CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The Soviet state invariably claimed that it drew ideological legitimacy from Marxism-Leninism. At every stage of its evolution, as perceived by the Party Programmes, the Soviet leadership invoked the Marxist-Leninist theory of state to justify its theorization of the evolutionary character of the Soviet state. The post-revolutionary programmes of the CPSU injected new elements in the Marxist theory of state. Therefore, the reconstruction of a conceptual framework of the Marxist theory of state became an essential component of this study. The process of evolution of the Soviet state in the context of the Party Programmes has been analysed in the light of the framework.

The conceptual framework was constructed by assimilating various elements of the Marxist theory of state, which, in fact, are scattered in the various writings of Marx and Engels. The hiatuses in Marx's and Engels' thinking on state occur because different
circumstances at different times raised questions about the state in theory because they raised them in practice.

The three main components of the Marxist theory of state are - (a) the origins of state, (b) Its nature and functions, and (c) the withering away of state in the post-revolutionary society.

Engels' *Origins of the Family Private Property and State* was the best exposition of the origins of the state. The state, as he pointed out, did not exist from times immemorial. The state came into being with the division of the society into classes at a certain stage of economic development. The differentiation of society into classes was a consequence of coming into being of private property. Since the state had not existed from the beginning of the society, it followed logically, that it was not a permanent phenomenon and, therefore, would not exist until eternity.

The division of the society into classes, gave rise to class struggle. The institution of state, therefore, became a necessity to keep in check the conflicts that arose between the exploiting and exploited classes as a result of clash of their class interests. The forms of the state kept on changing with
the changes in the material conditions (modes and relations of production) of the society. The state arose with the appearance of classes in the society and would disappear with the extinction of classes from the society. The state, therefore, had a transitory character.

Marx and Engels defined the nature of the state as some kind of a reflection of the common interests of the ruling classes in their political form. The state as a form of political power was the expression of contradictions in the civil society. The ruling classes used the state as a form of political power to manage their common affairs and for the exploitation of the non-possessing classes. The state, according to Marx and Engels, was nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another.

The question of withering away of state was crucial in the Marxist theory. Interestingly, this theory was developed by Marx and Engels as much in conflict with anarchism as with bourgeois democratic reformism. In the First International a fierce controversy broke out between Marx-Engels and Anarchists led by Bakunin. The controversy revolved around issues like organization of the working class into a political party
for making a proletarian revolution, the immediate abolition of the state after working class had captured power, or, the retention of a proletarian state during the transition from capitalism to communism.

Both schools of thought i.e. Marxist and Anarchist, had the commonality of the goal, i.e., both believed in the establishment of a self-regulating and classless society and denied the permanence of the institution of state. The first point of disagreement between Marxism and Anarchism was whether the working class should organize itself into a revolutionary party? While Marx believed in the political action of the working class organized as a political party, Bakunin was against the concept of a proletarian party and advocated political indifference on the part of the working class. The second major issue of disagreement was that after the revolution whether the state should be retained or immediately abolished?

Marx and Engel's drawing lessons from the Paris Commune emphatically stated that after a proletarian revolution the working class must retain the institution of state. The proletariat after destroying the old state apparatus must create its own apparatus and wield it for its own purposes. They
firmly believed that during the transition from capitalism to communism lay the revolutionary transformation of the society. The revolutionary transformation in its political form was described by Marx as the dictatorship of the proletariat. The anarchists in general, and Bakunin in particular, were hostile to all forms of political authority and state during the transition period and called for the abolition of the state at one stroke.

The dictatorship of the proletariat was considered by Marx and Engels as of transitory nature. The dictatorship of the proletariat as a form of organized political power abolishes the social conditions that gave birth to state and also creates conditions for its own disappearance. The working class uses the state (dictatorship of the proletariat) to hold down its adversaries and to socialize production and distribution. During the transition period the abolition of private ownership of means of production and pre-planned production leads to the gradual abolition of class distinctions.

