

HAREKRISHNA KONAR

Present Stage of Peasant Movement

Harekrishna Konar was a brilliant leader of the peasant movement of West Bengal and a prominent leader of the Communist Party of India (Marxist). At the age of 18 he was transported to the Cellular Jail in Andamans for his participation in the terrorist-revolutionary movement. Harekrishna Konar became a prominent leader of the kisan movement first in Burdwan district and later in West Bengal. Konar became the Minister for Land and Land Revenue in the first United Front Government in 1967. During this period, he made a big contribution to the militant peasant movement for occupation of benami and vested lands of the jotedars (landlords). He was the General Secretary of the All India Kisan Sabha and a member of the Central Committee of the CPI(M). His death in July 1974 due to cancer at the age of 59 was a big loss for the Party and the communist movement.

The birth centenary of this revolutionary leader is being observed this year and to commemorate this anniversary, we are publishing the abridged version of a speech he delivered to a meeting of college and university teachers on July 24, 1969.

Feudal exploitation still forms the basis of village economy in rural India. Feudal exploitation cannot exist alone in any country in the present age which is the last stage of imperialism. It must remain intermingled with imperialistic and capitalistic exploitation. Even in the pre-revolutionary Russia there has been some capitalistic development in agriculture. This capitalistic and imperialistic economy has shattered the self-sufficient village economy and brought it into the vortex of world market. Thus the villages and towns became interlinked through the market. Because of the imperialist domination over the market, the class-differentiation among the peasantry is sure to intensify. This is because the peasants are now engaged in production for market. This class-differentiation has intensified in proportion to the flourish of capitalism in different countries. It is even seen that some of the peasants, after passing through the level of rich peasants, rise to the level of jotedars and kulaks. This class-differentiation among the peasantry, as a result of the penetration of capital into rural India, did not escape the eyes of Comrade Stalin. He said that it was a must in the case of India. As a result of such differentiation among the peasants, they can have no uniform attitude towards revolution.

This class-differentiation among Indian peasants has been accentuated during the last 23 years. On the whole, big and monopoly capital have come into being in India. Village economy has been more and more intimately connected with the capital market. Peasants are even purchasing from market such ordinary things as ploughs, plough-shares, nails and pegs. Class-differentiation in rural areas in our country is far greater in comparison to that in many other countries in the world. For this reason the subject is to be specially studied. In our country agrarian revolution is intimately related with the struggle against feudal exploitation and the exploitation of monopoly capital and imperialism. A question may arise; where do capitalism and imperialism exist in the villages? Who is the capitalist there? The fact is this - these exploitations are connected through and through with feudal exploitation and are especially operative through trading. Is it feudalism pure and simple to hoard food grains and sell it at high prices? It is a strange admixture of different forms of exploitation. Profit was not made in this way in the old feudal times.

Even today land relations in the villages are primarily feudalistic in nature. But with the penetration of money economy in the rural areas, it having been combined with the capitalist exploitation has been assuming a strange character. And this capitalist exploitation is mainly dominated by monopoly capital which is allied with the imperialist exploitation. So the struggle against feudalism cannot be merely anti-feudal in character. It is the teachings of Marxism that the present feudal exploitation is allied with capitalism and imperialism.

The feudal groups in the rural areas are the representatives of feudal exploitation. They have the authority over everything land, money, the market and the right of work. In short, they lord it over rural life. So the peasants would have to struggle against the exploitation of feudal groups in the villages, i.e. they are to accomplish the agrarian revolution. But this struggle has different aspects. Agrarian revolution is intimately related with People's Democratic Revolution. The main task of agrarian revolution is to free the peasants. But it is not possible unless the political revolution – People's Democratic Revolution – is accomplished. It is the political power of the exploiting classes that has allowed feudalism in the village to survive. This exploitation is closely related with the class-character of the present State. If the peasants who form the majority of the exploited mass be not brought to the field of struggle for liberation, i. e. if agrarian revolution in the villages is not carried forward, People's Democratic Revolution would be a far cry. The revolution of the city workers cannot be accomplished unless the peasants are brought to the field and are liberated. So it can be said that the core of People's Democratic Revolution is agrarian revolution and the key to its success is People's Democratic Revolution. The problems of the peasants remain unsolved without People's Democratic Revolution.

