CHAPTER III

"COMMUNIST CONSTRUCTION" TO "DEVELOPED SOCIALISM" - 
THE 1961 PROGRAMME AND THE NEW THEORY OF THE 
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As already noted in the previous chapter, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union remained without a programme for almost more than two decades. Though a decision was taken at the 18th Party Congress to revise the 1919 programme but the outbreak of the Second World War prevented the preparation of the new programme. In 1952 at the 19th Party Congress a new committee again headed by Stalin was appointed to prepare a new programme and to present it to the next Party Congress, but once again it failed to do so. The 20th Party Congress in 1956 was told by Khrushchev that no new draft has been prepared. The Congress resolved to prepare a new programme. The Congress adopted the following resolution concerning a new programme:

The 20th Party Congress instructs the Central Committee to draft a programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union based on the fundamental tenets of the Marxist-Leninist theory, which develops creatively on the
basis of the historical experience of our party..., and taking into consideration the long-range plan being drawn up for building Communism and developing the economy and culture of the Soviet Union. The Congress instructs the Central Committee to publish a draft Party Programme in time for extensive discussion of it before the 21st Party Congress. 1

The next Party Congress in 1959 was an 'extraordinary' one and again at this Congress a promise was made that a new draft of the Party programme would be "worked out for the next regular Party Congress". 2 In June 1961, Khrushchev presented the draft at a Central Committee Plenum on 19 June, and it was unanimously approved. 3 Finally, the Programme was adopted unanimously on 31 October 1961. The Congress passed the following resolution:

"The Twenty Second Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union resolves that the Programme of the CPSU be adopted." 4

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2 Pravda, 4 January 1959.

3 Ibid., 20 June 1961.

The Main Thrust of the 1961 Programme

The 1961 Programme unlike its predecessors was a massive document running into more than a hundred pages. It dealt with all major areas like foreign affairs, economic policies, political system and the nationalities policy of the USSR. One of the most significant features of this programme was —

the newly found confidence of the Soviet leadership in the resilience and potentiality of the Soviet system; so much so that even promised that Communism would be established in the USSR within twenty years as a result of programmatic goals of adopting innumerable social, political and ideological measures and reforms....

Though our focus in this chapter would be on the processes and conditions which affected the evolution of the Soviet state, however, a brief discussion of the major elements of the Programme would be worthwhile here.

(a) **Foreign Policy**

The emphasis in the Programme on the Concept of Peaceful Co-existence and its elaboration was the novel

feature of the Programme. This major shift in the Soviet foreign policy took place in the 20th Congress of the CPSU which considered that another world war was no longer inevitable due to qualitative changes in the world arena. This formulation of the 20th Congress provided a theoretical background for the concept of Peaceful Co-existence to be included in the Party Programme. The Programme considered the "issue of war and peace" as the "principal issue" of the contemporary world. The third world war, which would be a thermonuclear war, could be avoided. The favourable conditions for the prevention of war had been created by "the consolidation of the Soviet state and the formation of the world socialist system....In the socialist part of the system there are no classes or social groups interested in starting a war". 6 It was also the firm belief of the Soviet leadership - as expressed in the Programme - that superiority of the Soviet Union and socialist block in science and technology, which were being supplied to the peace loving people and countries all over the world would attract the latter towards the

former to ward off the imperialist designs of another world war. Thus the Programme noted: "It is possible to avert a world war by the combined efforts of the mighty socialist camp, the peace-loving non-socialist countries, the international working class and all the forces championing peace". The Programme thus revised the orthodox Marxist-Leninist position that as long as capitalism and imperialism remained, wars were going to stay in the world. According to the Programme the policy of peaceful co-existence would be another means of carrying out class-struggle at the international level, without actually engaging in a war with capitalism and imperialism. In this context the Programme noted:

peaceful co-existence serves as a basis for the peaceful competition between socialism and capitalism on an international scale and constitutes a specific form of class struggle between them....

The inclusion in the Programme/a special section on the world socialist system was its another main feature. The emergence of a socialist block in Eastern Europe

7 Ibid., p. 59.
8 Ibid., p. 60.
and the revolution in China after the Second World War were given due prominence. The Programme described the world socialist system and its features as "a social, economic and political community of free sovereign peoples pursuing the socialist and Communist path, united by an identity of interests and goals and the close bonds of international socialist solidarity." The basis of the economic and political relationship within the socialist bloc - according to the Programme - was the social ownership of the means of production, the same type of the political system and a common Marxist-Leninist ideology.

While describing the 'Crisis of World Capitalism', the Programme was very optimistic. The basic contradiction in the contemporary world, according to the Programme, was between socialism and imperialism. But there were contradictions not only in the capitalist countries but among the capitalist countries as well. Despite the fact that the basic contradiction in the world was between socialism and communism, the Programme

9 Ibid., p. 22.
maintained elsewhere that the socialist countries "are prepared to maintain broad, mutually advantageous trade relations and cultural contacts with the capitalist countries". 10

Besides, welcoming the formation of socialist bloc and a description of the general crisis of capitalism the Programme took a significant note of the National Liberation Movements and the newly independent countries. The 20th Congress of the CPSU earlier had taken note of the qualitative changes in the world in the form of emergence one after another of the newly independent countries and the process of national liberation was still on in the colonial countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The historic significance of this Congress also lay in the fact that it recognized the various paths of transition to socialism - namely, the non-capitalist path of development - in the newly liberated countries. The Programme in 1961 in fact reiterated its commitment to different paths to socialism and reaffirmed the Soviet policy of support to national liberation movements and to the countries following the non-capitalist path of

10 Ibid., p. 23.
development. In this regard the Programme stated:

The CPSU regards it as its internationalist duty to assist the peoples who have set out to win and strengthen their national independence, all peoples who are fighting for the complete abolition of the colonial system. 11

The Programme, thus contained a comprehensive overview of the post-war world. The novelty of the Programme was its boldness and eloquence in revising the some of the orthodox Marxist positions.

