9TOP9
29648

Protect Self-Employed Peasants

AND

Tribal People



Prof. N. G. RANGA, M. P.

SELF-EMPLOYED PEASANTS
AND
TRIBAL PEOPLE

ga of Rangaji's Life-Long fight for the Protection and welfare of Agricultural Toilers and Tribal People

rof. N. G. Ranga, B. Litt. (Oxon.), D. Litt. (A.U.)
Member of Parliament

Kisan Publications
Indian Peasant Institute
Nidubrolu - 522 123
Andhra Pradesh, India.

Copies can be had also from

idha Sahiti
rupati – 517 506

(2) Milind Publications
6F. Rani Jhansi Rd.,
New Delhi - 110 055

rint : May 1, 1983

Price : Rs. 30-00

CONTENTS

1. Editorial Note
2. Prelude to Protection of Self-Employed Peasants
3. Who Are Less Revolutionary ?
4. Seventeenth Amendment–Rangaji's Statement
5. FIRST SPEECH of Rangaji in Lok Sabha
6. Rangaji's Personal Explanation
7. Rajaji's Support
8. Press Report on Bangalore Convention
9. Select Committee's Amendment
10. The Outrageous XVII Amendment
11. SECOND SPEECH of Rangaji in Lok Sabha
12. The Press Against the 17th Amendment Bill
13. THIRD SPEECH of Rangaji in Lok Sabha
14. Peasants Appeal to the President
15. Rangaji's Inaugural Speech at Kisan, Khet–Mazdoor, Youth Conference in Guntur
16. From the Book "The Tribes of the Nilgiris
17. Vision of Welfare Horizon for Tribal Peoples
18. Vista for Study of Rural Economic Problems
19. Need for Further Research in Agricultural Development and Peasant Economy

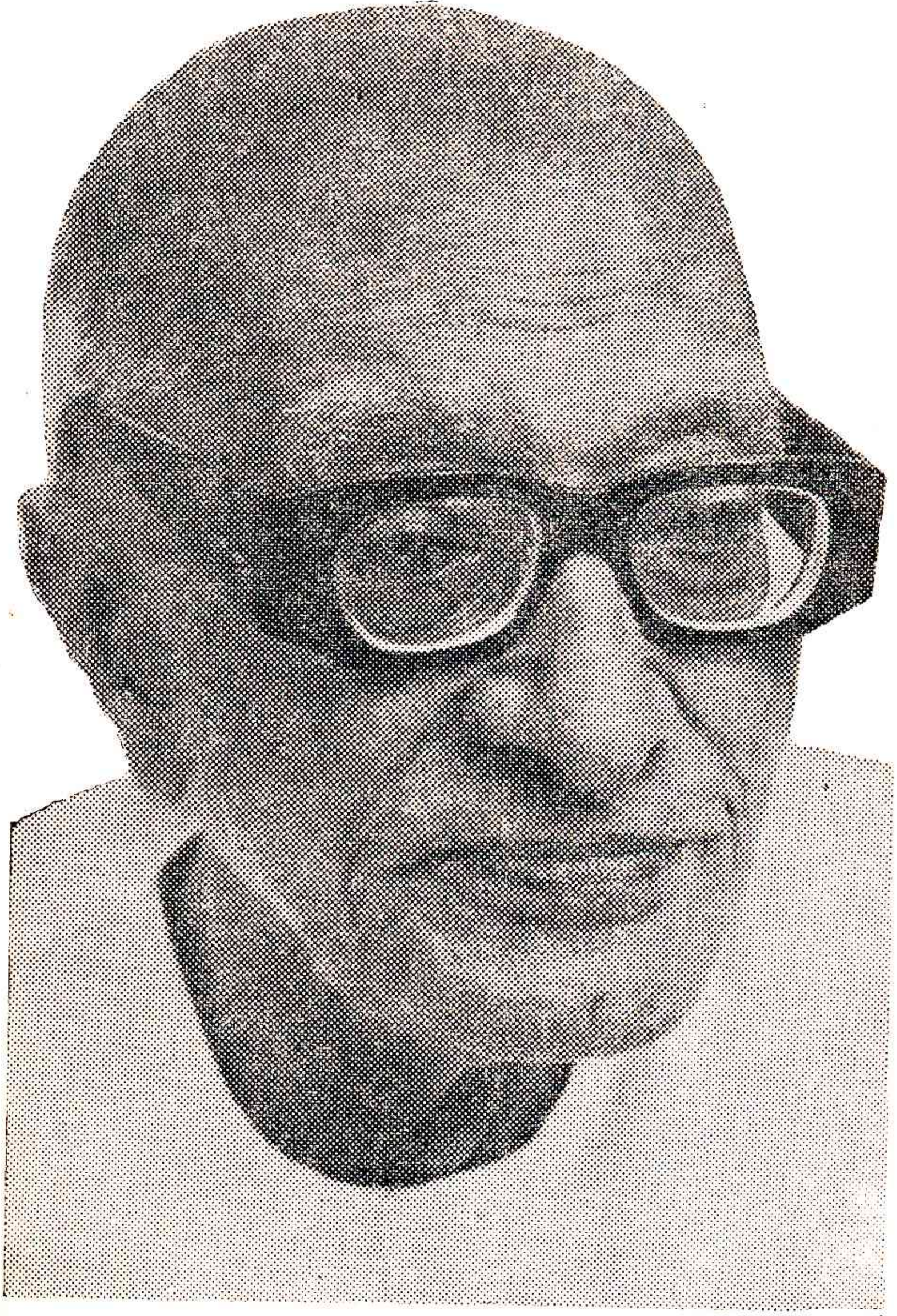
ERRATA

Page	*Line*	*Wrong*	*Right*
4	8	Irrespe–	irrespe–
17	30	for saking	forsaking
97	31	cansidering	considering
104	26	onr	our

Note : The Honorofic Hindi word (suffix) – "Jee or Ji" frequently added to the names of our elders. e. Rajajee or Rajaji, Rangagji, Gandhiji.

Dedicated to

PUJYA C. RAJAGOPALACHARI



(Popularly Known as Rajaji)

Editorial Note

Rangaji was the first M. P. to have raised his voice against the Seventeenth Amendment Bill to amend the Constitution, which sought to abolish Ryotwari Peasant System of land-holdings in the same way as the Zamindari, Istimardari, Jagirdari Systems of Landlordism were eliminated by including "Ryotwari" also in the new definition sought to be given to the word "Estate"

He issued a warning to the Peasantry against this Challenge to their Peasant Proprietorship through his Press Statement in July 1963. He followed it up by organising a nation-wide agitation against the Bill and Rajaji backed it up.

Rangaji advised Peasants to seek the aid of the Parliamentary instrument of petitioning Parliament to appeal to all M. P.'s against this unholy manoeuvre to subvert the time-honoured system of Peasant Proprietorship as a natural source of self-employment. More than a million peasants sent up those petitions and thus created the atmosphere of People's verdict against that Bill through that mini-referendum. He was aided by the Swatantra Party, of which he was the President in the country and Leader in Parliament and also by the Bharat Kisan Sammelan and Federation of Rural People's Organisations and Agriculturists Federation. A consistent and energetic fight was offered against the Bill at every stage of the debate on it in both Houses of Parliament during 1963 and 1964.

The Constitution (Seventeenth Amendment) Bill of 1963-64 sought to extend within its principal clauses the definition of Estate, by which the abolition of systems of Jagirdars, Zamindars, Istimardaris, Talukdaris, etc. was brought about to embrace also Ryotwari Holdings or Tenancies, in order to empower State or Central Governments to confiscate the rights of peasants' landed property by ordinary legislation, on payment of whatever the Government decided to pay, not as compensation, liable to be adjudicated as per the Compulsory Land Acquisition Act by

Courts but depending on the tender mercies of Governments concerned.

According to the earlier Amendment "the expression "estate" shall in relation to any local area have the same meaning as that expression or its local equivalent has in the existing law relating to land tenures in force in that area and shall also include (i) any Jagir, main or muafi or other similar grant and in States of Madras and Kerala, any janmam rights.

But according to this Seventeenth Amendment Bill, it also includes, (ii) any Land under ryotwari settlement.

(iii) any Land held or let for purposes of agriculture or for purposes ancillary thereto, including waste land, forest land, land for pasture or sites of buildings and other structures occupied by cultivators of land, agricultural labourers and village artisans."

But the Joint Select Committee has added the following sub-clause (d) to meet the Opposition of peasants voiced by Rangajee.

To Article 31 A of the Constitution after the existing proviso, the following new proviso shall be inserted, namely provided further that where any law makes any provision for the acquisition by the State of any estate and where any land comprised therein is held by a person under his personal cultivation, it shall not be lawful for the State to acquire any portion of such land as is within the ceiling limit applicable to him under any law for the time being in force or any building or structure standing thereon, or appurtenant thereto, unless the law relating to the acquisition of such land, building or structure provides for payment of compensation at a rate which shall not be less than the market value thereof. (Parliamentary records for Bills 1964, 27th May 1964)

> "But please note that there is no mention of the rights of land holding peasants now being enjoyed under the Compulsory Land Acquisition Act. So, the Government is empowered by this Act to acquire anyone's land, not necessarily for any bonafide public purpose, provided compensation at market value is offered to be paid in such manner as the Government might prescribe."

Rangajee has expressed in the course of his speeches in Parliament his conception of land reforms; his opposition to all land tenures of such intermediary rent-collecting agents as Zamindari, Jagirdari, Istimardari, Talukdari, his conception of peasant proprietorship, and self-employment and he indicates the nature of economic independence emanating from and obtained through peasants' small-holdings and his opposition to the contemporary moves, through legislative, governmental and Panchayati Raj channels to impose co-operativisation of land holdings leading ultimately to collectivisation and large-scale and mechanised agricultural transformation.

The Bills, numbered Seventeenth and Nineteenth were one and the same. The Seventeenth Amendment Bill could not be passed by the requisite special majorities by the Lok Sabha, owing to the abstention of a large number of Congress M. P.'s from voting in favour of the Bill, though they were present in Parliament House on that day; thanks to the moral atmosphere of opposition created by the nation-wide agitation carried on especially among peasants by political and class-wise forces.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister was very much upset by that unexpected defeat in the House, in which there was over-whelming majority on his side, what with the Congress majority plus the support offered to the Bill by Communists, Socialists, D. M. K. and some Independents. So he asked the Congress M. P.'s, when they met that evening in their general body, to decide whose will should prevail, either his or Ranga's. Naturally the Congress M.P.'s obediently but with chagrin assured their faith only in himself. The ultra-loyalists prayed that the House should be called into another session and assured him that the same Bill would certainly be passed without any hesitation.

So, the Speaker of the Lok Sabha was asked after that Session was prorogued, to convene a special session and waive the usual condition that no bill which fails to be passed by Parliament should be introduced again within the same year. But the Speaker allowed the same 17th Amendment Bill but under a different serial number, that is, the Nineteenth Amendment Bill to be introduced in the next special session. Thus, the

special Session was convened, despite the protests of Rangajee and Opposition Parties of Swatantra and Jan Sangh and the same one-clause Bill was introduced as the Nineteenth Constitution Amendment Bill.

It is worth-while to note that the Bill, as originally introduced was sought to apply to all land holdings, empowering the Government to take over all Ryotwari or Kisan holdings and if it had been accepted by Parliament, all land holdings, Irrespective of their sizes would have been liable to be taken over by Government, through a mere notification, **on payment of nominal compensation to be fixed by the fiat of the Executive Authority.**

Acharya Ranga organised a nation-wide protest and developed the post-card petitions, which came to be signed by more than a million peasants from all States. He led with the active personal participation of Pujya Rajajee, the mammoth Peasants March of protest in New Delhi to the Speaker and the President, (the first of its kind) and that Delhi March was preceded by hundreds of Marches at District Headquarters to Collectors and at State capitals to the Chief Ministers and Governors.

It may be specially noted that the Parliamentary weapon of petitioning was then utilised for the first time on a mass-scale and in a nation-wide manner, thus canalising Public opposition in a non-violent and democratic manner. Thanks to the year long campaign within Parliament and throughout the country and on every pro-peasant political platform carried on so persistently and in such a democratic manner - the Joint Select Committee which the Swatantra Party refused to join as a challenge to the conscience of all other parties, unanimously decided to exempt the peasants possessing holdings below the land ceilings fixed by Government from the operations of that draconian amendment, thereby virtually saving the broad peasant masses from its vicious, confiscatory claws. **Thus while Nehru triumphed against all big landholders above the ceilings, Ranga has saved all peasants having holdings below the ceilings, demonstrating the success of Parliament in achieving a compromise and an honourable consensus, that is the success of democratic process.**

By the time the 19th Amendment Bill came up before Lok Sabha (2-6-1964) Jawaharlalji passed away. His successor, Lal

Bahadur insisted upon its being passed, as an offering to the spirit of Jawaharlaljee and Parliament passed it. Rangajee refused to accept the Bill. So he went to the Polls in 1967, as the head of the Swatantra Party and appealed to peasant masses to censure Congress Party, by electing him to Parliament by a good majority.

Such are the undependable and partisan fortunes of parliamentary democracy that when Professor Ranga stood again for Parliament in 1967 from the same Chittoor constituency which had elected him in 1962 despite herculian opposition marshalled by the most popular national leader and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and his three Chief Ministers from Tamil Nad, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh he was defeated by the bigger vote for the ruling Congress Party thanks to the most extraordinary inter-caste combinations and financial conspiracies and ever growing ranks of power-oriented politicals among rural elite. Undauned by that vicious and painful defeat and disappointment at the hands of the very class of peasantry whom he saved, Rangajee stood again after three months in a bye-election from Srikakulam District. He was returned to Parliament by the large majority of over 54,000. But also, by that time Jawaharlaljee, his great friend in the National freedom movement and political opponent after 1959 was not there in Lok Sabha, as he had been in 1962, to greet him, with his usual democratic good cheer, as a worthy political colleague but an opponent across the table.

INDIRAJEE PROTECTS PEASANTS

Finally he has the satisfaction that the right of small (peasant) farmers, marginal (peasant) farmers and all other peasants whose holdings are below Ceiling limits to be entitled to State Protection and Assistance has come to be recognised by the Twenty Points (both old and new) Programme. Co-operative farming is no longer being engineered either by Government or by Congress Party as a compulsive imposition upon peasants through the Panchayati Raj manipulations. It has come to be merely a voluntary approach by interested peasants. Governments, and Indirajee's Programme and leadership are now being encouraged to strengthen the small and marginal peasants with their tiny holdings through the supply of inputs like fertilizers, seeds, current credit, seasonal and consumption credit and other

needs at subsidized prices both directly and throgh service co-operatives. They are being assured support prices and also enabled to get remunerative prices. Such other facilities as crop insurance, provision of minimum of employment for at least one adult in a rural family and assurance of minimum wages for agricultural workers all of which had formed the principal planks of the Kisan Programme, formulated and propagated by Rangajee as long ago as and ever since 1933, are being actively and progressively assured to our agrarian people by Indirajee's dispensation.

OUR PRESENT STAND

We consider land-holding not only as a means of production but also as a means of self-employment and economic freedom. As Indirajee said land is the most important source of renewable wealth and peasants are its protectors and promoters.

The employment in Government or private service will last only for certain period in one's life but this employment on one's own hoding lasts for generations as long as the land is not sold and is in the hands of the family.

In this sort of peasant-wise land-holding and agricultural production, the property in land is not separated from labour of peasants and the owner gets all the benefit derived from the land and there will not be exploitation as in industrial enterprises or commercial concerns. The moment the small holdings are nationalised or brought under collective farming of communes, the peasant loses his interest as self-employed worker and owner and the production suffers. Collective ownership, at this juncture is proved to be a disincentive.

In many of the communist countries like Yugoslavia, Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, etc., the system of collective farming by communes has proved to be a flop and they have had to revert to individual farming. Even in the U. S. S. R. and People's Republic of China they have had to allot house plots to create the necessary incentives to the individual peasant. It is funny to think in terms of introducing such a system in our country which proved to be a failure in the entire communist world.

To-day because of the advancement of agricultural science and research, and its popular application through Lab to Land Campaign, the small peasant is producing more and more and he is able to make the country surplus in food grains, sugar, cotton and other commodities. His family is being enabled to develop culture of multi-crops-cum- perennial fruit trees. And production of vegetables, milk, poultry, honey and fish as multi-pronged agro-industrial self-employed living, is being developed to maximise employment of small peasantry. It is this democratic socialist approach that the present socialist President of France Monsieur Mitterand and the late President Tito of Yugoslavia have advanced as the new and progressive Socialist way of life. We are firmly convinced that the small farms which constitute 70% of our agricultural enterprises have come to stay and are playing a revolutionary role in the development of our economy. Therefore we are convinced that our championship of peasant proprietorship is a progressive contribution to social revolution of our democracy.

We want the distribution of arable waste lands also and the land secured through land-ceiling laws among the landless agricultural workers.

We are for minimum wages for agricultural labourers and for remunerative prices for agriculturists, fixed on the basis of such wages and for peasant proprietorship. We are also for the parity between the prices of industrial goods and agricultural commodities and for export and import policies to be in favour of agriculturists. There is need for increasing irrigation potential and supply of electricity, public health and drinking water and sanitation facilities for rural areas. We welcome the establishment of National Agricultural and Development Bank and plead for at least one Bank plus Co-operative multi-purpose Society for every village. Scientific knowledge of the fruits of agricultural research must be made available to our peasants. We want agro-industries and subsidiary industries like poultry, dairy, sericulture, pisci-culture, etc. to create multi-pronged additional sources of self-employment and greater income and self-reliance for all cadres of rural men and women. At the same time we are for the protection of consumers especially those belonging to low income groups and weaker sections. We are for supplying

essential commodities to them at reasonable and when possible, at subsidized prices, supplied through much more wide-spread and co-operatively managed shops and effective public distribution system and controlled by Consumer Councils throughout the country.

In addition to the above-mentioned broad demands, the Governments of Smt. Indira Gandhi have accepted responsibility to provide integrated rural development, and employment, preferential treatment for the small and marginal farmers, agricultural workers in giving bank loans with differential rates of interest, assisting the artisans by giving subsidies, distributing house-sites to all the poor people in the villages and providing assistance to construct houses, and maintaining and providing storages for farm produce and waste lands and also land secured through land ceiling laws to the poor. We demand action plans to promote such welfare measures for the rural masses. We want much more.

— EDITORS —

Smt. K. V. PUSHPA KUMARI, M. A ,
Lecturer, S. V. University, Tirupati.

Dr. K. L. NARASIMHA RAO, M. Sc., Ph. D.,
Reader, S. V. University, Tirupati.

SRI P. RAJAGOPAL NAIDU, M. P.,
General Secretary, Rural People's Federation,
New Delhi.

SRI C. AMARAYYA, M. A.,
Lecturer, P. B. N. College, Nidubrolu.

PRELUDE TO PROTECTION OF SELF-EMPLOYED PEASANTS

During the Second World War the British Government imposed controls over the storing, processing -- transport prices and distribution of food grains, notably rice and wheat, and the procurement prices were fixed at uneconomic levels. It was all done for the purpose of ensuring adequate supplies of food grains, at stable and low prices in order to ensure the continuous supplies for the urban masses, including the industrial proletariat, so that the war economy would and could be maintained according to the needs of the imperial war.

We of the Kisan Congress leadership were determined to resist that war Economy, as much because of our political demand for Swaraj as because of our immediate need to prevent the additional exploitation of our peasants through the rigours of compulsory procurement of food grains and losses imposed through uneconomically low prices. We were also opposed to the War-time governmental castigation of peasants as grain - hoarders, black - marketeers, etc. The honour of offering the very first protest against those controls came to my brother, the late G. L. Narayana, M. A., B. L., the then President of the Andhra Kisan Congress and Joint Secretary of the All India Kisan Congress.

He was sent to jail for a year and interned in our village, NIDUBROLU, thereafter for some time.

During those War-times, our Kisans had to suffer from not only the coercive activities of the Government but also from the active persecution caused by Communists' collusion with Government in spotting peasants who stored their surplus food grains or who carted it to markets.

After the War was over and political power was transferred to the elected representatives of the people and before

and after the attainment of complete Swaraj that is 1946-1950, our peasants were bitterly disappointed to find that the same cruel, coercive regime of controls, compulsory procurement and uneconomic prices was being continued to their growing and utter impoverishment.

Our protests against controls were reinforced by Mahatma Gandhi himself. But Jawaharlalji as Prime Minister agreed to continue the very controls, which he had condemned when in the position only a couple of years earlier. A few members of the Congress Working Committee also supported me. Jawaharlalji asked us, "How else can we feed the urban professional and industrial workers? How could we take the risk of repetition of the tragedy of Bengal Famine of 1942–43 in which millions died of starvation?" I replied that if we removed controls over Zonal Movement of food grains and offered remunerative prices, requisitioned all the private godowns or store-houses and rice and flour mills, we would insure the country against such man-made famine as that of Bengal Famine and encourage peasants to produce more and so on. When he was not convinced and would not give up the unpopular and cruel shackles fastened on Kisans, I organised the all-India campaign for "De-Control" even though I was also a member of the Congress Working Committee. Jawaharlaljee challenged me then to take over the food portfolio in his cabinet and achieve both the feeding of the urban and industrial masses and the liberation of peasants from controls. Rajendra Prasad, the Food Minister offered to be content with being Minister for Agriculture and do his best to maximise production. I pleaded with Mahatma Gandhi that to accept such a challenge from a Prime Minister who was so unwilling, to drop the controls would not be a happy thing for me, and so I begged him to release me from such an ordeal but let him co-operate with Rajen Babu to withdraw the Controls. Then Gandhijee asked Rajen Babu to persuade Jawaharlaljee to agree to the removal of controls but Rajen Babu and Sardar Patel as his colleagues in the Cabinet and Congress Working Committee failed to free Jawaharlaljee from the spectre of food famine, which was being confused up by the officialdom at the Central and State levels. So Gandhijee had to resort to the extreme threat of himself going on fast.

CONTROLS LIFTED

It was only then that Nehru let Controls go, that is the Prime Minister felt obliged to yield to the demand of Gandhiji, and overcome his new found faith in bureaucracy. The food Controls were thus removed. The peasants breathed a sigh of relief. Markets were flooded with food grains. Prices began to come down. Black-Marketing sagged. Jawaharlaljee also was relieved of his fears.

But Indian food production is subject to the tender mercies of Monsoons. The new Indian foreign policy of Non-Involvement in international rivalries which we all favoured, laid special stress on "Self Reliance", especially on Food Production and stores and supplies. The United States was willing to sell and supply millions of tons of wheat from her surpluses. Our Prime Minister was not keen on depending upon the U. S. A. I was able to persuade the leaders of American and Canadian farmers, represented on the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP founded in 1946 in London) of whose Executive I was a member to offer their wheat surpluses at reasonable prices. As a result of my talks with U.S. Statesmen in 1948 and their President Truman in 1949, I gained confidence that the U. S. Government would be willing to supply the needed credits at reasonable interest rates to enable their farmers to place their wheat surpluses at India's disposal. Therefore I requested Jawaharlaljee not to pursue the anti-peasant policies and programmes which found favour with the bureaucracy. I pleaded that by paying remunerative prices for wheat and rice and by supplying adequate credit at low rates of interest and fertilisers, Indian peasants could be enabled to produce more and more But he did not have the same confidence as I had in our attaining food self-sufficiency, in a decade or two.

Controls Return :

Our Prime Minister was too impatient to achieve self-reliance. He was opposed to food imports for fear it might jeopardise our foreign policy to achieve political self-reliance and weaken our hard-won freedom. So he pressed the Congress a few months after the unfortunate swargarohan of Mahatma

Gandhi, to impose the controls but in a relaxed shape to be sure of minimising the need for imports and avoid the risk of "food famine".

That re-incarnation of the Control regime was one of the potent factors which precipitated my resignation from his Congress Party and forming the Krishikar-Lok Party (KLP) in 1952. We of the KLP were able to prevent the Congress in 1952 general election to regain its majority in the then Madras State Government. That electoral defeat of the Congress shook Jawaharlaljee from out of his own confidence and persuaded him to have second thoughts about the political need to relax controls and pay some heed to the wants and wishes of peasants. Thanks to the statesmanship of the late Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, his close confidant and of Rajajee veteran doyen among states men, and the growing pressure from Kisan Congress, food controls came to be removed in 1952. So we of the Kisan Congress came to be once again reconciled to the Congress Party but the country had to face up to the long time need for large-scale food imports, and that was galling to our proud Prime Minister.

In the mean while, Indian foreign policy got firmed towards non-alignment, thanks to America's unfortunate anti-Indian postures during the debates in the United Nations Assembly and its Security Council over the Kashmir issue and the growing rivalry between U.S.A. and U. S. S. R. So Jawaharlaljee was impatiently searching for such radical changes in Indian farming as might assure the country freedom from food imports and thus strengthen our economic and political freedom.

Planners Against Peasant Economy :

By the time the country got ready to launch upon the Second Five Year Plan, Soviet-oriented Scientists and Planners like Mahalanobis and political and proletarian-minded advisers like Gulzarilal Nanda gained the ear of Jawaharlaljee. They were entrusted to prepare the prospective plan ; to indicate whatever could be achieved during the Second Five-Year Plan and could lead to broaden the vista of self-reliance during the Third and Fourth Five Year Plan periods.

