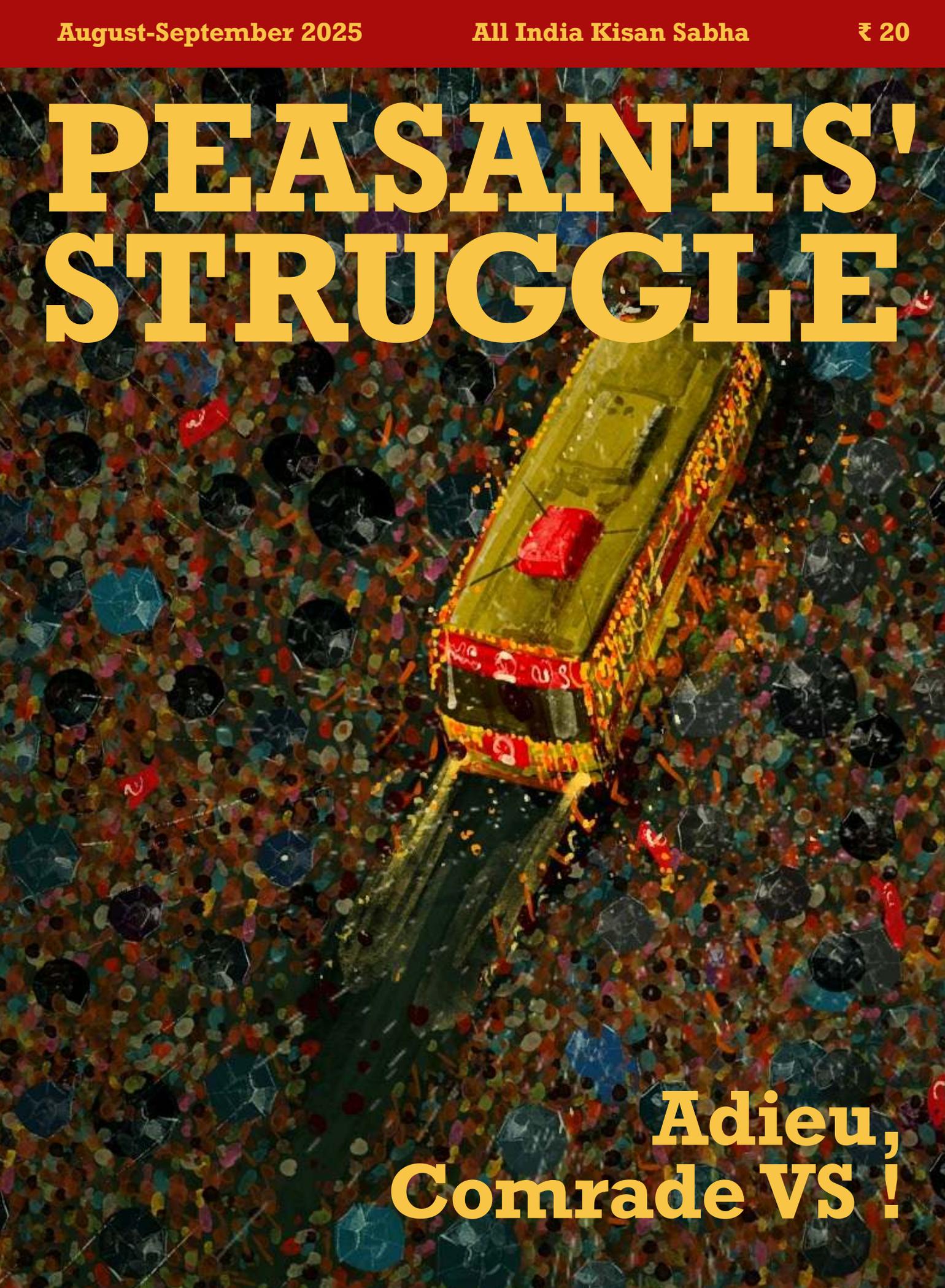


PEASANTS' STRUGGLE

A green tractor, heavily decorated with garlands and a red flag on top, is shown moving through a field of colorful confetti. The confetti consists of many small, multi-colored pieces, creating a vibrant and textured background. The tractor is positioned diagonally, moving from the upper right towards the lower left of the frame.

Adieu,
Comrade VS !



