If we look at the organic development of trade unions world over; it may intrinsically be related with medieval guilds protecting and promoting the interests of persons involved in the same trade. These guilds were small commodity producers (handicrafts or peasant industry) who later on developed as capitalist manufacturers, and consequently the factory owners (large scale machine industry), in their body and soul the modern bourgeoisie. The nature of these medieval guilds was inherently contradictory as there was a hierarchical structure within them, and there was also an inter-guild competition, i.e., promotion of sectional interests. As inevitable, in the process of social division of labour the 'journeyman' stripped of their guild security moved along with their guild master as modern wage labourer in modern machine industry. From their medieval guild they retained their characteristics of organising professionally and promoting sectional interests socially. The organization and nature of modern machine industry also facilitated this process of organizing the workers in trade unions along with lines of medieval guilds. So the modern trade union which is a developed child of medieval guilds is association of workers of a particular trade or industry for the protection and promotion of interests of their members, not necessarily compatible with the interests of the rest of the members and sections of the society. By definition they are mediators or alleviators of
workers' interests but at the same time they conceal the contradiction
unintendedly and exaggerate it intendedly. At the theoretical plane the
scholars are divided mainly into two categories (the liberal Pluralists and
Marxists), and loosely into four, another two categorised at criticist (they
make every approach of industrial relation subjects to criticism) and
post-industrialist. The liberal pluralists: According to liberal pluralists
scholars of industrial relations—the society is a functioning organism
tending towards equilibrium, viewing society as possessing unity. This
proposition consequently leads to the conclusion that contradiction
between the employee and the employer are not structurally given and
do not form permanent cleavage. So the two interest groups can meet and
negotiate through the process of collective bargaining. The other
conclusion of this assumption is that cleavage between the two are a
matter of historical chance and with the evolution of society the
contradictions are also likely to be resolved, because they drive from the
authority structure of society and as the society is going to democratise
the contradictions can also be resolved. There is contradiction in this
approach as it sees the employees and employers only as two different
interest groups negating the role of environment in shaping their
contradictions while at the same time claiming that they are given within
the authority structure of society, implicitly admitting that it operates
under certain social-historical conditions. The scholars who can be put
under this category are Lord Danovan, (1968), H.A. Cleg, W.E.J. Mac
The Marxist scholars view the society as characterised by the private ownership of means of production which consequently give rise to a peculiar kind of authority structure in society. The deep, permanent, structural division is likely to remain between those who sell their labour power and those who purchase it. The contradiction can be resolved only through a constant and direct struggle against capital. This approach looks at the trade unions as a social as well as industrial phenomenon. The strikes are permanent and ineradicable. The collective bargaining as an institution to resolve conflict can only influence the form of struggle but cannot prevent it. The scholars who can be placed under this category are L. Trotsky (1969), V.L. Allen (1971), T. Clarke and L. Clements (1977), H. Benyan and T. Nicols (ed.) (1977) and R. Hyman (1981).

The Criticists: Between these two approaches of industrial relations fall another category of scholars who may be called critics. They present a critique of liberal pluralistic school of industrial relations. But lack a conception of the agency for the transformation of capitalism, beyond the gradual spread of social enlightenment which departs little from traditional Fabian thinking. They also question certain basic assumption of Marxism with regard to the revolutionary role of working class. They however, can be grouped in the category of radicals on the
basis of their conceptual frame. The scholars who can be included in this category are J.H. Goldthrorpe, Michael Maan (1981) and G.D.H. Cole (1960).

The Post Industrialists appears to be talking about the end of capitalism and emergence of post capitalist society 'The mass society', 'welfare state' etc. Their argument is that inequalities in society are declining, with the working class emulating the life style of middle class. The industry according to them is managed by professionals not by capitalists themselves. The professionals seek a balance between diverse groups, (to this they call managerial revolution) resulting in acquisition by the state of characteristics of neutrality rather than class partisanship. The scholars included in this category are J.K. Gallbreath (1968), Dennial Bell (1960) and F.Zweig (1961).

Further conceptual understanding necessitates separation of categories like trade union movement from working class movement and workers movement. A trade union movement is necessarily a movement of workers organised in a particular trade or more than one trade for the betterment of material life of its members. "This economic struggle is a collective struggle of workers against their employers for better terms in the sale of their labour power, for better conditions of life and labour."1

So a trade union movement is a working class movement not necessarily in the interest of the whole of working class, although it can
be if it is directly associated with working class movement, whereas working class movement is not strictly a movement of workers in organised trade but it concerns with the conditions of all social classes. It has always a perspective of reorganising the society on egalitarian basis and the general emancipation of society along with it. It is not generally sectional, temporary and contradictory. It is essentially political in nature and puts primacy of politics over economics. For the concept of workers’ movement we may attribute it neither the characteristics of trade union movement like narrow, parochial and sectional tendencies nor of working class movement as the emancipation of all social classes which is not in their agenda. It is rather generally spontaneous and fragmentary. It is generally economic in nature but may acquire political character if circumstances directly lead to that direction.

Howsoever divergent in their social-theoretical presentation these approaches might be, regarding relative role of trade-unions they have of necessity to encounter the very concrete operational ways. The present study will refer to specific methodological disputes only in passing, wherever necessary, keeping the stated categories in the background.

A concrete operational approach has guided the investigation into the nature of Soviet Trade Unions, their relationship with CPSU and their role in formulating social and economic policies at their work place
in the post 1917 period. It is proposed to discuss the condition of Russian working class and their organisation before 1917, the condition of Russian economy in general and industry in particular in pre-1917 period, different class forces at play and their relationship with working class. Role and place of the working class in carrying out the socialist revolution will also be discussed.

In its evolution the course of Russian Industry was no different from World experience. Lenin observes, "The fact quite clearly show that the main trend of small commodity production is towards the development of capitalism, in particular towards the rise of manufacture; and manufacture is growing with enormous rapidity before our very eyes into large scale machine industry. Perhaps one of the most striking manifestation of the intimate and direct connection between consecutive forms of industry is the fact that many of the big and even the biggest factory owners were at one time the smallest of the small industrialist and passed through all the stages from "Popular production" to "Capitalism." ²

Class Struggle in Manufactory Stage

Industrialization came to Russia later than in the majority of western countries, although the first 'industries' were already in existence by the sixteenth century. "³ This is true of the craft industry and so far manufacturing is concerned it developed only in the 18th Century.
"The eighteenth century witnessed a very spectacular, though short lived, rise in Russian mining and general industrialization. But the serf oriented Russian industry proved incapable of competing with Western industries - based on hired labour - as soon as machine began to spread in these countries towards the end of the century... it actually delayed by at least a century the coming of industrial revolution in Russia."4 So the problem of industrial working class in Russia surfaced only in the later half of the Nineteenth Century, although the workers' discontent can be traced with the Pugachav Revolt in the 18th Century. It was not a new phenomena in Russia it simultaneously happened in French Revolution and American War of Independence. Although it can not be said that participation of Russian workers in Pugachev revolt was wholly identical with participation of French and American workers as "the specific features of class struggle in industrial countries are deeply rooted in national soil and are conditioned by the traditions of a given country, its distinctive history and culture."5 "Even in Russia, where serfdom had 'assumed a neo-feudal forms', foci of Capitalist Relations appeared from time to time in these countries, although they were unstable until 1760's and died down one place to flare up at another."6

The proletariat of the manufactory period was everywhere not only a deconcentrated, dissociated but also an extremely heterogeneous mass structurally. This circumstance is extremely important for understanding the essence of new classes, for an analysis of the forms of
its exploitation and the class struggle in that period." In Russia such manufacturers became conspicuous in the textile industry over the last few decades of 18th century. They sprang up in wood working, shoe making and other fields." From the end of 18th century the emerging proletariat was on the whole represented by two contingents of workers. Hired workman were peasants on quit-rent and wage workers in the true sense of the word. The later were in a greater numbers in the manufacturing industries and fewer in the mining industry. The emerging proletariat in Russia included, first as in other countries, workers of petty bourgeoisie enterprises, manufacturers of various kinds, as well as of factories (from the 30's and 40's of 19th century)."

Because, the manual tools were still the basis for capitalist production in the manufactory period, the complete realization of all its properties (of capitalist relations of production) including full subordination of labour to capital was not yet feasible. The machine basis technology required for this which was still non-existent. The entrepreneurs were still unable to enslave the workers completely, because the employers themselves and their production depended on skillful craftsman. "Capital is constantly compelled to wrestle with the insubordination of workmen," "these runs to complaint of want of discipline among the workmen" such was the root cause of peculiar condition of labour struggle in manufacturing stage."
"For all that no proletarian class movement in the true sense of
the word existed at that time (manufactory stage), because the working
class itself had not yet formed. Even if the labour struggle took the form
of open protest it could not be regarded as a working class movement. As
Marx said, "In the manufactory period the struggle of the proletariat is
latent or manifests itself only in isolated and sporadic phenomenon."
Strikes as Lenin noted, "expressed the class struggle in embryo, but only
in embryo". Again as Marx underscored, "the content about wages in
manufactory presupposes manufacture, and are in no sense directed
against its existence."