I ventured to suggest that we could achieve all the needed additional agricultural production by 1975 required for self-

sufficiency in food products through developing Co-operativisation of services needed by our agriculturists, such as credit, fertilisers, seeds, modern machinery, and improved implements. I wanted high priority to be given in the second, third and fourth plans for rural roads, major and minor irrigatin and drainage projects and railway and water-way communication, fertilisers, warehouses and processing and other auxiliary industrial development. I was confident that even small and marginal peasants can more than double their production, if only they are aided and serviced in that manner. (Read also Ranga's pamphlet on "Plan and the Peasant" 1957-58-Ed.)

WHO ARE LESS REVOLUTIONARY?

Are we less revolutionary or radical than the Planning Commission, when we agree to a ceiling on land holdings, while the Commission refuses to accept it on urban incomes?

How can the Planning Commission justify its suggestion that all small-holders should be persuaded to pool their holdings into Co-operative Farms or Gramdan Panchayats on the ground that the cultivation of such holdings is uneconomical when it is unable to hold out any hopes of alternative employment to them, as and when large proportion of them are sure to be deprived of even these inadequate sources of subsidiary employment? Everyone recognises the truth that the cultivation of bigger-holdings does not need so many workers whereas the cultivation of smaller holdings is highly labour-intensive.

Who can justify the Commission's proposals to exempt from ceiling huge holdings of cane, jute and cotton lands owned by capitalists or co-operative factories and to refuse to place any ceilings on urban, professional incomes and wealth. while imposing land ceilings?

From Rangaji's brochure "STORM BURSTS ON THE PEASANTRY" May, 1959.

But Jawaharlaljee was advised that all that would take too long a time. He was persuaded by the experts who managed to congregate in and around the Planning Commission, to believe that the small-scale holdings and their poor kisan entrepreneurs, were too conservative, too pitifully incompetent and incapable to meet the challenge of the rising needs of

India's growing population and the bigger demands of urban consumers for more food grains and better and more sophisticated food products. His own experiences of the peasantry of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, who had been suppressed for ages by the oppressive Talukdars to levels of uneconomic and hopelessly conservative methods of cultivation seem to have persuaded him to accept the advice of those anti-peasant experts and urban-oriented planners, who clustered around the Planning Commission.

The "Ford Commissioners" hailing from America, the Myrdal group of international economists rainforced the Indian planners' prejudices against our peasants. The success of North American Continental large-scale farming on one side and the growing strength of Soviet Large-Scaled but collectivised farming on the other seem to have convinced Jawaharlaljee that the future rural progress and economic and political self-reliance of India could be based not on the small-scale farming and large masses of individualistic small peasantry but on large-scale, mechanised farming. But how to achieve such a transformation of agricultural economy and base it on large scale mechanised farming.?

APPEAL TO JAWAHARLALJEE

Let the Prime Minister try this great experiment – unique in Indian annals – of helping the self-employed peasant to stand on his own feet, to be freed from the exploitation of both man-made institutions of commerce, industry and professions and their benefactors and armours, Governments and to gain his proper share and power in the benefits of this much-lauded planned economy. We can assure him that this will yield phenomenally good results and strengthen the roots of Indian democracy and the avenues of people's freedom. Let us not forget that it is wiser to widen a well-trodden path that has scope for greater width, strength and perspective. It is prudent to use the open door, rather than try to scale the wall for the mere adventure of scaling forgetting the main purpose.

From Rangaji's brochure "STORM BURSTS ON THE PEASANTRY" May, 1959

Bhoodan to Gramdan :

Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan Movement did not yield any large area of Bhoodan land, to be utilised for large-scale, mechanised agricultural production. His Gram Dan Movement, was expected to transform almost all the lands of villages. By utilising the coercive process of taking over all the land in a village or a group of villages by persuading majorityof land holders to pool their holdings into Gram Dan Holding, they hoped to win over the minority for the Gram Dan by playing upon their faith in democracy. So Jawaharlaljee grew enthusiastic about the prospects offered by the Movement of Vinoba for achieving what had till then proved to be an elusive ideal of food self-sufficiency, and achieve through it, political and economic self-reliance. So, he and Rajendra Babu, who had by then become the venerable Rashtrapathi, Debhar, the Congress President, Socialists like Lohia, Ashok Mehta, Sarvodaya Leader, Jaiprakash, the arch-planner G. L. Nanda and Leaders of Communist party such as A. K. Ghosh, Shankaran Nambudripad met at Yetwal in Mysore area of Karnataka State in the presence of Bhoodan apostle, Vinobajee. They decided to launch a national campaign for persuading peasants to pool all their lands and holdings into Gramdan Village social economy. It was indeed a formidable National Front. Once again I had to join issue with that Front of all Socialists, with all the religious aura of Vinobajee and the authority of Government and glamour of Jawaharlaljee and his socialist cohorts. (Read Rangajee's brochures (i) Panchayat Landlordism and (ii) Storm Bursts over Peasants – Ed). What was I to do ? Could I once again leave the Congress and found an independent political party again ? Indeed I had already realised, when I was merging the Krishikar Lok Party with the United National Congress in 1955 and making common cause with Jawaharlaljee as the greatest national leader that to maintain an independent political party based mainly on peasants and rural folk, without any substantial financial and urban support would be an impractical and impossible political task.

Yet I had to decide upon that course of opposition but with a heavy heart, to meet that compelling challenge to all that I had held as sacred ; that is, the historically just and

fundamental right of small peasantry to self-reliance and self-employment, instinct in peasant holding as precious national assets.

Equally strong must have been Jawaharlaljee's disappointment over my opposition to what he considered to be the best hope for rapid progress of India towards self-sufficiency in food and salvaging of our rural economy from the so-called back-ward peasantry. Vinoba wondered how, being an M. P. in the Congress Party at Delhi and the leader of the United Congress in Andhra, I could venture to oppose his move endorsed as it was by such a stupendous political combine of Socialists, Sarvodaya Bhaktas and Communists. Jawaharlaljee was as unwilling to lose me, just as I was unable to leave him. So he did not place Government's funds and personnel behind that Bhoodan movement. On the other hand, Kisans rellied to my call to oppose the Grama Dan Move and so, that stratagem of Bhoodan proved to be still born.

Why not Co-operative Farming :

The Planners thought of yet another but equally insidious anti-peasant manoeuvre. They suggested to Congress Premier Jawaharlaljee to inaugurate a national campaign for co-operative farming, based on joint farming of peasant pattadars. Jawaharlaljee thought that if the Congress, through the All India Congress Committee would decide upon a national campaign to organise co-operative farming, by persuading majority of peasants in any one area, I would not be able to oppose it. How could I gain any large-scale following among peasants to counter that Move?

First he tried to argue with me. He knew that I was equally patriotic and desirous of supporting him in his mighty efforts to ensure peace of the world and safeguarding the all round freedoms of all the newly liberated Afro-Asian countries and peoples. He was also aware of my enthusiastic support for his leadership in forging the Non-Alignment Movement. He knew how I had taken the lead in the commonwealth Conference held in Ottawa in 1952 in suggesting the "Non-Involvement stand" for India and other Afro-Asian countries. So he argued that

I should hail his whole - hearted support for the co-operative movement within the sphere of agriculture especially as I had been a champion of All India Co-operative Movemement, and been pleading for governmental support for agricultural co-operatives. I told him that I would welcome the political support of Congress and financial and organisational help from Government for developing processing, financing and servicing of agriculture through co-operatives. I could not agree however to large-scale co-operativisation of production through the pooling of agricultural holdings, because that would destroy the self-employment of peasants, and its essence, economic independence and social security, built into peasant economy. He was good enough to offer to proceed slowly and achieve co-operativisation gradually only in a democratic manner, as contrasted with the arbitrary, and steam-roller like Soviet methods. But we could not agree. (Read also "Co-operative Farming and Peasants" by N. G. Ranga and P. R. Patuchuri.—Ed.)

He was good enough to press me to join his government and said, "This is not a challenge to you. Rather, why not we both face this challenge of the times as comrades in arms as we had done in the past. Let us work together to make co-operative farming beneficial to both the farm-workers and peasants and the nation". I happened to be the President of the public Accounts Committee. Smt. Bharti Devi, my wife, Freedom Fighter and former President of the All India Kisan Congress and an M.L.C. was then being offered Cabinet Ministership in Andhra Pradesh Cabinet. So this extremely friendly gesture from Jawaharlaljee, in such fraternal and congenial political atmosphere was most fascinating. Yet, I would not agree with him because I felt that I might be for saking my life-long mission for the self-employed Kisans.

That phase of Inevitability of Separation from Jawaharlaljee proved to be extremely painful to both of us.

Nagpur A. I. C. C. for Co-operative Farming.

Jawaharlaljee was nothing, if he was not a stout fighter for what he believed to be the right cause. So he went to Nagpur and proposed that the A. I. C. C. should offer to campaign for

co-operative farming. Mr. Charan Singh, the then Minister in U.P. Government and Mr.C. Subrahmaniam, Nehru's own Cabinet Minister, opposed it. But the A. I. C. C. endorsed it by an overwhelming majority. Even if I had gone there as he had suggested to me in Delhi and opposed that resolution, it would have been passed, leaving me in such a hopeless minority. So great was his power over the Congress. I decided then that the time had come for me to dissent openly from that resolution. And within a fortnight after Nagpur decision, I sent in my resignation to the General Secretaryship of the Congress Parliamentary party. On receiving that resignation, Jawaharlaljee sent for me. We then had an hour long mutually painful tete-a-tete we loved each other so much during those 3 decades long comradeship in national movement, himself as the second in command, myself as a self-respecting colleague, both under Mahatmaji's umbrella. Thrice he offered a seat in his Cabinet, once as a challenge, later as comradely gestures. Everytime I had to abstain from agreeing to join his cabinet because our differing attitudes towards peasants' role in our national economy proved to be too great an obstacle. As I said on the public platform on 28th December 1981 in Mavlankar Hall, in reply to felicitations on the completion of my 50 years long devotion to Democracy and parliamentarianism "We both had tears in our eyes as we found it not possible to overcome our disagreement and give up our respective approaches to self-employed peasants."

To fight for peasants' rights for self-employment and small-holdings thus became a Herculean task for me. So once again I have had to go into political wilderness. For six months, Bharatidevi and myself toured all over India. We organised mass rallies against co-operative farming. Lal Singh, J. Hegde and B. Ramachandra Reddy of Agriculturists Federation joined us in that all India campaign of protest. So, Jawaharlaljee gave up that campaign, all so reluctantly. But I was defeated in the election for the Presidentship of the All India Co-operative Union. Finally I had to resign from the Congress itself as a protest against Jawaharlaljee's Congress move for compulsive co-operative farming. I have thus become a drift with no more prospects of being able to protect peasants from within the platform of the ruling party and other platforms under its control.

On the other hand, Jawaharlaljee continued to be equally keen on reorganising our rural economy, freed from land-owning and self-employed peasants. So, he paid heed to the intrigues of his resourceful planners and advisers to get round our opposition.

During that crucial period, my opposition to Jawaharlaljee's moves against peasants was being supported by Rajajee and Khasa of "Swarajya". And eventually our joint front came to take the political shape of Swatantra Party in June-August 1959 with myself as the Party President and Parliamentary Leader and Rajajee as the Founder-patron and M. R. Masani and Munshi, the intellectual props. No wonder Jawaharlaljee saw to it that I was defeated in the (January, 1962) general Election to Lok Sabha from my own home Constituency in Guntur District by allowing the Communist candidate to win over myself and Congress candidate. But I was able to get re-elected to Parliament by defeating all his phalanxes and communist allies in the bye-election to Parliament from Chittoor in September 1962.

Bill tried to classify and castigate peasants as Estatedars and abolish peasantism.

Having thus been baulked of their public schemes against peasants in 1957-59, Jawaharlaljee's planners wished to achieve their objective by managing Parliament by a procedural stratagem. This is to introduce suddenly the Constitution (Seventeenth) Amendment on the last but one day of the three months long budget session of Lok Sabha of 1973. I left Delhi just on that very day of the introduction of that anti-peasant Bill and so, I could not raise then and there my objection to the very principle, underlying that Bill. Within weeks thereafter, I appealed for public protest through my Press Statement opposing that mischievous move against Self-employed Peasants and their land-holdings.

That Bill had one principal clause and that clause was only an extension of the cobra's hood of one word "Estate" to peasants and their holdings. The definition of that word "Estate" had already been incorporated in an earlier amendment of the Constitution to abolish rent-collecting Zamindars, Jagir-

dars. All that this Seventeenth Amendment Bill pretended to do was only to extend that definition to another relationship of people to landholding, that is, Ryotwari system. How clever, and how cunning of the Planners to further their conception of better and larger agricultural production and so-called land reform. It sought to place self-employed small peasants also in the same box and economically and socially guillotined category as Zamindars. During the succeeding sixteen months of ceaseless and anxious struggle against that Bill, both Rajajee and Swatantra Party stood by me like Rocks and fully justified Rajajee's full-throated declaration that the Swatantra Party was the Party of peasants par excellence and my Mantram of Self-Employment was equivalent to the aspiration for Swatantra of all classes of toilers. The three great Parliamentary debates; the phenomenal peasant March in Delhi, the first of its kind and my Three Speeches in the House and the Petition to Parliament with million strong signatures, debates in State Legislatures are some of the democratic weapons or forces marshalled by us during that great struggle – partially successful – in defense of the historic and freedom-loving broad masses of self-employed peasantry of India.

THE SEVENTEENTH AMENDMENT

Acharya N. G. Ranga writes from Nidubrolu under the date June 27, 1963:

> I hope all those who are interested in the welfare and freedom of our people will study carefully the full implications of the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution introduced in Parliament on 6th May last.

To the definition of "Estate" given in Article 31-A the following new items are sought to be added:

i) any land held under ryotwari settlement:

ii) any land held or let for purposes of agriculture or for purposes ancillary to, including waste land, forest land, land for pasture and sites for buildings and other structures occupied by cultivators, agricultural labourers and village artisans.

In the third clause, which deals with the Ninth Schedule to the Constitution, from the 21st, i e., Andhra Pradesh Estates (Abolition and Conversion into Ryotwari) Act 1948 to the 143rd, the Manipur Land Revenue and Land Reforms Act 1960, as many as 123 new Acts are to be included — thus extending the protection and also the sphere of public 'purposes' as envisaged by the Plans and as accepted by the Supreme Court.

Since co-operative farming comes within the purview of 'public purpose' as envisaged by the Plans and Planning Commission and as embraced by the decision of the Supreme Court, peasants' holdings are in danger of being notified as coming within the sphere of activity of any co-operative farming society and peasants being presented with the alternatives of either pooling their lands with the co-operative farm or being offered the compensation fixed by a Land Tribunal for compulsorily acquiring them for the farm. Of course, the courts are to be kept out of all these

proceedings. The compensation may be prescribed as so many times the land revenue, as has been fixed by Bombay and other legislations, the Tribunal having the power to settle the exact amount. It is likely to be only a nominal amount when compared to what a peasant is now entitled to, under the compulsory Land Acquisition Act with all the protection of the courts, viz., the market value.

I am afraid that item (iii) seeks to bring even the agricultural workers within its mischief by denying them the hope of getting government waste lands allotted to them.

We must fight this mischievous attempt to undermine the stability of peasant proprietorship, to force peasants to join collective farms, to destroy the present rural economy based upon land values and self-employment, and to deny the right of peasants to lease out their lands for temporary periods to obtain medical treatment, to get their children educated in towns or to take rest in old age without the fear of their lands being taken over either by a co-operative farm or tenants.

I am of the opinion that we should ask in Parliament for circulation of the Bill, demand its reference to a select committee with power to call witnesses. Peasants should organize Marches during all this period right upto its final passage through Parliament. Groups in State Legislatures should table resolutions, asking Parliament not to pass the Bill and demanding the Union Government to withdraw the Bill. Bar Councils and Bar Associations should protest against this Bill and defend at least the rights of ryotwari holders of land. Rights which were conceived as fundamental by the framers of the Constitution, are sought to be whisked away as if they were mere rubbish.

– From "SWARAJYA" July 6, 1963.

First Speech Delivered by N. G. Ranga in Lok Sabha on September 18, 1963 on the Constitution (17th Amendment) Bill

Shri Ranga (Chittoor) : I have my own motion. I move :

"That the Bill be circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon by the 15th February, 1964."

Sir, I consider this day to be the beginning of the long dreary, black day for the Indian Peasants in this country. I am sorry, the Government has thought it fit to draft this Bill, get it introduced (on the last day of the prolonged Budget session) and now proceed to rush it to the Joint Committee. It is typical of the non-chalant attitude of the Government that the hon. Law Minister should not have helped his colleague, the hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, to agree even to the very moderate motion moved by one of our hon. friends from the Opposition in regard to the hours for discussion of this. It is also typical of this Government's anxiety to liquidate the peasantry in this country.

The Hon. Law Minister Shri Ashok Sen did not think it necessary to refer.....

.....even in this very short Bill, as it is, with only three clauses, to the very important item here, that is item (ii) of sub-clause (a) of Clause 2, which says :

"any land held under ryotwari settlement"

nor did he refer to item (iii) which reads :

"Any land held or let for purposes of agriculture or for purposes ancillary thereto, including waste land, forest land, land for pasture and sites of buildings and other structures occupied by cultivators of land, agricultural labourers and village artisans."

The Bill comprehends within its mischief all classes of people, all cadres of people who live in our rural areas not to speak of a section of the urban masses also who happen to own some land in villages all round the cities. The Hon. Law Minister had no justification to offer for these two very important clauses in this Bill. Supposing he drops these two clauses and confines himself only to that particular proposition of ceiling, the attitude of the House might have been different.* But ceiling is only one of the many things that the Government seeks to bring within the mischief of this Bill.

It is wrong for the Government to consider their land policy which they have conceived with the aid of the Planning Commission to be of greater sacredness, of greater inflexibility and of greater fixity than the Constitution itself. They will have to answer before the bar of public opinion in this country in regard to this particular matter.

Secondly, this Constitution in regard to this particular group of clauses 30, 31, 31A has had a very chequered career. Every time the Supreme Court found any of these laws to be defective, to be violative of the Constitution and its spirit the Government did not hesitate to come forward to this House with an amendment Bill in order to change the Constitution and in that way answered the Supreme Court, as it were. They may not say straightaway "This is what we are doing, you may do whatever you like" : they have not said that; but it amounts to that. And therefore they do not want to benefit themselves from the wisdom of the Supreme Court, nor do they want to benefit themselves from the wisdom of the fathers of the Constitution (Rangajee was one of them – Ed.) or even from the principles that are already enshrined in this Constitution.

And what is it they are doing, Sir? They think they have a policy. That policy, they think, comes within the four corners of the Directive Principles. And the Directive Principles cannot be enforced in the Courts. They themselves have stated it in the

---

* So far as the imposition of Ceiling on land holdings was concerned, Rangajee agreed to it, even as a member of the Kumarappa's Committee on Land Reforms. He wanted it to be extended to all Classes. (1950) — (Ed.)

Constitution in article 37. Surely more important than the Directive Principles are the Fundamental Rights of the people. They are enshrined there in a separate chapter 3 and there is a separate clause there, article 32, which empowers any citizen in this country anywhere to raise the question of the legality, the constitutionality of any one of the laws that are passed either here or there in the States and seek the protection of the Supreme Court. And those Fundamental Rights are being set at nought in preference to what they consider to be the principles which they think, in their own judgement, flow from the Directive Principles of the Constitution. This, I think, is a very unfair way of dealing with the Constitution.

Ceilings Laws already Passed, Imposed

Now, coming to the question and reason why they want these amendments. I question the very necessity for this Bill – they have themselves published the report about the working of the Third Five Year Plan only this year, March 1963, placed in our hands much later. And they have a chapter, Chapter XVIII, on Land Reforms. They have given copious information for State after State for all the States. Except in the case of Kerala, in all other cases they have themselves stated that the Ceilings Acts are being enforced, are being implemented. Statistics are being collected in certain areas as to how much (surplus land) is available, to whom it is to be granted and so on. In certain other areas even distribution is taking place. If they are keen only about ceilings and have no other ulterior motives in regard to this particular Bill, surely, Sir, there is not that urgency, there is not that need to come forward with this Bill.

True I have been opposed to ceiling, because it is discriminatory. Because the Prime Minister himself was not willing to extend the principle of ceiling even to salaried employees of the Government, not to speak of other classes of people in the country. He said: how would it ever be possible to get experts and experienced people for less than Rs. 2,500 a month? Whereas, in the case of agriculturists the utmost, the maximum they have been good enough and liberal enough to agree to be the ceiling

income, is Rs. 500 per mensem and not more. It is Rs. 500 per mensem for an agriculturist, but in the case of the salaried employees they thought that Rs. 2,500 was not enough. They were not prepared to impose any ceiling on the government employees, on the salaried employees, not to speak of all other non-agricultural classes. That alone is enough, Sir, to condemn this Government as being a discriminatory government, and a government which is opposed to the agricultural interests. For such other reasons we have opposed this.

Nevertheless we have passed all this legislation (on ceiling) all over India. Is it not their duty to have the patience and the legal conscience to re-examine their own ceiling legislation in all these States and to so reshape it wherever it is necessary as to bring it within the four corners of this Constitution? Instead of that, as lazy people, and as reactionaries, as people who are absolutely irresponsible and bureaucratic-minded, they do not want to give any other consideration to any of this legislation but simply put it in the wardrobe (Ninth Schedule), lock it up with double lock and then say, "It is part of the Constitution, therefore you who are Members of Parliament who took the oath (of loyalty to Constitution. Ed) and all other people who join in these representative institutions have no right what-soever to question it, because it is a part of the Constitution." Now, this is an extraordinary thing.

No Uniformity in imposition of Ceilings

Then I come to the other question, how did they use this power that has been given to them, that they themselves have taken, in regard to ceilings? Did they have a uniform rule? No. Did they fix it in any sensible way? No. Did they even accept the suggestions made by the Planning Commission in regard to certain classes of people? No. They did it in whichever way they liked. In such an arbitrary manner that in certain areas temple lands have been included while in certain other areas they have been exempted. While in other places they have been calculated on an individual basis, in certain other areas they have calculated it on the basis of families. Yet they talk of Principles. They have just this principle of behaving and acting in an unprincipled manner.

I think - I speak subject to correction - the Supreme Court has not raised any objection to the principle of ceiling. They seem to have raised an objection on how that particular ceiling is to be implemented. Certainly on the question of how much of compensation is to be paid, on the quantum of compensation they have raised an objection. And why did they raise it? Because, the principle which they had adopted earlier in Clause 31-A in regard to estates (of Zamindars, Jagirdas etc.) cannot be applied, cannot be extended to the ceiling legislation also. That, for a very good reason. There it was intended for all intermediaries, (like Zamindars, Talukdars etc.) functionless people who were created by the earlier Governments and whose function has lapsed or whose function has been terminated by the Government. They were rent collectors, therefore they had to be sent out of their function and so they did not have the same kind of right, the same magnitude of right for compensation as the ordinary people who own properties, landed as well as other types of properties. Therefore, they took for themselves the power to fix a tapering scale of compensation for them (Talukdars). The Supreme Court raised objection even in regard to that when the Bihar and other legislation came before them. Then Parliament took the opportunity of amending the Constitution and brought in clause 31A, and in that way they saved that particular policy of the Government. (Rangaji supported it — Ed.)

These peasants are not estatedars, these are not Zamindars or Talukdars or Jagirdars. (Some used to be merely tenants of the Jagirdars—Ed.) Many are Peasant proprietors. Now, they are not intermediaries. *They own their lands. In regard to them, the Government wanted to fix the ceiling which I have considered to be discriminatory, one-sided. However, Supreme Court did not raise any objection in regard to that. Government wanted to take away their surplus land over and above the ceiling. Therefore, they said that the quantum of compensation that they are fixing was not reasonable. It should be just; it should be reasonable; it should be as good as a market price and, they should not be treated in any way worse than those others

---

* Read also, Rangajee's "Economic Conditions of Zamindari Ryots" 1933 and "Kisan Speaks" 1937. (Ed).

whose lands would be taken over compulsorily by the Government under the Land Acquisition Act; where they have got to be paid an average of market price over a particular period of years, specified period of years, plus a solatium amounting to 15 per cent. Surely, it should be within the power of the Government, within the capacity of the Government to so amend their own ceiling legislation as to accommodate this particular principle which has been reiterated by the Supreme Court. I am saying 'reiterated' because it has been there since 1890 ever since the other legislation (Compulsory Land Acquisition Act. Ed) was passed. Indeed it has been enshrined in our own national tradition that nobody's property should be taken away without paying proper compensation, just compensation. Why is it that the Government does not want to do this much of justice to our Peasants ?

Unjust to classify Ryotwari holdings as Estates :

Now, I come to the question of the ryotwari holdings. I wrote a letter to the Prime Minister (Jawaharlaljee – Ed.) drawing his attention to the injustice of bringing the ryotwari peasants within the mischief of this Bill. He was good enough to send to me, after two weeks time that he gave to his advisers, a note prepared by his advisers with the authority of the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission. And what do they say ? They say that already in Gujarat and Maharashtra and also in Punjab, ryotwari holdings also had been brought within the definition of the estate therefore, there is nothing wrong in bringing all the ryotwari peasants all over India within the mischief of that particular definition. Now, this is a very arbitrary and bureaucratic way of looking at things and an irresponsible way also. It is befitting only a dictator, not a democratic Governmet.

