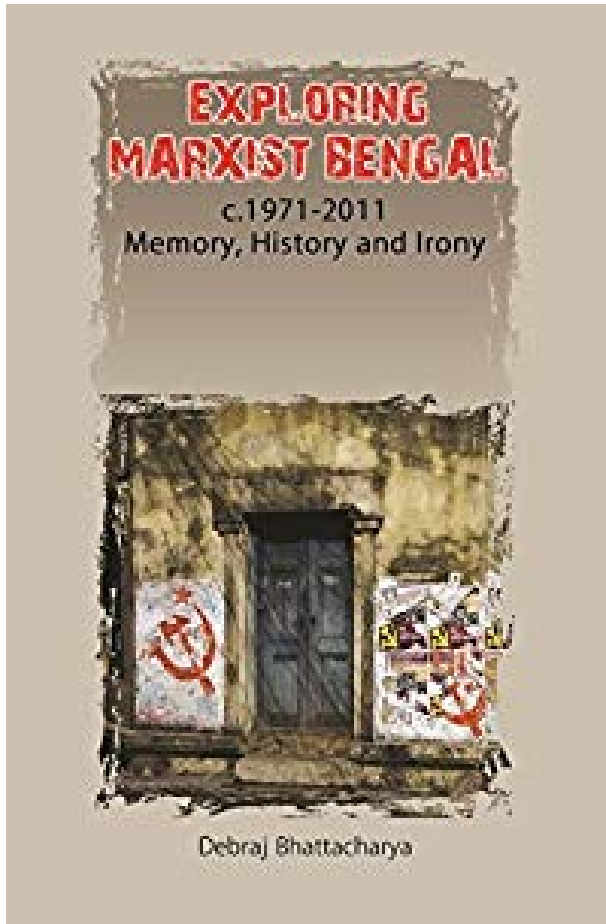


EXPLORING MARXIST BENGAL c.1971-2011: Memory, History and Irony



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In this book the author, who was born and brought up in West Bengal/India during the Left Front era, ponders over the question, 'How did I become interested in Marxist politics and what do I still believe in?' As a student of History, the author had learnt that one should maintain distance and analyse the object of study as if the analyst is a judge trying to find the truth about a place and a period of time. Such a method, according to the author, cannot capture many of the nuances of the Left experience in Bengal. Avoiding the traditional route, in this book Bhattacharya has attempted to weave a personal narrative with an impersonal historical understanding of West Bengal/India under Left Front. This weaving of the personal with the historical also makes the book different from most other scholarly works on the Left experience in West Bengal and India. The book begins with the author's childhood in the late-seventies/early eighties and ends in 2011 with the electoral defeat of Left Front. In the process it explores issues like fall of Soviet Union, globalization, hindutva, transformation of urban society, panchayati raj, rural poverty, work of NGOs, popular cinema, populist politics, the process by which the Left Front lost the election of 2011, reasons behind the decline of the Left and its future prospects. Bhattacharya is with the Institute of Social Sciences, an Indian civil society organisation.