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Radical Politics in West Bengal. by Marcus F. Franda

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havior of states. Herein lies the principal contribution of this thoughtful work.

EDWARD A. KOLODZIEJ, *University of Virginia*

Radical Politics in West Bengal. By MARCUS F. FRANDA. (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1971. Pp. xiv, 287. \$12.50.)

Of the questions confronting the comparative study of revolution, one of the most persistent is that of failure—why, in what would otherwise appear to be a revolutionary situation, the revolution remains in suspended gestation. Professor Franda is concerned with one of the most volatile regions of the world, the Indian state of West Bengal. It was in Bengal that Indian communism was nurtured a half century ago by the frustrations of a regional elite, sustained by a romantic terrorist tradition. Communal conflict, unemployment, and general economic decline have contributed to deepened political instability, upon which the communist movement in Bengal has fed. For all its size and power, “the communist movement in Bengal has not succeeded, but,” Franda writes, “it always looks as if it may be on the verge of doing so.” This book, in examining the social origins and experience of the communist movement in Bengal, seeks to explain why.

Franda sets three broad sets of questions for himself:

- (1) What are the sources of communism in West Bengal? Why have Bengalis been so active in the communist movement while other Indians have for the most part sought alternative outlets for political expression and participation?
- (2) What are Bengali Communists attempting to accomplish and how do they go about it?
- (3) What has been the impact of the Bengali communist movement on state and national politics, and on Communists themselves?

In the answer to these questions, Franda provides a lucid analysis of what often seems the hopeless confusion of Bengal politics. More

significantly, he has added to Marshall and Windmiller's *Communism in India* (1959) and Mohan Ram's *Indian Communism: Split Within A Split* (1969) an examination of the Indian communist movement in the political context of its most dramatic impact. Beyond party documents, he has meticulously drawn upon press reports, English and Bengali, and upon interviews and discussions with Bengal's communist leaders.

The volume is occasionally repetitive and disconnected, as in some of the biographical data on the communist leadership, but, on the whole, it is systematic and flows with sureness of direction and intent. It leaves some problems curiously unexamined, as, for example, the impact of the divergent organizational forms of the CPI and CPM on their capacity to mobilize support. Such omissions, however, are minor against the merits of the book. Although rarely a subject of review, the superb design for the dust-jacket by Sunil Das must be commended. *Radical Politics in West Bengal* stands highly recommended to any student of Indian politics and of revolutions—those won and those that have failed.

ROBERT L. HARDGRAVE, JR., *University of Texas at Austin*

The Politics of Fiscal Policy Formation. By LAWRENCE C. PIERCE.
(Pacific Palisades, Cal.: Goodyear Publishing Co., 1971. Pp.
xii, 225. \$8.00.)

Studies of public economic policy formation by political scientists are still scarce. Pierce's volume is a welcome and significant contribution to this limited body of literature. Concerned with an important area of public policy, it nicely illustrates how a policy-making approach can contribute to our knowledge of policy content, process, and politics—all proper matters of concern for political scientists.

The time focus of the study is the period of the Kennedy-Johnson administrations, although Pierce avers that the process then existent