

# **The Aim and Object of Krishak O Khetmajur Federation and Its Organizational Problems**

*In the background of wanton state repression on starving and destitute peasants, on the plea of 'lawful' necessity, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh gave this address at a school of politics during the tenth conference of the West Bengal KKMf. Here he provides the guiding thread to identify the root of all sufferings and misery in the life of peasants and people of the country in general, and explains why the state is bearing down so heavily on them, and what they ought to do to end their age-old misery and privation. Here he makes a thoroughgoing analysis of the problems besetting the revolutionary organization of the peasants, the KKMf, and what the leaders and the cadre need to do to be equal to their historic mission.*

The point I want to raise at the outset itself is that apart from your day-to-day problems as mentioned in the resolution which you have adopted in this conference of the Krishak O Khetmajur Federation<sup>1</sup> you have certain other tasks in respect to the overall situation obtaining in the country as a whole today which needs to be confronted in an organized way. What indeed are these problems? To identify the problems you need to reflect over not only the problems which you confront in our country, you will also have to think about the problems in the perspective of your home country and the foreign countries together, both in the national and in the international perspective. For, what do you really want? What for are you waging struggles? Why do you build your organization? If you have thought that you have built up the organization merely in order to fight to overcome your day-to-day woes and sufferings, to fight against the oppression of the landowners and persecution of the police, then I must say you are wrong, and I want to tell you that with such an objective there is no purpose in building up the organization. There was no need for you to make so many sacrifices and toil so hard to build up this organization. For, you will not be able to solve your problems in this way. You will have to go on fighting all your life, just as your ancestors did, and your offspring too will do, and doubtless their progeny will have to go on doing still, and in so fighting will end up in failure ultimately,

utterly wrecked – but the situation will not improve unless you realize what needs to be done in order to bring about a fundamental change.

If the KKMF does not conduct these struggles with this aim in view, it will not gather strength in real terms and will remain far removed from the main purpose and objective, you will not be able to get anywhere near to it. Then, what really is the main objective? The main objective is emancipation of the peasants and workers from all kinds of exploitation – the way peasants, workers, marginal peasants and middle peasants all are exploited in this system. It is the peasants and workers themselves who will have to achieve this emancipation. Neither the Babus nor the Congressites, nor any minister or leader will bring this emancipation to you – they cannot do it. All will have to acquire emancipation through their own struggle together. Hence, it is the peasants and workers themselves who have to achieve the freedom they need. And the thing we must understand clearly is that none of us can secure emancipation alone, simply with his own effort. So, we get united and build up organization. The self-same is the objective of building up the KKMF. Exactly with this aim in view you have built up this organization – you are rallying agricultural workers, share-croppers, poor peasants, marginal peasants and lower-middle peasants under the banner of this organization. But while rallying them, what do you observe? You find that the tillers are not the owners of the land they till, nor do they enjoy the fruits of the produce of the land; denied their legitimate right, they get a minimal share only. Such is the condition of the share-croppers. And the agricultural labourers grow crops and do other work in return for an extremely low wage — too low to maintain them even at subsistence level. And even this work they do not get throughout the year. Again, those who have a little land, who are the owners of a small land holding, find that even this small land they cannot keep for long, it goes out of their hand. During a financial crisis, driven by pressing family needs and finding no alternative, they are forced to sell gradually whatever land they had. What else do you find? You find that a section of people till the soil while another section – only a handful, who have never even used a plough — reap the benefits from the land and lead a life of comfort. Those who own the land have perhaps never used a plough – they may not even know how to hold a plough — whether they live in the village or town, they enjoy the real benefits of the harvest, of its worth, for the sole reason that they are the owners. As much as this system of ownership obtains in the villages, so it does in towns. The problems in the towns are no different either. The workers face basically the same problems in towns.