Further, Marx and Engels believed that with the disappearance of classes from society, the state will lose its political character. The political functions
of the state would give way to the simple administration of things. Thus, according to Marx and Engels the state is not abolished, it withers away. Of course, they did not chart out the trajectory and also did not specify the time-lag in the process of withering away of the state during the revolutionary transition from capitalism to socialism.

Following Marx and Engels, Lenin also made significant contribution to the theory of state. In his *State and Revolution*, Lenin reconstructed the Marxist theory of state and put it into a proper perspective. Lenin upheld the basic Marxist propositions on the origins, nature and character of the state.

However, Lenin's most notable and singular contribution to the Marxist theory of state was his analysis of the imperialist state. According to him, imperialism had perfected and strengthened the bureaucratic and military apparatuses of the state. The era of monopoly capitalism, at the same time had simplified the productive and distributive mechanisms and the entire business of administration.

Dwelling on Marx's and Engels' experience of the Paris Commune, Lenin tried to construct a theory of
the transitional state after the workers revolution. He emphasized the need of a proletarian state without the old apparatuses of the bourgeois state. He considered the Soviets as the prototype of the Commune state but with armed workers organized into people's militia. Though Lenin was for the smashing of the old coercive state apparatus, he stressed the need for the retention by the proletariat of the mechanisms of administrative and economic control which the bourgeois state had created and perfected.

Lenin believed that the proletariat could take over the administrative and economic control mechanisms of the bourgeois state, as ready-made instruments for the building of socialism. The transitional state would use the big banks, syndicates, postal services and consumer societies created by capitalism, which Lenin called as the accounting apparatus, to build socialism. Thus Lenin combined Marx's account of Paris Commune with the Soviets and the mechanisms of accounting and control which the imperialist state had created to construct a viable model of building socialism in post-revolutionary Russia.

Lenin, like Marx and Engels, believed that in the post-revolutionary society, the state is not abolished
but withers away. What is abolished after the revolution is the oppressive and coercive apparatus of the bourgeois state. The dictatorship of the proletariat as political form of the transitional state, according to Lenin, is necessary for the suppression of the erstwhile exploiting classes. The working class organized into the Soviets would also remove want and poverty of the people, the chief causes of violence. This would make the state redundant. With the withering away of the social causes of the excesses of the state, the institution of state will also wither away.

The prerequisites for withering away of state, identified by Lenin were, universal literacy and training and disciplining of millions of workers by the huge socialized apparatus of the railways, big factories, large scale banking etc. Through accounting and control the armed workers are transformed into a single countrywide syndicate. The gradual transformation of Soviets as organs of proletarian state into public self-government was considered to be another most important prerequisite for the withering away of the state.

Party Programmes

The ideological and political significance of the Marxist-Leninist theory of state was reflected in all
the Party Programmes. The Party Programmes not only took stock of the existing socio-economic and political conditions but also had the historic tradition of serving as a sort of blueprints for defining the general directions of social economic and political development of the society.

This study is basically concerned with the evaluation of the process of evolution of the Soviet state in the context of the Party Programmes. It began with a survey of the historical background of the 1919 Programme of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) for a better appreciation of the theoretical perspectives of not only the 1919 Programme but also of the latter programmes of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

The Communist Manifesto written by Marx and Engels in 1848 surveyed the stages of revolutionary transformations of the society from feudal to capitalist and capitalist to socialist. It exhorted the workers of the world to wrest power from the bourgeoisie through revolutionary means, and to raise itself to the position of the ruling class. However, the Manifesto had no blueprint about the political structure that would be
needed by the proletariat to exercise its rule during the period of revolutionary transformation. It also did not define the transitory nature of the state after a proletarian revolution. It is in the Critique of the Gotha Programme - which was not a programme in itself - Marx defined the nature of political power and the transitory nature of the post-revolutionary state, though not in details. The form of political power between the revolutionary transformation from capitalism to socialism was described by Marx as the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