(b) The Nationalities Policy

It was considered opinion of the Soviet leadership and a general belief prevalent among large sections of Soviet scholars that national strife, national narrow-mindedness and egoism, were phenomenon peculiar to the capitalist system. While under a socialist system "the nations flourished and their sovereignty grows stronger". This kind of a thinking was reflected in the 1961 Programme. The Programme noted with some kind of a satisfaction that -

11 Ibid., p. 51.
The boundaries between the Union republics of the USSR are increasingly losing their former significance, since all the nations are equal, their life is based on a common socialist foundation, the spiritual and material needs of every people are satisfied to the same extent, and they are united in a single family by common vital interests and are advancing together to the common goal - Communism. 12

The Programme underlined the 'common socialist foundation' and 'common interests' among different peoples living in different regions as some of the pre-conditions for the coming closer of the various nationalities. This formulation by implication meant that the very existence of these pre-conditions would automatically solve the problems of nationalities in the USSR. The Programme further took a superficial view of drawing together of the various nationalities by stating that "the building of material and technical basis of Communism leads to still greater unity of the Soviet peoples". 13

The Programme also believed that the laying down of the material and technical basis of the Soviet

12 Ibid., p. 109.
13 Ibid.
The society would -

obliterate the distinctions between classes, ...
and the development of communist social relations would make for a greater social homogeneity of nations and contribute to the development of common communist traits in their culture, morals and way of living.... 14

In the sphere of national relations the aims of the Programme were defined as; the all-round economic and cultural development of all nationalities, the comprehensive development of all Soviet republics, the free development of the languages of the peoples of the USSR etc. etc.

To sum up the Programme described the cultures of different nationalities as, "socialist in content and national in form". 15

(c) Social and Economic Sphere

The most notable feature of the Programme was that it set a time limit for building Communism in the USSR within two decades, divided into two stages. The

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid., p. 111.
first stage would be marked by "creating the material and technical basis of Communism", and by "raising the people's standard of living". During the second stage, "the material and technical basis of Communism will be built", which would ensure "an abundance of material and cultural values for the whole people".

The proclaimed aim of the Programme was:

Under Communism there will be no classes, and the socio-economic and cultural distinctions, and differences in living conditions, between town and countryside would disappear; the countryside will rise to the level of the town in the development of the productive forces and the nature of the work,...with the victory of Communism mental and physical labour will merge organically in the productive activity of the people. The intelligentsia will no longer be a distinct social stratum. Workers by hand will have risen in cultural and technological standards to the level of workers by brain. 18

The above formulations in the Programme provide us some of the important Marxist formulations regarding the antithesis between mental and physical labour and the conditions in which they disappear. These theoretical insights of the Programme would enable us to evaluate

16 Ibid., p. 65.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid., p. 63.
the process of the evolution of the Soviet state. The programme was a massive document and dealt with industrial and agricultural policies in detail, which are not directly relevant here but the other programmatic reference to socio-economic issues would be referred to in the discussion that follows subsequently.

Programmatic Perspective on the Soviet State

In his report to the Twenty Second Congress, Khrushchev described the Soviet state as the 'state of the whole people'. He observed: "The state of the whole people is a new stage in the development of the socialist state, an all-important milestone on the road from socialist statehood to Communist public self-government". Khrushchev also claimed that the programme has resolved an important question of theory of state. He proclaimed that "the draft Programme of the Party raises, and resolves a new important question of communist theory and practice – the development of the dictatorship of the working class into a state of the whole people, the character and the tasks of this state and its future under

19 Pravda, 19 October 1961.
The nature and character of Soviet state radically, as Khrushchev told the Congress, changed —

with the victory of socialism and the country's entry into the period of full scale communist construction, the working class of the Soviet Union has on its own initiative, consistent with the tasks of communist construction, transformed the state of proletarian dictatorship into a state of the whole people. 21

The state of the whole people according to Khrushchev "is not a dictatorship of any one class, but an instrument of society as a whole, of the entire people". 22

Khrushchev's explanation regarding the transformation of the Soviet state was that —

when Socialism had triumphed completely and finally in our country and we entered upon the period of a full-scale Communist construction, the condition which necessitated the dictatorship of the proletariat disappeared and its domestic purposes were fulfilled. 23

The Programme also proclaimed "Socialism has triumphed in the Soviet Union". 24

20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, n. 6, p. 5.
(A) Socio-Economic Base of the 'State of the Whole People'

The 1961 programme explained the change in the socio-economic conditions as the main reason for the transformation of the proletarian dictatorship into the state of the whole people. The programme emphasized the coming closer of the two main classes, i.e., the working class and the peasantry and the emergence of new intelligentsia. The Programme stated:

There are now two friendly classes in the USSR - the working class and the peasantry. And these classes, furthermore, have changed. The common character of the two forms of socialist property has brought the working class and the collective farm peasantry close-together; it has strengthened their alliance and made their friendship indestructible. A new intelligentsia coming from the people and devoted to socialism has emerged. The one time anti-thesis between town and countryside, between labour by hand and by brain, has been abolished....25

The programme maintained that there was no antithesis, or to put it differently, there were no antagonistic contradictions between various classes. The programme, therefore, identified the commonality of

25 Ibid., pp. 16-17.
interests between various classes in the following terms:

The indestructible socio-political and ideological unity of the Soviet people has been built on the basis of the common vital interests of the workers, peasants and intelligentsia. 26

F.M. Burlatsky, who defended and elaborated the concept of the 'state of the whole people' through his various writings also cited the qualitative changes in the country's social development. He argued that -

in 1937 factory and office workers accounted for only 45.7 per cent of the population, while collective farmers and craftsmen in cooperatives accounted for 48.8 per cent. In 1961, factory and office workers comprised as much as 71.8 per cent of the population, while the collective farmers and craftsmen in cooperatives comprised 28 per cent. 27