Each and every article man needs, which is consumed, which is used by man – are all produced by workers. But the benefit accruing from production is appropriated by a handful of owners, the capitalists, while the workers who sell their labour power, receive just a paltry wage in return. The wage a worker gets does not enable him to lead a life worthy of a human, let alone provide for the education of his children and bringing them up as true men. Most of the time, he scarcely scrapes together two meals a day. Hence, peasants and workers have to realize that so long as this system exists their condition cannot be remedied; rather their problems will go on increasing with every day passing. So, the interest of both peasants and workers is one and the same, which is to put an end to this capitalist order. Whether it is the land or the factories – to be owned only by a handful while thousands and millions of the masses of people are toiling day in and day out to earn bare bread, and this backbreaking toil being usurped as profit by the owners who are living in comfort and luxury, their wealth piling up — this unjust system must not be allowed to go on. Yet, you see, this system based on injustice is not considered illegal. Such is the country's judicial system like! Its occupation is precisely to give protection to this illegality. Here the owner is not an illegal owner; on the contrary, he is held to be a legally recognized owner. The owner enjoys the lawful right to usurp profit by cheating workers, by exploiting them. The jotedars, that is, the big landowners are legally entitled to exploit the peasants. So, by taking recourse to legal battle while the peasants may be totally ruined, they will never come near to getting legal redress. Whatever they may turn to, in every instance, at every turn, they find the law of the land protecting but the interests of the owners. That is why I said that this system wherein it is the function of the law to protect the interests of the owners of industries, the owners of lands and the rulers and exploiters – that system we must demolish. And if we fail to bring down this system, we won't arrive at a solution – no matter how much we may suffer, however much we may wage struggles against it. For, where do this exploitation and oppression issue from? Where does this tyranny come from? Why is unemployment ever on the rise? We shall have to search for the cause behind all these and get the correct answer.

A little inquiry reveals that at one time the forefathers of those who are agricultural labourers today all had land. The forefathers were not agricultural labourers, nor were they landless farmers. Yet the lands have gone out of the hands of the successors. That they could not keep their lands and most of it is getting concentrated in the hands of a few – what is the reason for it? How could it come about? Each organizer of your organization, each of your members must find

the answer to this question and explain it to the labourers, the poor and the middle class. We are very much aware of the privation, the miseries and sufferings and accumulated grievance of each and every family. There is grievance, there is discontent among the people and they also want to fight. But they do not know the correct path — what kind of struggle they should wage, struggle against whom, how to conduct the struggle and how far to go at a given time. We do wage a struggle when a problem or a crisis of privation confronts us. But by so doing we do not realize that the door to admit privation remains open in this society. We fought against privation, driven by its torment we fought but despite the struggle the door for torment to enter still remains open. So this torment will come back, it will return over and over again, and you have again to wage a struggle against it. Take the instance of food crisis – every year you find it recurring, and each time we wage a struggle against it. We are fighting with the door kept open for ingress of the crisis. How strange! Like a football bladder, if it has developed a leak and you try to blow it up, there is no end to your blowing. You go on blowing it all your life, but the moment you stop blowing it will deflate. For, the leak is there still. Hence, the person who is intelligent will first detect the leak and then seal it with a solution, and then pump it. Otherwise, there is no end to pumping.

The same applies here. Our social system has a number of leakages through which exploitation, oppression and torture rush in non-stop. We have to seal them with a solution. The solution for the purpose is not however gum or rubber, the solution is to overthrow the entire capitalist system and establish a new, socialist system: the ouster of the owners, the capitalists from ownership and establishment of the workers and peasants' rule, which means fundamentally changing the existing legal system and judiciary, the military, the system of governance, the executive, that is, the administrative system and the police; and on this new social order framing new laws, a new legal system, the police and military, to vest the people's committees consisting of common people from different social strata with power to run this new social system and consolidate its foundation. But who will allow you to install a society of this kind? Yet, unless you build such a system, you have no other avenue for survival. But who will let you build such a system? The beneficiaries of that system will be peasants, workers and people at large. But those who are having a good time in this society, enjoying a life of ease and comfort – the owners, the capitalists — they stand in no way to gain. So the capitalists, in order to perpetuate their privileges, to make them everlasting, have authored fat law books. With all

their learning and after heavily exercising their brains they have framed various laws constituting legal tentacles wherein the common people get entrapped, unable to extricate themselves from it. We cannot allow ourselves to get caught in this legal, vicious circle. These fat law books will have to be thrown overboard in their entirety, this legal system will have to be dismantled and instead in its place new laws, a new legal system set up. But, in trying to be clever, if we step into this legal vicious circle we will simply get entrapped in its convoluted web, we will get caught in the octopus-like tentacles and be left with no escape route. So, without stepping into that legal web, we will have to dismantle this anti-working class legal system and on the basis of a new legal system a new social system has to be built up, safeguarding the interest of peasants, workers and common people. And to that end what is required is the genuine organization of agricultural labourers, the party of the workers and peasants, their own party. That is to say, what is needed is an organization not only of the agricultural workers, but a party of the working class, their own party in order to guide the organizations of workers, peasants, students, youth and middle class in accordance with a uniform political angularity and ideology in the correct path.

