PREFACE

There is a much abused revolutionary slogan that the history of freedom is written in blood. Under the guise of a statement of fact, it calls for the writing of even more history in even more blood. The October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution once seemed to unlock the floodgates of freedom, aspiration and expectation among the downtrodden people in every nook and corner of this universe. My own deep commitment is to a socio-economic system which can help in achieving a complete emancipation of human conscience and labour. But I am aware that there is a tension throughout between this commitment and the stark realities of socio-economic development. This is because when I see the shocking degeneration of the popular, representative, socialist set-ups, like the Soviet Union, into more authoritarian and dictatorial systems. The snowballing mass uprisings throughout the socialist world and the political-economic transformations in the Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, have perhaps given currency to the notion that the history of the civilisation is the history of domination and subordination, against which people will rebel again and again, but might again land up in another kind of exploitative relations.
Soviet Union was the hub of the socialist world. It seems to me that the basic problem of the Soviet type societies is the bureaucratisation of the Communist Party-State apparatuses and their eventual domination over the society. I think the roots of the rise of a gigantic bureaucratic thermidor lie not only in the peculiar socio-economic circumstances under which the October Revolution occurred, but also in some of the ideological, theoretical understandings of the founders of Marxism and the Bolshevik leaders on the post-revolutionary state set-up. After the Revolution, it is the Bureaucracy and not the working masses which gradually took control of the core of political and economic power. I think the root of the socio-economic stagnation, authoritarianism and the eventual crisis, today in the socialist world, is this bureaucratic degradation of the system. One could well term the present uprisings in the socialist world as anti-bureaucratic.

Here, I have made an humble attempt to inquiry into the basic ingredients for the rise of this bureaucratism; henceforth my discussion is confined to the post-October decade or so. The methodology I have applied is basically historical-analytical.

The introductory part of my study deals with the concept of bureaucracy - socialist and non-socialist, and
the setting of the problem of bureaucratisation in the Soviet Union.

Chapter two explains how some of the inconsistencies, errors, and vagueness in the ideological, theoretical constructs on post-revolution socialist set-up and some Party policies after the Revolution made room for the rise of the bureaucracy.

The third chapter explains the historical semi-capitalist socio-economic situation in which the change-over came and the unprecedented aftermath of the Revolution which left the proletariat, the torch-bearers of the revolution declassed, therefore, only the Bolshevik party and the state apparatus was left to take over the corridors of power.

Chapter fourth analyses the ultimate consolidation of the Soviet bureaucracy's hold over the society with the coming of Stalin. I have explained the rise of Stalin more as the culmination of the emerging bureaucratic, authoritarian patterns of the then Soviet society and the legacy of Tsarism, than anything else.

I have concluded by stating that the preexisting social traditions and an ideology and institutional system, far ahead of the cultural level of the masses, favoured the
return to the earlier historical patterns in Russia and led on to create a totalitarian bureaucratic system.

That my choice of the subject is not arbitrary is demonstrated by the widespread on-going debate among the literary and political circles on the crisis of socialism. And here, my deepest and most sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor Dr. Ajay Patnaik whose indepth literary, foresighted and sobre guidance has always enriched my vision on the subject. Many a time a healthy discourse on the topic with him aroused the creative in me.

I would like to express my gratitude also to Prof. Zafar Imam and Prof. Arvind Vyas for the fruitful creative discussions I had with them on many occasions, formal or informal.

My research work would be absolutely devoid of any meaning worthwhile unless I communicate my greatest reverence to my noblest Parents and Mashima and Meshomashy whose relentless sacrifices to help me write my dissertation were a constant source of inspiration for me in progressing my research.

I am also grateful to my colleagues and friends, Soumen Dhar Chaudhury, Vidya Shankar Aiyar, Arup Chatterjee, Indranil Dasgupta, Ashok Behera and Rama Rao, who have
contributed criticisms of one or the other of these chapters, and stimulated my thinking.

My special gratitude goes to Miss Sudakshina Panigrahi whose memorable correspondences with me further deepened my vision.

Lastly, the full credit for this dissertation, I would certainly like to confer upon Dola, from the deepest chord of my heart, without whose inspirations and ambitions I would not have been able to proceed on the research work.

Date: 19-7-91

Santanu Sengupta
(SANTANU SENGUPTA)