

ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION  
BY THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

# SIXTEENTH SESSION

OF THE

# ALL-INDIA KISAN SABHA

**PROCEEDINGS**

**&**

**RESOLUTIONS**

**MAYAVARAM, 29th April—3rd May, 1959**

A I K S Publication

ALL INDIA KISAN SABHA  
4, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-1.

SIXTEENTH SESSION  
OF THE  
ALL-INDIA KISAN SABHA

PROCEEDINGS  
&  
RESOLUTIONS

MAYAVARAM, 29th April—3rd May, 1959

AIKS Publication

JUNE 1959

PRICE : 0.50 NP.

Printed by D. P. Sinha, New Age Printing Press, Hand Handi Road, New Delhi 1, and published by Bhawaní Sen, General Secretary, A.I.K.S. 13 D, Ferozshah Road, New Delhi.

## CONTENTS

	<i>page</i>
1. <i>Proceedings</i>	1
2. <i>Homage to Martyrs</i>	7
3. <i>Condolence Resolutions</i>	8
4. <i>On Refusal of Visas</i>	9
5. <i>May Day Greetings to Working Class</i>	9
6. <i>Greetings to Kerala Government</i>	10
7. <i>On Anti-betterment Levy Struggle in Punjab</i>	10
8. <i>On Land Reforms</i>	14
9. <i>On Wastelands</i>	20
10. <i>On Food Crisis and State Trading in Foodgrains</i>	21
11. <i>Cooperative Societies</i>	23
12. <i>On Panchayats</i>	32
13. <i>On the Prices of Commercial Crops</i>	34
14. <i>Names of CKC Members</i>	35
15. <i>Addresses of State Kisan Sabhas</i>	39

## *Proceedings*

The 16th Annual Session of the AIKS was held at Mayavaram, Tanjore District, Tamilnad from 25th April to 3rd May 1959.

The Central Kisan Council met on 25th April. Seven members were present. The agenda for the session was discussed in this meeting. It was decided that resolutions on land reforms, waste lands, food crisis and State trading, cooperative movement, panchayats, tax burdens with specific mention of betterment levy, Punjab struggle, prices of commercial crops should be the substantial agenda for the session. It was also decided that the delegates should form into commissions and discuss the draft resolutions and place before the entire delegates the resolutions as they emerge from the commissions.

On 26th and 27th April, 13 CKC members attended the meeting. Discussion had taken place on the question of land reform; though the Nagpur Congress resolution said that ceiling laws should be passed before the end of 1959, it did not go beyond the orbit of the recommendations of the Planning Commission and contain all the loopholes, which arise from the pro-landlord policies pursued by the Government. It was also decided that in the resolution, a call should be given for an all-India campaign for radical land reforms and seek cooperation of all those who stand for land reforms. Next, a brief discussion had taken place on the other issues and draftsmen were fixed to draft the resolutions on the lines of the discussed points.

The General Secretary of the Punjab Kisan Sabha had informed that due to the anti-betterment levy struggle, election of delegates to the All-India Kisan Sabha session could not be held in Punjab and requested that the delegates elected for the 15th Session be treated as delegates to this Session too. The request was accepted by the CKC.

On 28th the C.K.C. informally met and discussed the organisational situation in the various States. 15 members

were present. C.K.C. members from various States gave organisational reports and basing on these reports, some discussion was held as to how to improve work. The question of shifting the office also was incidentally discussed. It was ultimately decided that the Centre should be strengthened by making the office-bearers more at the disposal of the CKC, that the same principle should be followed in the provinces and that the question of shifting the office is not to be taken up now.

*Delegates session :* By the morning of 29th April, many delegates had arrived. The delegates session started from 3.0 p.m. The kisan flag was hoisted by Sardar Jagjit Singh Lyallpuri, General Secretary of the Punjab Kisan Sabha and all the delegates and volunteers and visitors saluted the flag. Wreathes were laid on the martyrs' column by Shri Bankim Mukherjee, MLA, one of the founders of the AIKS and the whole delegations and visitors marched past the column, paying their homage.

The delegates' session started at 3.30 p.m. with kisan songs and the National Song. Sardar Jagjit Singh Lyallpuri spoke how, under the leadership of the Kisan Flag, unfurled in 1936, the movement has advanced stronger and wider and even today how in various States the kisans are fighting for their demands even more united under this flag. Chairman of the Reception Committee, Shri C. Kandaswami welcomed the delegates to Tanjore District, the land of several bitter kisans struggles. Next Shri A. K. Gopalan, President, delivered his presidential address which was later translated into Tamil.

Next, a resolution paying homage to kisan martyrs, another on condolences were moved from the Chair and passed unanimously, all standing for a minute.

The next resolution also moved from the Chair was on the refusal of visas to foreign fraternal delegates was adopted.

Having fixed the agenda for the session, the General Secretary submitted his report with an introductory speech. In his speech he highlighted the big struggles conducted in 1958 and early 1959 and the lessons from them. The day's proceedings ended with reading the messages of greetings from the national organisations of China, Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Indonesia and from Trade Union International of Agricultural and Forestry Workers, All-India

Trade Union Congress, Bihar State Khet Mazdoor Sabha, Andhra Pradesh Agricultural Labourers Union, National Federation of Indian Women, President of the Andhra Peace Council and Dr. Gyan Chand.

Before rising for the day, the delegates were grouped into three Commissions, one for resolutions on land reforms, waste lands and food and State trading; another for resolution on taxes and prices and a third on resolution on panchayats, cooperatives.

The whole of 30th April was taken by the commissions for discussing the various resolutions which were thoroughly discussed with minor amendments; and some improvements were finalised. On the question of ceiling Shri Bankim Mukherjee opposed the very principle of ceiling on landholdings, which in his opinion, is wrong, unscientific and does not achieve our objective of abolition of landlordism. On the resolution on taxes, it was thought necessary to discuss it thoroughly in the full delegates' session so that the various tax systems prevailing in various parts of India can be understood.

The full delegates' session was held on 1st and the resolutions as emerging from the Commissions have been placed before it. All the resolutions except that on taxes discussion on which could not be concluded, were adopted without much discussion. Only to the resolution on land reforms an amendment was moved and pressed to the effect that ceiling should apply to poor peasants' land but was negatived by an overwhelming majority.

On 2nd morning, the AIKC met and unanimously elected the new office-bearers and CKC members.

One seat was left vacant to be coopted from Rajasthan later.

The AIKS had accepted the invitation of the U. P. Kisan Sabha to hold the 17th annual session in U. P. in the first week of April, 1960.

The following quotas for membership enrolment were taken by the Provincial Kisan Sabhas:

Assam	25,000
Tripura	25,000
Manipur	10,000
West Bengal	2,50,000

Orissa	20,000
Bihar	75,000
U. P.	1,00,000
Punjab	2,50,000
Himachal Pradesh	2,000
Rajasthan	50,000
Madhya Pradesh	20,000
Maharashtra	1,00,000
Karnatak	20,000
Andhra	2,00,000
Tamilnad	1,25,000
Kerala	2,50,000
	<hr/>
	15,32,000
	<hr/>

The AIKS had also decided to hold its next meeting in Andhra Pradesh in October or November.

It also decided that when the office-bearers are called to the States, the PKSs should meet their expenses and also pay Rs. 50 contribution for each public meeting they address.

It decided that the CKC should form a history commission to write the history of the AIKS and also to discuss questions of restarting the Bulletin.

At 5.0 p. m. the Rural Women's Conference was held which was attended by more than 5000 women coming mostly from the neighbouring districts. The conference was inaugurated by Shrimati Sushila Gopalan and presided over by Shrimati Godavary Parulekar. Shrimati Saraswati Subbiah, member of the National Executive of the National Federation of Indian Women greeted the conference on behalf of the Federation. Resolutions demanding equal wage for women for equal work, on peace and banning nuclear weapons were passed. Shrimati Papa, Janaki, Meenakshi spoke on the resolutions.