Now the KKMF is the organization of the agricultural labourers, landless peasants, marginal peasants and lower-middle peasants to conduct their day-to-day struggle and the party which is the peasants' and agricultural labourers' own party is SUCI. There you see, a feeling of oneness between the party and the mass organization will have to be fostered; both will have to move forward, one will have to move under the guidance of the other — that means, the mass organization under the guidance of the party. But to what end and with what objective? It is with the object of demolishing this social system. And there is one way only to demolish this system, and that is through revolution. So, we shall have to wage our struggles with the object of accomplishing revolution at the fore. But to say that we shall have to wage struggle — what does it signify? What for shall we fight? Will that struggle imply that we resort to brick-battening in the streets or that we fight simply for a meagre wage increase? No, ours is not a struggle of that kind. We demand land, we demand legitimate share of the crop, we demand provision of irrigation facility, test relief and this and that. On issues such as these we will certainly conduct our struggle. We shall fight because peasants and workers are yet to learn how to conduct even these struggles. Today they go on suffering ruination, oppression – each by himself and attributing his plight to the will of Allah, of God, and accepting it as one ordained by fate or else, feeling utterly helpless, he pours out his woes to his wife and simply stays back at home. That is all he does.

Therefore, peasants and workers are to be taught how to conduct the day-to-day movements. Through these movements precisely it will have to be shown: “See, what strength can be generated if you get united”. You become the victim of oppression when you fight alone but when you get united in thousands and wage fight you can chasten the very aggressors who attack you for nothing but driven by whim. Even their hearts sink when they see thousands rallying and thundering, “Long live revolution”. These very babus are filled with trepidation when they discover the tremendous strength lying hidden among the downtrodden — peasants from the lower rungs of society whom many do not even count as humans, having been steeled. Yet see how strange is this! “Are you worth being called humans” — such never ending taunts by the babus being dinned continuously into their ears, lead many peasants even to think, “Are we really humans?” Among many of them a notion has grown : what does it matter, as long as we have some rice to eat twice a day. Those who manage to secure this bare minimum have the feeling that they are living like lords. Since he can just manage two meals of rice a day he feels he has everything! He sits back contented that he is not lacking in anything. This is the kind of thinking of our peasants. With the peasants of our country this appears to be the base requirements to satisfy. And what does it turn out to be? It turns out to be whether they can manage to scrape together two morsels of food a day, whether they have a shack for shelter, so wretched that a ghost even would abandon it. Alas! this is what the peasants of our country are content with. And if he can make a hole to improvise a make-shift window in that shack then he surely considers himself an Amir, no less than a viceroy, because he has a window in his shack. If someone has ever some green chilli with his rice, he counts to have become a bourgeois. Just taking green chilli with rice is considered a bourgeois luxury — this kind of notion is prevailing in the rural areas of our country. Hence, he who can afford to have some vegetable curry, can afford to cook with a dash of oil makes no doubt for the regular category of bourgeois. This being the mindset, those denied even two handfuls of rice, agree with reluctance to be involved in a bit of struggle, and that too only after tenuous persuasion. Otherwise, he may even opt for setting out with a begging bowl. And yet the question of struggle hardly strikes him.

But who is responsible for this state of affairs? Why do they live in this way? They never ponder in the least who is responsible for their privation. Why do they have to lead a life like this? What crime have they committed before coming into this world? His little son of tender age, soft as a flower, and yet to know what the world is like, who still hasn't come to know vice

and virtue, what is good and bad, he knows nothing — then what crime has he committed? He did certainly not get any time or scope to commit a crime; then why should he die of starvation? Things have come to such a pass that peasants and workers appear to have even lost the inclination, the desire to find the answer. We are ardently trying to inculcate in them this bent of mind. When he goes hungry, a man makes no mistake in understanding the immediate problem confronting him at the moment. But to comprehend the character of destitution through contemplation is really a difficult task. We are trying to awaken that power of thinking in them. We shall go to the people with that point which they can easily understand. While attracting them by explaining the plain truth so that they easily understand it, we shall have to point out to them the complex issue involved. We shall have to explain that clearly. When they will realize it, they will in turn explain it to their neighbours. This way we will convince all – we will convince each other.

The babus want to make us believe that we are not humans, and we too are induced to thinking in this way. But I say, you have to do precisely the opposite. You must realize whether what they say is right, or it is that just the reverse holds true. In that case the truth that will emerge is that we are capable of doing a lot but cannot do so alone. If we unite, together we can achieve much. We are capable of accomplishing such a thing which they cannot even conceive. In terms of consequence it will be simply a nightmare to them. People need to be roused with that spirit. They can be roused then only when we will be able to infuse that political consciousness in them, when we can show them, when we can bring home to them that exploitation, oppression, tyranny, poverty and privation, unemployment and loss of their land — all the adversities they suffer in life — it is not fate that is to be blamed for all this. It is not the result of sins committed in previous life. In this way whatever the pundits of *tols*<sup>2</sup> or their likes, sadhus and monks may try to impress on you – these are not at all true. In the opening session of this school of politics you heard some discussion on these points. So, you should bear in mind that we have nothing to do with such sadhus who come to preach their sermons. We will pay our high tribute to those sadhus who fight against injustice. But those who come to preach fate, previous birth, knowingly or unknowingly seek to sap the mental strength of people, so that people do not get attracted towards struggle. Hence, they virtually act as the agents of jotedars and capitalists. It is as true in case of the Hindus as it is in case of the Muslims. So we shall have to keep away from such religious preachers. Peasants have to understand the simple truth in a

