PREFACE

This study may appear heterogeneous. In a sense, it is, and a few words are necessary to explain the nature and limitations of this study.

What I seek to present here is an evaluative study of the historic organisational experience of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The purpose is not to present a detailed description of the different parts of the party organisation and their functions. There are many works which do this very competently. But unlike the discourses on the CPSU’s various roles and its political history, its internal organisational functioning has received very little attention. But whatever else the CPSU was, it was above all a well-maintained organisation and therefore, organisational analysis must come before any broader generalization is made upon the historic Soviet experiment in social transformation. This study, therefore, intends to analyze just the modus operandi of the Party organisation - irrespective of its socio-economic policies - at different stages in its history.

The study spans about a century and falls into several distinct parts. So, it is necessary first to set the theoretical and methodical frame under which the subject should be discussed. If I dealt in some detail on the classical authors on party organisation, there is definite reason for this. Without clearly stating the specific problems under investigation it would have been impossible to take up such a long range for consideration. The first chapter intends to do this. In the following chapter I have tried to trace the theoretical lineage of the Soviet Communist party, that is, to what extent and in which respect the creation of this organisation owed to Marx, Engels and Lenins’ ideas on party. Third chapter exclusively deals with the origin of the concept of Democratic Centralism (DC) and its theoretical development.
under the auspices of the CPSU. The fourth and fifth chapters analyse the main events connected with the actual organisational working of the Soviet communist party *vis-à-vis* its organisational theory. In doing so all those events and incidents have been taken into account, as far as it became possible to gather them, which had a direct bearing on the theory and practice of the DC.

The whole study is based on an intensive review of the available sources. The materials included:

(a) the official historical record, as that is available in published accounts of the Party since its origin;

(b) the voluminous self-analyses, including the memoirs, which have been produced by various leaders and members of the Soviet Communist Party; and

(c) the best available secondary sources such as the works of Merle Fainsod, E.H. Carr, Bartram D. Wolfe and others.

It is well recognised that most of the materials on the CPSU came from intensely partisan sources. Some people may argue that such evidence should be disqualified. But this would be a hasty abdication of the responsibility to assess the data at hand, especially when the materials on the internal dynamics of the Party has been so scarce.

From the Soviet side I have used extensively the self-analyses by the Soviet Party leaders and the official authors. Of course, that is supplemented by the observation of actual practice in the organisation. But one should not throw out such precious data because the source is 'coloured' or 'partisan'. In fact, one should neither accept the Soviet descriptions uncritically nor reject them out of hand. In many cases
there is actually no contradiction between the testimony of the participants, the Party's own affirmations and the views of the close observers. As far as the controversies over "the facts" concerning the internal Party life are concerned it is, in fact, the evaluation of a practice which is in dispute rather than its existence.

A cognate matter is reliance on the old materials - books and pamphlets written as far back as a century, and more ago. These include the writings of Marx, Engels and particularly of Lenin, especially such texts as *What is to be Done?*; *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*; *A Letter to a Comrade on Our Organisational Tasks* etc. These and similar texts have been the communist classics. They have been printed in millions of copies in different languages and were very effectively used as training documents in all countries and throughout all changes in propaganda and policy levels of various communist parties. The works of Lenin and Stalin were not remote philosophical essays: they had almost solely a *practical* content. The indoctrination of the entire communist movement along lines set forth in these basic works provides a good source to understand the phenomena that were hailed as a 'party of new type' and the 'Bolshevik unity of the Party'.

The value of this study, perhaps, is not supposed to stand on its own. The incompleteness of this study stems from two reasons. First, it may lose its significance if not viewed in the background of the Marxist philosophy of emancipation of the toiling masses and in due course entire humanity. One should not forget for an instant that the whole enterprise of the Russian communist party and its activities were to end injustice and exploitation off the face of the earth. Every action of the Party was always justified on the ground that it will do ultimate good for the world. Therefore, the litmus test of the communist party ought to be on this ground and no other. The party may have been successful on various other fronts, but to the central philosophy of Karl Marx on the human emancipation what
has been achieved by the CPSU - this remains the unwavering perspective all along in this study. Secondly, in order to attempt a definite conclusion on the Communist experiment similar organisational studies of other communist parties should be available before a theorist. Therefore, till then the conclusions of this study may be considered as tentative and exploratory.

Working on this study was primarily, I suppose, as most studies for their authors, a matter of self-education. More particularly, of the painful reeducation I had to undertake after twelve Leninist years. I am grateful to my first teacher Com. Shiv Shankar Sharma and all my teachers and comrades who in one way or other enabled me to understand the fine psychology of a Leninist party organisation.

It is a pleasant duty to record my debts of gratitude. I wish to thank the UGC for the Senior Research Fellowship which permitted me to spend three years in full time study, contemplation and writing. My special thanks are due to Prof. Devendra Kaushik for his constant support. I am also grateful to Prof. Madhavan K. Palat, Prof. Namvar Singh, Prof. Valeri A. Efimenko, Prof. G. Kotovsky and Nirmal Verma for their valuable insights on the subject and suggestions which enriched my own understanding and this study.

Ultimately, it had been my good fortune to have enjoyed the company of a large number of scholars, friends and teachers at the Institute of Social Sciences, Moscow for almost one year during 1985-86. I am under obligation to my friend Alexandre B. Abashkin, Prof. Pyotre A. Fedosov, Prof. Svetlana Ukhchina and Prof. Olga Abashkina. Innumerable discussions, arguments and interactions with them on the functioning of the CPSU organisation and its intimate history enlightened me. So did my own close observation of the day-to-day organisational behavior of the CPSU at various levels in Moscow and other places during the time. I also
remember the living reminiscences of the old doctor Lydia Vasilyevna Galyitsina, the daughter of a Bolshevik leader who worked closely with the famous Bolshevik leader Felix Dzerzinsky in the Russian Communist Party. My understanding of Russia and the Russians including the communists owes much to the keen sense of her observations. All this was an experience beyond anything, which enriched my confidence on the subject and finally this study.

This thesis was first submitted in July 1993 for examination. After a perusal of the learned examiners suggested some revisions. Accordingly, an Addenda is inserted at the end of the final chapter to incorporate the points raised by the examiner. I am thankful to him for his comments and suggestions which have further benefited this study.

At the end, it must be mentioned that the responsibility for the text is mine alone.

\[\text{Shankar Sharan}\]

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