The pre-revolutionary Programme of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party was written in 1903 in the light of programmatic documents that we have mentioned, besides other writings by Marx and Engels. It identified capitalism as the dominant mode of production in Russia with the peculiarity of existence of numerous vestiges of the pre-capitalist order. The establishment of a democratic republic was defined as the short-term objective by the Programme. The long-term objective of the RSDLP as contained in the Programme was a socialist revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.
Soon after the adoption of the 1903 Programme and after the failure of the 1905 revolution, the social democratic movement in Russia plunged into a political and ideological controversy. Various political parties and individuals took rigid and sometimes diametrically opposed positions on two main issues. The first and the most important issue related to the relationship between the bourgeois democratic revolution and the socialist revolution. To put it differently, it involved the issue of stages of revolution. On this issue the social democrats had two Marxist propositions before them. The Communist Manifesto had laid down a neat and tidy scheme about the stages of revolution - capitalist revolution against feudal absolutism followed by a socialist revolution against capitalism and capitalist democracy. Marx revised the neat and tidy scheme of stages of revolution as envisaged in the Communist Manifesto after the German fiasco in 1848. In Germany, where capitalism was not fully developed to the extent it was in England and France, but it had the preponderance of the working class which was growing very fast numerically. In Germany, Marx envisaged the possibility of inter-mingling of the bourgeois democratic revolution into a socialist one because of the helplessness of the German bourgeoisie.
The second and no less an important issue in the controversy in Russia was about the role of various classes in the bourgeois democratic and socialist revolutions and particularly the nature of political relations between the workers and the peasants.

The Mensheviks recognized the bourgeois character of the 1905 revolution but maintained that a prolonged period of interregnum lay between the bourgeois democratic and a socialist revolutions. To the Mensheviks the interregnum between the two revolutions would be a period of parliamentarism of bourgeois democratic variety.

Leon Trotsky, like the Bolsheviks, questioned the Menshevik assumptions and propounded his theory of permanent revolution. According to him, the Russian bourgeoisie because of its historical weaknesses would not complete the tasks of a bourgeois democratic revolution. The Russian working class, believed Trotsky, would not only carry out the tasks of bourgeois revolution but would carry it forward to its logical conclusion by converting it into a socialist revolution. The working class would combine the tasks of the two revolution and carry them out in alliance with the peasantry. Trotsky assigned the leadership of the revolution to the proletariat and considered peasantry as a junior partner of the former.
The tasks of the two revolutions would intermingle and, according to Trotsky, the completion of these tasks under the hegemony of the proletariat would be a permanent process.

Lenin also recognized the bourgeois character of the 1905 revolution. Very brilliantly, Lenin exposed the dual character of the Russian bourgeoisie because of its historical weaknesses. Lenin, like Trotsky, also believed that the tasks of completing the democratic resolution fell on the shoulders of Russian proletariat. He considered certain sections of the peasantry as an important ally of the proletariat in completing the tasks of a democratic revolution. Lenin also saw the possibility of the bourgeois democratic revolution getting transformed into that a socialist one and he categorically stated the RSDLP stood for an uninterrupted revolution and would not stop half way. Nevertheless, he also insisted on the necessity of demarcating the stages of democratic and socialist revolutions.

The issues raised in the aftermath of the adoption of the 1903 Programme of the RSDLP, and after the failure of the 1905 revolution remained alive even after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. The realization of the long term objective of the 1903 Programme with the establishment
of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia in October 1917 made the programme redundant.

The new state structure that emerged after the Bolshevik revolution was the system of Soviets in the town and the countryside. The Soviets were also established in the Red Army. The new Soviet state apparatus replaced the Tsarist-state machine and was given the constitutional status in the Constitution of the RSFSR in 1918. The nature of the Soviet state structure was defined in the constitution as a "Republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies".