PEASANTS' STRUGGLE

The Journal of AIKS

August-September 2025



ALL INDIA KISAN SABHA
36, Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla
Lane (Canning Lane)
New Delhi - 110001
011-23782890
www.kisansabha.org
kisansabha@gmail.com

Editor
Dr Ashok Dhawale

Working Editor
Badal Saroj

Editorial Board Members
Dr Vijoo Krishnan
P Krishnaprasad
Inderjit Singh
Awadhesh Kumar
Manoj Kumar
Pushpendra Tyagi
Sanjay Parate

Designer
Navina Lamba

Cover Art
Arosh Thevadathil

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Editorial

Peasant agriculture came under tremendous attack in the last 3 decades. Over a million farmers, agricultural workers and migrant workers have committed suicide according to NCRB data of whom half a million suicides were in the 11 years of the Narendra Modi led BJP-NDA. This data is just the tip of the ice-berg and the real numbers are much higher. Unemployment, hunger, indebtedness and acute distress is the rural reality.

The ruling class parties in Global South including in India created a conducive atmosphere for imperialism to exploit the peasantry. In many instances, the peasantry heroically resisted. The classic case is the Delhi struggle against draconian farm laws, where AIKS played a decisive role in resistance. With the general crisis of capitalism intensifying and the emergence of socialist China as an economic and technological rival, the Trump led US has turned protectionist. All imperial gospels on benefits of the WTO regime are collapsing.

In continuation of the imperialist aggression and sanctions, US imperialism has unleashed a Tariff war on countries to force them to fall in line with US geo-strategic interests. The Trump administration has slapped India with a 50% tariff along with Brazil. This was after India refused to stop buying oil from Russia. This was like a bolt from the blue for Modi who was loyally acting as a subordinate ally of US imperialism. Instead of courageously driving the country towards an anti-imperialist position by getting integrated with the emerging anti-imperialist block, Modi & co are sailing in two boats. This was evident from the way in which Modi removed the 11% import duty on imported cotton. By this act, Indian farmers have been thrown to the mercy of the market, where they have to compete with heavily subsidised, industrial scale American farmers. There are also media reports indicating that India might sign a humiliating FTA with the US and EU in the coming days. This can further intensify the agrarian crisis.

The ruling class, the BJP and fascist RSS is resorting to communal polarisation to divert people's attention from livelihood issues. It is subverting constitutional institutions, the Parliament, Judiciary, Election Commission, infringing on federal rights of States. Rampant loot of resources, land grab is being facilitated. The Prime Minister's speech on Independence Day praised the fascist RSS an organisation that betrayed the freedom struggle and banned many times for its role in communal riots and also complicity in the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. The divisive Hindutva agenda is being openly advocated on the one hand while the gates are being opened for corporate profiteering.

Peasantry can survive only by unleashing a lock, stock and barrel class struggle in unity with the working class! ■



On Emerging Kisan Movement in the Country

HANNAN MOLLAH
(National Vice President, AIKS)



After the victory of the historical Farmers' Struggle, the Modi Government gave written assurance to discuss MSP and other issues with SKM to arrive at a final solution. But after five years, the government has failed to hold even a single meeting with SKM exposing its sheer lack of interest in solving the problem.

Modi's anti-farmer government's policy is corporatisation of agriculture and reverse land reform to take away land from the farmer and hand it over to corporates like Adani and Ambani.

SKM held several programmes to bring back the government's attention to the promises and organised struggles at district and state levels. Not only has the government remained unmoved, but its policies have intensified the agrarian crisis further.

Ever since Modi came to power, a series of attacks has been unleashed upon farmers. The BJP government introduced a land acquisition ordinance which was opposed by the farmers and eventually defeated. The Prime Minister also went back on his promise of implementing the MS Swaminathan report and submitted an affidavit at the court that MSP was not possible.

The third attack happened in the form of three draconian Farm Acts that could turn the farmers slaves on their own land. SKM fought against it for more than a year and defeated the conspiracy.

The next move was a free trade agreement for opening up the country's agriculture market to foreign countries. A "National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing" was announced to enable the corporates to loot farmers at their will through marketing machinery. After SKM's strong opposition, the policy was put on the backburner, but not withdrawn.

The latest anti-farmer move is a "Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement" signed with the UK. While more negotiations are on with European Union countries too, the most dangerous FTA would be with the US. The US wanted to dump their highly subsidised produce of agriculture, dairy and fishery to India, which would be the death knell for Indian farmers. US president Donald Trump has introduced a 50% tariff on Indian businesses and MSMEs.

