The Chapters which make up this work do not provide a complete picture of the Left responses to the problems of the peasantry. Many aspects of the subject have been omitted or touched only in passing. Nevertheless these chapters are concerned with those peasant movements in which discussions and controversies have been most active and changing ideas most apparent.

During the period of our study the peasant question had begun to dominate to some extent. The questioning of this subject became notably more analytical, more searching and less dominated by traditional approaches of a kind essentially unchanged since 19th and early 20th century.

The Elastic term 'The peasant Question' however, needs here to be interpreted in its widest sense. It covers not merely the externals of a social structure, its institutions, class divisions, economic and political implications, but also a great complexity of ideas, traditions and beliefs, a whole largely irrational and emotional substructure, upon which social behaviour is essentially based. All this, is now perhaps, the most punitive and exciting growth point in all peasant activities of this period.

Thus, we have largely confined ourselves to the peasant movements
and the role of Left parties and groups in these movements. Since there was conflict of ideology among various Left groups, the responses differed from one to another. However, Marxism did provide a systematic and relatively rigid body of doctrine among these Left parties. Consequently, they dominate this fascinating and often vaguely defined response of Left to the peasant movements.

The Marxist answer to peasant class consciousness and peasant relations with other classes marked by regional and local variations make it more and more difficult to explain the historical reality. The Marxist had three alternatives. To lead the peasants and provide them correct leadership. To wait and watch and opportunistically criticise them when the peasants make mistake and fail to rise as one man. To stem their revolutionary activities and oppose them for their excesses. The peasants in India were organisationally weak. Consequently, there was very little struggle in the rural areas. During the early period the leadership was in the hands of Indian National Congress. In terms of class relationship, the rich peasants held the sway. The Bardoli, Oudh and civil disobedience no-rent campaign were largely anti-imperialist and anti-Zamindar. Yet the leadership was frightened by the revolutionary trend. They had constant fear of the revolutionary struggles of the peasants. They were, however, satisfied as the Left was too young, ideologically ruderless
and was unable to exploit the weaknesses of rich peasant leadership who were always willing to enter into compromises. Some concessions were promised. But this position didn’t last long. The Peasants’ and Workers’ Parties enrolled a large number of young peasants and masses. The peasants of Punjab, Bengal, Bihar and Maharashtra combined in the peasant associations and the Left assumed their leadership. It was on the strength of these Workers’ and Peasants’ Parties that the peasant went into action and raised their demands. It was, therefore, the beginning of the new era though the power of the landlords was not broken. The landlords and rich peasants though opposed to each other, tried to prevent the activities of the poor peasants. It was during this transition period that the Left peasant organization became honourable institutions performing historic mission. The focres of rural feudalism and supporters of rightist and imperialist began to feel the weight of the Left peasant organizations. The leaders of the national movement too, realised the great change in the countryside. The Indian National Congress supported the peasant organizations but opposed the Left leadership. They also opposed the peasant leaders at the lower level for their violent activities. The fear was that the strengthening of these forces might turn things upside down.

The Meerut conspiracy case was the turning point. It marked the ascendancy of the Left, especially the rise of Communists in the rural areas.
The Tebhaga and Telengana movements proclaimed the strength of the peasantry under the leadership of the Left. In some areas the rich peasants deserted the landlords. The Middle peasantry too changed their vacillating attitude and the poor peasants became the main force in the bitter fight in the countryside. Now the peasants were organised into effective organizations. The landlords were pushed back politically and economically. The imperialist forces being weak in 1940, failed to checkmate the power of the peasantry. The political propaganda of the Left had grown wings. They encouraged peasants to fight against social evils and exhorbitant levies. The education was also emphasised. The same was the time for the cooperative movement. There is little doubt that in these movements the masses of the people were aroused and in the Telengana movement, the Nationalist Government was really scared. For the purpose of restraining peasant activities under the Left, reforms within the framework of the established order were permitted.

