The Communist movement originated in India and in Maharashtra in the first quarter of the 20th century. Maharashtra produced many of the Communist stalwarts. Nevertheless, the Communist movement has suffered stagnation in Maharashtra. Though the conditions in Maharashtra were congenial to this movement, the history of Communism in the State has revealed several gaps and shortcomings. This is a position which needs analysis. Is it the failure of the ideology or the failure of the methods adopted by the Communist leaders in Maharashtra? Why have other left parties - specially the P.W.P. also failed to create strong roots among the masses?

Here is an attempt to find out the strength and weaknesses of the Communist movement in the light of the socio-economic and politico-cultural trends in Maharashtra. The title of this thesis needs slight clarification. The term 'Communist Movement' has been used (1) in a generic sense as inclusive of all left movements and also (2) in reference to the fortunes of the Communist Party. The justification for using this term with a twofold meaning is that in the author's view the Communist movement in the second sense presupposes the development of a broad leftist attitude in sections of society which the party has to exploit in order to find an adequate social base. The success of the party has to be measured with this yardstick - how far has the party shown an awareness of social reality?
Finally it may be mentioned that references to the general history of the Communist Party in India have become inevitable because the Party in Maharashtra is not an independent entity but reflects the policies of the Communist Party of India. The question before the author is, Did the Communist Party in Maharashtra succeed in adapting the general policies of the party to the local conditions and, if so, with what degree of success.

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