In the face of these series of attacks against farmers, we have to build up a massive militant resistance to save our farmers, small traders and MSMEs.

The Kisan Movement, in the last one and half decade, has achieved many valuable lessons and experiences. It was learnt that to face these attacks, we need massive united resistance all over the country. The broadest possible unity in the kisan movement was achieved and issue-based united struggle became the new way of resistance. The unity of peasant-workers and agricultural workers was the most important achievement. Further expediting the struggle across the country remains the need of the day.

In this context, All India Kisan Sabha in its last CKC meeting, evaluated our experiences and analysed the nature of the series of attacks of the Modi government against the poor, farmers, workers, stud-

-ents, youth and women, democratic rights, Constitution of India and secular values. AIKS decided to organise intensive campaigning among farmers and mobilise them in common struggle. The worker-peasants joined the Bharat Bandh on 9th July and this was the first opportunity to launch an offensive against the Modi government and its anti-people policies. It was one of the most successful struggles in recent times. The council also decided to work for a joint movement against corporate loot in the month of August.

The land struggle was the basic struggle of peasantry and AIKS would build up that in the country. In all states, AIKS would organise land conventions to understand and deal with the land question in all states. On the basis of those reports a national land convention would be held in September.

AIKS also decided to organise a solidarity programme with Cuba, observe Moncada day among farmers and mobilise funds for Cuban solidarity. Human-wildlife conflicts in various states was yet another issue discussed. Not only do the farmers face attack from wild animals and suffer crop destruction, but lakhs of acres of land have been acquired by the government in the name of forming tiger reserves and elephant corridors. This was on top of the corporate land grab and land loots by the government in the name of development.

AIKS decided to build an independent as well as united struggle against such land grabbing. In the national council meeting of SKM, all these issues were discussed in detail and a consensus emerged to fight against all these problems. It was reported in the meeting that the 9th July Bandh was most successful among recent struggles with several farmer organisations, along with workers and agricultural labourers, joining the struggle.

SKM believes that the Modi government

would surrender to the US imperialism on FTA and open the Indian agriculture and dairy sector. We observed 13 August 2025, as “Corporate Quit India Day”. We organised tractor march, vehicle parade and burnt effigies of Trump and Modi across the country at block, tehsil and district levels. Imposition of high electricity tariffs has already been taken up.

The national-level intensified campaign was launched on August 15 and it would extend till November 25, to expose the anti-farmer and anti-national communal politics of Modi and the state governments led by BJP.

Massive protest rallies would be held at state capitals and in Delhi on November 26, on the 5th anniversary of the historical kisan struggle. Central Trade Unions and workers would also join in forming a national level worker-peasant united struggle against the Modi Government and imperialist conspiracies.

SKM in Punjab organised massive tractor rallies on July 30 against land pooling policy of the state government to grab lakhs of acres of land by AAP govt. and a massive Mahapanchayat on August 24. Publication material would be published by SKM to spread this campaign in the country.

SKM decided to build up militant struggle at local levels opposing eviction and bulldozer attacks and to fight for proper rehabilitation and compensation and against all types of demolition of slums and settlements without resettlement. SKM would fight against forceful construction of overhead high voltage transmission lines on farm lands and demand implementation of land use policy and preservation of agricultural land for cultivation considering the food security of the country. We demand that the government levy 2% tax on the top 1% who are super rich, enhance corporate tax, re-introduce 1/3 wealth tax and succession tax to find financial resources

at the rate of 7% of the GDP for rational, equitable distribution of wealth among workers, farmers and toiling people and to ensure five fundamental rights of food, employment, health, education and pension to all citizens.

Another broader platform of the kisan movement, Bhoomi Adhikar Andolan (BAA), had its national convention on 29 and 30 July 2025 at Delhi. Over 70 leaders of different kisan organisations from all over India attended the convention and had a brainstorming session on the problems of Jal-Jangal-Zameen in the country. BAA accused the anti-poor and anti-secular BJP-NDA of ‘Bulldozer-Raj’ politics which committed onslaughts on people’s right for housing, rehabilitation and resettlement. The meeting also highlighted State violence and atrocities — targeting Adivasis, Dalits, Muslims, Christians, women and girl children — which has depleted people’s trust in the rule of law.

It condemned bulldozer politics, arbitrary evictions and indiscriminate land acquisition, violating the Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013. The ‘double engine’ government of BJP-NDA in UP, Assam, Bihar, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Maharashtra, MP and Gujarat, are notorious for state violence and atrocities targeting Adivasis, Dalits, Muslims, Christians, women and girl children.