simple way. Suppose you may have committed some sin, but your two-month old infant has done nothing wrong — it has had no time even to commit any sin, nor any scope whatsoever in its life to commit a crime. So why should it die of starvation – that answer must be provided. Whereas the child of a rich person, a capitalist or a jotedar who all the time does injustice, oppression and mischief, you see how it enjoys the good things in life. Why this disparity? This must be answered. But who will provide the answer? If God could be found, then we would have asked him for an answer. But what answer shall we seek from God whom, till now, you could not summon in person? So, the answer has to be sought from those who can provide it. Those Congress ministers, jotedars and erstwhile landlords who seek the blessings of the divine agents of God, that is to say, the pundits of *tols*, those versed in scriptures or the mullahs of mosques, and promote them with their money power – it is from those Congress ministers, jotedars and landlords that an answer to these questions has to be demanded. They have a motive for doing all these. Using the name of God or of fate they want to divert people's attention from the main problem. So, we must demand an answer from these real-life representatives of God. They must answer, why this abominable state of affairs of yours.

So, the KKMF that we have built up is not merely for a thana<sup>3</sup> or any particular locality – the organization is for the whole country and here, in particular, for the whole of West Bengal. What struck me about the report, presented in the beginning of this conference, is the extremely narrow outlook of the organizers, which is a grave shortcoming of the organization. Those who would shoulder the organizational responsibility must get rid of their locality-centric narrow outlook and must move with a revolutionary outlook. This is my appeal to the organizers. They must bear in mind that the responsibility entrusted to them is to develop this consciousness among peasants and workers and build up the organization based on this consciousness. But who will do it? Except for the KKMF, is there any other organization having this crystal clear outlook and true revolutionary character; one that is built up with revolutionary objective and aspiration? We hold that there is none. We believe that in this country there exists no peasants' organization, other than the KKMF armed with clear revolutionary outlook, aim and conviction. And because there is none, we shall have to strive to build up this organization with our own flesh and blood. In such a situation, to move simply with a narrow, locality-centric outlook on the part of these organizers is terribly harmful. It is harmful because if every organizer harbours feelings of self-satisfaction and assumes an air of having accomplished a lot in his own area, and if they cannot



see beyond that and lack the necessary vision, then what will be the result? As a consequence, not to speak of entire India, even the vast multitude of peasants throughout West Bengal, throughout the different districts — we will not be able to organize them also. In that event the fate of our organization will largely become a matter of chance. What I mean to say is that our organization will come up in those places only where an organizer appears by chance, otherwise it won't. If this is how things turn out to be, the future of the organization is uncertain. Actually, the leaders need to spread this organization to different areas on the basis of a well-designed plan. So, I say, the leaders will have to rise above their preoccupation with local sectarian politics in the minutest detail of day-to-day struggles. However difficult this may be, the leaders must accomplish it. The point which I want to emphasize in particular is that the biggest weakness of our KKMFB lies in the very fact that the outlook of its leading organizers is influenced by locality-centric approach and they themselves are beset with only local problems. This is a very serious weakness of the leadership.

Hence, what I am to reiterate again is that if the leadership cannot rise above a locality-centric approach and spread the call for building up movement and organization throughout West Bengal, and adopt an appropriate plan to that end, then the organization is not going to grow just by itself. Then everything will be left to chance, to the coming up of a spontaneous movement. For instance, take the case of Medinipur, or quite a few other districts where even now you have not started any work. If you draw up a plan and start to work accordingly you will be able to spread your organizational work in a year or two. With the cadre or the staff at your disposal, if the capable ones who belong to the category of organizers would have been deputed to work with special assignment, you could have considerably forged ahead in every district by now. You will surely admit that you did not organize your work systematically and regularly in this way so long. It was not done in this way. Why not? If asked, you will say, "It is because circumstances are so adverse". You see, in the course of events I have become a leader. I am not prepared to accept this argument. However adverse circumstances may be — the task of the leadership is to change those circumstances. This is why one has become a leader. One does not become a leader to give the excuse of adverse circumstances. It is not that all the peasant comrades who have joined as cadre will develop to become leaders. The few who have the potential to develop as leaders are quite different from ordinary cadre. Their capability for work and their problems are not one and the same as the capability for work and problems of the others. There cannot but be