The fragmentary nature of Russian workers’ struggle in the
manufactory period can be seen in the whole of 18th and early 19th
century. For instance 'Frynov silk factory workers struggle from
1800-1880, the struggle of the Voznesensk Textile workers (Dimitrov,
Moscow regions) which also lead to the promulgation of the first law
dealing with the employment of children in factories, struggle of
Krasnopole’s Paper mill workers in the St. Petersberg Gubernia in 1777.
These and similar cases show that there has been persistence, endurance
and a sense of collective action among the Russian working class."

Serfdom was a constraining factor in Russian economic and
social life. The industrial development was at a very low ebb, and
consequently the economic and social organizations of Russian working
class were week. It was only after the abolition of serfdom and 'reforms' period a phenomenal growth of Russian industry as well as the Russian working class can be marked. So far the organizations of working class are concerned they were not in step with the pace of industrial and working class development because of the nature of the regime, and the cultural gap between intelligentia and the working class, while the former was under the influence of West European social and political development and latter was springing up from serfdom.

The great reforms abolished the serfdom but did not give any social, economic and political rights to industrial workers whose number was just as small as 565,142 in 1860.¹³

So the first attempt of creating workers organizations in Russia was undertaken by revolutionary intelligentia, the Norodniki. Even the "South Russian alliance of workers" in Odessa which the Soviet authors claim to be proletarian organization in Russia was headed by such representative of radical intelligentia as Ye.Zaslavesky and a number of Odessa university students, teachers etc. The only important figure among workers ranks was Obnorsky - but he had been involved with political activities for a long time and, before going to Odessa he had spent a number of years as an emigre in close contact with the German worker's movement.¹⁴ As there was a gap between the politically charged
leaders demands and immediate economic interests of workers, the later responded actively to economic demands and remained passive to the anti-czarist political passions.

The another workers' organization was "Northern Alliance of Russian Workers" which was for the first time organized by workers' themselves: Khalturin a carpenter and same Obnorsky, the aim of the alliance was liquidation of the existing political and economic order. An another organization namely 'Peoples' will' was also working which was joined by Khalturin later on. 'Moscow Workers' Alliance' was also one among them.¹⁵

Besides, these organizations of workers with political overtones there were certain other non-political mutual aid societies of workers like Jewish Artisans' Kheveras which later developed into tough, clandestine, trade union in 1890, Bristele Workers' Union in 1894, and similar mutual insurance and pension funds began to develop in Railways as far back as 1850. Although this question is hotly debated that whether these peaceful mutual-aid societies were originator of Russian trade unions or not. The Russian revolutionaries like Ryazanov, Kolokolmior who had struggled to form revolutionary social democratic cells among Russian industrial workers bitterly attacked this notion.¹⁶
Workers' Legal Position and Industrial Legislation in Russia

"Theoretically, workers' legislation started in Russia in the eighteenth century, and the first law stipulating a ten hour working day for all artisans and their assistants was issued by Catherine the great in 1785... it must also be remembered that Russian workers' had more official holidays each year than workers in any other European country." Between 1886-93, a set of laws came into force governing the hiring and firing of workers. In 1876 first law forbidding the employment of youths in gunpowder factories was promulgated. In 1880's and 1890's these were followed by a series of laws forbidding the industrial employment of children below the age of 12, employment of those below 15 years of age for more than eight hours a day, night employment of youths below the age of 17 and for all women in the textile plants as well as in the underground work like mines. According to Walking the bitterly anti-czarist Bolshevik historian Pokrovsky stated that the labour policy of czarist government. had been the major grievances of bourgeoisie, and that it had led them to turn against the autocracy after 1905.

But what mattered most to the Russian workers was the fact that at the same time the British workers were much better paid, while German workers were protected by more efficient insurance schemes. Again, "these labour laws were not accompanied by laws stipulating
penalties for the non-observation of these legislation... even there was no official recognition of status of working class and workers had no professional organizations to fight for their right”. What F. Naumann, a German historian of social movements, wrote in criticism of Bismark’s labour policies can suitably be applied to the labour policies of Russian government as well. Nauman wrote, "all the laws for the protection of workmen are a poor substitute for the free activity of trade unions." To substantiate this point the law of May 24, 1835 may be cited which obliged employers to issue to their workers paysheets on which the agreed condition of work and all payments were to be recorded. Under this law workers were forbidden to demand any change in the conditions before expiry of the contract while employees were given free hand to sack workers at a formal notice of 2 weeks.

Two laws were issued in 1845, first outlawed the night work for children while second outlawed the strike and put it on the same footing as revolts against authorities established." Besides, in 1859 an imperial commission was set up to modernise the whole system of industrial legislation. The industrial upsurge of 1870's, based on mechanization and hired labour and accompanied by an increase in strikes resulted in the great wave of industrial legislation of 1880's and 1890's, which began with the law of 2 June 1882, 5 June 1884, 3 June 1885, and that of 3 June 1886. All these labour legislations as Tugan-Baranovsky thinks were caused by the strikes and other forms of industrial violence of the
period.\textsuperscript{23}

**Industrial Growth and Condition of Working Class**

**Table 1**

1861 agrarian reform brought out the phenomenal growth of Russian working class in number as well as in its strengths. It can be seen from the following table.\textsuperscript{24}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of workers</th>
<th>Percentage in relation to population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>493000</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>616000</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>1213000</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>1405000</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This statistics include only the European Russia.

The structure of Russian industry in 1902 can be seen in the following table.\textsuperscript{25}

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enterprise with</th>
<th>No. of enterprises</th>
<th>No. of Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 5 workers</td>
<td>11,701</td>
<td>27800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 50 workers</td>
<td>14,189</td>
<td>240000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-1000 workers</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>950000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 1000 workers</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>700000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31,190</td>
<td>19,17,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above statistics indicate that a large section of Russian workers was concentrated into medium size i.e. 51-1000 workers and large scale industries in the industrial centres.

We can have another look at the number of workers engaged in different sectors of economy in 1894.26

**Table 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Adult Male Workers Population</th>
<th>15500000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Agriculture Wage Workers</td>
<td>3500000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Factory Mining and Railway Workers</td>
<td>1500000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Building Workers</td>
<td>1000000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Lumbar workers, navvies, Railway builder, Goods loader and unloader, all kinds of unskilled labourer in industrial centres</td>
<td>2000000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Workers occupied at home for capitalist, working for wages in manufacturing industries (Not included in factory industries)</td>
<td>2000000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL about 10000000 wage workers
Women & Children 25% of total wage labourer
2500000

No. of total adult male wage workers
7500000

From the above table it can reasonably be concluded that about half of the total adult male workers population was engaged in the production of material values. The part of this vast mass of wage workers had completely broken with the land, and lived entirely by the sale of their labour power. They included the great majority of factory (undoubtedly
also of mining and railways) workers, and a section of construction and ship building workers, and unskilled labourer, fairly large section of workers employed in capitalist manufactories and the inhabitants of non-agriculture centres engaged in the home work for entrepreneurs.

The above statistics signify that the relative surplus population (or reserve army of unemployed) was created by the capitalist mode of production.

The industry wise wages can be seen from the following Table 4.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Machine-Building</td>
<td>24 Roubles</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory Hands (All Factories)</td>
<td>18 Roubles</td>
<td>9 Roubles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>17 Roubles</td>
<td>7 Roubles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leather</td>
<td>17 Roubles</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Textile) Print work</td>
<td>16 Roubles</td>
<td>6 Roubles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottong Spinning</td>
<td>14 Roubles</td>
<td>11 Roubles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical</td>
<td>13 Roubles</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China &amp; Pottery</td>
<td>12 Roubles</td>
<td>4 Roubles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The level of workers discontent can be seen from the following table.
Table No.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Strikes</th>
<th>No. of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>31,195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>29,527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>59,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>43,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>97,498</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The largest number of strikes occurred in enterprises with over 1000 workers.²⁸

Although the numerical strength of Russian Industrial workers was small in relation to the total % of population but their strength was greater than their numerical strength in concentrated industrial regions, in medium and big size of industrial establishments. Another reason of their strength was that a Russian industrial worker was completely rootless and insecure as he had to travel a long distance from his village to find employment in the industry. He could not return home for the sowing and harvesting his little piece of land, which isolated him completely from his usual environment, and threw him into a strange, explosive and bitter atmosphere of industry. St. Petersburg the most sparely populated province, was highly industrialized centre of Russia, comparatively better paid and always in demand for workers.
It may also be seen that the collective actions of workers in the last decade of 19th century were progressively increasing with larger participation. This clearly shows that despite the "progressive" or "retrogressive" workers legislation the regime could not stop or satisfy the workers to win them to its side. Although, legally the workers associations were banned, strikes were prohibitory yet the workers' collective action continued to swell despite all odds. It may be due to the revolutionary nature of Russian intelligentia which led them to action. It has always obfuscated the nature of working class movement as Lenin put it this way: "In Russia, however, the yoke of autocracy appears at first glance to obliterate all distinctions between social democratic organizations and workers' associations, since all workers associations and study circles are prohibited, and since the principal manifestation and weapons of workers' economic struggle — the strike is regarded as a criminal offence."^{29}