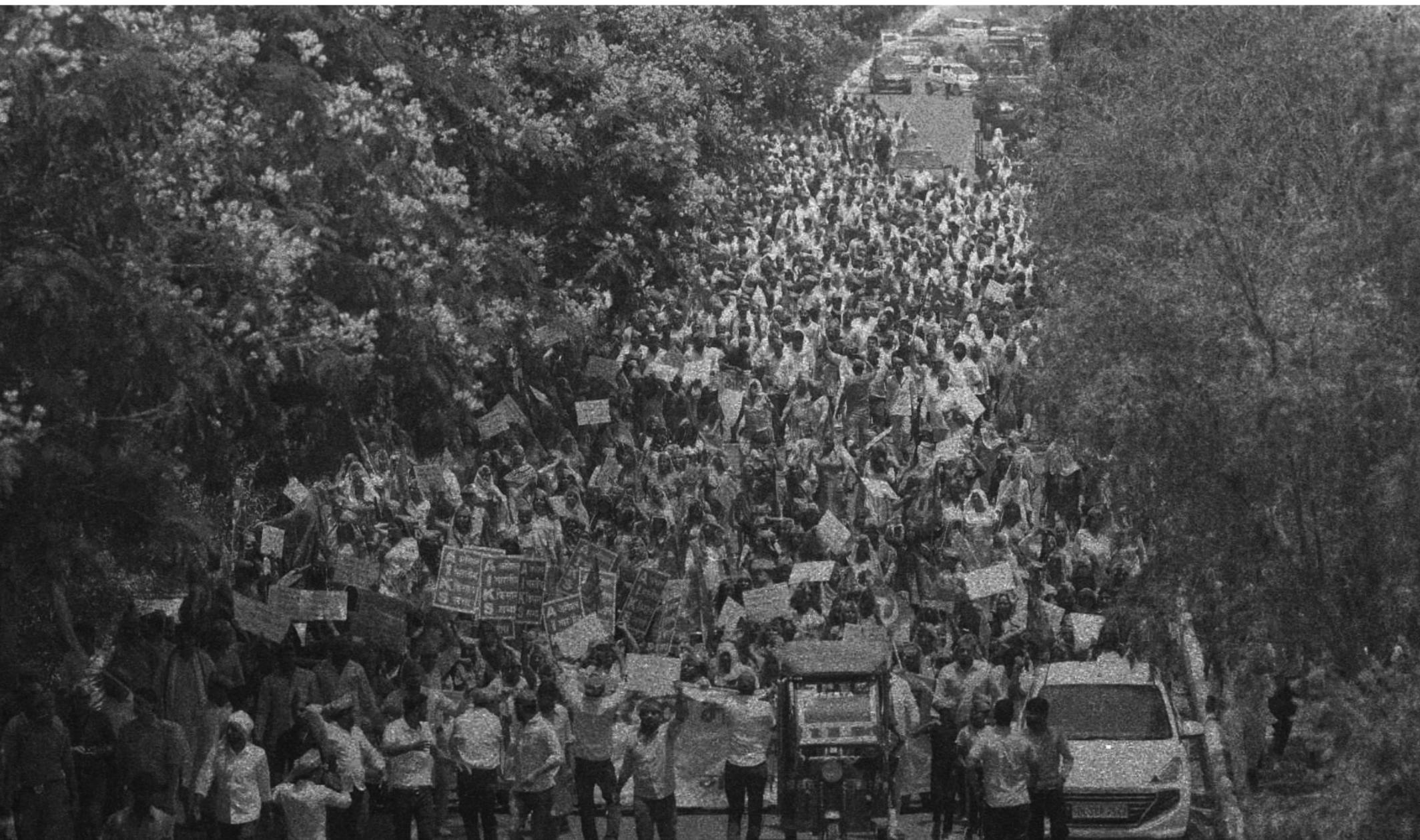
The meeting resolved to strengthen state level chapters of BAA to ensure better coordination and mobilisation and to strengthen local struggle by linking them with policies at all-India level. It will unite all the people’s movements to strengthen the national level resistance against corporate land grab, corporate loot of mineral deposits, communal politics and environmental destruction. The meeting called for a united campaign on the issues raised above, to observe 13th August as “Corporate Quit India Day” and to hold a National Unity Day in the context of growing comm-

-unal atmosphere and divisive jingoistic nationalism. The meeting adopted a declaration which will be placed before the people at the national convention in Odisha in December 2025.

