The present study is a modest attempt to understand the dynamic logic of the Soviet Trade Union Movement in the transitional phase of Soviet Society i.e. 1985 to 1991. Though, the study of trade unions, their nature, and their role as agencies of protecting and promoting the interest of workers in plural societies is a very old subject, yet, the role of trade unions in a state which self-proclaimed to champion the cause of working class, is of a particular interest. Many studies have been conducted on this subject during the Soviet period of 1917-85. This study benefitted a lot from the earlier researches on the subject to understand the nature of the Soviet regime, conditions of the working class and their organizations, and their role in policy formation of the Soviet state. In the Transitional phase of Soviet economy with Gorbachev becoming General Secretary of CPSU in 1985 to the collapse of the Soviet empire in the last months of 1991 some Western as well as Soviet scholars made some effort to understand the fate of workers and their struggles in this period, but none has dealt thematically on the subject as important as the organizations of working class, old and new. This is a first systematic effort to understand and analyse the emergence of new workers' organizations, their ideology, their role in transitional period as protector and promoter of working class interests, and their alliances with different political formations in the struggle for supremacy between different ruling stratum in this phase of Soviet economy and society.

Although, the internal and external cause of collapse of the Soviet empire are still being revealed through different sources but some of the contradictions of Soviet society and economy can be traced back to the launching of the socialist project itself with the coming of the October
revolution. In Chapter-I an attempt has been made to recapture analytically the historical itinerary of soviet trade unions in a specific kind of social formation i.e. before and after the October revolution, upto the 1985. In light of the understanding made of trade unions in the soviet period Chapter-II attempts to capture the Central theme of perestroika during which different ruling stratum made an efforts to break the passivity of soviet working class, to make it allv in the struggle for supremacy in soviet society. Workers as part of integral whole in the regime responded to the calls of political leadership, albert cautiously. It is only after availing the opportunities offered by beginning of political democracy workers responded to their immiseration beset by economic liberalization. It led to crop up some new workers’ organisations which led to the strike movement of miners of 1989 and 1991. In Chapter-III it is tried to demonstrate and establish the link between new workers’ organizations and political leadership in these strike movements. Old unions also tried to reform themselves but workers hardly looked to them except in the case of benefits associated with their membership.

In Chapter-IV a sketch of changing correlation of forces in Soviet politics along with the emergence of regional nationalistic movements has been made which ultimately led to the disintegration of USSR. Counter coup made by Yeltsin ended the party monopoly over power. The end of the party monopoly over power and the emergence of new workers’ organizations and their alliance with new political leadership led to the eclipse of the official trade unions. Making a final analysis in Chapter-V I tried to understand the present state of Trâde union organizations and their movement in Russia, highlighting some of the hopeful signs of its
revival banking upon the heroic traditions of the Soviet working class. But given the dismal state of affairs in Russian economy and lack of will in political leadership Russian working class gives a sense of its isolation nationally and internationally. This is also very true of workers' organizations.

On account of the lack and accessibility to the original resources I made this limited effort to treat the subject of which the possibilities for further exploration are still immense. In this effort I have been helped and inspired by some of my most near and dear ones without which this manuscript would not have been completed. I really fail to find the words of praise for my supervisor Prof. Devendra Kaushik, who has been very kind, cooperative and democratic in supervision. He corrected me like his son even where I have committed blunder. I really love and respect him. Secondly, my parents positively charged me by making a bit soft negative taunt about me, the good intentions behind such moves under no circumstances can be made even a subject for rethinking. My wife and my friends also made sometimes a timely interventions to remind me of my job. I feel grateful to them. Again, I thank everybody, whosoever he/she is, who has directly or indirectly cooperated in this effort.

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( Mahabir Singh )