It can also be deduced that as half of the working population was 'reserve army of labour' many of the workers' must have been taken for safeguarding their jobs as well as the living conditions, leave aside for better ones. But the mixed nature of workers' demands (economic as well as political) clearly established a link between social democracy and workers' movement.
Thus it can be concluded with reasonable certainty that the Russian workers at the end of 19th century were gaining class consciousness for different reasons. Working class organizations like trade unions were not operating but some little mutual aid societies and friendly organizations were there. They (workers) had no political or civil rights. The tight screw of regime on workers' economic and political activities put a premium to the social democratic politics, gaining workers to their side. The low salaries and longer working hours (60% of Moscow enterprises had a more than 13 hours day to more than 15 hours per day) are clear evidence of their miseries. Factory laws were poorly implemented by inspectorate. "The Russian factory inspectorate had to a great extent become the protecting body for the employers." Lack of sufficient holidays as Lenin observed, "even in the leading industries of advanced countries the system of holiday for workers is disgracefully inadequate, not to talk of Russia." "An extremely unhygienic environment, the combination of dwellings and working rooms, which turned the dwellings of home workers into a hot bed of health hazard and occupational diseases."

**Russian Trade Unions from 1905-17**

Before 1905 the strikes which occurred in Russian factories were almost entirely unorganized and represented little more than spontaneous outburst of revolt against intolerable hardship.
In 1905, the trade unions received their great impetus to grow. But even at this moment they were eclipsed, as organs of the recalcitrant workers... In the period of repression after 1906 the trade unions suffered almost complete extinction.\textsuperscript{34} The supremacy of revolutionary politics over trade unionism became apparent in the first Russian revolution of 1905. The czarist autocracy was greatly weakened; the trade unions for the first time enjoying the full freedom of organization and gained considerable membership. Nevertheless, their role in the turbulent strike movement of that year was only secondary. In the St. Petersberg, the capital and the centre of revolution, they were completely overshadowed by a new institution that had spontaneously spring into being the Council of Workers' Delegates, the first soviet in history. The so-called regime of June 3, banned the trade unions and their members were severely punished for participation in strikes and other economic activities. But some trade unions were allowed to exist under close police supervision.\textsuperscript{35} The labour movement was in a state of depression from 1906-12, when a political revival was manifested itself in many strikes. This revival was for a time interrupted by the outbreak of first world war.\textsuperscript{36}

**October Revolution and Trade Unions**

In 1905, trade unions counted 250000 members while it rose to 1.5 millions during the first months of 1917. This can be accounted for the newly won political freedom. But the practical role of trade unions in
revolution did not, however, correspond to their numerical strength. It was even less significant than in 1905.\(^{37}\) As Carr remarked, "when they (trade unions) revived and spread after February 1917 revolution, they were once more overshadowed in the consciousness of the most active and radical workers by the prestige of the Soviets; the trade unions, though they now enrolled largely increased number of workers, played no role whatever in the October revolution.\(^{38}\) They (trade unions) were relegated to the background not only by the Soviets by also by the factory committees.

The Great Trade Unions Debate and Positions of Different Political Formations

The dilemma of trade unions under socialism dimly foreshadowed in the early history of Marxism. The Marxist programme in its entirety constituted what could be described as a 'labour policy'. It drew the logical consequences from the theory that labour is the sole source of value; and it made the industrial proletariat both the artificer and the main beneficiary of the coming revolution. It could not disinterest itself in the demands which were the staple of trade unions platforms under capitalism — higher wages, the eight hours day and so forth. But these demands pre-supposes the capitalist system, and could be only secondary features in revolutionary programme. The main purpose of the workers should be to overthrow the capitalism, not to improve there own
position within it. The items which figured as minimum demands of the workers in the communist manifesto and in later party programmes prepared basing itself on the understanding made by it, were important not so much for their own sake, but as stepping stones to the revolutionary goals.\textsuperscript{39}

This attitude was responsible for the somewhat skeptical mistrust of trade unions displayed by early Marxists. The first international had to pick its way delicately between those of its members (mainly the English group) who thought trade unionism, an all important form of organized labour activity and those (mainly French and Germans) who were inclined to dismiss it as irrelevant, if not prejudicial, to the revolutionary struggle and to the future of socialism. Resolution passed by Geneva Congress in 1866 recognised that trade unions were necessary and vital 'so long as capitalism exists but warned them against the pursuit of 'narrow' aims and urged them to 'strive for the general emancipation of millions of oppressed working people.\textsuperscript{40}

The habit of the organizing workers under trade unions and pursuing the narrow self-interest of a section of workers relegates the primary of revolutionary cause into the background and generates the tendency which Lenin often called 'Trade Unionism' in a pejorative sense. Lenin, in 1902, in 'what is to be done'? attacked the "economist" group of Russian social democrats for 'lapsing from social democracy into trade
unionism'. In a similar way he attacked the German social democratic party calling it 'revisionist'. He argued that 'the political struggle of social democracy is far broader and more complex than the economic struggle of the workers with the employers.' He further elaborated, "for the socialist the economic struggle serves as the basis of organization of workers in a revolutionary party, for the consolidation and development of class struggle against the whole capitalist system. But if the economic struggle is regarded something self-sufficient, then there is nothing socialist in it." 

He further elaborated the point, "to assist in the economic struggle of the proletariat is the job of bourgeoisie politician. The task of the socialist is to make the economic struggle of the workers assist the socialist movement and contribute to the success of revolutionary socialist party."

This dialectical contradiction that modern industry tended to organize the proletariat for class struggle, to shape its collective mind and to discipline its will but it was also true that the unity of working class was being constantly disrupted by centrifugal forces, that its class consciousness was constantly disintegrating, and that its collective will was being dissipated in pursuit of the most diverse and contradictory objectives. This formed the background against which Lenin viewed the respective roles of various labour organizations, and analysed the
relative antagonism between trade unionism and political socialism. In light of this theoretical understanding, the relationship between party and trade unions could not be free from some dualism. The auxiliary role of trade unions was emphasised in a resolution adopted by the fourth congress of Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party (RSDWP) in April, May 1906, in which Bolsheviks and Mensheviks were united. In this Congress Bolsheviks passed the resolution for all party members to join the trade unions but cautiously, they were in favour of "non-party" character of trade unions rather than the "political neutrality" of trade unions. After the regime of June 3, the so-called 'liquidators' among the Mensheviks were inclined to confine themselves to such forms of activities as were tolerated by the government. The London Congress of RSDWP of 1907 also tabled a resolution that Social Democrats should give up their aspiration to lead the trade unions. It invoked sharp protest from Lenin and the resolution was not put to vote.

In February 1908, the Party (RSDWP) suggested the 'Fractions' and 'cells' formation within trade unions which later on became the characteristic for communist method of organization. As the revolutionary fervour proceeded in 1917 this Controversy over the work and role of trade unions vis-a-vis party attitude towards them became a matter of serious concern between different political formations. The Soviets were dominated by Mensheviks who nominally favoured the
trade unions political neutrality. This claim was not very strongly based on the fact that under Menshevik leadership the trade unions supported the Kerensky government and his war policy. The Menshevik advocacy for neutrality was mainly a form of their opposition to the growth of Bolshevik influence in trade unions. At this stage Lenin expounded the idea of "workers' control" over industry. It was to be a sort of dual control of employers and workers over industry, a condominium in which the workers were to train themselves for future exclusive management and progressively to widen the sphere of their responsibility. Trade unions were expected to play their part in establishing 'worker's control'.

In every factory or workshop of any significance, its immediate purpose was to control by the workers 'on the spot'. At this stage Bolshevik appeared as adherents of the most extreme decentralization of economic power, which gave the Mensheviks opportunity to charge them with abandoning Marxism in favour of anarchism.

After assuming power after the October revolution Bolshevik came into direct confrontation with Factory Committees as centralization of political power and economic control was now indispensable if the newly formed soviet government was to survive but all factory committees aspired to have last and final say in all matters affecting their respective factories. A few weeks after the upheaval, the factory committees attempted to form their own national organization which was
to secure their virtual economic dictatorship. Bolsheviks now called upon trade unions to render a special service in the nascent soviet state and to discipline the factory committees. By the end of 1917 a compromise reached between the factory committees and trade unions as factory committees were to form the primary organization upon which trade unions would work but by the same token they were incorporated into the unions. The unions now became the main channels through which the government was assuming effective control over industry. This was roughly the situation when first All Russian Trade Union Congress assembled in Moscow in the second week of January 1918. This gave rise to a great trade union debate between Bolsheviks themselves vis-a-vis other political formations.