A resolution seriously condemned the killings in Bastar and paramilitary operations against the so-called insurgents as it violates the rule of law. More than 500 tribal people have been killed. The meeting also condemned the election commission for the announcement of Special Intensive Revision (SIR) to deprive lakhs of people of their voting rights. It also condemned the barbaric attacks of Israel on Palestine and Gaza which has kill-

-ed over 60,000 people with the support of imperialist USA. On these issues, BAA will build up a massive people's movement in the coming days in the country.

AIKS strengthened its organisational position and enrolled more than 1.53 crore members from 27 states. As a pan-India organisation, it has a great responsibility to build up a massive militant kisan movement in the country independently and jointly with all the constituents of SKM and BAA. Therefore, in the coming days, farmers and workers will join the massive resistance struggle against the anti-people, communal, corporate politics of the Modi government. ■



9th July 2025 General Strike Stern Warning to Corporate & Communal Extremist Forces

P KRISHNAPRASAD
(Finance Secretary, AIKS)



The General Strike on 9th July 2025 called by the ten central trade unions and supported by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) successfully affected major sectors of industry, services and agricultural production all over India. This was achieved despite the threats and intimidation by the administration, the police and the hostile criticism by the corporate media.

In the sectors like coal, power, bank and insurance and steel the strike was almost total. Impact was widespread in the industrial sector of Telangana and Karnataka. Visible strikes were observed in ports, defense industries and the IT sector. Massive demonstrations by the unorganised sector workers, especially scheme workers, were noticed all over India. In states like Tripura, Assam, Bihar and Kerala the strike turned into a total bandh with commercial shops closed down and road traffic turning into standstill for the entire day. In all other states including BJP ruled states of Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan thousands of the workers and farmers demonstrated on the streets with slogans against the corporate policies of the Modi government. Punjab and Haryana witnessed massive demonstrations in all districts. Farmers massively joined hands with the workers in the Rail Roko and Rasta Roko struggles especially in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. Apple farmers' protests were massive in Kashmir and Himachal. Around 25 crore workers' participation in this strike action made it one of the impactful massive protest actions of the working people across the world in recent times. The resounding success and massive participation especially of women has signaled a stern warning against the ruling corporate forces.

The support of SKM and the platform of agricultural workers organisations ensured massive participation of the peasantry and rural workers in the widespread protests including road and rail blockades across rural India. Organisations of students, youth, women, small traders and other social sections also actively participated. Opposition political parties, especially the Left parties, also extended support.

The General Strike was called mainly against the implementation of the four labour codes, privatisation of public sector units, danger of casualisation of employment, MSP @ C2+50% with guaranteed procurement and comprehensive loan waiver for the peasantry. Thus, the burning issues of both farmers and workers were targeted by the trade unions and that attracted the entire working people including the farmers and agricultural workers to come forward for a united resistance across the country. Compared to the earlier strikes, 9th July 2025 was notably more impactful. The corporate media and the bureaucracy noticed the vibrant, pan India worker-peasant united action. On the other hand, this successful action has filled confidence among the entire working people to fight the corporate policies tooth and nail.

From our assessment, what is important to note is the leadership role played by the united trade union movement and the working class in making the strike action effective and in uniting the entire working people including the peasant masses, petty producers and traders who bear the brunt of corporate policies. The working class of India is consistently building the worker-peasant unity as a cohesive force across India against corporate dominance. 9th July 2025 was the 22nd General Strike since the invention of neoliberal policies. The success of this worker-peasant united action has given confidence to all the democratic sections in the society that the entire

working people are ready to fight back the anti-people policies of the ruling classes.

In the historical farmers' strike of 2020-21 led by the SKM - the most impactful mass action in independent India that sacrificed the lives of 736 farmers — that forced the Modi government to repeal the three farm acts, the success was also attributed to the active participation and support extended by the trade union movement across India.

Despite the growing protest against FTAs, the Modi government has surrendered to the pressure of developed countries including the UK and signed the Indo-UK FTA Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) on 24th July 2025 in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and initiated opening the Indian economy to UK and thus endangering the sovereign power of independent India. It is a fact that the Indian state and the bureaucracy were forced to take into cognisance the growing worker-peasant unity against corporate exploitation which is evident from the unwillingness of the Union govt. to succumb to the pressure of the Imperialist countries to open dairy sector and sectors like apple when the Free Trade Agreement—CETA was signed.