The second programme was adopted in March 1919 by the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist Party. The Programme was adopted at the height of the civil war and also at a time when the fervour of war communism was at its zenith. The Programme defined the nature of political power in Russia as the dictatorship of the proletariat. It took note of the concrete reality in which the dictatorship of the proletariat was being exercised. The chief characteristic of this reality, according to the Programme, was the existence of vast majority of petty bourgeois strata.
The Programme defined the aims of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the development of a higher type of socialist democratism through the Soviets, the mass organizations of the working class and poor peasantry. In the sphere of industry its objective included the nationalization of trade and industry and a state system of distribution organized on a national scale. It gave top most priority to organized industrial production according to a general state plan and by the use of trade unions' control over the productive process. The Programme aimed at the organization of large-scale socialist agriculture and the elimination of kulaks as a class. It ensured equality to women in all spheres of life and advocated the introduction of free and compulsory education for all. In national relations the Programme urged closer relations between the various Soviet nationalities and reiterated its support to the right of subject and oppressed nations to self-determination.

The 1919 Programme was thus some kind of an exercize in the direct realization of communist goals. The measures adopted during the period of war communism according to the programmatic perspective proved to be a disaster. The compulsory requisition in foodgrains and wholesale nationalization of trade and distribution
created tensions in the smychka (alliance). The alliance between the working class and the peasantry was on the verge of breaking down. Tensions surfaced between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the vast majority of the peasant population. The Programme did not envisage these tensions and also failed to ease them. It also lacked a theoretical perspective on the question of transition. The problem of transition was completely ignored in the programme.

The New Economic Policy was introduced to correct the mistakes of war communism and to save the alliance between the working class and the poor peasantry. In 1920, on the Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution, Lenin accepted that the Bolshevik Party's belief during the period of war communism that communism could be built directly through state orders, was a mistaken view. Lenin strongly felt and very categorically stated that number of transitional stages were necessary for transition to communism.

Thus, the introduction of New Economic Policy as a stage of state capitalism was not a temporary retreat. On the contrary, as Lenin believed, it was going to stay for many years and decades to come. The NEP,
therefore, was a definite stage of building socialism in the USSR.

On the eve of the introduction of the NEP, the Communist Party was divided into various factions and platforms. There was no unanimity on crucial issues like one-man management, the role of trade unions and the NEP itself. The Tenth Congress of the Communist Party banned all factions and platforms within the party. This Congress also gave final approval to the introduction of NEP.

The disturbed class-relations between the proletariat and peasantry and the switchover from war communism to the NEP raised serious confusion regarding the nature of the Soviet state. Trotsky and Bukharin insisted on describing the Soviet state as a workers' state. Lenin cleared the doubts about the nature of the Soviet state and described it as a workers' state with the peculiarity that it was not the working class but the peasant population that predominated in the country. And that it was a workers' state with bureaucratic distortions.

Thus, during the period of New Economic Policy the 1919 Programme had become redundant. No serious
attempt was made to revise this Programme. In fact this programme became relevant during the period of industrialization and collectivization. Stalin used this Programme because of its focus on strict discipline, hierarchy and strict state control. The transformation of the Soviet society during the 1930s again witnessed the omnipresence of the Soviet state in all spheres of life when everything was done on the state orders. In fact, Stalin justified ultra-statism in 1933. He said:

The abolition of classes is not achieved by the extinction of class-struggle, but by its intensification. The state will wither away, not as a result of weakening the state power, but as a result of strengthening it to the utmost. (J.V. Stalin, Problems of Leninism, Peking, 1976, p. 626)

In 1936 a new Soviet Constitution was adopted. This constitution defined the nature of the Soviet state as a 'Socialist State of Workers and Peasants'. It was claimed that the foundations of socialism had been built in the USSR. There were no references to the dictatorship of the proletariat. The 1936 constitution made the 1919 programme completely irrelevant. And it was replaced by a new programme in 1961.
Ultra democratism and complete state control were the notable features of the evolution of the Soviet state in the context of the 1919 Programme. During the period 1917-1919, it were the democratic tendencies which prevailed in the evolving Soviet state system. During the period 1919-1924 the democratic and centralizing tendencies were struggling against each other. After Lenin's death the centralizing tendencies dominated the Soviet state and during Stalin's time the state structures became highly centralized and bureaucratized. The Soviet state during that period can rightly be described as bureaucratic centralized state.