The leadership of Indian Republic launched a massive counter attack and the guerilla movement which was started on the model of Chinese experience in Hunan was defeated. The Indian Army armed with modern weapons smashed the Telengana movement. The Indian republic apparently favoured peasant revolution, but in reality they were afraid of revolution and against it.
In the thesis we have tested some hypothesis. The persusal of the activities of the Left vis-a-vis peasant movements amply prove that the Left was not a cohesive group. There were many parties which were both horizontally and vertically divided on ideological lines. Within these were socialist parties which stood for class cooperation as against class conflict propagated by the Communists. The Communists though armed with revolutionary ideas failed to demarcate the role of peasantry vis-a-vis a numerically weak and unorganised working class, unfortunately the leadership depended heavily on outside support of communist leaders from London or Comintern. The leadership of the Left was also not cohesive and did little to understand and formulate ideologies based on concrete realities of the situation. Moreover, their interests in the countryside were thinly spread. Largely concentrating in metropolitans emphasising the vanguard role of the working class.

The time, when Left leadership thing adopted the Andhra thesis, it was too late as these concrete realities of Indian situation had changed. The imperialists were defeated and the leadership of the government had gone in the hands of Indian ruling class having charismatic leadership under Jawahar Lal Nehru and others. The doctrine of armed struggle came too late, their were no takers of this struggle which was apparently hired from the Communist China. Consequently, throughout, the Left response vis-a-vis the peasant moved
around restricted areas and suffered from isolation as the new ruling class of India rejected it outrightly. Even the peasant consciousness was not mature to the extent that they could have a solid basis. As such throughout the Left participation couldn’t gain momentum on its own, and it failed.

In the peasant movements since 1926-51, the Left had twofold tasks first to mobilise the peasantry on class lines and secondly, to fight against united front of the British and the privileged section of the landlords. In this process of struggle the Left had to work under various compulsions. Throughout this period the constant threat and suppression by the British hampered their growth. In case of peasantry, the traditional steel-framed socio-economic complex structure of Indian society too proved major problem in mobilisation. Apart from these the Left movement itself was suffering from internal problems such as no clear cut ideology and international affiliations.

In the formative phase of the Left in 1926-34 there were three major peasant movements i.e. the Bardoli movement, the Awadh movement and No-tax Campaign during Civil Disobedience Movement. In this period after facing severe repression in form of the Meerut conspiracy case, the Left had to work under disguise, in the name of the Workers' and Peasants' Party. The main objectives of these Workers' and Peasants' Parties were to work under the aegis of Indian National Congress and making it more radical party.
But due to the limited mass base, organisational network and ideology among the few intellectuals the Left movement couldn’t traverse the depth of the Indian masses. Again the peasant question largely remained untouched due to the strict adherence of the Indian Left to the Marxist-Leninist Classical concept of revolution in which labourers were put on the forefront and the peasants as their allies. Apart from these, in the ongoing peasant struggles they failed to provide a united front of the peasantry against the imperialist regime. They showed ambivalent attitude towards these peasant questions. In the case of Bardoli movement, the Bombay unit of Workers’ and Peasants’ Party criticised it for being an anti-imperialist agitation of mixed class character, who were not interested for the cause of poor peasants and landless labourers. But one of the important intellectual of the Communist Party of Britain and mentor of the Indian Left, suggested them to take active part in the Bardoli movement.

An other thing which hampered the impact of Left on the peasantry was their radical programmes even at its earlier stage such as land to the tiller, abolition of the zamindari etc. these programmes alienated the other sections of the peasantry from their ambit which could provide a united front to the peasantry. Another major weakness was the ‘leadership’, which came from the middle and rich sections. Therefore, they didn’t pursue the programmes
with devotion which were in the interest of the poor peasants and landless labourers.

However, the major outcome of the formative period was the foundation of the platform of the Left, on which all exploited sections which were disenchanted and dissatisfied with the reformist policy of the Indian National Congress could stand together. No doubt, in initial stage the platform was in the aegis of the Indian National Congress, but the Left were major constituent of it.

The period 1934-44 relate to the organisation of the Left parties. The formation of the Congress Socialist Party and the All Indian Kisan Sabha a front rank organisation of the Left acted as spur in the consolidation of the Left movement. Various peasant movements were organised by the Left on the basis of class lines in provinces like Bihar, Andhra, Punjab, Kerala and Bengal. But in this period too, there was no effective all India leadership among the peasantry and the Kisan Sabha movement couldn’t penetrate in the provinces apart from above mentioned movements.

In Bihar, the peasant movement developed under the leadership of Swami Sahajanand Saraswati. He organised the poor peasantry and landless labourers against the big landlords. In Bihar provincial Kisan Sabha 90 percent of the membership came from lower castes, traditionally associated with
cultivation. Although caste elements were not totally absent in the mobilisation of the peasantry, yet under the Swami’s leadership, the Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha gradually emerged as a class-oriented organisation. However, the movement led by the Kisan Sabha couldn’t meet the desired results. But a remarkable change of attitude could be noticed in certain areas of Bihar that the Zamindars, who had always violated laws and exploited the peasantry, now in changed circumstances (after the mobilisation of the peasantry) became too, conscientious about the observance of law. They were facing very tough time in collecting the rents. The limited success of the Left was attributed to various factors, first the another political party, the Indian National Congress several times ditched the Bihar Kisan Sabha and sided with the rich peasants and landlords due to the electoral importance. Secondly, caste and community feelings were also spread by the zamindars to break the unity of agitating peasants. Thirdly, the Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha, promised pre-mature demands such as ‘land to all’, which was an impossible task at that juncture. Thus the problem remained unsolved.

In Andhra, the peasant movement in its initial stage was reformist in nature. Its main leader N.S. Ranga equally wooed with Marxism, Socialism and Gandhian doctrines. His main demand were prevention in enhancement of revenue, revenue remission, famine relief and agricultural credit on liberal
terms and abolition of zamindari. These demands clearly indicated his bias in favour of the middle peasantry. The Kisan Sabhaites in this province sought some kind of harmony among the various stratas of the peasantry. They stressed the growing need of the united front of the Kisans especially the middle peasants and the poor peasantry and landless labourers. Their ultimate aim was the complete national freedom and a democratic state of Indian people, leading ultimately to the realisation of Kisan-Majdoor Raj, which was people's democracy leading to socialism.

The Kisan Sabhaites remained concentrated only on mobilizing the peasantry through peasant marches, launching self-help movements, distributing pamphlets and involving in famine relief works. The work done by the Kisan Sabhaites in this period paid rich dividends to them in future struggle of Telengana.

In Punjab, the Left leaders worked through Kisan Muzara Committees. They supported the cause of tenants against the middle strata of the Punjab agrarian hierarchy known as the ‘Biswedars’. The movement spread in various princely states such as Patiala, Malerkotla, Jind, Ferozpur etc. But the Communists and Socialists leadership was weak in this period. Therefore couldn’t make serious dent in the movement. Actually during this period the movement was joint venture of both the Indian National Congress and the
Leftists. So the movement remained peaceful with some petty gains.

In Kerala and Bengal the Left consolidation was felt around. They organised the peasantry especially the poor section and the landless labourers under the leadership of middle class peasantry. The mobilisation was clear cut on class lines. Particularly, in these two provinces the peasantry under the Left leadership emerged as a formidable force. Many a times they established hold on the villages. But under the constant repression of the British Government the achieved aims were deserted. The most inspiring they came out of those movements in two provinces despite the united opposition of Landlords, Britishers and the Indian National Congress to a certain extent, the peasant realised their strength as a class. The level of consciousness of the peasantry has risen to a larger extent.

In the period 1944-51 (ascendancy of the Left) the Left first time organised peasant movements with a definite ideology in three provinces in Bengal, Andhra and Punjab. In Bengal, the Left constituent the Communist Party of India and front rank organisation the All India Kisan Sabha worked at the grass-root level and won the confidence of the peasantry. The movement was launched by the Left for two-third share of the produce for Bargadars (poor peasantry) from the landlord ‘Jotedars’. During the mobilization of the peasantry the Left had to face various kinds of hurdles first, the ‘communal’,
most of the Bargadars belonged to the Muslim Community and the landlord Jotedars belonged to the Hindu community. Second, the social dominance of the Jotedars was so strong that the poor peasantry hardly dared to challenge their authority in past. Third, the other political parties criticised the Communists and the Tebhaga movement as a looting spree and the Government of the Muslim league adopted hard measures. Again after partition, the Government of India under the guidance of the Indian National Congress heavily repressed the movement.

Despite all these odd circumstances the highly charged and mobilised peasantry along class lines established hold over the rural administration for a short duration of time. Most of the Jotedars left the villages and fled to cities and the remaining agreed to the terms dictated by the middle class leadership of the Left group. The rural peasantry particularly in Dinajpur and Kakdwip showed remarkable religious solidarity under the influence of the Left ideology.

The Telengana movement, was organised on the lines of Andhra thesis, which laid emphasis on the civil war and the imminent task of organising armed resistance to the offensive of the Government. This movement too was organised on class basis (big landlords and the pattadars on one side and the Bhagelas (poor peasantry) and landless labourers on other side). The grivances
of the rich peasants, middle peasants, poor peasants and landless labourers resorted them to fight against the exploiter 'Deshmukh'. But in the last stages of the movement middle and rich peasantry left the movement or sided with the Deshmukhs. The dedicated cadre's of the Communist Party of India established a strong foundation in the peasantry. Under heavy repression of army of Independent India like Tebhaga, the movement was crushed.

The Left in this movement itself was suffering from ideological problems. The lack of effective leadership and coping the model of Chinese revolution without taking consideration of the Indian situation, movement collapsed.

In Punjab, the Muzara movement confined to the princely states particularly Patiala. In this province, the movement was led by both Socialists and the Congress leaders against the Biswedars, the middle peasants in the agrarian hierarchy of Punjab. The tenants adopted violent means and forcibly acquired Biswedar's land in some areas. But under the united action of the Government and Biswedar, it came to an end.

Similar attempts were made by the Communist Party of India in Tripura, Kerala, Bihar, Maharashtra and Karnataka, but due to weak organisation of the party. The peasantry couldn't achieve worth mentioning.

In short, the position of the peasantry and the extent to which the
various parties and groups have its interests into account have always
determined in all essential respects, the fate and depth of the peasant movements
in our period of study. The peasantry in India has always represented and still
represents a very great force. The Left's interest among the peasantry had
roots in the writings of Karl Marx, viz. *capital*, particularly in vols III & IV and
Engel's, 'The Peasant Question in France and Germany', Kantsky's book
'The Agrarian Question and Lenin's works such as 'The Development of
Capitalism in Russia emphasised the economic and political peculiarities of
Russia's development. However, the Communists in India didn't produce any
leaders who could analyse the economic and political peculiarities of Indian
peasant. Consequently, the Communists failed to map up a correct scientific
programme of agrarian question. Mao's investigations of peasant movement in
Hunan and other writings attached primary importance to guerilla warfare.
The Andhra thesis of Indian Communists blindly imitated the theory. They
distorted the Mao's successful attempts by juggling with facts, by sheer
speculation and tendentious supposition. The later refutation by the the party
further proved the false argumentation and speculation of this Draft thesis.
The failure to judge correctly the potential of the peasantry as also the
economic and political circumstances of Indian remained the real bane of
Indian Communists. The other segments of Left also suffered from the false
plea of liberal democratic illusions.
However, the Left inspite of its failings, the social contradictions in the countryside and their diagnosis for the peasant movements materially changed the aspirations of the peasantry. Though their original approach did intensify the class contradictions and can be regarded as one of their most remarkable features for the research worker in peasant movements.