SKM has called for a parliamentary review of the CETA and to drop all the anti-people, anti-national provisions in the agreement that will ruin domestic agriculture, industry and services. As a warning to the corporate forces and to recollect the historic Quit India movement, SKM called upon the framers to raise the slogan 'Multinational Corporations Quit India, Corporates Quit Agriculture' and organise massive protests on 13th August 2025 across the country holding tractor/ motor vehicle parade, burn copies of CETA and effigies of the US President Ronald Trump & Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The ten central trade unions had supported this call. This action was successfully organised ac-

-ross India and there was massive participation of the farmers, workers and agricultural workers.

“The support of SKM and the platform of agricultural workers organisations ensured massive participation of the peasantry and rural workers in the widespread protests including road and rail blockades across rural India.”

Prime Minister Modi has failed to retaliate solidly against the bullying of US President Donald Trump who signed an order to impose an economic embargo of 50 per cent tariffs on Indian exports to the US in the name of India purchasing Russian oil. Modi had promised in 2017 to double the income of farmers by the year 2022. In fact, its pro-corporate policies had doubled the cost of production and distress in agriculture. The policies of denying remunerative MSP and comprehensive loan waiver, curtailing Rs 85,000 crore fertiliser subsidies in the last three consecutive Union Budgets and curtailing allocation to NREGA has ruined the competitiveness of Indian agriculture. About 31 farmers commit suicide daily in India. Peasant households are forced to join distress migration adding the reserve army of labour in urban centres thus affects the bargaining power of the working class.

Instead of protecting the rights of the entire working people and developing the dome-

-stic economy as vibrant and competitive so that it could absorb the domestic industrial products and compete with and advance in the world market, the Modi govt. is sticking to the pro-corporate policies of expropriating vast natural and human resources of the country for huge corporate profiteering. The Modi government and BJP-RSS combine being under the duress of the imperialist forces, will never agree to the long pending demands of remunerative price to farmers, minimum living wage to workers, liberate the working people from indebtedness, repeal the 4 labour codes and address the acute unemployment.

The only way ahead for the working people is the path of protracted, militant, massive struggles across India under the combined strength of worker-peasant unity. November 26, 2025 marks the 5th anniversary of the historic farmers' struggle of 2020-21. On that day, SKM, along with CTUs and platform of agriculture workers unions, have decided to organise massive worker-farmer protest action at New Delhi as well as in the state capitals. It will be headed by a 3-month long national campaign against corporate-communal forces from August 15 to November 20 with the vision of national unity and people's unity based on the two pillars of worker-farmer unity and unity of the people, especially the Hindu-Muslim bond, leading to secular unity of different religions and faiths.

Both the class and secular unity of the entire working people is necessary to defeat the evil machinations of the corporate and communal extremist forces under the grip of RSS-BJP combine representing the ruling classes of India. In order to prepare the peasantry for the ultimate struggle till victory, to attain all the genuine demands including remunerative MSP and loan waiver, further cementing the strong foundation of the worker-peasant unity across the country is necessary. The need of the hour is to take up the message of class and secular unity up to the grass root level in the villages, factories, workplaces and to each worker-

“The only way ahead for the working people is the path of protracted, militant, massive struggles across India under the combined strength of worker-peasant unity.”

peasant household. The peasant as well as the working-class masses have to be ready for the long haul, for a larger and more durable massive struggle than the historic 2020-21 farmers' struggle in the immediate future. ■



July 9: A Milestone General Strike





Against Corporate-Communal Nexus



Building the Worker-Peasant Alliance in India

Dr ASHOK DHAWALE
(National Vice President, AIKS)



The history of victorious socialist revolutions in Russia, China, Vietnam, Korea and Cuba has shown that the worker-peasant alliance was crucial to their success. In each of these countries, the victorious revolutionary forces had to battle against the bourgeois-landlord ruling classes in their countries, and also against imperialism which backed these ruling classes to the hilt.

In the new era of imperialist globalisation and neoliberalism, with neo-fascist, chauvinist, communal, casteist and racist tendencies raising their ugly heads, the cardinal importance of forging and strengthening the worker-peasant alliance in each country has grown manifold. This is because, in addition to feudalism and its remnants, the working class and the peasantry are today facing the even bigger assault of neo-liberalism and its attendant evils. This can only be repulsed by a much greater unity of both these productive, and exploited, classes.