First of all, my friends who are in Gujarat have advised me that it is not applicable to Gujarat ryotwari land holdings. Their holdings are treated, recognised, by the Government as well as the public as their property just like the holdings of our ryotwari system in the whole of South India and other places also. Similarly, in parts of Orissa and in the whole of Maharashtra, everywhere, ryotwari landholders have been

recognised by the High Courts, by the Supreme Court as well as the Government themselves till now to be the owners of their lands. They have also the right to bequeath (or sell – Ed.). So far as the ryotwari holders are concerned, they are the owners of their lands and they have been recognised as such. They are cultivators themselves; they are their own employers; they are self-employed people. The land belongs to them.

And how many of them are very rich people? Government have the information obtained in regard to the ceiling legislation as to what percentage of these ryotwari land-holders or pattadars have been found to be possessing more than the ceiling. They have the statistics. It is not more than 3 per cent, anyway, in any State and those people are being dealt with by the ceiling legislation. As compared to other people they are smaller people. Their income is not more than Rs. 500 per month and even those people are to be harmed by this legislation. How are they going to be dealt with? They are to be treated as estatedars.

What is the consequence? Once a person comes to be treated as an estatedar, or the owner of the estate, all penalties that have visited the zamindars, talukdars, jagirdars, will come to visit these unfortunate people also. By this Bill, Government wants to take that power. Then their land can be acquired compulsorily by the Government either for the use of any other class of people, even individuals, according to the wishes of not only this Government but also the State Government and all its agents right down to the Zilla Parishads and the Village Panchayats also. Their lands can be acquired compulsorily which means the peasants need not have to agree. The peasants will have to be helpless spectators. *(Read also Rangajee's "Panchayat Landlordism" 1957).

Beware, Plan's agents decide Public Purpose:

All that the Government has got to do or what it may propose to do is simply to pass an order that such and such an area; so much of such land is going to be acquired. And how do they acquire it? For what purpose? **For public purpose, they may say.** What is that public purpose? They have themselves

defined it here in article 31 (2). But that definition does not hold good for them. The Supreme Court also came to their rescue and the Law Commission also wants to come to their rescue and their planners are anxious to see that this definition of 'public purpose' is widened as much as possible so that even the head of the Panchayat Board or Zilla Parishad would be able to say that such and such land is necessary for such and such a purpose or even a managing Director of a factory who is able to convince the local collector or the local Secretary of the Land Revenue Department would be able to say that such and such land should be acquired.

And that becomes the 'public purpose'. Why ? Because it subserves their plan purposes. Everything that is contained in their plan is supposed to be the public purpose and that is expected to be an inflexible thing. Therefore it must take precedence over everything else. That is their public purpose. Can the government say that co-operative farming will not come within that purpose and the land being given to any particular favourite of theirs will not come within some particular purpose or other? Because the Plan purpose is, as wide as the width of this country ; and as long as the length of this country ; because its arms spread all over like those of Kartaveeryarjuna, therefore 'public purpose' becomes a nebulous thing. It becomes the sweet will and pleasure of the local Minister and the Revenue Board and all the other officers and also these so-called non-official agents who are now being brought into power at the head of all these various organisations to decide for what purpose they want to acquire the land compulsorily.

Having acquired it what is it that they want to pay tc peasants ? They do not want to pay according to the Land Acquisition Act at all. They want to be free to pay whatever they like – yes, according to law. The local laws are there. They have given us a precis of the 123 Acts that have been already passed in so many places. It is only twice as much as the land (Revenue or Tax — Ed.) That land is there, to be developed by the owner. Then, it comes to four times, six times and from that the maximum sometimes upto 30 times. Therefore, what would be paid to the peasants will depend upon the sweet will of the local land revenue commissioner whom they will appoint;

of a tribunal and the tribunal will decide according to the manner in which his pockets are lined and his palm is oiled. If he is satisfied then it will be ten times; otherwise, it will be only twice. And in how many years would the amount be given? Not straightway on the spot; but only in instalments and the instalments also in bonds. Then, there is this wonderful menace of inflation which will convert Rs. 100 of today to something worthless or only Rs. 10 in another ten years' time; and for ten years or twenty years the man has got to go on waiting. Again, in how many instalments? That also depends upon the bride that the man would be giving or the good will of the officer who is concerned. And this is the (arbitratry Ed.) power that they want to take, in order to take away the lands belonging to the ryotwari peasants.

Now, how has this Bill arisen? It has arisen from the genius of our friends, the Communists in Kerala. Of course, they said they wanted to do a good thing, and that was in regard to the Zanmi or Zamindari tenants; there, they are called the jenmam tenants or Kanamdars or something like that. For them, they wanted the land in the same way as we wanted the land for all the other zamindari tenants all over India. Therefore, they were passing that legislation. But whether they knew it or not I am inclined to think that they knew – they included (merged) in it those ryotwari peasants also who happened to go, unfortunately for them, into the (newly formed) Kerala State because of the merger of a small portion of Kasergode Taluk; only about 2500 persons or so were there. My Hon. friend Shri A.K. Gopalan (CPI) would give the details later on. In order to help those jenmam tenants, they brought those ryotwari peasants also into that legislation, and they got that Bill passed there. It was held up here by the President. In the meanwhile, they went out of power. Then, the Congress people came into power, and they passed the very same Bill, because they had sent out the Communist Government there by non-violent violence, and so, they wanted to save their conscience by accepting their Bill. Thus, they fathered their baby; that baby was later on struck down by the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court did not raise objection over so many other things in that Bill, but they certainly raised objection over this, thanks to the genius and splendid pleading of

Mr. Nambiar, the lawyer. I am referring to who pleaded for peasants and then, the Supreme Court was able to see reason that these ryotwari people had been brought in wrongly (into that Bill) and therefore, they said that the measure should be struck down.

Instead of amending that Bill suitably, what has this Government done? They wanted to oblige our Communist friends. And in fact, they (Congress Party) are themselves going that Communist way, and they think that this is an excellent way. They think, 'Why have all this bother?' as the Law Minister himself has said, of having to go and wait and see whether the Supreme Court would accept this or would not accept that Act. And they further thought 'Let us put the whole lot of these 123 Acts passed by all these legislatures either when they were asleep or when they were awake or when they were half-awake, in the Ninth Schedule just as the Law Minister has been awake during this debate. This just as they have passed those Acts, our Government wants to put the whole lot into the safe custody of (the Ninth Schedule of) the Constitution and make them a part and parcel of the Constitution.

That does not redound to the legal acumen or the legal conscience or the political commonsense or the sense of responsibility of this Government. And yet they have done this. This is a communist way of approach and nothing else.

Now, what would be the consequence of this legislation? About 65 million peasant families are going to be affected. There will be insecurity in their minds, and for years and years they will suffer from this insecurity, because they will not know when their lands are likely to be taken away at the dictates of the village panchayats or parishads or State lagislatures.

Of course, it may be said that the State Legislatures are also representative, and therefore, they are not going to be so irresponsible and so they would not pass any such laws. I ask now, "Have they not passed all these irresponsible laws and have they not passed so many of these lawless laws? In the same way, would they not act also in the future? Have they not done in such a manner in Bengal?" In Bengal, whereas the market

price was Rs. 200, the price that was to be fixed for the peasant was only a small sum, and even the small sum was not being paid to the peasants. And when an appeal was made to the Prime Minister he appealed to the local Chief Minister, and the local Chief Minister said 'We are completely safeguarded by article 31A; so, why do you worry at all unnecessarily?' This is the fate of the Bengali land – owning tenants there. And the same would be the position of all other people also; I have given you just one instance only. Therefore, we cannot trust ourselves to the tender mercies of the State Legislatures.*

Why cause insecurity among peasants during Emergency?

Now, why are the Government so very keen, and so very persistant with this Bill, in spite of my plea that they should not go ahead with it during this emergency? They themselves have stated that during this emergency everything that we do should have a defence slant. Is it a defence slant to sow insecurity in the minds and hearts of crores of people? Is this the manner in which you want to get our people to offer a united front against the Chinese by threatening the security of their land – holdings?

And what are these land-holdings? They are not mere houses. If you do not have a house, you can go and take shelter under a tree or in a choultry. **But this land (or land-holding) which provides them employment, which saves them from social degradation, which assures them of economic independence, which has saved them and their forefathers and which also assures their children of continuity of their employment as well as their freedom.** It is in this sphere that government wants to create this atmosphere of insecurity. So I charge them with irresponsibility in their duty towards our Motherland in this emergency.

---

*Quote from Storm Bursts on the Peasantry by N. G. Ranga :

Ranga has live contact with the masses; he knows his peasants he is indeed the leader of the Kisans. If today he has raised his voice-or is it the banner of revolt? – against the Congress, because of its agrarian policy, it is not for want of appreciation of Congress Zeal for land reform or understanding of socialist ideology but because of his firm conviction that what is sought to be done is harmful to larger agricultural interests and the way in which it is sought to be done is authoritarian in character.

from SWARAJYA of 7th February, 1959.

And here was a Minister of theirs speaking only the other day. And he said :

"Our approach to agriculture must always be predominantly farmer-oriented. The crux of agriculture is the farmer everywhere and in all cases, and the crux of prosperous agriculture is the persuaded and contented farmer."

I am aghast at the manner in which this Government wants to deal with the single largest interest, socially, politically and economically. I wish to warn Government that the peasants are not going to take this lying down in the same docile manner in which they had been accepting things all this time.

Petitions :

All over India, in some States, more and in some other States, fewer, peasants have begun to awaken themselves, and nearly **68,000 of these peasants have sent their petitions to the Secretary to the Lok Sabha**. protesting against this Bill and asking that this Bill should be dropped. *All this might not make any appeal to these friends opposite. Sir, 1967 is coming, and I wish to remind them that in 1967 they have got to go to the people with this Bill and with this Act, and indeed, this unholy addition to the Constitution. I shall leave it at that.

On an important thing like this, should they not be able to see from their own election manifesto whether really the people have given them a mandate in regard to this matter when last time they had gone to the polls ? I have gone to the polls, and all of us have gone to the polls. Did you or did anyone of us give any inkling to the ordinary masses in the country that this kind of an insecurity was likely to be created as to security and stability of their property ? We have not done that. If we are to be a democracy, then is it not our duty, and the duty of this Government to wait until after next elections, before they can rush through this legislation ? Give an opportunity to those people, and tell them all about the Bill and get their consent. By all

---

*Rangajee put life into this Constitutional means to canalise peasants' opposition to the Bill. On most of these Post Cards 20 to 30 peasants put their signatures. By the time the Select Committee sittings began ten times as many petitions were received by Parliament, thus warning Joint Select Committee about the magnitude of Peasants' Opposition.

— (Ed.)

means, if they agree, if they want to commit political suicide or social or economic suicide, then that is another matter.

I wish to refer to one or two points that may be raised by some of our friends. In fact, it has become fashionable for some of those friends to say that we of the Swatantra Party are a reactionary party. I wish to say that whoever wish to support this measure and the threat that is implicit in it and the threat that is going to be hurled at the crores and crores of these peasants, the self-employed peasants of this country, are reactionaries.

As one of my hon. Congress friends has said, it is necessary that peasants should be assured of their ownership of land, if they are to be encouraged to produce more and more. He gave the excellent example of small holders and their achievements in Japan. I wonder whether he was really aware of the clauses of this Bill. He was making out a case for my self and my peasant proprietors. Let him know what the peasant proprietors want in this country. Let him have the courage to go with this Bill and face our peasant proprietors as voters.

Therefore, it is time that in this country we realised one thing. Who ever opposes peasant proprietors, that is, those who own their own lands, who are cultivating their own lands, who are producing all this wealth that we want in this country – nearly 50 per cent of the total wealth of the community, more and more production in all spheres, would themselves be castigated as either Fascists or Communist-minded, no others.

Beware of Soviet – Chinese Experiences :

China has made experiments with what are called communes. Our friend and comrade, Khrushchev, called it ultra-leftism, deviationism and adventurism, because they in Russia had made their experiments and then gave them up. Only the other day, the erstwhile Food Minister was giving information as to how in Poland in Czechoslovakia, in Yugoslavia, Rumania, Bulgaria and all the other communist and satellite countries as well as in Russia, the cummunists were obliged to yield to the sacred passion of peasants for land ownership and so they certainly yielded from half an acre to two acres (per peasant). I have myself seen those kitchen farms in Soviet Russia. This Government is publishing small pamphlets encouraging these educated urban ladies,

fashionable ladies – to take to kitchen gardening. While they want kitchen gardens in towns. Why do they want to destroy the holdings in villages. That is what Soviet Russia has done. That is her own bitter experience. To-day the agricultural production in Russia is lagging behind because of these wrong experiments that they have been carrying on, due to the hopelessly anti-peasant attitude and policies that they have pursued during the last 45 years. Is our country also to be forced to go through the same fire of suffering and struggle and sacrifice? And sacrifice at whose cost? At the cost of the peasant masses.

Therefore, I wish to warn this Government that if they are really keen on this, and if their intention is that this Bill should be passed as it is now, let them agree to go to the people, to make an appeal to them. Let us go and face the people, both of us, both sides, and then we shall see how they will fare.

In conclusion, I wish to say that our party dissociates itself entirely from this Bill. That is why we have refused to go into the Joint Select Committee. That is why we are asking for circulation of the Bill. It is not at all fair that the Bill should be proceeded with in the way it is sought to be. Even parliamentary convention demands that a Bill like this, to which 124 other Acts have been tagged on, should be circulated among lawyers, peasant organisations and Farmers' Forums that Dr. Deshmukh has developed all over the country. This Bill should have been given the widest publicity among these people. They have not done that.

Under the circumstances, they have no moral right to go ahead with this Bill. If they were to do so, it is my duty, it is our duty, to resist it. It is the duty of our party and the Kisan Sammelan of which I happen to be the nand, it will be our sacred duty, to resist this measure through all parliamentary means in this House and through every other legitimate means which would be open to us in this country. *

---

* It was as a welcome democratic response to that prolonged, snow-balling agitation throughout the country, engineered by Rangajee the Select Committee has wisely and unanimously exempted all peasants and their holdings which are below the ceiling limits from the mischief of the definition of the term "Estate". Rangajee took note of this triumph of peasantry but he continued to oppose the Bill because it left the State Legislatures free to go on lowering "Ceiling limits". Indeed, the Ceiling limits were more than halved by 1975, just as he feared. – Ed.]

SEPTEMBER 19, 1963.

Shri Ranga (Chittoor) : I would like to offer a personal explanation (to this Lok Sabha).

"I was one of the very few people in this country who took up this question of elimination of intermediaries (like the Zamindars, Jagirdars who are only rent collectors) between the Government and the actual tiller. I also rejoiced in their elimination process. But I have always laid stress on the fact that the actual tiller of the soil who happens to be peasant proprietor (holding land in perpetuity with heritable rights) should not be eliminated and he should be helped. My complaint now is that this Bill seeks to weaken that right of a peasant to ownership of land."

★ ★

N. B. : Read the books "Economic Conditions of Zamindari Ryots" 1933, "Kisan Speaks" 1937 by Prof. N.G. Ranga, M. P.

OCTOBER 12, 1963 : "SWARAJYA"

Rajajee on Government's Opposition to Rangajee's Motion for circulation :

I am afraid that Parliament members, including the members of the Union Cabinet, have not realized the full legal impact of the Seventeenth Amendment. Otherwise they would not, I believe, have so lightheartedly sponsored it and refused to circulate it for public opinion. The Seventeenth Amendment is to act as an authorization charter for applying the zamindari laws to all ryotwari lands and other lands held by all kinds of owners. The effect will be immediate and final. It does not wait for any acquisition proceedings to be started by a State Government or cooperative farming to be ordered. If a poor fellow has worked hard and through diligence and prudence acquired a field, say two acres of irrigated land or a five acre plot of dry land, and he has invested his all in it, hoping to leave it to his children when he should die, by this new law the man becomes at once a mere rent collector. The property is lost, such as he had hitherto enjoyed and hoped to enjoy for all time and to bequeath. He cannot put any tenant in temporary possession and cultivate the land as he had been doing hitherto, because the tenant would be having the rights of tenants in a zamindari. This legal transformation by mere decree of Parliament, operates at once. It is not only for purposes of acquisition by Government that it operates. The arguments about acquisition without paying full market value and about the intentions of Government to pave the way for collctivization, should not make people believe that is the only conseqence. Let it not be thought that the danger lies some time ahead. It is a change brought into being with immediate effect and in respect of the whole character of the ownership.

"Legislation by definition is the most dangerous of all forms of legislation. This amendment creates a Zamindari everywhere in all parts of India, on every field owned by peasant proprietors. — In short, every owner of every field is by a stroke of the pen made into an intermediary."

FEBRUARY 15, 1964 :
PRESS REPORT ON BANGALORE CONVENTION

Prof. Ranga's Bangalore speech; Presiding over the Southern States Peasants Convention held in February 1964, organised.

Prof. Ranga's presidential address developed his well-known theme of self-employed status for peasant proprietors and artisans as the foundation of democracy or republicanism. It is in line with the core of Gandhian teaching regarding the vital importance of the rural aspect of civilization and culture. It is indicated by Rajajee's slogan "For farm, family and freedom", given as the central ideal and operative goal of the new party at its foundation. Prof. Ranga recalls the dour determination of the late Sardar Patel in his Bardoli struggle and his devotion to peasants - and his warnings about the intentions of the Nehru Government about co-operativization or collectivization of land as part of communization of Indian society and economy – are based on insight and knowledge of Nehru's personality and governing ideals.

Ranga's exposition of the role of small self-reliant peasant proprietors and artisans and craftsmen has – for reaching overtones leading to **a new vision of society which uses modern technology to the service of man in his simpler and more integral and immediate relationships in the family and the small town and village.**The idea is that secondary and intermediate cash relations should not smother humane impulses. Complete self-sufficiency of each village need not be insisted upon but the capacity of small areas to produce enough for exchange in cottage and small work-shop with the help of electricity is encouraged. **This way lies a truer socialism enabling personality to survive and recalls the vision of William Morris."** Swarajya of 15-2-1964.

Rajajee also addressed this Convention and declared once again that "Acharya Ranga's Mantram of Self-Employment" is the equivalent of our conception of Swatantra"

THE SELECT COMMITTEE'S AMENDMENT
(in Favour of Small Farmers)

The Select Committee has made the following amendment through the clause 2 Sub-clause (1) of the Bill :

"Provided further that where any law makes any provision for the acquisition by the State (Government) of any 'Estate' and where any land comprises therein is held by a person under the personal cultivation, **it shall not be lawful for the State to acquire any portion of such land as is within the ceiling limit applicable to him under any law for the time being on force.**"

This is exactly what Rangaji had fought for and achieved through his vigorous and persistent fight against the original Bill. Thus the great majority of self-employed peasants having holdings below the ceiling limits are saved from the almost confiscatory mischief of the original Bill.

The definition of the word 'Estate' was mentioned in clause 2 (ii) of the Bill.

It included, besides Jagir, Inam etc. in sub-clause (ii) and also "any land held or let for purposes of agriculture or for purposes ancillary thereto including waste land, forest land, land for pasture or sites, buildings and other structures occupied by cultivators of land, agricultural labourers and village artisans." If this definition had been accepted without the vital amendment made by the Select Committee, the fate of the crores of small peasants would have been the same as that of the feudal lords. But the Kisan movement triumphed over collectivist planners and their friends.

It also reduced the number of laws passed by States, which were sought to be placed in the ninth Schedule of the Constitution from 124 to 44 and thus allowed the jurisdiction of the Courts over 80 Acts to prevail and thus protect peasants.

This proposition of exempting the self-employed cultivating peasantry from the definition of the "Estate" was mooted and accepted by Joint Select Committee only in response to the opposition offered to the Bill in and outside Parliament by Rangajee, Rajajee and Swatantra Cohorts.

This became possible mostly because of the nation-wide, vigorous and powerful campaign organised by Rangajee against the original Bill and its mischievous intent on eliminating self-employed peasantry. — (Ed.)

THE OUTRAGEOUS 17th AMENDMENT

By C. Rajagopalachari

Date 30-3-1964

There was an unprecedented gathering of Kisans from all parts of India, including the most distant regions, at the Ramlila grounds of Delhi on March 30, which recorded a protest against the Seventeenth Amendment and marched to Parliament in an orderly demonstration and presented to the Speaker, through the Swatantra Members of Parliament, their request for the withdrawal of the Amendment. Five thousand two hundred and forty-five delegates of Kisans participated in the Conference.

Anyone reading Article 31 of the Constitution will be struck by the single-minded purpose and eloborate care pervading that provision.

A year later came up difficulties in respect of legislation in some States dealing with farmers of land revenue who were called by different names, Rajas, Zamindars, Jagirdars etc. These were all big men to whom the Government had farmed out land tax due to the Government. They were not, in any sense, owners of land but were either in their own right as ancient rules or as newly established agents and attorneys of the Government authorized to collect the tax on land, for which undertaking they got a share of it as commission and plenty of powers to facilitate their collection work. The resources were calculated roughly and they bound themselves to pay to the Government a fixed sum of money, appropriating the balance to themselves. This system of farming land tax was adopted by the East India Company Government because it appeared to them the easiest way to get the tax collected on an assured basis and also because it was a system under which a responsible person was placed in authority who would be interested in the extension of the area of cultivation. This was called the Permanent Settlement. Most parts of Northern India fell under this scheme of permanent settlement.

In certain areas the officials of the East India Company advised against this system of farming and succeeded in inducing the Company to adopt a system of direct collection of the land tax from the owners of the fields without any farmers of revenue in between. This was called the ryotwari settlement i. e., settlement of tax dues individually with peasants. In this system, the amount of tax was to be revised once in a period of 30 years or so, in order to give a chance to Government to raise the amount on account of increased prices and other causes. In Madras and some other 'presidencies' (as they were then called) this ryotwari system prevailed either exclusively or along with the other system by which the Government collected land tax through the farmers of revenue whom they set up as intermediaries and asked these quasi-officials to collect the land tax from the peasants. Special laws were enacted to protect the peasants from illegal eviction and harassment in the latter system.

When the movement for abolition of zamindaris and other "farmers of land revenue" (they were Zamindars and not cultivating farmers or peasants. – Ed.) started during the Provincial Autonomy period just before World War II, legislation was introduced in some provinces for the purpose. I believe I was the first to initiate it when I was in charge of the province of Madras.

These Zamindari Abolition Acts were attacked in court as infringements of the guaranteed fundamental rights of the 1950 Constitution, and adverse decisions had to be faced by some Provincial Governments. Then came Articles 31–A and 31–B in order to remove difficulties raised by the interpretation of the Supreme Court that the rights of the zamindars and other farmers of land revenue were in the nature of proprietory rights and the legislation impugned was not consistent with the provisions of Article 31. Articles 31–A and 31–B were, therefore, drafted and piloted through Parliament by Dr. Ambedkar who gave a solemn assurance, on behalf of the Government that these new Articles would never be extended to effect the rights of ryotwari owners of fields but would be used only to help the State Governments to get rid of the intermediaries.

Article 31-A laid down the limits of the relaxation that was made of Article 31. Reading it, one can easily see that it was never the intention of the law to permit any trespass by the State on the rights of the real owners of land, large or small. The object of the amendment was only to facilitate the removal of intermediaries. Ryotwari pattadars were owners, not tenants, although the latter term was often wrongly used.

Now a new levelling down theory has been hatched by which every one who does not handle the plough himself and is not just a struggling small peasant is an "intermediary" and so all the bigger ryotwari owners, who are the best farmers in the land and who supply the markets of the industrial towns and cities, must be got rid of. It looks egalitarian but it is a delusion. It is a misguided movement which kills agriculture by withdrawing enterprise and capital from that basic industry.

The Seventeenth Amendment now proposed is an outrageous piece of legislation seeking to place the State in full power to liquidate not only intermediaries but all land ownership when and as it thinks fit. It is an immoral breach of the assurance given on behalf of the Government in 1951. The immorality of it is accentuated, when we remember that it is the very same Government that gave the assurance that is now seeking to tear it up.

Article 31-B adopted in 1951 was a particularization of the effect of article 31-A giving a list of thirteen pieces of legislation saved from being impugned for any reasons that may be urged on the strength of the Articles relating to fundamental rights. They were all Zamindari abolition laws. The present Seventeenth Amendment extends the Schedule to cover 124 Acts open to objection under Article 31 and other Articles in Part III of the Constitution. Article 31-B lays down that these Acts shall be in force not withstanding anything contained in them contrary to any provision in Part III of the Constitution and notwithstanding any decree of court that was passed or which may hereafter be passed, thus saving them from attack under any of the fundamental rights guaranteed in the Constitution and denying the help of courts even to examine whether the compensation given is fair and adequate.