quite a difference. What I want to say by this is that if we give serious thought to the real bearing of revolution then we will realize that it can never entail some stereotyped, mechanical activities devoid of creativity and diversity. But on the contrary, your attitude appears to be one of remaining content with whatever you have, in whatever quantity, and then, just to stir up your business, make some moves this way or that way. You will have to shake off this sterile mindset. You will have to expand the organization but in a balanced way. We should not develop any such overpowering crave for expansion that as a result whatever was there gets destroyed, gets totally ruined. No, not like that. The existing organization, whatever is there, must be safeguarded and consolidated; side by side, an effective plan has to be worked out for spreading the organization to different areas. To chalk out such a plan is the task of the organizers. Therefore, my particular appeal to the leaders and the organizers is : please sit together and adopt an effective plan. I have already pointed out that I did not like the sense of complacency that I noticed in your report. Had the report been made ten years back, I would have been happy.

I have all along observed a tendency in the style of work of our rural comrades, which is to remain completely confined to less important works. What is found is that one comrade going out to do a particular job, he gets completely arrested in that. We need to have a correct understanding of the problem. Suppose the leader goes to a particular area. On arriving, he finds a local movement going on there and at once he gets himself unnecessarily involved in that movement. It is only natural that the common people of the area would invariably desire greater involvement of the leaders in their movement. From their point of view this is quite natural. But why should leaders get involved in so many ways? It happens, they either get so much involved or they totally detach themselves from everything. Such an attitude is not proper. Leaders should be forthcoming in providing leadership to movements. They will leave after doing what is necessary so that the local cadre can conduct the movement by themselves, on their own feet. And leaders too should see to it that they themselves acquire the competence to steer and gear up movement and the organization in this way. They must master this art of building up organization. They will have to keep themselves free from getting tied down in this manner. By talking to the leading comrades, another thing that I have noticed is that attending courts and looking after cases seems to have turned out to be the main task of many of them. If there is need to look after court cases, you must find new recruits who can do that. And simultaneously you will have to find time to look after organizational work. To see to these is the task of the leaders.

It is beyond my comprehension why leaders should take so much trouble every day just to go to court. When I point these out to them, they come out with a long list of how hard they work throughout the day. But what purpose does it serve to hear all these? From them I expect something different. What I want is that they provide leadership to the organization. I want you to give leadership, but you start giving an explanation to me of how hard you have been working day and night. I told you, “You are to provide leadership”, and you went away to plough your field, saying, “See, how well I plough”. But what use are all these to me? In that case, you had better go on ploughing and give up the leadership. Let him provide leadership who is capable of doing so. Actually the task of the leaders is to recruit some people to undertake the routine work and get them do it without themselves getting tied down, and to develop and equip the new cadre whom we are getting as worthwhile cadre, educate them and depute them on a plan to various places in order to expand the organization. To regularly supervise all this work and finding time for these is the problem before the leaders. These constitute the main problem before the organizers. This kind of shortcoming I have noticed among the organizers of almost all districts.

As for instance, in Birbhum, what a tremendous complacency, what a strong sense of self-satisfaction prevails! How come so? What a battle we have been waging, how many struggles we are conducting! But in reality we are content simply with some stereotyped, mechanical activities empty of creativity. Whenever a struggle is waged in some place we pay least attention whether the contacts that developed at other places are dying out or getting disrupted. We are completely indifferent how the few competent cadre we have could be sent to explore the whole district steadily and thoroughly and expand the organization thereby. Hence, no matter whatever prospect once existed, as a result of failure to nurture contacts these may be lost by now. If it turns out that the district leadership cannot rectify these shortcomings then it is the organization that will be harmed most. Similarly, you see what a great opportunity, what a bright prospect has opened up before the KKMf of South 24 Parganas. Yet till today you could not spread your Krishak O Khet Majur Federation throughout the entire district of 24 Parganas. The leaders will have to think it over and provide the answer. Otherwise what purpose is served by holding these conferences? It is for this only that a conference is held, the secretary’s report prepared, all these done, otherwise all these have no meaning. Hence, we ourselves have to criticize our own work. We must criticize ourselves. Despite having the background of such a great movement why could you not spread your organizational work to cover all the thanas of entire 24 Parganas, let

alone spread it over all the districts of West Bengal. You should realize that there must be some shortcomings somewhere. It is true, there are limitations and we are aware of it. But to understand this in such an abstract sense will not do. I know you have many problems. And owing to these problems it may perhaps not be possible for you to set up an organization in all the districts overnight. That such organizations as those of Joynagar or Mathurapur will rapidly come up in every district in just a year or two – to think like this is unrealistic. But it is true also that we certainly can enroll and develop at least some people so as to give birth to a nucleus of KKMF in every area. None of you can deny that we are capable of doing it, and that the situation prevailing in the organization is conducive to it.

