

**Panel 34:** Communism Compared: Andhra Pradesh and Kerala in the 1950s

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**Abstract:** Notwithstanding considerable differences in geography, natural endowments and social structure, both Kerala and Andhra, two principal regions of southern India, exhibited strong left-wing tendencies from the time before the achievement of Indian independence in 1947. The Left's growing popularity in these two regions was marked by the significant presence of the Congress Socialist Party and the Communist Party of India. These organizations successfully mobilized workers and organized peasants into Kisan Sabhas before independence. The success in mobilizing the people of the two regions was reflected in the impressive success of the Communists in the 1952 general elections, though they were not yet in a position to form a government. The years between 1952 and 1957, the latter being the date of the second general elections, was marked by opposite developments in the two regions. Andhra's Left became weaker in these years, and did not perform as well in the 1957 elections. In contrast, the Left in Kerala consolidated the gains of 1952 and won a majority which was adequate to form the state government in 1957. This panel aims at understanding the causes behind the diverse trajectories of the Communist parties in the two regions. Moreover, the similarities and differences are analyzed, and the general patterns of Leftist politics in southern India during the first decade after independence examined.

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