After the Rural Women's Conference, the delegates' session assembled and Shri E. M. S. Namboodiripad, Chief Minister of Kerala, warmly greeted the session and spoke on the achievements of the Kerala Government.

The third morning, the delegates' session again met and passed the resolution on food, state trading and accounts of the previous year submitted by the General Secretary.

The delegates' session concluded at 12.30 p.m. on 3rd May.

In the evening, from 3 p.m. a huge procession consisting of more than 10,000 volunteers and people and preceded by the leaders of the AIKS and delegations from various States went round the city. The day culminated with a huge rally of more than 100,000 people, coming from all over Tamilnad. Shri C. Kandaswami, Chairman of the Reception Committee welcomed the delegates and the people and asked Shri E. M. S. Namboodiripad to inaugurate the rally. Shri E. M. S. in his inaugural speech gave an account of the measures taken by the Kerala Government for the benefit of the people and how the opposition parties, instead of cooperating, are putting all sorts of obstacles. The rally was greeted by Shri Bankim Mukherjee, Shri N. Prasada Rao, Shri Bhowani Sen and Shri Chanan Singh Brar. Shri A. K. Gopalan who presided and Shri P. Jeevanandam addressed the rally.

The Reception Committee had made elaborate arrangements for the comforts of the delegates all these days. Huge Pandals were constructed for the sessions; excellent food was served in all and comfortable lodgings were provided.

Along with the session, the Reception Committee arranged an exhibition and daily cultural shows, film shows and Bommalattam, the famous Tanjore puppet play. The Central Government, the Madras Government, the Soviet and Netherlands Embassies in Indina, besides a number of companies, weavers' societies, etc. participated in the exhibition. The cultural shows were superb. The best cinema and dramatic artists, dancers and songsters in Tamilnad like Sivaji Ganesan, Sahasranamam, Balachandran, Tangevelu, T. V. Ratnam, Padma, Nataraja—Sakuntala Ballet, Kalamandal, etc. participated in these shows and drew thousands of crowds. The crowd that attended the drama "Kattabomman" exceeded 20,000, all paying. The Bommalattam was very popular and film shows showing Soviet, Czech, Polish, Dutch and Rumanian films were also popular and attracted large crowds.

## I

### HOMAGE TO THE MARTYRS

The 16th Annual Session of the All-India Kisan Sabha pays homage to the memory of the men and women martyrs of the anti-betterment levy and food struggles in Punjab, who fell victims to the brutal police firing at Atiana (District Ludhiana) and Narur (District Kapurthala) and to the beating up at Bhaini (District Sangrur) and to maltreatment and criminal negligence on the part of the officials in Jullundur and Ferozpur Jails and, of the Kisan Sabha workers of various States who have been killed by landlord gangs and it conveys its heart-felt condolences to the relatives of these heroic martyrs.

In this martyrdom, the blood of peasants and agricultural workers, of men and women, has mingled together, cementing the unity of the entire rural population. This glorious sacrifice of the martyrs will inspire millions of rural population to carry forward the struggle for ending oppression, exploitation and tyranny and for a happy, free and prosperous life.

### MARTYRS

#### **Victims of Narur firing:**

Mai Basanti  
Havaladar Basant Singh  
Sardar Basant Singh  
Sardar Ram Singh  
Sardar Lachman Singh

#### **Victims of Atiana firing:**

Mai Chand Kaur  
Bibi Bachni

#### **Died in Jullundur Jail:**

Sardar Malkiat Singh

#### **Died in Ferozpur Jail:**

Sardar Nikka Singh (Agricultural Worker)

#### **Died due to police beating:**

Bhai Godha Mal

## MURDERED BY LANDLORD GANGS

Sri Papachan	..	Pampa Valley, Kerala.
Sri Sundar Shetty	..	Pyurlike Village, Karn ataka
Sri Mahabala Shetty	..	" " "
Sri Chinnappa Shetty	..	" " "
Sri Dhiren Gaen	..	24 Farganas, West Bengal
Sri Ram Raghav Lahiri	..	Malda district, West Bengal
Sri Muhammad Mustafa	..	Kopaganj, U. P.
Sri Ramachandra Sharma Bharadwaja	..	Badaun, U. P.
4 Kisan Sabha workers of Unnao	..	U. P.
Sri Muthayya	..	Mayuram Taluk, Tamilnad
Sri Venkata Narasayya	..	Madhira Taluk, Andhra Pradesh

## II

### CONDOLENCE RESOLUTION ON CHETTIAR, BABA VASAKHA SINGH, IRAWAT SINGH AND MOULANA AZAD

The 16th Session of the All-India Kisan Sabha mourns the death of Shri Chakkarai Chettiar, the respected leader of the working class in India and one of the founders of the All-India Trade Union Congress, Baba Vasakha Singh, the beloved leader of Sikhs in Punjab and one of the founders of revolutionary movement, Irawat Singh, the legendary hero of the Manipur Kisans, and Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, one of the great leaders of the national movement and sends its heartfelt condolences to the members of their families.

## III

### ON THE DEATH OF JOLLIET CURIE

The 16th Session of the All-India Kisan Sabha mourns the death of Jolliet Curie one of the most eminent scientists in the world who devoted himself to the cause of world peace and sends its heartfelt condolences to the members of his family.

## IV

### REFUSAL OF VISAS

This Session of the All-India Kisan Sabha condemns the action of the Government of India in refusing entry visas to fraternal delegates from the Agricultural & Forestry Workers Unions in USSR and Hungary. This action of the Government is contrary to all principles of democracy and of panchsheel to which the nation is wedded and does not help in promoting friendly relations with the countries which are helping us in all possible ways to develop our national economy. Hence this Session appeals to all progressive forces in the country to protest against this policy of the Government and press upon it to give up such an undemocratic policy.

## V

### MAY DAY GREETINGS TO WORKING CLASS

The Sixteenth Session of the All-India Kisan Sabha offers its cordial and fraternal May Day Greetings to the Working Class of India and the World. In offering its greetings the Sabha notes the role of the workers of the USSR where they are leading the people in their magnificent task of building communism, of those of the People's Republic of China and other countries of People's Democracy where they are playing the leading role in building Socialism, and of those of the other countries where they are either struggling for the national liberation or defence of national independence of their respective countries.

The Sabha considers that, as in the case of the Socialist Countries, the leading role of the working class in building a new society is of vital importance, so also in the case of India its leading role in the struggle for preserving and for defending national independence and sovereignty is indispensable.

Since for this great task of the Indian people as well as for the task of building a real democratic India, the alliance of the kisans with the working class is most essential, the All-India Kisan Sabha assures the working class of India all help and cooperation in building and firmly establishing the worker-peasant alliance.

## VI

### GREETINGS TO KERALA GOVERNMENT'

The Sixteenth Session of the All-India Kisan Sabha conveys its congratulation to the Government of Kerala for introducing the Kerala Agrarian Bill and other measures for the benefit of the peasantry and agricultural workers in Kerala. It is a happy coincidence that when this session was reiterating the general principles and urgent measures for agrarian reform the Legislature Assembly in Kerala was discussing the Agrarian Bill based upon the same principles.

This session appeals to all the peasantry and agricultural workers throughout India and to all the progressive people interested in genuine land reform to extend their sympathies to the Kerala Government and remain vigilant against all manoeuvres of the reactionary elements against the urgently needed progressive reform and check their efforts to obstruct the process of its implementation.

This Session appreciates the various other reforms introduced in Kerala by the present Government in the State and can understand the anger roused thereby in the mind of reactionary elements who are therefore desperately harassing this Government. This Session urges upon all the progressive people irrespective of the party affiliation to mobilise democratic opinion in the country to frustrate the efforts of the reaction to bring this Government down.