The first part of the Seventeenth Amendment proposes to enact that land of every kind shall be in the same precarious position as the rights of farmers of land revenue, viz., the abolished zamindars. The second part gives a long tail of enactments protected against the Supreme Court. Apart from dissenting minutes, the Select Committee on the Seventeenth Amendment has recommended that in cases where the land is cultivated personally by the owner, just and full compensation should be given and that the long tail of the Ninth Schedule should be docked as most of the items in the tail are found to be really unnecessary. The second of the above recommendations is a matter of mere aesthetics. The first calls for examination. What is the rationale of recognizing proprietory rights, only when the owner personally handles the plough? The new laws of Hindu inheritance brought into being by the secular Congress Party have given equal rights of auccession to female children. If a girl thus inheriting a small bit of land does not wish to give it up or take any risk of losing it when she marries and lives with her husband in another village, and so leases it out to her brother or cousin who owns another part of the same land or a neighbouring field, must she lose the benefit of the protection of Article 31 and be at the mercy of local intriguers who may plan to rob her of her property under cover of some scheme of collectivization or otherwise, getting encouragement from local political bosses? If a young peasant leaves his village and goes to work in a factory in Madras or elsewhere leaving his precious field in the hands of an uncle or cousin, who continues to live in the village, and exchanges lease documents in respect of the land, should he lose his land by reason of the new Amendment, because he is not an owner personally cultivating his field? Should be not get full compensation if his land is wanted for a collective organised by his rivals and enemies?

I have given only two instances of gross injustice. There are many other possibilities. Haphazard expropriation is not socialism. The improvement suggested by the Select Committee do not remove the defects of this outrageous Seventeenth Amendment which seeks to undermine the authority of the Constitution and puts State legislatures above the Constitution. The scheme of the 17th Amendment is a sabotage of the Constitution and an

affront to the Supreme Court and the High Courts of the land. It is not, in reality, meant to help land reform. Intermediary tax-gathering rights granted to so-called proprietors were abolished long ago. The present scheme is to strike at ownership of property, which the Constitution did not intend to permit and, as it is, does not permit. This Amendment is something that will tear up the whole of Part III of the Constitution which corresponds to the Bill of Rights in the free constitutions of the world, and does away with all the restraints and prohibitions inscribed in the Constitution against any trespass by the State against any tresspass by the state on the rights and freedom of citizens in respect of wealth inherited or earned by citizens and invested in land, big or small. As I told the great gathering of Kisans that met in Delhi on 30th March and marched to Parliament to present this protest, Parliament is now busy tearing up the Charter which was so carefully and laboriously drawn up and solemnly affirmed in November 1949. All the anxious care taken by Sardar Vallabhai Patel is being undone by an innocent - looking new definition which nullifies the power of the Supreme Judiciary of the land and gives to the State Executives of the day all power to deprive Kisans, big and small, of their property, no authority being left to the courts to examine or rectify any injustice done in the process, or even to examine the question of the quantum of compensation. This outrage on the Constitution must be prevented.

SECOND SPEECH OF RANGAJI IN LOK SABHA

on the Bill (17th Amendment) As Amended by the Joint Select Committee, 25–4–1964

from volume XXII Columns 12805–12826

Mr. Deputy Speaker : Motion moved.

"That the Bill further to amend the Constitution of India, as reported by the Joint Committee, be taken into consideration".

Shri Ranga (Chittoor) : Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, when the Bill was introduced at first, I said that the dark day has been begun for our peasants by this Government. (*An Hon. Member* : Black day). I find that it has not in any way lightened in its darkness at all, nor in its gloom, in the gloomy prospects for our peasants.

What is Land Reform ?

Sir, my hon. friend has made much play with the idea of land reforms. The whole burden of his song is based upon this that this Parliament has accepted land reform, therefore this is based on the basis of land reform, this is intended in order to implement land reform, and therefore it should be accepted by this House.

Now, what is meant by land reform ? What is it that was comprehended by that idea, by that Phrase ? Throughout history, during the Nineteenth Century as well as this century, in the west as also in the east, by land reform people had understood that there should be no intermediaries between the actual cultivators of the land, the actual owners of the land, and the Government : and who ever may be an intermediary that intermediary if he happens to be functionless should be removed, and

he should be removed by paying compensation. But it so happened that our Parliament has in its own judgement decided that this compensation need not be based upon market value but it should be something which would be within the competence of the social economy of our country. That is so far as the intermediaries are concerned.

When the movement for the abolition of the intermediaries was inaugurated in this country on a nation-wide scale from a political platform, I had the honour of being one of its initiators, and the movement was led by so many of us. And at that time — that was in 1931, Sir — when this question came up for discussion in the then Congress which at that time happened to be our national platform for all national revolutionaries, I found myself in a minority. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, as he then was, was sponsoring what was known as the Charter of Fundamental Rights on behalf of the Congress Working Committee. **And it fell to my lot to suggest that the zamindari system should be abolished. It was, his lot to oppose it. I said that the forests, the rivers, riverine rights and wastelands, all those which were then under the possession of the zamindars, should be nationalised. should be taken over by the State. It fell to his lot to oppose me and defeat me. And then I wanted that what had come to be known as tenants under the zamindars, who actually had been for generations the real owners and real tillers of the land, should be accepted as the real owners of the land and the zamindari system should be abolished and the Congress should commit itself to that statement. My amendment was defeated by an overwhelming majority of the Congress Committee.** That is how I understood land reform and how he reacted to it then. It was not then suggested by the Congress Working Committee or by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at that time that all land should belong to the State, the State should come to have the right to acquire anybody's land at any time at any price that is would choose. They never made any such proposal at all.

Then, Sir, again in 1947 when we were becoming free and we wanted a Constitution for ourselves, we had the Constituent Assembly, and all these questions were discussed. Some of our friends from the then socialist party were really keen at that time

that no compensation should be paid to the zamindars. The Constituent Assembly took two very important decisions, and one decision is incorporated here. And that decision is that compensation should be paid, it should be reasonable, it should also be just. But the zamindari system should go. That was common ground between the then socialist and the then Congress people. The dispute arose only in regard to compensation.

Afterwards the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution was brought in, as my hon. friend referred to. According to the Fourth Amendment compensation was to be decided by the various Legislatures, at the State level, and it should not be questioned by the Supreme Court, it should not be justiciable. Why ? Because, it came to be questioned in courts and the courts held that the compensation should be just and reasonable, and therefore it should be more or less at market rates and so on. In our social economy, it was felt by our legislators and Parliament, our country would not be capable of affording so much of compensation to those intermediaries and at the same time giving necessary protection to the peasants. Indeed, the Supreme Court did not question the right of Parliament to confer ownership of land upon the zamindari tenants. That was not in dispute at all. The only point that came in dispute was the compensation. It was over that the Fourth Amendment was passed. So that was the land reform.

Ryots as owners — Protected.

Then the question also arose whether this kind of legislation would also be made applicable to ryotwari landholdings, because the ryotwari system, the ryotwari tenure, came to be there in a number of States — parts of Punjab, large parts of Gujarat and Maharashtra, the whole of South including parts of Karnataka, parts of present Malabar, Andhra and Madras and also in a portion of Orissa. The question was whether in these areas also this kind of legislation would be applied. This question was specifically raised in the Constituent Assembly. Dr. Ambedkar, speaking on behalf of not only the Government but also the whole of the Constituent Assembly, gave the assurance that so far as ryotwari system was

concerned every holder of the land was treated and accepted as the pattadar or owner of the land and there was no intermediary, no zamindar or any estatedar. He did not get his ownership only by virtue of the fact that he happened to be a rent collector. He was the actual cultivator. Therefore, this legislation would not be made applicable to them and if by any chance at any time Parliament or the State legislatures were to take it into their head to try to extend the mischief or protection of this 31 A to the ryotwari pattadars then, he said, it would be the duty of the President to withhold his assent and it would also be the duty of the President to take note of that particular assurance that he was then giving in the Constituent Assembly. That was the position then. Therefore, the ryotwari pattadars were not taken to be intermediaries at that stage.

Now, what is the position of these tenants in the rest of India who have, fortunately, come to be the owners as a result of the abolition of the zamindari system? Once the zamindari system was gone, these people also came to assume the same status as the ryotwari pattadars. They have become the bhoomidars in Uttar Pradesh. They are the owners. In Uttar Pradesh they were made to pay the compensation themselves over a number of instalments. They have paid it. It is as if they have paid for it and got it. It has come to them as their property not only because of the legislation that was passed by which zamindari was abolished, but also because they paid the compensation. These people as well as the ryotwari pattadars, all of them, all over India, have come to be placed on a uniform status, on a uniform basis, as being the owners of the land.

Protect Tenants of Ryots.

Therefore, how does this land reform come to affect them? Yes, it does affect them in one direction. Land reform is expected to give complete rights to the owners of the land to be the cultivators, to be self-employed peasants. At the same time, some of them may be such big people having such large holdings that they would have to invoke the aid of tenants in order to cultivate their lands. What should be the relationship between these landholders who have the ownership of the land and the tenants who would not have the ownership rights? This is the only point

that was left to be decided after the abolition of the landlord system in our country.

So far as that is concerned, what are the precedents before us? There was the tenancy system in Ireland. Even now it is there in England and over the whole of the European continent. Their tenants are assured of a minimum tenure of five or ten years They are also protected from being rack-rented, so that it would be one-third, one-fifth or one-fourth of the gross yield that would be obtained from the land. Subject to these two conditions, t..e rights of the owners or landholders are not in any way impinged upon. In the rest of the world, in the rest of the non-Communist world, anywhere you may go, in Japan and other places these two rights have to be conferred upon the tenants. Have these rights come to be conferred or not upon the tenants in our country? That is for the Government to examine.

In Madras State it fell to the lot of my leader – at present my leader and accepted as the leader of almost everyone of us till recently – Rajaji when he was the Chief Minister on behalf of the Congress, to introduce tenancy legislation and give the lead so far as the south was concerned, to protect the tenants of the mirasidars and the ryotwari pattadars in Tanjore District. That legislation was later on extended to the whole of Madras State and then to Andhra also. Today we have got this protective legislation to protect our tenants under the ryotwari pattadars. Is it contended – I want the Government to make it very clear – by this Government that the ryotwari tenants should be made now the owners and these ryotwari pattadars are to be treated as landlords in the same way as zamindars were treated? Should the whole of their group and all their rights be abolished in the same way as the rights of the zamindars were abolished? Let them make up their mind. We would like to know what they would like to do.

Somebody might say, why should their rights be protected at all? Somebody might ask, why do they want to lease out their lands to other people? In some cases it is because some of their able – bodied people have gone to the army. In some other cases it is because they have entered service. There may be some cases where they are ill, they are widows or they are little

children. For these reasons they are obliged to lease out their lands. Are we going to deprive these people of their rights over their lands just because they are obliged for a temporary period to lease out their lands to others ? We must make up our mind in regard to that.

If you look into the tenancy legislation of some of the States like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh you will find that it is stated there very clearly that so far as these people are concerned, they should be free to lease out land to others and they should not be treated as absentee landlords. When they have leased out their lands to other people, why should their ownership rights be affected ? They do not want to lease out their land for ever and ever. They do not want to be like absentee landlords. They want to be self-employed peasants. They would like to continue as peasants. But, at the same time, for various praiseworthy reasons, for reasons relating to nation-building purposes, to get their children educated, etc., they want to take leave from their cultivation for three or four years. It may be that they are not well and they would like to take leave. Therefore they would like to lease out their land to others for a temporary period. Are we going to prevent these people from exercising this much of right ? Then, in that case, what are you going to do with the landlords here who own a number of houses ? Are you going to deprive them of their houses because they have rented out their houses ? Because they have rented out their houses do you mean to say that immediately those tenants should become the owners and the owners should be thrown out in the bazar ? I hope that is not the policy of the Government. If that is not the policy of the Government in regard to them, why should it be different here. I have given only one instance. Why should these ordinary peasants be prevented from taking recourse to this liberty of leasing out their land to a few other peasants for a temporary period. provided, of course, there is tenancy legislation and their basic rights are protected ? I would like to have an answer to this from the Government.

Who are these people ? It may be said that they are all very rich people owning hundreds of acres, ten or twelve people belonging to the same home owning a number of shares, having so much of social power, prestige and status and thus exploiting other

people. And they are using political power. But that cannot be said now, that the ceiling has come to be imposed in all the States in the country. Is it contended by anybody that the Supreme Court has questioned the very basis of the ceilings? It is not questioned. After the ceilings came to be imposed, what is the position in different parts of the country ? In Kerala, I am told – I speak subject to correction – it is 3½ acres or 4 acres. How much is it ?

Shri Vasudevan Nair (Ambalapuzha) : It is much more.

Shri Ranga : All right. However much more it is, it cannot be more than 40 standard acres. You go anywhere you like and it cannot be more than 40 standard acres. In many places it is 5 acres or it may be 10 or 12 acres. That is all. If that is so, on what basis have they fixed it ? On that also, there were many questions, doubts and criticisms made just as I questioned the right of the Government to put ceilings only on agriculturists and not not on others. to discriminate against peasants in favour of all other classes of people, to prevent peasants alone from having the opportunity of sending their children to high schools and colleges and getting their opportunity of making their own contribution to the public services as well as the corporate sector. Many people have questioned the manner in which these ceiling limits were being fixed. Nevertheless, the Planning Commission had imposed its will and almost all the States have accepted it. And they have agreed that so far as agriculturists are concerned, no agricultural family should have an income of more than Rs. 500 per month. Just look at this year's income-tax rates-the exemption level is Rs. 3,600, besides the various concessions that have been made by the Finance Minister. All those people who get an income of less than Rs. 500 per month are specially favoured. Is it not so ? The House also welcomed it. We all liked it. They are considered to be only middle-class people and they are being favoured by everybody and they are in a large number. We want their number to increase. Yet what do we find when we turn to agriculturists, we say, the ceiling is only Rs. 500 per month and not more. It was under that notion that they fixed this ceiling on standard acres. Now, is it fair to think of these people as land monopolists ? How many such people would there be in any village ? Out of a hundred people in a particular

village, there may not be even one person whose holding can be said to reach upto the ceiling limit. In some places, there may be two; in some places, there may be three but never more than five. Out of a hundred people in any particular village, not more than 5 people are capable of getting this much. These are the topmost people. All the rest are much lower people, much poorer people, much weaker people and their holdings are much smaller. Are you going to consider all these poor people as intermediaries, as functionless people, as anti-social people not needed at all by society and, therefore, they should not be given the freedom to lease out their lands if and when on occasions they find it necessary to lease them out to somebody or the other? Just because they have the right to lease them out, must you consider them as landlords and treat them beyond the pale of constitutional protection? These are the questions which my hon. friends have to answer not only in this House but all over the country. As I said the other day, after all 1967 is coming- thank God, we are not yet a complete dictatorship - and this Government, this Parliament, all these parties, have to go and approach the people and they have got to answer these questions when they go to them. What answer would they give to these people? Is it that they are treated as estatedars and, therefore, when this Bill is passed, it gives the power to this Government to acquire anybody's land at any time, whether it is forest land or grazing land or house site or any land for cultivation? They can acquire it any time they like. Somebody might ask: Have they not at present that power? True, there is the Compulsory Land Acquisition Act. They can acquire anybody's land, my land or your land, subject to conditions which are already set in there and those purposes must subserve, what is known to be, the public purpose. But now they have changed that idea of public purpose. They have made it as wide and broad as the Planning Commission's own notions. Therefore, for any public purpose, they can hereafter claim to acquire any land. What is the distinction between the earlier power and the present power? According to the earlier power under the Compulsory Land Acquisition Act, the peasant is treated, is known, is accepted, as the absolute owner of the land. Therefore, he must be shown good enough grounds as to why his land should be taken. That particular purpose is justiciable. Sir, supposing

for constructing a school building a site is needed and you happen to be the acquiring authority and you are subject to certain influences and you are angry with me, you would take my land instead of somebody else's ; and his land is quite close by and it can be acquired as well as that of mine. But you have got a choice and you would make that choice against me. Then, I go to the court under the Compulsory Land Acquisition Act and prove to the satisfaction of the court that somebody else's land is more suitable. If I am fortunate enough to get such an eminent jurist, as Mr. N. C. Chatterjee, to stand up for me, he will be able to plead for me : "Mr. A's land is more suitable for the school. Mr. Ranga's land need not be taken at all. This is being taken for *mala fide* purposes or even for wrong purposes or because of wrong judgement. Therefore, Mr. A's land ought to be acquired, not Mr. Ranga's land." It can be argued like that. Now, if this Bill were to be passed, there is no scope for that because it has come under 'estate'. Once it comes under 'estate', then they cannot go and plead before the court. Even the purpose for which they want to take way my land will not be justiciable. I speak subject to correction. I am not a lawyer. I only look at it as a self-employed peasant does and I look at it from their point of view. It is for the Government to say I am wrong. I will be certainly glad if they come and tell me I am wrong, saying, "Yes, the interpretation of this public purpose is justiciable. We accept it. Therefore, we will not acquire anybody's land at any time by merely saying that it is for public purpose and our word is to be accepted by the court." Are they prepared to say that ? I would like them to give us that assurance.

They say that they have made an amendment here. What is that amendment ? For all those lands which are below the ceiling, if they were to be acquired at any time for any purpose chosen by the Government, compensation at the market rate is to be paid. So far as it goes, they think it is good and, therefore, our peasants ought to be satisfied. How can they be satisfied ? What is meant by the ceiling ? Is it a fixed thing in any particular State ? Is it not a fact that in several States, some of the Chief Ministers so managed as to—what should I say ? — quietly defy or get round the recommendation of the Planning Commission and they fixed the ceinling as they wanted it ? At the same time,

the Planning Commission protested against that kind of deviation. Where is the guarantee that tomorrow or day after tomorrow the same Planning Commission would not take objection to some of the ceilings and would not impose them with the help of the Prime-Minister under this Government. Suppose this Government goes and some other Government, more left to this Government, were to come into power and their Planning Commission as well as their Ministry give the order to the State Governments saying, "You bring down the ceiling from 25 acres to 20 acres. No. Even 20 acres is too much ; bring it down to 10 acres or 5 acres or even 2 acres. If Kerala could have put it at 3/2 acres....

Shri Vasudevan Nair : It is not correct.

Shri Ranga : How much is it ? Please tell me.

Shri Vasudevan Nair : It can be even 100 acres. It is according to the quality of the land.

Shri Ranga : It is not the mere extent then. It is a matter of standard acre.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedi : (Kendrapara) : It is 12½ acres there.

Shri Ranga : Supposing it is 12½ acres there in Kerala, where is the guarantee that another Government or the same Government with another mind would not begin to tell the other States also that if it is good enough for Kerala to have 12½ acres, it would be good enough for the other States also, and there should be uniformity in this matter ! My hon. friend the Deputy Minister was talking about uniformity and the need for it. So, they may very well say 'Why should you not also agree to this uniformity and, therefore, bring it down to 12½ acres ?'. Thereafter, if my hon. friends from the Communist Party were to have also their chance of capturing the government in Kerala, would they not like to bring it own to 3⅜ acres in order to satisfy their friends either in Soviet Russia or in Soviet China ? They will certainly do that. When the ceiling comes down, what would happen to all these poor folk ? And how many of them are there? There are millions and millions of them ; there are tens of millions of peasants all over the country, As Shri S. K. Patil has already told us, we have got more than 60 million peasant

families in this country who are cultivating their own lands. They are self-employed people. They have either purchased their lands or they have inherited them and they have found their own employment. They do not depend upon this Government.

Some people might say that this Government is depending upon their votes. If so, why is it so very angry and so very malicious and so very much opposed to these people ? They want to liberate themselves from their control even in these elections by converting them all into agricultural workers and once they become landless people without any hold over anything and they become rootless, then this Government can exploit them as much as they like as is being done in Soviet Russia and Soviet China.

It is said that in 1954. the proportion of those who owned less than 40 acres of land was 60 per cent. What will happen when the ceiling of all their lands would come down ? All these people are small people. Their income cannot be more than Rs. 500 per month. Why should they be deprived of their rights? Why should you raise your Damocles' sword over their heads ? What public purpose are you going to serve ? Probably, you want to bring in co-operative farming. You know the results of co-operative farming not only in this country but in Soviet Russia and in Soviet China. You want to bring in large-scale farming. How can you bring in large scale farming unless you deprive these people of their holdings ? Once you deprive them of their own holdings, what will be their fate as well as the Government's fate ?

What is the position of the 5 million goldsmiths today ? Have Government been able to find any employment for them ? I make this challenge to them. Will they be able to find employment for these 5 million people ? Already, the number of the unemployed educated people in our country whose names are registered with the employment exchanges runs to 6 millions. So, we have already got on our hands 11 million unemployed people. then, there is the case of the under-employed people also. And on top of it there would be 60 million agricultural workers. Once Government bring in their tractors and other things, more than half of them would be unemployed.

Shri Ranga : I was submitting that Government would not be able to provide employment for them. Then, what will happen to them? And why do they want to bring about more unemployment? They say that they do it because they want to improve agriculture. Has the productivity gone up in Soviet Russia per acre? Is it not a fact that today Soviet Russia has found it necessary to concede some small holdings to the extent of about 2 acres to each peasant and also allow them to own cattle in order to improve their agricultural production? Is it not because of the large-scale farming and collectivisation and co-operatisation that Soviet Russia is obliged to import, as much as 5 million tons of wheat from other countries? Therefore, I submit that co-operative farming is not going to improve production. On the other hand, it will dwarf it, and it will destroy it and it will increase un-employment, and it will create social unrest and chaos. Then who will be benefited by all this? Surely not these friends opposite (Congress); I am sure of that because then they will be thrown out of power. It would be the communist friends who would reap the harvest and it is for them that my hon. friends opposite are preparing the ground. Just like the hawks and eagles which go on waiting for a patient to die so that they can pounce upon the corpse, my communist friends are waiting for that opportunity.

It is some kind of a Soviet devil which has come to possess them and posses their leaders; it has not come to possess all of them, but it has come to possess a few of their leaders. I am prepared to make an exception even in your case, Sir. If all of you were to search your own hearts, you would certainly feel that you are suffering from this qualm of conscience, namely, 'What is this? Are we doing the right thing or not?'

Mr. Deputy Speaker : Let the hon. Member please leave me alone.

Shri Ranga : In Bhubaneswar, you have taken to a new *mantra*, and under that *mantra* and under that *namasmarana* you are mesmerising yourselves to such an extent that you are prepared to get into this deluge.

Therefore, I wish to warn our friends that please for God's sake. Let them retrace their steps, even now. But I find that it is too late. Therefore, what are the prospects for our peasants?

I can assure you that even under this enactment, the State Governments have got the right to change these Acts and to amend these Acts which are going to be placed in such an infamous manner in that infamous Schedule. When we get an opportunity, we would like first of all to amend that schedule suitably in order to reinstate the peasants in their own proper rights.

Is ceiling limit final ?

Then, as regards the ceiling itself, have my hon. friends opposite got the moral courage to say this ? If they are really keen and sincere about the provisions that they have placed before the House, let them say that this is the final ceiling, and it is not going to be reduced further. Otherwise, what would happen ?

Shri Bibudhendra Misra : May I point out that we are not concerned with ceiling at all under this Bill ? That is a matter for the State Governments. We cannot take away the right of the State Governments to have their own way of land reforms.

Shri Ranga : Unfortunately, my hon. friend seems to have forgotten what has been written here in this bill. In my hon. friend's own Bill, what does he read ?

Shri Bibudhendra Misra : Let my hon. friend read it out.

Shri Ranga : Just as government were remiss in their duty of looking into all those Acts at the time they put them in the Schedule, and, therefore, they put all the 124 Acts in the Schedule and afterwards, under your chairmanship in the Joint Committee, they were made to give some thought to the matter and they had to give up 60 Acts out of the Schedule, likewise, my hon. friend seems to be again ignorant of this.

It has been provided in the proposed proviso to article 31 A of the constitution that :

> ".....it shall not be lawful for the State to acquire any portion of such land as is within ceiling limit applicable to him under any law for the time being in force."

Now, what does this mean ?

Shri Bibudhendra Misra : First of all, it is very clear that so far as land reform legislation is concerned, the power lies with

the State Governments. An apprehension was expressed in the Joint Committee as to what would happen to the small landholders if you take away land below ceiling. Therefore, it was provided there as part of 31A that whenever land below ceiling is taken by a new law there must be paid compensation at the market price. That is only to give an assurance to the House that it is not the intention of Government to harm the small landholders. It is their intention to protect them. But that does not vest with Parliament the power to direct the States as to what ceilings they should have.

Shri Ranga : I cannot congratulate the Government on having this advocate to give away their own secrets.

It means this : that Government wants to have complete powers to fix ceiling anywhere they like, to give instructions to the States, to fix ceiling limit at any level they like. That is exactly my contention. They have got that right.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker : That right vests with the State legislatures.

Shri Ranga : That is why I say it is necessary for Government to assure the peasants that wherever ceiling is to be fixed in any State it would stop there and it would not be further reduced : it would be the final thing. Are they prepared to say that ? No I want them to have the moral courage to give that assurance to our peasants.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy : Who are they to say that ?

Shri Ranga : There you are. They would like to bring it down further until it becomes one acre or two acres—as in Soviet Russia.

Shri Vasudevan Nair : You are raising an unnecessary scare.

Shri Ranga : I want them to give an answer. They want to reduce it. Let them give the assurance. The Deputy Minister or this Government may not be able to do it But this ruling party has got to give that assurance to our peasants otherwise when they go to them for their votes next time, they know their fate. We also know what would be the fate of this Government.

Shri Bibudhendra Misra : That we shall see later.

Shri Ranga : For the time being—that is what is stated. Therefore, they want to go to the peasants and tell them : 'Look here, you are all below ceiling. You are not going to be affected. Ranga is only raising a scare,—as these communist friends are saying. You are all going to be protected'. But we know that ceiling is not going to be the final thing. It is capable of being reduced. The socialists and communists also agree with it. It will go on being reduced until it satisfies first the socialists, then the communists.