**The High Pitch of Trade Unions debate**

The issue before the Congress was in the words of Mikhail Tomsky, the leading Bolshevik trade unionist, whether the trade unions should tie their fortunes to those of Soviet government or whether they should remain independent organizations of workers’ economic struggle. Tomsky said "Even before the October revolution the general condition of industry compelled the trade unions to give up strike action... now when the proletariat has assumed the political and economic leadership of the country and removed the bourgeoisie from the management of industry the struggle of the workers for the improvement of their positions has
naturally had to take on new forms, the forms of an organized action through the trade unions and through various regulating bodies, upon the economic policy of the working class as a whole. The sectional interest of groups of workers have had to be subordinated to the interest of the entire class."45

Against this Mansheviks assuming that given the backwardness and feudal character of Russian society this revolution could be only a bourgeoisie revolution hence the independence of trade unions. Maisky a Manshevik at Congress stated this position in the following, "Comrades, ... we still, still think that our revolution remains, as we, used to say, a bourgeoisie revolution, and that trade unions have therefore to perform their customary job... I suppose that capitalism will unfortunately very soon reassert itself with all its might and power. I think therefore that if capitalism remains intact, the task which trade unions are confronted under capitalism remains unaltered as well."46

Martov gave a very sophisticated version of above positions opposed Lenin giving following explanation:

'Government donot represent the working class only. It can not but be the defacto administration connected with the heterogeneous mass of toiling people, with proletarian and non-proletarian elements alike. It can not, therefore, conduct its economic policy along the lines of
consistently and clearly expressed interests of the working class. The trade unions, as exponents of strictly proletarian interests, should reserve their freedom of action vis-a-vis the government'.

Another dimension was added to above discussion by Lozovsky and Ryazanov as they argued that so long a socialist revolution in rest of the Europe and in the whole world do not occur the possibility of occurring a counter revolution are prominent in the Soviet union. In that case, working class should not loose even its single weapon of struggle against bourgeoisie. Although Lenin did not agree to Martov's position at this stage but he had to agree to it three years later.

The Congress of Trade Unions could not bring itself to declare that the trade unions would at once form part and parcel of new administration - at best it spoke about their statification in vague and conditional terms:

"As they develop trade unions should, in process of present socialist revolution, became organs of socialist power, and as such they should work in coordination with, and subordination to other bodies in order to carry into effect the new principles. The Congress is convinced that in consequence of the foreshadowed process, the trade unions will inevitably become transformed into organs of the socialist state and the participation in trade unions will for all people employed in any industry be their duty vis-a-vis state."
During the civil war trade unions whose membership rose to 3.5 million transformed themselves into the organs of civil war. As the civil war dragged on the trade unions called up and armed 50 percent of their own members. This speeded up the process of total socialization, at first, as matter of military rather than economic policies.

The second All Russian Congress of Trade Unions (January 1919) placed more emphasis of the 'state functions' of trade unions. At this congress Tomsky stated "At this moment when trade unions regulates wages and conditions of labour, when the appointment of commissariat of labour, too, depends on our Congress, no strike can take place in Soviet Russia." Lenin spoke about "inevitability of trade unions statification". This doctrinal position of Lenin was linked with the conception of "withering away" of state. But how it will take place, whether trade unions will absorb the state or state will absorb the trade unions? This question was not resolved nor even addressed.

At this stage a new institution of Russian industrial administration came into being, apart from trade unions, it was Supreme Council of National Economy (VSNKh). It started gradually extending its control, through the management of National Industrial Trust (Glaviki). Trade unions had to be reorganized so as to correspond with vertical administration of industries. VSNKh was set up in cooperation with trade unions but it soon acquired identity of its own. More often both
institutions came into conflict. VSNKh was inclined to regard unions as an auxiliary, whereas, at least, some trade unionists held that the actual direction of the industry was a prerogative of unions. This conflict aggravated when VSNKh secured the cooperation of a number of technical specialists and old time economic administrators, upon whom many trade unions habitually looked with utmost distrust. This development gives a symbolic significance of developing class apparatus within different branches of industry at that time.

The Ninth Congress of the Party (March-April 1920) and Third All Russian Congress of Trade Unions (April 1920) marked a new turn. The two new measures stood in the centre of the debate: (a) the introduction of individual management in industry in place of management by committee and (b) Further militarization of labour and formation of labour armies.

The individual management was seen as reappearance of autocracy in industrial administration. Lenin, Trotsky and Bukharin met the objections of individual management by saying "individual management does not in any degree limit or infringe upon the rights of working class, or the rights of trade unions, because class can exercise its rule in one form and another, as technical expediency may dictate." A resolution submitted by Trotsky and adopted by the Congress said the
organization of industrial management, "should be carried out by agreement between the organs of Supreme Council of National Economy and the corresponding organisation, central council of trade unions."50

At the Third Congress of Trade Unions Trotsky defended the labour armies, which means a "type of labour that is socially regulated on the basis of an economic plan, obligatory for the whole country, compulsory for every worker". Menshevik raised objection to it saying any compulsory labour will not increase productivity.

In this way Trotsky proclaimed the unrestricted rights of the proletarian state to use the labour power of the nation in the way it considered proper and the duty of the trade unions to concern themselves with the worker as a producer not as a consumer.

In the later years Trotsky himself became the strong critic of a labour policy of which he had unwittingly been an inspirer. Trotsky's philosophy of labour came to underlie Stalin's practical labour policy in the thirties, but Stalin and his adherents had never admitted it. Trotsky's theory was not only embodied, but also exaggerated and brutalized ad absurdum.

Throughout 1920 the trade unions were in a ferment. Trade unions openly protested against the interference of party in their affairs. AUCCTU split into two groups, one led by Trotsky (Productionist), and another by Tomsky who insisted on the need for trade unions to resume
in some measures, the defence of the interests of their members. The Central Committee and Politburo of the CPSU twisted sometimes to Trotsky's and at another times to Tomsky's view which led the matter to the 10th Party Congress in March 1921.

As the controversy unfolded various groups merged with one another and in the end only three resolutions were put before the Congress (1) one motion put forwarded by Trotsky and Bukharin urged the complete statification of the trade unions. (2) A motion emanating from the so-called worker's apposition (its leader was the former Commissar of Labour, A.Shlyapnikov) demanded the transfer of entire economic administration to the trade unions. Lenin backed by nine other members of Central Committee tried to strike a balance between the two, that is, a well known platform of ten.

Trostky also advocated the subordination of trade unions to the economic administration, abolition of commissariat of labour and managerial post to the bourgeoisie technicians who have become full members of union. He advocated the wage policy on the basis of (a) Shock competition between workers at production (b) the levelling out of wages, at least in so far that premium for high output should be paid out only after a real minimum wage had been secured to all workers. Earlier he emphatically favour wage differentiation.
The workers apposition postulated the domination of trade unions over the state, abolition of normal economic administration, and its substitution by trade unions. They forcefully said 'in practice the leadership of the party and government bodies have in the last two years systematically narrowed the scope of trade unions' work and reduced almost to nil the influence of the working class associations in the Soviet State.' 'The party and economic authorities, have been swamped by bourgeoisie technicians and other non-proletarian elements, displayed outright hostility towards the trade unions, a hostility which reflected bourgeoisie class hatred of the proletariat.

'The Plateform of Ten' led by Lenin resolved, that 'The present situation urgently require that trade unions should take a more direct part in the organisation of production not only through detailing their members to work in economic administration but through the whole of their machinery as well. But, apart from this, the whole tenor of motion suggested the need for the strictest subordination of trade unions policy to the government. Nevertheless, the idea about the statification of trade unions was described as erroneous on the ground that it will not help to improve Russia's economic position and that trade unions absorbed by the state would not be able to perform their proper functions. Describing the trade unions as the school of communism the Leninist motion enumerated the following task before trade unions.
(i) To study systematically the work of economic administration. (ii) Exercise functions of control and inspection. (iii) Participation in the working out of economic plans and production programmes and fixing economic priorities. (iv) To study the labour process from technical angle. (v) To take part in building up the machinery of economic administration. (vi) To work out ways and means of combating infringements of labour discipline etc.  

Danniel Bell aptly remarked about this struggle that, 'from 1917-21 the issue of industrial administration was the most sensitive indicator of the clash of principles about the shaping of new socialist order... it was the most continuous and provocative focus of actual conflict between communist factions. Similarly, Rosa Luxembourg made the following comment about Bolshevik policy of labour, "The ultra-centralism asked by Lenin is full of sterile spirit of overseer. It is not positive and creative spirit, Lenin's concern is not so much to make the activity of the party more fruitful as to control the party - to narrow the movement rather than to develop it, to bind rather than to unify it."