That is why I said, what is needed is a good, well-designed plan. While working according to such a plan the leaders must constantly rake their brain and look after the work. Had work been conducted in this way, by now we could have at least built up a nucleus of organization in every district within a few years; we could have raised a number of small units. And in that event these would not have remained inoperative. With contacts maintained, attention paid and guidance provided to those, they would have gradually grown. So, what I was saying, the revolution or the fundamental change of society we talk about — that talk serves no purpose unless we do give proper importance to the organizational aspects and do not keep thinking about it.

At the same time, it is also true that simple clamouring for organization will not hasten the process of revolution. Just as ideological leadership and consciousness is a necessity for the organization, again, at the same time, it is imperative also to spread the organization among people. The two should be linked inseparably, both have to be integrated. We must bear in mind that we want to build up a revolutionary organization. We do not want, by any means whatsoever, just gather some people and set up an organization to garner votes. The type of organization that will do for election-centric parties, the same type of organization will not in the least serve our purpose. We want an organization that will not only fight without relent the oppression of the jotedars but will carry on the struggle with firm determination and based on correct political consciousness, outlook, aim, ideals, ethics and culture till the capitalist system is demolished. So, while this political consciousness will have to be developed with great care, simultaneously whether expansion of the organization built up on the basis of political consciousness is going on or not will have to be also looked after carefully. I go to enquire or

keep on checking for a few days when it suddenly occurs to me, but then again it slips my attention – that will not do. Or, when starting work, the moment some difficulties, some problems, arise we start saying that these boys are of no worth — you see this sort of thinking will not at all help us. Having seen all these being repeated again and again, what has struck me is that we are yet to grasp the paramount importance of organization. We are yet to acquire the ability to view all these fresh problems in that context, in the context of objective reality and the associated problems. That is why I said, if we remain preoccupied round the clock with such things like what is happening to the dispute over a land, to the court case and how it is being looked after, we will not be able to build up the kind of revolutionary organization that we want to build up.

I would like to draw your attention now to a few more issues. From the resolution adopted at this conference, you have got certain indications about the political situation prevailing in the country today. Except for West Bengal, in all the other states throughout India, there is scarcely any sign of left movement. Despite various divisions, numerous shortcomings and deviations including influence of sectarian thinking you have seen that the left parties in West Bengal built up the historic “food movement”<sup>4</sup> unitedly only last year. Now, based on some specific demands and issues, an attempt is being made for a united struggle with participation of all. But already some hindrances have been created and attempts are afoot to cause disruption to forging a united movement. We have noticed that some of the left parties, through their attitude and activities are creating a ground for disruption of the united movement. And the Congress has been instigating it from behind. They want the leftists to divide into two – with the communists on one side and the anti-communists on the other. Whereas, earlier, those opposed to the Congress and who, by and large, were anti-capitalist and with a bit of pro-left inclination – all of them had been fighting unitedly against the Congress. This was roughly the picture of mass movement in West Bengal. Now a new point is being raised that among the lefts one group are communists while the others are anti-communists. But this only helps the Congress. Among the leftists, the two parties, the RSP and the Forward Bloc are masterminding this. These two parties are the real mischief makers in this regard. In addition, the PSP is also giving incitement to this. And newspapers like *Jugantar* and *Anandabazar* are lapping it up. They are sending out clear indication, that is to say, they are making it amply clear to the anti-communists that you need not worry about publicity. Hold a meeting, even if only of a few, and we will give it a big coverage. We will go on

publishing your speeches and make you into a leader. For, as regards the communist supporters, they are organizationally quite strong. From the point of view of capacity to rally people and conduct struggle, they constitute the real force in West Bengal. The others are mere signboards. But still then names, an ensemble of names also carry weight. So, initially these parties could not muster such courage. They wondered whether they would be able to organize meetings, take out processions or hold conferences independently and receive publicity. Now, these papers gave them to understand, you need not worry about publicity; it is we who make the leaders. So many times we have made so many leaders with sheer publicity. If necessary, we can even lever up communist Jyoti Basu, and for your leaders we can do the same. Counting on this, they now opt to stay separate. This is creating a problem.