Here and now I have to deal with these Bhubaneswar socialists. In this country, there is scope only for one kind of socialism, and that is Nehru socialism. Willy-nilly the various other parties will be making their peace either with them, or they will be finding us to be their comrades.

Finally I give this warning to Government, that if they persist in these methods of keeping the peasants on tenter-hooks, making them feel insecure about the ownership of their land and not give them any kind of assurance at all that they are not likely to be treated as intermediaries, that they are not likely to be treated or dealt with in the same unceremonious way as the zamindars had been treated, and if they do not give them that assurance to the peasants, then the peasants would be justified in treating this ruling party and the farmers of this legislation as well as all those people who will be voting with them as the enemies of the self-employed peasantry in this country.

Lastly, we stand for tenants' protection. We stand also for minimum wages for agricultural workers. We also stand for all the government land,—80 million acres are still in the possession of Government, or much more than what they can possibly get by this ceilings legislation—being distributed freely and on *patta* to agricultural workers so that they can also become self-employed peasants, if not for 365 days in the year, at least for a part of it, for 60 days and then for as many more days as possible. Let them also become self-employed peasants. Let there be the largest number of self-employed peasants and people in the country. That country which stands for self-employed peasants and people to the largest possible extent, that country which helps

self-employed peasants, that country which would stand by them and encourage them, that country alone will have a future which would be worthy of great men like Buddha, Mahatma Gandhi and Rajaji.

Shri P. R. Patel : My hon. friend, Shri Ranga, spoke at length as if the Swatantra Party alone is the only advocate of the peasantry of the country. I may tell him that all the members of the Joint Committee tried their level best to see that the small landholders are in no way put to any disadvantage. That was the unanimous view ; Government also came forward, and we unanimously put in a suggestion that if any land is acquired below ceiling, the full market price should be paid. Once this proposition is there, I do not think there is any fear for the agriculturists that they would not be paid.

But I do not understand one thing. I do not understand the reform policy of Government. What should be that policy ? The aim of the reform policy should be more production and creation of stability in the mind of the agriculturists. To me, it seems these two elementary things are wanting. The agriculturists are always living in the fear of what would happen tomorrow, what legislation would come tomorrow which would affect their lands they till. I would request Government to put an end to this and let stability in the mind of the agriculturists be created. Let them feel that they are the masters of what they have today.

* * *

THE PRESS AGAINST THE BILL (May 9, 1964)

(After the Fall of 17th Amendment)

More than one leading organ of non-partisan public opinion advise calm reconsideration and deprecate hasty procedure in respect of the Seventeenth Amendment. Under the caption, "Accidentally Right" **The Hindustan Times** wrote editorially on 29–4–1964 : "The objection which has been taken (to the 17th Amendment) is not so much to land reform in principle as to the range of the protection given to legislation struck down by the highest judicial authority.

That members were busy outside recording their votes in elections to various important committees was no justification for absence from the House when a bill to amend the Constitution came up for voting. That the justification was in fact offered reflected a cavalier approach to the process of Constitutional Amendment which should cause concern. The result, however, is that Members and particularly those on the Government benches, will now have plenty of time to take a close look at the Bill and see if it is really necessary."

The Hindu, pre-eminent daily paper of the ryotwari region in India, devotes its editorial on the 30th April to the collapse of the Seventeenth Constitutional Amendment, in the course of which it says : "Millions of honest farmers all over the country will rejoice over the fact that temporarily at any rate, this obnoxious measure has been snuffed out."

Like the **Hindustan Times of Delhi**, The Hindu also hopes that this opportunity for re-examining the Bill will be availed of by the party (Congress) to manifest .... respect for the opinion of the Opposition and of the interests concerned." (Swarajya) of 9–5–1964.

THIRD SPEECH MADE BY PROF. N. G. RANGA

In Lok Sabha on June 2, 1964

On the Constitution (17th Amendment) Bill

Shri Ranga : This 2nd June will go down in our history as one of the blackest days in the constitutional career of Parliament and also of this country :

Because this House is passing a Bill, which affects adversely according to me, the vital interests of a majority of people in our country and it is also symptomatic of the cavalier manner in which the ruling party and its allies have been proceeding about this particular matter, on several occasions. Even yesterday, we had in the House only just a little more than the bare minimum for quorum, i e. 50 members present. Does this Bill really deserve only that kind of cavalier treatment from the parties which are interested in this Bill ? I say, no. Yet, why are they so indifferent and at the same time, take it for granted the result on this Bill ? It is because of the intoxication they have gained by the presence of the numbers on their side in favour of the arbitrary policies that they have decided upon, the arbitrary interpretations they have given to the expression and idea of land reform and the arbitrary definition they have chosen to give to the expression "estate".

My hon. friend, the Law Minister, has just now said that whatever might have been the conception of a family prevalent in different parts of the country, they themselves and the Planning Commission and the panel appointed by the Planning Commission, according to their own wishes, decided in favour of their own interpretation and were bent upon enforcing it. Therefore, they did not care for the decision of the Supreme Court in regard to the Madras Act.

To Weaken or Liquidate Self-employed Peasantry Is Not Land Reform :

They have been trying to justify this Bill in the name of land reforms. Yet, may I make it perfectly clear that I have myself been in favour of land reforms all these decades. Much earlier did I take up this issue (in 1930-31) than most of my friends on the other side, including the Ministers. I can assure you, Sir, that a large number of my friends who are in the Opposition have been in favour of land reforms. But what do we mean by land reforms? I need not go over all the points I have already made, on previous occasions. I need only mention this that by land reforms in this country as well as in other democratic countries, it is understood that the peasant, the land owner, the pattadar, the small-holder should be brought into direct relations with the State and there should not be any intermediaries, and every step should be taken as early as possible to remove the intermediaries by paying compensation. Yesterday the Law Minister was trying to find fault with my colleague, the Deputy Leader of my party, Mr. Masani, for having stated that when ceilings came to be imposed, compensation at market rates should be paid, as if that demand was immoral. I put that question yesterday and I repeat it again to-day when this very same Congress Government decided to pay more than Rs. 1600 for every share whose face value was only Rs. 100 belonging to the then Imperial Bank of India, did they consider that procedure, that action of theirs immoral? If in the same manner, we were to demand that all those people from whom their land is to be taken away by legislation and for such action, compensation at market rates should be paid, how could it be treated as an immoral demand? Nevertheless, we bow before practical realities and we have agreed to the system of compensation that they have adopted also to be implemented. We did not raise any serious objection to that.

Ryots in the south same as tenants in the North :

Then there is the other question, about the rights of ryotwari tenants. My hon. friend, the Law Minister, wanted to take umbrage behind the phrase used by the late Prime Minister Jawaharlaljee, that he did not wish that article 31 A of the

Constitution should be extended to ryotwari land that he used only the word 'tenants' and not 'owners'. Actually, at that time, according to the ideas of most of our friends from northern India, including the Prime Minister, they looked upon all farmers as merely tenants and they considered the zamindars as owners. So, the zamindars (the intermediary rent – collectors) were got rid of. What happened to those millions of peasants in the Gangetic Valley, in Bengal and all the rest of India (When the Zamindars were liquidated)? They were brought into direct relations with the Government (like the ryots of the South.) Therefore, they were no longer tenants, but became owners of the land. That is the position now in that part of India where there was the Zamindari system.

In the southern part of India, where there was the ryotwari system, some people in the North considered them to be tenants. But we always maintained that the ryotwari pattadars were owners of their land, which was accepted by Sir Thomas Munro.* It was he who insisted that they should be treated as owners of their lands and ever since then the British Government accepted them as owners. It was those owners whom the late Prime Minister had in his mind when he used the expression ryotwari tenants. So the late Prime Minister gave the assurance that their interests were not going to be jeopardised. Dr. Ambedkar also gave that assurance in the Constituent Assembly that if at any time this .... or any other legislature were to be so unmindful of their rights and seek to pass any kind of legislation like this, it would be the duty of the President to withhold his assent. These were the two assurances which were quoted by Mr. Masani yesterday and earlier by so many of us. I charge this Government that it is going against those assurances.

My hon. friend just now said that the Government does not stand for revivalism, but only for reform. When those assurances were given, I would like them to see whether Dr. Ambedkar or Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was a revivalist; they were indeed reformists and they wanted agrarian reforms. At the same time they did not want to jeopardise the rights of the ryotwari patta-

*Certainly from 11th Century, if not earlier, i. e. from Chola, Chalukya Times ryots' proprietory rights over their holdings have been recognised. —(Ed.)

dars. By the same token, all those other millions of peasants who had been groaning under the exploitation of the taluqdari (or Zamindari) system also have become owners like ryotwari pattadars because they have been given bhoomidari rights. So all the South Indian pattadars and the neo-pattadars of northern India must be treated alike as owners of their lands, and their rights over the land ought not to be placed in the same category as the rights of the erstwhile zamindars; their lands ought not to be treated as estates.

Give Government Land to the landless

The Law Minister said yesterday that they want land to be given to everybody. Mr. A. P. Jain, Ex-Minister who came to-day quoted what Jefferson had said more than 150 or 160 years ago in America. What were the conditions in America in those days? Not more than 20 per cent of the arable land was brought under cultivation at that time. Thereafter, from time to time Government went on offering a minimum of 100 or 150 acres of land to anyone who asked for land. There was plenty of land then. So he could think of seeing to it that everybody become a landowner. What is the position now in America? To-day not more than 10 per cent of the people are employed on the land. The rest of them are provided employment in non-agricultural industrial, commercial and professional employments. Is that the position in our country? Is it possible for the Government to give land to every cultivator in this country? It is not possible because they have not got that much land. Now they say they are going to get some land after implementing the ceiling legislation. The ceiling legislation has not been challenged, so far as the conception of ceiling is concerned, by the Supreme Court so far. Therefore, there is no need for this legislation if they want to safeguard the idea of ceiling alone (and get land for the landless).

They would get land from all those people whose holdings are bigger than the ceiling. That land is (would be) available for allotment. To whom? To the landless people, to small holders. But that would not be very much. Possibly, it might not be more than 10 million acres over the whole of India, because in Andhra they could get only 4 lakh acres. In that

fashion if we were to estimate, what would be the position ? It cannot be more than 10 million acres. But to-day there is in the possession of the Government land to the extent of more than 75 million acres, right upto 125 million acres of land. Is it not possible for the Government to grant all these lands to the agricultural workers? Is it not a fact that myself and many other friends of mine in the Kisan Sammelan have been demanding all these 30 or 40 years that this land should be given to the agricultural workers freely as also the necessary equipments so that they would bring the land under cultivation ? We have asked for it. What is the response given by the Government during the last seventeen years of their regime ? The latest response, they have given is, taking advantage of the declaration of emergency, to send a circular to all the State Governments that no more land should be granted to the agricultural workers. **Who is the biggest zamindar in the country to-day ?** It is the Government. Who has the land monopoly other than this Government ? So the Government have failed in their duty to see that the land is distributed among the ordinary landless people, for whom my hon friend was shedding tears yesterday.

They have been in those lands for years and we have been asking them that they should distribute the land among those people. Yet the Government has failed to do so. It is because of this that in Andhra the Kisan Sammelan, the Swatantra Party, even the Communist Party and the Jana Sangh have jointly organised a satyagraha with the result that thousands of people are in jail, demanding that this Bill should not be passed. So far as we are concerned, so far as the Communists are concerned all voices are united in demanding that the land belonging to the government should be distributed among the landless people. The government is not willing to accept this request. Therefore, it does not lie in their mouth to pose as if they are champions of the landless workers.

On the other hand, if this Bill were passed – and it is going to be passed – what is likely to happen is even the house sites that are owned by the agricultural workers, by the artisans, not to speak of the ryotwari pattadars all over India, even those house sites are in danger of being compulsorily acquired by government.

They might ask me, what would happen to those tenants of some of those ryotwari pattadars who come to have, even after the ceiling is imposed, some 100 or 200 acres of dry land in those areas? So far as the ceiling goes, it cannot be more than 25 acres of wet land or 50 to 60 acres of possibly fertile dry land.

Some of these people may be employing some tenants. What will happen to those tenants? We have suggested that there ought to be (Tenancy) legislation in order to protect them from eviction in an arbitrary manner, that there should be security of tenure for them for five or ten years, that the rent should not be too high and there should not be rackrenting. Therefore, there should be tenancy legislation.

Now, in this matter, my leader, and (who used to be) their leader too until a few years back, Rajajee, gave the lead in Madras as early as 1952 in getting a legislation passed to protect the tenants under the ryotwari system in Tanjore district. Afterwards, it was extended, as I have already stated, to Andhra as well as other districts in the then Madras State. You can have that kind of legislation (for all our States) They have got it in Maharashtra and Gujarat and other places. That kind of legislation can be passed. But surely it would be wrong for my friend to come and say that this legislation (Constitutional Amendment) is intended for their benefit, because if this legislation, if this amendment, were passed, even such tenants are in danger of losing the small, tiny rights they can come to have over their lands.

Let us not have lop-sided ideas of the importance of the various classes of people. Here is the livelihood pattern, as in 1951. It has changed more and more in favour of the owner-cultivators, tenant-cultivators and cultivating labourers. What was the position then? More than 249 million people were employed in (or dependent on) agriculture. Among them owner-cultivators were 167 million. They cultivate their own lands, and I claim to speak for them. Let my friends say, no. Let him say how this Bill is going to benefit them. Let them prove in what way it is beneficial to them. The tenant-cultivators were only 31 million at that time, quite a large number in the north. I shall not be surprised if more than half of them have become

owner-cultivators. The cultivating labourers number 44 millions. And all of them are going to be adversely affected.

Beware of collectivisation or co-operativisation of land holdings :

Then it may be said "No, no, we have given the go-by to the conventional conception of land reform, we are developing a new conception of land reforms." What is that conception now ? Nagpur Resolution has engaged a part of it. Their gramdan has also engaged a part of it. Their fondness or liking for the concept of Soviet Russia has also engaged another part of it. Their object is to have co-operativisation and collectivisation of land. How are they going to achieve it ? They have found that co-operativisation of land is not successful. So they cannot proceed with it in a voluntary manner. Therefore, they went to have this right in their hands, this coercive right to acquire land, not in the usual manner under the Compulsory Land Acquisition Act – they do not want to accept that because there (under that act) the courts will have the jurisdiction – but in a different way. Under the present arrangements anybody whose land is likely to be taken away can go to the court and prove that his land ought not to be taken for a public purpose but some other land may be taken, there is malafide in taking his land and so on. So, they do not want the courts to give any such protection to the "tenants" (Under the compulsory Land Acquisition Act).

That is why we charge that this Government is weaking in this sly fashion, in this indirect manner (the protection given to peasants by that Act and the Courts enforcing it) that is, the Supreme Court itself. In the Constitution itself we have said that the Supreme Court is one of the three pillars of our Constitution. You destroy, you debilitate, you paralyse and you weaken the Supreme Court and to that extent even more than to proportionate extent, you would be destroying, debilitating and weakening and paralysing our Constitution. This is exactly what they are doing. If they say "no" I would like to put to them this question : When all these crores of peasants are brought within the purview of the Village Panchayat Boards, Panchayat Samitis or Zilla Parishads, and when their land is acquired for co-operative cultivation, to whom are they to look for protection ? They will go

to the courts, but the courts will say "we are helpless." "We cannot help you." Of course, it might be said; why should you be afraid that anybody would be so foolhardy as to take away (their lands) or say that all the land in a particular place should be given away to the government? When the ruling party has decided and accepted it as a government policy that there should be large-scale co-operativisation of land it is manifest that they want large areas of land. Since they want the land, they will say that whichever Panchayat Samithi is willing to come forward to organise co-operative farms would be given encouragement, subsidy, prizes and so on. And so there would be an atmosphere of competition between one village panchayat and another. They would go on declaring by their own resolutions, "Yes, we are ready to organise co-operative farm." Then the Director at the State level would say, "Yes, this resolution has to be implemented." Immediately all their lands can be taken away, will be taken away by the Government and the peasants will be given the choice either of accepting the compensation or of becoming the members of the co-operative farm, which would be formed locally.

Money for Land is not as Employment from Land.

Are they to accept the compensation? If they accept the compensation, what are they to do with that money? You know what is happening in this country with investments? How are the small peasants getting this compensation of Rs. 200 or Rs. 500 or Rs. 1000 to know anything at all about the stocks and shares of these companies in the corporate sector. Therefore, they would not know what to do with this small money, where to invest it etc. and they are likely to waste it. They themselves would be forced to come to the conclusion that the only best possible alternative available for them would be to go into this co-operative farm, whether they like it or not. In that way, Government would coerce our peasants in an indirect manner. If some of them do not want to go that way, they have to be satisfied with that small sum of money given as compensation.

My Hon'ble friend said, "We have made some improvement in the Joint Select Committee; we have provided for compensation for all those people whose lands are to be taken away

provided they are within the ceiling." Moreover, what is the use of this money? The distinction between money and land has got to be understood by this House. Money can be spent away then and there, but land need not be lost, will not be lost, **cannot be stolen by anybody. The Land yields employement not only for the present generation but for many generations to come, not only ordinary employment, but self-employment, independent employment; the Owner of the land is his own manager, he is own employer and his own worker. He finds his freedom as a worker as he is independent on that land. What satisfaction would it be for such a peasant to be told, "You will be paid your compensation." Therefore, the Bill, as it is amended by the Select Committee, is not at all in the interest of the peasants**

Then, let us look at it from the point of view of their so-called true revolutionary approach. What is the true revolutionary approach? To help as many agricultural workers as possible to become land-owners. But the Government is not prepared to do that. To help peasants to become owners – that also the Government does not want to do. To help the owners to become better owners, better producers with greater assets, with greater credit and greater facilities and cultivate their holdings on scientific principles in order to increase production and so on – is the Government prepared to do it? * What is likely to happen now is actually what is happening to-day in the Communist Countries. That people will have no more interest in the land or will be losing their interest. They will not invest any more money in the land. So agricultural production is bound to suffer more and more, year after year for decades to come, that is, as long as the peasant proprietors are not allowed to remain on the land. If it is not for increasing the agricultural production, for what else then does the Government want to achieve this co-operativisation ?

Urban Vs Rural :

The urban people have got an idea that agricultural people are able to produce their own food, maintain themselves and

---

* This policy is accepted by Indirajee in 1981-82.
* See Rangajee's brochure "Peasants and Food Controls" 1946-47.

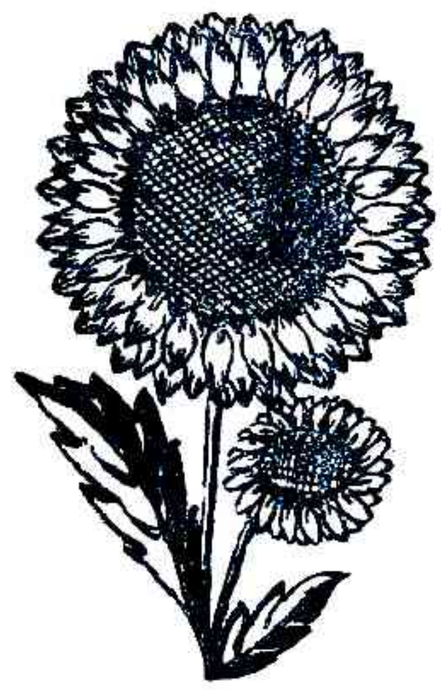
keep independent of the urban civilisation, whereas the urban people are obliged to be dependent upon them even for food. Therefore, there seems to be some kind of envy in the minds of these urban people and those in the Government services in regard to agriculturists.

Secondly, quite a large number of people have been bitten by the bee of Communism and Socialism, Stalinism and Sovietism, and they are in a hurry to industrialise our country to such an extent as to dismiss all these peasants as soon as possible. They want to be rid of the peasants because they cannot understand the mind of peasants and they cannot appreciate their love of freedom. They want to fill this land with people who would obey their orders, their dictates. With this end in view they wanted to introduce controls, they did introduce controls, but they could not make a success of that. They had to withdraw from that front.

The peasants have been independent people and they want to turn them away, (from their holdings) so that as rapidly as possible they could bring in controlled economy. Therefore, I say this Government is pursuing a policy which is suicidal, which is from freedom point of view reactionary and from the agrarian point of view destructive of production and incentives and from the rational point of view, it is calculated to destroy the culture, the age-old culture that has come down to us — **culture of freedom, culture of free employment, culture of self-employment, culture of the people who are able to live in their own homes, work on their own farms and have their own place of worship and place of residence as free men** They are free men because they have this much of landed property. They want to destroy that much of property. That is the reason why they want to take this power in their hands. **This is why I oppose it, just as I oppose absentee-landlordism.**

I want to answer one other point Some of my friends from the Socialist and Praja Socialist platforms have been saying that by my opposition to this Bill I would be giving support and shelter to those very big landlords whom the communists have been pleased to call land monopolists and so on. I wish to assure them that I am one with them in saying that wherever they may

be, they may be a few in village, and a few thousands in a State-if they are old-fashioned or feudal-minded landlords who may be in a position to exploit those other rural people who would have to co-operate with them in order to make agriculture a success proper steps should be taken against them. I for one and my Party and my leader Rajajee also are prepared to co-operate with this and any other Government in seeing to it that proper steps are taken to see that every possible protection is given to their tenants and small holders and also to see that those rich landholders behave as decent employers and as responsible citizens in this country.



PEASANTS' APPEAL TO THE PRESIDENT

(Against the 17th Amendment of the Constitution)

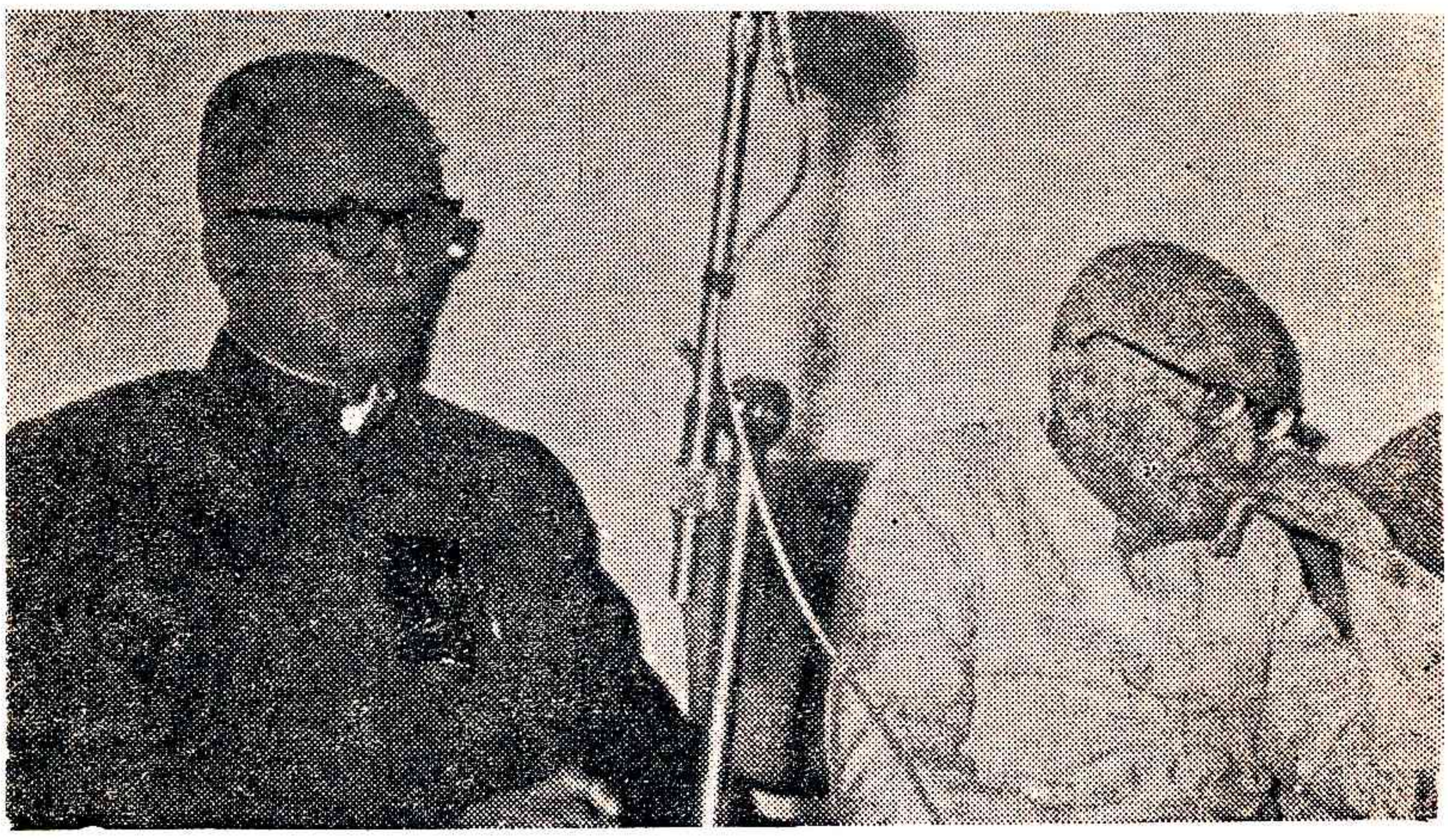
The following memorandum was presented to the President of the Indian Union, signed by Rajaji, Acharya Ranga, Sri M.R. Masani, Sri Dahyabhai Patel and Prof. M. Ruthnaswamy requesting the President to withhold assent to the 17th Amendment of the Constitution passed by Parliament :

1. The 17th Amendment to the Constitution is of an extremely farreaching character, entrenching as it does on the Fundamental Rights to property of no less than 60 million families in India who own and cultivate some land By a stroke of the pen, ryotwari farmers, the backbone of our society, are sought to be placed on a level with feudal landlords and intermediaries by the designating of any land used for the purpose of agriculture as an "estate". This distortion of language and justice is made retrospective as from 26th January, 1950, when the Constitution itself was brought into operation. This 17th Amendment infringes the important principle of law that a new enactment should be expressed in simple and clear language. It is cryptic and has all the characteristics of riddle the full implications of which can be fully understood only by men learned in the law.