The 1919 Programme was replaced by the Third Programme of the CPSU in 1961. The novel feature of 1961 programme was its proclamation that socialism had been built in the USSR and that the Soviet society was entering into a phase of Communist construction. The significance of its perspective was reflected in its utopian aims and unattainable goals. It promised that the USSR would be a full fledged communist society within two decades. The fulfilment of this goal was promised in two stages of ten years each. During the first phase the material and technical base of communism would be created. The exploitation of economic potentialities
of the USSR would tremendously raise the living and cultural standards of the Soviet people. The second stage would be marked by an abundance of material and cultural values of the whole population. The other most important feature of the Programme was its emphasis on peaceful co-existence and its belief that wars were no longer inevitable. It also accepted the possibility of different paths to socialism and reiterated the Soviet policy of support to national liberation movements.

The novel theoretical innovation in the Programme was its characterization of the Soviet state as the "state of the whole people". The Soviet state was not a dictatorship of one class but an instrument of the entire people. With the development of socialist democracy, according to the Programme, the organs of state power would be transformed into organs of public self-government. Thus, the programme revised the Marxist theory of state. While Marx had held that during the transition from capitalism to communism the dictatorship of the proletariat would be the political form of the state.

The absence of the exploiting classes, and the existence of two friendly classes working class and collective farm peasantry and the emergence of socialist intelligentsia, was the basic premise of the programme
in the evolution of the Soviet state into the state of the whole people. The Programme as well as the Soviet theoreticians denied the existence of antagonistic contradictions in the Soviet society.

The emphasis in the Programme was on state controlled development and it glorified the role of the Soviet state in completing the tasks of socialist construction. The final withering away of the state in the USSR depended on both internal and external conditions. The building of a developed communist society in the USSR and the victory of socialism in the world arena were described by the Programme as the internal and external conditions respectively.

The characterization of the Soviet state as the state of the whole people created confusion about its classness. The Soviet leadership and the Soviet authors were at pains to explain that the Soviet state was not a super-class phenomenon. The Soviet scholars had argued that the state of the whole people was merely an extension of the dictatorship of the proletariat without coercive roles to perform. The Programme also emphasized on the increased role of the Communist Party in the Soviet society and envisaged the diminutive role of the party only under the conditions of mature communism.
During Khrushchev's period certain steps were taken to democratize the Soviet state apparatus like the strengthening and development of Soviets to undermine the powers of bureaucracy, revival of comrades courts. The local Soviets, trade unions and house committees were empowered to set up these courts. Attempts were also made to transform some of the functions of the state to the public organizations. Regional Economic Councils were set up to give more autonomy in economic decision making to regions and republics. All these measures were given up after Brezhnev came to power.

The Brezhnev leadership gave up the utopian goal of the 1961 programme regarding the building of communism within specified time limit. The concept of 'developed socialism' was introduced in the early seventies. Developed socialism was described as an independent and protracted stage in the transition to communism. The utopian goals of the 1961 programme were abandoned, though the programme remained valid.

The concept of the state of the whole people was not denied by the Soviet leadership though it increasingly propagated the concept of developed socialism. The focus was now on the growing social homogeneity
and absence of social antagonisms as the socio-economic base of the state of the whole people. In 1977 a new Soviet Constitution was adopted to include the concept of the state of the whole people. This constitution described the Soviet state as the state of the working class, collective farm peasantry and the Soviet intelligentsia. The Communist Party was given the constitutional status and was described as the "nucleus of the Soviet society". During the Brezhnev period there was increased emphasis on the role of state and party in the Soviet society.

The concepts like 'growing social homogeneity' and 'emergence of a historic community of the Soviet people' were considered to be simplistic and of doubtful nature by some Soviet scholars in the early eighties. Scholars like Fedoseyev, Zaslavaskaya and Titma, to mention a few, pointed to the existence of different social strata with different social interests. Zaslavaskaya in particular in her Novosibirks Report raised the question of conflict between the nature of production relations and productive forces in the USSR. But Zaslavaskaya's analysis remained only a minority view.