Anatoly Butenko, who entered into a controversy with the Chinese on the nature and character of the Soviet state, reinforced Burlatsky's argument in favour of the state of the whole people. According to Butenko:

26 Ibid., p. 17.

"In 1962 workers and office personnel constituted 73.6 per cent of the population of the USSR, collective farm peasants and craftsmen belonging to cooperatives numbered 26.3 per cent and self-employed peasants and private craftsmen constituted 0.1 per cent." 28 Butenko also denied the existence of antagonistic contradictions in the Soviet society. He wrote: "In our society there are no antagonistic contradictions. The Soviet people constitute an unprecedented community of classes and social groups, united by a unity of interests, goals and world-view." 29 He also denied the existence of class-struggle in the USSR. Developing his argument on the question of class-struggle, Butenko logically reached the conclusion that "the existence of classes is not identical with the presence of class-struggle". 30

Burlatsky distinguished the state of the whole people from the dictatorship of the proletariat on the basis of -

29 Ibid.
30 Ibid., p. 31.
(1)...broadening of the basis of socialist society to include all the population,
(2) by changing functions of the state, which now include the creation of communism
and the transfer of state administration to public organisations, and (3) by the
extension of democratic methods of rule. 31

Throughout the discussions on the state of the whole people
one point was emphasized again and again that under this
form of the Soviet state the coercive role would be much
less and those organs of the state which carry out the
economic and cultural functions would play the primary
role. 32 Burlatsky defined the state of the whole people
as following:

The state of the whole people is a
people's body of power an instrument
whereby society effects the building of
communism and guidance of economic and
social processes; secures the freedom of
the individual, socialist equality and the
people's welfare: maintains relations with
other countries on behalf of peace and
international friendship, and organises the
country's defences. 33

31 Burlatsky, n. 27, p. 4.

32 A.S. Fedoseev, "Sovetskogo sotsialisticheskogo
Obshchenarodnogo gosudarstva v stroitel' stve
Kommunizma", Sovetskoe Gosudarstva i Prava, no. 4,
1962, p. 31.

33 Burlatsky, n. 27, p. 107.
The 1961 programme defined the aims of the state of the whole people and charted out the trajectory of its evolution as -

All-round extension and perfection of socialist democracy, active participation of all citizens in the administration of the state in the management of economic and cultural development, improvement of the government apparatus, and increased control over its activity by the people, constitute the main direction in which socialist statehood develops in the period of building communism. As socialist democracy develops, the organs of state power will gradually be transformed into organs of public self-government. 34

For the evolution of the state of the whole people into public self-government the programme added:

It is essential to strengthen discipline, constantly control the activities of all the sections of the administrative apparatus, check the execution of the decisions and laws of the Soviet state and heighten the responsibility of every official for the strict and timely implementation of these laws. 35

In order to achieve these ideals the programme envisaged the enhanced role of the Soviets and the development of

34 Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, n. 5, p. 98.
35 Ibid.
the democratic principles of government. It recommended the "widest and fullest discussion of the personal qualities and suitability of the candidates to be elected to the Soviets". 36 It also suggested the injection of fresh blood into the Soviets by electing "anew at least one third of the total deputies...so that millions of working people may learn to govern the state". 37 The programme also assigned increased role to the social organisations in the period of the full scale construction of communism. The programme summarized the role of social organizations as follows:

As socialist statehood develops, it will gradually become communist self-government of the people, which will embrace the Soviets, trade unions cooperatives and other mass organisations of the people. This process will represent a still greater development of democracy, ensuring the participation of all members of society in the management of the public affairs. Public functions similar to those performed by the state today in the sphere of economic and cultural management will be preserved under communism and will be modified and perfected as society develops. 38

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid., p. 105.
According to the programme the "character of the functions and ways in which they are carried out will be different from those under socialism". 39

As the public self-government evolves certain state bodies like planning, accounting, economic management and cultural advancement "will lose their political character", 40 the programme maintained. Though the state of the whole people would gradually evolve into public self-government yet the institution of the state would remain for times to come. According to the programme "the dictatorship of the working class will cease to be necessary before the state withers away". 41

The programme mentioned the prerequisites or conditions for the withering away of the state. It stated: "To ensure that the state withers away completely, it is necessary to provide both internal conditions - the building of developed communist society - and external conditions - the victory and consolidation of socialism in the world arena." 42

39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid., pp. 97-98.
42 Ibid., p. 106.
Khrushchev also justified the retention of the state in his Report to the Twenty Second Congress. To him -

the process of withering away of the state will be long one; it will cover an entire epoch and will not end until society is completely ripe for self-administration. For some time, the features of state administration and public self-government will intermingle. 43

Despite the emphasis of the Soviet leadership on the classless character of the state, the programme frequently glorified the role of the institution of the state. The programme repeatedly mentioned the control of the state over the civil society, and state controlled development. About the role of the Soviet state during the period of communist construction the programme reiterated:

"...the socialist state is the main instrument for the socialist transformation of society. The state organises and unites the masses, exercises planned leadership of economic and cultural construction". 44 The programme was full of contradictions regarding the nature and role of the Soviet state. On the one hand, the programme aimed at the transformation of the state into public self-

44 Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, n. 6, p. 20.
government while on the other, it justified statism. The programme made the state to pervade all walks of life. About the increased control of the state, the programme said:

Expressing the will of the people, it (Soviet state) must organise the building of the material and technical basis of communism and the transformation of the socialist relations into communist relations, must exercise control over the measure of work and the measure of consumption to promote the people's welfare, protect the rights and freedoms of Soviet citizens, socialist law and order and socialist property, instill in the people conscious discipline and a communist attitude to labour, guarantee the defence and security of the country, promote fraternal cooperation with the socialist countries, uphold world peace, and maintain normal relations with all countries. 45

The glorification of Stalinism in the Party Programme and in Khrushchev's Report to the Twenty Second Congress was nothing but a reversal to "modified Stalinist position to justify the continued presence of the state's power". 46

According to Brinkley -

45 Ibid., p. 98.

Khrushchev authorises a significant development of public participation on the basis of the idea that the Soviet Union was moving gradually towards the stateless society and at the same time he points out that the immediate purpose must be the strengthening of the state, partly because the education of the public will take time, but especially because the capitalist encirclement has not been entirely replaced by a socialist encirclement. The necessity of maintaining powerful security forces will make the withering of the state a gradual process. Moreover, it is the methods of control which will undergo this evolution and not the control itself. In short, the building of communism will involve not less control but more efficient methods. 47

Regarding the role of the state, and increasing emphasis on Statism, in the Party programme, George Lichtheim also remarked, "what we have in fact is a prospectus for a state-controlled order with a fast rate of growth and a planned economy". 48

The evolution of the Soviet state into the 'state of the whole people' and its role and functions during the period of communist construction, as perceived by the programme and the Soviet leadership led to considerable confusion regarding its class-nature. This confusion

47 Ibid., p. 44.

reigned in the minds of the Soviet intellectuals both before and after the adoption of the programme. The confusion about the nature of the Soviet state was created by the introduction of the concept of the 'state of the whole people' in Marxist theory by the Soviet leadership. This novel innovation in the programme was a revision of Marx's understanding of the nature of the transitory state during the transformation period from capitalism to communism. In his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Marx had defined the nature of state during the transitional phase as follows:

> Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. 49

Marx's definition of the transitory state clearly suggested that during the transition period the state would have a definitive class character. It would neither be a supra-class state nor it would be an institution over and above or autonomous of the society. The state would be a political instrument in the hands of the working class for

the radical transformation of the societal relations.

Anatoly Butenko, for example, denied the existence of a super-class state before the adoption of the Party programme but later wrote number of articles in defence of the concept of the state of the whole people. In 1960, Butenko argued:

The state overall is a class phenomenon, as well by its origin as by the role it plays in every given society. This circumstance is so essential that without it the state would cease to exist as such. Classness is the general constant trait of every state; also the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which does not differ from any other state in this regard. Super-class states do not exist; the state cannot be other than the organ of the ruling class. The essence and function of any state are determined entirely and fully by the interests of that class whose instrument it is, or to be more precise, the economically dominant ruling class. 50

In 1967, another Soviet theoretician V.M. Chkikvadze wrote about the evolution and class-nature of the Soviet state. He argued that the state of the whole people was merely an extension of the dictatorship of the proletariat without major changes. He argued that the

50 Anatoly Butenko, et al., Protiv soveremenogo revizionizma v filosofii i sotsiologii (Moscow, 1960), p. 245.
Party programme had been interpreted -

as if the Soviet state had already lost its class nature, as if the socialist state had ceased to be a class state. But that of course, is clearly running ahead and is very harmful for both theory and practice.

Though the Soviet state has become the expression of the will and interests of the entire people and no longer appears as the dictatorship of a class, it does not cease to have an entirely class-character, nor is it deprived of class content, until the objective grounds for the existence of classes have disappeared. This does not exclude the possibility and necessity of speaking of the well-known evolution of the class-nature of the Soviet state in accordance with the development of the state of the entire people. 51

(C) Programme, Party and the State

The 1961 programme considered it to be necessary that the role of the communist party be strengthened rather than diminished during the period of communist construction or transition to communism. According to the programme the need for Party's leadership and its role would increase as various administrative functions are gradually transferred from state to social organizations. The

Programme defined the role and importance of the party as following:

The period of full-scale communist construction is characterised by a further enhancement of the role and importance of the communist party as the leading and guiding force of the Soviet society.

Unlike all the preceding socio-economic formations communist society does not develop spontaneously, but as a result of the conscious and purposeful efforts of the masses led by the Marxist-Leninist Party. The Communist Party while unites the foremost representatives of the working class, of all working people, and is closely connected with the masses, which enjoys unbound prestige among the people and understands the law of social development, provides proper leadership in communist construction as a whole, giving it an organised planned and scientifically based character. 52

There was a political paradox in the programme regarding the role of the party. On the one hand, the Programme spoke of gradual withering away of the state because some of the functions of the state organs would be transferred to social organizations. On the other, it legitimized the increasing grip of the party over the society. When exploiting classes do not exist in the society, the role of the party should also gradually

52 Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, n. 6, p. 131.
diminish. The eventual withering away of the party was considered to be something which could happen only in the remote future under conditions of mature communism. D.I. Chesnokov, a leading Soviet theoretician of his times commented on this aspect. He stated:

The party will occupy the leading position during a long time in Communist society. Even in the early stages of the victory of communism on a world scale, the party as the embodiment of all that is most progressive and original will need to exist. The people will need many years, decades of life under communism while all the new mechanism of social organisation is sorted out and coordinated, till at length the conditions will be created for the withering away of the party. This process will be long and protracted. It will be realised as all members of society will reach the level of consciousness and organisational experience of party members. Gradually, the difference between communists and non-party persons will disappear. The party will turn into a universal organisation coinciding with the organisations of self-administration. 53

The Communist party, legitimized its control of the state and society through the programmes. George Lichtheim discovered the "authoritarian tone of the pronouncements", 54 of the Party programme regarding the enhanced role of the party.

54 Lichtheim, n. 48, p. 33.
(D) **Party Programme and the Process of Democratization**

During Khrushchev period certain important measures were taken to minimize the power of the state administration. Khrushchev proposed to abolish the central economic ministries and replace them by Regional Economic Councils. Decentralization of Economic decision-making, which implied that the Republic will have a greater say in economic decision-making. In a linked measure he also favoured a scheme for completely abolishing the local Soviets' administrative departments and transferring their functions to the standing commissions. But this measure was 'attempted experimentally but not widely adopted'. 55 Another measure taken in 1962 was the splitting of the administrative apparatus into agricultural and industrial sections, associated with a similar splitting of the party apparatus according to the production principle, and was aimed at eliminating the tendency to govern by making declarations.

Khrushchev's attempt to develop Soviets was also meant for paving the way for popular participation and to undermine the bureaucracy's power. Further measures to

democratize the state apparatus was the revival of 'comrade courts' to involve the ordinary people more closely in law. Local Soviets, trade unions and house committees were empowered to set up these courts to try minor offences.

The establishment of the comrade courts, according to Geoffrey Hosking, implied that "gradually they might replace the ordinary courts as part of the move towards 'self administration'." In a parallel development non-professional 'lay assessors', were added to the regular courts of justice again seen as "part of the move towards communist self-administration". These moves were supplemented by a system of vigilants (volunteer citizen police units). The members of these units were enlisted through the Komsomol and similar public organisations. These units were assigned the duty of patrolling the streets of Soviet cities and to maintain social discipline. All these measures, according to George A. Brinkley -

may be regarded as a part of the policy of decentralisation being carried out under Khrushchev....They are officially represented as providing for the broadening of democracy and the beginning of transition to full communism, with the people more and more


57 Hill, n. 55, p. 51.
taking over the functions of the state through the spontaneous development of independent organisations like the people's militia (vigilantes) and comrades courts. 58

When the process of transferring some of the functions of the state to the public organizations was underway, articles started appearing in the Soviet press, critical of the functioning of these organizations. Some writers explicitly complained against the development of public organizations:

The notion has been growing that the problem of the maturing of communist public self-government may be reduced to a mechanical replacement of state by public forms, to the speeding up of the transfer to public organisations of state functions in the area of distribution, services for the population, the safeguarding of social order, culture etc. Actually the development of the socialist state into communist public self-government is a process which affects the system of all state and public organisations. Of course, the transfer of some functions of the state organs to public organisations has an important meaning, nevertheless, that does not make up the most important part of the process of the development of the socialist statehood in present conditions. For example, under the socialist mode of production the strictest control of society and the state over the measure of work and of consumption is an objective necessity. Public organisations actively participate in this control but with the preservation of the leading

58 Brinkley, n. 46, p. 49.
role of the state. The development of public forms of socialist democracy must occur in interaction with the state forms. 59

Some other Soviet writers like V.V. Varchuk and V.I. Razin also argued that -

there were two sets of apparatuses. One is the state apparatus which is sufficiently developed and stable....The other apparatus is the public one, which is poorly organised and unstable, and it operates only on the basis of enthusiasm and serves as an object of most varied investigation....If this is the case, then it means that the enlistment of public is being carried out only for the sake of enlistment itself, for the sake of records. 60

The primacy of the state apparatus over the public organizations was reinterpreted by the Soviet authors, in the field of education, culture and the protection of law and order.


60 V.V. Varchuk and V.I. Razin, "Issledovaniya v Oblasti politicheskoi organizatsii sotsialisticheskogo obschestva", Voprosy Filosofii, no. 4, 1967, p. 143.
DEVELOPED SOCIALISM AND THE SOVIET STATE

After Khrushchev's removal from power, the troika - Brezhnev, Kosygin and Podgorny - took over the reins of power in the USSR. As had been the Soviet record, the change in leadership also meant change not only in policies but shifts in ideology as well. Though the 1961 programme was adopted only three years before Khrushchev's fall, the new leadership began to place less and less emphasis upon the Khrushchevian claim that the Soviet Union was engaged in the construction of full-scale communism and that it would be accomplished within a specific period of time. Brezhnev bestowed upon himself the honour of introducing new concepts, characterizing the Soviet society, as his predecessors did before. In his speech in 1967 on the occasion of Fiftieth Anniversary of the October Revolution Brezhnev cryptically referred to the "developed socialist society being built in the USSR". But he did not explain or elaborate the concept of developed socialist society. The concept was fully blown by Brezhnev in the 'Report of the Central Committee', which he delivered to the Twenty-fourth Congress of the Communist Party in 1971. Later on there

was a flood of articles in the Soviet press and journals trying to define the concept of developed socialism. Fyodor Burlatsky's definition summarized the concept of developed socialism. He defined it as follows:

Developed socialism is an independent, more or less protracted stage in the transition to communism, a stage in which occur changes inherent in socialism as such, in which the advances of the scientific and technological revolution intertwine with the advantages of socialist social system. 62

In the light of the introduction of the concept of developed socialism, it became difficult for the Soviet leadership to reconcile the 1961 programme with the former's less optimistic perspectives. At the Twenty-sixth Congress of the Party in 1981, Brezhnev proposed the revision of the 1961 programme. He argued that -

In the period under review all the changes in our country and all our actions on the world scene were put into effect in accordance with the Programme's provisions. On the whole, the present Programme of the CPSU correctly mirrors the laws of social development. But 20 years have passed since it was adopted.

In that time extensive experience has been accumulated of socialist and communist

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construction in the USSR. This experience incontrovertibly demonstrates that our advance to communism is being accomplished through the stage of a developed socialist society. This is a necessary, natural, and historically long period of the formation of the Communist system.

The programme should clearly identify the changes that have taken place in the structure of our economy and underscore and specify long-term aims. 63

The programme, Brezhnev further said, should also include international developments like "the drawing together of the fraternal countries and the development of their economic integration". 64 The 26th Congress approved Brezhnev's proposal and resolved -

to instruct the CPSU Central Committee to introduce the necessary amendments and additions into the present programme that on the whole, correctly mirrors the laws of world social development, determines the fundamental aims and tasks of the struggle of the Party and the Soviet people for communism and to prepare the new draft of the CPSU programme for the regular congress.