2. The Amendment represents contempt for the Supreme Judiciary of this country, being an attempt to undo the judgements of the Supreme Court and the High Courts.

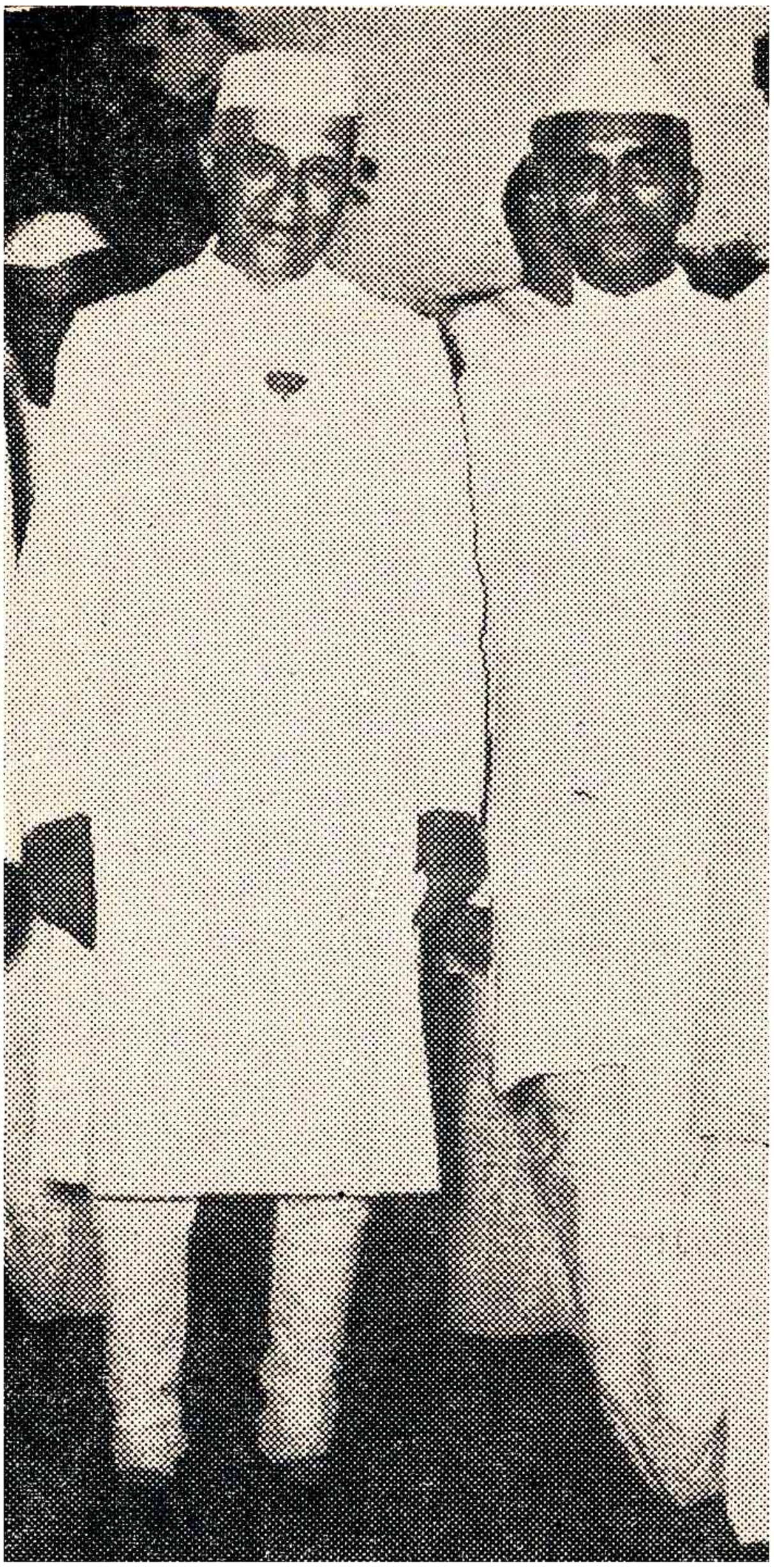
3. Over and above the cumulative effect of the considerations set out above, there are some very specific reasons which call for the President's intervention.

4. This law in effect does away with the whole of Part III (including the vital Article 14) of the Constitution and the guarantees therein contained, so far as land-owning citizens, small or big, are concerned. The contention that this Amendment is necessitated by the desire to carry through land reforms is altogether untenable since land reforms in a free society have always been understood to mean freeing the peasants from intermediaries and parasitic rent collectors and not the dispossession of



RANGAJI

RAJAJI



NEHRUJI RANGAJI

the actual tillers of the soil like the ryotwari landholders who are in direct relationship with Government. The plea that an Amendment introduced in the Select Committee protects those actually cultivating the land below the ceiling from expropriation is an untenable one for two reasons :

(a) First, it opens the door to their being divested of their land for any purpose and not for any specific public purpose as would be the case if the land acquisition laws were to apply.

(b) Secondly, the ceiling itself is capable of unilateral and arbitrary reduction on the part of the State Government or Legislature, thereby rendering this so-called safeguard illusory.

5. The present Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha do not have any definite electoral mandate to make such a radical interference with the Fundamental Rights of a particular class of citizens, the most numerous among all. The Election Manifesto in 1962 of the Congress Party, which is now in office, did not include any item which made clear to the electorate that if the Party was returned to office it would take away the right of all the farmers of this country to fair compensation at market rates for their land as and when an occasion arose for the Government to acquire it together with what can be taken to make up for the compulsory deprivation of a long enjoyed vocation handed down for generations. It cannot be argued that there was no provocation for such an item forming part of the Election Manifesto since one of the laws in question had already been struck down by the Judiciary and is now included in tne new Ninth Schedule. This is a situation in which the President would be acting entirely within his rightful province to ask that no such Amendment to the Constitution be made until after it has secured the mandate of the electorate at the time of the next General Elections in 1967 or, if the present Government so desires, earlier.

6. A second specific reason for this appeal is that while the letter of the Constitution may appear to have been respected, its spirit has been violated by the manner in which this Amendment was got through Parliament. It will be recalled that on April 28 this year, this Amendment failed to secure the particular majority required for such an Amendment to the Constitution,

as a result of a failure on the part of the majority of the members of the Lok Sabha to turn up and vote for it. Constitutional propriety demanded that the measure should have been dropped for the life of this Parliament or that a new measure was evolved and referred to a Select Committee before being placed before Parliament. Instead, in an attempt to vindicate lost prestige, a special session of Parliament at great cost to the nation, was convened on 27th May, the ostensible purpose of this being to give validity to enactments struck down by the highest judicial authority many years ago, which had been suffered for long to rest so struck down. Despite all appeals that an amendment to the Constitution should not be made a matter for the Party Whip and that the traditions laid down at the time of the Constituent Assembly that all decisions should be left to the free vote of the members should be observed, the Congress Party constrained its members, many of whom were not in agreement with this measure, to vote for it. This in effect nullifies the express provision in the Constitution that a free vote of an absolute majority of Parliament should signify assent to any such Amendment. The question arises as to whether the kind of consensus required by the Constitution in the case of an Amendment to it was forthcoming in this case.

7. There is a final consideration which is perhaps more decisive than any other and that is that this Amendment represents a breach of faith with Parliament and people on the part of the Congress Government. On 1st June, 1951, While replying to the Constitution (1st Amendment) Bill, Dr. Ambedkar gave an assurance (Parliamentary Debates. Vol. XII, Part II c.c. 9913–14) that "there is no intention on the part of Government that the provisions contained in article 31 (A) are to be employed for the purpose of dispossessing ryotwari "tenants". The use of the word "tenants" is merely conventional, such tenants being recognized by the law and all the Governments that ruled India as full owners. The Law Minister, Dr. Ambedkar, spoke on behalf of Government and proceeded to point out to the critics of the 1st Amendment Bill that there was a specific safeguard against a breach of this assurance. He drew attention to the proviso attached to article 31 (A) "which requires that every such Bill shall be reserved for the consideration of the President", and proceeded to say :

"I believe that whenever any such measure comes before Parliament for consideration, the undertaking given in this House would be binding upon the President in giving his sanction so far as any such measure is concerned. Therefore, I submit **there is no ground for any fear of any such thing happening and I believe that there is also no justification for any kind of propaganda that may be carried on by interested parties that this Bill proposes to give power to Government to expropiate everybody including the ryotwari tenants.**" It may be repeated and explained here that when he used the word *ryotwari tenants*, which was a technical term used under British rule, Dr. Ambedkar was referring precisely to those whom Clause 2, sub-clause (ii) of the Bill describes as holders of "any land held under ryotwari settlement" and who are full owners of the landed property they hold.

8. The day that Dr. Ambedkar thought would never come has arrived. The situation in which he assured Parliament that the assurance given "would be binding upon the President" has now arisen. It is hoped that the President will be pleased to fulfil the responsibility entrusted to him by seeing that the official assurance given to Parliament at the commencement of the process of amending the Constitution is respected. A new Government securing the mandate of the electorate for a change of policy might perhaps be forgiven for going back on such a solemn assurance but the Congress Party and its Government which was responsible for the pledge can certainly not go back on it without at least securing approval from the electorate to a reversal of that assurance.

9. The constitution as amended by this new Bill would stand disfigured by an article amounting to a deep riddle. If the object of this crude disfigurement of the Constitution by an artificial definition be "land reform" as often stated, it is humbly pointed out that there is nothing to prevent the highest security and the best terms being provided for cultivators of land and all workers thereon by a properly drafted enactment within the solemn terms of the Constitution and without infringing any of the guarantees contained therein.

10. For all these reasons it is requested that the President may be pleased to withhold his assent to the Constitution (17th Amendment) Bill.

"Swarajya" June 27, 1964.

Programme for the Future

PROF. N. G. RANGA'S INAUGURAL SPEECH

at Kisan, Khet-Mazdoor, Youth Conference in Guntur inaugurated by Shri Rajiv Gandhi on Feb. 3, 1982.

This is the National Martyrs' Remembrance Week. On the 30th of January the whole Nation has once again resolved to march ahead, in the manner of our Mahatma Gandhi and all the Martyrs who had achieved our National Freedom, to continue to work for social and economic freedom and all round social justice. It is during the January of 1980 that our patriotic, socialist-minded Gandhian Youths hailed once again Indira Gandhi as the chosen leader of our masses. It is also during this month of Mother Earth's gifts of harvests that Indiraji has invoked our masses to hearken her cell "Shrama Eva Jayate" and to give first priority to maximise productive efforts in all directions, so that we can move irrevocably and effectively towards "Garibi Hatao" and social justice. It is appropriate that this all India platform of Youths of our Kisans and Mazdoors should be taking shape to-day for the first time in this Guntur District, which witnessed so long ago as in 1923, the very first twins of Conferences of Kisans and Khet Mazdoors (about sixty years ago) to join the National Freedom Movement and hail Mahatma Gandhi's supreme leadership. I exhorted our Kisans and Khet Mazdoors to organise themselves. To-day, as one of the Veteran Freedom Fighters (Swatantra Samara Yodha) and the first among the Kisan Bandhus who have been guiding Kisans and Mazdoors towards the goal of Kisan Mazdoor Praja Raj, I hail this opportunity to exhort the rural youths to welcome and reinforce the sincere efforts of Indiraji towards "Garibi Hatao" and social justice.

I am happy that Rajiv Gandhi, the chosen leader of the National Youth Congress has come to this Kisan-Mazdoor Rural

Youths Platform. We hope that this would become the vital spring-board for the fulfilment of the new national resolve for "Shrama Eva Jayate", coupled with "Buddham Dhammam Gachchami" and social justice.

Once before in 1936 the Congress President was glad to welcome the resurgent Kisan Congress during his tour in Andhra. Once again, to-day Rajiv Gandhi, the youthful as well as seasoned Karyakarta is inaugurating this conference of Rural Youths of the Post-Gandhian era. Our democratic non-violent March towards Socialist, Secular, Sama-dharmic Society holds aloft the torch that we, veterans have been keeping aflame with the blessings of Gandhiji, Jawaharlalji, Bharatideviji, Sarojiniji, Swami Sahajanand and myriad martyrs.

Grateful to Scientists

We are proud of the ever expanding creative environment of scientific research and progressive discoveries that is being built up by our scientists working in various fields of agriculture forestry and fisheries. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the scores of Agricultural Universities, many more national level Research Institutes of University stature, attached to various statutory Commodity Boards have been exploring in their multiple fields of researches possibilities for improving the yield of the crops and creepers, protecting them from pests, shielding them from cyclones, storms and by-passing droughts and surviving floods and inundation and transforming deserts and salty soils into friendly crop-bearing areas. For too long our elders (among peasants and workers as well as public leaders and Governments) have depended upon official agencies for broadcasting the knowledge of the achievements of our scientists among our masses. Only recently the aid of Panchayati Raj with its representative elements among the agriculturists has been invoked to spread the knowledge of the discoveries, suggestions and warnings coming from the governing body of scientists among the agriculturists and other rural people.

We have yet to create popular awareness and habits of imbibing the teachings and exhortations of our scientists. So far Punjab, Andhra, Haryana, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamilnadu and Karnataka are in the vanguard.

"Lab to Land" Programme

The Lab to Land campaign has come to be evolved in order to bridge this gap. Our youths of Kisans and Khet Mazdoors should take up as their sacred function of helping our agriculturists to take full advantage of the latest achievements and exhortations and warnings offered by our researchers. Let every Kisan Mazdoor Youth Congress of every Panchayat Samiti offer to function as the advance bugle, well-tutored popular oracle and enthusiastic mobile platform for the "Lab to Land" forces both scientific and administrative. Let us also invoke the aid of N. C. C. and N. S. S. Youths in this direction. By performing this function we would be strengthening our crores of hard working and socially creative agriculturists to multiply our national wealth and helping the grass roots to gain more employment, raise more food and rise above poverty. Let our rural youths take this as the creative challenge to their patriotism. Let them compete with one another much more spiritedly than how sportsmen do in their Olympics. Let the Central and State Governments and leaders of political parties and social organisations offer prizes, trophies and titles for all those youths who come under their influence or guidance, who achieve ever higher records of giving a shot in the arm of our toiling masses in their daily and devoted toil in producing, protecting, enriching our crops, trees, plants, creepers, fields, fish ponds, canals, rivers, soils, and bunds and social forests and fishes and productive fossils. This is indeed a total devotion of Mother Earth and service to her devotees and dependents, the Kisan folk, the real sons of the soil.

Rural Versus Urban

I am sure that our Kisan Youths are well aware of some of the universal facts of rural life; that rural labour is paid less, incomes of rural families are much lower, and prices of agricultural and other produce are much lower than those of factories and urban productions. They are also told by their parents and others that every son or daughter of a Kisan or Mazdoor family who manages to go to towns and finds employment earns more wages or gets higher salary. Indeed there is an unending drive of rural youths towards urban centres because life, incomes,

opportunities are on a higher level in towns. But the reason for all this dreadful difference is not so fully explained or universally admitted. That there has been for centuries an unjust sealing down or downgrading the value of services of rural folk, more especially of agriculturists, and landless workers in particular, when compared to the share gained by urbanites. It is unfortunately a world-wide social disease and it is high time we began to fight against this unjust disparity – six per cent of world's population (in the West and in Urban areas) are able to "consume 40% of basic commodities. The disparity in per capita income between the countries situated at either end of the development ladder is 1 to 200 in many countries. The disparity – intolerable gulf-continues to grow between the haves and have-nots, because the richest nations continue to grow richer"— UNESCO's report, 1980.

I have been clamouring ever since 1926, that it is mostly due to their comandeering and monopolising the services of credit processing, storing, transport and marketing of agricultural produce from one end and the urban and factory products from the other by private and capitalistic merchants and even co-operatives. I have proved to the hilt in my books "Outlines of National Revolutionary Path" (1945) and "Credo of World Peasantry" (1956), that there is a continuous annual drain of rural wealth, all so invisible to the urban centres, from underdeveloped countries into developed, industrial and commercial countries. The urban and professional classes have succeeded in over-valuing their services and under-valuing those of rural folk, thanks to their control over banks, transport and modern industrial and commercial mechanism and certainly over Governments. Why? Because they are better educated, organised and have gained control over modern means of propaganda and bureaucracy.

It is the sacred duty of the youths of Kisans and Mazdoors to concert measures economic, political and social to stop this drain. One of the best constructive solutions is to develop co-operative servicing and marketing. Unfortunately even co-operative services are becoming too costly and uneconomical for rural flok. They have to run to manage these co-operatives in a truly co-operative social manner so that the cost of their services would not be higher than 50% of what private or mono-

polist trade charges. The other alternative to profiteering private trade is public or state-enterprises and management. But that also is becoming too expensive and profit-motivated. Our youths have to fight against this evil and make it really service-oriented.

We have to save our producers from the pre-harvest and post-harvest exploitation carried on by all those engaged in marketing and thus stop the age-long invisible transference of rural wealth into urban coffers.

Thanks to the progressive response given by our peasants to the timely advances made by agricultural scientific discoveries and technologies and "Lab to land Campaigns", the productivity of our crops has gone up by 100%. Extension of irrigation by canals, wells, tanks and sprays and effective drainage, developing anti-erosion measures and wind - breaking trees and weather - responsive cropping can further increase the yields and incomes from agriculture. So there is still so much more to be achieved, if only the youths of our Kisans, and Mazdoors are properly educated and encouraged to pursue improved methods of agriculture and handicrafts and become votaries of self-employment on land and in agro-industries. Let our youths work sincerely as progressive devotees of Mother Earth. They can certainly achieve their due share of power in our democracy and honour in our society.

Some Salient Spheres of Service

Our Youths have a great role to play in helping our Kisans to obtain credit from Banks, for the purchase of seeds manures and pesticides, implements and machines and spare parts and such other inputs from both governmental and private agencies.

They have also to see that these inputs are supplied in right time and in adequate quantities and in good quality and at reasonable or controlled or when possible subsidized prices. Even co-operatives have to be guided to serve people better.

Our Youth Congress should learn to play effective role in fighting official delays and obstruction caused by urban officials and their endemic corruption. They have to function as the shields and shelters of our poverty-ridden and socially disabled masses in these and such other social spheres.

Another urgent service crying for volunteers is the timely distribution of essential commodities, needed for daily home consumption by the masses from the civil supplies and markets and fighting black marketing and adulteration.

Protection of Khet-mazdoors

Let us face the ugly and unpleasant truth that the great majority of our hundred millions of agricultural and other rural workers are to-day obliged to live without the means to satisfy their bare dasic human needs. They suffer from many prolonged periods of unemployment and their women are depressed by their painful and inescapable duties of somehow helping their families to survive on half or partial rations. It is therefore the duty of our Rural Youths, more especially of those who have some lands of their own and who are above the subsistence level, to strengthen the demands of our Khet Mazdoors for the following crying needs :-

Enforcement of Tenancy Act and Minimum wages Act and ensuring actual payment of

(1) Minimum Wages and allowances needed for meeting elementary and basic human needs, depending upon minimum support prices.

(2) House sites and houses, Rural Hospitals.

(3) Drinking water and medical facilities.

(4) Minimum infrastructural facilities for subsidiary employment. especially for women, during seasonal periods of unemployment.

(5) Training in the technological use of latest seeds, machines, manures, insecticides irrigation facilities and mixed multiple cropping, economics and compensation or insurance against accidents for workers.

(6) Compensation against accidents.

(7) Old age pensions

(8) Rural granaries, cold and other food storages as insurance against famines.

(9) Fire fighting equipment.

(10) Multi-purpose economy for small-holders embracing or combining the production of foodgrains, vegetables, fish–poultry, dairy animals, bee-hiving, fruit-trees, cattle-feeds, etc. with a view to maximise income, employment and self-reliant and multi-faceed home-economy for marginal farmers and even agricultural workers, in need of employment during non-agricultural seasons.

The crying need of the hour : Control population growth.

These and other demands are to be satisfied by the society as a whole. The most important challenge that stares youths of Kisans and Khet Mazdoors in their faces is the need for persuading themselves and their families to control population explosion. Let them join all others and work through the Youth Congress and other fronts of all others to overcome this most insidious enemy of social progress.

Small-scale farming has come to stay.

For well over half a century I have had to contend with all the support I could gain from the scholars of Indian Peasant Institute and its extensions and whatever political forces and elements that I could mobilise against the advocates of large scale farming and advisers of Governments. **They were pressing for compulsive co-operativisation of land holdings leading to the elimination of the small farmers and self-employed peasantry while kisan congressites would welcome only service co-operatives.** [Read "Peasants & Co-operative Farming" (1957) and "Panchayat Landlordism & Peasants" (1959) by Rangajee and P. R. Paruchuri.]

At long last Indirajee has declared from the F A.O. Platform in November 1981 that "Indian experience has also discovered the significant fact that farm productivity is, by and large, neutral to the size of the farm." She also declared that the "basic requisites for the rapid adoption and diffusion of new technology", as displayed by Punjab's experience of high yields and better and newer seeds, are "owner cultivation, rural communications and rural electrification." Dr. Swaminathan, the eminent Agricultural Scientist says in his latest thesis on the "Need for Building a National Food Security system" that "small

and marginal farmers and Share Croppers cultivate nearly seventy three percent of the operational holdings in the country." So, the Kisan Movement that we have been developing since 1923 has at last succeeded in protecting the Self-Employment economy of our small-holders and their employment, however, inadequate it may be on their own holdings for each concerned family from the threat of Totalitarian Collectivisation. What a herculean fight it had been so prolonged (from May 1957 till June 1964) and against such seemingly over-awing Parliamentary Forces of the Ruling Party and their Communist and Socialist allies in Parliament ! The Kisan movement triumphed over their Constitution (17th and 19th) Amendment Bills. Indian Kisans were able to persuade so powerful a political leader as Jawaharlaljee to let the broad Kisan masses whose holdings are below the ceiling levels to continue to own and cultivate their holdings, without the threat of State-engineered co-operativisation or collectivisation. Fortunately Indirajee has now become their champion.

World Insurance Against Natural Calamities

I have been stressing the need for a World Insurance Fund against the Natural Calamities that destroy annually hundreds of crores of rupees worth of agricultural properties and produce. Such an International Insurance Fund would have to buttress National-Level Insurance Schemes. I am glad that Indirajee is supporting Dr. Swaminathan's pleas for a National Food Security and strengthening our National Food Reserves. These schemes have to be developed in order to buttress the complementary National Schemes of Crop and Cattle Insurance. Let us demand crop and cattle insurance on a contributory basis. Indirajee has herself declared that "for a permanent impact, national food security must have an umbrella of social security." So, in the first instance, let Old Age Pension be provided for Khet Mazdoors by Government itself, since agricultural workers are unable to make any contributions and land-holding Kisans-most of them being exposed to vicissitudes of seasons, pests and pestilences-cannot and shall not be burdened by this social responsibility.

Remunerative prices based on minimum wages

Let us continue our fight for remunerative prices for all farm produce, based upon actual payment of basic, humane level

wages for workers. To work for adequate and timely advances of credit, seeds, manures, insecticides, cattle feed, power, and other energy supplies and economical efficient and reliable and non-exploitative marketing facilities is an urgent "must".

We welcome the recent steps taken by the Government to assure adequate support prices for rice, wheet, Jowar, cotton, jute, oil-seeds, tobacco, sugarcane, and Government should see that the rising costs of inputs, interest on credit as well as incidence of risks caused by natural calamities are covered by these support prices. Our Youths have to be ever vigilant and see that in actual practice, such support prices genuinely cover all such costs of cultivation and also the humane level of wages for agricultural labour, both domestic and field workers. We appreciate the powerful campaign by the Prime Minister against the profiteering indulged in by the international monopolies in fertilisers and pesticides.

The Plight of our Rural Women

The plight of our rural women workers continues to be highly deplorable. Their hours of labour, while working for wages in the fields are longer and their wages are much lower than what are offered to men. The conventions and resolutions of the I. L. O. offering to work for equal wages and social amenities for women serve only the national purpose of indicating what may be aimed at or wished for, so far as the Southern Hemisphere is concerned. Let us remember that two thirds of world's illiterates are women and rural women are worse off in this social polio. In matters of education, technical training and equipment, and also humane conditions of employment the less said, the better. Therefore I appeal to our youths to do all they can to improve the lot of this great uncomplaining, hard-working class of rural women, who are our mothers and sisters.

Women for multi-pronged self-employment

I wish our youths to remember the inherent capacity and actual success of the social economy of self–employment, in assuring a modicum of economic independence and social justice, which are the bedrock of any effective and real political freedom.