Before coming to the subject of building the worker-peasant alliance in India, we must grasp Lenin's theoretical concept of the worker-peasant alliance.

LENIN'S CONCEPT OF THE WORKER-PEASANT ALLIANCE

We observed the death centenary of Lenin last year. Among the numerous seminal theoretical contributions made by Lenin to Marxism was his concept of the worker-peasant alliance for a socialist revolution. Not only did he theoretically propound this concept; but he also practically worked to make it a reality to ensure the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia, and he also maintained that alliance for the building of socialism.

The famous Hungarian Marxist and author of *History and Class Consciousness*, Gyorgy Lukacs, called Lenin "the only theoretician equal to Marx yet produced by the struggle for the liberation of the proletariat." Lenin was indeed an extremely rare combination of theory and practice, of movement and organization. His supreme achievement was, of course, to lead the first successful socialist revolution in the world, defend it against all odds, and build a Communist Party that would achieve this task.

Marx and Engels in their rich writings mainly concentrated their attention on the proletariat—the working class—in the then relatively advanced industrial capitalist countries of Europe. The proletariat, they declared, would provide leadership to the struggle for a radical social transformation from capitalism to socialism. They, of course, took account of both the positive and negative aspects of the role of different strata of the peasantry.

The experience of the heroic Paris Commune of 1871 showed that one of the main reasons for its defeat was that the French bourgeoisie was able to obtain the support of the peasantry against the Commune that was led by the working class. This support was mustered by creating the fear in the peasantry that the working-class attack on bourgeois property would extend to an attack on peasant property as well.

However, Marx and Engels were also aware of the positive potential of the peasantry. This comes through clearly in a letter written by Marx to Engels on April 16, 1856, where he says, “The whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility of backing the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the Peasant War. Then the affair will be splendid....” Lenin took serious note of this observation very early on, and again repeated it in one of the last articles in his life called *Our Revolution*, first published in *Pravda* on May 30, 1923.

At the young age of 26, Lenin wrote *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* in 1896. In that book he underlined the revolutionary potential of both the proletariat and the peasantry. As early as 1901, in his article *The Workers’ Party and the Peasantry*, Lenin spoke of the revolutionary aim of working class struggles and then wrote, “Can this aim be achieved without sowing the seeds of the class struggle and political consciousness among the many millions of the peasantry? Let no one say it is impossible to sow these seeds! It is already being done in a thousand ways that escape our attention and influence.” In 1903, Lenin greatly expanded on this theme through his book *To the Rural Poor*, which still retains its relevance.

DUAL AIM OF THE WORKER PEASANT ALLIANCE

The first Russian Revolution of 1905, which was crushed by the Tsarist regime, yielded valuable lessons. It was then that the Bolshevik Party gave the slogan for a “revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.” This was a valuable enrichment of Marxism.

The basic analysis and argument for this new slogan that Lenin advanced, on the basis of the concrete analysis of concrete conditions, was as follows. There was a great difference between early and late ca-

-pitalism. The French Revolution of 1789 led by the bourgeoisie, representing early capitalism, had smashed feudalism and had redistributed the lands of the feudal estates among the peasantry. But the bourgeoisie in late capitalism, in Russia and elsewhere, had lost its earlier vigour, was incapable of striking such mortal blows to feudalism, was in fact trying to strike compromises with the feudal order which frustrated the democratic aspirations of the peasantry, and was itself being threatened by the emerging working class. The bourgeoisie was terrified that if it attacked feudal property, this would lead to a rebound attack by the working people on bourgeois property as well.

It was in such a situation that Lenin put forward the dual aim of a worker-peasant alliance, led by the working class, which would not only complete the democratic (anti-feudal) revolution, but then would also move forward to a socialist (anti-capitalist) revolution.

Thus, the following conclusion was drawn by Lenin in his celebrated book *Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* written in 1905, “The proletariat must carry the democratic revolution to completion, allying to itself the mass of the peasantry in order to crush the aristocracy’s resistance by force and paralyse the bourgeoisie’s instability. The proletariat must accomplish the socialist revolution, allying to itself the mass of semi-proletarian elements of the population, so as to crush the bourgeoisie’s resistance by force and paralyse the instability of the peasantry and the petit bourgeoisie.”

Based on the cardinal principle of strengthening the worker-peasant alliance, Lenin and the Bolsheviks consistently took several policy positions and practical steps until and especially after the October Revolution, when it was in power.