The programme must give a deep scientific reflection of the most important changes


64 Ibid., p. 87.
in the life of the Soviet society, and in world social development, of the main tasks of the communist construction. 65

In 1982, Brezhnev died and the task of drafting a new party programme was left to his predecessors.

Though the 1961 programme remained valid, the Soviet theoreticians shifted their emphasis to develop socialism. The proponents of the concept gave primacy to social and economic criteria. The focus was now on the commitment to raising the living standards of the Soviet people, and harmonic social and economic development. Economic and technological factors were identified as the main dynamics of developed socialism. The proponents of developed socialism also elaborated the concept from the point of view of social development. They argued that -

the most important aspect of the Soviet society is its growing social homogeneity. It must be observed unfortunately, that this process has thus far been little studied, yet it is here that the characteristic features of social development, at the stage of developed socialism show themselves especially distinctly. The convergence of classes and the absence of social antagonism is the best condition for the development of democratic forms in administration, for the

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involvement of all working people in the discussion and supervision of decisions. 66

The growing homogeneity and the absence of social antagonisms in the Soviet society, according to the Soviet authors, was due to the socio-cultural and economic changes that had taken place. They argued that this had happened because of the growing influence of the working class.

The working class which at the beginning of 1971 made up 55 per cent of the employed population of the USSR, is now numerically the largest class in society, it is constantly growing as people from other strata, especially the peasantry move into it. 67

The peasantry, according to Burlatsky -

has also entered, in the main, into the working class milieu. At present, and especially in the future, they will as before swell the ranks of the working class as well as the ranks of service sector employees. The social aspect of the peasantry itself has undergone striking alterations. There have appeared in the village such groups as agricultural machine operators, who are little different from workers in the nature of their labour their life style and psychology. 68

66 Burlatsky, n. 62, p. 103.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
Another notable feature of developed socialism in terms of social structure was the constant 'intellectualization' of the society. While explaining the phenomenon of 'increasing intellectualization' of the society, Burlatsky observed:

In recent decades significant shifts have taken place in society's educational structure. While in 1939, 15.9 million persons had a higher or secondary (complete or incomplete) education, in 1977, 126.1 million persons had such an education. The number of workers with a complete secondary education grew more than thirty-fold in the same period. Among employees in the national economy, the number of specialists grew by ten-fold between 1941 and 1977.

How has the weight of the intelligentsia in Soviet society changed? In 1939, there were 1.2 million persons in the USSR with a complete higher education, in 1959, there were 3.8 million such persons, in 1970, 8.3 million and by 1977, 12.5 million. In 1977, the intelligentsia consisted of 35 million persons. 69

The Soviet authors, therefore, defined the growing social unity among various social classes, as a criterion of developed socialism and placed emphasis on "moral unity and the sharing of common values". 70 Another significant

69 Ibid.

feature of developed socialism, was the evolution of a 'new historical community' of the Soviet people, the category coined by Brezhnev in December 1972 in his speech on the Fiftieth anniversary of the formation of the USSR.\textsuperscript{71} The Soviet authors popularized the idea and considered it to be a significant contribution to the theory of developed socialism. According to Kerimov:

A historically new community of people, the Soviet people, has taken shape in the process of building socialism and communism in the USSR. This community is based on the unbreakable union of the working class, the peasantry and the intelligentsia, with the working class playing the leading role, and on the friendship of all the nations and nationalities of the USSR. \textsuperscript{72}

The above survey of the theory of developed socialism brings into bold relief the following features of developed socialism, (a) economically, an industrialized society with emphasis on scientific and technological resolution and raising the standards of the Soviet people, (b) socially and culturally, a homogenous community of the Soviet people having common values, with absence of

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\begin{itemize}
\item [71] Brezhnev, n. 61, vol. 4, p. 57.
\item [72] Kerimov, n. 70, p. 34.
\end{itemize}
social antagonisms. Alfred B. Evans summed up the features of developed socialism rather developed socialist society as propagated by Soviet authors as "a mature socialist society, economically industrialised, socially consensual with its emphasis on socio-cultural unity".  

The Soviet scholars were popularizing the idea of growing social homogeneity in the USSR to provide theoretical foundations to the concept of developed socialism. This was a over-simplistic view of the complex societal processes. The noted Indian Sovietologist R.R. Sharma considered the process of growing social homogeneity to be a complex one and argued that the existence of inter and intra-class heterogeneity and consequently the corpus of a wide variety of contradictions cannot be denied in the Soviet society.  

The denial of presence of antagonistic contradictions in the USSR by the Soviet leadership was also of

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doubtful nature. Even the presence of non-antagonistic contradictions like between mental and physical labour, town and countryside, between different nations and nationalities, and between centre and different regions, can become antagonistic contradictions if constant efforts are not made for the resolution of non-antagonistic contradictions, as it happened in the USSR. In fact a section of the Soviet scholars voiced its concern through its writings about the ferocity and existence of contradictions in the Soviet society. Pyotr Fedoseyev criticized the dominant view prevalent amongst the Soviet scholars that in a socialist society the non-antagonistic contradictions will not degenerate into antagonistic ones because of the lack of objective conditions. He argued:

From the methodological standpoint it would be an oversimplification to think that all contradictions in society following the socialist road are always and under any circumstances bound to be non-antagonistic. Historical experience shows that in certain conditions - when major shortcomings have long been accumulating in economic and cultural construction, in social administration etc. - non-antagonistic contradictions could acquire features of antagonistic ones. 75

Fedoseyev not only criticized the Soviet scholars' lack of theoretical perspective on the dialectics

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of contradictions in a developing socialist society like the USSR but also in a very subtle way highlighted the problems which had been accumulating in the Soviet system.