The slogans at different periods of development of agrarian revolution are to be formulated in accordance with the tasks of People's Democratic Revolution. The main objective of agrarian revolution is to abolish feudalism. Keeping this end in view, the struggle of the peasants is to progress. But the concrete slogans at different times or stages of this peasant struggle and the demands to be raised at a specific period are to be determined according to the political task of the time.

What was seen in China? Up to 1927 when the famous Northern expedition had been in operation, the movement of the peasants was directed against the warlords and feudal landowners, the allies of imperialism. The struggle of the workers in Hankow, Shanghai and other cities and that of the peasants in rural areas under their leadership were shattering the political power of the feudal lords and striking hard against feudal exploitation. When in 1927 the bourgeois leadership betrayed and joined hands with imperialism and dealt a blow against the revolutionary workers and peasants, the Communist Party, though hit hard, began to rally itself anew, basing itself upon the struggling peasants here and there in rural areas. In the face of fascist-like terror, the struggle of workers in cities was frustrated. The revolution then primarily turned into agrarian revolution. With the formation of strongholds of political power in the rural areas, peasant struggle was led toward the seizure of land. Apart from this the party had to go to the villages on account of changed circumstances. It was a tactical question.

Afterwards, United Front was again formed against the fascist attack of Japan. Even Chiang Kai-shek who was arrested in the hands of his own generals was ordered to be released. Keeping at par with the political needs of the time the slogan for land grabbing was changed into the slogan for the reduction of rents for the sake of building broad unity against Japan. In the post-war period the question of agrarian revolution came to fore according to the needs of the liberation movement. The main point that is to be borne in mind is that the present movement should be advanced step by step in accordance with political slogans. That must be dependent upon the slogans required to advance the People's Democratic Revolution. The peasants and workers are to be trained in this matter accordingly. It is the political task which is prime and foremost. It is this which will decide the tasks on different fronts. As for example, a line was once drawn in Vietnam differentiating the landlords — treacherous and patriotic. To give little concession for the sake of the widest possible unity, even if temporary against the main enemy is a necessity. Even after 1954 when the Vietnam Government took hold of land, it compensated the patriotic zemindars; in special cases they were even given small holdings of land for cultivation to satisfy their

own needs. The land of ordinary landlords was confiscated but they were allowed to retain their small factories and houses. But no mercy was shown to the treacherous landlords. In China also land reform legislation were passed in haste, but they were not given immediate effect. Its implementation was gradual and it was first applied against the most hated sort of landlords of the adjacent areas.

How far has capitalism flourished in rural areas? Some scholars are of opinion that agricultural production and the solution of the food problem do not depend upon land reform. They argue for land reform only from the standpoint of social justice. The progress of capitalism, they say, depends upon the physical form of capitalist production. According to them, increase of production depends upon technology. In reality, these talks about technical improvement (improvement of fertilizers, irrigation, seeds etc.) create confusion which is manifested in the theory of 'green revolution'. Will technical improvement solve the problem is the question. The development of capitalism, particularly in the sphere of agriculture, is intimately related to the rural production.

The ruling classes in our country first thought that with increase in rural production the supply of foodgrains etc. would increase in urban areas, the capitalist class in rural areas would be strengthened and that entrepreneurs taking initiative in small enterprises will appear, i.e., democracy will flourish there. Real land reform in the interest of the peasants is not possible in the interest of their class alliance. So they have tried for limited capitalistic development with the help of the landlords. They tried to solve the problem by making the landlords and rich peasants cultivate by improved methods. But in reality it has not materialized. The crisis has rather deepened. To allow concentration of land in the hands of few meant that most of the peasants would have no land, and no work either. On the other hand there has not been rapid industrialization also. Where then is the alternative means of livelihood? (It was relatively possible in Germany under Bismarck.)

Where would then this vast mass of pauperized peasants deprived of land and employment opportunity go? They are bound to remain in the villages. They will be forced to go for land and work to the handful of owners of big holdings and money. This means that they are compelled to approach the feudal owners and those who would pay them wages. And what about wages in villages? It is almost bonded slavery: to accept wages on any terms or to fast. Indeed the more the infiltration of capitalistic exploitation, the uglier the form of feudal exploitation.