It is not that the food-problem alone has aggravated. There are many other undemocratic actions of the government and also the conduct of the police against which direct resistance need to be organized. Yet that is not coming to happen. For, who will protest? No strong voice of protest is being raised. The common people are confused. They do not keep abreast of who is doing what and where. In the newspapers they read that the leftists are divided. As a result the common people who are not attached to any political party, who have a non-partisan attitude and who, if there is an anti-Congress joint movement, will feel reassured and will support such a movement – this section of people is quite confused. In such a situation no rallying call for movement whatsoever is indeed reaching them. By this, great damage is being done. The Congress is doing unjust things, resorting to repression, torture, lathicharge and shooting without provocation, breaking strikes – all these have started anew. The Congress and the police under it had resorted to repression and torture in the past too, but there were protests against it. Now whatever they are doing, these are hidden from the public view. The newspapers do not report these. Hence the people of the country remain in the dark about it. In the past, the rape of a woman would have created a storm of furore. Now, the police are breaking into so many houses and raping women. There are no protests, nothing is being done. Not a voice is raised, not even a report appears in the newspapers. The KKMf cadre need to fully understand this situation. We must squarely confront this menacing situation. Were we able to meet the challenge unitedly, that would have been good. Maybe something could have been done about it quickly. But if things come to such a pass that nobody wants to stand up against these evils then should we too, just like them, sell our conscience and take to our heels? Or should we squarely confront it?

Losing no time we have to immediately consolidate and strengthen our organization with all our might in order to squarely face up to all these misdeeds, repression and torture. For, we cannot confront such crying injustice simply with intellectual and mental faculty. In order to confront this we need physical strength, the strength of organization. Unless we possess this strength, simply with our pious wish we cannot do it, no matter how intense our desire. We must persist in our attempts so that we can move forward unitedly. But if the others do not come along, then we will have to try our utmost to confront it on our own; we must be prepared for that. What is needed for it is the strengthening of the organization. We will have to draw up a plan for consolidation and expansion – that should be our slogan. In other words, it is not simply a question of consolidating the organization. While consolidating it, its expansion will have to be brought on. Do not let the existing organization, whatever is there, get weakened. Fortify it, reinforce it. And then on the basis of that consolidated strength, spread the organization according to a plan. In this way, spread out from one district to another. And consolidate the organization that already exists. But being carried away by the zeal for expansion of the organization, do not expose the already built organization in an unprepared state in the face of oppression and attacks of the erstwhile landlords and of the jotedars. The plan to take the organization forward will have to be adopted – this slogan at the moment is most vital for the KKMf. This plan will have to be carried out on the basis of objective condition. Build up organization in new thanas even if it be just one or two. The committee must regularly collect reports, and meet at intervals of one, three, or six months. You will have to examine in how many thanas and districts you have built up new organization. These will have to be spread out in such a way that we find at least one or two representatives from every district attending the conference in the coming year. To expand the organization to every district and all thanas – effective programmes as these will have to be adopted. Then only discussion on national and international politics or on other issues assume meaning and significance. Otherwise, politics will be reduced to a sort of fashionable pastime of the educated, so-called intellectuals. As we find, they discuss politics over a cup of tea, that is, they raise a political storm while sipping tea, but setting aside self-interest they never enter into politics even if the country goes to the dog. Our politics is not like that. The politics we discuss carries a meaning. We learn all this actually in order to practise. We acquire knowledge to apply it in practice. So, it is not something of a fancy to us. You are unlettered, but you people who have assembled here despite your lack of

formal education are taking pains to know and learn some such matters which even those ‘pundits’ do not understand – to such subject matters you have to apply your brain. Is all this but a fancy? No. On the contrary, it is aimed at fortifying our organization, which will help us in the struggle we are waging for survival. So, without sitting idle and wasting time, build up your organization. This is my appeal to you.

