PREFACE

The Soviet state always drew its institutional meaning, ideological legitimacy and political ethos from the Marxist-Leninist theory of state. At every stage of its evolution as perceived by the Communist Party's Programmes, the Soviet leadership invoked Marxism-Leninism to define its nature and character. The 1903 Programme of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party and the 1919 Programme of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) had a revolutionary vision of the radical transformation of the Tsarist state and of building socialism in the USSR respectively. Later on, until 1986, the exercise of defining the Soviet state - mistakenly called novel innovations - in the Programmes and documents of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, became ritualistic. Too much of realism and over-doses of restructuring the Soviet political system during the years 1988-1990, finally caused its collapse in December 1991.

This study seeks to determine the extent to which the Programmes of the CPSU had correctly or mistakenly perceived the historical evolution of the
Soviet state. Thus, the study has analysed the process of the evolution of the Soviet state in the context of the Programmes of the Party. This process has been examined at three layers of questions at the same horizon - the theory, history and the interaction of various processes - socio, economic and political.

At the take-off stage itself, the study has constructed a theoretical and conceptual framework. The scattered components of the Marxist theory of state and Lenin's contribution to it have been put together to have a proper perspective on the Marxist-Leninist theory of state.

The second chapter provides the historical background to the 1919 Programme of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and then proceeds to analyse the evolutionary process of the post-revolutionary Soviet state in the context of the Party Programme. Various processes and events that influenced the evolution of the state and the debates within the Communist Party have been analysed in details.

The novel innovations of the 1961 Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union regarding the nature of the Soviet state have been studied in
details in the third chapter. The introduction of new concepts and theoretical generalizations during the Brezhnev period have also been analysed to evaluate the nature and character of the Soviet state.

Finally, in the fourth chapter the fast changing policies and reforms for the restructuring of the Soviet political system have been analysed in the light of the New Edition of the CPSU Programme, the Draft Platform and the Draft Programme of the Party.

A brief conclusion at the end sums up and elucidates the findings of this study.

The theoretico-empirico and historico-analytical methodology has been applied in this study. The Party Programmes have been examined at the theoretical level in the light of necessary empirical evidence as provided by the societal processes.

The investigations of this study are based on primary sources like newspapers, journals and documents including resolutions of the CPSU. Besides, the secondary sources have also been used.

My stay during 1989-90 at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies (University of London), as a
Visiting Fellow not only helped me in the collection of materials but also provided an opportunity to lecture to the post-graduate students of the School. The discussions during and after the seminar on "Perestroika and the Soviet Political System", which I gave at SSEES broadened my horizons and led to further clarity.

In 1990, the visit to the USSR Academy of Sciences, Moscow, on a University Grants Commission Fellowship provided an opportunity to collect research material but this visit was also of immense help for a better understanding of the Soviet system. My visits to the then German Democratic Republic, Romania and Bulgaria in 1990, provided an opportunity to have a perspective on the tumultuous changes that were sweeping the entire Eastern Europe.

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