Not only this the Bolshevik attitude towards opposition was very harsh. The delegation of British labour party which visited Moscow in June 1920 to end the allied intervention in Russia was provided an illigally printed appeal to socialist everywhere asking for the support for nearly 200 socialist and anarchist imprisoned in Moscow.
Trade Unions During NEP

At the tenth party Congress Lenin initiated the new economic policy which introduced a mixed, socialist-capitalist economy. Soon afterwards, private capital, Russian and foreign, was readmitted into industry and commerce, while the state retained its commanding post in large scale industry. This change was bound to create a new situation for the trade unions. The Forth Congress of AUCCTU, was convened in May, 1921. During this Congress Bolshevik members stuck to the position of Party regarding trade unions decided at the Tenth Party Congress, while the left social revolutionaries and Mensheviks pressed for the complete separation of trade unions and the state, on the ground that under NEP the workers would be compelled to defend their interest against private and state capitalism. The resolutions of LSR and Menshevik were voted down by the Bolsheviks who were in majority. In the Eleventh Party Congress in March, 1923 party asserted the Leninist principles of 10th Party Congress but added certain elements to it. It was now reemphasised that the unions ought to support the claims of labour in private and leased enterprises and also in such socialized concerns where workers suffered from bureaucratic deformations and encroachments, with capitalist remnants. "It can be said that during the first phase of NEP, emphasis was fairly widely placed on unions’ role as defenders of workers immediate interests, especially when collective labour agreements were concluded each year."52
In the later part of NEP, the individual management instead of management by committee was now to be firmly established. "The main task of the proletariat after it has conquered power... is to increase the volume of output and... raise the productive forces of the society... (This) demands that managements of factories should concentrate full power in their hands... any direct interference by trade unions with the management of enterprises must in such circumstances be regarded as absolutely harmful and inadmissible."\(^{53}\)

Tomsky who opposed these views was asked to go to Turkistan leaving behind his trade unions work. Trotsky argued that although many trade unionist had became industrial managers, the trade unions as bodies were loosing influence, especially as workers promoted to managers tended to lose touch with their original unions. For this party urged the new worker manager to remain a good trade unionist. This productionist view point found eloquent expression in the resolution of 12th Party Congress (April 1923), the first congress Lenin did not participate. The party was now engaged in building up, on the basis of monopoly of power, the monolithic state. The subordination of trade unions was one of the prerequisites as well as result of this process. "From 1925-26 onwards, when the drive for industrialization was developing, emphasis fell more and more on the educative role of trade unions — and this was interpreted as meaning, above all, that they must give direct backing to increasing production and fulfilling the economic plan."\(^{54}\)
The mass unemployment persisted throughout the NEP due to industrial and agricultural overpopulation. At the height of NEP about 2 million people were without job. The reserve army of unemployed performed in Russian economy the same function as in any other capitalist country. The real wages were considerably below 1914 level. Fear of unemployment prevented workers from demanding higher wages and pressing the trade unions to staking their claims. The mass actions were reduced as NEP progressed. The workers' participation in strikes heightened in 1925 but afterwards it progressively slowed down. It can be seen from the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Workers</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>24000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>34000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>33000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>20000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>less than 20000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of individual disputes progressed as Schmidt, the then Commissar of Labour disclosed at Eighth Congress of Trade Unions, that the number of disputes involved 2.5 million workers.55

In 1927 CC of CPSU ordered a large scale release of redundant labour from state industry and worked out higher norms of output and asked the workers to cooperate with economic administration in the
process of rationalization. Trotsky, Zenoviev and Kamnev vehemently protested against it charging the economic administration and trade unions that the emphasis was not on higher technical efficiency but on exacting more physical exertion from the workers. The past years have been characterized by sharp increase in labour conflicts most of them being settled by compulsory rather than by conciliatory measures.

**The Emerging Character of the Soviet State**

The nature of Soviet state is studied from various angles since its inception. Those who say that October revolution was not conducted by and not reflected the urge of the mass of Russian people, as Lenin and his followers seized the state power in the name of proletariat, would be arguing unwittingly for the most authoritarian and autocratic regime of czar. Was czar a democrat and ruled Russia in the interest of the majority of people living in that country? Answer is definitely no. An American Writer Dunn said "No matter what our conviction, we have to admit that Bolsheviks are hammering out a startling new mechanism in the field of political control. These experiment deserve scientific study, not hostile armies, intelligent criticism, not damning epithets."\(^{56}\)

Walter Lipmann, editor in chief of the New York times, in his illuminating study of all Russian news which appeared in New York times in early period of revolution, has proved the stupidity, inaccuracy and falsehood of the "facts and fabrication, which have passed as news."\(^{57}\)
Mortov as one of the most prominent opponents of Bolsheviks wrote at that time "understand, please, what we have before us after all a victorious uprising of the proletariat — almost the entire proletariat support Lenin and expects its social liberation from the uprising..."\textsuperscript{58}

Again, Tonyncliff says "The Russian revolution brought to power a much mature, better organized and politically conscious working class".\textsuperscript{59} Commenting upon the Russian revolution a renowned historian of 20th century E.H. Carr said "Russian revolution will continue for long to polarize opinion, being hailed by some as a land mark in the emancipation of mankind from past oppression, and denounced by others as a crime and a disaster."\textsuperscript{60}

A long time associate of Russian Planning and economy Charles Bettelheim called it the "establishment of proletarian power,"\textsuperscript{61} in his widely known volume of class struggle in U.S.S.R. So not even a single serious scholar till date has contested the character of Russian revolution other than the proletarian or proletarian peasantry coming to power representing the majority of the Russian populace.

But from 1917 onwards a whole lot of changes occurred in Russian social formations, in its polity, economy and consequently in the balance of class forces resulting into the changes in class relations among different social formations. This is a matter of particular interest to understand the future development in U.S.S.R.
Although, the differing viewpoints were very much prevalent within Bolshevik leadership about the character of Soviet state, most of them thought an international proletarian revolution is the only guarantee to make the revolution deeper inroads inside the Soviet society. When it was realised that revolution did not trigger in other parts of Europe Lenin retreated from his earlier position of 'war communism' and formed an alliance with peasantry with new strategic insights. Lenin time and again repeated that only a long term strategic-alliance with peasantry is the only guarantee to save the revolution in Russia. In the mid 1920s when other European social democratic parties looked as following revisionist policies, Stalin immediately propounded the theory of "Socialism in one Country". This proposition was immediately challenged within party circles with stringent opposition by the Bolshevik like Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev and Kemnev. Trotsky first saw the Soviet worker's state with 'bureaucratic deformation' and later on as a "degenerated workers state".

Trotskites even in the last quarter of the present century saw the Soviet state as 'workers' state' with degenerated bureaucracy. A well known Trotskite theorist, Ernest Mandel said Slatinist theory of Socialism in one country 'expressed primarily the petty-bourgeois conservatism of bureaucracy, as well as the mounting appetite of party apparatus for privileges of power." Describing the laws of motion of Soviet economy Mandel said, "the concept of transitional society is
utilized to analyse the laws of development of Soviet economy. A transitional society is not defined by the simple combination or articulation of old and new relations, but instead is understood to be a formation with relations of production specific to this transitional period. The decisive feature of these new relations is the conscious distribution of the means of production and labour power through the plan. The distribution of consumer goods, however, still maintains the commodity form. Consequently economic order is governed by the conflict of two antagonistic logic — the logic of the plan and logic of the market.63 Thus for those who see the Soviet union as 'denerated workers state' in last analysis form the opinion that workers and a section of party apparatus should raise the banner of revolt against the corrupt degenerated element and establish a truly socialist society. This position is supported by Isaac Deutscher, Maurice Brinton, Simon Clarke and Donald, Filtzer.

Another view about the erstwhile Soviet union is that it was a 'State Capitalist' society. The most profound champion of this view is Charles Bettelheim. He says "The development of productive forces can never, by itself, cause the capitalist form of division of labour, or the other bourgeoisie social relations, to disappear. Only a class struggle developing under the dictatorship of the proletariat and correctly led... can bring about the disappearance of capitalist economic relations, by attacking the capitalist division of labour, and at the same time, the ideological and political relations that make it possible for relations of
exploitation and oppression to be reproduced." The problematic of the 'productive forces' unilaterally subordinates transformation of social relations to the development of productive forces. Again, "under the cover of state ownership, relations of exploitation exist today in U.S.S.R. which are similar to those existing in other capitalist countries. It is only the form of these relations that is distinctive there. This distinctive form is state capitalism, and we have known since Engle's time that state capitalism is merely capitalism 'pushed to an extreme.'

Refuting the Stalinist conception of socialisation of means of production in defence of Soviet Socialism Bettleheim said 'mechanistic identification of legal forms of ownership with class relations' is false analogy particularly where the transition to socialism is concerned. Further he goes onto say "The reinforcement of State was identified with the reinforcement of socialism. The denial of social contradiction was combined with praise for the dictatorial apparatus. The 'workerism' means that certain qualities of workers (like discipline and self sacrifice) were used as a means of repression and that the existence of a 'worker base' was seen as a guarantee of the party's revolutionary character... on economic front socialism was increasingly identified with a planned economy subject to objective laws — an organized form of capitalism."