Its continuous success would depend much more on the whole-hearted co-operation and competent and energetic partnership of our rural women. Theirs would be the major responsibility to create many types of self-employment in and around their homes. Kitchen gardens through such activities as bee-hiving, poultry-keeping, dairy farming, vegetable and fruit culture, hand spinning knitting, tailoring and handicrafts are useful sources of self-employment. Over and above all these small but varied contributions to the home-economy, they have to rear our children and feed our families and project and promote harmony and happiness of our families and social peace. So I appeal to our youths to consider their service to our women folk as a sacred duty and all-round social insurance against slavery.

Women to Develop Home-Gardening

Let our sisters and mothers develop social forestry, horticulture and vegetable gardening "on every bit of vacant land and harvest solar energy" through vitamin-rich and protective foods, such as golden pumpkins, the beloved of our Rishis and the blessings from Arundhati for our brides and bridegrooms. Indiraji would be pleased best if our womenfolk enrich the food of our people by such home-grown nutritious fruits and vegetables.

To nurture one or two coconuts, two or three plantain clusters, a bean-stalk or two with the support of a bamboo, etc. in or around their small house-sites should be considered by every mother to be an essential service to the family. Let all the children and old folk be inspired to aid our mother in developing such a creative and protective home-equipment or environment. Our mothers in Kerala and Assam have been in the vanguard in this direction.

Indiraji Too Opposes Disparities

We are glad that Indiraji has also high-lighted on the World Food Platform some of our problems, such as "challenge of disparities, the plight of the landless and the under-employed need for a more nutritious diet and new energy conserving methods of production and the "need for helping millions of our women, who earn their living through operations like selling fruits and vegetables processing farm produce and drying and

storing grains." Therefore, let our Kisan Youths keep in mind the national need for bettering the green revolution, achieved through the happy co-operation between the scientists and Kisans of all ranks by themselves playing an active role, as true devotees of Mother Earth, "the most important source of renewable", wealth in the words of Indiraji.

Let us not forget our tribal people

For all outward appearances, the tribal people seem to be placed on a plane of equality with all other people. For instance their adult men and women are to-day entitled to votes and to stand as candidates. Some have been elected M.P.'s and M.L.A.'s and some have even become Ministers. That is not yet enough.

Co-operative credit and marketing facilities are supposed to be made available equally for them. But in actual practice the officers and co-operative society managers are so ill-paid, considering the specially costly and difficult conditions of life, that they exploit the tribals as much as the merchants. The exploitation of the tribals can be minimised only when the officers are paid higher salaries, and are recruited from among the tribals and corruption comes to be minimised if not suppressed.

Tribals are the most backward in regard to education and awareness of latest scientific and cultural advances, markets, commerce and prices. So education, both elementary and adult has to be developed by specially effective measures, by offering free food and lodging to all the children and made more attractive in the tribal manner. Special hospitals have to be opened in their areas and their own women have to be trained in midwifery and pre-natal facilities.

Alienation of tribal lands to non-tribals has to be stopped and earlier alienated lands should be restored to the latest tribal owners, by compensating the non-tribal merchants and others.

All essential commodities, including protective foods, baby foods, medicines have to be supplied at subsidized prices and their honest, equal distribution should be monitored.

The agricultural semi-industrial goods and products of handicrafts of the tribals have to be purchased by co-operatives

and State Handicrafts Boards at prices, which are 15 to 25% higher than the statutorily prescribed procurement prices, in order to insure the tribals against distance, etc. Similarly goods that are to be imported from distant plains have to be freed from the burdens of excise or sales taxes. Cold storage, de-hydration facilities have to be provided at as many central or strategic places in their hilly areas as possible. In short, every effort should be made to maximise the incomes and living conditions of the tribals and officials who serve them so that parity between them and non-tribal plains people could be achieved in the quickest way possible

I have suggested all these measures to Indiraji. If and when these social developments take place and tribals' own youths begin to play active role in building the requisite social institutions, such as co-operative credit, marketing societies, preservation centres for fruits, food grains and fish. Only then there would arise the social protective and economic environment, needed by the tribals to attain party with agricultural and other self-employed sections of the plains.

How I wish Shri V. Raghavaiah, Kavuri Venkayya, Mandeswara Sarma and Kodandaramaiah had lived up till now to see how under Indiraji's dispensation, a number of places of social prestige and political power in the very rural areas where the tribal people are still being socially looked down upon and politically suppressed, such positions of power, influence and prestige as Sarpanches of villages and Chairmen of Municipal Councils and Panchayat Samitis have come to be statutorily reserved in Andhra Pradesh for such tribals as yanadis of V. Raghavaiah, Lambadis of K. Venkayya, Koyas of Kodandaramaiah. These attainments are as important ladders for general advancement of these people's self-confidence, as positions in the I.A.S., I.P.S., Judges and Ministers. All of us who worked for these trible peoples hail this first round of success in our social revolution.

FROM "THE TRIBES OF THE NILGIRIS"

(A unique survey of their Socio-Economic conditions conducted voluntarily & published by Rangajee in 1933)

Education Emancipates Tribal People

It cannot be said that education does not pay for these people because the few who have studied up to the third or the fifth form are able to earn Rs. 20 to 40 per month in their own neighbourhood and several others who can speak English quite fluently and who have learnt to write their signature are able to eke out a decent living by working as maistries for the workers on the plantations or for those who are engaged in carpentry or by labouring as suppliers of dairy products to the residents of Kotagiri, especially Europeans. In fact there are very many more openings for educated Badagas than for the Hindus of the plains and yet these people have not the foresight and the patience to educate their children sufficiently well. If at all, the social customs and disastrous habits such as expensive marriages and funerals, unclean habits of not bathing more than once in a week or wearing ugly and dirty clothing, living in dingy and unhealthy and insufficient houses, are to be uprooted, education must be made much more popular and universal than at present and adult education must be given not only through the development of literacy but also through the medium of picture and word to the men and women of these people on an intensive scale. (Page 6)

Prevent the Alienation of Tribal Lands

Whether it is possible to make most of the Badagas to take to land again as their main source of employment or not, it is absolutely necessary that they must be enabled to have a sufficient extent of land to provide for them at least a profitable source of subsidiary employment. The mere fact that most of the Badagas are obliged to become indebted in spite of the fact that

they obtain fairly high wages or salaries and a substantial income from agriculture, shows that it is impossible for these people to continue to maintain their present standard of living unless the progressive alienation of their lands is checked. Their kadu land which is at present being sold, does not fetch even a decent price to make it worth while to sell. If it were to be alienated, it becomes impossible for them either to increase their standard of living or to avoid debts or to be able to save anything. Neither tea growing, nor the production of fruit will help these ryots unless they are prevented from selling their land. As long as there are buyers who are avaricious to purchase lands, it will not be possible for Badagas who have an extraordinary fascination for making debts, to retain what littie land they possess at present. The future generations of Badagas will be very much handicapped by the results of this disastrous habit of the existing ryots to deprive themselves of their land for a few rupees. During 1928 to 1930, they have sold away 150 acres of Kadu land to Europeans. (Page 16)

Measures to Improve the Tribal's Lot

These tribal people on the Nilgiris and others like them in other parts need the paternal care and protection of the Government to a very much more extent than the people of the plains. They must be prevented from alienating their lands to any but an agriculturist of the same tribes and they ought to be given special training in gardening, sericulture and handicrafts. Private money-lenders ought to be prevented from lending them any credit, except it be through the co-operative societies. The State ought to appoint special staff to manage for them co-operative credit banks, co-operative stores and co-operative sale societies, so that their economic conditions can be bettered. Last, but not the least thing to be done is to effectively educate them in and after the school-going age in addition to preventing them from drinking toddy, etc. (Page 75)

N. B. : For a fuller idea of tribal people's problems and their socio-economic conditions, please read the above-mentioned dissertation, and Rangaji's auto-biography "Fight for Freedom" published in 1967 by S. Chand & Co., New Delhi. — Ed.

VISION OF WELFARE HORIZON FOR TRIBAL PEOPLES

(on Mrs. Indira Gandhi's Birthday, November 19, 1982)

Mahatma Gandhi who appreciated the reports of my surveys of the conditions of the Tribes of Nilgiris and Mahendragiri agreed with my suggestion and entrusted Thakkar Bapa who had been working for decades for the uplift of the Tribals and Harijans, with the onerous task of developing the All India Adimjati Sangh as long ago as 1933. I was repeatedly drawing the attention of Central Legislative Assembly and International Labour Office to the specially deplorable conditions of rural labour and specially of the tribal people. I tried but unsuccessfully to get the Criminal Tribes Act repealed. That effort drew the attention of Mahatma Gandhi and Congressmen to the humanitarian work that goodmen like Vennelakanti Raghavaiah had been carrying on for decades to save Yanadis and others from the clutches of the Police and Criminal Tribes Act.

Alluri Sitarama Raju roused the Tribals, Savaras, Koyas, Marias, Khonds of Andhra, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh and carried on his meteoric revolt, partly not-violent and partly violent. Raghavaiah must have been inspired by Raju's heroism in carrying on his pioneering and often thankless work for the woe-begotten Yanadis. He has paid an inspired tribute to Raju's work in his valuable books on "Tribal Revolts."

Ram Narayan Singh, M.P. of Hazaribagh and P. Kodandaramaiah, M.P. and V. Raghavaiah of Andhra, Jaipal Singh, M.P. of Santhal Parghana were my colleagues in founding the Excluded Areas and Tribal Peoples Association in 1936. We opposed the British manoeuvre to keep away the Tribals and tribal areas from the political reforms which were being introduced in the rest of

British India. We wanted their Tribal peoples to be brought into the main stream of political emancipation and social development that the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi were trying to achieve. When the Constituent Assembly was convened. Rajendra Prasad, its President acceeded to our request to preside over our special session convened in my place in Delhi to demand special protection for the tribal peoples. Both Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel, Dr. Pattabhi appreciated our approach. Unfortunately the Anglo-American Church leaders, who wielded considerable influence over the Christian Nagas misled the Naga leaders and induced them to try for a separate independent state of their own in the same way as Pakistan was being created. At that juncture, the tribals of so called Jharkand that is, of Santhal Parghanas also were sought to be separated from the movement for national unity, in the same way as some princes of Indian states such as Mysore, Trivandrum, Bhopal, Hyderabad, Kashmir were being influenced by British imperialists to opt for independence.

On the eve of the achievement of Independence, the Constituent Assembly appointed a Sub-Commission to enquire into the social and economic needs of and constitutionally special protection demanded by tribal peoplé all over India, in the North Eastern Regions, Assam and the hitherto Excluded and partially Excluded Areas. Both Dr. Pattabhi, the then President of the Congress and myself did all we could to include the special chapter in our constitution on Tribal Areas and Tribal peoples. Shri Pusuluri Kodandaramaiah, M.P. who was appointed as a Member of that Sub-Commission and Raghavaiah as an M. L. A, and Parliamentary Secretary in Madras and Jaipal Singh made their constructive contribution to the formulation of that historic chapter. It was as a part of that phase of humane reorientation of national policy, that we succeeded in Parliament to repeal the terrible Criminal Tribes Act. Thus arose the Vimukta Jatis and their Uddharaka Sangh, also as a plank of Gandhian Constructive Structure of National Service.

I am happy that the post-Independence governments at the State levels and centre have been paying special attention to the development of these peoples, who are the true inheritor of the

Pre-Aryan, Pre-Dravidian ancestors of Bharat Mata, although so much more needs to be done.

The tribal people are placed on a plane of equality with all other people. For instance their adult men and women are to-day entitled to votes and stand as candidates. Some have been elected as M P.'s and M. L. A.'s and some have even become Ministers. That is not yet enough.

As one who had the honour of working under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and as a colleague of Thakkar Bapa for the protection and welfare of Tribal peoples and de-tribalised masses (over fifty millions all over India) I testify to the genuine interest displayed by our successive premiers, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Morarji Desai and Indira Gandhi and Jai Prakashjee and Parliamentary Leaders of all Parties in what all could be considered to conduce to the welfare of our Adi-Basi brethern all over India and more especially in the North Eastern States.

It was Jawaharlaljee who took the bold initiative in forming a separate State for the Naga peoples through raising Nagaland into a separate State, equal to all other much bigger States and with much larger populations. I am glad to say that Indiraji and her successive Home Ministers were good enough to accept the advice offered by me, even when I was the leader of opposition and others on both sides of Parliament to form separate States for Meghalaya, Tripura, Manipur, Mizoland and Arunachal, irrespective of their miniscale populations but based on their social and tribal characteristics and demands.

Both Jawaharlaljee and Indirajee admire Tribal people's cultural traditions and aptitudes and their love of poetry, arts, and handicrafts and dances. So they have given special encouragement to all types of educational, technological and institutional equipment needed to enable them to make rapid progress. Indiraji is particularly keen that the contribution of our tribal peoples in these directions would come to achieve command heights in the national edifice of cultural achievement. Hence the special honours being rendered to the troupes of tribal artists in all national Jumburies. Hence also the plans for the establishment

of increasing centres of Polytechnics, Colleges, Universities and adult educational centres, Agricultural University centres and Handicrafts Institutes in miniscale centres and for groups of students and trainees.

As is well-known, the Central Government has been offering full-scale financial assistance and under-writing the budgets of these States, because, the central leaders have realised the need not to burden our Adi-Basi peoples with the same level of tax burdens and responsibility for financing the modern type of costly, sophisticated beauracracy.

Smt. Indirajee has been specially anxious to ensure rapid progress of the North Eastern States by improving the road and Rail and inland water communications.

The latest initiatives of the Railway Ministry to extend railways in many a N. E. State are an earnest of this approach. The development of road communications is being given top priority by both the local governments and Central Defence Forces. We provided large enough funds and materials to achieve all weather road connections between all important Centres of people and administration. It is true that so much more needs to be done.

Our Central Government cherishes special and protective approach towards our tribal peoples; The local Governments are being encouraged; goaded if I may venture to say so-to win back for our Adi-Basis the lands which had been alienated to money lenders; to liquidate their debts and offer liberal quantums of credit from co-operatives and Banks and Governments, for financing their agricultural and handicraft operations.

Our Parliament is the genuine well-wisher of the long suppressed tribal peoples, so Central Government is bent upon encouraging and inspiring the Tribal peoples and their leaders to make rapid strides in their all-round progress and gain more than proportionate share and constructive exhuberance in our national productive channels and resources and principal sources of national strength and statesmanship.

The great Brahmaputra had been a river batting the people of many a N. E. State. Jawaharlaljee constituted the Brahma-

putra Flood Control Commission to train this turbulent river to be a means for protection from flood and famine and destruction. But Brahmaputra continues to be unmanageable. Indirajee is now bent upon taking big enough steps to achieve protection of the people of this hard-hit area to the maximum possible extent within this decade.

In the meanwhile, Planning Commission is persuading the Governments concerned to take steps to develop irrigation, drainage and navigation schemes in all the areas which are adjacent to this great river.

Similarly river conservancy, flood protection, minor irrigation projects, rural water supply, rural electrification and construction of tanks and rural sanitation and hospital equipment and extension and distribution of electric power are some of the varied social equipments, which are being developed.

Indiraji is determined that non-tribal new-immigrants should not be allowed to gain any dominent control over any of the vital social and economic avenues, and political institutions and that the outsiders need be invited and welcomed only as life-time partners and non-exploiting comrades.

Efforts are also being made by State Governments, of N. E. States with the active initiative, encouragement and assistance of Government of India, to start a large number of agro-industries like Paper Mills, Rice Mills and Fruit Preservation, Tea manufacture.

The production of hydal power, crude oil and development of oil refineries are being developed and maximum facilities for employing local peoples, after providing them with special technical training are sought to be provided. All these need whole-hearted co-operation from the local tribal peoples and their leaders.

The spread of education among Tribals is the special objective of 20 Points Plan. State Governments are being encouraged to spare maximum funds to develop elementary and higher education and provide special facilities for imparting technical, medicinal and engineering training and employment. Special facilities for transporting to and fro the students of tribals

from distant villages to the High Schools and polytechnics, which are to be situated in the convenient centres of groups of villages. Compulsion cannot be so acceptable or practical in tribal areas of sparse centres of populations so far distant from each other, amidst hilly areas. Free supply of Midday meals and School books have to be provided. Educational development can be achieved mostly through the enthusiastic co-operation between the parents and educational and road-transport authorities.

Alienation of tribal lands to non-tribals has to be stopped and lands which had been alienated to money-lenders should be restored to the latest tribal owners, by compensating the non-tribal merchants, banks and others.

All essential commodities, including protective foods, baby foods, medicines have to be supplied at subsidized prices and their honest equal distribution should be monitored.

The agricultural semi-industrial goods, products of handicrafts of the tribals have to be purchased by co-operatives and State Handicrafts Boards at prices which are 15 to 25% higher than the statutorily prescribed procurement prices, in order to insure the tribals against distance, etc. Similarly goods that are to be imported from distant plains have to be freed from the burdens of excise or sales taxes. Cold storage, de-hydration facilities have to be provided at as many Central or Strategic places in their hilly areas as possible. In short, every effort should be made to maximise the incomes and living conditions of the tribals and of officials who serve them so that, parity between them and non-tribal plains people could be achieved in the quickest way.

Co-operative credit and marketing facilities are supposed to be made available equally for them. But in actual practice the officers and managers of Co-operative Societies are so ill-paid, cansidering the specially costly and difficult conditions of life that they are tempted to exploit the tribals as much as the merchants. This exploitation of the tribals can be minimised only when the officers are paid higher salaries, and are recruited from among the tribals.

A number of places of power in the very rural areas where the tribal people are still being socially looked down upon and

politically suppressed, such positions of power, influence and prestige as Sarpanches of Village Panchayat Samitis have come to be statutorily reserved in Andhra Pradesh in the first instance for such tribals as Yanadis of V. Raghavaiah, Lambadis of Kavuri Venkaiah. These attainments are as important ladders for general advancement of these people's self-confidence, as positions in the I. A. S., I. P. S., Judges and Ministers.

If and when these social developments take place all over India and tribal areas and tribal's own youths begin to play active role in building and managing the requisite social institutions, such as co-operative credit, Marketing Societies, Cold Storage Centres for Fruits and fish, there would arise the social protective and economic environment, needed by the Tribals to attain parity with the agricultural and other self-employed sections of the plains.

Government has appreciated the objective behind my suggestion to establish a special N. E. States Development Commission to plan the comprehensive, all-sided socio-economic development of the tribal peoples and their areas. The N. E. States Zonal conference which has been expected to serve this purpose may be further strengthened with the necessary technical and planning secretariat to develop five and ten year perspective plans. Those plans may be scrutinised and dove-tailed into the comprehensive National Plans. But the Governments of the States concerned have to agree to co-operate with each other and strengthen the efforts of Indirajee to speed the development of their peoples. I have suggested that initially a fund of five to ten hundred crores should be set apart by the centre for the first five years of plan programmes of these States, in addition to whatever the State Governments may be able to spare. This is a challenge to the leaders and ministries of our Tribal peoples and I am confident Parliament would be only too glad to aid them fully whether they get it developed and implemented through their zonal councils or a special Tribal States Planning Commission.

VISTA FOR STUDY OF RURAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

(Dr. Rajendra Prasad Memorial Lecture
on 28–12–1981 in New Delhi)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank the Secretary of the Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics for inviting me to deliver this address to commemorate the services rendered by Rajendra Prasad, my life–long colleague and leader in the service of the rural people of our country. It was Rajendra Babu's comradeship with Mahatma Gandhi during the historic Champaran Kisan Struggle which inspired me to take up the cause of the much exploited and unorganised peasants and labour of rural India. It was also their triumph against the powerful English Indigo planters backed by the British Government which infused confidence in my heart that we would and could achieve success, if we organised our peasants and fought for the redressal of their grievances. He was good enough to inaugurate the very First All–India Conference of Kisan Organisers held under my Presidentship in 1936 in Madras. He was also responsible to withdraw the hated controls over producers of food grains in 1947.

I also had the privilege of being one of the founders and first Vice-President of this Society, with Rajendra Prasad who was then the first Minister for Agriculture as its first President. So I cherish this opportunity proffered to me by the present cadre of Statistical Scientists working for the all–round welfare of Agriculturists to address your Conference in the name of our national leader and sincere Gandhian.

Beginning of our Studies

More than half a century ago, I commenced my researches in rural economics, began to develop statistical studies of econo-

mics of cultivation of paddy, cotton, tobacco and of cattle breeding, dairy farming, marketing and processing as also rural employment and consequences of under-employment on agro-industries, rural arts and crafts, notably hand-spinning and weaving. My studies helped me to realise the great relevance of Gandhijee's movement for Rural Development; Village uplift, Harijan and Girijan uplift. Ever since, I have been a devotee and idealogue of total Revolution of Gandhian era.

Agricultural statistics is an important aspect but only an aspect of the scientific study of agriculture as a whole. Agriculture is a science and the statistical study of various aspects of agriculture, more especially in its application to scientific, biological, meteriological and all other observational developments, experimental researches is a vital and indispensable arm, needed to help the rank and file as well as leaders of Agrarian Science, as a whole.

I was one of the first batch of researchers invited by the Oxford institute of Rural Economics in 1924 to initiate general as well as statistical studies in Indian rural economy, and the results of my statistical study of the economics of farming, cattle-power of six villages in Andhra were embodied in the first volume of Economic Conditions of Indian Villages. It was published in 1926. I found out that more and more peasants of those villages were descending to the level of marginal peasants and landless tenants, obliged to pay more than 60 per cent of the produce as rent.

Then I began to study the conditions of peasants and workers in dry or upland villages and compared and contrasted their socio-economic conditions with those of deltaic villages. I drew the conclusion that the quickest means available for improving their conditions, at least to the level of the former would be in extending irrigation for their lands. Therefore, the economics of irrigation projects had to be viewed from the angle of additional employment made possible for rural folk, their cattle, and greater income per annum per acre and per worker. So the earlier criteria of what interest would be yielded on the capital invested on any irrigation project, was not conducive to all round rural progress.

Then I proceeded to study the possibilities for internal migration of peasants and workers from over-populated delta villages to the sparsely populated and less developed areas within the same state (the then Madras) or neighbouring Indian State (the then Nizam's dominion). My survey* revealed that tenants and marginal peasants of deltaic villages could raise themselves to the status of small farmers by purchasing low-priced lands in other areas and introducing their better methods of cultivation etc.

What were then the possibilities for landless Harijans to improve their socio-economic conditions by migrating to towns? At that time very few but bold rural workers were venturing to migrate to towns such as Guntur, Vijayawada, Madras. Neither they were able to improve their economic conditions, nor was their social status enhanced, though they liberated themselves from the stifling day-to-day caste-wise social depression. Their slum life was proving to be almost an incurable urban disease. Many of them were obliged to live on the city pavements and hovels put up on the road in margins.

I turned my attention also to the possibilities of additional employment and larger earnings for the socially backward groups, whose main sources of employment and income lay in crafts from handloom weaving to cobblery. I found that if Government would encourage them by way of training them in the use of better tools, by supplying improved tools and machines and by providing cheaper and timely credit and marketing facilities, there were immense prospects for increasing their employment and income. This proved the incorrectness of orthodox economic teaching in our Universities of that era (1890 to 1920) that there could be no future for our cottage industries. These results were published in a series of papers in the then *Indian Economic Journal* from Allahabad *Mysore Economic Journal*, and eventually embodied in the volume *South Indian Labour of 1931*. [My brothers G L. Narayana, M.A.B.L., G. V. Subbaiah, B. A, and others aided me in making these surveys. All of us worked voluntarily and at our own costs in the Gandhian way.]

I have ventured to give these few details of my first essay in laying foundation for Indian Rural Economics and Agricultural

---

* *Economic Conditions of Indian Villages*, 2nd Vol. (1928)

Statistics to indicate how we can discern potentialities for discovering new paths for improving the plight of our rural masses, especially the poorer sections who are being debilitated by low earnings, unemployment, under feeding and consequent social and economic listlessness. I must add that Mahatma Gandhi blessed our campaign for the abolition of *Zamindari* system only after he was convinced by his careful perusal of my survey 'Economic Conditions of Zamindari Rayots' published in 1933. As you all know, he led the way for all of us by conducting similar studies of the conditions of the Bardoli and Champaran peasants in 1916, 1917 and 1918 Therefore I hail Gandhiji as the greatest of the founders of Indian Rural Economics and Agricultural Statistics. His disciples, Puranik and Dwivedi have been publishing bi-lingual Monthly *Rural India* on all our behalf since 1936.

Agricultural Prices

We are proud of our agronomists and other associated scientists as well as our peasants for having achieved 'Green Revolution.' They have enabled us to get out of the most depressing era of food deficits and demoralising threats of hunger on the 1943 Bengal Famine scale and recurring food imports from USA and other western countries: Have we however taken adequate steps to see that the 'Green Revolution' has spread its uplifting and profitable sun-shine, more or less uniformly over almost all the states, more especially the chronically depressed areas in all States, tribal and mountainous regions? Whose fault has it been and to what extent for their continuing backwardness; the Scientists or those in charge of demonstration or financing agents or politicians or else administrators?