Now back to the point I was talking about. I had been discussing the weaknesses of the left movement in our country and the nature of the attack launched by the Congress. After the food movement last year, many believed that the police would now be chastened by a measure. But that did not come about, rather the opposite happened. There was such a gigantic movement but afterwards not even a protest worth mention has been raised in West Bengal, though the police atrocities are unprecedented in recent history. During the British rule too such did not happen often. Despite being the perpetrators of such brutality, the police of our country talk big that they are the servants of the people; they are the police of an independent country. What tall talks! And people, on the other hand, are confused. And the wily capitalists are laughing up their sleeves, thinking they have fed the leftists, socialists, revolutionaries and communists of the country with such opium that they are really out! What opium? The opium of nationalism. They sermonize that the country is independent today, so it is incumbent on you to protect the national interest, the welfare of the country and the country’s unity and discipline. Therefore, discipline is not to be breached, peace not to be disrupted, and law not to be violated, as these will spell disaster for the country. The capitalists go on with this brainwashing operation, and all the revolutionaries, socialists and communists<sup>5</sup> are nodding their heads as if mesmerized. But the matter is just the opposite. If these leaders of our country can be fed the opium of nationalism and progress and kept in a state of slumber, if they can be befuddled, then who will effectively resist disaster befalling the country? In that event peril is sure to gush in and engulf us. Fascism will come swearing by the name of the country. Students will be robbed of their democratic rights, with an eye on the “national interest”. People will be murdered in indiscriminate firing to protect the “country’s interest”. Peasant movements will be depicted as acts of extreme indiscipline in the “interest of the country”, and the leftists and socialists will digest these spinelessly. At best they will make a token protest in Parliament or an Assembly and pocket their salaries, travel in first class coaches and come to public parks to deliver speeches. This is the picture of the left movement today. The police in Birbhum forced their way into many houses at night and raped



women, even going to the extent of shoving in their batons. They let loose an orgy of inhuman and demoniac barbarity. Even after providing documentary proof of these incidents, the CPI, Forward Bloc, RSP and the socialists – none of them protested. They all remained silent, they did nothing. Rather, they joined the refrain that the police did the right thing. Can the police tolerate anarchy? The peasants have looted paddy, attempted to assault the jotedars. This is anarchy, these are illegal actions. The duty of the police is to maintain law and order. The police did the right thing. They made speeches in support of the police. And the Congressites started saying, that's right. If they have looted paddy, violated law and order, then naturally the police have done no wrong. This is the state of affair! What do all these show? They show that disaster has already closed in on us. Here, that disaster is an absolutely despotic rule. A plot is being hatched to clamp a full-scale autocratic rule throughout the country so that no democratic movement, no revolutionary struggle can grow. Therefore, wherever a mass movement tends to surface even slightly, it is being nipped in the bud by brutal thrashing. Jawaharlal<sup>6</sup> emphatically declares, no mob frenzy or any unlawful act will be tolerated. Anybody caught in such an act will be soundly thrashed. Putting on a mask of democracy and behind parliamentary rhetoric, he talks like a seasoned dictator and is proceeding to introduce an autocratic rule. And the leftists, socialists and communists are all watching idly. Those who make tall talks of revolution are all looking on idly. They are not making any effective protests. But why? The point you must comprehend is that none of them is a revolutionary. Except for us, there is no revolutionary in this country. So, the entire responsibility devolves on us. Neither can we be in tune with them, nor are we able to organize an effective protest today alone on our own strength.

We are not yet able to build up what can be called a real resistance movement. So we are utterly helpless and restless. But to be merely restless — what will come of it? Being helpless and restless, we may end up one day in our negation. That won't help anything. That is why I said we will have to acquire adequate strength to squarely confront this situation. This suffocating situation will have to be confronted with the collective effort of our party, the SUCI, together with the KKMF and other mass organizations of our party. With this aim in view, whatever needs to be done and all what needs looking after have to be done. To acquire that ability we have to equip and educate ourselves in that way. Right now, this is what matters, these are the real tasks. This apart, we shall have to acquaint ourselves with the national problem and the international situation, and discuss all problems and questions relating to these. We shall

have to provide answer to all the problems. There can be no holding back on this score. Political discussions will have to be held and schools of politics conducted regularly with this objective. But what is needed is to go back from school not merely with some sterile knowledge. What one must really see to is how to translate this knowledge into action, how to concretely put it into practice. For that what is needed is an appropriate organizational outlook and vision, and the mind to apply these, and lifelong dedication and endeavour. So, my appeal to the cadre is: Think deeply about these issues, correctly understand the main problem, take initiative to discharge your individual responsibility and step ahead along the correct path for liberation of people from the unbearable condition of the present. Here again, I remind the leaders : please shake off the locality-centric, narrow outlook that is obstructing organizational development, and put the organization on a firm base. Spread out the organization to every district. Shake off the lax attitude. Instead of being content with applause, come forward to work in a planned way. I consider this to be our prime task in the present situation. If you can move along unitedly in this way, then only shall I consider this conference successful. It is with this that I conclude my speech.

*Speech on June 18, 1960*  
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*On October 23, 1982 in Bengali.*

## Notes

1. KKMf, later renamed, All India Krishak O Khet Mazur Sangathan, AIKKMS.
2. Ancient schools for teaching religious scriptures in Sanskrit.
3. Police station area.
4. Refers to the historic food movement of 1959.
5. By communists he means here those who belonged to the undivided CPI, which he proved beyond all doubt, was not a real communist party but a pseudo one.
6. Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister.