KISAN HAND BOOK

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RIGAN HANDBOOK

KISAN HAND BOOK

Prof N. G. Ranga M. L. A. (Central)
General Secretary, A. I. K. C.

Kisan Publications
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PUBLISHERS NOTE

This is the first of the four books we are publishing in 'Kisan Hand Book' series. We wanted to publish all the 4 books in one volume at first, but later decided to publish them seperately to make them handy. A study of these four books of the Kisan Hand Book series together with our two Previous Publications The Modern Indian Peasant and The Kisan Speaks will enable even a layman to Know the beginnings, growth and development of the Indian Kisan movement, its Various other pnases and the aims and objects of the movement.

We are deeply indebeted to Prof Ranga who has written all these six books for us. The seventh book—The Peasants fact Book-also written by him, we hope to bring out by February 1939.

We are also able to secure the services of com D. Bedekar B. A., Miss A. G. Stock M. A. (oxon) Mrs Freda Bedi M. A. (oxon) Indulal Yagnik B. A. for the Editing and Publishing of the Kisan literture. We thank all these comrades for having agreed to co-operate with us.

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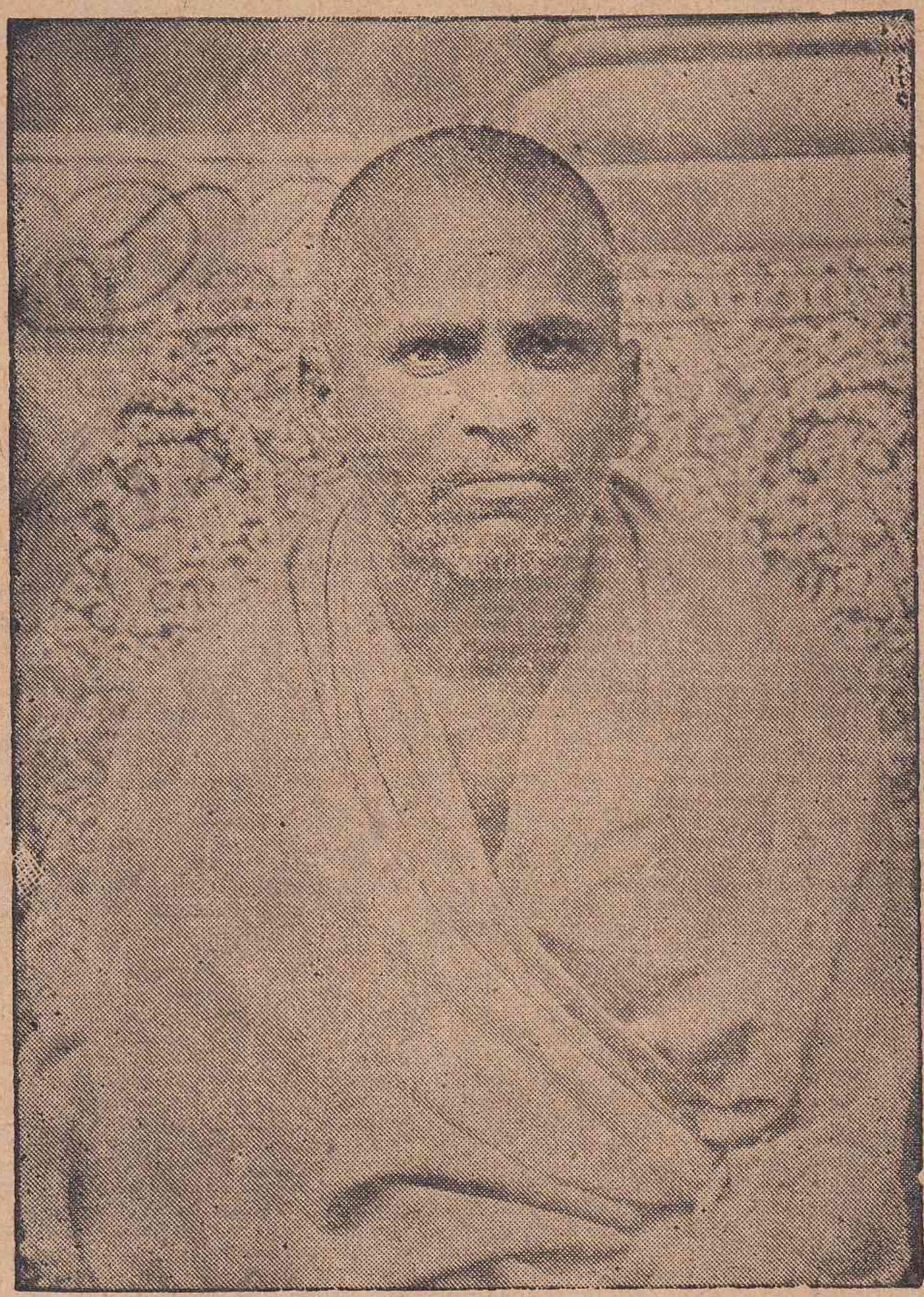
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Sjt. Swami Sahajanand Saraswathi
President, A. I. K. C. 1938.

THE KISAN HAND BOOK

CHAPTER I

Minimum Demands of Peasants and Instructions to Kisan Workers.

THE object and main task of the Kisan movement are stated in the following resolution passed at the first All-India Kisan Congress held at Lucknow on the 11th April 1936 :

"The object of the Kisan movement is to secure complete freedom from economic exploitation and the achievement of full economic and political power for the peasants and workers and all other exploited classes.

"The main task of the Kisan movement shall be the organisation of peasants to fight for their immediate political and economic demands in order to prepare them for their emancipation from every form of exploitation.

"The Kisan movement stands for the achievement of ultimate economic and political power for the producing masses through its active participation in the national struggle for winning complete independence".

The one outstanding fact of Indian economic life is the grinding poverty and utter misery of the vast peasant masses which comprise 80 per cent. of its population. No political or economic programme which has the audacity to ignore their needs and demands can by any stretch of imagination be labelled a national programme. Every organisation claiming to represent the people of India must place the interests of the bankrupt and much exploited ryots, tenants and agricultural labour in the forefront of its programme if it is to vindicate its claim.

In as much as the Indian National Congress is today the only effective political body with a country-wide organisation claiming to champion the cause of the masses it must necessarily make the solutions of the peasantry the chief plank of its political and economic policy.

The terrible conditions of the Indian peasants is too well-known to need repatition. The tenants are oppressed by Zamindars, Talukdars and Malguzars, Inamadars and other landlords. The peasant proprietors have to bear the yoke of a harsh system of land Revenue. The agricultural labour receive, if at all starvation wages and work and live in conditions bordering on slavery.

But unfortunately while the condition of the peasantry dominates the whole political and economic life of the country, the peasants themselves have been most backward politically and organisationally. The results are twofold; firstly the peasants have been deprived of all the ameliorative legislation, that could have been passed during the last 16 years, even by the

present legislatures, if the legislators felt obliged to satisfy the peasants; and secondly the political movement itself in the country has remained more or less unconcerned with both the immediate and basic problems of the peasantry.

The Indian National Congress at its last Lucknow session declared that the misery and poverty of the peasantry is "fundamentally due to the antiquated and repressive land tenure and revenue system". Indeed, the fundamental cause that makes for their present starvation is the land tenure and revenue and credit system which is nothing else but a device perfected by British Imperialism to wring out of the peasants the utmost that can be got out of them without actually killing them. It is this that must be immediately abolished before any other constructive measure aiming at the welfare of the peasantry can be undertaken.

Our objectives may not be possible of realisation under the present system of Government. Yet the peasants, if they are to save themselves from utter ruin, must fight to secure them. The system of Government must go if it stands in the way as it undoubtedly does. This is how the struggle of the peasantry merges into the fight for swaraj. It is for this reason that the Kisan Conference had declared its resolve for complete independence. In this manner do the Kisan and political movements become independent, the strength of the one adding to that of the other.

Under these circumstances it is essential that a *political movement* must be developed in our country as to draw its main strength and inspiration from the peasantry. It must also strive for the removal of all

those obstacles that stand in the way of a true and lasting solution conducive to the fullest well-being of the agricultural masses of the country. The peasants' fight for bread and land is linked up with the national fight for political freedom.

The Kisan Sabha means the unity of the peasants to fight the forces that are driving them deeper and deeper into misery and poverty. By organising the peasants, by setting them on their feet, the Kisan movement not only enables them to put a stop to the thousand and one harassments and extortionate practices of the landlords and land-revenue officers and Sowcars and their agents, but also advances them greatly toward the goal of political freedom, thereby strengthening, as nothing else can, the movement for national independence.

Fortunately, the Kisans all over the country are becoming more and more conscious, politically and economically, of their basic problems. The All-India Kisan Committee is an expression of this awakening among the peasantry. They have at last realised that they must fashion out their own militant class organisations if they are to make any sustained advance towards their goal. The Kisan Sabha represents not only the ryots, the tenants and the landless labourers but in some places the petty Zamindars. In other words it represents and speaks and fights for all those who live by the cultivation of the soil. All these different straas among the Kisans will have to combine and fight for the removal of all the fetters imposed by British Imperialism and its allies-the landlords. In short, they must fight for complete National, Socio-economic Indedendence. India, a Dependency of Britain, must be

transformed into free, progressive and Democratic India of the masses. The fight for such an India can only effectively be conducted on a programme based on the grievances and demands of the Kisans of India.

While the fight for these basic changes goes on, the peasants must also fight for all that can be gained within the framework of the existing economic order. Only in this manner can they prepare themselves for the bigger struggle, the objective which must be kept ever present in the minds of the Kisans.

MINIMUM DEMANDS

To this end, we frame the following charter of fundamental and minimum demands of our Kisans, the Provincial Kisan Sabhas having the right to supplement it by a list of their local needs :

1. Whereas the present system of Zamindari (U. P. Orissa, Bengal. Bihar. Madras, and Assam) Talukdari (U. P. and Gujerat) Malguzari (C. P.) Ishtimardari (Ajmer) Khotes (Deccan) Zanmis (Malabar) Inamdars, involving as they do the vesting of ownership of vast areas of land and of the right of collecting and enjoying enormous rent income, is iniquitous, unjust, burdensome and oppressive to the Kisans,

And whereas the Zamindars, etc., rack-rent their crores of tenants while neglecting the irrigation sources,

All such systems of landlordism shall be abolished, and all the rights over such lands be vested in the cultivators and these Kisans made to pay income-tax like the Ryotwari ryots.

2. Whereas the present systems of land-revenue and resettlement imposed by Government in Ryotwari areas have proved too vexatious and resulted in the progressive pauperization of peasants, all such systems of land revenue and resettlement shall be abolished and replaced by a graduated land-tax upon net-incomes of Rs. 500 and more (for a family not exceeding five) (as also recommended by the Taxation Enquiry committee).

3. Whereas the peasants have been over-burdened by oppressive rural indebtedness and the usurious rates of interest,

Whereas the lands of most of the peasants have either passed or are passing into the hands of absentee landlords, sowcars and urban classes,

The peasants shall be completely relieved from all liability to pay their old debts or interest thereon and the State shall immediately put into operation the necessary machinery to provide agricultural credit for peasants' current needs.

4. This Committee demands that landless peasants and those having less than five acres each be provided with land to cultivate ~~on the basis of co-operative farming (without the~~ right of alienation) and since one third of the total cultivable land is still unoccupied and vested in Government and landlords, this Committee resolves that all such lands be granted to the landless Kisans.

The Peasants will immediately take all possible steps to achieve the following minimum demands:

1. Cancellation of all arrears of rent revenue.

2. Abolition of all Land Revenue Assessment and rent from uneconomic holdings.

3. Reduction by at least 50 per cent of rent and also of water rates; and in no case shall the rent charged by landlords be more than what the Ryotwari ryots have to pay to Government in the neighbouring District or Province under similar circumstances; and in regard to the tenants of the proprietory ryots suitable tenancy legislation must be passed for their relief.

4. Immediate grant of the right of permanent cultivation without the right of alienation to all tenants and actual cultivators of the lands of Zamindars, Talukdars, Malguzars, Istimardars, Zanmis, Khotes, etc.

5. To grant of the right of remission of rent for all tenants of landlords whenever crops fail and to stop all resettlement operations and all kinds of enhance ments of the rent or land revenue and to survey and settle all the Zamindari, etc., lands.

6. To immediately impose an adequate and graduated income-tax, death duty and inheritance tax upon all the agricultural revenues of landlords and merchants.

7. Abolition and penalisation of all feudal and customary dues and forced labour, including Begar and illegal exactions.

8. The declaration of a 5 years' moratorium for all agrarian indebtedness.

9. An immediate enquiry to be made into the extent of repayment of the principal borrowed, interest thereon and the assessment of the assets and liabilities of the peasants.

10. Freedom from arrest and imprisonment for inability to pay debts, rents and revenue.

11. Immunity from attachment for all minimum holdings, stables, living quarters, household necessaries dairy and other cattle in execution of civil decrees and revenue and rent demands.

12. Rate of interest, charged by private money-lenders not to exceed 6 p. c., compound interest being penalised.

13. All money-lenders shall be licensed.

14. State credit, Co-operative and Land Mortgage credit shall be advanced, at not more than 5 per cent simple interest and for 40 years and Land Mortgage Banks shall be established everywhere.

15. To lower the freights upon the transport of agricultural commodities and third class railway rates and the development of canal and road transport.

16. Abolition of all indirect taxes particularly duties on salt, kerosene, sugar, tobacco and matches.

17. Introduction of one pice post card.

18. Prohibition of dumping of food products.

19. Stabilisation of prices of agricultural products at 1929 level by the necessary adjustment of exchange and currency policy and other methods.

20. The customary rights of peasants and workers to secure forest produce (grazing and fuel timber) must be safe-guarded, the grazing fees abolished and the regulation of grazing and distribution of timber in forests to be vested in village Panchayats and the

tanks, rivers, etc., therein freely thrown open to their cattle and peasants given licenses for bearing firearms to protect themselves, their cattle and crops from wild animals and made immune from persecution for killing such animals and penalise private punishment inflicted on them by landlords for killing such animals.

21. The administration of all communal lands, howsoever originated, and grazing lands (Gochar) shall be vested in village Panchayats.

22. A Peasants' Union Act must be enacted to safeguard their fundamental rights by collective action.

23. Minimum Wage shall be assured and the Workmen's Compensation Act be extended to all agricultural workers.

24. To so redistribute the burden of taxation both Provincial and Central jointly or variously as to impose at least 75 per cent of the tax-burden upon the richer classes and to so redistribute the public expendi ture as to spend and devote 75 per cent. of it for the welfare of workers and peasants.

25. To compulsorily fix a minimum fair price for sugar-cane on a rising scale to give the fullest benefit of Sugar Protection Act to Kisans and to suitably protect the cultivators of Jute and coconut by fixing a minimum price.

26. To develop co-operative and State marketing and thus prevent the exploitation of peasants by middlemen and to abolish all kinds of "Charity" deductions made by merchants and transference of all such present funds to the Peasants' Associations.

27. To develop the irrigation and drainage facilities for protecting peasants from famines. and to take all other steps to insure peasants against such calamities and to establish Tank Restoration Funds in all the areas of landlords, pay adequate contributions to finance, adequately and timely repairs and improvements of all irrigation add water supply sources.

28. To develop garden and intensive cultivation, to supply cheap and tested seed and useful fertilisers, to popularise the latest methods of cultivation and to carry on the agricultural and industrial operations of the State in close consultation and co-operation with the Kisan Sabhas.

29. To provide cattle insurance, fire-insurance and health insurance.

30. To establish a Village Panchayat for the administration of the civic affairs of every village and to entrust to it the function of distribution of irrigation water supply.

31. To empower the Kisan organisations, as in the case of the Sarada Act, to bring to book all those officials (particularly of the P. W. D., Excise, Revenue Railway and Police) who are obliged to take bribes from any penal punishments.

32. To pass an Agricultural Insolvency Act.

33. Adult franchise and functional representation in all legislatures.

34. Repeal of all anti-peasant, anti-labour and anti-national laws, ordinances and regulations in British and Indian India and the release of all Kisan

labour and political prisoners whether sentenced or detained without trial.

35. Re-instatement of all peasants deprived of their lands, etc., owing to their participation in the movements for their economice and political freedom and also owing to their failure to pay revenue or rent during this economic depression.

36. Immediate establishment of free and compulsory education for girls and boys, medical and sanitary aid, provision for drinking water and a national housing policy.

37. To grant the right to all peasants to bear arms.

INSTRUCTIONS TO KISAN WORKERS.

Swami Sahajanand Saraswati General Secretary of the All-India Kisan Sabha has addressed the following letter of instructions to Kisan workers and organisers in the country:

The All-India Kisan Congress held at Faizpur restated and emphasised the fundamental and minimum demands of the peasants and further expressed its opinion that they could be best achieved by advancing the day to day struggle of the Kisans through the medium of their own class organisations.

With a view to guide the Kisan workers all over the country in their work of aiding and or-ganising the Kisans in their daily struggle against economic exploitation and political oppression, the following detailed instructions are now being sent to all kisan comrades, provided that they will have the right to

choose their own practical line of action, in close conformity with the spirit underlying these instructions, but in harmony with the varying local circumstances from time to time.

(1) First and foremost the kisan worker must help the kisans in their daily disputes with the Government. These relate to the valuation of the crops in ryotwari areas, the suspension and remissions of land revenue and lowering of water rates and timely supply of irrigation water and timely repairs of irrgation worksf wherever irrigation water is supplied by the Government. In regard to all these a Kisan comrade must help the peasants in pressing Government by all legitimate means.

(2) In the event of revenue revision or resettlement being ordered by Government, Kisán comrades should collect all possible detailed materials re crops, production, gross and net incomes from land etc. and submit it to the settlement officer and to the higher Kisan Committes and should carry on a vigorous propaganda for preventing Government from imposing additional taxation and for reducing the existing rate of taxation.

(3) In as much as to-day the land revenue burden has become unbearable due to the fall in prices, it is essential that immediate steps must be taken to ask Government on behalf of cultivators of the village to revise the land revenue in a lower direction, to familiarise peasants with the provisions of the Civil Procedure Code so as to enable them to delay the payment of revenue long enough for them to realise money by the sale of their produce and pay the kist

without, undergoing any great hardship and to prevent Revenue officials from coercing peasants by taking advantage of the peasants' ignorance.

(4) In time of famines or floods, an enquiry should be made into the sufferings of peasants, their needs specified and demands formulated and protection from Government and public sought for the suspension of land revenue, old "taccavi" dues and debts.

(5) Inquiries must be set on foot by every village and Taluka Peasants' Committee to collect information regarding land tenure, wells, canal dues, pasture and grazing lands etc. incidence of direct and indirect taxes, upon peasants and proper publicity obtained for it in the local press.

(6) In the Zamindari areas, the Kisan comrades must get Kisans to ask the Government and Zamindars to assess revenue on the lands that they cultivate according to ryotwari rates of land revenue in the ryotwari areas, and to get their lands properly surveyed and settled, their tanks repaired; and on the basis of the great difference between the Government Land Revenue assessment and the rent exacted by the Zamindar, a persistent campaign for the lowering of the rent and repairs of tanks and the granting of remission ought to be carried on. In this struggle every provision of the Tenancy Laws, Revenue Codes etc. ought to be fully exploited and an *offensive* should be constantly launched on the Zamindars in the courts, before Government and through legislatures and by public agitation to force them to discharge their duties at least as laid down by the Laws of the land.

(7) Furthermore the tenants must be warned against signing printed lease forms which in addition to rent, make all sorts of other demands, indicate wrong or bigger areas in any patta or stipulate any onerous conditions.

(8) Illegal exactions of any kind must be legally fought and the Zamindars and the landlords must be prosecuted in test cases.

(9) As far as possible, collective bargaining by the tenants of one landlord must be promoted in order to obtain better terms for all and collective consultation before any action is taken by any group of peasants must be insisted on.

(10) Rights on trees in the fields, and rights of free grazing and fuel and thatching straws and leaves, rights over all communal grounds and properties must be safeguarded, insisted upon and secured.

(12) Tenants, whenever their demands are refused or who are otherwise oppressed in any manner, should be asked to take the most effective collective action decided upon locally.

(13) An inquiry must be instituted in ever villagey regarding the conditions, extent and incidence of suffering of the Serf or slave labour and reports submitted to the higher committees and Government, and legal and other action taken to abolish such Serf labour.

(14) So far as the rich peasants or intermediaries who also rent out lands for cultivation are concerned, Kisan comrades must see to it that every lease is carefully scrutinised and collective bargaining promoted and the scale of rents lowered and rack-renting prevented.

(15) Tenants should be advised to refuse to cultivate the soil or to pay the rent wherever tenants do not have the permanancy of tenure or right of alienation, until all disputes are settled between the landlord or the intermediary and his tenants.

(16) Wages and conditions of work of the farm labourer must be inquired into and every opportunity must be utilised to effect improvements in their conditions by negotiating with the peasants and by assisting their organised strike against zamindars and planters.

(17) In so far as the money lender or the sowcar is concerned, the Kisan worker must scrutinise and examine all accounts and interest charges and lease papers concerning indebted Kisans and do everything possible to negotiate for the lowering of interest rates and exempting of a portion of the accrued debt.

(18) Collective resistance may be offered to high interest charges, and if necessary and advisable, social boycott adopted against the arrogant and unreasonabel sowcars and their shops boycotted to bring them to reason. Legal assistance ought to be offered to all indebted peasants and in order to escape from the unconscionable clutches of money-lenders, the Kisan workers should try their level best to see that co-operative and "taccavi" credit is provided for all peasants.

(19) So far as the merchant is concerned, the villagers must fight for proper weights and measures and prevent any illegal exactions in kind or cash being made by the merchant or the sowcars under whatever pretext it may be.

(20) As far as possible collective fixing of the fair price of agricultural produce ought to be obtained and

co-operative sales must also be encouraged and grain markets organised for the purpose and information regarding the market prices broadcast from day to day or week to week through public meetings and other means.

(21) In so far as canal rates and other water rates are concerned, the villagers should be collectively asked to approach the Government to lower canal dues in order to bring them in line with the fall in prices. Wherever no water is received, canal dues should be refused as long as it is legally possible to do so and authorities must be approached with a view to get them cancelled, and the revission of water rates must be demanded so that only such rates will be collected as will cover the investments upon irrigation projects.

(22) A fight must be carried on to get remissions of of all canal rates in times of famine, brought, cyclones and floods.

(23) The distribution of water between several villages should be settled by peasant committees of the villages concerned and the irrigation officers ought to be influenced to obey their decisions, except under extraordinary circumstances when such disputes ought to be referred to irrigation advisory committees consisting of officials and representatives of the village committees.

(24) Arbitarry unjust orders of the irrigation officers must be scrutinised and exposed and brought to the notice of the superior authorities and bribery when found among such officers ought to be put down by every legitimate means.

(25) The monopoly of canal waters by sugar companies and other concerns and individuals must also be opposed and the rights of ordinary peasants must be asserted by agitational and legal means.

(26) In so far as forests are concerned, free grazing and free fuel, bamboo and timber rights must be insistently demanded by the Kisans and vigorous agitation carried on for the purpose and the exorbitant compounding fees now prevailing lowered, and the arbitrary and coercive methods and corruption found among forest officers put down.

(27) Special attempts ought to be made to put down bribery and corruption among all the officers of Government and landlords and co-operative and local self-Government movements.

(28) Peasants, Marches ought to be organised both to the peasants conferences and local and district and higher authorities to create a mass consciousness among the kisans and to awaken the authorities to the realisation of the collective demands of peasants.

(29) Minimum and fair prices for sugar cane, juet-Cotton, Rice wheat, Groundnuts, and other crops must be sought to be established especially whenever and wherever protection is granted to the manufacturers interested in those crops.

(30) Everything proper and possible should be done to undermine the influence of the power of landlords. Sahukars and other exploiting classes, and for this purpose, every kisan comrade ought to try to strengthen the kisans as against landlords and sowcars and prevent the alienation of their lands, and auctioning of their properties and cattle etc.

(31) It is the duty of every kisan comrade to continually familiarise and popularise the Charter of the Fundamental and Minimum Demands among the Kisans and for this purpose, he ought to utilise every fraternal platform.

(32) It is imperative that the awakening and rising political consciousness amongst the Kisans should be crystalised in concrete organisational forms if the struggle of the Kisans is to be carried forward with the least possible delay to a successful end.

Therefore, I exhort all Kisan workers to strive to their utmost to cover the length and breadth of the land with a net- work of kisan organisations with mass memberships which will form the basis of the future fight for political and economic emancipation of the Kisans.

(33) Kisan comrades must encourage the holding of Kisan fairs and sports as well as agricultural exhibitions from the Kisan point of view along with Kisan conferences to promote intelligent appreciation of their own interests and needs through recreational channels.

(34) Mass singing of Kisan and national songs must be promoted in order to intensify the solidarity and militancy of the Kisans.

CHAPTER II

Politico Economics: Kisan Viewpoint

Resolutions of the A. I. K. S. and A. I. K. C.

I. CONSTITUTION.

* This All India Kisan Congres emphatically condemns and totally rejects the new Constitution devised by British Imperialism to maintain and strengthen its political domination by alaying itself with the most reactionary indigenous forces of feudalism and decaying capitalism with a view to deepen its exploitative grip and oppressive power over the toiling masses of India.

This Congress therefore calls upon all the anti-Imperialist forces in the country and especially the Kisans and workers to so develop their day -to -day struggle against the exploiters, as represented by British Government in India, the Zamindars and landlords and industrialists and money lenders that they will ultimately by its own dynamic power smash the slave Constitution and wrench

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* *Resolutions adopted by the 2nd session of the All India Kisan Congress held at Faizpur on 26th and 27th December, 1936.*

the political and economic power from the hands of British Imperialism and its allies in the country.

This Congress also urges upon the Indian National Congress the imperative need of an unequivocal declaration at the Faizpur session to the effect that the Congress representatives in the legislatures will not become pawns of imperialism by accepting offices under the new Constitution.

II. REPRESSION.

This Congress protests against the repressive and unjust action of the Punjab, N. W. F. P., Bengal and Madras Governments in imprisoning a large number of Kisan comrades under some pretext or other, in starting security proceedings against many more particularly in Bihar and Andhra and in refusing to remove the electoral disqualification against a number of prominent kisan comrades of Bengal and reassure kisan comrades that they ought to carry on their kisan service undaunted by all such repressive actions of Government.

III. DEMANDS.

This Congrss unconditionally reiterates all the demands political and economic as adopted at the first session of the Congress held at Lucknow and as amplified at the meeting of the A. I. K. C. held at Bombay during August last and emphasises

the fact that unless the system of absentee landlordism, agricultural debt and the present Land Revenue system is abolished there can be no lasting solution of the biggest problem facing the Indian people namely the ending of the starvation of the 28 crores of Indian cultivators.

(1) This Congress of the Kisans therefore is of the deliberate opinion that the present system of absentee landlordism, which comprise nearly 70 per cent of the Indian agricultural tenures, is the root cause of the economic poverty and cultural backwardness of the mass of the Indian peasantry. So long as it exists the real cultivators and toilers on land shall ever remain in reality the slaves and the serfs of the big zamindars or landowners. No amount of tinkering or half hearted measures like the Tenancy legislation of U. P., Bihar and Bengal or the Punjab Land alienation Acts will ever solve the basic economic problems of the Indian Kisans. Only a radical reconstruction of the present system of ownership and cultivation alone involving the abolition of the Zamindari systems, will assure a modicum of economic well being to the starving millions of Kisans of India.

(2) This Congress is also of the opinion that the burden of agricultural Debt which to-day is calculated by competent authorities to be 1500

crores is unbearable and inequitous in as much as the major part of the debt was incurred at a much higher price level than the one prevailing at present and consequently it is impossible for the agriculturists to meet even the debt service let alone pay off the principal. This Congress therefore is convinced that a complete and unconditional liquidation of that debt is absolutely necessary if the Indian kisan is to obtain some relief from the state of perpetual starvation in which he lives today.

(3) This Congress is further of the opinion that the present system of Land Revenue prevailing in the Ryotwari areas is completely at variance with the system of rational and human taxation in as much as it makes no allowance for a minimum subsistance income before levying the Revenue and demands that the whole system should be done away with and replaced by a system of land taxation exempting all net agricultural income *below* 500 rupees similar to the ones prevailing in all civilised countries.

V. FAMINE

This All India Kisan Congress is of the opinion that a radical everhauling of the present Famine Relief Code is the urgent necessity of the moment if it is to fulfil even to a small degree the functions of redeeming the distress of the famine-

stricken peasantry. It must be revised on the lines whereby the declaration of a state of famine will rest not with the revenue official alone but with joint committees of Revenue officials and the representatives of local bodies, of a given area such as of peasants and workers' associations and the disbursement of the famine relief fund must also be carried on in close consultation with peasants' and Workers' Unions.

It is further resolved that the distinction between famine and extreme scarcity embodied in the Indian Famine Code be abolished.

VI. ELECTIONS.

This Congress deeply regrets that the election manifesto issued by the A. I. C. C. did not incorporate the fundamental demand for the abolitin of the Zamindari and allied systems of absentee landlordism and further that the working committee of the Congress, the A. I. C. C. and the Central Parliamentary and Provincial Committees have failed so far to issue supplementary election manifestoes to pledge the Congress candidates to work for the realisation of the specific demands of the Kisans of India as adopted by the Lucknow Kisan Conference and as ampilfied by the A. I. K. C. at Bombay.

This Congress deeply deplores the hostile attitude adopted by the C. P. B. in rejecting the proferred

co-operation in the forthcoming Provincial Elections in the matter of selecting candidates who stand for the interests of the masses and conducting electioneering campaign and in deliberately refusing to select most of the trusted Kisan workers as its candidates for the Provincial Elections and in making pacts and understandings with the reactionary and-National and anti-Peasant parties and individuals in violation of the spirit of the Election Manifesto issued by the A.I.C.C. and otherwise in nominating the erstwhile communalists and other reactionaries: who have in the past opposed the National and Peasants interests, as the official Congress candidates for the elections.

This Congress further directs all Kisan comrades and organisations to utilise the electioneering platforms and other opportunities to broad-cast and popularise the peasants and workers, minimum demands.

This Congress while generally supporting the Congress in elections, offers its special support to such Congress candidates as will pledge them-selves to safeguard the interests of the workers and peasants by implementing their minimum demands.

VII. KISAN ORGANISATION

This Congress notes with great appreciation the awakening that has been manifested all over the country amongst the toilers on the land; since the holding of the first session at Lucknow. It particularly notes with satisfaction the numerous conferences of the kisans held all over the country under the ægis of their own organisatins testifying to the rising consciousness and tempo of militant united action that is developing among the Kisans,

It is imperative that this awakening and rising political consciousness should crystalise in concrete organisational froms if the struggle of the Kisans is to be carried forward with the least possible delay to a successful end.

This Congress therefore exhorts all kisan workers to strive their utmost to cover the length and breadth of the land with a network of kisan organisations with mass membership which will form the basis of the future fight for political and economic emanicipation of the kisans,

VIII. AGRARIAN LABOUR.

This Congress is of the deliberate opinion that the prevailing low standard of wages, and primitive conditions of work and social repression of the agricultural labourers including the so-called Harijans and other suppressed classes which constitute 33 per cent of the agricultural labourers is inhuman and unbecoming to any civilised society.

This Congress in particular condemns the system of indentured labour under which large sections of these labourers, their wives and children are held in barbarous chains of virtual slavery in parts of Gujarat, Sindh. Bihar, C. P., Orissa, Madras and other provinces.

This Congress is convinced that it is only by organising these landless labourers in their unions with a view to fight for the improvement in their wages can their chains of slavery be destroyed.

1st MEETING OF THE A. I. K. C. AT NIAMATPUR, 14TH 15TH JULY '37.

Swamiji and Yagnik submitted verbal reports regarding propaganda work carried out by them in

several provinces. Com. Yagnik pointed out that from the experiences acquired by him during his tours in several provinces he was in a position to state that a move for abolishing the Zamindari and Malguzari systems had been set on foot.

Com. Bankim Mukerjee, one of the secretaries of the A. I. K. C., also submitted a verbal report of the work he could do in the provinces placed in his charge. The Secretary was requested to draw up a full report or the list of members from different provinces as well as the progress of the work between every two meetings of the A. I. K. C, and to place the same before it regularly. Thereafter matters like organisational work and formation of committeeS was considered. Comrade Harshadev Malaviya of U. P. while making a statement re: the work done in U. P. pointed out the difficulties the Kisan workers had to surmount as well as the position of congress workers and others they had to face.

1 Organisational Resolution

After taking into consideration reports of various provinces the meeting resolved that in the provinces which had not still been properly organised and affiliated to the A. I. K. C. the following steps be taken to organise and consolidate the peasant movement which was spontaneously growing all over the country and thus form strong provincial Kisan Sabhas under the leadership of the A. I. K. S. on mass membership.

Not withstanding this resolution the office bearers of the A. I. K. C. in charge of the respective provinces would have full powers to change any arrangement if

in their opinion the methods and arrangements suggested in this resolution impede in any way the early formation of any provincial Kisan Sabha :

An organising committee consisting of the following members be appointed to convene a meeting of the leading Kisan workers of the respective provinces and form provincial committees which would take upon itself the enrolment of mass members and arrangements for proper peasant delegates, provincial conferences where the permanent Kisan Sabha for the province concerned would be formed. The U. P. provincial committee should finish its task by the end of September.

(1) Dr. Ashraf (convenor) (9) Harshadeo Malaviya (3) Mohanlal Gautam (4) Acharya Narendra Deo (5) Sajjad Zaheer (U. P.). P. D. Marathe ; C. P. (Marathi) Behrrilal Patel ; C. P. (Hindustani) Namboodripad ; (Kerala) Satyavati Devi and Vatsayan ; (Delhi) Bankim Mukerjee to tour Asssam first.

Prof. Ranga arrived at noon and took the chair.

The Draft Constitution was then discussed and it was adopted with some additions and alterations. The constitution was finally approved by the Commitee, and is now to be put into operation forthwith according to the resolution of the Faizpur session of the All India Kisan Sabha.

The meeting of the committee was resumed again on the 15th morning when the following resolutions were adopted unanimously.

2. CONGRESS AND KISAN.

The meeting of the A. I. K. C. Welcomes the controversy that has developed in the press on the question

of the relation of Kisan Sabha with the Indian National Congress as a sign of the recognition of the rapidly developing strength of these organisations in various parts of this country.

In the opinion of the committee the plea of national unity being jeoparadised by organising seperate Kisan Sabha is untenable. The fulfilment of the tasks of the national revolution demands an unity of not a loose mechanical sort, but a real organic unity of all the classes and elements bound together with a common revolutionary purpose and actuated by a common motive for the overthrow of Imperialism.

The committee holds that at the present stage and in the present character of the national movement, a little conflict here and there between certain section of the national revolutionary forces and the class forces of peasants and workers may become unavoidable and the surest remedy against this is the acceptance by the Indian notional Congress of the policy of collective affiliation.

Hence the committee endorses the statement of Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, the General Secretary, on the subject and categorically reaffirms his unequivocal statement that "the existence of a seperate and independent Kisan Sabha is most essential and can in no circumstances be dispensed with"

The committee welcomes the resolution adopted by the Utkal Provincial Congress Committe on June 14th which statesthat "The policy of the congress has always been and is to encourage the peasants to have their own organisations to protect their interest in as much as, the Indian National Congress in its session at Karachi

Lucknow and Faizpur has unequivocally accepted the fundamental rights of peasants to form their unions"

This committee recognises the spirit of cordial sympathy towards the Kisan movement animating the Congress President's recent statement on its relation to Indian National Congress and welcomes his recognition of the inherent rights of the industrial workers and peasants to organise themselves. But while fully conscious of the great role and status of the Congress as an anti-Imperailist organisation and of the necessity of co-operation with it in carrying on the struggle for political freedom, the committee must point out that the inalienable right of Kisans to form their own unions can not possibly be conditioned or affected in any degree by any consideration of the existence and strength or weakness of the Congress organisations in any area. The committee further hold that Kisan Sabhas should be started everywhere to carry on the Kisan's day to day struggle against the Government Landlord, Moneylenders and all other exploiting classes not only for their economic amelioration but also for developing and intensifying the fight against foreign imperialism and its Indian allies.

This committee appreciates the fraternal feeling expressed by the Congress President in appealing to the Congress workers to help in the organisation and development of Kisan Sabhas and reciprocates the feeling with its appeal to the Kisan Sabha workers to enrol peasants as members of the National Congress pending collective affiliation.

Lastly this committee denounces all attempts to villify the Kisan movement under various pretexts and all efforts made in various quarters to subordinate the

Kisan Sabha to the control of the Congress committee and exhorts all Kisan workers to strengthen their organisation by enrolling mass membership and forge ahead with their specific tasks with full faith in the great role, critical and constructive, of the Kisan movement in the people's struggle for freedom.

3. KISAN GROUPS IN LEGISLATURES.

This Committee exhorts members of the Kisan Sabhas elected to the various provincial Legislatures on the Kisan, Congress or United Front tickets to form or join Kisan and Labour members' groups and propose resolutions, bills, amendments etc, and take all possible measures for the realisation of the Kisans' demends as stated in the Charter of Rights adopted at the Faizpur session of the A. I. K. Sabha and as amplified by the respective provincial Kisan Sabhas from time to time.

4. CONGRESS AND OFFICES.

This Committee endorses the statement issued by the President and secretaries of the A. I. K. S. soon after the Delhi meeting of the A. I. C. C. in which they warned the country against the danger involved in the decision of the Congress to accept offices and expressed the opinion that by accepting ministry the Congress would, however unwillingly and unconsciously, be more likely to strengthen the vested interests and British Imperialism than to strengthen our fight against the "Slave Constitution" and British domination over India.

This Committee draws the attention of the country to the significant fact that since the Faizpur session of

the Indian National Congress all the extra-legislative programmes of vital importance to the masses of the country, including the task of organising and strengthening the mass organisations of the workers and the peasantry have practically been relegated to the background and eclipsed by the constitutional haggling over the terms of the acceptence of office.

This committee is further of opinion that the whole idea of ending the Act through working is erroneous and tends to create an illusion about it by distracting the attention of the masses from direct mass struggle against Imperialism which was the essence and spirit of the Faizpur resolution regarding the anti-Imperialist struggle.

This committee declares that the Kisans of India have no illusion about any substantial good coming out of the working of the Government of India Act and firmly believes that their salvation from the thraldom of Zamindars and Sahukars can only be achieved by the real ending of the Act and the destruction of the Imperialist domination over India through their own organised mass action,

This Committee therefore exhorts the Kisans to remain firm in their revolutionary role and to continue to develop their class organisations with a view to win land, bread and freedom.

Since however the congress has chosen to accept ministries on the declared policy of not only combating the Act but also ameliorating the conditions of the peasantry, this committee demands that the congress ministers should lose no time in taking all such steps, adminstrative and legislative, as would satisfy the

demands of the Kisans and afford effective and immediate protection to the peasantry from the Government, Zamindars and Sowcars, including the declaration of moratorium on all agricultural debts and arreas of rent and revenue and the suspension of all other proceedings for coercion, eviction and alienation and urges upon the Kisan comrades and Sabhas to be constantly on the alert and forge necessary sanctions for the achievement of their demands.

5. REPRESSION IN BENGAL.

This meeting of the All India Kisan Committee strongly condemns the application of Criminal Tribes Act on a large number of prominent peasant organisers including Syed Ahmed Khan M. L. A. of, Noakhali. The Act, which is in its very nature barbarous and deprives a man of all civil liberties on the strength of police report only, has been diabolical in its operation all over the country.

The Committee further strongly condemns the policy of the Bengal Government in banning the District Peasant Conferences of Barisal Hoogly; 24 Parganas, arresting several peasant organisers of Bankura on a charge of dacoity, unnecessarily harassing Jagadhish Palit, a member of the A. I. K, C. and constantly oppressing the peasant organisers at Chittagong, Barisal, Khulna, Bardwan, Hoogly and 24 Parganas,

V KOTTAPATNAM SCHOOL

This Committee condemns the action of Madras Government in banning the Kottapatnam School of

Politics and Economics and making an unprovoked and malicious lathi charge of the students and incarcerating men and women of the school and congratulates these students on their brave stand against this attack on the civil liberties of the people.

VI ANDHRA PEASANTS MARCH

This committee welcomes the Andhra provincial peasants March and congratulates the brave marchers who have undertaken this 1000 miles march which will last for about four months.

VII DAMODAR CANALS

This meeting of the A. I. K. C. while congratulating the Canal-Tax Payers and peasants of Burdwan for their militant and determined fight against the Land Development Act as applied at Burdwan, declares that the A. I. K. C is not against the Land Development Scheme, as such, which fulfils Dr. Bently's and Sir W. Willcock's plans of opening up silted rivers and digging new canals to provide irrigation for the whole of the province and simultaneously help in the removal of Malaria:

This Committee endorses the criticisms against the present land development Act with its arbitrary taxation as formulated by the Burdwan peasantry and as advanced by the Bengal Kisan Conference and objects to the faulty scheme with bad engineering and wasteful expenditure resulting in a heavy burden on the peasants being legalised and sanctioned by the Act.

The Committee further, vehemently condemns the action of the Government in repressing the peasantry

in the canal area by the wholesale attachments of the property of the villagers and not coming to any settlement even after such a long period which has passed since the peasantry placed in a body their concrete proposals before the authority and even after the ministers publicly promised redress.

RED FLAG.

After this, the following statement on redflag con troversy was approved by the Committee.

We have been carefully following the controversy that has arisen over the flags being hoisted by our comrades in the Congress and Kisan organisations. We are sorry to find that any idea of conflict between the National flag and the Red flag of the peasants and workers should have been allowed to gain currency. We have always understood that the National flag, as the symbol of national unity in our struggle for freedom, is as dear to our peasants and workers as to all other fighters for freedom and therefore has its natural place of precedence on occassion symbolic of the National struggle for freedom and Swaraj uniting in a common purpose all the anti-Imperialist forces of the nation despite their differences in their class idealogicies and interests.

At the same time the Red flag which has come to be recognised all the world over as the symbol of inter. national solidarity and unity of the proletariat and the peasantry, has now come to endear itself not only to the industrial workers but also to the growing number of class-conscious, oppressed peasantry of India. More over, in all the countries all the exploited classes have

to-day come to attach special significance in their struggle against the Fascist menace, to this great emblem of revolt against all systems of exploitation and oppression. No wonder more and more all our Kisan comrades and organisations have rightly come to adopt the Red flag as the symbol of Kisan movement and are jealous to uphold its dignity and keep it flying against all odds. It is only natural, thus for us to welcome this spontaneous expression of the class solidarity of our peasantry with our workers through this great symbol.

All lovers of freedom and rebels against oppression of man by man will, we hope, realise the great contribution, the adoption of this Red flag can make to the growth and the strengthening of the desired class consciousness. international outlook and militant anti-imperialist fervour of our masses. Now can India and her millions of peasants remain out side the world current of anti-imperialist forces and not line up with the growing phalanx of the international people's movement for democracy and freedom ? It is only right, therefore, that our peasants shall stand firm by the Red flag and hoist it at all their peasant gatherings and ceremonies. We feel convinced that the adoption of the Red flag by our peasants far from weakening the national fight or confusing the masses on their national struggle, will succeed in awakening in them the essential class consciousness which is the bedrock of struggle for fighting all forces of reaction and building up a mighty sector of our national forces. We therefore, earnestly appeal to all the fighters for India's freedom to appreciate and respect the sentiment of loyalty of our peasants and workers for their red flag.

In conclusion we would urge upon our Kisan comrades and organisations to respect the National Flag at all Congress or United Front demonstrations and thus to avoid all possibilities of conflict between the two flags, one the symbol of fight for our national freedom and the other the emblem of our international solidarity with the oppressed of all lands.

CALCUTTA MEETING

(27, 28—October 1937)

An important meeting of this Committee was held on October 27 and 28 at the Commiitee rooms of the Bedgal Provincial Kisan Sabha Albert Hall under the presidentship of Prof. N. G. Ranga.

After the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee were discussed and adopted, leading Kisan workers from the different provinces submitted reports of the work being done in their areas and several suggestions were made for speeding up Kisan work in the country. The following resolutions were adopted :

1. *Congress Ministers.*

Whereas Congressmen have now accepted offices in 7 out of 11 provinces of India for the express purpose of wrecking the Gevernment of India Act of 1935 and for working out the constructive programme including the agrarian programme of the Congress and,

Whereas the ministries have already, during the last few months, introduced half-yearly budgets, announced agrarian policies, taken some concrete measures and foreshadowed some more,

This Committee, while recognising some temporary and inadequate relief given to the peasants in their provinces, deeply deplores and expressess its strong dissatisfaction with the piecemeal, superficial and purfunctory manner in which the Congress Ministries have dealt with only some of the problems affecting the Kisans, who constitute the poorest and the overwhelming majority of the people and who have because of their faith in the Congress and believing in the Congress election manifesto and the Congress resolutions, elected them to the positions of power.

This Committee regrets to note that while ministries in several provinces have already announced 3 and 5 years' plan of the congress programme no comprehensive plan has been so far contemplated or announced by any of the ministries for implementing the Congress agrarian programme.

This Committee expresses its conviction that Congress Ministries should now strive their utmost to implement their pledges made to the peasantry, if they are not to forefeit their confidence and to redeem the honour of the Congress. This Committee further requests the Congress M. L. A's and the Congress Committees in these provinces to take all necessary steps to see that the Congress pledges are observed fully in letter and in spirit before the end of the next year.

This Commmittee lends its whole-hearted support to a similar resolution adopted by the Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha on their Kisan Demands Day, October 17 and calls upon the Kisan Sabhas in other provinces to carry on a vigorous and militant propaganda on the lines laid down in this resolution with a view to bring home to the Congress ministers and M. L. A.'s their

direct and primary responsibility to the peasant electors and their paramount duty to grant urgent relief for the stranglehold of the Government demands, the landlords' rents and the Sahukars' debts. The Committee further believes that it is only by carrying on such a day to day struggle that the Kisans can strengthen the national struggle for complete independence.

2. Land Revenue.

This Committee is of opinion that the land tax imposed by the Government in Ryotwari areas, irrespective of the area or profits of cultivation is unjust and oppressive and operates as a poll-tax and has been rightly condemned as a mark of economic slavery, and as pending the revision of the Land Revenue laws and systems the Faizpur Congress called for "substantial reduction" in land revenue as a measure of "immediate relief" in view of "rpesent conditions" and "the deepening crisis" involving a sharp fall in prices, the Committee feels that the Congress Ministers are in duty bound to effect a flat reduction of 50 per cent at least in the present land tax and to exempt all uneconomic holdings from the same.

The Committee deeply regrets that the Congress Ministries being not content with effecting insignificant reductions in the land revenue demand for the current year, have in several provinces bluntly asked the peasants in the most hectoring tones not to worry them with insistent demands for reduction in land revenue as they could not do so consistently with the due fulfilment of the prohibition programme and the carrying out of nation-building activities.

The committee must state its considered and emphatic opinion that the refusal or inability of the Congress Ministry to effect a drastic cut in the revenue demand in the next budget will be deemed by the peasants as a gross violation of the pledges given to them at the time of the elections.

The Committee therefore deems its duty to give a timely warning to the Ministers concerned to frame their next budget on the basis of a substantially lower incidence of land revenue, aud assures the Ministers of the full support of the peasants in any struggle they might have to wage against the present constitution and the Government of India to effect drastic economies under reserved heads and to secure additional sources of income.

3, *Annawari valuation of crops.*

This Committee requests all revenue Ministers to issue special orders prohibiting village, Taluka and District officials from making fanciful and exaggerated annawari valuations of crops and to get their valuations endorsed in every case by the representatives of village Panchayats and Local Kisan Sabhas as the case may be.

The committee further exhorts Kisan workers and Sabhas to exercise strict vigilance on the annawari valuations as they are being made in villages, compare them with their own estimates of crops, make prompt representations to higher revenue officials to have false valuations corrected in time and carry on vigorous agitation including the holding of meetings and demonstrati ons and observing an " annawari day " if necessary and suspend the payment of land revenue till their represen

tations in this behalf are finally decided by the revenue ministers.

4. Debts and moratorium,

This Commitee reminds all congress ministries of the resolution on agrarian debts and moratorium adopted as a part of the agrarian programme at the Faizpur Congress.

The resolution provides, in the opinion of this Committee, for two things : Firstly, the setting up of a machinery by law to scale down and liquidate the Himalayan burden of debt that has well-nigh broken the back of the peasant, and secondly, pending the enactment of laws which might conceivably take a year or more, the immediate declaration of a moratorium for preventing of transfer of lands to the Sahukars and other non-cultivation classes and the attachment of the peasants' moveable property and specially the year's crops on which the peasant and his family must depend for their maintenance.

This Committee deeply regrets to note that while most of the Congress Ministers have announced enquiries and legislation for carrying out the first part of the resolution and have thus forewarned the Sahukar of the impending cut in their debts, they have, except in the United Provinces refused to pass any emergency law for preventing the transfer of peasants' lands current crops, their cattle etc. to the Sahukars and other non-cultivating classes,

This Committtee enters its emphatic protest against the pronouncements of some Congress Ministers who, forgetful of the imperative Congress mandate in the matter that concerns the food and well-being of the

millions of peasants committed to their charge, have either bluntly questioned the nature of the present crises and attacked the whole principle of moratorium or decided to grant some limited relief to those peasants only as would apply for the benefit of some debt redemption laws to be enacted at some future date.

This Committee states its deliberate opinion that all such pronouncements and decisions must be deemed to constitute a gross violation of the Congress pledge to give immediate relief to the peasant from the strangle-hold of the Sahukars. The Committee therefore urges the Congress Ministers to enact forth-with brief moratorium laws by convening special sessions of the legislatures during the next one month. The Committee further requests the A. I. C. C. and working Committee to issue urgent instructions to the ministers who have so far wilfully refused to honour the Congress pledge on the subject.

Finally this Committee deems it its duty to state that in the event of no acts being passed or measures taken to afford immediate and adequate protection to the peasants' lands and so cheap credit being given to the peasants' current crops, cattle etc, before the 31st of December next the peasants will be entitled to declare a moratorium themselves, and further to boycott all legal machinery that might be set up for reducing or negotiating debts and take all other concerted measures they might deem fit to promote the object in view.

With a view to make the Congress and other Ministries realise the urgency of liquidating agricultural indebtedness and the strength of the peasants' demand

for the immediate declaration of a moratorium this Committee calls upon the Provincial Kisan Sabhas to organise their provincial campaigns of Moratorium day or Moratorium week at the earliest opportunity before the end of November and to prepare themselves for further and more effective action as and when such action is advised by the A. I. K. C.

5, Repression,

This Committee condemns the repressive policy of the Bengal Government pursued against the Kisan movement particularly in the 24 Parganas and strongly against the collusion of the Government with the Port Canning and Land Improvement Cos. and other Zamindari Cos. in banning legitimate meetings of the peasantry and prosecuting Kisan comrades and calls upon the peasants of the Dt. to carry on a relentless fight for the protection of their legitimate demands including the re-occupying their 'Jyot" Khasht lands.

6. Congressmen's opposition.

This Committee while congratulating the Utkal Provincial Congress committee for according its wholehearted support to the U. P. K. S. strongly condemns the mischievous move of certain Prominent congressmen particularly of Utkal, Tamil-Nad, Andhra, Karnatak, Bengal, Bihar; Gujerat and Maharashtra to sabotage the Kisan Movement.

7. Repression in provinces,

This committee condemns the repressive policy of the Punjab, Bihar, Bengal, U. P. Bombay and Madras Ministries displayed so shamelessly in their arresting a large number of Kisans and Kisan comrades, banning

Kisan Conferences, promulgating section 144 and confining a large number of Kisans in their villages and urges upon the Kisan Sabhas to carry on their organisational and propagandist activities undaunted by the threats of repression and reprisals, on the alleged ground of disseminating class hatred and sedition.

8. *Price of Cane.*

This Committee deplores the reported decision of the U. P. and Bihar Government to fix the price of cane at 5 annas per maund even though they had known that such a low price could not even cover the actual costs of cultivation. Inspite of the recommendation favouring 6 annas made by the majority of the joint sugar conference held at Lucknow and by working committee of the BiharP. C. C. and actually approved by some of the sugarmills in Bihar. The Committee urges upon these Governments to revise their decision and fix 8 as. as the absolute minimum price and thus carry out their election pledge of protecting the cane-growers and calls upon the Kisan Sabhas in these provinces to carry on a strong and effective whirlwind campaign for a high and more reasonable price.

9. *Abolition of Landlordism.*

This Committee reiterates its faith in the Lucknow resolution that "all systems of landlordism shall be abolished and all the rights over such lands be vested in the cultivators" and therefore denounces attempts and proposals being made by Congress and other M. L. A's and Ministers to pay compensation at the present swollen market prices to Zamindars for the purpose of the purchase of their zamindars under the pretext of abolishing the Zamindari system by peaceful means.

This Committee maintains that since eventually all such payments of compensation can only be exacted by the State from the masses, Kisans cannot permit any such compensation being paid to Zamindars, and therefore calls upon all M. L. A's interested in Kisans and Kisan Sabhas to effectively resist all such moves to pay compensation to zamindars and all other intermediaries between the State and the actual cultivators.

10. Kisan Groups.

This Committee congratulates the Kisan M. L. A's of Bihar and Bengal upon forming the Peasants' Groups of M. L. A's but strongly deplores the decision of the Madras Congress Assembly party not to allow the formation of any such group and calls upon all those M. L. A's genuinely interested in the welfare of Kisans to form themselves into peasants' groups in spite of such undemocratic decisions as that of the Madras Congress Assembly Party and thus seek to promote the interests of peasants.

11. Red flag,

This meeting reiterates its approval of the statement regarding Red Flag issued by the President and Secretaries of the A. I. K. C. after the Niyamatpur session of the Committee and while asking Kisans to respect and maintain the national flag as the symbol of our anti-Imperialist struggle for national freedom calls upon Kisans and Kisan Sabhas and Committees to adopt Red Flag as their own and hoist and march under the Red Flag.

12. Water Rates.

This Committee is definitely of the opinion that the present water or Irrigation Rates are too high and

based upon wrong principles and admit of large reductions consistent with the economics of all Irrigation works and records the failure of all Provincial Governments to take any steps to reduce their incidence and readjust the basis of their levy in the face of Congress pledge to substantially lower canal and other Irrigation rates and while reiterating the Lucknow Resolutions on the subjccts demands immediate reduction by at least 50 per cent of water or Irrigation rates.

This Committee protests against the levy of 25—per acre imposed by the Madras Government on all new wet lands in the Presidency.

13. Prohibition.

This Committee warns the Congress Ministries that their prohibition scheme shall under no circumstances be allowed to be used as an excuse for whittling down, or modifying any or all items of the agrarian programme adopted at the Faizpur Congress session.

This Committee further trusts that the Prohibition scheme inaugurated by the Congress will be worked in such a manner as to result in the welfare of the workers and peasants without increasing the vicious power of the Police, Excise, and Revenue authorities over them.

14. Agricultural Forests :—This Committee is pained to notice that none of the Provincial Ministries has so far even tried to devise means for transferring all "Agricultural Forests" to village Panchayats elected on adult suffrage and demands not only abolition of all grazing fees in all such forests as was done by the Bombay Government, but the rapid transference of all such forests to village Panchayats and the amendment of Forest Acts and the reorganisation of the manage-

ment of other Forests known also as "Reserves" so as to obtain the co-operation of Kisan Sabhas and minimise the persecution of peasants by Forest Officials through the operation of coercive forest laws or Regulation and secure the customary and necessary rights of peasants over the Agricultural produce of such forest.

15 Forced Labour:—This Committee demands that immediate steps shall be taken by all Ministries to penalize the forced labour, ill-paid, unpaid and all other extralegal compulsory or quasi-conpulsory exactions or levies of labour, grain or moneys made by Government officials, Land lords, their agents and money lenders.

16 Co-operative Societies:—This Committee deplores the havoc caused by the Co-operative Credit Societies in collecting their pound of flesh from our Kisans at exhorbitant rates of interest and thus ruining them by alienating their land and otherwise impoverishing them in utter disregard of co-operative principles and demands the complete transference of all the Co-operative Credit and other Societies to efficient popular control.

This Committee while desiring development of real co-operative movement under the control of Kisans, will carry on relentless fight against the presant constitution and methods of Co-operative Societies and desires the Provincial Ministries to see that no peasant is deprived of his land, no interest higher than 4 Percent is charged and that their Co-operative Acts are suitably amended to protect the peasant.

17 Unoccupied Lands:—This Committee reiterates its demand that all unoccupied but cultivable lands in

the possession of the Government or Landlords or religious endowments shall be granted without the right of alienation to Co-operative Societies of landless labourers and petty cultivators and urges upon the Provincial Governments to stop all further alterations of all such lands to any individuals for their personal enjoyment and devise as soon as possible the ways and means for settling upon them the co-operative organised peasants and in the meanwhile, such lands should be leased out only to landless labourers at nominal rents.

18 Grazing Rights:—This Committee desires the rapid improvement of cattle but realises that the object can be achieved only if, among other things, adequate and free grazing facilities are provided and therefore urges upon the Provincial Ministries to transfer to the contract of village Panchayats all grazing lands including canal lands roadside lands, waste-lands for free grazing.

19 Salt Tax:—

This Committee reiterates its demands for the abolition of salt tax and calls upon Government of India to abolish, as a first step, the surcharge imposed upon it and to extend the salt concessions, accruing from Gandhi-Irwin pact to all those places from which they have been withdrawn. This Committee further requests Provincial Governments to urge upon Government of India to extend the salt concessions to all such places.

20 Plantations:—

This Committee reiterates its demands for the nationalisation of all plantations without paying any compensation and pending the achievement of this

demand, this Committee requests Provincial Governments to appoint enquiry Committees including the represantatives of labour unions or plantation labour to investigate the sufferings and needs of plantation labour and to take the earliest steps to afford them adequate protection and establish minimum wages and Provident Funds for such labour and strict enforcement of factory Act, Workmen's Compensation Act and Payment of Wages Act.

21. Agricultural Wages.

This Committee requests Provincial Governments to appoint Enquiry Committees consisting of the representatives of Peasant and Agricultural workers. to report upon the grievances, sufferings and needs of agricultural workers, and to suggest ways and means for improving their social and economic conditions and to take early steps to implement such recommendations and in particular this Committee desires the early establishment of Agricultural Wages Boards, the extension of Workmen's Compensation Act and Payment of Wages Act to agricultural labourers.

22. Famine And Floods.

This Committee views with great concern the sufferings of peasants of the Andhra and Assam, Bihar, U. P., and Orrissa due to floods or drought and requests the respective Provincial Governments to take such immediate measures of relief including the opening of famine works, suspension of land revenue or rent, as are found to be necessary and demanded by local Kisan Sabhas.

23. China.

This Comittee denounces the unprovoked and barbaric imperialistic invasion of China by Japan and expresses its deepfelt sympathy and solidarity with the exploited and suffering masses of China. The Committe congratulates the Chinese people for the heroic resistence put up by them and calls upon Government of India to recall Indian troops from China.

24. Rents.

Whereas the Faizpur agrarian programme has demanded the readjustment of rent to present conditions of our peasants and its substantial reduction, the U. P. and Madras Ministries have contented themselves with appointing inquiry committees, non-representative of Kisan organizations and even Kisan M. L. A. s. Bihar and Orissa Ministries have introduced unsatisfying Bills and nowhere have definite steps been taken with a view to effect the much needed "substantial reduction of rent", this meeting of the A. I. K. C. records its emphatic protests against the failure of the Congress Ministries to take emergency and urgent steps to reduce rent and to consult peasants organisations in preparing their policy regarding rent and tenure and to make their inquiry committees representative of Kisan Movement.

25. Damodar Canal.

While endorsing the resolutions regarding the Burdwan Damodar Canal issued by the first meeting of the All India Kisan Committee, the B. P. K. C. and the Burdwan District Kisan Samity

this Committee views the Government decision to reduce the Canal Tax by 25% if paid by September 1937 as totally unsatisfactory in as much as the present financial condition of the peasantry concerned does not allow payment of any such tax in the month of September particularly and also because the peasants demand the appointment of a non-official committee to enquire into and verify their contention that no such development of land or improvement of their economic condition has been effected by the canal as to justify such high rates of taxation.

While the Committee welcomes the Government decision to appoint an enquiry committee for the purpose, it urges that the Committee should include representatives of the B. P. K. C. and that arrangement be made to hold this enquiry immediately and to give peasants of the canal area every facility to represent their case at the time of the enquiry.

26. Bengal Tenancy Bill.

This Committee deplores the failure of the Bengal Congress Assembly party to adequately expose the inadequacy of the Bengal Tenancy Bill and the failure to take the initiative to give a lead to introduce agrarian measures or to carry on effective propaganda to implement the agrarian programme adopted by the Congress and virtually

ignoring it and condemns the policy of the Ministry in not only refusing to bring down the rent but on the contrary in making a new law actually prohibiting in a shameless and cunning manner any reduction of the rents for the next ten years and refusing to afford adequate protection to the actual tillers of the soil, to abolish certificate procedure, to fix a minimum price of Jute by creating a jute marketing Board, to scale down the debts of the cultivators to the falling price index and denounces the tactics of the coalition party and particularly of the Ministerial Proja Group within it in sidetracking the burning issues of the peasantry and in trying to break their Unity by raising the Communal Bogey without doing anything sincere and substantial to implement its election pledges for the peasantry.

27. *U. P. Kisan Committee.*

This meeting of the A. I. K. C. places on record its sense of appreciation of the work done by the U. P. Kisan Committee appointed at the last meeting of the A. I. K. C. in bringing out the fortnightly paper " KISAN " from Allahabad and activising and building the Kian Sabhas in numerous districts of the province. Further it approves of the line adopted by the U. P. K. C. in co-operating with the old provincial Kisan Sangha with a view to building up the unity of the Kisan Movement in

the province. The Committee, however, views with regret the delay caused by the Provincial Kisan Sangha in calling the Provincial Kisan Conference which is already overdue. The A. I. K. C. further authorises the U. P. Kisan Committee to continue work in the lines of the A. I. K. S. programme and see to it that the Provincial Kisan Conference is convened by the Provincial Kisan Sangha by the end of December failing which the U. P. K. C. should communicate with the A.I.K.C. for further instructions in the matter.

28. *United front.*

This Committee is gratified at the response its appeal for a United Front of all Revolutionary forces and elements has had since its Niyamatpur session and welcomes the appeal made by comrade Ruikar in support of the plea for the development of such a United Front on the basis of the minimum demands of the peasants and workers as formulated by the A. I. K. C. and A. I. T. U. C. and authorises its President and Secretaries to co-operate with all genuinely anti-Imperialist organisations and comrades in order to develop and strengthen the anti-Imperialist and anti-Fascistic United Front.

29. *Jute Prices.*

This Committee requests Government of India and Provincial Governments to establish a statutory minimum price for and to control the total

production of Jute so as to save the Jute growers from extreme misery and insolvency and enable them to realise at least their costs of cultivation, especially as it is possible to be achieved without any delay and detriment to the commerce in Jute in view of India's practical monopoly in World's Jute production.

30. Surma Valley Election.

This Committee views with great concern the attitude taken up by the A. I. Congress Parliamentary Board towards the candidature of Com. Biresh Misra a radical peasant organiser in the Karimaganj bye-election. In the opinion of the Committee the procedure adopted was so preposeterous as to be almost unbelievable. Com Misra's candidature was recommended by the Sylhet District Congress Committee and endorsed by the A. I. Congress Parliamentary Board. His rival Rabindra Aditya, however, went on with his own election campaign posing as the real Congress Nominee. B. P. K. C, at this stage took exception to this procedure. The Sylhet District though administratively belonging to the province of Assam is within the province of Bengal in the Congress arrangement. So B. P. C. C. considered their right ignored. Any way the B. P. C. C. also finally endorsed the candidature of Com. Misra. But for reasons unknown and for no fault of Com-Misra or of Sylhet

D. C. C. the candidature of Misra was cancelled and Sjt. Aditya's candidature accepted just a week before the polling day. The decision was not communicated to the Sylhet D. C. C. by any letter. More astounding than all this was that B. P. C. C. took disciplinary action against certain important office-bearers of Sylhet D. C. C. The injury done to Com-Misra is beyond redemption now, but taking into consideration the above facts the least that the working Committee or *A. I. C. C.* can do is to remove the disciplinary bans against the officials of Sylhet *D. C. C.* Therefore this committee strongly urges the Working Committee and *A. I. C. C.* to do the needful.

31. Civil Liberty in Congress Provinces.

This Committee is particularly pained to see some of the Congress Ministries invading on the Civil Liberties of the public, contrary to the charter of Rights passed by the Congress and especially deplores the banning of the timely publication. "The Peasants Revolt in Malabar In 1921" by com S. N. Tagore and the prosecution under the hated repressive sections of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of Coms. Batlivala and Krishna Pillai (Madras) and the gagging of Anathkant Bose of Kishanganj (Bihar)

32. Bengal M. L. A's Letter.

The letter of Abdul Hakim M. L. A. containing his suggestion that rents of Bengal should be reduced according to the principle incorporated in his Bill was read and was considered to be of sufficient importance

to be communicated to the B. P. K. C. for necessary action.

33. Repression in the Punjab

This Meeting of the A. I. K, C. strongly condemns the repressive policies of Sir Sikhander Hayat Khan's, Goverment against the Kisan workers of the Punjab and takes the recent arrests, internments and externments of various workers as a challenge to the Kisan Movement in the province. This meeting of the A. I. K. C. therefore exhorts all the well-wishers of the poverty-stricken masses of the Punjab to unite in effectively fighting against the arbitrary and reactionary regime of the Unionst Ministry which through its actions in the last few months has proved itself to be the true successor of the previous bureaucracy and the loyal supportor of the Imperialist exploitation.

34. *Use of Repressive Laws against Kisan Leaders in Bengal and Punjab,*

This meeting of the A.I.K.C, strongly condemns the outrageous action of the present Government of Bengal and Punjab in continuing to restrain the Civil Liberties of eminent Kisan leaders like Mr. Sayed Ahmed Khan M. L. A. and several others in Bengal and large numbers in certain villages in Hudaran in Lahore and elsewhere in the Punjab under atrocious measure known as the Criminal Tribes Act. This meeting regards the refusal of Government of Bengal to withdraw these orders which were imposed by the previous Government inspite of repeated request and representations made since its resolutons last at the meeting of the A. I. K. C. by members of the Legislative Assembly and various Kisan and other Popular organisations, as a gross

betrayal of the peasant movement and abominable encroachment on the legitimate rights of the Kisan leaders and organisations.

35. Peasants' Struggle in Estates.

This Committee accords its full support to the peasantry in the Indian States which is suffering from the crushing burden of land revenue far in excess of British India, debts and other feudal charges and which is now struggling to get its rights reco gnised in accordance with the All India Kisan Manifesto.

Further the Committee is in full sympathy with the Indian States subjects in their fight to gain Civil right and Liberty in the form of freedom of speech, association and democratic right to elect the representatives to the Assemblies and also considers the State subject as an integral part of the freedom movement and the fight against Imperialism and its allies, the princes.

The Committee records its strong condemnation of the Policy of externing Kisan and other workers from the States Provinces, the case of Patiala and Nabha quite conspicuous,

36. Agrarian Serfdom

The Committee reiterates its previous resolution demanding the abolition of all systems of agrarian serfdom which perpetuate personal slavery under many forms in different parts of India and requests all Congress Ministers in particular to prohibit and abolish all these systems by passing laws threatening the owners of those serfs with exemplary punishment.

This Committee wholeheartedly supports the public

appeal made by Dr, Sumant Mehta: the well-known public worker of Gujerat, for the emancipation of about one lac of agrarian serfs called Dublas chained to their masters from generation to generation in the area comprised in the Surat District and the adjoining state territories and including the Bardoli taluka which is far-famed for the Satyagraha struggles of 1921 and 1929 and which will be the venue of the Congress leaders of Gujerat and the Bombay Congress Ministers to remove this blot from the fair name of Gujerat by snapping the chains of these Dublas slavery before the congress session is held at Haripura next year.

37. *Cotton Rebate.*

This Committee is deeply concerned to note that a serious crisis has developed in the cotton growing districts of the country as the prices of cotton have suddenly dropped during the last few weeks from Rs.250-0-0 to Rs. 150-0-3 per Khandi due to the bumper crop in U. S. A, and the cotton growers of India thus stand to lose about Rs. 60 crores.

The Committee therefore urges the Government of India and the Provincial governments to take all possible means including the fixing of a statutory minimum price of cotton to save the cottongrowing peasants from the serious ruin that faces them and requests the provincial ministers in particular to grant a special rebate of 50 percent in the revenue and rents payable for the cultivation of their lands.

A meeting of the A. I. K. Committee was held at 9 A. M. on the 17-2-38, and on the 18-2-38 and 21-2-38 under the presidentship of Professor N. G. Ranga, to consider urgent problems of the Kisan Movement.

The following resolutions were adopted :—

I. PAYMENT OF RENT AND REVENUE.

This committee condemns the vicious propaganda carried on by a section of the press and the public accusing the Kisan Sabha and its leading workers, of launching a general No-Rent Campaign, especially in Behar, the U. P., C. P. and Surma Vally and warns the people at large against the danger of being taken in by such wild allegations that are being circulated unscrupulously by the enemies of the Kisan Sabha and selfish agents of Feudalism and Imperialism.

This Committee hereby confirms and reiterates the principles adopted by the ALL INDIA KISAN SABHA from its very inception that firstly the amount required for maintaining the Kisan and his family in comfort and security should constitute the first charge on the product of his labour and should have priority on all claims on the Kisan, that secondly rent and revenue should therefore be assessed on an income tax basis, thus exempting the Kisan's minimum net income of Rs. 500 and less from the payment of any dues and thirdly pending the adoption of all laws and measures in fulfilment of these demands. Kisans will be fully justified in demanding exemptions from payment of Rent and Revenue, when these demands cannot be paid except by selling their rights in land or by incurring debts or by cutting down their minimum maintenance charges and sinking deeper in misery and starvation.

The Committee while warning all Kisan comrades against the risks and dangers of launching campaign of non-payment of Rent and taxes, exhorts all Kisan workers to freely propagate the views set out above and

advise the Kisans to boldly plead their inability to pay exhorbitant and oppressive dues when no surplus is available after providing for food, clothes shelter and other necessities required for themselves and their families.

II. ABOLITION OF FEUDALISM.

This committee is convinced on review of the latest developments in the AGRARIAN STRUGGLE developing specially in the Zamindari provinces and the Indian States that the liquidation of Feudalism involving the abolition of all systems of landlordism such as Talukdars, Zamindars, Khote, Zenmies and Sowkari-land-holders etc. is the urgent and the immediate task of the Kisan Movement and is an integral part of the National democratic Revolution in the provinces as well as in States. This Committee is further of opinion that no reforms in tenancy law could substantially alleviate the wœs and oppression of the Kisans so long as they remain the virtual serfs and slaves of the landed aristocracy and so long as vast areas of land remain vested in non-cultivating landlords. The committee therefore calls upon all Kisan Sabhas to concentrate their best attention on the abolition of all Feudal systems as the immediate issue and launch forthwith a vigorous campaign for abolishing all systems of landlordism root and branch without paying any compensation.

III. CANCELLATION OF DEBTS.

This Committee deeply regrets that no adequate measure were adopted since the inauguration of the NEW CONSTITUTION in most of the provinces, to declare a cemplete *MORATORIUM* on agrarian indeb-

tedness. Even in the provinces where the Congress is in office, this demand though embodied in the FAIZPUR AGRARIAN Programme remains mostly unfulfilled because of the failure of Congress ministries to resist opposition of vested interests in a determined manner. Debt relief and Moratorium legislation as passed by some of the ministries is so halting and niggardly as to grant particularly no relief from attachments and sales of lands, crops, cattle and other movable properties of the Kisans.

In these circumstances the committee calls upon all Kisan Committees to concentrate their attention henceforth on total cancellation and liquidation of all the debts and arrears of rent of the small peasants, tenants and agrarian labourers, as the urgent demand of the hour and inaugurate an intensive campaign to secure full relief from the rapacity of the sowkar and Zamindars who have in the vast majority of cases already extorted the original loan amount many times over and had already collected excessive rents.

To this end the committee authorises the president and secretaries to fix an early date for the observance of an ALL INDIAN KISAN DEBT CANCELLATION DAY.

The committee adjourned till 9 A. M. the next day

IV KISAN SABHA'S REJOINDER TO CONGRESS ATTACKS

"This Committee condemns the wanton, undignified and mischievous attacks levelled persistently at the Kisan Sabha, Kisan workers and Kisan activities by some responsible congress leaders who are being re-inforced in this campaign by selfish zamindars,

sowkars and Imperialist agents. While the committee recognises the concerted onslaught made by the Imperialists and their Indian allies as a sure tribute to the Revolutionary Character of the Kisan Sabha and the rising tempo of its movement, it takes a very serious view of the hostile criticism emanating from Congress Circles in as much as these constitute breach of the Karachi and Faizpur resolutions on the recognition of peasant unions, creates and widens the gulf between erstwhile comrades in recent battles of Freedom and splits the United Front between anti-Imperialists in and outside the Indian National Congress.

The Committee in particular is shocked at the mandacious charges of preaching Violence and creating a poisonous atmosphere made repeatedly against responsible leaders of the Kisan Sabha in Bihar and elsewhere without giving them the slightest chance of answering them and in face of their repeated contradictions of these charges. The Committee apprehends that such a propaganda persistently carried on by responsible Congress Committees and leaders and embodied in authoritative Congress Documents will give a handle to the British Government to persecute Kisan Workers and ban the Kisan Sabhas and warns the Congress that such a campaign if unchecked will make it responsible for any reign of repression and terror that might be imposed on militant Kisans in the future. The Committeee while ready as ever to face any such emergency with full faith in the Revolutionery ardour of the Kisans, deems its solemn duty to warn the Congress leadership against the grave danger of alienating the sympathy, confidence and support of vast Masses of Kisans. The Committee feels that such suicidal

practice if not reversed immediately will tend to deprive the Congress of the support of the Kisan Masses who constitute its backbone and deprive it of its potentialities to play its historic role in the achievement of independence.

Lastly, the Committee reiterates its resolve even in face of these grave provocations to support and strengthen all Genuine anti-Imperialist struggles that might be carried on by the congress against the entrenched forces of Imperialism with a view to build up a mighty United Front of all Militant Forces for developing the struggle for the National Democratic Revolution.

V. KISAN SABHAS OF INDIAN STATES.

This committee sends its hearty greetings to the Kisans of several States on the heroic struggles being carried on by them against the cruel exploitation to which they are subjected by the Princes, and Zamindars their parasites and agents with monstrous terror and urges the Kisans of other States to emulate their example with firm faith in the justice of their demands and certainty of their final victory.

The committee draws the attention of all public workers in the States, to the Kisan manifesto, the charter of Kisan Rights and the constitution adopted by the A. I. K. C. all of which make no distinction between brother Kisans of so-called British India and Indian States, which should be utilised to mobilise them in day to day struggles for their rights. The Committee therefore earnestly exhorts Kisans and Kisan workers to orgnise and strengthen Kisan Sabhas in their areas and assures them of the full sympathy

and support of sister organisations in the propaganda and struggles that might be carried by them.

The Committee is convinced that it will be by such day to day struggles of resistence against feudal exploitation and oppression that the State Kisans and people will be enabled to end the complicated net work of Zamindari system obtaining in the States, and liquidate the last remnants of medaeval feudalism and the autocratic State rule and secure complete responsible democratic Government for 80 millions of the people of India.

Earlier in the morning a deputation on behalf of A. I. T. U. led by Dr. Suresh Bannerjee, the President, met the members of the committee when it was decided to hold the next annual session of the Kisan Sabha on and after 21st April 1938 after the Trade Union and N. F. T. U joint conference was held at Nagpur on April 16th and 17th. The meeting was again adjourned to 9 A. M. tomorrow.

Prof. N. G. Ranga, President, Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, General Secretary, and B. P. L. Bedi and Indulal Yagnik, the Joint Secretaries of the All India Kisan Sabha have issued a statement to the press on 22-3-1938 to explain the attitude of their Sabha regarding the Congress resolution on acceptance of office adopted at Delhi, and to focus the attention of the Kisan legislators and workerson the immediate task before them.

At this juncture, while reaffirming our unswerving loyalty to the resolution adopted at the Faizpur Session of the All India Kisan Sabha, rejecting the new constitution embodied in the new Government of India Act, and declaring our opposition to the acceptance of office,

we deeply regret to note that the Congress has not only reversed its basic policy of non-co-operation with British Imperialism, pursued by it for the last 17 years since its special session held at Calcutta in September 1920, but also its policy of consistent, if lukeworm, opposition to the British Government and its administration in India, carried out since its very birth in 1885.....

Let us also remind those legislators and other Kisan comrades that their main task lies, as in the past in the vast country outside the narrow limits of the council chambers. They must study and inquire into the day-to-day grievances and demands of the peasants and strengthen their organisations to resist all exploitation and oppression. And so far from being deterred by any ideas of embarassing the Congress or any ministers in the struggle of the peasants even at the risk of losing their legislative status or personal liberty.

The Kisan Sabha will certainly strive to take the fullest advantage of the present situation by placing before the country, concrete bills and proposals for securing the immediate demands of the peasantry for the remmission of all arrears of rent and revenues and substantial reduction in both, for reduction in or cancellation of all debts, demands which have been supported by *Congress* as well as the Kisan Sabha. But we will do so primarily to mobilise mass opinion on such proposals in all parts of the country with a view to bending all ministers to the will of the Kisans and the people and to speeding up their march to-wards the realisation of our final goal.....

Secondly there is the question of assessment. All enhancement of rent and revenue in force o r ordered

since 1929 (when depression began) should forthwith be checked. And immediate steps should be taken to scale down the rents and land assessment, in accordance with the Kisan Manifesto.

The third demand is even more imperative and urgent, from the Kisan point of view. We refer to the immediate necessity of declaring an all-round and comprehensive moratorium on the collections of all rent. revenues and debt charges old and new, owing by the Kisans of India.

We are sorry to find that even the demand of a debt moratorium mentioned in the Congress resolutions at Lucknow and Faizpur and in the Congress election manifesto, was dropped by the Working Committee at Wardha, and in the resolution of the A. I. C. C. at Delhi. In replying to one of us on this, we are glad however, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru categorically reaffirmed the Congress stand on this vital matter. And we expect the Congress ministers to issue administrative orders immediately on their assumption of office to all revenue officials and judicial courts, Zamindars and co-operative societies to suspend all proceedings and processes, attachments and decrees designed for the collection of Kisans' debts.

But whatever the ministers and governments may do, our dudy is clear. The demand for a moratorium, complete and immediate, should ring out from thousands of villages and towns of India and Kisan comrades shold strive immediately to build up mass organisations of Kisans to fight for their rights. They form the overwhelming majority of the oppressed millions of

India. They hold the greatest power in their mighty arms. If they but move and mobilise in unconquerable bettalions, the day of their deliverance will not be far off."

All Provincial, district and local Kisan workers are requested to hold mass meetings of Kisans in their areas to press the 3 demands mentioned above together with other purely local demands and send them to Congress Labour and other nationalist M. L. A.'s as well as the ministers and the governments for immediate satisfaction. Reports of these meetings and movements should be sent to the press and the provincial secretaries.

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE THIRD SESSION OF THE ALL INDIA KISAN SABHA HELD AT COMILLA (BENGAL) ON THE 14TH AND 15TH MAY 1938 UNDER THE PRESIDENTSHIP OF SWAMI SAHAJANAND SARASWATHI.

1. This Sabha mourns the untimely death of Comrade Jwala Singh the veteran kisan leader of Punjab and the President of the Punjab Kisan Committee who met with an accident while on his way to attend this Session of the Sabha.

This Sabha sends its heart-felt condolence to the bereaved family and records its deep appreciation of his services to the Kisans of India.

2. This Sabha pays its respectful homage to the Kisan men and women who have laid down their lives in resisting the aggression and oppression of their exploiters. The Sabha cherishes the faith that it is

only through the conscious and fearless sacrifice and suffering of battalions of kisans that they will be able to inaugurate the KisansMazdoor Raj in India.

Repression in Bengal condemned.

3, This Session of the All India Kisan Sabha, raises in protest the organised voice of the Indian peasantry against the most barbaric method of repressing the peasant movement in this province by applying the obnoxious C. T. Act against such peasant organisors of the Nookhal and Commilla Districts as comrades (1) Maulvi Mukleswar Rahman (2) Krishna Sundar Bhoumik (3) Khetra Nath Sarma (4) Jagadish Das. (5) Surash Ch. Das, who are in Jail and (1) Md. Eradutulla (4) Md. Mafizuddin Ahmed (3) Md. Nayasali Bepari (4) Md. Nur Islam (5) Md. Sultan Doctor (6) Md. Ali Hossain (7) Md. Abed Ali and others who are in villages and demands of the present ministry of Bengal the immediate release of those who are in Jail and immediate withdrawal of the ban on others.

4. This Sabha condemns the Bengal Ministry for its action in convicting comrades Ananta Mukherjee and Niharendra Dutt Majumdar, member of the A.I.K.C. and the Bengal legislative Assembly thereby putting obstructions in holding this session of the A. I. K. C.

This Sabha further condemns the Bengal Government for serving externment orders on number of kisan workers and congratulates the kisan workers in bringing about the session successfully under heavy odds of repression and reaction attempted by the reactionary and communal forces.

5. *ABOLITION OF ZAMINDARI SYSTEM.*

This Sabha is firmly of the opinion that the true salvation of our kisans will begin only after the total abolition of the Zamindari and every other intermediary system of collecting land tax or rent, as such intermediary systems have worked consistently, are working and can work only to the detriment of the essential interests of the kisans and society, depriving the actual tillers of the soil of even their minimum livelihood, and of even the very land which they haveinherited from generations as toilers. This system is most costly, least efficient and most corrupt and above all, most destructive of all incentives of peasants to adopt more productive means of cultivation.

This Sabha therefore reiterates the resolution passed by the A. I. K. C. at Haripura on this subject and particularly stresses that " no reforms in tenancy laws could substantially alleviate the woes and oppression of the kisans so long as vast areas of land remain vested in non-cultivating landlords " and exhorts all kisan sabhas to concentrate their best attention on the abolition of all feudal systems without paying any compensation as the immediate issue and carry a relentless campaign and inaugurate such forms of struggles as will achieve this objective.

This Sabha views with dismay the attempts being made by the High command of the Congress, to give a further lease of life to the existing victims of agrarian system under the guise of allowing it to mend itself and declares that any one who is for this cancerous over-growth of British Raj strengthen that Raj. The Sabha further deplores the statements of some of the foremost

congress leaders which while being powerless to remove the evils of the Zamindari system, strengthen the pro-zamindari elements in the provincial ministries, particularly the congress ministries which were expected to give the utmost possible relief to the peasants.

6. The Problem

This Sabha endorses the resolutions adopted by the A. I, K. C at Haripura demanding the total cancellation of all debts of peasants, tenants and agrarian workers and calls upon all kisans to continue vigorous agitation for the speedy realisation of this demand.

This Sabha therefore condemns all existing and proposed legislation providing for the settlement of agrarian debts through debts conciliation boards, arbitration boards etc. and declares that the kisans will not be appeased till the whole volume of their debts is liquidated.

In view of the fact that the agrarian debts constitute the heaviest burden on the kisans, this Sabha calls upon the kisan Sabhas to adopt among others the following instruction:

(1) To collect. and publish outstanding cases of Sahukars, false accounts and vicious tyranny as well as misappropriation of kisans land, houses and other property from time to time.

(2) To get statements of Sahukars accounts on behalf of the kisans.

(3) To explain how to take advantage of the provisions of the existing laws including the Civil Procee-

dure Code debt relief or conciliation acts,

(4) To ask the peasants to affix their signatures to any documents without seeking competent advice.

(5) To ask peasants not to pay any dues without getting a receipt.

(6) To help kisans in fighting out their cases in courts of law and in conciliation boards. etc.

(7) To exhort kisans to reduce their social and other expenses drastically so as to enable them to avoid contracting further debts.

(8) To prepare kisans to withhold the delivery of grain or other crops or payment of any cash to their creditors except when the rest of the crops and cash left with them are enough to maintain them and their families till the next harvest season.

(9) To prepare the kisans for a general campaign of non payment of debts and even a boycott, social and economic, of all sahukars in limited areas, challenging them to repair to courts of law for the recovery of their debts.

7. Class Struggle

This Sabha is convinced that the theory of class collaboration i. e. the principle that the interests of the exploiting and exploited classes can be adjusted and reconciled within the framework or the present society as preached by the Gandhi Seva Sangha and some of the nationalist ieaders can only tend to penalyse the strength of the masses who are being slowly but progressively awakened to the realisation of their historic responsibilities.

This Sabha is convinced that such collaboration even on the excuse that the anti imperialist struggle demands such a policy for the sake of so called national unity, can result only in perpetuation of economic enslavement and in checking growth cf the struggle of the masses and therefore in obstructing the achievement of Swaraj for the masses and ultimately in a settlement between the traditional exploiters of the masses and imperialism for a more stable and intensive exploitation of the masses.

This Sabha deems it its duty to carry on a relentless flght against the advocacy and propagation of such a theory and for that purpose exhorts all kisan comrades all over the country to organise their sabhas as the organs of kisans struggle and to pursue their present method of agitation, organisation and struggle.

8. DAMODAR CANAL,

This Sabha approves of the movement set on foot by the Kisans of the District of Burdwan against the iniquitous and unjust Damodar Cannal tax and condemens the attitude of the minister in charge for persisting and refusing to pay heed to the legitimate demands, of the peasants of the locality in this behalf.

The session further resolves that as the present Anderson Cannal does not really satisfy the needs of the peasantry and is unable to solve the irrigation problem of Western Bengal, the government should develop an irrigation scheme which will be able to revise the decadent areas of western Bengal and preparatory to that an hydrolic laboratory should be establi-

shed in Bengal, want of which has brought about so much misfortune to the people.

9. LAND TAX-Land which more than any other means of production should belong to its actual tillers has been made a source of exploitation from times immemorial by the ruling class.

The land tax is of the nature of a slave tax levied by the State on every inch of land occupied.

While even the modern capitalistic states have devised less inequitous systems of taxation like the progressive income tax with an exemption limit the Governments in India including Indian States have continued to tax land without considering the peasants capacity to pay and the income he draws from land and on the other hand such land revenue is largely devoted for the benefit of non-agricultural classes who pay the least to these Governments.

This conference therefore declares the resolution of our peasants to strive to secure the immediate abolition of this land tax and its substitution by a system of progressing income tax exempting all incomes under Rs. 500—

10. FEDERATION.

As the scheme of Federation as contemplated by the Government of India Act 1935 can only result in the further enslavement of our nation by harnessing it more securely to the chariot of British Imperialism allied with the forces of Indian feudalism and capitalism, it is the duty of every Indian to do his best to destroy the scheme.

Since the real constitution that can assure freedom and progress to our masses can only be that which either establishes or lends to the establishment of a Kisan Majdoor Raj, this conference visualises the establishment of such a state when it supports the national demand for the convening of a constituent assembly to settle the constitution of Independent India.

This Sabha therefore exhorts the kisans to prepare themselves to fight the imposition of a federal scheme and to convene the constituent assembly based on adult suffrage.

Gandhiji's Statement an Kisan Sabhas.

This Sabha regrets that though the I. N. C. at Haripura unambiguously admitted the right of kisans to organise their sabhas many prominent congressmen are carrying on a hostile campaign against the kisan sabha which is bound to prove detrimental even to the Congress.

This Sabha particularls deplores Mahatma Gandhi's groundless accusations against the activities and intentions of the Kisan Sabha without ascertaining and without even taking into confidence the Sabha's accredited representatives.

This Sabha declares that it has never done any thing to weaken the Congress but on the other hand has sought and still endeavours to strengthen the freedom movement as represented by the I. N. C.

12. Native States.

This Sabha congratulates the Central India and

Rajastan States Conference upon having appointed an Economic Enquiry Committee to enquire into the actual state of economic and civic conditions of kisans masses of the states and holds that an agitation based upon the findings of such an enquiry will become irresistible. The Sabha therefore calls upon the peoples of other states also to conduct similar enquiries and develop a full fledged kisan movement based on the ascertained day to day economic and civic needs of the masses, with a view to rapidly liquidate the present autocratic and wasteful Governments by princes and their allies.

13. Natural Resources and Kisans.

While appreciating the reduction made in some provinces in the grazing fees, this conference demands not only the re-instatement but also an extention of customary rights of peasants to obtain free grazing facilities, fuel, timber for housing and agricultural implements and green manure from forests and also a radical revision of all forest laws, both Central, provincial, so as to bring the protection, extension and administration of forests under the popular control of the masses concerned.

This Conference declares that all mountains, forests, irrigation sources, mineral resources, subsoil water, and hydraulic resources are the inalienable property of the nation but have till now been unjustly allowed by the British and other Governments for their own anti-national purposes to remain in the possession or control of Zamindars and other intermediaries and shall therefore be resumed by the nation as soon as an opportunity offers itself. The Sabha therefore requests

provincial governments to take over these properties on behalf of the nation and administer them in the interests of the measures and with the active cooperation of the peasants and workers concerned.

The Sabha further urges kisane to carry on an intensive campaign for the immediate nationalisation of these Zamindaries, plantation, forests etc. that have been vested in foreign capitalists by British Government and urges provincial governments to adopt urgent legislation for rescinding the rights of those foreign capitalists and protecting the rights of labourers working on these concerns.

14. Volunteer Corps.

It is most essential that our peasants should be sided, in their growing struggles against the varied procesess and means of exploitation carried on by Zamindars, by organising well trained and disciplined volunteers and the need for fitting peasants to peacefully yet lawfully protect their hearth and home and the honour of their women folk and maintain their legal rights is becoming daily urgent in view of the Zamindari law-lessness either winked at or actively aided by some governments. This sabha therefore calls upon all kisan sabhas to proceed forthwith to train Kisan and Mazdoor volunteer crops and appoints the following subcommittee with powers to coopt other members to draw up a scheme of training, oath, rules etc and the internal constitution of the volunteer corps, if need be, in cooperation with the A. I. T. U. C. for submission to the next meeting of the A. I. K. C. :—

Abdur Razak, Khan Swamiji

Ranga (Convener) and K. P. Sinha.

15. Assam Kisans and Ministry.

This Sabha expresed its views that refusal to accord previous sanctions by the Governor of Assam by supplying section 299 (3) of India Act 1935 on the plea of safeguarding interest of ministries to the Sylhet Tenancy Act Amendment Bill when presented to the Assam Assembly by Com. K. S. Roy M. L. A. exposes the hollowness of the Provincial Autonomy and shows the reactionary nature of the new constitution which is meant not only to smother the freedom movement of the Indian Nation but also to be utilised to suppress the growing consciousnes of the exploited and expropriated masses under the guise of special responsibilities of Govornor and Governor General. While emphatically denouncing the autocratic action of the Governor this Sabha calls upon all the members of the Assam Assembly who were returned by a predominently kisan vote to see to the early passage of the above bill and directs the workers of the Surma Valley province to immediately launch an intensive propagagda for obliging the Assam Government to pass this Bill into law.

16. Agricultural Workers : Awakering Welcomed.

This Conference welcomes the emergency of agricultural labourers' movement and associations in some provinces and also the decision of the Andhra Congress Socialist party to advise such committees to affiliate themselves with the A. I. K. C. and assures the agricultural workers of India that since their real interests are almost one with those of most of our peasants who are equally helpless and unhappy, poor and dow ntro-

dden, they can always expect the maximum cooperation from the Kisan Sabhas and appeal to all Kisans to make common cause with agricultural labourers and thus pave the way for a united imperialism and.....

This Conference earnestly requests all peasants to abolish all systems of agrarian serfdom known as Hali etc. and pay them the industrial workers wages to use only proper measures in paying wages to their workers and to help workers to free themselves from "forced labour" (Bighar) exacted by the exploiting classes.

This conference reiterates its demand that minimum wages ought to be assured by the state to all workers and therefore requests provincial governments to appoint agricultural wages boards representing both workers and peasants to enquire into the economic condition of agricultural industry the capacity of peasants to pay and the needs of workers and the minimum wages needed and those payaple by peasants and also to be prepared to take every other step to enable the agricultural industry to pay at least a minimum wage for those workers.

This sabha reiterates its demand that all cultivable but unoccupied government lands should be granted to agricultural workers for cooperative cultivation.

17. Criminal Tribes Act.

The Criminal Tribes Act, as in its operation condemned lakhs of people belonging to several peaceful communities to life long slavery and unmitigated expression by the police. While it has

totally failed to reform any of the so called hereditary criminal tribes, it has actually impeded their growth into useful and intelligent citizens and has been so much abused as to destroy the civil liberties of many political workers, peaceful citizens and philanthropists. This Conference calls upon all kisan comrades and Sabhas who have to deal with those unfortunate people who are brought under the criminal tribes act to take active steps to get this act repealed without any more delay.

18. This Sabha is convinced that the Bengal Tenancy Amendment Bill falls far short of the demands of peasants of Bengal. It does not seek to take even the Preliminary steps to pave the way for the abolition of the Zamindari and its allied intermediary systems and eliminate even a few of the many intermediaries. It fails to reduce the total burden of rents by at least 50% by freeing all small holders from rent-burdens and at least to permenantly stop all further enhancements of rent. It has not materially improved the economic status of the actual tillers of the soil such as Bargadars. It does not seek to replace the present inefficient and costly Zamindari system of rent collection by Government's own rent collection system. It has not established " Land Courts " consisting of the representatives of Kisans to settle the disputes between landlords and tenants.

Neverthles the Sabha must express its definite opinion that so far as it goes, it is in the interests of the peasants of Bengal and therefore strongly condemns the steps being taken by the landlords and the accomodation given to them by the Governor and Governor General in order to condemn the much exploited peasants to a continuation of the present intolerable Zamindari oppression and demands that the Bill be made an Act without any further delay and a more radical bill be introduced without any more delay.

19. Service and the Masses.

The oppression of our masses by the services has not at all abated but has in many cases increased since the inauguration of Autonomy.

The least that a responsible government can be expected to do is the elimination of such oppression and the wide-spread corruption prevailing from top to bottom in our services, and even the Congress Ministries have failed to root out those evils though half hearted attempts are being made in this direction.

The failure of the ministries to separate Judiciary from the Executive strengthens the services and hardens their oppression. Therefore the Sabha demands that urgent steps should be taken by government to deprive all executive and revenue

officers of their judicial functions and put down corruption.

20. Cooperative Credit.

This Conference regrets to notice that the cooperative Credit banks have only resulted in the alienation of peasant's lands to absentee landlords, especially during the past nine years of economic depression, owing to their too high rates of interest, penal rates and other practices and declares that unlessthe fundamental objective of cooperative credit is so changed as to enable peasants to retain their lands at any cost while obtaining necessary productive credit, kisans cannot at all be benefited by this cooperative credit and therefore urges upon the ministries to radically revise their laws governing cooperative credit so as to fix 4% as maximum interest, prevent alienation of peasants lands for failure to repay such cooperative credit. offer long term credit, if and when needed and abolish all penal rates.

This Sabha condemns the oppression and torture carried on by the cooperative departments societies and their agents in exacting their dues from the helpless peasants and urges governments to immediately stop these evil practices and punish all these officials who are found guilty of such oppression and torture.

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Sjt. Indulal Yagnik
Editor, The Kisan Bulletin.

21. *Agricultural Marketing.*

In view of the fact that at least 12½% of the real value of agricultural produce as admitted by government is being appropriated by the wasteful, inefficient and grabbing merchants, who because of their improper and unscientific methods of watering bad sampling etc. spoil the reputation of Indian produce in world markets, this sabha is very anxious that urgent steps shall be taken to eliminate this waste and this class of intermediaries and therefore urges upon the provincial governments to lose no time in establishing well regulated open markets, controlled by peasant representatives, cooperative ware-houses and in specifying and declaring "National Trade marks" for various kinds of produce enforcing proper weights and measures and taking all other steps to asssure the best possible price for agricultural produce.

The sabha demands immediate steps to be taken by provincial governments to fix and maintain minimum prices for jute, sugar cane, rice, cocanuts and other produce which need such special protection of the community

22. *Irrigation.*

Irrigation is one of the most fundamental and insistent needs of the famine stricken peasants of our country and its extension brooks no delay.

This sabha is therefore disappointed to find that even the present provincial ministries are continuing the old British policy of demanding huge profits from irrigation and therefore are unwilling to undertake and develop even the irrigition works needed as famine protection works. The sabha calls upon all kisan sabhas to ascertain the irrigation possibilities of their areas and to carry on propaganda in order to oblige their local governments to undertake and complete as soon as possible all the necessary famine protection schemes, and other schemes that will improve their productive capacity.

The sabha also protests against the failure of provincial governments to reduce the irrigation which are in most cases too high and congratulates the Burdwan Kisan and other peasants or their heroic fight against the inequitous fees levied on them.

23. Agrarian Revolutions.

The sabha congratulates the kisans of India on the phenomenol progress achieved in agitation and organisation and partial successes gained in some local struggles carried on for the speedy realisation of their demands since the Faizpur session of this sabha. The sabha is convinced that the increasing public discussion and criticism, favourable and otherwise of the sabha in India and abroad and of its objects and activities give unfailng testimony to the rising tempo and success of the kisan movement in India.

The sabha however desires to express its considered opinion that the goal of the peasant movement can be nothing short of an agrarian revolution meaning a fundamental change in the agrarian economic relationships including the abolition of the present land revenue, zamindari and sahukari systems vesting ownership of land in the tillers of the soil and freeing them from all manner of exploitation.

This sabha therefore impresses upon the constituent sabhas the need of raising the kisan struggle from its present preliminary stage to such higher and more inten sive form of struggle as would not only secure immediate relief but would also gather in volume and momentum culminate in a nation wide peaceful peasant struggle that would end in the aforesaid agrarian revolution.

This sabha at the same time believes that an agrarian revolution in India cannot be completed within the framework of Imperialist rule and therefore declares that the fundamental task of peasants of the country requires that while fighting for their class demands through their class organisations they should also fight in alliance with other sections of the people and working through the Indian national congress against imperialism and replace it with a full democratic swaraj.

To the above end the sabha exhorts kisans (1) To realise that as producers of all food, and raw materials they are better entitled to the right to live and the good things of the world than others who live on fruits of their labour (2) To form and extend kisan organisations to every village and develop the struggle of the peasants through them, (3) To resist individually and collectively and in a peaceful and disciplined manner all

illegal trespasses on their fields, yards and houses and all illegal, oppressive, immoral and unconscionable exactions, insults and assaults on their persons and their families. (4) To form joint committees with congress workers, youth and other organisations to enforce their demands. (5) Among other ways of struggle, peasants may also resort to strikes by withholding all produces including, milk, vegetables, corn eggs, cattle and other things from towns and town markets on certain days in pursuance of the instructions of district or provincial commitees. (6) Effect a close unity of alliance with the peasants and agrarian labourers of the socalled untouchable, scheduled aborginal backward and similar classes and communities with a view to unite and develop and take concerted action of all the most exploited and therefore potentially the most militant sections of the people.

24. Surma Valley Struggle.

This sabha appreciates the struggles that have been launched by the peasants in Karimagenj, North Sylhet and Suramaganj Sub division in the district of Sylhet against the excessive rent, illegal exactions and Zoolum of the local zamindars condemns the attitude of the zamindars in instituting number of false cases against the peasants in order to suppress their legitimate rights and demands and deplores the partial attitude of the local authorities in withholding justice to the peasants. The Sabha therefore warns the government of Assam that unless the grievances of the peasants concerned are redressed the government will be responsible for the consequences of its callous conduct.

25. Howrah Struggle.

This Sabha records its appreciation of the heroic struggle of the peasants of Sankrail Jinjanshow and Amta in Howrah district against Kud system and the system of extracting rent from peasants by forcibly detaining the paddy in the fields and this sabha emphatically condemns the promulgation of section 144 by Bengal Govt. in these areas and thus making it impossible for the peasants to take any concerted action and demands the immediate withdrawle of section 144.

26. Tippera State.

This Sabha records its protest against the imposition of excessive charges on agricultural produce and on buffaloes by Tipperah State and requests the state authority to abolish the charges.

The Sabha also resolves that immediate steps be taken to organise the peasantry with a view to secure abolition of the excessive charges.

27. Land Acqusition in North Bengal.

This Sabha vehemently protests and condemns the action of the government in helping a commercial concern in acquiring huge tracts of land driving out the poor Peasantry from their home and hearth.

This Sabha also condemns the zamindars concerned who instead of protecting the poor peasants are helping that commercial concern in acquiring the lands.

28. Repression in 24 Parganas.

This Sabha vehemently condemns the government of Bengai for aggressively pursuing repressive policy in 24 Parganas to destroy the legitimate movement of the

peasantry in that district which includes the posting of police, sending military expedition in villages, the arrest detention and conviction of more than 250 peasants organisers under sections 107, 144, 153, and the like and by the arrest and imprisonment of such peasant leaders as comrades Niharendu Dutt Majumdar, Bankim Mukherjee and Ananta Mukherjee.

29. U. P. Kisan Movement.

This Sabha welcomes the rising tempo of the kisan movement in the United Provinces which is expressed in the numerous successful partial struggles that have been carried out and the kisan demonstrations and conference that have been held in the province and congratulate the comrades of the U. P. Kisan Committee, csnstituted at the Niyamatpur meeting of the A. I. K. C. in July 1937 for duly carrying out the responsibility placed on it. But the Sabha feels that in spite of its (U. P. K. C.) conciliatory attitude towards the old provincial kisan sangh, which was upheld at Calcutta, the Kisan movement of U. P. still remains in the main, uncentralised. The Sabha therefore directs the U,P.K.C. to see that a proper central committee is set up at the forthcoming Cawnpore provincial kisan conference and the kisan movement is brought in line with all India movement duly affiliating it to the A. I. K. C.

30. Mansa Struggle.

This Sabha congratulates the heroic peasants of Mansa State (Gujarat) and their woman folk on the unparalleled no tax campaign they have successfully carried on early, five months past and peacefully suffered, mass meetings, lathi charges firing and other atrocities at the hands of the state forces. As a result

of this struggle the Mansa peasants have organised themselves with such perfect unity and discipline that they have paralysed the entire machinery of the state and their committee has virtually established a state within a state.

The Sabha affirms its sense of solidarity with the Mansa peasants and calls upon the kisans of India and specially of the neighbouring districts states and agency areas to render all help moral and material in men and money to secure the speedy victory of this epic struggle

31. This Sabha adopts the constitution as passed by the AIKC at its Niyamatpur session with the following amendments :—

1. That in article XI (a) of the constitution substitute twenty three for twenty one and six for 4.

2. Substitute Twenty three for twenty one and six for four in (b) of article XI

3. Substitute four for three in article XXV.

4. The Sabha further appoints a committee of the president general secretary Indulal Yagnik Jaiprakash Narain, Sukumar mitter and Bankim Mukherjee to draft any further amendments required in the constitution and authorises the AIKC to submit its report to the next session of the AIKS.

32. Next Session of the AIKS.

This Sabha resolves to hold the next session in Bihar, the time and place to be fixed by the Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha with the approval of the CKC.

OFFICE BEARERS FOR NEXT YEAR.

This Sabha elects the following office bearers :

General Secretary	Prof. N. G. Ranga M. L. A.
Jt. Secretaries	Indulal Yngnik, B.P.L. Bedi, Bankim Mukherjee and Avadheswar Prasad Sinha.
Treasurer	Mian Iftikaruddin.

This Sabha elects the following persons as members of the C. K. C.

Bihar.	Jadu Nandan Sharma
	Jaiprakash Narayan
	Karyananda Sarma
Bengal.	Muzaffar Ahmed
	Abdul Bayat
Andhra.	K. S, N. Murti
	K. Obulu Reddi
C. P.	Beharilal Patel,
Malabar and Karnatak.	Kamaladevi.
Maharashtra	Bhuskute.
Surma Valley.	Suresh Chandra Deb.
Orissa.	Malati Chaudhary
U. P.	
Tamil Nad	
Punjab	

The following shall be the substitute members. I. Bengal, Atul Bose, (2) Andhra Ch. Vasudeva Rao (3) Tamilnad (4) U. P. (5) N. Dutta Majumdar. (6) States.

The C. K. C. is authorised to coopt, Members for those province which are not at present able to suggest their members in consultation with their local P.K.C's

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Prof. N. G. Ranga M. L. A.
General Secretary
A. I. K. C. 1938.

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CHAPTER III

CONGRESS-ONLY A COMMON FOREUM

Prof. N. G. Ranga.

It is well for us to keep in mind that there are much too many allies of the powers—that—be in the midst of our own Kisans and that they are likely to do their worst to undermine or frustrate our campaigns, If this prospective Provincial Autonomy was conceded to us by the British Conservatives, itis because of their cock-sureness that it would divide us into more or less evenly balanced two sections, one fron the Ministry of the day and the other opposed to it, so that no concerted action can be taken by all the people in any particular locality. Our appeal for a classwise campaign can alone check the degenerating effect of this Provincial Autonomy, the dissolvent of national life. It however takes time even for our movement to achieve this. Be must, therefore, continually carry on our propaganda for the development of that degree of classconsciousness which alone can overcome the Communalism, Parorchialism and selfish Persian interests. I can say, from our Andhra experience, that wherever our appeal is rightly termed and timed and our comrades are pure, sincere and trustworthy, all the machinations of the Zamindars cannot be of much avail and campaigns will succeed inspite of the powerful opposition of our enemies.

Is Class-Consciousnsss Good ?

Very few things are good or bad by themselves ; but everything relatively good or bad. So is class-consciousness. The rich and the landed are highly class-conscious but it is not conducive to the progress of humanity and soit is bad. The class-conciousness of our masses is yet in its early development but when fully developed, it will do a tremendous amount of good to the society at large because it will succeed in putting an end to the present-day exploitation of our society by the religious and social a poltical, and economic vested interests. Of course there need bo no urge for the maintenance of class-consciousness when there are no longer any classes in a society.

How best to achieve it ?

It is to centralise and guide our independent but mutually dependent propagandistic, organisational and ideological campaigns so as to make them most effective and least wasteful, we need the indian National Congresss. It is our common Forum. In it we shall meet each other. Through it we shall inspire one another. In it we shall reflect our common and growing fighting strength. It not only has thus to serve as our common meeting ground and rallying force but has also to be our anti-imperialist watch-dog as against all anti-nationalist forces in the country and our sentinel to draw inspiration and strength from the international struggle of the toilng millions of the world. It is the duty of every section of the masses to struggle hard and evolutionise its attitude towards the masses asea whole and every section of the masses to struggl hard and revolutionis its attiude

towards the masses as a whole and every one of our sections in particular.

Workers

It is a trite saying that the future lies with the Peasants and Workers, struggling and suffering, hand in hand, for the achievement of a Socialist State. It is the sacred duty of every one of our Kisans to fraternize with the workers in the village and in the town and to meet them more than half way in satisfying their demands. Particular care has to be taken by our Kisan comrades to minimise any possible conflicts between Kisans and agricultural workers by making our Kisans grant timely and humane conditions of employment to workers. To settle any possible disputes that may arise between peasants and agricultural workers. we have to create a joint conciliatory machinery. This can be better done, if we also take a hand in developing the organisation of our companions in our villages, who are unfortunately much more depressed than ourselves.

Common Ground

There is much to be achieved by both workers and peasants by common effort for their mutual benefit. Their most immediate common need is more and more employment to ward off the concomitant evils of unemployment and poverty. To this end, we need continuous and consistent efforts to be made on the part of both to harmoniously work together for the achievement of their common goal. So I sincerely hope that our Kisans will do all that lies in their power to uplift our agricultural workers, to treat them as comrades, to welcome them into their organisations and to win their hearts by sincere and ready response to all their calls for help.

Endeavour and need

It is worng to think that just becauase to organise ourselves it is not an end in itself, we shall not all the time be concernedwith organisation work alone. It is in the nature and degree of our organised strength, at any moment which can settle the success or failure of everyone of our campaigns. None shall forfget the fact that our struggle may possibly be a prolonged and tortuous one. We have to keep our organised forces, constantly trimmed up, trained and reinforced, ready to take fight and rush to sacrifice. The Legislatures are only one of the numerous fronts on which oun enemy is trying to maintain his illgotten ground, to win fresh rights and to take us unawares and *worst* us in the skirmish. We have to guard ourselves from the punitive attacks of the Zamindars in our Forests, the one-sided or costly litigation in courts, the Zulum of official and quasi-official ranks to the administrative machinations of the Provincial and Central Governments, if we are to remain atleast in our present unenviable positions. Throughout this vast land and in everyone of our seven lakhs of villages and through every District Board and Provincial and Central Legislature, fresh chains of slavery and subjection are being forged to be forced on us. To fight them constantly and to ward off all the able to depend upon our organised rank and file, and well trained, tutored and trusted servants and well marshalled organisations.

Peasants' sanctions

The peasants and workers of Spain have come to arm themselves to develop their sanctions as against

the Fascist rebles. The Chinese Youths and masses have taken to arms to maintain the Independence of Communist Southern China. The Britsh miners refused to transport coal either by rail or by steamer when the White Blockade of Red Russia was organised in 1919—21. Similarly our kisans and workers have to forge their own sanctions to force the acceptance of their demands upon the vested interests, functioning in and outside the Legislatures. We neither can nor wish to use arms and ammunition to strengthen our struggle against our opponents. So our sacrifices alone can be our sanctions and our readiness and capacity to suffer can strengthen them. Non-violent and unarmed as we are bound to be, our sacrifices and sufferings have to be much more. Yet struggle and suffer we must and sacrifices are invitable, if we are to live and advance towards the achievement of our objective,

Appeal to Intellectuals

Mahatma Gandhi has recently struck the right key when he advised the Guzarat writers and poets to live amidst our Kisans, to divine their thoughts, yearnings and ideals and to write, sing and compose only in terms of their life and its demands and in the medium of their 'live' and 'creative' rural language. We are badly in need of a real creative and lively literature for our villages and only our intellectuals can supply it to us. I appeal to our savants and singers, poets and writers to wield their pen to uplift and inspire us, to goad us to action and to make us heroes. I can assure them that by serving us, they will be placing themselves in the illustrous company of the Mahatma, Potana and

Unnava of the Andhra, Tolstoy, Gorki of Russia anp Ibsen of Norway. *Faizqur Kisan Congress Address*

WHY THE KISAN SABHA ?

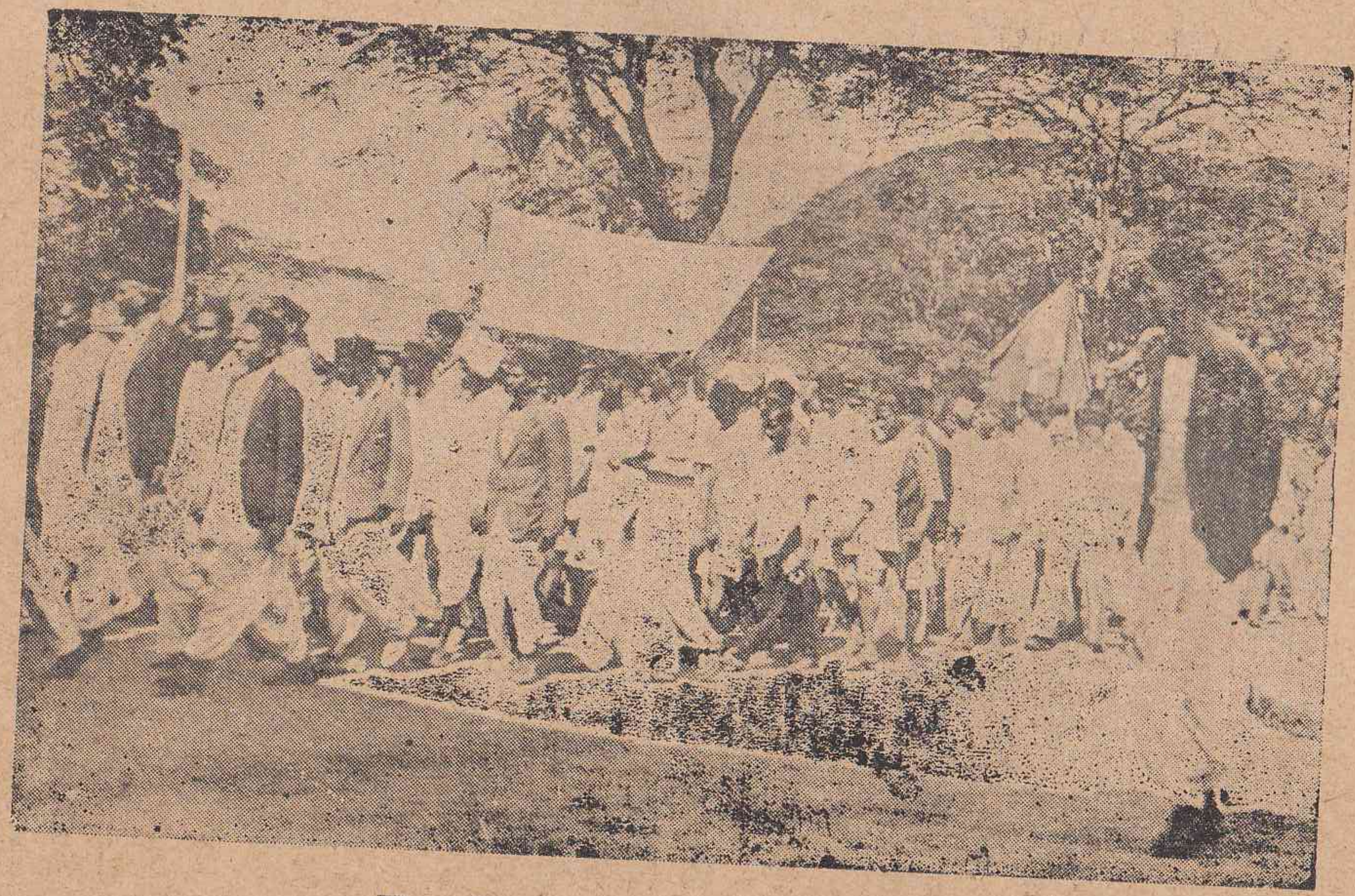
(Swami Sahajanand Saraswathi)

I feel called upon to tell those, who cannot brook the Kisan movement and spare no pains to descredit and scandalize it, that the Kisan movement may be distasteful to them, but it is a truth which their vilification will not kill. The pronouncement of the President of the Haripura Congress is the only logical, consistent and final verdict as regards the propriety of the movement. "My own view is" said he, "that we cannot abolish such organisations by ignoring and condemning them. They exist as objective facts and since they have come into existence and show no sings of liquidating themselves, it should be manifest that there is a historic necessity behind them. I am afraid, whether we like it or not we have to reconcile ourselves to their existence." This statement of the Congress President read with the resolution of the Congress takes the very ground from under the feet of those who cover their opposition to the Kisan Sabha under the spacious arguement that the Congress itself is an organisation of the Kisans. After all the need for the organisation of the Kisans has been recognised by the Congress itself. The question that remains is whether the organisation should be an independent one. The reply to the question is obvious. The Kisan Sabha must be a separate and autonomous organisation. It is dangerous to argue that the Congress is a Kisan

organisation, because ninety-five p. c. of its members are Kisans. Such reasoning would lead to the fallacious view that the Congress is a Hindu organisation because an everwhelming majority of its membership is Hindu. The Congress no more belongs to the Kisans than the country belongs to them by virtue of their overwhelming numercial strength. The Government of our country does not become the Government of the Kisans because an overwhelming number of constables, soldiers, jailwarders and clerks are recruited from among the Kisans. The ridiculousness of any such reasoning is obvious. I do not want that the Congress should be a Kisan organisation in name only. I want it if ever to be so in its ideology. I want that in that case it should reflect the class interest of the Kisans and case to be dominated by those who fatten on the exploitation of the Kisans. I want that as the true organisation of the Kisans the Congress should wage a relentless war against feudalism and capitalism. But in such a case the Congress will not remain a national organisation because the landlords and capitalists would desert it soon as it adopts a genuinely anti-feudal and anti-capitalist programmes. The Congress cannot be a national organisation and an organisation of the Kisan at one and the same time. The two terms cannot fit in any single proposition without making the proposition itself utterly ridiculous.

A genuine Kisan Organisation should fight for the class interests of the Kisans: And a national organisation like the Congress is incapable of taking up the leadership in such a fight. As a national organisation the Congress has perforce to safeguard the interests of all classes. It is obvious that we cannot fight agains-

British Imperialism and *at the same time make alliance with the forces that uphold it.* Similarly we cannot fight for the interest of the Kisans simaltenously with our regard for the promotion of the class interests of the Zamindars. The two sets of interests are in deadly conflict to each other and cannot in any circumstances be reconciled. To state that the interests of Kisans and zamindars are identical is as absurd a proposition as one propounded sometime ago by Lord Irwin when he said that the best interest of India were identical with those of the British Empire. To make the Kisan Sabha a branch of the Congress is nothing short of throwing dusts in the eyes of the public. The only other result that may follow from such a course is the perpetuation of a permanent conflict between the two so as to incapacitate them both. For if the Kisan Sabha as a branch of the Congress abstain from the fight for the class interest of the Kisans and thus degenerate into an organisation in name only then the leaders of the movement will simply be playing a big hoax on the Kisans. If on the other hand the Kisan branch of the Congress becomes an active and living organisation it is bound to come into serious conflict with the parent organisation. Such conflict will force the leadership of the Congress either to suspend the activities of the Kisan branch, or, in the event of the triumph of the radical elements ever the conservative forces, will give the Congress movement itself the colour and character of a class movement. But the latter evntuality will rob the Congress of its national character and thus deprive it of its most essentials elements. The constitution of the Kisan Sabha as a seperate organisation is thus *the only*



Bombay Hunger Marchers

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method by which we can save both the Kisan Sabha and the Congress.

I am certain that if the Kisan movement is conducted on proper linis under proper leadership the Congress itself will gain in strength as a consequence. To my mind the apprehension entertained by some that a separate Kisan organisation will weeaken the Congress appears to be thoroughly unfounded. An organisation in itself is nothing. *The main thing is its leadership.* It is the leadership alone that can give an idea of the possiblity of the movement. I am convinced that if the tactics of the right-wing of the Congress leadership succeed sooner or later the real fighters for freedom will be completely eliminated form the Kisan Sabha. But as I have already stated no one can check the forces of time. The Kisan Sabha has *come into existence as a historical necessity and no one can stop its onward march.* In these circumstances any attempt to suppress the Kisan Sabha by the Congress high command will result in the transference of its leadership to reactionaries, as unfortunately has already happened in certain places, and the ultimate effect of suppression of the Kisan movement will, therefore, be that it will prove an obstacle in the way of the struggle for freedom and thus our national emancipapation will be delayed. It is through active co-operation of the Kisans that the Congress has achieved a spectacular triumph over the forces of British imperialism. Therefore I am convinced that the only way to raise the prestige of the Congress in the eyes of the Kisans is to marshal them under the banner of the Kisan Sabha in order to train them up as valiant fighters for the cause of freedom.

To understand the present phase of the Kisan movement it is necessary to bear in mind a few facts concerning its back ground. Before 1920-21, the Kisans of India were steeped in despair. They suffered from utter lack of self-confidence. Nourished in the school of reactionary philosophy they had learnt to regard all their miseries as the fruits of their own actions of the past and even of previous birth. They regarded their misfortune as incurable. They thought that nothing short of divine grace could lift them up from the slump of miseries. The red turban of the police was a terror to them. A fight with British Government with any prospect of success was altogether unthinkable. But in 1920-21 the Kisans learnt the first lesson of fearlessness from the Congress. The success that attended their first fight electrified them as it were. They have since fought and won many a valiant battle against the British Government. No wonder then that they have learnt to regard themselves quite fit to wage war against much less powerful zamindars of their own lands.

CONGRESS AND KISAN SABHA

I have already made clear what I think should be the position of the Kisan Sabha vis-a-vis the Indian National Congress. Here I desire to make a few more observations. The Congress is a nationai organishtion. It has not been an anti-impnrialist organisation from the start. But historical forces have compelled it to shake off its reactionary colour and it has to-day become an instrument of the

Nation for struggle for independence in spite of its rightwing leadership. Can the Kisan Sabha which is pledged to end exploitation in all shapes and forms do anything directly or indirectly to weaken the Congress ? Will not any such step weaken the Kisan Sabha itself ? Can any Kisan Sabhaite adopt any such suicidal course ? Therefore the criticism which is levelled against the Kisan Sabha is entirely unfounded.

But let it not be forgotten that there is difference between apperance and reality. The resolutions of the Congress, which have largely been forced upcn it by circumstances, give it the appearance of a genuine anti-imperialist organisation. But the working out of the resolotion remains in the hands of the moderate section of Congressmen. Not unoften these later water down the resolution considerably while actually implementing them. It is for this reason that the Kisan Sabha often finds it difficult to endorse every action of the Congress leadership. This is no antagonism to the Congress as such.

Those who promise that the abolition of landlordism and organisation of the Kisans can only be achieved after winning Swaraj really mean to strengthen the forces of reaction in the Congress. Swaraj is not any patent and finished product. To us and to the toiling and starving millions it means

a guarantee for the necessities of life free from anxietics and it can only be achieved if the real political power is vested in the producing masses. But it is a common historical fact that so long as feudalism and capitalism are not done away with, real and substantive power cannot come in the hands of the massses. Hence their abolition is *a necessity for, and conditioa precedent to Swaraj.* America, Germany, England etc. are self-governing countries since long. But the miseries and exploitation of their worker and peasant masses remain as ever. We should take a lesson from it and conduct our fight for freedom accordingly, so that the masses may be on their guard not to allow the political power pass into the hands of the vested interests in the name of Swaraj. Therefore we will have to predetermine the shape and form of the Swaraj that we want to establish. It won't fall from high heaven over night.

KHET MAZDOORS AND KISAN SABHA

Of late some people have begun a tirade against the Kisan-sabha in the name of agricultural labourers. According to them Kisans are exploiters. Their object is not so much to serve them as to flirt with the zaminders, who are the common enemy of both Kisans and khet-mazadoors. They should realise that the service of the mazdoors and

the friendship with zamindars are two contradictory things.

Besides some irresponsible persons, there are some responsible congressmen in it. It may, well cause some apprehensions among the petty zamindars and big tenants who are the mainstay of the Congress and have practically nothing to do with the Kisan sabha. But the rest of the Kisans, who are more than 80 p. c. and form the very backbone of the Kisan movement, have no cause to fear from it. These so called *leaders of the khet-mazdoors hope to weaken the Kisan sabha on the one hand and earn cheap leadership on the other.* To them I would humbly say that their calculations are wrong. They should take a leaf out of the history of the Menshevik and Social Revolutionary parties of Russia who went to the peasants and workers with this very hope. But in the words of Trotsky "Very soon the effect of their ideas out-stripped their original intentions," and they had to withdraw disappointed. *However clever and disguised our utterances may be, the masses give a direct meaning to them.*

The charges of exploitations against the Kisans and their Sabha is due to ignorance, real and feigned. *In a way exploitation is the rule with the existing society and even the khet-mazdoors exploit the barber, washerman and others who serve him in one way or other.* But this does not make him an exploiter as he is forced to it

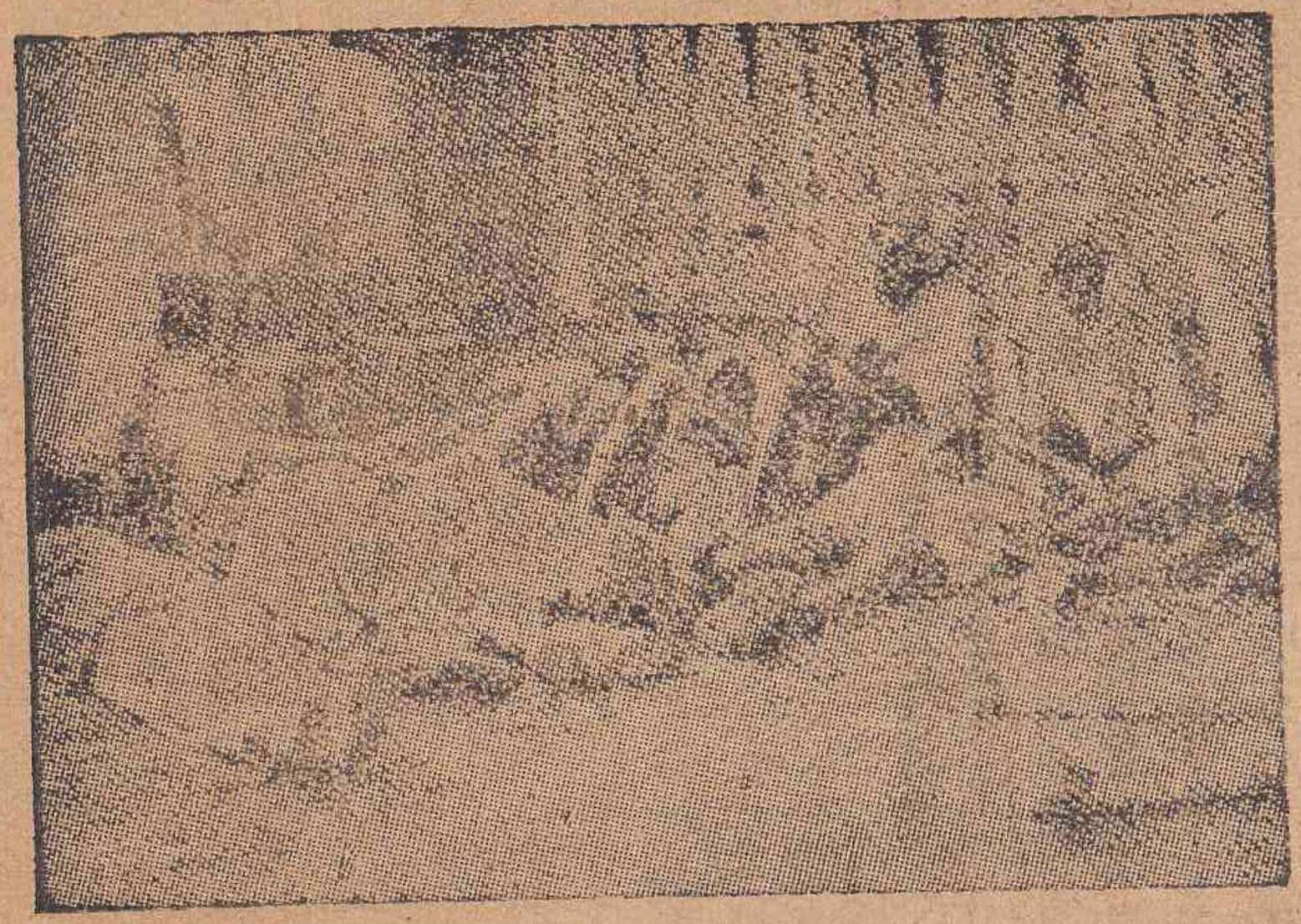
by circumstances over which he has no control. This applies equally to Kisans also. Kisan is the source sending forth elements which run the entire affairs of the world. But he is not concious of it. He is the producer and supplier of all articles of food and raw-materials. He also supplies men for army, police, jails, courts etc. and not only drivers and coolies for the railways but also 99 p. c. of the passengers. He supplies workers to the factories and workshops and blacklegs, too, when these go on strike owing to the desperation caused by hunger and ill-treatmenl of the employers. There is no proletariat here in the sense in which they exist in the west. The Kisans themselves go to the cities in their spare time or when they are unemployed. Thus it is evident that the entire social machinery of exploitation is being run by the Kisan who cannot help it. So if he awakens to the sense of his rights and responsibilities this machinery will automatically come to a stand-still and the present social order based on exploitation will be shattered without shedding a drop of blood. *This is the end which we are driving at and this is the secret of the Kisan organisation.*

OUR PROGRAMME & OBJECTIVE

It is often asked by some as to what is the constructive programe of the Kisan Sabha, while others go even further and brand the sabha as a band of babblers with no programme. But they forgetthat to organise the Kisans on the basis of their immediate and day to day problems and to strengthen their organisation through struggles based on them in order that ultimately they may be able, in co-operation with other sections of the oppressed humanity, to achive final

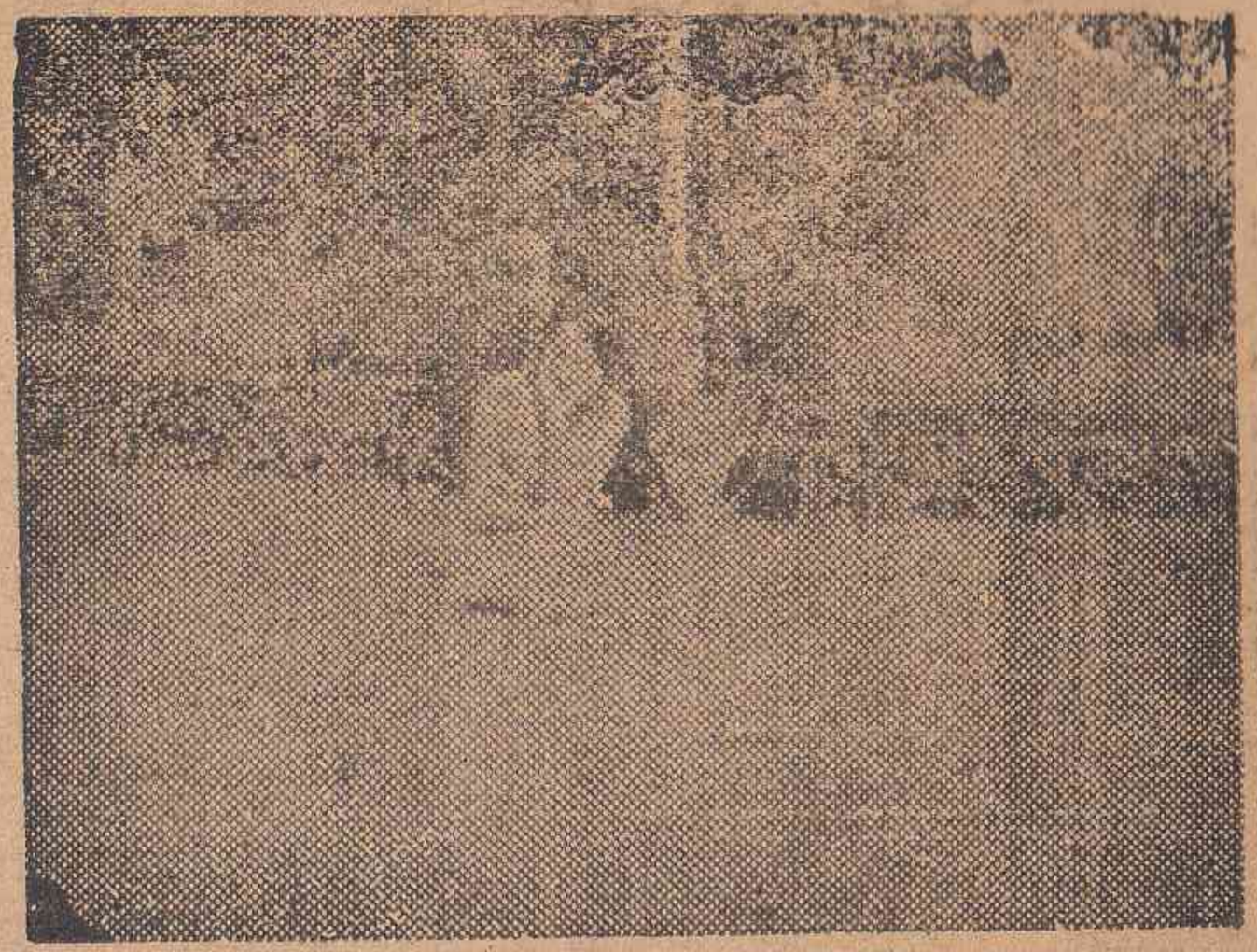
victory in the fight for independence resulting in their complete social, economic, and, political emancipation, *is the real construtive programme of the Kisan Sabha* Call it constructive or otherwise. But the fact remains that the real disease of the masses is that *while they starve, others who are a handful, fatten on the product of their labour.* There is only one way out of it, i. e, to rouse the masses from their age long slumber and make them realise their right and might and teach them how best to utilise that might. They already possess the strength of nnmbers, they havc only to *learn its right use to their advantage.* What else do they need? At last victors will be theirs and they will be acle to establish Kisan Mazdoor Raj—real Swaraj—in which "from each according to cadacity and to all accordink to needs" shall be the watchward. For the establishment of this Swaraj the masses will have to wage a relentlesss war. in which there will be no distinction of caste, creed or religionf because hunger, cold and dɨsease recognise no division of Hindu and Muslims, Brahmin and non-Brahmin and they affect all equally. The question of religion arises only after the satiation of hunger.

The Punjab Ministry at Work



Thousands of Kisans were lathicharged at Amritsar when they Marched to the local officials to represent their grieva nces.

Mis Stock M. A. (oxon)



Two of her articles, Revolutionary Peasant and Hunger March in India will we hope be read with great interest.

CHAPTER I

REVOLUTIONARY PEASANT.

Six weeks in India do not make anyone into an authority on its many problems, but they do correct some impressions picked up in England. Among these is the idea, which I have often heard expressed in Socialist discussions, that the Indian National Congress is mainly a middle-class body ! that the vast mass of peasants of whom India chiefly consists have little interest in political independence, and really need British impartiality to save them from their own caste and communal problems.

I travelled in March with a group of peasant leaders and speakers through about a dozen villages in the Punjab and three or four in the United Provinces. It was a quick tour, and there were several meetings a day...some of them well-organised workers' and peasants' Conferences for which the ground had been well prepared, others mere scratch gatherings got together at a few hours' notice ; one was held in a tiny Punjab village to which there was no road at all, only a foot-path through the corn. Even in the smallest village at the shortest notice it was possible to assemble three or four hundred people and when the meeting had been announced beforehand the audience was often bigger than the biggest I have seen in Hyde Park or Trafalgar Square ; men would walk all night to attend, and all the next night home again.

STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM:

A deputation would come out to meet the speakers, often with a red flag and a brass band shouting slogans: "Long live Jawaharlal Nehru:" and "Up the Revolution!" They wreathed us with garlands of flowers and led us to a rigged-up platform in some open space among the mud cottages, where it seemed as if the whole community had turned out to stand in the blazing sun and listen. As a rule the women stood a little apart from the men, or sat on a flat roof overlooking the meeting; there were not quite so many of them, but they were not less interested and attentive.

These speakers were urging the peasants to do two things—to rally behind the Congress to make an end of British rule, and to unite among themselves in a nation-wide movement which could stand up to the landlord, the money-lender, and the tax-collector—the three bugbears of village life. The new constitution, they said, contained absolutely nothing to help peasants, in fact if anything it only strengthened the oppressive power of the police, whom the average villager evidently does not regard as his friend. As one speaker put it: "Under the new constitution the District Sub-Police Inspector is the Viceroy's own favourite wife, and none of the Congress members is allowed to lay as much as a finger on him." Whether the Congress Party decided to take office or not was not half so important as whether the peasants were well organised or not. If Congress took office it would need the pressure of the peasant masses to help to make a stand against the British Government. If it

refused, the most reactionary Government could be kept in check if the peasants were 100 per cent solid.

THEY KNOW THE EMPIRE.

Such speeches were heard everywhere with the silence of people attending to every word in the argument, and applauded with cheers and shouts. " Up with Revolution." greeted us at every pause. I asked N. G. Ranga, the president of the All-India Peasants' Movement. whether they knew what they meant in shouting for the Revolution He answered: "Certainly. They mean they want more land, fewer taxes, lower rents, protection against the money-lender, better social services—a hundred things the lack of which they feel at every moment of their lives." Not a revolutionary programme in some people's sense; but when 75 per cent of the people of India want these things, obviously they cannot get them except by social change which amounts to a very drastic revolution.

In three days' travelling in the Punjab we met one man who told us in detail how, for the crime of coughing outside the police station, he had been detained for seven hours and fined 50 Rupees (£3,10s.) Another who invited us to supper, was Kabul Singh, schoolmaster and successful Congress candidate for the Punjab Legislative Assembly. He had been forbidden by the police to speak at any of his own meetings, and had won his campaign by sheer force of personality,by standing on the platforms in silence. Another was regarded by the police as dangerous and was interned in his own village. The treatment was only moderately successful, people always knew where to find him.

and he had become a centre of pilgrimage, and was carrying on good socialist propaganda. Another who had been at one of our meetings, later met us in the road in great distress, to say that his son had returned that day from South America and had been arrested on arrival and put in Lahore Fort. This was done under a fifty years' old decree which allows the police to make arrests without publishing their reasons and to pass sentence without open trial. He might be kept in the Fort, deported, or sent to the Andamans, and none of his friends need be informed of his fate.

OLD WAYS, NEW IDEAS

The South is often said to be less militant than the North. In the Andhra of Madras, I attended four of five similar meetings in the company of other peasant leaders. The enthusiasm and the crowds were much the same, and so was the burden of the propaganda. Caste is a more important social problem in the South than in the North, and in several places I was invited to visit the Untouchables' quarter. In one I saw a school, the only one in the village or in any other village I saw. Untouchable children sat side by side with caste Hindus, learning from an Untouchable School-master. There were two or three Christians in this community, and they came up to ask what I thought of the prospects of Christianity in India ; but they explained that they too, were nationalists. In another I happened to come on an evening when the whole community was gathered for recreation. A man sat beating a drum, chanting in a curious triple rhythm, while the rest ringed him round in a folk-dance that must have been centuries pre-Aryan in its origin. Over them, as an emblem of their

hopes a standard-bearer spread out a red flag inscribed with the hammer and sickle.

THE UNTOUCHABLES

Congress is trying to abolish Untouchability. Gandhi has symbolised the new attitude by calling the community "Harijans," which means " People of God," instead of outcastes. and all India has followed suit. When Gandhi himself or Jawaharlal Nehru visits Delhi, he makes it a point of staying in the Harijan colony there, and everyone who wants to see him must come out to it, and incidentally probably, accept Harijan hospitality. Every young Congress worker spends part of his time in fraternising with the Harijan community, doing social and educational work and helping to break the barriers of tradition. It is slow going, because besides being socially segregated the Harijans are the proletariat of the village, forbidden by ancient custom to own land. Mere fraternising will not solve their problems, and there is not enough land to go round. So Harijans remain poverty-stricken. But they themselves seem generally to feel that the Congress, rather than the British, are their true friends. When the Congress Party won a clear majority in the Provincial elections and then refused to take office, the Governor-General of the United Provinces asked three. All refused and in the United Provinces one replied that though he already belonged to a depressed class, he was surprised that the Governor should wish to depress him to such depths as that. These were men elected by the Harijan communities, whose protector the British Government claims to be, and who, accustomed all their lives to being treated as inferiors, might be ex-

pected to welcome the prestige of office. It says something for public opinion in India that they, too, should have rallied so unequivocally behind the party which is pledged to fight for national independence.

PEASANTS AWAKE

The average income of the Indian peasant is less than 2½d. per day. He is class-conscious because he has the landlord and the money-lender to fight and he is anti-imperialist because it is quite obviously the British power that supports his enemies. The army and the police are paid for mainly at his expense, and used not infrequently to suppress him. He can easily understand that the force which says to him: "You shall pay your rent no matter if you starve," is the same that says to his country; "You shall pay your foreign debts no matter if the whole nation starves," and when he wakes up politically he is liable to be a nationalist with a thorough-going passion for independence which exceeds that of the bourgeoise and the intellectual.

As I write these words, there is a Peasants' March going on in the Andhra District. It is to take more than three months, covering 500 villages and 1500 miles of country, and will end with the presentation of a charter of demands to the Government of Madras. Those who have seen something of English Hunger Marches will realise that it makes more than "a few agitators" to organise a demonstration on such a scale, and that it could only be undertaken by a movement with a real and widespread popular backing.

CHAPTER II.

PEASANT MARCHES.

Peasant Marches, Rallies either to our Conferences or to Government offices are one of the most powerful instruments in the armoury of our movement to bring home to the public as well as the authorities concerned the strength of our organisations, the tempo of the feelings of our masses in support of certain demands. The extent of public support lying behind our movement and our needs and the true nature of our sufferings.

When a march is started, it usually runs for a number of days through a large number of villages over a fairly good distance. All along the route and in all the villages touched meetings are held, speeches delivered' slogans shouted, demands declared by word of mouth and exhibited by placards and processions organised. Thousands of on lookers, more of ordinary citizens, hundreds of interested people and scores of comrades doing their quiet work in their respective villages are brought within the or bit of influence of this broadcast propaganda. What cannot be achieved by a series of Conferences or by a costly whirlwind tour of leaders can be achieved in the way of effective propaganda, visual demonstration of our accounts of Kisans' sufferings, feelings, needs and demands through these Marches.

Kisan Songs, militant in their singing and inspiring in their content is the first essential of a March. Not less than five marchers there must be to begin with. Preliminary announcement of the programme of the march in the press and by special leaflets is needed. The Marchers have to be as simple and economical as possible in their needs and expenditure while on march. Reliable and accurate information must be sent in advance to the villages which are to receive the marchers as to the reception arrangements to be made so as to minimise their expenditure. The publication, as widely as possible, of the charter of demands for the strengthening of which the March is intended, a short statement in support of those demands is very necessary. The collection of detailed information in every place visited by the marchers as to the special economic and other circumstances; difficulties and needs is useful. The holding of a meeting after a procession, at which speeches are delivered to explain the aims and objects of the Kisan movement, the demands of the Kisan Sabha on its All India, Provincial and District platforms and the response needed from Kisans in general, have to be organised. As far as it is possible, some literature regarding the movement and some copies of the Kisan songs have to be left behind in every village. A few youngmen have to be taught to sing the Kisan Songs. Various other suggestions are given in another section of this chapter. And a careful study of the " Technique of the Peasants' Movement " in the " Modern Indian Peasant " will be very useful.

I must lay special stress in this connection upon the great educative value of these marches. Even druing those marches organised only on one day say, to a Legislative Assembly, a Premier or the local District Magistrate or Commissioner peasants of distant parts have to go to the prescribed headquarters. If meetings are held, after the preliminary processions with their usual placards, slogans and songs, in all their villages and more meetings are similarly held by them in all the villages on the way, especially after the programme is duly announced much propaganda work can be carried on. Since usually several similar marches will be joining in many of those villages on the way side, this propaganda will become more and more effective, the numbers of marches will be swelling like a snow ball and the tempo of the March and Demonstration will be continuously rising, until by the time the headquarters is reached. The March will grow into that of an excellent non-violent army. If necessary and if possible, properly, decorated bullock-carts can be rushed into service, with all the romance, picturesqueness and grandeur atttached to a growing caravan of peasants on our roads.

A much more important thing is the training our own Kisan comrades can obtain during these Marches. They will come into touch with workers engaged in Kisan work in various villages. They will discover many in whom there is a great love of our work latent in them but awaiting our tapping. They will themselves come to learn by first-hand experience the troubles and needs of Kisans of

different villages. They will also learn as to how to organise processions, meetings, win over many doubters and inspire Kisans at different stages of social and intellectual development into whole-hearted faith in our movement. But more than anything else, they will all get enough opportunities at several places to address different Kisan gatherings, consisting of different kinds of people. It is during those occasions they can test their powers of eloquence, persuasion and presentation of their points. They can also gain practice in speaking in a winsome, inspiring and convincing fashion. Thus our Marches can be an excellent training, testing and educative grounds for fitting our Kisan comrades for undertaking ever greater responsibilities.

The local leaders of our marches ought to guard themselves against the mistake of monopolising all the speaking for a few top men for fear the others may make some irresponsible speeches. It is through committing mistakes and learning therefrom that we can reach success if not perfection and unless we give more than enough opportunities to all our junior cadres of comrades during these marches to gain experience in speaking in public gatherings, we can never hope to enable them to become responsible, capable and self-reliant speakers, competent to tackle any meeting and to expouse authoritatively and in a responsible manner, the viewpoint of our movement.

Once the March reaches its destination, what has to be done is explained in another section. I need only say here that it is most useful to tutor the marches as a whole in the demands, proposed to be

presented to the authorities concerned, to encourage them to present their own accounts of local difficulties and needs and to convince them that they are approaching the Premier or Ministry or the Divisional Commissioner who is an agent of the Government not in any suppliant fashion or subserviant mood but in the firm belief that those authorities have to serve them and have to be informed, through their March, as to how best to serve them. That our Kisans are the masters and the authorities their servants, that our marchers are the taskmasters and the ministry their functionaries coming to be judged by them and to be attuned to the constructive vibrations of the Kisans' Civic Consciousness has to be told and retold to our marchers. Then alone can we say that any march has served its purpose.

It is interesting to notice a few facts about the history of this weapon, the Kisan March. The decision was taken to organise the first peasants (protection) march on the 12th February 1933 by the Andhra Peasants Protection Committee. The first March took place on the 6th March 1933. The whole Indian Peasantry is grateful to-day to those brave Marchers who dared the ordinances and section 144 of C. P. C. prohibiting assemblies of people numbering more than four at any place and marched bravely in their thousands over many days and in all their long caravans of bullock-carts in Guntur, Kistna and West Godavari Districts. Doubters were not lacking and Congressmen who had distinguished themselves for heroism did not dare encourage Kisans to join those marches lest the Police should pounce upon peasants and demoralise them through

repression. Hence my grattitude for all those heroic comrades like the late K. V. Chalapati, Mr. G. Brahmaiah, at present, the General Secretary of the A. P, C. C., M. Bapi Needu, one of the Parliamentary Secretaries, my own two brothers G, V. Appaiah. G. L. Narayana, Bharatidevi, Nukala Raghavayya.

The second Kisan March took place on the seventh of November 1933, when it was celebrated in Vizagapatam, Godavari, Kistna, Guntur, Nellore Districts and veteran Congrees leaders like Nyapati Subbarao associated themselves with it. The third march took place all over the Madras Presidency, but this time not to the Collectors' offices but to our Kisan Conferences in December 1934. The fourth one was observed throughout the Presidency in November and December 1935 and with it, this method became known and was adopted in other parts of India. To-day the Kisan March is a terror to the Ministries as well as officials and no wonder the I. G. P. of Madras has written in the Administration Report of 1937—38 frightful things about it and the Congress leaders of C. P. tried to sabotage it and some Congressmen went to the extent of trying though in vain to prejudice Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and Sirdar Vallabhai Patel rushed to ban but in vain, the Haripura Kisan March.

Coming to some of the Marches that have actually taken place since the Faizpur Kisan Congress, I have already given a short account of the Kisan Rallies at Faizpur Congress (Dec. 1938) Delhi convention (April 1937) Calcutta A. I. C. C. (October 1937) Haripura Congress (February 1938) and Comilla Session (May 1938). I shall

make only a passing mention of our most important Marches which have come to our notice and content myself with giving a chronological list of some other marches at the end of this section. I must however state that many more Marches have taken place in very province but they are not reported to us either because they are not province wide or because of the neglect of local or Provincial Kisan Sabhas.

MONSTER MEETING IN THE PUNJAB:

As Many as 50,000 Kisans gathered in May 1939 at Barapind to attend the Provincial Kisan Conference, presided over ba Swami Sahajanand Saraswati. Bhai Bhag singh canadian unfurled to Red Flag. An effective protest was launched against the represive policy of Government, in addition to reiterating the Kisan demand's the most pressing demands were for moratorium and the replacement of land revenue by incometax and reduction of irrigation dues.

BERARS'S REVENUE AGITATION

To Demand and immediate reduction of revenue Berar, the 5000 peasants assembled in May 1937 under the presidentship of Mr. M. S. Aney, the leader of the Congress Nationalist Party in the Central Assembly, "So great was the enthusiasm that the conference centinued its session through out the night.." Several other similar conferences were held in that May for the same purpose.

ANDHRA PROVINCIAL RYOTS CONFERENCE

The ninth Provincial Ryots conference was held under the presidentship of Com. K. S. N. Murti in Nidubrole,

the home of Kisan activities in the South on the 12th June 1937. Few pamphlets were published on that day announcing the schemes of the Association of land revenue, tenancy, forest laws and the attitude, of Kisan towards agricultural workers. A new chater of Kisan Demands, pitched on a higher minimum was drafted and passed. This chaster demonstrated the "greater capacity of our peasants, as disployed so aboundantly in the recent elections, to achieve this new charted and their showing determination to obtain satisfaction for them."

BIHAR KISAN MARCH TO THE ASSEMBLY.

"Unprecedented seems of victorious enthusiasH were witnessed in and around the Assembly Chamber when more than 50,000 Kisans marched to the Chamber on the 23rn August, 1937 i.e. the opening day of the Assembly.

Kisans came from all parts of the Province, The March was led by Avadeswar Prasad Sinha the General Secretary of the B. P. K. C. He read out the memorial of Kisans; demanding Morotrium, and opposing any idea of a compromise with Zamindars on the tenaney; rent arrears and restitution of alienated lands.

MAHARASTRA PEASANTS MARCH TO THE ASSEMBLY.

On the 13th September 1937, 300 Mahratta Peasants Marched over 70 miles from Ghargoon, touching more than a score of villages on the way. It has produced very good effect not only in the villages actually touched but also in the Districts covered by the Marchers. They demanded (I) complete remission of arrears of land revenue (2) stay of all proceedings for the recovery of such arrears (3)

reduction by 10 to 15 per cent in land revenue (4) repeal of the land Revenue Code (5) total reversal of policy of irrigation dues (6) declaration of morotorium.

This March, as could only be expected, gave rise to several Taluk and District Conferences to Khandesh and Nasik Districts. Com. Indulal Yagnik and Mr. Vasantrao Naik M.L.A. Presided over the Conferences, which urged. The abolition of present land revenue code, reduction of rents, irragation cesses and a declaration of Morotorium.

KISAN DAY MARCHES IN BIHAR.

On September first, more than 20,000 Kisans gathered at the Gaya March under the leadership of Swami Sahajanand and Yadunandan Sarma. The conference " warned the Congress Ministers of serious agrarian discontent if the Congrerss pledges were not implemented without delay.

As many as 5,000 Kisans attended Village Meetings, 15,000 attended Thana Meeting. There were held about 2.000 Meetings all over Binar on that day. These extraordinary demonstrations following clearly in the wake of the Kisan March to the Assembly have electrified the Congress M. L. As and authorities."

As a consequence " 61 Congress M. L. As' regimented silenced so for and in their party meetings have taken the extraordinary steps of submitting an open representation to the premier, urging him to introduce a tenancy bill incorporating the demands of the Kisan Sabha."

KISAN DAY MARCHES IN ANDHRA AND TAMILNAD.

As many as 6,000 Meetings were held on this Day a.l over the Andhra and Tamilnad. The C. S. P's co-operation was idvaluable particularly in Tamilnad. Even the Chief Parliamentary Secretary of the Madras Ministry Mr. A. Kaleswara Rao Associated himself with our demonstrations hy presiding over the Madras meeting. On this day the brave Andhra Pesants' Marchers reached Bezwada, the headquarters of the Andhra Provincial Ryots Association and were accorded a fiitting welcome by the City Congress. District Congress and the C. S. P. and Youth Leaguers.

KISAN DAY IN BENGAL:

In addition to a large number of rural meetings and demonstrations, successful Public meeting was held on 1-9-37 at the Albert Hall Calcutta to declare to the citizen the demands of our Kisans.

IN C. P.

A very large number of Conferences were held in various Districts, and those held in Nagpur, Wardha, Jubbulpore Districts were particulary note worthy.

PUNJAB KISANS' SATYAGRAHA SUCCEEDS:

Nearly 40,000 Kisans of Nilibar in Montgomery District had gone on strike February-March 1938 and achieved the following demands :—(1) Batai or division of half and half of produce between the landlords and tenants. (2) wet rates to be paid equally by both (3) the Village Patwari account

to be paid by the landlords (4) No Begar or socalled voluntary cultivation, Comrades Munshi Ahmed Din and B. P. L. Bedi aided this struggle.

AMIRTSAR SATYAGRAHA MARCHES :

No wonder with such traditions, the Kisans of Amritsar came to organise a series of successful Kisan Marches in July 1931 and bend their ministry.

DELHI KISAN MARCH BANNED :—

The Delhi P. K. C. which was formed in 1936 wanted to organise in January 1938 a Kisan march to the chief Commissioner. But the authorities prohibited that much and thus sabotaged the only effort made in the centrally administered areas to acquaint the government with the troubles of our Kisans. No wonder the report of the enquiry made with the ravages of the exploiting Istimendars of Ajmer is not yet published.

75 PEASANTS MARCHES IN THE ANDHRA :

During December 25—January 7th of 1938, as many as 75 Kisan Marches had taken place to the local head quarters of Revenue Officials in Tamilnad and Andhra in pursuance of the appeal made by the South India Federation of peasants and workers to which the Tamilnad and Andhra Kisan sabhas are affiliated. As many as two lakhs of peasants had associated with these Marches. The Kisan demanded were sent to Government through the local officials. The subsection on suggestions for Kisan Marches'" was drafted to guide these marchers.

KISAN MARCHES IN U. P.

Both on the opening Day of the Legislative Assembly and on two other occasions, huge concourses of peasants came off at lucknow. The first had the active support of Pt. Jawaharlal and the last his appeal against it. But on both the first two occasions, Pt. Jawaharlaljee gave very heartening messages. The P. C. C. also encouraged, nay, brought about the Kisan Day of April 1938.

CHAPTER III

SUGGESTIONS FOR ORGANISING

In connection with the Marches organised on the 24th January 1938, in Tamilnad, Karnatak, Malabar and Andhra, the following suggestions were given. It will be found that they are useful for other provinces also.

1. Resolutions regarding local grievances of ryots are to be specially framed, passed in the Special Peasants Conference, in the District or Taluk Ryots Conferences.

2. In addition to these, the local grievances of ryots of any village or villages, taluks have also to be incorporated either in the main schedule of demands or in supplementary list of demands.

3. Any and every ryot must be welcomed to state, before the Revenue Official any special trouble regarding his village or the tank or irrigation source.

PROCEDURE FOR PEASANTS MARCHES.

4. As soon as the District or Taluk Ryots Association decides upon a day for organising the Peasants March, it has to inform the local Revenue Official, whether he is a Tahsildar or Revenue Divisional Officer, or Collector, stationed at the place, where the March is to take place, when the Marchers are to be expected. If possible, an advance copy of the main demands, i.e., the Provincial Demands plus District Demands is to be sent to him a day

or two previous to the date of March to enable him to prepare his replies.

5, *Procession* :—As far as it is possible, an hour or two before the March to the Office, it is better to organise a procession through the streets of the town, thus gaining more friends and marchers and awakening the townsmen to the existence of our movement and demands.

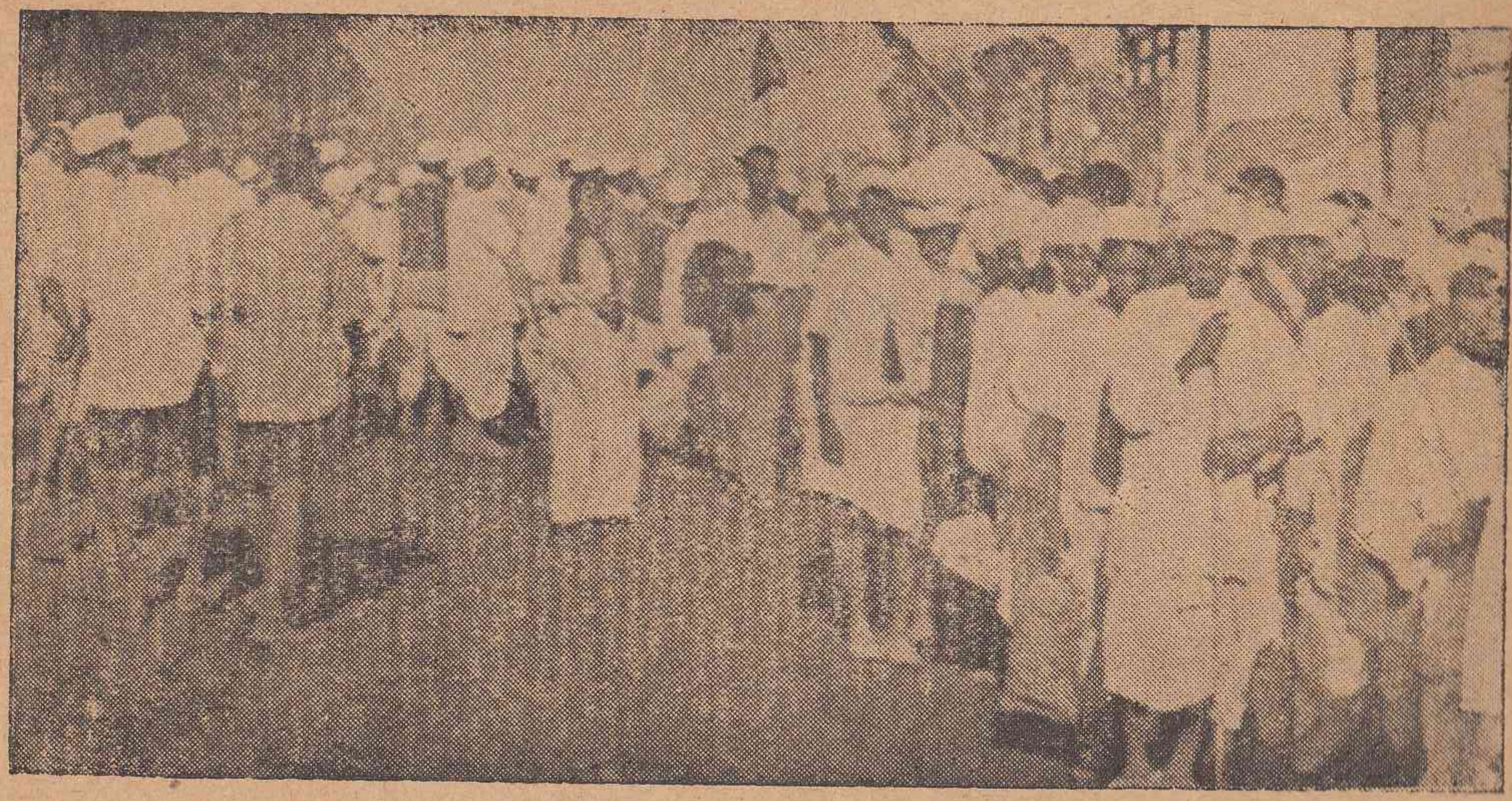
6. Both the National and Red Flags have to be used.

7. The co-operation of all Congressmen and the office-bearers of the local Congress Committee has to be particularly obtained and welcomed.

8. It is most essential that as many ryots as possible are to be brought within the circumference of the March. At least as much publicity as possible has to be given to the fact that such a March is going to be organised on the appointed day to communicate the resolutions of our peasants to the Government through the local Revenue Officials, so that the peasantry will know what is happening in their name.

9. It is however enough, for the purposes of a March, if at least five ryots take part in it and present our demands to the Revenue Officials.

10. Sometimes it may happen that the local Revenue Official may not be found in his office. Then our peasants need not be discouraged. It is enough if they attach a copy of their resolutions to the Notice-Board in the Revenue Office, leaving a letter to the Officer. Then the Marchers have to send that news to



The Hari pura Kisan March

the press and also to the District Collector. To prevent such happenings, our Provincial Kisan Committee has to write as usual, to the Chief Secretary to Government, requesting him to make his subordinates in the Districts to welcome our Marchers.

11. Taking advantage of some of our Peasants carrying some agricultural instruments on previous occasions, the Bihar Government has prohibited the carrying of such instruments by our peasants during their March on the 16th August 1938. Therefore it is advisable, in order to prevent the recurrence of such repressive measures, for our peasants to go to the Collectors' Offices or Government Head Quarters without any kind of instrument or weapon, bearing their traditional ' lathis ' or ' dandas,' if such are indispensable.

12. It is conducive to our peaceful demonstrations to stop shouting our slogans and exhibiting our flags once we enter the compound of the Official or Minister that we wish to see or interview ; especially is it so whenever that official or Minister is known to have taken objection to our demonstrations within his compound.

13. If in any place either the local government or the local official were to prohibit our marchers from approaching him, as was done by the Sindh Government in 1937 and by the Punjab Government and Amritsar Commissioner in July—August 1938, the duty of our peasant marchers is indicated by the brave peasant Satyagrahis of Amritsar, who continued, until the ban was removed by Government in August to carry on

their Satyagraha, inspite of the lathi charges at the Jalianwallahbagh and mass arrests.

14. It is most important that as soon as a March is over, our ryots shall hold their public meeting in some garden or public place, explain their resolutions to all assembled there and pass their resolutions in that meetings and send all the information to all the Newspapers, including the News Agencies.

15. We are suggesting the following Provisional Resolution : We are anxious to have the suggestions of our District Ryots Associations so that we can, in our final covering letter to the Chief Secretary to Government to be sent after the Marches are all over, give a comprehensive list of our demands to the Madras Government.

TO SUPPORT CONGRESS

16. Let no one fear that these Marches are likely to be misunderstood as being opposed to the Congress. In fact, the Prime Minister of Madras has deplored the lack of agitation in the press and on the platform on behalf of our peasants. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and himself marched with our peasants in August 1932 and welcomed the Peasant Marchers latter in the year. We are organising these Marches to strengthen our Congress in its efforts to obtain Debt Relief, Tenancy Reform, to develop the village Panchayat System, to spread prohibition and to introduce the Wardha Educational System etc. But we want to enrich the work of our Congress by our suggestions, experiences and publishing our needs and demands. So we trust, that all

Congress Committees, Congress Socialists, Youth Leaguers will co-operate with our peasant associations, workers and peasant workers as they are of several interest.

The following two resolutions are given here out of the ten circulated by the South Indian Federation of Peasants and Agricultural workers.

We are keenly conscious of the poverty and sufferings of our bretheren, the agricultural workers and so we request Government to provide them with free house sites in every village and to grant them only all the cultivable but un-occupied Government lands for co-operative cultivation and to render them all other help.

We request Government to (a) restore all our customary rights for obtaining fuel, grazing facilities, water-resources, agricultural timber from forests (b) to extend such rights to cover the exisiting needs of our peasantry and (c) so, we desire the abolition of all grazing fees, as in Bombay and to lighten the rigours of Forest-Rules regarding reserve forests by amending the Forest Act, and to remove the 'Reserves' and Coupes' from within the circumference of two miles of a village.

This is only a provisional list of general demands. It has to be supplemented by the local demands. Even the subjects covered by this list may have to be amplified in the light of the local experience.

CHAPTER IV

THOUSAND-MILE PEASANTS' MARCH

The 120 days' Peasants March over 1000 miles, covering the whole of the Andhra organised by the local District Ryots' Association, has been inaugurated on the 13th July at Itchapur by Prof. Ranga, the President of the All-India Kisan Sabha.

Mr. P. Shyam Sundaram, M. L. A., the President of the District Ryots' Association welcomed the brave Peasants Marchers. Messrs. K. S. N. Murthi, the Provincial President, G. Latchanna, the General Secretary of the Peasants' Protection Committee, Ch. V. Rao the General Secretary of the Provincial Ryots' Association are leading the Marchers.

PROF. RANGA'S MESSAGE

In the course of his speech Prof. Ranga said. "I am glad to inaugurate this great March which, I am sure, will prove historic in the annals of our Indian Kisan Movement. This March is a very ambitious one. It is to cover a thousand miles directly another five hundred miles indirectly during the next four months. It seeks to stir up the whole Andhra country-side, whip up the Kisan organisers, if they need any, gather strength as it goes on in support of the New Charter of our Minimum Demands and demonstrate to whichever Ministry may be in power and to all the anti-imperialistic national organisations the mass-basis strength and class-consciousness of our movement and the capacity of our comrades for service, suffering

endurance and undaunted courage. I therefore congratulate the comrades who join this great March and wish them complete success.

At the same time, we have to mobilise the public opinion of our cuntryside during this March in favour of capturing the various Congress Committees. We must make the Committees to constantly consult and welcome the advice of our peasants' Associations by convincing them, by sheer force of greater organisational strength. that they can effectively carry on their duties only by following our lead or welcoming our assistance. For this purpose, this Peasants' March will be invaluable.

The Zamindars are only biding their time. They have an invaluable friend in the Governors and a bulwark in the forthcoming Federal Assembly. We have therefore to carry on a ceaseless agitation against the Zamindari system.

Through this march, we will be able to gain an invaluable insight into the real and fundamental causes far this slow growth of our movement and the unreadiness of our peasants to join our organisations in their millions. We have also to conduct economic enquiries into the grievances and needs of the peasants and workers. We can also ascertain the kind and degree of exploitation being carried on by the Zamindars, Sowcars, officials and other middle-men. In fact this March bids fair to be the greatest means of mass contact so far organised, if we except the Dandi March and if only the public were to give us the needed and well-deserved support, as I confidenty hope for. It will electrify

not only its immediate platform the Andhra Province, but also create a new fervour and a revolutionary tempo in the rest of India."

The Marches reached Madras on the 27th of March and presented their demands and report to the premier and Revenue Minister. An outline of their report was published in the National Front in April 1938.

HUNGER MARCHES IN INDIA

MISS STOCK M. A. (OXON)

While you read these words, a Hunger March is going on, bigger than the biggest that ever happened in England. It covers 2000 miles of country, touches 500 villages in its path, and makes a thousand others aware of its coming.

It began on July 3rd, and will not reach its goal until the first of November. The marchers are thousands of peasants from the Andhra District of South India, who are carrying their grievances and the charter of their rights to the Provincial Government at Madras.

THE AWAKENING.

Huge as it is, this march is only one act in the awakening of the peasants of India. The demand which they bring to Madras are not purely local: some of them are, for each Province of India has troubles of its own, but others are part of the minimum programme of a nation-wide peasants' organisation which is moving all over India. It stands for these points, among many others:

(1) That all arrears of rent and revenue shall be cancelled ;

(2) That a five years' moratorium shall be declared for all agrarian indebtedness ;

(3) That no moneylender shall be allowed to charge more than six per cent. simple interest.

(4) That no peasant shall suffer imprisonment for inability to pay his debts. revenue, or rent ; and

(5) That agricultural workers shall have a legal minimum wage.

These are among its immediate points. But its leaders are Socialist in outlook, and ultimately it stands for the abolition of the big landlords and for a social revolution.

This Peasants' Movement is not often heard of in England, but it is a vital and growing part of the Indian struggle. It is federated in a democratic organisation with branches in every Province of British India. It is no mere paper construction, for at its annual delegate conference in August this year, speakers addressed an audience of 25,000 men and women.

Its minimum subscription is a penny a year. To English readers this sounds like a nominal sum ; but remember that the average income for the whole of peasant India is less than 2d. a day.

If you have 14, a week to leave on, you probably find 1, a year about as much as you can afford to pay to

the Labour Party ; how much could you spare out of 1-2 a week ?

LARGE TASK AHEAD

This peasants movement is altering the whole face of Indian politics. It is bringing within the anti-imperialist forces masses of workers some of whom had remained untouched by earlier propaganda. The possibilities for the future now that the movement is getting under weigh are incalculable.

It has a large task ahead of it, for there is not a district in British India which does not teem with peasant grievances. It is linking the spontaneous local committees which rise to deal with these grievances into the parts of one concerted agitation.

Sometimes a rent strike, sometimes a march, again a refusal to pay excessive taxes—all these things help to keep the spirit of revolt alive, and every victory brings increasing confidence.

But such excitement cannot be kept up continuously; they must happen at intervals when local conditions are right, rise to a climax and die away.

The movement also has its established summer schools and training centres, where it aims at training local leaders who can not only organise a sudden demonstration, but can form a sort of permanent watch committee in every village in the intervals of action.

The peasants know very well that the new constitution, like the old, makes it impossible to lighten even a fraction of their burdens, so like the town workers and

the lower middle classes of India they throw themselves into the fight for complete independence.

NEHRU AS FRIEND

More than 70 per cent. of the people of India are peasants, and without their work the National Congress Party could never have won its majorities in the Provincial Legislative Assemblies. They work in close touch with the Congress Socialist Party, to press on the Nationalist Movement itself a stronger programme of social and agrarian reform, and they have a friend in the Congress President, Jawaharlal Nehru.

Now that Congress has consented to take office, the initiative must fall largely into their hands, and it will be their task by mass agitation and pressure to strengthen the left wing of nationalism against the right.

The Indian peasant has no reason to regard the British Government as his protector. He is over-driven and underfed, and sometimes does not know the sensation of a full meal from one year's end to the next.

The new factory industries have taken away his old occupations of hand-spinning and weaving, and left him unemployed for about four months of the year or more. He is heavily in debt, and harassed by the three bugbears of village life—the landlord, the money-lender, and the tax-collector.

If he is the tenant of a great landlord, he is rack-rented, while the landlord himself, who does nothing for the land, pays to the Government a trivial little tax which in some places has remained unalterable since

1793. If he is a freeholder, roughly half of the value of his produce goes in land-revenue to the Government.

NO SOCIAL SERVICE

In return for his taxes he gets none of the social services which an English worker regards as his right. He has quite probably no State school, no hospital, no post office within reach ; no social insurance, no sanitation or public health service, possibly not even a road to connect his village with the world.

The army and the police are paid for largely at his expense and used not infrequently to suppress him. It does not need Marxist propaganda to make him think of the Government as a machine devised by the rich for the exploitation of the poor : if he hears it, he can recognise the truth of the picture.

When he wakes up to national politics, it is not difficult for him to believe that the same power which says to him ; " You shall pay your rent, no matter if you starve !" is the power that says to his country ; " You shall pay your foreign debts, no matter if the whole people starve !" He will play his part in the overthrow of that power ; but afterwards he means to build a new world based on justice.

Some of the Andhra peasants poor and illiterate as they may be, march to Madras with defiance in their step. When they reach a village, comrades come out to welcome them and garland their leaders with flowers.

PEASANT SONGS.

Their meetings are held under the red flag, and as they march they sing, in their own Telugu language, peasant songs with words that breathe the spirit of revolt ;

" Wading through mud, walking through thorns.
You raise your crops with untold sufferings.
Yet you don't find enough to eat !
Is there no limit to your slavery ?

" Look at these parks, these palaces and pleasure-grounds :

Can't you recognise in them your own sacrifices, your own sweat ?

" You drive the plough, break upon our beloved mother earth.

And the millionaires like a host of butterflies.
Start up to dance your death-dance
" O raise your class. as now you raise the crops ;
Feed your kindred as you feed the merchants !"
(The Tribune, London. Sept 10, ' 37)

CHAPTER V

Memorandum of Immediate Demands Submitted by The Andhra Provincial Peasants' Marchers to the Premier of Madras On 27-8-38.

IMMEDIATE AND URGENT DEMAND

1. Zamindary ryots.

1. *Rents and water rates*: The existing rents in all estates should be reduced to the level of rates prevailing in the adjoining Government Ryotwari areas.

2. Cropwari rates should be abolished and special rates for garden crops and Mulun land should no longer be collected and only dry rates should be assessed on all such lands.

3. Water rates and penalities should not be collected from lands which have no regular source of irrigation but depend only on rain-water hill stream and village channels and lift irrigation from similar natural sources.

4. No rents should be collected on house-building and cattle-shed sites occupied.

5. Corn rents should be abolished and should be commuted or settled into cash rents.

REMISSIONS.

6. The tenants should have the right to claim remissions whenever there is failure of crops due to seasonal and

other unforeseen causes or whenever there is sudden abnormal fall in prices of crops.

IRRIGATION SOURCES

7. All irrigation sources which are out of repairs should be completely repaired by Government and the cost thereof recovered from the zamindars concerned. They should hereafter be vested in Panchayat Boards and be controlled by them.

8. An irrigation fund should be constituted to meet the recurring charges of maintaining these irrigation sources in good condition and Panchayats to be empowered the collection of the same.

9. All fees collected on fuel for domestic consumption should be abolished. All grazing fees should be completely abolished.

10. At least forests to the extent of a mile in distance from adjoining villages should be set apart as unreserved so as to afford free grazing facilities to cattle.

11. In other forests facilities to obtain fuel, fencing and other materials for agricultural implements, green manure etc., free of cost should be afforded.

12. Facilities to those ryots living in areas adjoining forest areas by way of granting gun licenses etc., to protect themselves and their property from the ravages of wild animals should be afforded.

13. Local officers should be directed to renew forthwith all gun licenses etc., which have been cancelled in the part.

RENT COLLECTIONS

14. Collection of rents and land revenue should be entrusted to village Panchayats.

15. The land holder is entitled under the Debt Relief Act to recover costs awarded by a Court in a rent suit, and water and land cesses actually paid to Government by him. This should be cancelled as it is surely a great hardship to the ryots.

16. The provision which stipulated that only those who pay in full rents due for 1346, 47 Faslis will be entitled to the benefits under Chapter 141 of the Madras Agriculturists' Relief Act should be cancelled.

17. Rents due for each year should be collected during the year and arrears should not be allowed to accumulate. Land-holders should be prohibited from proceeding against ryots for the collection of the accumulated arrears of rent.

18. The seasons and instalments for payments of rents should be conveniently fixed extending over 4 months to suit the harvesting of crops in each district.

19. The landholders should have no right to attach movable properties for the realisation of rents, He should proceed against the immovable property that he may have in excess of the minimum economic holding that may be decided upon by Government. He should attach only that land and only to the extent of the arrears of rent for which it had fallen into arrears. The landholders right of first charge to realise his rents should be removed from the statute.

COMMUNAL LANDS.

20. All communal lands like that of village sites, topes and gardens, cremation grounds, public paths and thoroughfares, pasture lands, tank-beds and thrashing floors which were being enjoyed by the village community since time immemorial should hereafter rest in the Panchayat Boards to be used for such communal and common purposes for which they were formerly intended.

SURVEY AND SETTLEMENT.

21. All lands in zamindary areas should be compulsarily surveyed by Government, record of rights maintained and field maps and pattas of individual Holdings should be supplied to Pattadars free of cost. All survey costs should be borne either by the Government or the landholders concerned. Landholders who do not grant pattas and field plans and exchange Muchillakas should have no right to attach properties for realisation of rents due.

LANKA LANDS.

22. Lands which due to the fluial action of rivers and due to the erosion of such lands have diminished in area should not be assessed to tax. Lanka lands which are newly formed as a result of floods should be assigned to such of the Pattadars who have lost their adjoining lands due to similar floods and any land in excess should be kept at the disposal of the village Panchayat for communal Purposes.

HOME FARMS.

23. All home farms should be abolished and converted into Jiroyati land and assigned to landless peasants and agricutural labourers without cellecting any premiums from them with a view to encourage co-operative farming,

ZAMABANDI.

24. Zamabandi or the Annual Revenue collections in Zamindari areas also must be as in the case of Ryotwari Tracts and opportunities should be afforded to the ryots to ventilate their grievances on such occasions and such Zamabandi should be arranged before the harvesting of crops so as to facilitate the ryots to represent their tale of woe due either to failure of crops or water scarcity or famine.

LAND COURTS.

25. Touring land courts should be established to settle all disputes that may arise either between landholders and tenants or among tenants themselves.

VILLAGE FUND.

26. The Government should collect at least 0-4-0 in the rupee from the gross land revenue collections of each village in the estates to be credited to the village Fund to afford civic amenities of the said village.

MISCELLANEOUS.

27. All the above facilities should in fairness be extended to the ryots in Inam, Mokhasa and Sotriyam villages also.

Tribunals contemplated under Sec. 185 of the Madras Estates' Land Act as amended in 1936 should forthwith be constituted and the respective rights of Inamdars and their tenants should be enquired into immediately.

28. Ryots' Associations should be statutorily recogniged by the Government and the Landholders and the right to sue and act in representative character should be recognised and all benefits derived therefrom through court decisions should uniformly apply to all ryots concerned without distinction, situated in similiar circumstances.

PANDIT NEHRU INDICTS.

"The major Problem is the land Problem. We do not talk about it so much. Our Press or Prominent people rarely discuss this great Peasant Problem".

Jawaharlal Nehru.

It is ingratitude.....It is treason.....to ignore the Bread giver. The Protector of Humanity.

It is your duty to Know him; sympathise with him; and serve him. Most of you do not know, not having had the opportunities and the requisite literature.

BUT NOW YOU NEED NOTHING.

Only Read!

The Kisan Speaks	Re. 1
The Kisan Hand Book	Re. 1
The Modern Indian Peasant	Re. 1
The Economic Condition of Zamindari Peasants	As. 12
Economic organisaation of the Indian Village Vols. I & II	Re. 3

All these obtainable from:

THE KISAN PUBLICATIONS,
23. STRINGERS ST., MADRAS, G. T.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

	Rs.	As.	Ps
Tribes of Nilgiris	0	8	0
Economic Conditions of Zamindari Ryots	1	0	0
Labour in South India	1	8	0
Modern Indian Peasant	1	0	0
Kisan Speaks	1	0	0
History of Kisan Movement	0	8	0
Kisans and Congress	0	8	0
Kisan Githavali (Hindi)	0	2	0

SHORTLY TO BE PUBLISHED

Guide to Village Economic surveys	0	2	0
Peasant Fact Book			

ALL INDIA KISAN PUBLICATIONS

23, STRINGER ST., MADRAS G. T.