After the famine of 1843 the system of hoarding penetrated the villages. Its exploitation is more severe than the earlier usurious exploitation. This new system of hoarding has offered the hoarders better opportunity for making profit by increasing the prices of commodities. What did the moneylenders of the past do? They realized one maund and ten seers of paddy for lending one maund of it. Of this ten seers, eight would go towards the interest and two for compensating moisture. But at present it is much more profitable to sell a maund of paddy in the month of Sravana (July-August) at Rs.60 instead of lending it at an interest of ten seers. Paddy sells at Rs.20 at the highest in the months of Agrahayan-Paush (mid-November to mid-January). Loan transactions are made nowadays in terms of money, and not in terms of paddy as was the age-old practice. This may be termed as capitalist invasion of the market. There lies the opportunity of getting rich easily and without taking any risk as most of the land is concentrated in the hands of a few.

Though there is law that a share-cropper would get his share of the produce at the sixty-forty ratio, in practice it is 50:50. At certain places there is even a reverse tendency. The system of payment by contract is getting introduced, the rent for a bigha (one-third acre) being pre-fixed at 5 to 8 maunds of paddy. Therefore it is evident that in certain cases a more cruel method of feudal exploitation is being introduced. The moneylender would not sell paddy during the harvest. He would sell it at high prices during the lean period. It would fetch him enormous profits. The use of tractors, better seeds, fertilizers and irrigation facilities would no doubt increase production. Very well. But why would he make use of these? A tractor would cost him some seventeen thousand rupees or more. Why would he spend such a big amount? Moreover, he is to make provision for its maintenance, a driver and oil. It involves risks, too. So the

jotdar and the moneylender would not accept any risks. They would spend nothing for all these. A capitalistic mode of production involves some risk while this feudal exploitation is devoid of it.

During the British period indigenous capitalism developed to some extent in Bombay. In Bengal it was otherwise. What does the history of Bengal tell us? From the very outset of the British regime, the compradors were engaged in trade and earned profit. But the Permanent Settlement offered them an opportunity of sure income without taking any risk. So they invested their capital in buying zamindari instead of going in for factory industry. Under the Permanent Settlement the zamindar had to pay revenue at a permanently fixed rate. But the rent to be realized from the cultivators was not fixed. So the leasing out the zamindari for realizing rent (subinfeudation) became the practice. In this system the zamindar might pay Rs.2,000 as government's revenue while he would realize Rs.8,000 from his lessee. Besides this they would extort a huge amount of illegal income. Moreover, as a result of the Permanent Settlement, a middle-class intelligentsia, having connection with the British and the zamindari exploitation came into being. (Their role in the revolt of 1857 and in the revolts of the peasants at different times may be recalled.)

But in Bombay the system was Raiyatwari. That was why some of the banians and the moneylenders there in Bombay invested their profits in buying zamindaries. Of course, a few of them took the path of capital investment in industries. But that was very limited. Thus capitalist exploitation entered into Bengal but the capitalist mode of production did not develop proportionately. Not that it did not develop at all but it was very much limited and intimately related to the feudal method of exploitation. The activities of the jotdars and the moneylenders, who would employ labourers for cultivating their land, became supervisory in nature. Whatever might be the rate of wages in the sowing season, they would advance loan to the labourers in the lean period and then employ them at cheaper rate. For these reasons capitalist development in agriculture was bound to be limited.

It is limited no doubt. Besides, along with this limited capitalist development, the mode of production at certain places had a backward turn. In certain cases the tenants with partial rights were converted into unsettled tenants or share-croppers. Moreover, the limited development of capitalism gave birth to other problems. As for example, peasants are losing their land. It intensifies social and class antagonism (vide report of Ladejinski, the representative of the World Bank in India.) The policy of the ruling classes is to develop a base capable of forestalling the revolutionary possibility in the rural areas. Hence, do a big of land reforms, give some encouragement to the rich peasants along with an attempt to transform the feudal landlords into capitalist landlords, and create some illusion by advocating improved methods of cultivation in the name of land reforms — this is their line of action. Efforts have been made to that effect through the community development etc.