Chris Harman, also characterises the wrestwhile Soviet state as capitalist one. But his standpoint is different. He says that Stalinist
ruling stratum of 1929 faced with two choices (1) follow the logic of capitalism and accumulate in order to further accumulate or (2) face subjection to international capitalism. This was the demand of the situation for the Stalinist ruling stratum to maintain in power or give way to the left opposition policies. Ruling stratum knew how to defend itself and it had to turn upon every other class of Russian society, to subordinate them to the needs of accumulation. "That is why the year of the end of independent trade unions, was the year of the abolition of the right to strike and was also the year when the first time wages were forced downward by the bureaucracy." 68

Another shade of opinion regarding the nature of Soviet state expressed by Paul Sweezy. He said, "Soviet state apparatus presently (1976) be viewed as constituting a new ruling class". He proposed that Marxism accept "the hypothesis that proletarian revolution can give rise to a new form of society, neither capitalist nor socialist." 69

The third characterization of wrestwhile Soviet union is of "actually existing socialism" in Soviet and East-European countries. The pioneer of this school of thought is Rudolf Bahro. 70 He said, as all those involved are well aware, the rule of man by man has lost its top layer. The alienation and subalternity of the working mass persist in a new phase "The New system only corresponds in a small way to the principles it proclaims, betraying its own goals and not achieving any thing new. The
entire potential of the system had been demolished as a result we can see... the same ideological bankruptcy of power structure." He goes on to say, "abolition of private property in the means of production has in no way meant that immediate transformation into the property of people, rather whole society stands propertyless against state machine. The "essence of the 'actually existing socialism' is conceived as one of the socialization in the alienated form of stratification, this being based on traditional division of labour which has not yet been driven to the critical point at which it topples over." Another scholar of this school Elmar Altvater agree with Bahro and identifies the following characteristics of 'actually existing socialism'. (1) Primacy of politics rather than primacy of economics refuting Bettleheim thesis. (2) The 'unified mechanism' of domination (3) Continued existence of old division of labour as basis of domination (4) Political dispostism as a form of domination (5) Bureaucracy as institutional form of despotism (6) Scarcity as the basis of reproduction of bureaucracy. (7) Social immobilism.

Last but not least are those who continue to call Soviet union a proletarian state, which to a greater extent proved to be a emotional signpost for the revolutionary masses in the third world countries and orthodox Marxist scholars everywhere in the world. Some of them, supported Soviet union albeit apologetically like E.H. Carr saying it was better to have revolution in such backward and autocratically governed society rather to have no revolution at all. The biggest of the apology for
massive military build up and the continued repressive practices and single party rule is the encirclement of Soviet union by imperialist powers and the fear of enemy infiltration in workers' state. The other scholars who follow the suit are like Albert Szymanski, Michael Goldfield and Melvin Rothenberg. In this short characterising attempt of wrestwhile Soviet union we may see the tendencies polar apposite to each other in looking at the Soviet state. On the one hand we may see, the Soviet intellectuals except a few like Roy Medvidev, radicals in the third world and a few scholars in the western world supporting the Soviet cause albeit-apologetically, and on the other hand scholars like Bettleheim" who says that calling the october revolution of 1917 as socialist one would be a "grand illusion of 20th century". For further understanding let us have a look at the trade unions and labour policies of Soviet union in the next 60 years from 1928-1985.

**Trade Unions and Labour Policy from Planning period to the exit of Stalin**

The discussion on trade unions and labour policy in the planning period of economy during the Stalin era is appearing more and more elusive and contradictory for lack of correct information and little access to related documents. As Isaac Deutscher said, "Soviet literature on this subject provided a wealth of information throughout the first decade or so after the revolution, when trade unionism was often subject of
dramatic controversies inside the Bolshevik party, even than the facts and data published were not always reliable. Since the late 1920's, however, the sources of information have been progressively drying up. The monolithic nature of the regime has precluded any frank and honest discussion of this as of most other issues." The first issue was the industrialisation. As the ruling stratum went ahead for the planning of rapid industrialization, the trade unions tried to resist such a move. "It is difficult to say exactly what was the attitude of the mass of trade unionists, since they never had the chance to speak their own mind frankly." 

At the dawn of massive industrialisation the Eighth Congress of Trade Unions was held in December 1928. This was the last time Tomsky appeared at Congress as recognized leader of trade unions. He revealed that "industry has been troubled by many unofficial strikes which had been due to the trade unions paying inadequate attention to the needs of the masses, to their being detached from masses and showing contempt for the small matters of worker's life." He demanded real election in the union. Rank and file, he went on to say, were afraid of speaking their minds for the fear of being charged as LSR's, and Mensheviks. The Eighth Congress of trade unions in which Tomsky was sacked and Kagnovich took over and four months after in April, 1929 the Sixteenth Conference of party took place in which all opposition elements were silenced and regime took a monolithic shape.
Under the planning period, the problem with which the planner had to contend was the extreme shortage of industrial labour. The unemployment ended, "on March 13, 1930, Michail Sukunov, a Moscow plumber, finally got a job. When he left the labour exchange, the door closed and Soviet commentators pronounced that this event symbolised the end of mass unemployment in U.S.S.R." In the scarcity of labour the rural surplus population was transferred by concluding annual labour agreements between collective farms and industrial management. This involved 24 million people between 1926-39.

The Soviet trade unions firmly discouraged strikes, and behind the unions stood the political police. So trade unions leadership colluded with party leadership against the rank and file of the workers. Fluidity of labour was the substitute for strike. Millions of workers downed tools and left their place of work to hire themselves somewhere else. On September 3, 1930 Central Committee of CPSU proposed that workers employed into industry should accept the obligation to remain in the factory for a specified period. Special incentives were given to those who honoured the obligation, and trade unions boycotted the ‘deserters at production’. ‘Labour exchanges were closed to stop the fluidity of labour.’ Industrial managers, chronically short of labour and desperately anxious to reach their target of output, were certain to disregard the sanctions decreed and to give a job to any ‘deserter’ from another factory who applied for one. Donald Filtzer put this phenomenon
albeit differently. He said, planned economy led to the planlessness and remarked that "Labour shortages set in motion a spiralling deterioration of the situation. As shortages developed managers began to hoard labour and recruit more workers than the plan allowed... labour turnover skyrocketed and with it the insecurity of the factory managers over their inability to hold onto workers." So a pattern of complicity between workers and enterprise managers was established in this period. "The low pay economy was instrumental in encouraging managers to maximise the recruitment of labour." The system of continuous production along with 'socialist competition' and 'shock work' resulted in wear and tear. The inadequate and often non-existent repair and maintenance caused more problems. The pressure on wages, longer working days, speed ups, increased hostility and discontent, leading in most extreme form of strike, although perhaps more usually involving go-slows. This resulted in the planlessness of the plan.

As the plan period progressed this fluidity continued as also the rigorousness of the measures taken against it, reaching its culmination during the war period. Factory Managers responsible for the fulfilment of the plan targets never allowed these punitived measures to be implemented in full scale. A labour decree on December 28, 1938 was declared with more stringent measures against labour and absenteeism. These were the demotions, terminations, making insurance benefits with longevity of service, pensions, forced labour camps which become
substitute to the stage of unemployment in capitalist countries. "In 1933 Soviet government abolished the People's Commissariat of Labour forcing the trade unions to establish a people's inspectorate of safety, and under the pressure of dictatorial demands of regime the AUCCTU disbanded its own labour inspectorate." 83 "Collective agreements by 1935 had quitely passed out of existence." 84

The principle of "Socialist emulation" which was enunciated at 16th Party Congress of 1929 relied on symbolic and heroic traditions of working class as no individual material incentives were given to any worker. But in 1931 the wage equalization was firmly denounced and new wage scales with wider differentials were introduced. The role of the RKK was again attacked. "Most striking feature of this period was the gradual narrowing the scope for dispute. Policy disputes under the aegis of centrally fixed targets and indices, with the acceptance of the conditions of code as the norm, and in the absence of trade unions' rights, the disputes almost entirely disappeared at the enterprise level." 85 For the occurrence of a dispute "the emphasis shifted to individual failings, unrelated to any weakness in the system caused by economic and social factors; instead they were the exceptional cases which arose despite the system." 86 During the Five Year Plans, the output of consumer goods industry was rigidly fixed in advance, the trade unions were left with no scope for bargaining over the national wages bill, even if they had wanted to bargain, because it would lead to inflation.
Along with the wage differentiation, the piece-rate system was also introduced. Output above the norm was paid according to the new scale of rates increasing with the output. Where the piece-rates were technically impossible to measure, time bonuses served to stimulate intensity of labour. 'Brigade piece-rates' were special form of payment introduced in the industry where the output of the individual worker could not be measured in piece rates but output of the whole team lent itself to such a measurement.

