries would feel even more secure and calm if the ideas of making this area free of both nuclear and chemical weapons were realized.

Romania and Bulgaria have made proposals on this issue. As far as we know, other states have reacted to them positively. Here I would like to announce that the Soviet Union is ready to give the necessary guarantees concerning the non-deployment and non-use of nuclear and chemical weapons in this zone. I think that it would be worthwhile to go even further, to rid the Balkan Peninsula of all foreign troops and military bases.

We regard the Balkan states' efforts to make their region a zone of peace and cooperation as an inalienable part of the all-European process. Basing itself on its rich traditions in this respect, the USSR is ready to develop cooperation with all the states in the area and contribute in every way possible to the establishment of a stable and positive situation in the Balkans.

I would also like to draw your attention to the proposal of the Warsaw Treaty member states on freezing military expenditures of the countries of both alliances for a year or two. The initiative, as you know, came from the Romanian comrades. The implementation of the well-known proposal of our friends from the CSSR and the GDR, put forth jointly with the SDPG, on creating a nuclear-weapon-free corridor in Central Europe would help reduce the military confrontation. A Polish comprehensive plan for arms reduction and confidence-building measures in the centre of our continent was also made public not long ago. All these proposals reaffirm the importance of every socialist state's contribution to peace and the importance of combining the initiative of each of them with the general line of the socialist community in international affairs.

Comrades,

Seven decades ago the Great October Socialist Revolution raised the banner of peace over the world for the first time ever. Today, in the last quarter of the 20th century, the socialist countries, together with everyone who holds the fate of our planet close to his heart, are working for a peaceful future for mankind. The Soviet and Romanian Communists and the Soviet and Romanian peoples are working together to make these noble aims come true.

Allow me to express my firm confidence that we will continue to walk hand in hand and to strengthen our alliance and friendship!

With all my heart I wish the Romanian people happiness and prosperity!

Long live peace! Long live socialism!

*(The speech by Mikhail Gorbachev was listened to with great attention and repeatedly punctuated by prolonged applause.)*





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