What is the significance of peasant movement of last two years? Have we been able to utilize the United Front Government as a weapon for the development of a mass movement? The answer to this question would offer us the yard-stick of judgment. The success is to be measured in terms of the degree of political consciousness aroused in the peasants and the extent to which the poor peasants have been united and organized, and not in terms of the immediate economic gains and what was secured for them. (There was some such attitude in us in 1967 but we detected the errors and corrected them.) Secondly, to give undue importance to legislation is not a correct attitude. New laws are to be enacted even with our limited power; they are necessary, too, in the interest of realizing immediate demands and of advancing the peasant movement as a whole. But our attitude must not be confined to that direction only. We have kept this in view in West Bengal. We have learnt lesson from the events of Kerala. We decided not to send our draft Bills to Delhi and wait for the approval of the Central Government. We resolved that without waiting for new enactments we would unleash mass movement first on the basis of the existing laws. New laws are required, and we have enacted a few, too. But the primary attention is to be paid to unleashing the initiative of the people. What should be the slogan? That depends on the organization and level of consciousness of the peasants. Slogans for today should be such as would bring the peasants to the field of struggle.

The peasants in the villages constitute the main force of the democratic revolution, but the peasants are divided into different strata. The poor peasants and the agricultural workers should be made our base in rural areas, if we think of People's Democratic Revolution. The people forming the lowest stratum are directly connected with production and are deprived most. As the combination of monopoly capital and feudalism aided by imperialism is a formidable force, the number of enemies must be kept to the minimum as far as practicable. So the middle peasants must be made a close ally, otherwise our strength will sag. To keep them as a close ally and unite them with the poor has its objective basis. Who is a rich peasant? He who takes part in any major operation of production such as ploughing, sowing and harvesting. He also makes surplus production and thereby earns profit. Attempts must be made to keep him with us, and there is the objective possibility of doing so.

Feudalism is, (apart from social relations), primarily based on big holdings of land. As one feudal lord possesses enormous land, it is but natural that he can hoard and lord it over the share-croppers and agricultural labourers. The agricultural labourers, the poor peasants, the share-croppers—all have a craving for land. So there must be movements centering around land. On the question of land the peasant movement in West Bengal has step by step gone deep into the lowest stratum. At one stage the movement was started in 1946-47 on the question of share of the produce. At a later stage a powerful movement against eviction was added to it in 1954-55. Still later, in 1958-59, the movement was started for the recovery of benami (fraudulently and secretly transferred to another's name) land in certain predominantly share-cropping areas of 24 Parganas and Midnapore districts. The Government had spoken of investigation about such land which remained in words only. But the peasants occupied it and demanded that the Government investigate. At other places the movement continued against eviction and on their issues.

There had been many movements on the demands of the middle and other strata of peasants. But no such movement had ever been started mainly with the poor peasants at the base in a vast area. Opportunity came in 1967 with the formation of the United Front Government and the peasant movement overcame its weaknesses and limitation and widely engulfed the poor peasants. At this time the land movement assumed mainly the share of taking possession of vested land and its distribution. There were the laws, there was the United Front Government. The Government was then asked to recover the benami lands, but the slogans for recovering such lands with the organized efforts of the peasants was not raised then. Had it been raised, it would probably have advanced beyond the existing level of mass-consciousness. The land that had been legally vested in the Government but was yet in the possession of the jotdars was actually taken possession of and distributed. Get the lists of such land from the Government and occupy it yourselves—was the slogan that advanced the peasants to some extent. The poor peasants widely rallied and took initiative. They had some taste of land. The sorrow for their land lost over generations and their dream of getting it back boosted their consciousness to new heights. That their level of consciousness was raised was amply manifested in the mid-term election.

Rice sold at Rs. 3 or 4 a kilo in 1967, but that did not confuse the poor, though it somewhat perturbed the middle class. In the widespread democratic movement of 1968 the village peasants along with the working class and the urban people played a relatively better role than before. The United Front of 1969 was on a higher plane than that of 1967. Following the formation of the new United Front Government the high tide of the peasant movement swept the entire countryside with unprecedented speed. The 'petitioning' attitude of the earlier period was discarded. The slogan for occupying khas (vested) land gained new momentum and the peasant mind was greatly enthused. Eviction was stopped. The share-croppers did not surrender their land. Even in some cases they went so far as to restore their right to the land from which they had been evicted one or two years back. It means the struggle against eviction and struggle for land merged together. The Ordinance to stop eviction helped the peasants much in this respect.