## VII

### ON ANTI-BETTERMENT LEVY STRUGGLE IN PUNJAB

The All-India Kisan Sabha had repeatedly demanded the cancellation of the betterment levy. This Session of the All-India Kisan Sabha greets the brave peasants of Punjab who in pursuance of the stand of the AIKS under the leadership of Punjab Kisan Sabha, waged a heroic struggle against the unbearable burden of betterment levy. The unprecedented determination and broad nature of this struggle is reflected by the fact that within a short period of one and a half month, more than 19 thousand peasants

offered satyagraha and nearly ten thousand were actually arrested and sent to jail.

All sections of the peasants actively supported and worked for the satyagraha and the satyagrahis included large numbers, peasants following the Congress, Akali and Communist Party. Some leading workers belonging to the various political parties, village headmen, the Panches and Sarpanches also courted arrests in hundreds during the struggle. The peasant women of Punjab played a heroic part in the struggle, in facing the brutal and uncivilised repression of the Government. Quite a large number of women also offered satyagraha.

The struggle against betterment levy won active support and also actual participation in the satyagraha from the agricultural labour population as well.

Imposition of Betterment Levy in Punjab was all the more unjustifiable, in view of the fact that the Punjab Government realises huge amount of taxes etc., under the laws already in existence. The irrigated land in Punjab is already chargeable to increased land Revenue upto Rs. 3- per acre, local rate at 50% of the land revenue, surcharge and special charges on land Revenue and Water Rate ranging upto Rs. 17- per acre. Over and above all the Betterment Levy of Rs. 10- per acre per instalment, is being imposed, for thirty half-yearly instalments. Even from the narrow angle of productivity of a Project, the Bhakra-Nangal Irrigation Project is productive. The peasants in Punjab were, therefore, forced to launch this struggle, when the Punjab Government refused to listen to the voice of reason, set aside its own legal procedure laid down in the Punjab Betterment Charges Act, and made attempts to realise Betterment Levy as an advance payment.

In order to crush this struggle of the peasants in Punjab, the State Government let loose a reign of unprecedented terror and repression. Brutal lathi charge on the peaceful satyagrahis every day, whole-sale loot of the villages in lieu of realisation of fines on satyagrahis, and of other also who had not offered satyagraha became the order of the day. Warrants for the arrest of all Kisan Sabha workers were issued and the Kisan Sabha was virtually declared illegal in the State. In order to terrorise the people it opened firing at many places, killing seven on the spot, including three women and seriously injuring another two

dozen persons. Conditions of Martial Law prevailed, without its declaration, in the State.

The State Government did not spare even the President of the All-India Kisan Sabha, who went to Punjab to make on the spot enquiry about the repression let loose against the peasants. First he was refused entry into the village Sherpur which was surrounded by 500 policemen under the command of the district authorities for an attack on the people. Later on, under orders of the State Government, an externment order was served on him and he was removed from the State under arrest.

The glorious struggle of the peasantry could not be crushed by bullets, martial law like conditions or any amount of slanderous propaganda against it. The peasants en-masse supported the struggle and refused to pay a single pie of Betterment Levy.

When repression and slanderous propaganda failed to cow down the peasants and break their resistance, the State Government's spokesmen, including the Governor and the Chief Minister issued public statements that the struggle was unwarranted and had political motives behind it, since the Government was prepared to settle the issue of betterment levy through negotiation.

The Kisan Sabha, which had no ulterior political motive and was purely concerned with the unjust burden of betterment levy responded to these statements and withdrew the struggle for creating a congenial atmosphere and settling the issue through negotiations.

But the All-India Kisan Sabha notes with concern that the State Government in Punjab has not appreciated and responded to the magnanimous gesture of the Kisan Sabha. In the name of cases involving violence more than two hundred peasants and the Kisan workers are still involved in the cases which have not been withdrawn. Fresh measures of repression and provocative steps have been taken in all the districts and this policy is being pursued at the direct instigation of the Chief Minister, who after the withdrawal of the struggle, has made the most irresponsible, provocative speeches, inciting the police and his Government supporters for violence against the peasants and Kisan workers.

Although it was stated by the Chief Minister on the floor of the Assembly that the betterment levy would be

substantially reduced, attempts have been made to forcibly collect the levy based on the previous schedule.

The Sabha also notes with concern that in resorting to these repressive measures in the State of Punjab, fundamental rights of a citizen under the constitution are openly violated by the Punjab Government and the judiciary being not independent of the Executive, no justice is available to the peasants. In many cases, illegal attachments and arrests have been effected.

The All-India Kisan Sabha strongly condemns the repressive and brutal policy of the State Government. It calls upon all democratic people in the country to raise their voice against the violation of elementary legal and constitutional rights of the people in Punjab.

The All-India Kisan Sabha congratulates the peasants in Punjab and the Punjab Kisan Sabha, who have conducted this glorious struggle against Betterment Levy. The Sabha congratulates them for forging such a broad and strong united front of the peasants, winning the support of other sections especially the landless labour in the villages. The Sabha is also glad to note that inspite of the betrayal of the State Government and its refusal to honour promises made by it, and inspite of the terroristic repression still continuing in the State, the peasants maintain their high morale and absolute unity and are unitedly opposing the collection of betterment levy.

The Sabha supports the cause of the peasants in Punjab and is also of the opinion that there is absolutely no justification for imposing the betterment levy in Punjab, and demands from the State Government :

- i. Release of all the peasants and withdrawal of all cases started during and after the withdrawal of the struggle.
- ii. Stop realisation of the fines against the satyagraha and refund of fines already realised, and make good the loss of property during the loot.
- iii. Withdraw police force from the villages, stop repression and punish the officials responsible for the unwarranted firings and other illegal acts of repression on the peasants.
- iv. Stop realisation of Betterment Levy from the peasants till the issue is settled after negotiations with the Kisan Sabha.

It is due to the united struggle of the peasants that the State Government has been forced to reduce the quantum of the levy from Rs. 104 crores to Rs. 42 crores, and to declare that the levy would be imposed upon the actual matured area, the Sabha, therefore, appeals to the peasants to maintain their unity, strength and opposition to the levy, till it is totally abolished.

The Sabha calls upon all other Provincial Kisan Sabhas to launch a campaign in solidarity with the struggle of Punjab peasants against betterment levy and against the repressive policy of the Punjab State Government.

## VIII

### ON LAND REFORMS

The chronic and serious food crisis affecting tens of millions of common people every year, a crisis that is intensifying every year and has assumed the character of a national crisis affecting the whole economy of the country, weakening the internal market, intensifying the problem of unemployment, and thus creating crisis for the Plan itself—has highlighted not only the vicious role played by the increasing grip of big landowners and profiteers over marketable surplus in foodgrains produced in the country and the urgent necessity of breaking this grip, but it has also exposed the dangerously weak and disorganised state of agricultural production which has created the chronic problem of deficit food production, and which, again, in its turn provides wider scope to hoarders and profiteers. Thus, the question of increasing production has become a question of most urgent importance.

The AIKS has for many years past declared and it has been proved to be correct by hard reality of the situation that the problem of increasing agricultural production is neither simply nor mainly a technical problem. With concentration of land in the hands of a handful landowners on the one hand, and millions of tiny holdings, tens of millions of landless peasants and agricultural labourers faced with increasing pauperisation on the other hand, there cannot be created any solid basis for rapid growth of production. It demands firstly, a radical reorganisation of agrarian relations—which alone can create the solid basis, and secondly,

emancipation of peasants from the heavy burdens of debt, unequal exchange, growing taxes and lack of irrigation etc. The miserable failure of the Government in both these respects has inevitably resulted in crisis in agriculture.

Comparison of rapid advances in agricultural production in China with the sorry state of affairs in India conclusively proves the contention of the AIKS that radical agrarian reform is the most urgent need of the hour. It is necessary not only to save the peasants from ruination, but also for increasing production to save the country. The AIKS correctly demanded, under the existing conditions, breaking of land monopolies of big landowners by putting a ceiling on landholdings, distribution of their surplus land and Government waste lands to the landless and poor peasants and agricultural labourers, security of tenure to tenants etc.