The contradictions between the theory of 'developed socialism' and the societal actualities
embarrassed the new leadership when it took the reins of power in 1985. The Soviet society witnessed stagnation in all aspects of life. The Soviet society was caught up in a crisis phenomenon. Hence, Gorbachev urged the need for updating the 1961 programme.

The 1961 programme was updated and adopted by the Twenty-Seventh Congress of the CPSU in 1986. The New Edition of the Programme was a sort of blend of old and new elements. It repeated the claim that after 1961 the Soviet society had entered the stage of developed socialism and that the proletarian state had become the state of the Whole people. But it also took a realistic view of the existing societal conditions.

The revised programme did not break any new grounds in Marxist-Leninist theory as its predecessors did. The significance and novelty of the Programme lay in its critical assessment of the developments in the past. The accent in the New Edition was on 'acceleration', 'Role of human factor', and restructuring of the Soviet political system. In the international arena its focus was on the elimination of threat of a nuclear war. These were some of the elements of the 'New Political Thinking'.

The New Edition of the Programme justified the evolution of the Soviet state into a state of the whole people. Though there was decreasing emphasis on the state of the whole people in Gorbachev's Report to the 27th Congress and in the programme as well. The theory of developed socialism and the state of the whole people was being tuned down.

The advancement of socialist democracy and development of socialist-self government were considered to be main tasks for the effective participation of Soviet citizens in the affairs of the society. The Communist Party was assigned the key role of supervising the Soviet state and society, as had been the practice in the past. The Programme retained the CPSU as the leading force and the nucleus of the Soviet society. As far as the socio-economic base of the Soviet state was concerned the New Edition reiterated the drawing closer together of the working class, the collective farm peasantry and the Soviet intelligentsia. But the Programme omitted references to the concept of 'homogeneous Soviet Society', which was popularized during the Brezhnev period.

The New Edition of the Programme was a compromise programme. It did not make serious attempts
to define the Soviet political system. It was due to the fact that Gorbachev had very limited time at his disposal before the 27th Congress and also because, he was trying to consolidate his position. Gorbachev had yet to formulate a comprehensive strategy for restructuring of the Soviet political system.

It was at the Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee in January 1987 that Gorbachev defined his strategy of democratization of the Soviet state and society. He concretely pin-pointed the serious shortcomings in the functioning of the political institutions. He came down heavily on the outdated political and theoretical concepts that did not correspond to reality.

At the 19th All Union Conference of the CPSU in 1988 Gorbachev went a step further. The concept of the state of the whole people was openly criticized. He accepted the omnipresence of state in the entire gamut of Soviet life. The growth of executive apparatus out of all proportions was admitted by Gorbachev, thereby, meaning the autonomy of the state from civil society. This phenomenon resulted in the universal rule that the decision-making bodies were not responsible and
accountable for their actions. The bureaucratization of the state structures became an impediment in the participation of the people in the affairs of the society.

In the light of the shortcomings that were pointed out by Gorbachev, it was decided at the Party Conference that the restructuring of government bodies must be undertaken immediately. The conference also resolved to amend the 1977 constitution. The measures suggested for the reform of the political system were to strengthen socialist legality and to enhance the legislative, managerial and supervisory functions of the Soviets and to restore the supremacy of elective bodies over the executive apparatus.

Immediately after the 19th Party Conference practical steps were taken for the renewal of the Soviet political system. In November 1988 the 1977 Constitution was amended. The novelty of the constitutional amendments lay in the reinvigoration of the Soviet political system. These amendments were concerned with the reform of the Soviets and the electoral system. As a result a system congresses of People's deputies was established and the Supreme Soviet was transformed into a permanently functioning body. A committee for constitutional
supervision was set up. The system of multi-candidate constituencies was introduced and provisions were made for the representation of public organizations in higher bodies of power.

The 19th CPSU conference unleashed the political reforms. But along with the reform of the political system the economic reforms were also underway. The 'law on property' introduced private ownership of the means of production. The reform process now started going wayward. The New Edition of the Programme was losing its validity.