Secondly, in many areas the task of taking possession of vested land and its distribution was not primarily entrusted to Government officers. Instead it was effected through the direct initiative of the

peasants. In many cases the officers went after the task was over and simply collected the names of the peasants to whom the land had been distributed.

Thirdly, there was the struggle for the recovery of 'benami' land. In 1967 efforts were made from the government's end to recover such land. The peasants became particularly conscious that the land which had not been vested yet might also be vested now. From the middle of 1967 to the end of 1969 the Government had legally recovered more than three (3) lakh acres of benami land. The government could not take possession of the entire land because of Court injunctions. But the drive for finding out benami land was not confined to Government effort only; the peasants themselves came forward, too. What does it signify? The land of which the Government had not taken any legal possession and there was doubt as to whether it would be able to do so, was occupied by the peasants. This is what is called 'occupying benami land'. (it means the peasants occupied such land which had not yet been recognized as vested and was still in the hands of the landlords by means of forged documents).

Then came the question of land under injunctions which would amount to nearly two lakh acres. The unjust devices, which the landlords adopted to retain the excess land by obtaining ex-parte injunctions from the High Court, were not accepted by the peasants and in many cases they occupied such land. The peasants who showed respect for the judicial system and had illusion about the 'court of justice' as being above class considerations, began to get rid of it. They started realizing that the process of law cannot rise above class interest.

It bears special significance. The awakened consciousness of the peasants about the illegally occupied benami land and the land vested in the Government and of their growing strength broke that complacent attitude. The United Front Government has helped their just honest efforts by every means. The Home Minister of the United Front Government has performed the hard task of restraining the police from siding with the jotdars and going against the peasant. That is why there is no much eagerness on the part of certain pro-jotdar parties of the United Front for usurping the Home department. The Land Revenue and the Home Department with their manual cooperation have undoubtedly played an important role. But it was the unprecedented upsurge of the poor peasants, their broad initiative and active performance which formed the real basis. This movement, like surging waves, gained tremendous momentum in vast areas of every district of West Bengal. The movement has become strong not only in its extent but also in its intensify. The manifestation of the revolutionary power of the rural poor has special significance. (It is comparatively weak in Bankura, Purulia and Darjeeling.) How erroneous is the opinion of the adventurist amateurs is quite understandable from this. Poor peasants have learned wonderful lessons through experiences.

In 1969 at least 10 lakh bighas of land have passed on to the poor peasants from the hands of the jotdars. It means 50 to 60 lakh maunds of rice, instead of going in to the granaries of the hoarders, became the food of the poor. The peasants got some temporary relief. Yet their main problem remained unsolved. Important steps have been taken however, towards developing their fighting strength necessary for that solution. The condition of the peasants, in respect of their immediate needs, has become somewhat better than before. A portion of their money income would come into the market. It would influence the market, though little.

By this time there has been a change in the mood of the peasants and in their sense of dignity. The age-old servility of the poor peasants and agricultural labourers had been the safeguard of the ruling classes. This servile attitude has got a severe jolt. On the strength of this awakened consciousness, the peasants have moved forward for the realization of their demands other than that for land. This year they practically did not approach the Government for loan, relief etc. They secured paddy loan on a small interest from those moneylenders and jotdars who had surplus stocks. They even got some donation for their "dharmagola" (grain bank). As a result of which hoarding received a blow. This was perhaps for the first time in 26 years when the price of paddy did not rise much, even in the lean period. The peasants learnt a new lesson for stopping hoarding. Bereft of proper consciousness and organized leadership and guided by spontaneity, the anti-hoarding movement of the peasants, might in some cases, take the

opportunist path of looting, while, if guided correctly, it may go a different way. Beside this anti-hoarding drive, in some cases the jotdars and moneylenders were forced to give back the land of the poor peasants transferred to them under distress.

This movement for land influenced the movement of agricultural labourers, too. They also got some land. The friendly relation between them and the poor peasants and share-croppers has been growing more and more intimate. The poor peasants, too, instead of remaining indifferent, stood by the movement for increased wages. The agricultural labourers launched extensive movement at various places and also succeeded in securing enhanced wages. Nearly a lakh of agricultural labourers come to districts like Burdwan, Hooghly etc. from Bankura, Purulia and other places to work. They have gone back with enthusiasm for a movement. It is an example of the influence of the agricultural labourers movement.

The illusion of the peasants for the process of law started losing its effect when the movement for vested land passed on to occupying benami land. It was not important whether it would be possible to legalize the possession of all the occupied lands. It can certainly be done to some extent. But then it depends upon how the judgements of law courts, injunction etc, are to be faced. The reality is that in the consciousness of peasants the question of land reforms is getting involved with the question of the administrative structure of the country. Until the struggle for land came to the peasant stage, the peasants could not understand from their own experiences where the impediment lay. At present they are learning this. So they realize the need for amendment of the Constitution has become understandable to them. Through this their consciousness would reach a higher level, and their idea about the need of People's Democratic Revolution would grow strong. Our immediate task in the present situation would be to revise the laws in conformity with the extent the peasants had advanced on the question of land beyond the limits of the existing laws. Basing on this revision of laws the movement of the peasants would move a step further. This revision of laws is also a matter of movement for partial demand. This, too, would not solve the basic problem of the peasants; but would fetch some extra land for them and the peasant movement would advance still further. Along with this, a propaganda campaign should be conducted among the peasants about the basic tasks of the People's Democratic Revolution.

The level of consciousness of the peasants cannot be raised by issuing orders from above, nor can they be drawn in to the revolution that way. Only the adventurist Novices can think so. Peasants learn through their own experience. So in every case, such slogans should be raised and tactics adopted as they understand and thus take part in the movement. An example may be cited to show how the experiences of the peasants has grown. The level of consciousness of the peasants at Chaitanyapur in Burdwan was initially confined to the stage of acquiring 5 acres of a jotdar's vested land. They had not the mental preparedness for going beyond that limit, i.e. for acquiring the land which had not yet been vested. But the movement for occupying that 5 acres of land en masse after getting it settled officially, created an unprecedented sensation in the peasants of the whole area. The peasants, could not yet have accepted the slogan, if given at that time itself, of occupying the entire benami land of that jotdar. They were not even aware that only the receipts from the government for the distributed were not enough safeguard for them. The jotdars attacked them with guns and they had to face it. Two of the peasants died and 70 others wounded. They had to retreat a little any way but they learnt a lot. They feared not on the contrary, the experience roused in them great hatred. Moreover, when the arrested jotdars and their seized guns were released by order of the Judge's Court, the role of law courts became clearer to the peasants. The 20 - to 25 thousand peasants, who gathered to mourn the death of the two peasants, were led to occupy the benami land of the Roy Choudhuris—the jotdars. More than a thousand acres of land were occupied. That which was impossible a few days ago became now possible. They also harvested the crop on that land and took it home. It would be impossible for the jotdars to disposes them of the land without difficulty; injunctions would be of no avail.

This is how lakhs and lakhs of toiling peasants have been awakened to the ideals of struggle. I have been engaged in the peasant movement since 1939, but I had never seen before such unprecedented

enthusiasm, firmness and mass awakening in such vast areas. Whether we would be able to properly utilize the situation depends on our own activities.

The earlier peasant movement in Bengal was at first based primarily on middle peasants. Now it has shifted its base and has become deep-rooted. Primarily the movement is now firmly based on poor peasants, share-croppers and agricultural labourers. In other words, a strong foundation has been laid for future movement.

Again, as a result of this movement, countless activists have come out in the rural areas. But they are yet to gain experience and be enriched with political consciousness. But they have wonderful courage and firmness. The organization and consciousness of the poor peasants and agricultural labourers have remarkably developed. There has been enormous increase in the membership of the Kisan Sabha. This is the initial manifestation of the peasants willingness to be organized. This membership is of much value to the poor peasants. They attach much importance to it. At present there are more than 9 lakh members. Thus we have made great strides. As the crisis, on the one hand, is deepening, so the peasants, too, on the other, are keeping track of its and coming forward to encounter it. They are making some preparation to encounter a more difficult situation if necessary. The reactionary forces in their attack against the peasants would not have it easy as a walkover.