But the AIKS notes again with alarm that while the Planning Commission, Central and State Governments have, in theory, recognised the importance and the necessity of land reforms, in actual practice they, except the present ministry of Kerala, have made a caricature of land reforms. They have shown and are showing more concern to protect the interests of bigger landowners in various ways.

Most of the State Governments have not even passed legislations for fixing ceiling. They have practically refused to ban *mala fide* transfers, partitions, evictions etc., which are absolutely necessary as interim measures for checking evasion of ceiling and for giving security to temporary tenants. Even many remnants of various forms of intermediary interests have not yet been liquidated. This has only encouraged landlords and also has given them time to resort to above methods to defeat as much as possible from beforehand any imposition of ceiling later on. In a few States like Punjab, Hyderabad and Bengal, laws about ceiling have been passed, but they are framed and implemented in such a way and with such exemptions like exemptions of gardens, orchards, fisheries, efficiently managed farms etc. and with such scope for *mala fide* transfers and evictions that lakhs of tenants and sharecroppers have been evicted and have become helpless victims of landlords, moreover, in the first two States not a single acre of land has yet been acquired, and in West Bengal where the Government calculated to get 6 lakh acres, only about 1,22,000 acres of surplus land has vested in the State. Provisions about checking of *mala fide* transfers, even where they have been incorporated as in West Bengal,

are implemented in such a way that it has become a farce. Nowhere distribution of surplus and waste lands has begun. There has been little rent relief and in some cases revenues have increased. All this has created a serious complicated situation, a great uncertainty disorganising agricultural production.

Only in the State of Kerala under the present ministry, steps towards correct agrarian reform have been taken. Eviction of tenants has been banned as an interim measure giving them much-needed relief and security. Distribution of waste lands amounting to 7 lakh acres has advanced to a great extent. Scope for partition has been greatly restricted. An agrarian Relations Bill is going to be passed shortly which imposes ceiling, confers security to tenants, reduces rent, makes provision for distribution of surplus land and for adjustment in relations of tenants with small owners. The AIKS congratulates the Kerala ministry and calls upon peasants of Kerala to play their part properly in carrying forward these reforms.

The AIKS notes that when objective conditions urgently demanded proper land reforms, the reactionary landlord elements and their representatives within and outside the Government, emboldened by the pro-landlord policies of the Central and State Governments, started a concerted campaign against any land reforms and particularly against ceiling. In such a situation the Nagpur Resolution of the Congress, which is the ruling party in the country, directing its ministries to pass legislations about ceiling within this year, is a welcome step. The AIKS thinks that it is not only a rebuff to the reactionary landlord campaign, but it also provides scope for forging wider and more united mass campaign for proper land reforms.

But the AIKS also notes with regret that the Nagpur Congress resolution has got many shortcomings and does not mean basic change in the past policy whose defects have been proved in practice. It does not say anything concrete about ceiling, about plugging or even restricting the loopholes. No mention has been made about banning of transfers and partitions and about reviewing past transfers. The land reform Bills that have been brought after Nagpur as in Orissa and are intended to be brought in other States, are full of these defects.

Secondly, distribution of land, which is the central task of any land reform and without which land reform becomes

meaningless, has been practically ruled out. As a substitute for land distribution it has been suggested that surplus lands will be handed over to Panchayats and will be run by co-operatives of only agricultural labourers. As a first step towards cooperative farming, it suggests formation of various service co-operatives. The AIKS is opposed to the idea of handing over surplus and waste lands to the Panchayats and, instead, demands their distribution to landless and poor peasants, as otherwise land reform loses its main significance.

Like all democratic people the AIKS supports the principle of co-operative farming and formation of mutual-aid teams and various types of service cooperatives. But it cannot be a substitute for land distribution, on the other hand, land distribution alone can create the real basis of proper cooperative development. The AIKS opposes any side-tracking of the issue of land distribution in the name of cooperative farming.

But AIKS strongly disapproves of the activities of the reactionary elements who are creating a row against cooperative farming in order to oppose land reform altogether. AIKS is of the considered opinion that to make cooperative farming an issue of debate at the present moment objectively helps the pro-landlord elements to befog the whole issue and side-track the question of land distribution. Kisan Sabha calls upon the people to be on guard against this device.

While noting the fact that in the present socio-economic set-up of the country, development of real cooperative farming has got only limited possibilities, the AIKS is firmly of the opinion that the future of scattered and backward Indian agriculture lies in its march through various stages towards cooperative farming. AIKS and all its units shall take initiative and join others in forming various types of mutual-aid societies, service cooperatives, and where possible, even cooperative farming and shall take steps to foil the attempts of big vested interests to dominate cooperatives. But the process demands education of the masses and only through their own experiences and by stages with proper help from the Government the peasants can advance on this path. In this connection the Kisan Sabha cannot but note that while talking loud about cooperative farming the Government itself puts obstacles in its path. As a worst example, in West Bengal some cooperative farms organised and run by

ordinary peasants who individually were not liable to pay agricultural income taxes, are now being crushed by unjust burdens of heavy income-taxes—and this is not remedied by repeated representations. The Kisan Sabha opposes such obstacles in the path of cooperatives and demands proper help from Government. In this connection the Kisan Sabha notes that cooperative farming cannot be successful unless the differences in the areas owned by different land-owners are reduced to the minimum, and that cooperative farming as well as service cooperatives can be successful only when entry of landlords into these societies is banned and they are freed from the control and interference of corrupt and bureaucratic officials and also from the political domination and manoeuvres of vested interests. It also demands thorough change and democratisation of present co-operative Acts and rules etc.

The AIKS is of the opinion that if the defects and shortcomings mentioned above are not removed and all people interested in proper land reforms do not stand together on guard against the landlord interests who particularly wield great influence on the State Governments, then declarations about land reform will either fail to bring expected results or even fail altogether.

Considering all the above factors, the 16th Session of the All-India Kisan Sabha demands that immediate measures be taken to implement land reforms on the following lines :

- i. Laws regarding ceiling and land distribution to be passed in all States within this year and to be implemented within the next year. All remnants of various forms of intermediary interests to be liquidated in the same period.
- ii. Ceiling to be put on family basis, and considering the areas and class of land it is to be fixed in such a way that peasants' lands are not touched, at the same time enough surplus land is available, and no exemption like orchards, sugarcane farms, efficiently managed farms etc. from the operation of ceiling are made.
- iii. As an interim measure all transfers, partitions and evictions to be banned. All transfers and partitions since 1953 to be reviewed with peasants' cooperation, if proved malafide, to be made null and void and whenever necessary, landlords to be made liable to

pay suitable compensation to ordinary transferees; all evictions of tenants since commencement of Second Five Year Plan to be reviewed and evicted tenants to be reinstated.

- iv. Provide security of tenure to all peasants under whatever tenure they hold land, subject only to the small owner's restricted right of resumption. Full security to share-croppers should be given.
- v. All surplus and Government waste lands to be distributed to ejected tenants, poor peasants and agricultural labourers in such a way that maximum possible number of people can get land. Cancellation of any penalty imposed on poor peasants occupying and cultivating waste lands.
- vi. Present system of land revenue and land taxes to be replaced by a single graded tax on agricultural land with a revenue-free minimum. Incidence of land revenue and also of rents to be lowered.
- vii. Supervision over preparation or revision of land records be entrusted to popular committees and implementation of land reforms be made with their help.

This Session of the All-India Kisan Sabha calls upon all peasants and agricultural labourers and especially all Kisan Sabha units to build up a strong nation-wide campaign on the above issues. It calls upon all its units to concretise the demands and tasks according to specific conditions in their areas. Where laws have been passed, campaigns should be undertaken for suitable amendments of the laws and also for distribution of land. Where bills are pending or have not yet been brought out, campaign should be run for bringing and passing such bills with necessary amendments. Campaign for banning partitions and evictions should be conducted everywhere.