A Draft Platform was published in February 1990 by the Central Committee of the CPSU. Entitled as "Towards Humane, Democratic Socialism", the Draft Platform was to serve as an ad hoc programme until the 28th Congress of the CPSU. This document described the Soviet society in a state of flux, instability and confusion. It advocated a plan-market economy and the private ownership of the means of production. It dropped the concept of the 'state of the whole people' and replaced it with the concept of 'law-governed state of the whole people'. The Platform also tacitly accepted the existence of dictatorship of the bureaucratic and managerial class over the people. It recognized other political parties
and movements and advocated political pluralism. It also denied the monopoly position to the CPSU and described it as a party of socialist choice.

At the 28th Congress of the CPSU the validity of New Edition of the Programme was rejected. A draft of the New Programme of the CPSU was published in August 1990. It defined 'Socialism, Democracy and Progress' as its main objectives. It dropped references to dictatorship of the proletariat while mentioning the 1919 Programme and characterized the Soviet state as a super-centralized bureaucratic one during the Stalin period.

The Draft Programme was an exercise in transforming the Soviet economic structures into a full-fledged market economy and the Soviet Political system into a parliamentary democracy. It envisaged the conversion of the CPSU into a social-democratic party and granted full autonomy to the Party units at the republican levels. To sum up, all the post-revolutionary Party Programmes lacked a correct theoretical perspective on the problems of transition in the USSR. Consequently, the leadership failed to properly define the evolving nature and character of the Soviet state in the Programmes of the CPSU.
The 1919 Programme precisely comprehended the nature of social realities in Russia. But for the transformation of those realities it relied heavily on the role of the state. Though during the initial period after the Bolshevik Revolution the mass organizations had taken over the functions of the state. The realization of the communist goals became the main objective of the 1919 Programme. The crucial issue of stages of transformation between capitalism and communism in a small peasant country like Russia was totally ignored.

During the period of civil war and war communism, the state and party apparatuses became heavily bureaucratized. The introduction of New Economic Policy was a corrective step to overcome the mistakes of war communism. Attempts to reform the Soviet state apparatus during 1920-1923 were running parallel to the centralization of Party apparatus. The former failed while the latter led to the emergence of CPSU as a monolith. During the period of New Economic Policy the Party miserably failed to revise the 1919 Programme and to define the nature and character of the Soviet state.

The 1961 programme of the CPSU overlooked the presence of social contradictions in the Soviet society.
while proclaiming the evolution of the Soviet state as the state of the entire people. It glorified the role of the state during the process of building a communist society in the USSR within a specified span of two decades. However, few rudimentary measures were adopted to transfer some of the functions of the state bodies to the public organizations and to provide more autonomy to regions and republics in the late fifties and early sixties. Notwithstanding these measures - which were given up in the middle of sixties - the Soviet leadership perennially emphasized over the need of perfection of the Soviet state apparatus and glorified the role of the communist party in the Soviet society.

During the seventies and eighties the Brezhnev leadership created the myth of 'developed socialism'. The growing social homogeneity and the emergence of the historic Soviet community were defined as the socio-economic base of the state of the whole people in the USSR. Politically, the leadership idolized the Soviet state apparatus and tightened the grip of the Communist party on the polity and society by defining it as the nucleus of the society in the 1977 constitution. There were no signs of withering away of the state.
The New Edition (1986) of the CPSU Programme made a realistic assessment of the developments in the USSR and suggested acceleration of socio-economic development and reform of the political system in the USSR. But during 1988-1990, the reforms of the Soviet political system went wayward. The new leadership failed to lay down the parameters of reforms of the Soviet state structures and the political system. The Draft Platform and the Draft Programme (1990) of the CPSU envisaged the transformation of the Soviet economy into a plan-market economy and the political system into a parliamentary democracy.

The most notable feature of this study is that the lack of proper perspectives on the stages of evolution of the Soviet society and state in the Party Programmes logically led to over-optimistic and sometimes wrong theorizations by the Soviet leadership. It was invariably believed by the Soviet leadership that the over-intervention of the super structure (ideology, politics and state) would shape the course of life in the desired direction of socio-economic and political development in the USSR. As a result the balance between the state and civil society was lost.