Then comes the Stakhanovism. The socialist emulation became inhibited competition between individual workers. Trade unions favoured 'shock work' rather than this principle. In 1935 Stakhanovism took its place. The difference between the two movements was one of degree. "The emulation in output associated with Stakhanov method was more intense and brutal than the older system of shock work." This mode of payment under Stakhanov movement was against the understanding of Marx who stated that, "piece wages is the form of wages most in harmony with the capitalist mode of production". Commenting upon the wage inequality in U.S.S.R., Deutscher observed, "the inequality between classes is less than elsewhere. But the inequality inside the working class between various groups of workers, has certainly been much greater than in any other country." Stakhanovism made Russia a classical country of labour aristocracy. Ordinary worker, middle
and lower level trade unions functionaries, ill health and old age workers were the worst sufferers of this movement. They showed resistance to this movement but in disorganised form and by various means.

This concealed opposition prepared the ground for the great purges of 1937-38, of which trade unions were the chief victims. The victimisation of workers, peasants, trade unions functionaries and middle level management of industry took alarming proportions during the Stalin era, with the liquidation of so-called 'opposition group' left or right. Party monolithism tolerated no criticism and dissent from the official line. The great pressure for heavy industrialization made the matter worse. "The forced labour system was developed on mass scale in the early 1930's and expanded remorselessly until Stalin's death in 1953." 89 Robert Conquest put the estimate of deaths between 1930-38 at about seventeen million people. 90 Stephen Cohen puts this figure at 9 millions by 1939. 91 Jerry Hough further brings down this figure to 75000-200000 range. 92 Stephen Cohen whose high figures have just been cited, was a consistent opponent of American policy in the cold war, and insisted that Stalin and Stalinism rather than communism and October revolution were responsible for the repression of 1930's. Roy Medvedev the dissident Soviet historian who regarded himself as Leninist, also made extremely high estimates of the number of persons repressed under Stalin. 93 According to Alec Nove, "evidence seems consistent with the view that tens to eleven million people perished in the thirties with the
peasant numerically the main victim." On the number of prisoners in camps, colonies and prisons in 1939-40 Victor Zemskov described by Conquest as 'a thoroughly reliable researcher' opines that the statistical data adduced by R.Conquest and Stephen Cohen are exaggerated by almost 500 percent. Thus there are widely different claims and counter claims regarding the 'harvest of terror' under Stalinism. But none of the scholars has refuted that there was no terror at all. This terror led to the atomisation of Soviet work force which facilitated the entrenchment of Stalinist bureaucracy in power. This also resulted in lack of internal economic coordination which made effective planning impossible.

By the 1942 trade union organizations had virtually ceased to function in most part of the country. It was only in 1944 that under the charge of Kuznetsov trade unions began to be reorganised and in 1947 AUCCTU reintroduced enterprise collective agreement. It was precisely at this crucial moment that the Tenth Trade Union Congress was convened in 1949 after a long gap of 17 years. In this Congress the major focus remained on production and productivity. Some of the delegates managed to air complaints concerning trade union officials' neglect of members' need. A new class had emerged within trade unions. The credential committee of the tenth Trade Unions Congress reported that only 23.5% of all delegates were workers, 43% full time trade unions officials, 39% members of central committee of trade unions, 9.4% from
technical intelligencia (as compared to 2% in earlier Congress) 85% of
delegates had some governmental awards, 71% delegates had secondary
or higher education.95

The next step in the unions' efforts at protecting the workers
from management abuse came in July 1951, when judicial directives
annulled the 1938 requirements forcing factory trade unions and
management officials to consider attendance and production records in
the distribution of welfare benefits. However, an immediate and dramatic
increase in labour discipline violations temporarily ended further
liberalization measures.96 The eleventh Trade Union Congress held in
June 1954 underscored the desire of trade union leaders for something
more than proforma adherence to union rules and regulations.97 By 1955
attempts to force compliance with central union decrees had expanded to
include greater adherence to rules governing working and living
conditions of all union members.

Following the 20th Party Congress at which Party and Trade
Union spokesman demanded the rejuvenation of factory union offices.
The U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet decree of 25 April, 1956 on decriminalizing
industrial absenteeism and truancy soon ended the labour's dependence
on management. A new group of commentators produced a more
comprehensive theory of labour whose purpose and level of sophistication
was very different from that of the twenties. Solidifying the
administration into management and government elite, and the absence from any organised pressure for reform, gave a new purpose to the theory. Now its aim was to justify, to find a rationale for existing relationship. The new theory stated that, "in socialist enterprises and institutions, where labour relations are those of comradely cooperation between people, free from exploitation, there are not and can not be opposing interests between the administration and workers. Both sides of the labour relationship are equally interested in fulfilment of production plans, in the strengthening of labour discipline, and in further systematic improvement in material conditions and cultural services of the workers." This new theory, by laying the blame for labour disputes on the remnants of capitalism, wiped out any need to look at the practices of the last 20 years; it exonerated the present system from blame and thus made every study of the system unnecessary. In this regard, E.H. Carr aptly observed, "They (Soviet trade unions) survived at the logical cost of their integration into state machine. The organs of the workers and the organs of the workers state could not go their separate way." 

The Khrushchev period can best be understood as an attempt to operate the Stalinist model without reliance on harsher administrative measures. Emphasis was placed on incentives, at the same time the scope of local union activity was increased and attempts were made to encourage workers participation in the organisation of production. Khrushchev warned economic managers of the evils of 'departmentalism'
and proposed that regional economic councils replace central economic ministries. The U.S.S.R. Supreme Soviet meeting of 7-10 May 1956 ratified most of Khrushchev’s plans, abolishing nearly all of the central economic ministries creating about 105 regional economic councils in their place. Khruschev stated that Unions faced a similar fate. Given the power struggle within CPSU, Chairman of AUCCTU Grishin, at its meeting of 11-15 June 1957 enunciated an agenda for trade union reform that included a greater union role in economic management, wider rights for regional and local union agencies, as well as further development of production conferences, workers’ meetings, and technical societies. Grishin spoke for the retention of Trade Union Central Committees, but only some Central Committees were to be retained with the merger of forty seven central union committees into twenty three by late 1957. In the Twelfth Trade Union Congress held in March 1959, all the principles which the Party Plenum of December 1957 had adopted were reaffirmed. Party leaders singled out three primary agents through which workers participation could take place. These organs were the factory trade union committees, production conferences, and the enterprise collective agreement. After the fall of Khrushchev in 1964, Party leaders no longer portrayed the unions as building block of some future communist society, as had been the case under the Khrushchev. Yet formal party support for union efforts to improve living and working conditions of workers continued throughout the 1960’s and the 1970’s. The management lost
out during the Khrushchev period. Under the wage reform, wages rose more than salaries, in some cases the latter fell. Also a new premia system, introduced in 1959, tied managerial premia to fulfilment of the cost indices and economies in the wage fund which further affected managerial earnings. Management position in the enterprises was affected by increase in workers' and unions' rights. ¹⁰⁴

Although some of the theorists supported Khurschev in his de-Stalinisation programme and economic revival, they reacted sharply to his half-hearted de-Stalinisation and some of his 'rightist' economic policies. Isaac Deutscher writes, "de-Stalinisation was half-hearted, inconsistent, incoherent and therefore unsatisfactory... Khrushchevism did not reject the big Stalinist lie in favour of truth, it sought to replace it by a set of half-truths only. This led inevitably to much cynicism, hate and dangerous disillusionment, without offering the youth, young intelligentia and workers any positive idea or any positive political method capable of filling the vacuum left by the destruction of idols and taboos."¹⁰⁵ He further adds, "there has been widespread discontent with the sluggishness of farming, with bureaucratic rigidity and chaos in some sectors of industry, and above all with the lack of resembling anything like workers' control or workers' participation in the management. All this resulted in the persistent gulf between the ruler and the ruled, for the workers and lower grades of intelligentia feel that they are deprived of their rights and that all that matters in social and political life is
settled in an arbitrary way by the people at the top."\textsuperscript{106}

Although Deutscher did not agree with the proposition that there was a tendency to restore capitalism in Soviet union, but he maintained that a, "new grounswell of a peculiar kind of reaction and conservatism is unmistakable."\textsuperscript{107} Another economist commenting upon the centrally planned economies made a reference about U.S.S.R. of Khrushchev and Brezner period that "Soviet reforms began in 1957 when Khrushchev abolished most of the industrial ministries and established regional councils to which the individual enterprises were subordinate. It was believed that the councils would be more responsive to local needs, but the organisation replicated the centralised system on regional basis. Khruschev successor eliminated these regional councils in 1965, on the ground that they created unnecessary duplication, and introduced a new reform based on the idea of economist Yevsei Liberman. This re-instatement the industrial ministries but gave more decision making power to the managers of the enterprises and increased the role of profit as a criterion for allocating resources and bonuses as an incentive for production."\textsuperscript{108}

Evidence suggests that during Khruschev and Brezhnev period unions got a considerable influence in the various party fora as is evident from the increasing number of central committee members and politburo from AUCCTU. Grishin’s successor, Aleksander N. Shelepin was the first AUCCTU Chairman to hold full membership of Politburo in thirty eight
years. On the one hand the unions at highest level were gaining influence in the party but at the local level they seemed not working in favour of rank and file. In April, 1966 Chairman Grishin noted, "that union officials do not always fulfil their responsibility and pressed union organisations to act more effectively on behalf of workers."\(^{109}\)

The half-hearted de-Stalinisation of Khruscheve era and consequently re-assertion of crypto Stalinist elements in Brezhnev period, economic assertion of party apparatus and bureaucratic assertion of middle level union organisation led to the disillusionment of rank and file during 1960's and 1970's. All this led to the sporadic workers discontent and sometimes open revolt against authorities in 1960's and in early seventies. "A wave of particularly acute workers struggle began in a number of towns across the country, which at times assumed the character of open revolt."\(^{110}\)

In Temir-Tau (Kazakhstan) in the autumn of 1959 a serious workers' struggle took place. Workers were dissatisfied with their extraordinarily bad living conditions and low wages. In Aleksandrov (Valadimir oblast) open confrontation of workers with militia in 1969, people's revolt against 'Fascist drunkards' militia in Dneprodzerzhinsk (Ukraine SSR) in the summer 1962, spontaneous protest enmass against the election of a worthless individual to the position of power in 1962 in Odessa, workers uprising in Novocherkarsk against the nationwide
doubling of price of meat and dairy products in 1962, coupled with a 30% reduction in the rates of pay at the electric locomotive manufacture plant in the said town. It was reported that for three days the town was virtually under workers' control. Another event which is extremely important is the naval sailers mutiny on a cruiser, the flagship of the pacific fleet. So in the Soviet union unlike old Russia, there were no broad strata who were likely to support the regime in times of crisis. In October 1968 at AUCCTU Meeting, secretary N.N. Romanov reported that approximately 60% of all dismissals by the management throughout the entire Soviet union took place without trade unions' approval, and the figure for Uzbekistan (77.4 percent) Georgia (73.4 percent) and the Altai Region (69%) were even higher.

In 1970's attempts were made for the formation of independent trade unions. In 1978 Vladimir Klebnov, the prime mover in the formation of an independent workers organization — the free trade union associations — invited a major crack down on dissidents with an increase in the number of arrest and trials. Klabnov who was a miner asserted that 12-15 workers died every year at Bazhanova where he had worked because, output targets were unrealistically high; men often had to dig coal twelve hours a day instead of the normal six. Injuries under conditions made 600-700 men a year idle. Miners had to work in temperature. In the mines of Donestk oblast only 7 out of the 15 cooling plants were functioning and many mobile
air-conditioners were out of action. A year later in 1979 a similar group — The Free Interprofessional Association of Workers (SMOT) met similar fate. So what Khrushev and Brezhnev sought in their own way, was to end the excesses of Stalinism without dismantling the system that gave rise to them. To do so they were willing to pay off blue collar workers with more money as long as greater income did not mean greater power."

In the last part of Brezhnev era (1979-82) the industrial production was only increasing at the rate of 2-3 percent per year. There were enormous problems with energy, coal, transportation. Agriculture production began to decline. In 1979 the gross agriculture products were less than in 1978, and decreased in 1980 as well. 1981 was an especially poor year; figures on grain were not even published. In 1982 harvest was bad. The amount of food purchases from abroad increased and food and supply at home took a sharp turn for worse, the sale of meat and dairy products were going for special curtailments. In the majority of industrial centres some rationing had to be introduced. The free market, which sold food at higher prices, assumed larger proportions. Andropov who took over after Brezhnev initiated a campaign to improve labour discipline, he rooted out some inefficient administrator and opposed corrupting influences, sacked many incompetent people holding government posts. He outlined reforms of educational system, later pushed through in 1984
by Chernenko. But at the same time he continued the policy of crushing the dissidents ruthlessly as it was prevalent in the last phase of Brezhnev era.

Chernenko put forward a more open democratic party organisation and increased public participation in the Soviets. Greater attention was to be paid to public opinion, with larger role given to trade unions in management. He wanted more decentralisation and opposed distortion associated with personality cult. With the demise of Chernenko a new leader of post revolution era stepped in office with innumerable ideas of reforming Soviet society, polity and economy with greater vigor and energy, which led to the dramatic events to follow that unfolded the drama later on.

Soviet Trade Unions (1917-1985): An Overview

Soviet trade unions were vertically organised on the basis of trade and industry on Leninist principle of democratic centralism, along with administrative structure of Soviet government. There remained little room for horizontal contacts between different trade unions as the lower bodies were strictly subordinated to higher bodies. At plant or factory level the factory committees which included all employees of factory (blue color and white color) were chief spokesmen of worker's interests, and elected directly by the assembly of workers through open ballot. If factory employed large number of employees the 'shop'
committees and 'floor' committees could be formed but strictly under factory committee. Although theoretically, the membership of trade unions was voluntary and non-capitalist worker's organisations could be formed, but practically it was not possible because of intolerance of unofficial organizations by the regime, and benefits (like insurance, holiday homes, bonuses, training, schooling and kindergarten for workers children, factory farms, pensions) distributed and associated with the membership of officially recognised trade unions. The Directors of industries were appointed by higher administrative bodies in consultation with troika i.e. factory committee, local party committee and management of industry. The factory committees were always vulnerable to local party committee as it could influence the opinion of factory committee via its members operating in party 'fractions' and 'cells' among workers.

Collective agreements were the hallmark of workers bargain with management for production quotas, structure of wages, gradation of job (with which pay tied, as is noticed that persons with same skill were graded differently in different trades which gave rise to the wage differentiation within a grade itself) piece rates, bonuses and incentives. Though, the collective agreements were suspended at the height of Stalinist era.
For the resolution of Labour disputes between a factory committee and management, and between individual worker and the latter, RKK (Rates and Conflict Commission) were elected with equal number of its members by factory committee and management, till 1957 when Khrushev replaced them with Labour Dispute Commission. If any involved party in a conflict did not agree to the decision of RKK, it could go to the court. The planned nature of economy decided production target and wage proportions centrally, which left little room for maneuverability either of production targets by management or for wages and conditions of work by the local unions. As the targets were unrealistically high, the managers (who were solely responsible for the fulfilment of production quota) tried to hoard reserve labour (which was possible in low wage economy) to fulfil targets. There grew a complicity between labour unions, workers and management because workers could avoid harsh discipline, labour unions could avoid criticism of higher bodies and of course, management fulfil its production targets.

The productionist approach of Soviet plan overloaded the plants which gave rise to three shift system; leaving little time for repair of wear and tear for which no body was responsible which gave rise to disputes (about 90% disputes were of such nature). Disputes also arose due to the pressure of fulfilment of plan targets. It is these disputes which were the bone of contention between individual workers and management. The disputes between labour unions and management were over jurisdiction.
The unions played passive role or distanced themselves in majority of cases of disputes between worker and management and developed a tendency for settlement of the cases by courts. In doing so unions distanced themselves from the rank and file, because they were also the attestee of production plans and labour laws. The short supply of raw material and spare parts gave opportunity to make shoddy deals between different plant managers and agencies of market which gave rise to corruption in an alarming manner. This complicity between local labour unions, workers and management never allowed any central labour law to be implemented in its full scope, if these laws were not in their common interest. The unrealistically high production targets resulted in conflicts between labour and management. The management resorted to dismissal of workers illegally, allowing them less holidays, confiscating bonuses and deducting pay over indiscipline etc. The whole concept of discipline was production oriented.

The emphasis of building heavy industry in scarce material resources led to the neglect of small consumer goods industry which created almost always the shortage of consumer goods in the market, giving rise to the black market operations. From the 1930's to the end of cold war, pressure of military build up against NATO allies, and economistic conception of development (catch with west, surpassing west, development of productive forces etc.) led to a thrust towards building armaments and heavy industry and their (heavy and arms industry)
establishment found much significance in the overall structure of Soviet establishment and consequently influenced the whole pattern of Soviet development till the end of Soviet state itself. The pressure on production and productivity in short supply economy led to the bourgeoisie methods of management i.e. one man management, piece rates, incentives, bonus and greater wage differentiations. These measures even if they did not strengthen the class inequalities led, at least, to maintain them, resulting in giving a kind of authority structure in the society. This gave a sense of alienation to the working class, and a dormant kind of legitimacy to the regime. The fear of illegitimacy from the very outset of Soviet state led it to acquire a monolithic character and a sense of disbelief in its very constituents. It led them to have their separate ways under the subalteranian nature of consciousness of workers which established a relationship of master and servant.

From the foregoing discussion it is clear that the establishment of a socialist society called for a proper understanding of the importance of continued class struggle in the phase of transition from Capitalism to Socialism. The experience of building socialism of a more formal type in the erstwhile Soviet union has only highlighted the problems that beset the path of transition.
NOTES


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