But a few problems have cropped up as a result of the movement being based on poor peasants. The middle peasants in the villages were so long in the leadership of the movement. They belonged to higher social classes. But the poor peasants have now come forward. They generally hail from the rank of Scheduled Castes and Tribes. As a result of their removal from leadership, the middle peasants have been feeling a bit uneasy, somewhat shy. The old balance of power has broken down and to create a new one a new basis has to be laid. With the poor peasant in the position of leadership, unity must be built up between the poor and the middle peasants. No solution to this problem is possible without a political campaign and movement. The significance of the leading role of the poor peasants has to be explained to the middle peasants. On the other hand the necessity of building peasant unity has to be made clear to the poor peasant also. They must understand that it is but the beginning of their movement and that they have to fight still harder and tougher battle in the future. So they have to unite with all peasants and go ahead with them all. That process has started, too. The bye-election in Raina (Burdwan) is just over. In the area of northern Raina adjacent to Barsul our candidate has secured much more votes than in the mid-term election. In these areas both the poor and middle peasants have voted for us but it has been otherwise in the southern areas. In those areas we had no movement of the poor peasants for land. That is why in other areas many felt somewhat uneasy because of false "news" and by reading newspapers, the middle peasants misunderstood the position and felt somewhat panicky; the poor had not the courage and inclination to stand on their own feet. Thus were lost both the container and contained. Though as a whole we have won it by a larger margin than before, we should take the lesson from the contrast between these two areas.

The peasant movement is still in the stage of economism. It may be termed militant economism. The same is the movement of the workers and the middle class people, i.e. teachers and other employees. Under such circumstances how far would the people dare face the political attack of the reactionaries when it comes? Political consciousness of the peasants and other sections of the people must be developed. Their movement and consciousness should be raised to such a stage when political task would be the directive force.

The peasant movement is spreading very fast. Cadres worthy of leadership are wanting to cope with it. There are many ordinary workers but they are not quite developed and experienced. This gap must be filled up. There is risk of healthy consciousness being turned to perverted path if loopholes in the organization exist and if there is failure in giving correct leadership. Certain sectarian tendencies manifest themselves in the relation between the poor and middle peasants and even in the relations among different sections of the poor.

The working class must stand by the peasants. Because, it would not be sufficient for the working class, if it must come into leadership, to look to its own class interests alone but they are also to champion the interests of other exploited classes. No section of the share-croppers should be left to the side of the jotdars. In this way would be built the people's United Front. Care must be taken to preserve unity at the base even when it is disrupted at the top. Ceaseless efforts must be carried on to build unity among the poor who are under the influence of different political parties. No sectarian partisan attitude should be given indulgence.

There is some influence of village factionalism on the peasant movement. It would not be proper to think that whoever comes close to it is above suspicion. There are men in the villages who are touts. They are smart and clever. Taking advantage of the paucity of workers capable of writing petitions, giving lead to the peasants and speaking for them, such men, in the guise of United Front supporters, have managed to infiltrate the poor peasants' movement. Their number would swell if organizational gaps were not filled up. In some places such men would come even into local leadership. It cannot also be said that some good new workers, suddenly getting into leadership, will not lose their heads. Such a thing has happened in however few cases it may be. Consequently defects and shortcomings have followed in certain places. Though very few in the peasant movement led by us, it would not be proper to ignore them keeping in view the future.

We have to look for the sources of these mistakes and correct them. We have to do it even from the crest of enormous progress and success. We have to move forward keeping in mind the base formed among the poor. Unity with the middle peasants must be strengthened. We must impress upon other classes the importance of their forming intimate relation with the movement of the poor peasants. Its significance must always be highlighted before them. A great revolutionary force is awakening and is being raised. Solidarity should be built up with it. The circulation of 'Desh Hitaishee' has been increasing in the villages. It means there, too, the people want to know. All these tasks along with the success and weakness of the movement must immediately be discussed with leading cadres in every district.