We have been clamouring ever since 1944 for the establishment of all India price-fixation agency for agricultural products, notably food grains. We in Central Legislature have demanded the fixation of minimum price levels to be maintained by Government and also steps to make it possible for our peasants to obtain remunerative prices. The then British Government conceded the justness of our demands. The Bengal Famine Commission that pontificated over the Bengal Famine deaths also suggested that these protective measures have to be taken, if peasants are to be

expected to put their best efforts into agriculture and if such famines were to be averted. Our Economists and at least Rural Economists have to study how far, in what manner and with what results the succeeding administrations at the Centre and States have attempted to implement those recommendations or acceded to our *Kisans'* demands.

The Late Rafi Ahmed Kidwai took tentative steps to assure support prices first for wheat, then for paddy in some states. Then we complained that those price levels were inadequate and demanded a more or less scientifically justifiable price levels. We also wanted that such price levels should approximate to remunerative price levels. Government conceded the justness of our demands. How far have the subsequent administrative steps taken by Government been satisfactory ? At long last the Agricultural Prices Commission (A. P. C.) came to be established in answer to our demands. But we complained that its terms of reference and instruments of instruction tended to favour the urban and professional consumers. We challenged further that it was meant more to assure the industrial, commercial and professional classes that the Commission would try to compensate them for the withdrawal of the earlier anti-peasant controls over the prices of food grains, storing, transport and disposal of the surpluses over and above the permitted portions of peasants' production garnered by their families from their own holdings. It has taken fifteen to twenty years, that is, till after the 1980 General Election to Lok Sabha, for Central Government to reorient the instrument of instructions to A. P. C. to enable or to oblige the A.P.C. to estimate and suggest the price levels for food grains from the peasants-side.

Invisible Drain of Rural Wealth

Has any study been made by our Scientists in the Laboratories or in the University Faculties of Economics in any one year or over a Five year (quinquennium) period as to how much of peasants' hard-earned wealth had been unjustly diverted into the coffers of urbanites ? I have called it invisible transference of wealth into the pockets of urban classes in my book *Credo of World Peasants.* What is more, how much more production,

better production, could have been achieved, if such denudation of peasants wealth had not been allowed ?

What about the personnel of the A. P. C. ? Have we not had to wait for so many years to persuade Government to include in it, just one representative of peasants as its member ? Now we are to have one more. How long are we to wait to ensure adequate representation for agricultural workers and also for dry-crop economy ? Have our economists ever cared to study the possible impacts upon agricultural production that a better paid, less under-fed and better educated agricultural workers could have made ? How are the levels of support prices, and remunerative prices to be calculated ? What all out-of-pocket expenses are to be covered by the support price levels ? It is only in 1981 that the Central Government and the Planning Commission realised the need to provide for seasonal risks inherent in agricultural production and the interest charges on the capital invested in land and working capital—either owned to borrowed. Should they not have thought fit to include annual input of working capital in estimating costs of production ? What about the investment made or contribution offered by all members of cultivating peasants and their families ? Can any economist say that the cost of cattle services have ever been fully estimated ? In all such directions good old Dr. Mann in Poona, Dr. Gilbert Slater of Oxford and the economists of Indian Peasant Institute, started by me and inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi so long ago as 1933 have made some studies. Unfortunately onr agricultural economists have yet to explore further avenues for studies in helping our peasantry to argue with Governments and urban economists for adequate prices.

The lab-to-land campaign is the latest and most effective development of the decades-long activities of Demonstration Farms and State Agricultural Departments and their Staffs. It would be well for the Planning Commission and Government to make it a permanent feature of the marriage between Science cum Laboratory with the Farm.

It is also good that the I.C.A.R. and Agricultural Universities have undertaken the responsibility of studying how far, in what manner and with what monetary and family enrichment

and benefits, the adoption of not only specific achievements of the laboratory but also multi-faceted improved farming can be demonstrated on the small holdings, back-yards around the living quarters of marginal farmers, small farmers and even enterprising landless agricultural workers. Some effective studies are being made into the socio-economic benefits thus derived by these peasants and their results and are published in the Rural India. More and more such experiments, and studies into their results have to be made year after year indicating the follow-up benefits. I hope the students and post-graduate scholars of all our Agricultural Universities and colleges and rural development services will continue to work out their findings and their lessons would be sedulously broadcast through the Radio and other avenues of popular education.

Beware of One-sided Suggestions, Solutions

We are grateful to our Scientists and Planners for their sincere studies, inventive and enterprising achievements and advices. But our administrators and cabinets have also to be vigilant, selective and democratic-minded in making their choice out of the passionate tentative suggestions or plans sponsored by our experts. Take for instance, the Linlithgow Commission's heavy accent reinforced by our planners up had to 1962 in favour of large scale farms. So many of us had to fight hardy battles before we could persuade our political leaders to give up their support of the *Zamindari* and *Talukdari* systems, and proposals for large scale and cooperative farming which were supposed to make valuable contributions to agricultural Productions, because of their huge land-holdings and large scale farming.

Let us remember that the scale of minimum prices to be supported and minimum wages to be prescribed and enforced would have to be related to the general price-levels and rising standard of living of the people as a whole. Therefore, it is the duty of our agrarian statisticians to be studying the trends of general levels of prices and wages in the country as a whole and also in rural areas, so that results of their studies can be utilised by all concerned, within the Ministries of Agriculture, Labour and Finance. So far not enough attention has been bestowed to these aspects of the socio-economic life of our agriculturists.

Small farms have come to stay

Parliament had to struggle hard between 1964-66 to so amend the planners' Proposal embodied in the Seventeenth Amendment (Bill) to the Constitution, proposing to include Peasants holdings also in the definition of the term *Estate* in Article 31 by which feudal rights of *Zamindars* and *jagirdars* were abolished, as to save peasants' holdings below the ceiling limits. Thus the self-employed peasantry were saved from the contemplated compulsory merger of their holdings into large-scale farming, on payment of nominal compensation.

If only our Planners had taken the trouble to study the socio-economic aspects of our small holdings in our Indian demographic and socio-political atmosphere, they would not have obliged our political leaders to rush into that painful campaign and controversy for or against cooperative farming. So many of us had to champion the cause of our crores of peasants who had emerged as independent Peasants, gaining ownership over their small-holdings, free from the strangle-hold of feudalist landlords.

Thank God, the Narora orientation Programme of twenty points has settled that controversy over the size of farm by persuading Government at all levels to accept the small-farming as an effective and creating type of our rural economy, best suited to our over-populated peasantry, suffering from seasonal unemployment and also under-employment with the most urgent need for growing contact between their land and labour: extracting every additional day of useful and meaningful employment in order to minimise their under-employmeut, and maximise agricultural produce ounce by ounce.

Similar were the suggestions coming from some of our most eminent and well meaning experts such as the need for fixing crop targets and control over irrigation-water supplies. Looking at them from the planning or laboratory angle such suggestions may not be opposed but there are the more important social and political overtones, which cannot be overlooked. So our researchers and scholars and their deans and professors have to be careful to study the socio-economic conditions also, before they venture to proffer such projects and approaches. The time

has gone by when economics had been so irresponsibly divorced from politics and both could be insulated from demography and its explosive social detonators.

Slave Production? Employment

Coming to demography, have our planners and agricultural and rural scientists and economists begun to make adequate studies into the evil ramifications of population explosion, which has come to be such an unmanageable and cumulative multi-pronged social cancer? For long we have been complaining that despite astronomically burdensome plannd expenditure on development and march towards welfare society, the poor are becoming poorer. We now know it is mostly due to population explosion. Is it not high time for our Agricultural Universities not to speak of other Universities and Institute to study on a larger as well as smallar compasses, village or *Samiti* or *Zilla* levels, how much of employment by days, in different seasons is becoming available for rural labour on land, in agriculture in agro-industrial or craft activities and how much labour can be ploughed into family centered self-employment through vegetable gardening, horticulture, poultry keeping, pisi-culture, seri-culture, dairy-farmings etc? Have they studied as to how much of feeding, under-feeding, leading to partial starving are being experienced by agricultural workers, men, women, children and old folk and with what effect on their labour-efficiency, social behaviour, distempers? Apart from a few such studies made by some of us, way back and a few isolated partial studies by a few now and then within or without the orbit of Planning Commission, our scholars, not to speak of statisticians, have not so far made any worthwhile studies Let us not forget that unless and until such studies are made in a systematic manner, we cannot come to any genuine estimate of basic wage in real terms of calories of energy, needed by our crores of rural workers. It is only when we are able to provide for more than 70 per cent of the essential needs of our workers within the support price levels, we can hope to free agricultural activities and production from the stigma of slave production.

Further, it is high time that the prescription, fixation and enforcement of minimum agricultural wages are carefully enquired

into. Have all our State Governments done their minimum duty in this regard. If, not what are the processes of agricultural or rural work which are yet to be coupled with the wages to be paid for them ? It took us sixteen years of agitation in Central Assembly before National Independence, to get the idea of extending minimum wage legislation to agriculture accepted after the advent of *Swaraj* Government During the past 25 years after the Central Act permitted the State Governments to prescribe and enforce minimum wages for agricultural workers, only a small sector of agricultural and rural work-life has come to be embraced by such regulation, not to speak of being protected.

Here is a vast field of human existence of more than one third of our rural labour certainly more than five crores of adults who are yet to be brought within the sphere of protected labour. Is there any wonder, that there still prevail the evils of 'bonded labour', though some of us thought we succeded in getting forced labour outlawed 40 years ago ?

So long as our agricultural prices do not provide wages yielding minimum and humane basic wages for labour and minimum family incomes for both self-employed peasants and labour, our non-agrarian urban middle classes as well as working masses cannot escape from the charge of enjoying their wages, salaries and incomes by exploiting the more numerous rural labour and peasants It is the duty of our agrarian scientists to awaken the conscience of our society as a whole through their continuous researches and sincere studies with the aid of this latest army of Agricultural Statisticians.

Communications

Rural roads and road transport, canal communications and electrification of villages, pumping sets to tap underground water are all worthy of study, in their comparative economic viability and national availability. Lining of canals by R.C. or by bricks, prevention of losses through percolation, provision of drainage facilities, fighting innundation, soil erosin and deforestation all deserve careful studies. Many a time, estimates for an irrigation dam are presented without providing similar estimates for the drainage facilities for its surplus waters. Railway and Road

bridges are proposed at sites unmindful of consequent submersion of cultivated lands. Similarly environmentalists think only of the birds, beasts, trees and soil without bothering how peasants economy is also to be protected. Thus such pulls and counter-pulls have all to be assiduously studied by trained and conscientious economists and statisticians.

Fertilisers and Pesticides

The spread of the use of fertilizers and other chemical inputs as between different states and crops, their comparative advantages or disadvantages when compared to the traditional or modernised utilization of organic manures by peasants in deltaic and dry areas, for different crops have to be studied, so that the nation would know why some states are continuing not to use the fertilizers or pesticides and with what results. Most extra-ordinary is the failure of our scientists to study the positive contribution being made by birds and such trees as Banyan, Mango, Tamarind, Neem which harbour birds in hopping upon worms and other pests infested lands and killing them, thus minimising peasants need for pesticides.

For quite some time, most of our Economists have given all support for the growing mechanisation of agriculture, notably through tractorisation. Now prices of petrol and diesel oil have sky-rocketed. Is it not time for our Economists and Statisticians to work out the comparative economics of bullock and buffalo-power for ploughing and transport? Then the economics of cattle-feed, chicken-feed *vis-a-vis* their alternative use for fish, oilcake and oil extraction have also to be studied. The rising cost of the use of cement has to be weighed against that of reinforced earth, brick-quilns etc. Can our peasants, at the bottom rural level afford to keep bullocks or is it possible for them to hire other's bullocks, just the way tractor can be hired ?

Rural Credit

Credit is the most vital input for all aspects of agriculture. The economics of credit supplies and available means to control their supplies, periodical repayments and their adhesive social pulls have to be continuously studied. I have found during these six decades of my study and fight for liberalisation of supply of

credit that agriculturists are troubled most in their efforts at economic betterment, by the continuing scarcity and cost of credit at all stages. So our Rural Economists have to be ever on the alert to spy the mischief played by the suppliers of credit, whether they be Scheduled Banks, Co-operative Banks, Finance Corporations, Chit Funds etc. The comparative cost of credit offered to peasants by scheduled Banks co-operative banks and other democratic means available for reducing the cost of cooperative credit need constant study.

Cooperative service Societies have a pivotal role to play in the spheres of credit, purchase, distribution of fertilizers, pesticides and other agricultural inputs and also the vital consumers' essential goods. Neither state or national level studies, nor sectorwise studies have been made in a systematic manner, at definite periods as to how far these cooperatives have succeeded in lessening the burdens of inputs, or the prices of consumers goods when compared to the usual channels of trade. Continuous studies have also to be made about the cost of the services rendered by different types of the cooperatives, both agrarian and trading.

In response to half-a-century long agitation by *Kisan* Movement, the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development is coming to be established. It is the duty of Agricultural Statisticians and Rural Economists to be on the look out to survey and report how far this bank would be helping the agriculturists and rural artisans, their arts and crafts, through various channels such as the State Cooperative Banks, including the Refinance, Marketing cooperative agencies, Handloom weavers finance and Marketing cooperations and such other financing agencies, catering to the other artisans.

Equally important is the study of the operations of the Warehousing Corporation and Food Corporation in their relations with peasants in different areas; that is how do their services prove to be timely, economical and productive? Our Statisticians have also to aid the rural folk as well as the Governments concerned by conducting periodically surveys as to the results achieved by the Development Scheme financed or undertaken by the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP).

Rural Employment–Welfare

They have also to monitor the achievements of Employment Guarantee schemes such as what is being experimented within Maharashtra, Bihar and Kerala and also by the Public Distribution programmes in all the States. They have also to study the impact of population rise upon the activities of employment generation programmes undertaken at Block–Levels.

There is need to study toil–reducing or energy – saving (energy conservation) on the part of our labour in–put by peasants, workers, and their women in different operations in agriculture by the adoption of better implements and improved methods of work. Labour saving machines, like tractors are needed in some areas, for some processes. But their effect on the total employment available to the local workers (Block, or Zilla or Region) seeking employment has to be carefully studied from year to year and from crop to crop.

Periodical studies have to be made into the comparative suitability, seasonal and agronomical and financial advantages of devoting peasants' holdings, either partly or wholly in different regions to the production of single-crop like paddy, wheat, cotton, jute or double–crops, or even successively three crops on the same land in the same year, including pisciculture, as in Japan or rice and pulses.

Special studies have to be made into the economics of marketing of our agricultural products, such as wheat, rice, corn, pulses, oilseeds, cotton, jute and other fibers oil–cakes, coffee, tea, spices, fruit, dairy products, poultry, timber, chillies, tobacco, turmeric, goats, sheep and the success or failure of peasants in obtaining remunerative or minimum prices and the differences between the prices obtained by them and degree of variation found in the prices charged to consumers.

In heavily or over-populated countries, priority has natually to be given to labour intensive or employment yielding operations, while the back-breaking or energy-consuming work has to be minimised.

New Economic Order

Invisible transference of wealth from South to North through unequal terms of trade has enriched the industrially and commercially advanced countries, mostly in Northern Hemisphere and pauperised the mainly agrarian, industrially backward and commercially weaker countries, situated mostly in Southern Hemisphere. I have drawn the attention of the Parliamentary leaders of the Common wealth, Inter-Parliamentary Conferences, General Assemblies of World Food and Agriculture Organisation (F. A. O.) and I. L. O. and recently United Nations General Assembly to this enervating drain of the annual production of wealth from the Southern to the Northern hemisphere. My thesis exposing that this process of exploitation has been unjustly sanctified by the so – called equal exchanges working through world markets and buttressed by Imperialism in the pre-war world, were published first in 1946 and also in my books *Colonial and Coloured Peoples Freedom Front and World Role National Revolution* in 1946 and also *Challenge of World Peasants* in 1956.

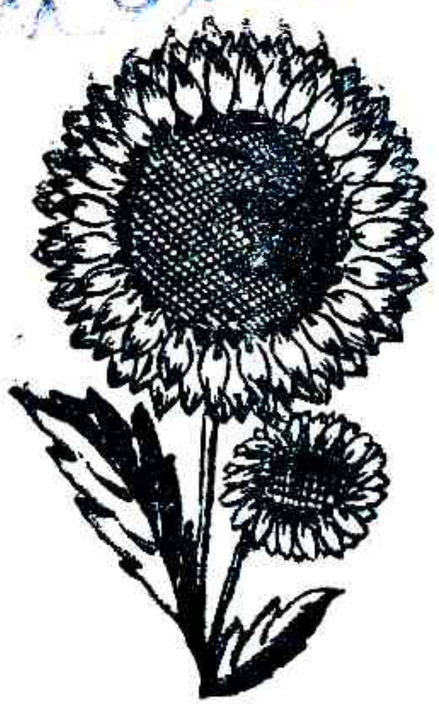
Now our Prime Minister has drawn the attention of the leaders of the 21 countries, including U. S. A., U. K. assembled in Cancun in Mexico in November, 1981 to the continuing and growing poverty of the masses of the South when compared to those of the North and strengthened the plea of the Brandt Commission for less unequal terms of trade. She re-iterated the demand of the Non-Aligned nations for a New World Economic Order.

Such unequal terms of trade prevail in the commercial transactions between the agriculturists on one side and industrialists and commercial classes on the other within all our under-developed countries also, thanks to the same mischief of Markets and suppression of agricultural masses. So many of us have been demanding since 1946, that there should be parity in the evaluation of the products and services offered by the agricultural masses and non-agricultural urbanites, and less unjust or unequal terms of trade as between ruralites and urbanites. Detailed studies are needed to strengthen our demands for higher levels of prices, based upon humane standards of living needed by agriculturists, both peasant proprietors and landless workers.

It would be their privilege to be educating our public and warning our administrators about the success or failure of the present welfare-oriented schemes for the benefit of scheduled castes, tribal peoples, women, people of hilly and other backward areas, in such special fields as elementry education, health, water supply, house-sites and houses and slum-clearance in rural areas.

So our Rural Economists and Statisticians have a vast vista of problems to be studied, public needs to be considered and rival claims for national resources to be weighted. They have to be sociologists in their attitude and public workers in their approach. Their work would find social fulfilment in the measures in which peasantry and workers, landed and landless come to rise as honoured and happy humanity equal to all others, ensuring Social Justice between Rural and Industrial World.

Thank you.



NEED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PEASANT ECONOMY

A Poser to I. C. A. R. March, 1983

* Dr. Swaminathan's Suggestions and I. C. A. R.

I am glad that Dr. Swaminathan has directed in his latest book 'BUILDING A NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY SYSTEM' 1981 special attention to the needs of our small farmers. Since we have nationally opted for small farm economy he has made many suggestions to help our small farmers to achieve more or less parity with super-farm economy through technical and administrative improvements i. e. Researches, Extension, Lab to Land operations, Service Co-operatives, efforts of peasants, Governmental aids such as inputs, storages or banks of seeds, implements, fertilisers, insecticides, seasonal credit flows.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research has to persuade our Scientists to study all such scientific aspects of small-farm economy as are calculated to improve its efficiency in protecting the soils, (fertility, texture, moisture) raising crop yields resisting erosion etc., along the directions indicated by Dr. Swaminathan. Lab to Land organisations and Extension establishments at State levels have been paying special attention to small farm technology, including multi-pronged constituents, such as mixed farming, inter-culture, planting and production of fruit-bearing trees, legumes, fish and supply of inputs, seeds, manures, tube-well or draw wells, drainage, anti-erosion, insecticides, weedicides, and pesticides. What more has to be done to develop

---

* Dr. Swaminathan, F. R. S., F. N. A., was a member and adviser of National Planning Commission, Director-General of Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Director of Indian Agriculture Institute, NEW DELHI and presently Director General of International Institute of Rice, Manila.

agro-forestry and social forestry, multi-crop planting in harmony with or as insurance against either too late or too early advent of monsoons, droughts or floods in order to "purchase time" in Dr. Swaminathan's words and protect peasants.

Have we directed attention to the planning of a tapestry of small-holders, social economy, in terms of food for the members of the family, cattle bio-mass bio-gass and other livestock, and their products, fruits and farm-yard manure, poultry, pigs, fish, legumes, etc. and cash for the markets, and subsidiary employment based on farm-products, local agricultural products? What more can be done to improve the supplies and storage of inputs, marketing facilities for farm products through State agencies, Co-operative marketing and timely supplies of bank credits etc?

Have we begun to build Banks or stores of genes and seeds of alternate crops, to fall back upon in times of failure of sown crops, with what effect, to what extent? That is, consistently with local soils, climate, monsoons or floods, cyclones or storms, are we developing minimum preparedness to meet their challenges? Institutional equipment is needed to face such crises; such as improvement of sub-soil moisture, management of water when in plenty or in scarcity, plant protection, choosing the crops in tune with all such ground-level, water-weather-worms presences? What possibilities are there to make quick enough shifts from one crop to another, or to develop mixed crop economy or to arrange alternate levels of beds (terracing) in the same field, to help one crop to draw off the surplus moisture or water from the other crop on the adjacent bed but on a higher level etc.

What more has to be done to develop the campaigns of "one tree for every child", one dairy animal and one bee-hive for each family, social forestry, fish ponds in every village and in parts of the fields of small-holdings and persuading peasants, especially their women, to plant a few coconut, banana, other fruit trees; one or two tamarind trees, plots of chillis inter-mixed with a few worm-preventive marigolds, legumes such as pumpkines, water-gourds, beans, brinjals? What safe-guards have to be taken to enrich environmental and ecological balance?

Survey of Basic Needs

Is it not high time that the I. C. A. R. complex should begin making surveys of "Basic Needs" of our agriculturists, especially small and marginal peasants? Is any effort being made to develop an inventory of basic Agricultural Assets for each of the major crops? (food, fibre, fish, poultry, milk products, draught animals) improved implements, co-operatively or collectively owned modern machines such as spraying machines for irrigation, manures and pesticides, tube-wells, pump-sets etc. We have to develop such inventories for each zone and each state, and when possible for each major production centre of major crop. Is any effort being made by State Governments to develop necessary equipment, such as helicopters, fumigation materials, pesticides in bulk supplies and storages, to fight invasion of pests, rodents, cranes, etc.?

What modernisation steps are being devised and adopted in order to feed and protect the old, disabled people and children and provide employment to the able-bodied unemployed agriculturists during droughts or floods, in order to maintain the morale and health of the affected agricultural people? Surely the Lab to Land and Extension Departments have to pay special attention to their "Basic Needs".

Removal of Constraints

Agriculture and agriculturists have been faced with so many Constraints from the failure of Governments to recognise their special responsibilities towards the smallholders and agricultural workers who have been depressed and exploited and unorganised for ages.

The most obvious constraint is the paucity of supply of credit, and high cost of rural credit. There are so many more equally serious constraints, facing agriculturists and making employment on land both to the small holders and land-less workers painfully risky and most unattractive. Because of ever growing pressure of population and unappeased hunger for employment and rising demand for land holdings and their ever-dwindling holdings, employment in agriculture and on land is resulting in "Distress employment" of Land and distress sale of

agricultural products. Nation-wide studies, but on zonal level basis have to be made as to the nature and extent of the "Constraints" facing agriculture and what steps have to be taken by governments, service co-operatives, banks, to overcome them.

What conveyer-belt steps, in the sphere of food, feed, fuel, fertilizer veterinary services and credit and farmers' co-operatives and population control have to be undertaken by the small-holders, their co-operatives and their own Kisan organisations ?

One of the steps that peasants as well as Government can take is to harvest solar energy. To raise causerina, caschew, sunflower, new babool, palmyra, coconut, date-palms, banana, margosa and such other trees or plants on the boundarise of house-sites, bunds of canals, tanks, roads and railways is not too costly and can prove a valuable asset. Steps have to be taken to develop such renewable sources of agricultural wealth and national well-being.

We need the whole-hearted and concerted action by peasants, scientists and administrators to bridge the wide gap between the potential and actual yields of crops. I have myself drawn attention to this wide-gap as long ago as 1937 and now Dr. Swaminathan is obliged to draw our attention again in 1981, because of our national failure in this vital direction. I hope our present-day scientists, Lab to land and other administrators would hasten to develop adequate steps to overcome, before 2000 A. D. this serious and costly constraint in this vital sphere of our national life and achieve ecological balance.

CAUTION

Dr. Swaminathan has suggested the formation of "Land use and Management Boards", from the national-level to District and Samiti levels. These boards are to embrace all aspects of agriculture such as cattle, trees, water, fish, poultry. But care has to be taken to avoid giving any coercive powers to them, apart from what the great majority of small-holders (small and marginal farmers) of any locality are voluntarily accepting. If by any chance, the scientists' approach is to be accepted that since right of peasants to their holdings has come to them from governmental authority, small-holders should accept as their duties, the dictates of the land Management Boards", more harm would be done than good, by whatever such Boards can be expected to achieve because of the non-cooperation of peasants with the proposed Land use Boards.

It is no good to have a plethora of such independent organisations such as Nutrition councils to deal with different aspects of agricultural studies and developments as are suggested by Dr. Swaminathan. The Land use and Management Board can be entrusted with all the various responsibilities as are indicated by him. Care should be taken to associate in full-measure the great body of small-holders directly or indirectly with the personnel and activities of these proposed Land use and Management Boards.

EPILOGUE

SARVE JANA SUKHINOBHAVANTU !

(May all people be happy !)

PRINTED AT :
SWATANTRA ART PRINTERS
VIJAYAWADA - 520 004.