Another very notable Soviet scholar who fell in line with Fedoseyev on the nature of contradictions in the Soviet society was Tatyana Zaslavskaya. In the 'Novosibirsk Report', Zaslavskaya pleaded that -

The 'model' for production relations worked out by Soviet science and which corresponds to the present level of development of the productive forces must take into consideration the complications, the 'multidimensionality', and frequently even the conflict of interests, of the groups operating in the economic structure, the regular pattern of their behaviour and inter-dependence, the substance of their 'dialogue' with the social institutions and organs of economic management. 76

Tatyana Zaslavskaya, therefore, also did not agree with the concept of growing social homogeneity in the USSR. Rather, she also hinted at the presence of divergent interests among the various social groups in the Soviet society. And the prevalence of the different

interests could lead to social tensions. In this context Zaslavaskaya again noted:

An important source of social tension in the economic structure is not only the 'inharmonious', but also the clash of interests between vertically aligned groups; between workers and foremen; foremen and the chiefs of enterprises; chiefs of enterprises and administrators in the ministries. 77

Another noted Soviet sociologist Titma pleaded that the Soviet social scientists should extend their investigation of the social structure in the USSR beyond "the simple assertion that our society is moving towards social homogeneity". 78 He further argued that the Soviet social structure was "segmented and that within its classes and social groups, it is possible to discern qualitatively different strata each occupying its own specific social position". 79

The above discussion clearly suggests that a microscopic minority among the Soviet social scientists

77 Ibid., p. 106.


79 Ibid., p. 68.
criticized and challenged the claims of the Soviet leadership about the growing social homogeneity in the USSR and also the claims about the absence of contradictions in the Soviet society. The claims of the Soviet leadership proved to be over-simplistic, standing on a weak theoretical foundations.

The 1977 Constitution and the State of the Whole People

The Brezhnev leadership revised some of the basic premises of the Khrushchevian programme of building a communist society in the USSR within a specified span of twenty years. But it did not negate the concept of the state of the whole people, though the emphasis on it was somewhat less in the late sixties and early seventies. The Khrushchevian characterization of the Soviet state remained valid as did the 1961 programme. The revision of the theory of 'construction of communism' and the characterization of the Soviet society as 'developed socialism', the leadership felt, must be reflected in the political aspects as well. While speaking on the necessity for a new constitution for the USSR, Brezhnev pressed this point while delivering the 'Report of the Central Committee' of the Communist Party to the Twenty Fifth Congress in
1976. He said:

The draft of the new Constitution should evidently reflect the great victories of socialism and formalise not only the general principles of the socialist system, expressing the class substance of our state, but also the basic features of the developed socialist society and its political organisation. 80

There was no innovation in the theory of the state of the whole people as far as its socio-economic base was concerned. Brezhnev repeated the same arguments like 'the growing homogeneity of Soviet society', the indestructible alliance of the working class collective farm peasantry and people's intelligentsia and professionals becoming still stronger and establishment of a new historical community of the Soviet people'. 81 As a result of the above socio-economic factors, as noted by Brezhnev, "the Soviet state, which came into being as a dictatorship of the proletariat, has grown into a state of the entire people". 82 The preamble of the 1977 Constitution of the

80 L.I. Brezhnev, "Report of the CPSU Central Committee and the Immediate Tasks of the Party in Home and Foreign Policy", XXV Congress of the CPSU (Moscow, 1976), p. 102.


82 Ibid.
USSR also codified the nature and character of the Soviet state almost in the same terms. It stated: "...the aims of the dictatorship of the proletariat having been fulfilled, the Soviet state has become a state of the whole people."\(^83\)

And the Soviet state expressed, according to Article I of the Constitution "the will and interests of the workers, peasants, and intelligentsia, the working people of all the nations and nationalities of the country".\(^84\) The essence of the state of the whole people in developed socialism according to the Soviet theorists lay in its expression of the 'moral and political unity of the society'.\(^85\) The emphasis of the Soviet authors on the 'homogeneous' nature of Soviet society and the Soviet state as an expression of moral and political unity of the society raised confusion about the nature of political power (the 'state' is an expression of political correlation of class forces at a particular point of time). This (political power) the Soviet writers argue was the somewhat classless character of the Soviet state. As far as the nature of state power (state power is the power of a particular class to impose its will, policies and

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84 Ibid., p. 15.

85 Kerimov, n. 70, p. 75.
decisions on the society through persuasion or coercion)
in the Soviet society was concerned the Soviet authors
argued that it was used for building communism and to fight
out imperialism. According to the Soviet theoreticians:

In the period of transition from capitalism to socialism it (state power)
exists as the instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Under developed
socialism state power no longer functions in this capacity, but this does not mean
that it becomes 'extra-class' or 'supre-class' in character. As the power of the
working people guided by the working class, it continues the cause of the dictatorship
of the proletariat, carrying out the building of communism and waging class struggle against
imperialism internationally. 86

So far as the question of class character of the state
power was concerned, the Soviet authors emphasized on its
international functions.

The goals of the Soviet state as defined in the
preamble of the 1977 Constitution were -

...the building of a classless communist
society in which there will be public,
communist self-government. The main aims
of the people's socialist state are: to
lay the material and technical foundation
of communism, to perfect socialist social
relations and transform them into communist

86 Ibid., p. 81.
relations, to mould the citizen of communist society, to raise the people's living and cultural standards, to safeguard the country's security and to further the consolidation of peace and development of international cooperation. 87

According to Article 9 of the constitution, 'the extension of socialist democracy' i.e., the broader participation of the citizens in managing affairs of the society and the state, continuous improvement of the 'machinery of the state' and 'heightening of the activity of public organisations', were the trajectory of development of the Soviet state. 88

The recurring references in the Constitution to the process of democratization and active mass participation in the management of the affairs of the state and society was to take under the tutelage of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. For the first time, in Soviet history the Communist Party was given a constitutional status under Article 6 of the 1977 Constitution.