The AIKS particularly calls upon all its units, Kisan Sabha workers, members and all people in general to build up a vigorous campaign for land reforms on an all-India scale in such a way that the next year becomes a year of biggest mass mobilisations and mass struggles for land reform. It enjoins upon the Central and State Kisan Sabha units the responsibility of preparing concrete programme for such a campaign.

The AIKS appeals to all patriotic people, parties and organisations interested in land reforms in the interests of

peasantry to respond to the call of AIKS and build up a united campaign. The Kisan Sabha extends its full cooperation to all such people or organisations.

## IX ON WASTE LANDS

There is chronic and acute food crisis in India and large parts of the country are in its grip today as in the previous years. Mass struggles for food were launched by the people on a wide scale in several States last year.

In view of this situation, it has become a vital national task to increase the production of foodgrains all over the country. One of the major steps that should be taken for the purpose is to bring under cultivation the millions of acres of cultivable waste lands which are in the possession of the Governments in different States.

The following official figures show the extent of land that may be available for cultivation in addition to what is already cultivated:

	1952-53	1953-54	1954-55
Uncultivated land excluding fallow land (in million acres)	99.00	97.70	98.00
Fallow lands other than current fallow (in million acres)	33.3	31.3	31.8

Responsible spokesmen of the Central and State Governments including many important ministers often talk big about increasing food production through land reform measures and co-operative farming. But no State Government led by the Congress have in all these 12 long years of our independence distributed fallow lands to evicted peasants, poor peasants and agricultural labourers.

This only betrays an attitude on the part of the Governments which is both deplorable and condemnable. What is however worse is that in cases where some people have tried to cultivate such lands, they have *been greeted with* official obstacles in their way and many have been evicted and punished after they have cultivated them for several years.

This 16th Annual Session of the All-India Kisan Sabha, while greeting the Government of the Kerala State for

giving the lead in the matter, demands that all other State Governments should take immediate steps for making cultivable waste and fallow lands available for cultivation, and for distribution of those lands among poor peasants and agricultural labourers without any premium, as well as for giving them necessary facilities for cultivation. The distribution of the lands should be made through popular committees.

The Sabha further demands that all peasants occupying waste lands which belong to Government should be given pattas and that the lands assigned to or occupied by landlords should be taken away and distributed to agricultural labourers and poor peasants.

The All-India Kisan Sabha at the same time calls upon all State and Provincial Kisan Sabhas and other units of the Sabha to seriously take up this question of distribution of waste and fallow lands in Government possession among agricultural labourers and poor peasants and to take up this campaign as one of its major immediate tasks. Broad masses of the rural folk and other people should be drawn into the campaign and struggles should be launched on as big a scale as possible for securing those lands and cultivating them.

## X

### ON FOOD CRISIS AND STATE TRADING IN FOODGRAINS

The 16th Annual Session of the All-India Kisan Sabha views with grave concern the deepening food crisis engulfing more States and areas of the country with every passing year, States like West Bengal and wide areas of Behar, U.P., and also parts of other 5 States have become areas of chronic famine. In 1958, severe food crisis hit hard West Bengal, Bihar, U.P., Orissa and even the surplus State of Punjab. Tens of millions of people, particularly the vast masses of poor peasants and agricultural labourers became worst victims of this crisis. Many starvation deaths occurred. Pauperisation has increased to a great extent. Lakhs of poor peasants have been forced to mortgage or sell away parts of their tiny holdings. Food crisis combined with growing

rural unemployment has forced agricultural labourers to face starvation and semi-starvation for months together.

The intensified food crisis is no longer a crisis affecting the poor peasants and agricultural labourers alone. All sections of consumers, particularly workers and salaried employees are increasingly being hit by the crisis. It is disorganising agricultural production, compelling the country to expend annually huge sums of money for importing foodgrains thus increasing the difficulty of financing developmental projects. Thus the food crisis has become a national crisis of first importance requiring the urgent intervention of all democratic people of the country for its solution.

The AIKS has repeatedly declared that the deepening food crisis is not fortuitous. It is the inevitable result of the anti-people, pro-landlord and pro-profiteer policies of the Government itself. One of the causes of food crisis is the chronic deficit in food production which is due primarily to the failure of the land reform measures and also failure of the Government to help the peasants with cheap irrigation, credit and fertilisers etc., for increasing production, and for any permanent solution of the food crisis this problem of production must be seriously tackled. But food deficit by itself cannot explain the growing intensity of food crisis. As a very significant factor, the AIKS especially notes the fact that the increasing grip of hoarders and profiteers over marketed foodgrains is contributing more and more to the intensification of the food crisis. No mere talk about production deficit can hide the role of hoarders and profiteers. By cornering a major part of marketed foodgrains these elements create an artificial scarcity even when there is no actual deficit in production and with deficit production they get wider scope for their anti-people activities. It has become a serious menace to the country and without breaking the grip of these elements there can be no immediate or permanent solution of food crisis. But the AIKS notes with concern that instead of curbing their activities the Government policies are strengthening these elements more and more. Not only that, on various pretexts the activities of these elements are being sought to be covered up.

The AIKS in its last Bongaon Session, warned the Government of the impending food crisis and demanded urgent measures to check the activities of profiteers, to procure sufficient stocks of foodgrains from the producers at

a fair price, to requisition stocks of big traders and landowners, to make up deficit by necessary imports and to make adequate arrangements to supply foodgrains to the people at a reasonable rate and also to take up other relief measures. The Session also demanded urgent measures to help production.

But the Government from the very beginning adopted a complacent attitude, procured less than 3 lakh tons of foodgrains thus helping hoarders to corner practically the whole of marketed grains, and the relief measures taken by the Government were very inadequate and irregular and that also at a late period when forced by circumstances and pressure of mass struggles. This policy of the Government engulfed wide parts of the country in a severe food crisis. The only exception was the State of Kerala where, inspite of a regular 50% deficit in food production, inspite of the discriminatory attitude of the Central Government towards Kerala in supplying foodgrains and obstacles put in by the Congress Governments of Southern Food Zone in the way of Kerala Government to procure foodgrains, the steps taken by the popular ministry of Kerala have checked to a great extent the deterioration of food position there.

This Session of the AIKS protests against the complacent and pro-profiteer attitude of the Central Government and against its discriminatory attitude towards the Kerala Ministry. It congratulates the people of West Bengal, U.P., Punjab and other States for the heroic and determined struggles conducted by them which forced the Government to take at least some steps without which the crisis could have assumed more serious proportions. It congratulates the ministry of Kerala for the popular policies pursued by it.

This Session is further of the opinion that this year also many areas will experience a serious food crisis. Already it has begun in States like West Bengal, Bihar, etc. Though the Government claims that this year's production is about 70 million tons, yet taking the country as a whole there is a deficit; moreover, States like Kerala and West Bengal are heavily deficit States—in West Bengal the deficit has increased further by about 2 lakh tons. Further the power and activities of hoarders and profiteers have increased, which, if not curbed, will create havoc in the country. So this Session warns against any complacent attitude taken by the Government in this respect.

So far as production is concerned, the Session is of

the opinion that steps for increasing food production must be taken immediately in order to take the country forward towards permanent solution of food crisis. For this purpose, Government will have to adopt and implement proper land reform measures, provide cheap irrigation, lower price of fertilisers and increase their supply, provide adequate cheap credit to peasants, assure fair price for agricultural produce and relieve peasants of tax burdens etc. The Session calls upon all peasants and democratic people to strengthen the campaign on these issues.

But, for solution of food crisis the control and distribution of foodgrains has acquired special significance. In this context the Session is of the opinion that immediate steps must be taken to curb the activities of profiteers in foodgrains in order to save the country from a repetition of food crisis. In this connection the question of eliminating profiteers from wholesale trade in foodgrains and the State taking over such trade has acquired paramount importance. The Session notes that after avoiding this question for many years the Central Government has at last recognised its importance and declared its policy to go towards State whole-sale trade in foodgrains.

