

West Bengal has the longest ruling democratically elected Communist government in world history. Since 1977 the Left Front has governed a population of 68 million people and has received considerable world-wide attention as a positive example of Third World development and change. In this book, Dr. Ross Mallick convincingly challenges this view of the Left Front government, arguing that it has been a failure in terms of redistributive development reforms.

Using interviews with government officials and ruling party members as well as internal government and party documents, the author concentrates upon the Left Front's rural development policy and compares and contrasts this with their policy towards industrial labor, the state bureaucracy and big business. He explores the role of different classes in formulating and directing the Communist party's policies and explains why communism developed in Bengal, but not in neighboring states. The author also assesses why the communism that has developed is not of a revolutionary character, but of the most minimal type of reformism in which the lower classes have had a peripheral role and which has not significantly improved their standard of living. Mallick concludes that, although the powers and policy options of the state government were necessarily limited, a great deal more could have been achieved had the ruling party not been impeded by the elitist nature of its political base.

Development policy of a Communist government will be widely read by students and specialists of South Asian studies, Third World development and comparative communism.



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Development policy of a Communist government:

West Bengal since 1977

Ross Mallick





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Glossary

AIKS All-India Kisan Sabha

(CPM Peasant Organization)

Bargadar Sharecropper

Benami Property transferred to another

only nominally

Bhadralok Literally "gentleman," normally refers to

high caste upper class Bengali

Biga 1/3rd of an acre in Bengal

CADP Comprehensive Area Development Program

CC Central Committee

CITU Centre of Indian Trade Unions

(CPM Trade Union)

Class 1-IV employees Grades of Government employees

with Class 1 being the highest

CPC Communist Party of China

CPI Communist Party of India (previously

"pro-Soviet")

CPM, CPI (M) Communist Party of India, (Marxist),

independent

CPI (M-L) Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist),

Maoist commonly referred to as Naxalites

CPSU Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Crore Ten million
FB Forward Bloc
Hectare 2.47 acres

IAS Indian Administrative Service

ICS Indian Civil Service IPS Indian Police Service

IRDP Integrated Rural Development Program

Lakh One hundred thousand Village Council

PB Politburo (CPM)

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Glossary xiii

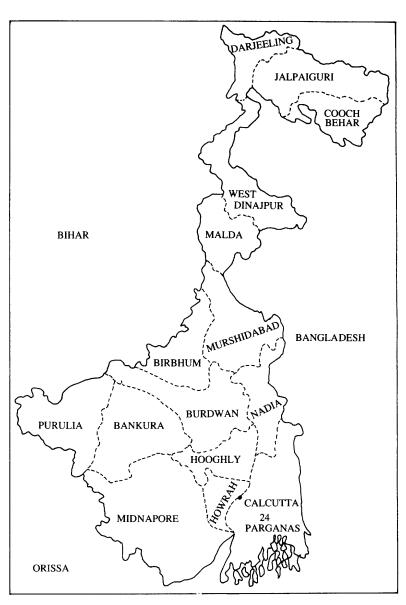
RSP Revolutionary Socialist Party Scheduled Castes Untouchable castes listed or

"scheduled" in the constitution of India Student Federation of India (CPM)

SFI Student Federation of India SUC Socialist Unity Centre

WBCS West Bengal Civil Service
Writers Building Secretariat, seat of West Bengal government
Zamindar Landlord and colonial revenue collector





District map of West Bengal

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