Article 6 of the 1977 Constitution perceived the Communist Party as "the leading and guiding force

87 Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the USSR, n. 83, p. 11.

88 Ibid., p. 17.
of Soviet society and nucleus of the political system, of all state organisations and public organisations". Therefore, the emphasis on the democratization of the Soviet society and the improvement in the machinery of the state in the Soviet constitution, and the recognition of the Communist Party as the nucleus of the political system legitimized the increasing control of the party over the polity and society. The state-guided development of the Soviet society and the emulation of the control of the party over the state and society, according to Evans, had two implications:

The first is a recognition of the legitimacy of the government's machinery of ministries, planning and administration. The symbolic acknowledgement of the role of the state has increased in the ideology of mature socialism....A second and more profound implication of the new view of the Soviet state is that the current leadership is still philosophically committed to the subordination of social forces to organised political direction. 90

The issue of 'withering away of the state' was completely evaded by the Soviet authors. To an extent, it was logical also. Because the Soviet leadership and

89 Ibid., p. 16.
90 Evans, n. 73, p. 423.
theoreticians were glorifying the increasing role of the state of the whole people and of the communist party. Even Brezhnev evaded this important aspect of the Marxist theory of state in his report on the Draft Constitution, to the Extraordinary Session of USSR Supreme Soviet in October 1977. When the world press raised the question that there were no signs of withering away of the state in the USSR, Brezhnev dismissed the withering away of the state as a "long process". 91 According to V. Chirkin,

The state of the whole people exists over a longer historical period than the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is only a transitional phase. This is because a mature socialist society represents a longer period of development along the path to communism. 92

Post-Brezhnevian Leadership and the New Party Programme: Emphasis on Realism

After Brezhnev's death in 1982, the new leadership also reaffirmed its commitment to the revision of the 1961 programme, as had been the usual Soviet practice.


After Brezhnev, Yuri Andropov became the Chairman of the Committee responsible for drafting the new Programme. In June 1983, Andropov told the Central Committee that the "new programme needed a realistic analysis of the existing situation" and must specify clear guidelines for the future. 93 Chernenko, who succeeded Andropov, also stressed on the realistic formulations of the revised programme. In April 1984, while addressing the Commission responsible for the revision of the Party Programme, Chernenko urged the need to delete from the existing programme the -

over-simplified impression of the means and dates by which a transition to communism would take place...the revised draft should give a realistic and thoroughly considered evaluation of developed socialism, which would be an historically protracted period. The programme must concentrate on the immediately attainable goals and should avoid unfounded promises and progresses. 94

Therefore, in the post-Brezhnev period, the emphasis of the leadership was on the need to take account of existing realities. But the programme could not be revised as the interregnum between the years 1982 and 1985 was marked by instability of the political leadership in

93 Pravda, 16 June 1983.
94 Ibid., 26 April 1984.
the USSR. The task of drafting a new programme was, therefore, left to Mikhail Gorbachev, who took over reins of USSR after Chernenko's death. The new Soviet leadership broke new grounds in its assessment of the stage of development of society and the evolution, nature and character of the Soviet state, which would be the subject matter of the next chapter.

The discussion of the 1961 Programme in this chapter brought out certain novel features of the Programme. Firstly, the Programme was a very optimistic document. It proclaimed that socialism had been built in the USSR and the Soviet society was poised for attaining communism within a specified time period of two decades. It described the transition from socialism to communism as a stage of communist construction in the USSR. This formulation in the Programme was a revision of the orthodox Marxist theory regarding the stages of transition in a post-revolutionary society.

Secondly, the Programme elaborated the concept of peaceful coexistence and proclaimed that a third world war was no longer inevitable. The struggle between socialism and imperialism would be carried out through peaceful means. The Programme also recognized different
paths of development in the newly independent countries and reiterated the material and moral support of the USSR to the countries following non-capitalist path of development.

Thirdly and most importantly the novel innovation in the Programme was the concept of the 'state of the whole people'. It proclaimed that with the building of socialism in the USSR, the dictatorship of the proletariat as a form of state had fulfilled its historical necessity. There were now no exploiting classes in the USSR. The three main classes, the working class, the collective farm peasantry and the socialist intelligentsia were coming together and the distinctions between mental and physical labour were gradually disappearing. The Programme claimed that there were no antagonistic contradictions in the Soviet society.

The Programme also noted that the state of the whole people would gradually be transformed into public-self government. The economic, social and cultural functions would be transferred to the public organizations. The state of the whole people would not have any coercive functions to discharge as there were no exploiting classes but the Soviet state would use coercion against enemies of socialism both within and outside the Soviet society.
The leadership that took reigns of power in the USSR after Khrushchev's fall toned down the over-optimistic proclamations of building communism in the USSR. In the seventies the Brezhvian leadership propounded new concepts like 'developed socialism' and the 'growing social homogeneity' of various classes in the USSR though it did not negate the concept of the state of the whole people. During the Brezhnev period there was growing emphasis on the role of the Soviet state in the socio-economic and cultural spheres. The emphasis on statism and the glorification of the Communist Party again put a question mark on the nature of Soviet state. The Brezhnevian leadership came out with a new constitution in 1977 and provided a constitutional status to the state of the whole people. The CPSU was also given the constitutional status and was recognized as the nucleus and guiding force of the Soviet society. Our discussion has shown that the theoretical formulations of the Party Programme and of the Soviet leadership regarding the nature of the Soviet state were full of contradictions. On the one hand the leadership was popularizing the idea of the evolution of the Soviet statehood into a public-self government while on the other hand in practice the increasing role of the Soviet state in the affairs of the society had become an omnipresent phenomenon.