While welcoming this declaration and while also agreeing to the fact that its full implementation will require some time and much preparation, the AIKS notes with concern that the interim measures suggested by the Government, like simply licensing wholesale traders, procuring from them, if necessary, a part of their stocks and allowing them to procure and sell on their own can have practically little effect on the profiteering activities of the hoarders.

The Government cannot shirk its responsibility of immediately entering the foodgrains trade directly on the plea of paucity of funds or shortage of storage godowns. There is no justification for those arguments. It should be noted that the marketed grains are at present stored in godowns owned either by traders or banks and a substantial part of the finances is also provided by the scheduled banks. These godowns and funds can easily be utilised by the Government if it so desires.

Experience of the war years and also experience of some States like West Bengal, Behar, etc. prove conclusively that the interim steps suggested by Government do not in practice curb the profiteers, on the other hand, under the garb of State patronage, the profiteers manage to get streng-

thened and to corner most of the marketed foodgrains, thus nullifying the price fixation policy. It also breeds corruption and bureaucratism. The West Bengal Government has promulgated an Anti-Profiteering Act, has fixed prices, but it is a complete failure.

In the considered opinion of the AIKS, the serious food situation urgently demands the adoption of a coordinated policy regarding procurement, control and distribution of foodgrains.

✓ Procurement of a substantial part of the marketable foodgrains by the Government and Government supply through a network of fair price shops are important prerequisites of such a policy. Without such measures it is not possible for the Government to control the market and to prevent the hoarders and profiteers from establishing a monopoly grip over the foodgrains market and from demanding very high prices from consumers. To help Government procurement and supply it is also necessary to fix a fair minimum price for producers and also a corresponding maximum price which are to be guaranteed by Government purchase and supply. Price unfair to the peasants affects Government procurements, hit and antagonise the peasants and help profiteers to corner foodgrains. It has been proved by the experience of the failure of the Government procurement. Moreover, deficits of individual States are to be made up by supply from the Central stocks of foodgrains created by internal procurement and necessary imports. So long as deficit continues in the country as a whole, there is no other way but to import foodgrains to the extent necessary to make up the deficit.

But the AIKS notes with concern that the Government is not at all serious in adopting such a policy; on the other hand, it has adopted a very complacent attitude which in previous years made the country to pay costly. Its procurement policy has failed to a great extent and only a small stock has been created. Fair price shops in many areas have been closed down inspite of prevailing high prices. The interim measures suggested by the Government regarding State trading constitute in practice a negation of the objective of State trading—an objective which the Government was forced to accept by pressure of circumstances. This only demonstrates the strong pull of vested profiteering interests on the Government policy. The AIKS expresses its strong disapproval of this policy.

The Session particularly protests against the discriminatory policy pursued by the Central Government towards Kerala in the matter of supplying foodgrains. It is the responsibility of the Central Government to make up the deficit of individual States from the Central stock. But the Kerala Government was denied this supply on various pretexts, though Kerala is deficit by 50%. On the one hand, the Central Government stopped supply of foodgrains on the plea that the Southern Zone has been created and Kerala can make up its deficit by purchases from surplus States; on the other hand various obstacles were put in the way of the Kerala Government making it practically impossible for this Government to procure stocks from these States. This is nothing but a calculated attempt to starve the people of Kerala and discredit the popular ministry there. No argument can hide this stark reality. The AIKS condemns this attitude and demands that the Central Government must fulfil its responsibility towards Kerala. But the Session notes that by justifying its policy towards Kerala the Government of India wants in practice to continue its policy of discrimination. The activities of certain Congress ministries of the South Zone appear to be intended to put further obstacles in the way of Kerala ministry to buy foodgrains from surplus States. The Southern Food Zone has practically failed in its declared objectives. Anyway, the Central Government must shoulder the responsibility of supplying foodgrains to Kerala to make up its deficit. In this connection, the AIKS is of the opinion that the Government must have a uniform policy on food for whole of India and it is the duty of the Central Government to see that all States properly implement it in practice.

Under these circumstances, considering the delicate food position of the country as a whole and the real danger of food crisis in different parts of the country the AIKS urges upon the Government to adopt the following measures :

1. To purchase directly and through cooperatives where possible a substantial part of the marketed grains; to requisition hoarded surplus stocks of big landowners and big traders. To encourage cooperative marketing societies, storage godowns and help them with adequate funds.
- ✓ 2. To fix a minimum price fair to the producers in consultation with peasants' representatives and also to fix a maximum price which should be not more than 15% higher

and guarantee such prices by Government purchase and supply.

3. To open a network of fairprice shops in Towns and also in all rural areas affected by high prices, with a guarantee of regular supply. To subsidise foodgrains for the poorer people.

4. To substantially restrict bank credit to traders and millers and procure 50% of their stocks, and to utilise bank money to finance Govt. purchases.

5. Deficit of individual States is to be made up from the Central stock of foodgrains and no discrimination against Kerala on any pretext.

6. To implement local development schemes on a permanent basis for providing work to rural unemployed; to allocate at least 100% more fund for direct rural credit to peasants; to suspend realisation of rents and debts from peasants in area affected by severe food crisis and to provide adequate relief; to organise grain-banks on an extensive scale and to form and run them democratically.

7. To constitute democratic food committees with representatives of all parties and organisations at all levels for proper implementation of food policy.

8. The AIKS also demands that the scheme for State wholesale trade in foodgrains should be immediately finalised and steps towards its implementation in stages be taken in consultation with all parties and mass organisations including the Kisan Sabha.

9. Moreover, for increasing agricultural production and attaining self-sufficiency in food, steps should be taken to implement urgently needed land reform measures, particularly about ceiling and distribution of surplus and waste lands, and at the same time, to take measures for widescale flood-prevention and irrigation measures, for cheap irrigation water, adequate and cheap fertilisers, adequate and timely credit to peasants, and assuring fair price to the peasants and such other measures. It is of particular importance to note that concentration of land not only affects production, but also strengthens the grip of vested interests on marketable grains.

This Session calls upon all peasants, agricultural labourers and all democratic masses of the people to build up a strong campaign on the above issues. It particularly calls

upon all Kisan Sabha workers to take initiative in organising such a campaign with the determination to prevent repetition of food crisis.

It appeals to all parties and people owing allegiance to different parties including the Congress to respond to the call of AIKS and forge a united campaign to defeat the game of hoarders and their representatives and to materialise the objective of State trading in foodgrains in practice.

## XI

### ON COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

The 16th Annual Session of the All-India Kisan Sabha expresses on behalf of its eight lakh members, the latter's concern for the revitalisation of cooperative societies in the country-side: e.g. societies for agricultural credit, for the marketing of agricultural produce, for small and cottage industries, labour cooperative societies and multi-purpose cooperatives which are helpful to the rural poor. The genuine interests of peasants, village artisans, agricultural workers and other sections of the rural poor demand a healthy growth of cooperatives and measures of some relief from the exploitation of users, trading profiteers and parasitic landlords.

This Session of the All-India Kisan Sabha notes with grave anxiety the existence of a very unsatisfactory state of affairs in the organisation and management of cooperative societies as well as in the statutory provision concerning them. The fact revealed by the working group on cooperative policy that about 37 per cent of the village (cooperative credit) societies have overdues exceeding 50 per cent of their outstandings, is itself an impressive indication of the growing crisis in this sector of rural economy. To this must be added the fact that only an insignificant proportion of rural credit is supplied by cooperative societies, even after the introduction of the new programme under the two Five Year Plans. In consequence, credit supplied by usurious money-lenders, profiteering traders and big landlords often ties the peasants and rural artisans to abnormally unequal terms of exchange for the sale of their produce, compels them to mortgage their land and other

property on severe terms and finally leads them inevitably towards pauperisation.

Naturally, under these conditions, the existing cooperative societies are also affected by the crisis. Large amount of unrealised arrears of credit societies threatens not only the stability of the existing credit societies but also the prospects of future growth of cooperation in general.

As a result of extremely unsatisfactory provision of rural credit, the rural poor are often unable to derive the benefits due to them from cooperative marketing societies, of which there is a very small beginning. The rural poor are so tied to money-lenders and traders through loans and *dadans* that very little freedom is left to many of them for the disposal of their produce to the marketing societies. This lack of freedom on the part of the peasants and rural artisans too often vitiates the real purpose of all types of cooperative societies. They are often thrown into the grip of these very vested interests from whose exploitation, the co-operatives are intended to protect the rural masses.

On top of these, extremely inadequate financial provision for co-operative societies under the Second Five Year Plan condemns the rickety structure of rural economy to languish in its old shallow moorings. In order to alter these state of affairs, the banking resources of the country must be mobilised to the maximum possible extent and geared to the rural co-operative sector. Co-operation can be further financially strengthened by linking the operation of State trading with the rural co-operatives, by entrusting the procurement as well as the distribution of the State sector to rural co-operatives as per capacity of the latter. At the same time, the guarantee of State procurement at reasonable prices of the products of rural artisan and marketing societies can play an effective role. But at the present moment, very little concessions are enjoyed by cooperative societies and, therefore, a state of stagnation or even decadence continues to prevail.

The All-India Kisan Sabha is, therefore, of the opinion that mass campaigns must be organised in every state in order to remove the obstacles that stand in the way of developing genuine co-operatives in the country-side. The most important of these impediments may be enumerated as follows :

- i. The policy of political discrimination pursued by the

Congress Government in matters of cooperative societies is a serious handicap to their rapid and healthy growth. The ways in which concessions are given, societies are registered and financial assistance sanctioned are all subordinated to the aim of keeping cooperatives as the monopoly of the Congress Party. Combined with this, the policy of relying on rich elements in organising the cooperatives of various types constitute the biggest source of corruption, inefficiency and also bankruptcy of the cooperative societies.

- ii. The statutory provision rules out the formation of a cooperative society in any area where such a society is already in existence. The managing authority of an existing society can admit or reject any new application for membership. Consequently vested interest once in control can always remain so.
- iii. Rigid statutory provision for raising a specified share capital, and the requirement of landownership for granting loan keep the advantages of "co-operation" almost out of the reach of the poor peasants and agricultural workers.
- iv. Merger of village credit societies into large-size cooperatives without the consent of the societies concerned, inflict a serious damage to the initiative of the rural masses.
- v. Inadequate financial provisions, coupled with the failure to distribute loan in due time are responsible for the crippling conditions of cooperative credit societies. Absence of official guarantee for the procurement of the products or for a favourable market for the disposal of the same is an additional reason for the failure of cooperatives of artisans and of marketing societies.
- vi. Official red-tapism and high browed bureaucracy of the officialdom frustrate the enthusiasm of the rural masses.
- vii. The burden of the old debt is a great hindrance to the path of drawing the rural poor into the cooperative movement. Peasants and artisans burdened with debt cannot disentangle themselves from the net of the users and profiteers.
- viii. Illiteracy in general and ignorance of cooperative laws etc. in particular on the part of the rural poor constitute another big hinderance to the growth of coopera-

tive societies. This deficiency is further complicated by statutory requirements of a complex nature for the management of cooperative societies.

Under these conditions, the All-India Kisan Sabh a urges upon all its units to campaign for a charter of demands for the rehabilitation of cooperative societies. Such a charter will of course contain many specific variations from State to State, but the following demands must be taken up in our campaigns :

- ✓ 1. The right of any member of a rural poor family to become member of a cooperative society by agreeing to fulfil the obligations and duties implied in such a membership.
- ✓ 2. Freedom for any number of persons in rural poor families to organise a cooperative society of any type irrespective of whether a similar society exists in the area or not, if this admission is refused by the existing society.
- ✓ 3. Complete elimination of political discrimination and favouritism.
4. Elimination of official red-tapism and the simplification of the statutory provision.
5. Abolition of principle of unlimited liability wherever it exists.
6. Suitable changes in the laws and rules so that the rigidity about raising a specific share capital is relaxed and loans may be advanced by credit societies to the landless peasants on personal security and in order to do away with the domination of vested interests over the cooperative societies.
7. Redemption of old debt of the rural poor on reasonable basis.
8. Education in cooperative organisation and management for the rural poor and social workers.
9. Ample provision of finance by the State and the banks.
10. Compulsory provision for a Reserve Fund for credit societies under the joint administration of the Government and the societies concerned.
11. Elimination of too many intermediary stages between the Reserve Bank and the village societies.
12. Guarantee for the procurement of the products of the co-operatives of small and cottage industries.
13. Guarantee for optimum loan to the credit cooperatives.

14. Valuation of land for the purpose of mortgage at the current market rate when the loan is issued.

The All-India Kisan Sabha urges upon its units to fight for these demands in cooperation with all others who are interested in genuine development of cooperatives.

They must at the same time take up the work of organising and managing rural cooperatives of various types, of enlisting new members in the already existing societies and of assuring their democratic as well as efficient functioning, as part of their day to day tasks in the country-side. The State Committees are specially requested to pay serious attention to the training of cadres for this type of work in rural areas and regard this work as of supreme importance.

This Session enjoins upon the CKC and the State Committees to organise study groups for detailed studies in the laws relating to cooperative societies and the conditions thereof in order to formulate suitable changes in the existing legislation. It is of opinion that laws relating to cooperative farming societies require special study in order to ensure the voluntary character of such societies and enthruse the peasants to join them. In this respect such statutory measures as the banning of mortgage, sales and auction etc. of the land and implements of cooperative farming societies may be of great importance. Such and similar measures can be proposed after detailed study of the conditions prevailing in the country-side.

## XII

### ON PANCHAYATS

The All-India Kisan Sabha welcomes the fact that the institution of the village Panchayat is increasingly becoming important and vital in the life of the kisans of our country. It is gratifying to note that the village Panchayat which in the past was a phenomena confined to certain States on a restricted scale, is now being extended to all States and every village without exception. While welcoming this development, this Session regrets that in some of those States where the Panchayats are in existence for several years, attempts are being made to curtail certain democratic fea-

tures of the same and to increase the authority of the Central State apparatus on these organs of Local Self Government.

The All-India Kisan Sabha further regrets that though steps are being taken to set up the Panchayats with the object of building them as the centres of developmental activity at the village level, yet there are many provisions and clauses in different State Panchayat Acts which are totally undemocratic. They consist of such measures as nomination in place of elections in certain cases, arbitrary powers for the executive officers and other administrative officials and so on. Left as they are, they adversely affect the very objective of the Panchayats, cripple the local and popular initiative, burden the Panchayats with unwanted bureaucratic officials and objectively aid the village reaction to convert them into their handmaids for self-aggrandisement.

The All-India Kisan Sabha is proud to place on record its compliments to the thousands of Kisan Units and their workers all over the country, who by snatching the initiative from the clutches of local reaction, have put up selfless and exemplary work in running the Panchayats and thus endeared to the peasant masses. It calls upon all the units of Kisan Sabha at different levels to take up the work at Panchayat level with more vigour and perseverance, and build united democratic movement to build the Panchayats and transform them into genuine centres and instruments of a truly popular local administration.

Hence the All-India Kisan Sabha demands that

1. the Panchayat Acts in different States should be as far as possible uniform;
2. the elections of Panchayats at all levels should be conducted on the basis of adult franchise, direct elections and on the principle of secret ballot and not by show of hands. Panchayat courts must also be similarly elected;
3. the system of nominations on whatever pretext should be abolished;
4. over-riding and arbitrary powers for executive officers and other administrative officials over the Panchayat Boards should be withdrawn and they be made subordinate to the elected Panchayat;
5. all the developmental and nation-building activity

- at the village level should be entrusted to Panchayats without exception;
6. at least 50% of the land revenue should be compulsorily handed over to Panchayats in each State and to supplement the resources of the Panchayats with funds from other revenue resources of the State. No Panchayats should be compelled to levy any particular tax if that hits the people. The tax-structure of the Panchayats must be so constructed as to put a progressive burden on the rich;
  7. supervision and control over the preparation of land records and collection of land taxes should be vested in the hands of Panchayats;
  8. at least one seat must be reserved for women and one seat to Harijans if their number exceeds 5% of the rural population of the Panchayat area.

The Kisan Sabha is of the opinion that these measures alone constitute the minimum guarantee for the real and popular building-up the Panchayats as the democratic levers of all developmental activity in the village and calls upon all the kisans and other rural masses to campaign and ensure the implementation.

The Kisan Sabha calls upon its State, District, and Taluk units to take energetic and timely steps to guide, educate and train the Kisan cadres to successfully discharge their functions, overcome all the obstacles and build the Panchayats as the popular instruments of all the developmental activities at the village level.

### XIII

#### ON THE PRICES OF COMMERCIAL CROPS

This 16th Session of the All-India Kisan Sabha views with grave concern the downward trend and the low and uneconomic level of the prices of most of the major commercial crops like sugarcane, jute, tobacco, pepper, chillies, cotton, lemon grass, oil, termeric, shellac, etc., while the prices of the manufactured goods as well as the general price level continue to rise higher and higher. Moreover, there is an ever-increasing gap between the harvest and the off-season prices, which cheats the peasants of a fair

share of the prices of their own produce while exacting unconscionable prices from the consumers. This disastrous trend is glaringly revealed even in the cases of the major food crops like rice, wheat and pulses whose harvest prices are generally not more than fifty to sixty per cent of the off-season retail prices paid by the consumers.

The AIKS is of the opinion that this state of affairs is due to the monopoly grip of the Indian and foreign monopolists over our trade, to their unbridled profiteering, speculation and manipulation of stocks, to the pro-vested interests policy pursued by the Government which aids and abets this profiteering and speculation, to the low purchasing power of the people which narrows the internal market, to the crisis of the world capitalist market which continually creates a crisis of the external market for most of our commercial crops and to the persistent refusal or failure of the Government to develop alternative markets for these commodities by developing long-term trade relations with the crisis-free economy of the socialist countries and to develop our own industries for the processing of these commercial crops for internal consumption and export.

✓ The AIKS notes with regret that despite categorical and clear-cut recommendations by a number of Governmental Committees and Commissions to fix fair floor prices for the agricultural products a few months in advance of their dowing, the Government has so far failed to implement them. Not only has the Central State Trading Corporation not taken steps to purchase the major commercial crops as a measure of price-support, but even the efforts of the Kerala Government to form its own State Trading Corporation are being thwarted by the Central Government.

The AIKS strongly condemns this anti-peasant and monopolist policy of the Government which depresses the economy of the agricultural producers who contribute nearly fifty per cent of the national income, ruins millions of peasant producers every year, intensifies the crisis of the internal market and thus hampers the programme of reconstruction and rapid industrialisation of the country. On the contrary, it has given a free hand to the monopolists to artificially depress prices to levels insufficient to cover even the bare cost of production.

Thus, whereas, according to the findings of the Central Jute Enquiry Committee the cost of production of one maund of jute is between Rs. 21 to Rs. 24/- the actual self-

ing price this year has fallen down to Rs. 13/- in West Bengal and Rs. 9/- in Bihar. The belated decision of the State Trading Corporation to enter the jute market has not materially changed the situation.

The case of sugarcane is even more glaring. Here the Government has reduced the minimum prices from Rs. 1-12-0 to Rs. 1-7-0 and Rs. 1-5-0 per maund while it has allowed the price of sugar to rise from Rs. 31/- to Rs. 40 per maund, thus aiding the sugar capitalists in defrauding the growers of several crores of rupees every year. The growers are not able to recover their full cost of production which according to the Indian Central Sugarcane Committee is Rs. 140 per maund (excluding the cost of cartage and supervision).

Similarly, in the case of tobacco, due to the operations of the ILTD Co., a purchasing agency of the British-owned Imperial Tobacco Co., an artificial slump has been inflicted on the growers of virginia tobacco and the Government have refused to intervene to protect the interests of the growers by fixing minimum prices, making purchases and starting State-aided Cigarette factories for the processing of this tobacco. As a result today, the price of tobacco had fallen down ruinously to a level lower than that of the cost of production.

The AIKS, therefore, demands a radical change in this suicidal policy of the Government and the immediate adoption of the following measures :-

1. Floor prices of all major commercial crops should be fixed a few months ahead of sowing at a level as to cover the cost of production and the cost of living of the growers. The Government should support these prices by large-scale purchases. ✓

2. The principle of state-trading at the wholesale level should be extended to all the major commercial crops. ✓

3. Ware houses with coldstorage arrangements wherever necessary should be established at every important centre and liberal credit should be advanced to the growers on the security of their crops.

4. The prices of industrial goods should be scaled down to a level of parity with the prices of the agricultural products. ✓

5. Markets should be found for surplus commercial crops by developing trade with all countries, specially the

socialist countries, on the basis of long term agreements and by suitably modifying the export-import policies. The stranglehold of certain foreign monopolies (like the IITD, Rally Brothers, ISMA etc.) on the export trade of our commercial crops should be broken by extending the activities of the State Trading Corporation.

6. Industries must be developed to utilise our own raw materials and the internal market should be expanded by raising the purchasing power of the people.

7. The minimum price of sugar-cane should be fixed at Rs. 1.75 per maund, the various deductions which are being made in certain States should be cancelled, and a share in the excess earned profits during the years 1952-59 should be paid to the growers.

8. The minimum prices of jute should be fixed at Rs. 30 per maund, full working of the jute mills be ensured by the unloading of sealed bales etc. import of inferior foreign jute be stopped and restrictions on the export of surplus jute be removed.

9. Minimum prices for tobacco should be fixed and external markets should be found in the Far East, the Middle East, the Socialist countries, etc. and the monopoly of a few trading companies should be broken. The excise duty on tobacco should be reduced.

The AIKS greets the peasants of various States, particularly the canegrowers of U. P., for their glorious strikes and struggles against these disastrous policies of the Government and calls upon all units of the Kisan Sabha to build a powerful united mass campaign for the realisation of the above mentioned demands. ✓



## ADDRESSES OF STATE KISAN SABHAS

1. Andhra Pradesh Ryots' Association,  
Himayatnagar, Hyderabad.
2. Assam Prov. Kisan Sabha,  
Banapati Bhaban, Rani Bari,  
GAUHATI.
3. Bihar Rajya Kisan Sabha,  
43, Legislators' Club,  
Gardiner Road, PATNA.
4. Gujarat Kisan Sabha,  
Juna Bazar, BROACH.
5. Himachal Pradesh Kisan Sabha,  
C/o Sri Kameshwar Pandit,  
Skipton Vila, SIMLA-1.
6. Kerala Karshaka Sangham,  
Pawamani Road,  
KOZHIKODE-4.
7. Karnataka Raitha Sangha,  
56, K. V. Temple Street,  
BANGALORE.
8. M. P. Kisan Sabha,  
Itwara, BHOPAL.
9. Maharashtra Kisan Sabha,  
Raj Bhuwan,  
Vallabh Bhai Patel Road,  
BOMBAY-4.
10. Manipur State Kisan Sabha,  
47, Gimson Road,  
IMPHAL.
11. Punjab Prov. Kisan Sabha,  
Civil Lines,  
JULLUNDUR CITY.

12. Rajasthan Prov. Kisan Sabha,  
P. O. — JHUNJHUNU.
13. Tamilnad Kisan Sabha,  
15, Perianna Maistry Street,  
MADRAS-1.
14. Tripura Kisan Sabha,  
Motor Stand Road,  
AGARTALA.
15. Utkal Kisan Sabha,  
Chandni Chowk,  
CUTTACK.
16. U. P. Kisan Sabha,  
22, Kaiserbagh,  
LUCKNOW.
17. W. Bengal Prov. Kisan Sabha,  
77, Dharmtalla Street,  
CALCUTTA-13.