The classic rallying slogan of the Russian Revolution itself — “Peace! Land! Bread!” —

reflected this unity. Soviets of workers, peasants and soldiers were elected, and their deputies came together in conferences. In his last article dated March 2, 1923, called *Better Fewer, But Better*, which deals with the tasks of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, Lenin wrote, "We must strive to build up a state in which the workers retain the leadership of the peasants, in which they retain the confidence of the peasants, and by exercising the greatest economy remove every trace of extravagance from our social relations."

IMPERIALIST GLOBALISATION AND NEW CHALLENGES

Lenin made a brilliant analysis of imperialism in 1916 in his book of the same name. Today, after more than a century, the basic character of imperialism outlined by Lenin — its exploitation, loot, inequalities, wars, destruction — have further accentuated. International finance capital is on the rampage. Millions have been killed in wars and famines. Planet earth is itself in grave danger due to global warming and environmental degradation.

As Prabhat Patnaik writes, "The prospect of a revolution over much of the third world depends crucially upon the successful building of a worker-peasant alliance. Without such an alliance any revolutionary transcendence of capitalism is not possible, just as the October Revolution itself would not have been possible without such an alliance.

"The necessity for such an alliance arises today not just for completing the anti-feudal democratic revolution, but also for overcoming the acute agrarian crisis, and in general the crisis of petty production, that contemporary globalisation has unleashed over much of the third world. It has entailed an elimination of State support for petty production which the post-colonial dirigiste regimes had provided in

varying degrees, in keeping with the promises of the anti-colonial struggle, and has exposed this sector to encroachment by globally mobile big capital and to the vicissitudes of world market price fluctuations.

"Since the growth in demand for labour in the capitalist sectors of these economies has been woefully inadequate, falling short even of the natural growth of the work-force, this encroachment by big capital on petty production has brought acute distress to millions of working people, including to workers employed within the capitalist sector itself. In India for instance more than four lakh peasants have committed suicide over the last 3 decades."

LEGACY OF WORKER PEASANT ACTIONS IN INDIA

United actions by workers and peasants in India were manifested in various glorious instances in our anti-imperialist freedom struggle, and also in the numerous struggles of the working class and the peasantry both before and after independence. Space does not permit a recounting of all those struggles.

On January 19, 1982, a massive joint All India General Strike by the working class against the then Congress central government's anti-worker, anti-peasant and anti-people policies was successfully organised. It raised the demands not only of workers, but also of peasants and agricultural workers, who came out on the streets in large numbers in solidarity. There was brutal police firing on the strike rallies in Uttar Pradesh, in which two peasants Bholu Paswan and his younger brother Lal Chand Paswan were killed; and in Tamil Nadu, in which three agricultural workers Anjan, Nagooran and Gunasekharan were killed. Many others were injured in repression unleashed in various parts of the country.

A day earlier, on January 18, 1982, the Great Mumbai Textile Workers Strike had begun, in which two and a half lakh workers from all textile mills in the city went on an indefinite strike which lasted for over a year. The All India action on January 19 above also gave solidarity and support to the Mumbai Textile Workers Strike.

Many other All India Strikes were held in later years, in which the working class and the peasantry took up each other's demands and supported each other.

HEIGHTENED UNITED STRUGGLES AGAINST MODI REGIME

A new chapter began with the coming to power of the Modi-led BJP-RSS regime in 2014. The neo-liberal policies which were inaugurated by the Congress central government of Narasimha Rao in 1991 and continued since then by all successive central governments, reached their pitch under the Narendra Modi regime. To these shamelessly pro-corporate and neo-liberal policies was added a dangerous mixture of communalism, casteism, authoritarianism and neo-fascism.

“But it must be underlined that building the worker-peasant alliance to carry out a radical transformation in society is fundamentally a political project, not an economic one.”

Naturally, the resistance of the workers and peasants grew in the same proportion. In 2015, a large struggle led jointly by several organisations of peasants, agricultural workers, adivasis and dalits under the united umbrella of the Bhumi Adhikar Andolan (BAA), forced the Modi regime to withdraw the reactionary pro-corporate ordinance amending the Land Acquisition Act, 2013.

In 2017-18, massive struggles of tens of thousands of peasants led by the AIKS, like the 10-day Mahapadav and 3-day Statewide Road Blockade in Rajasthan, and the 11-day Statewide Farmers' Strike and subsequent 7-day Kisan Long March in Maharashtra not only succeeded in winning their demands, but they also caught the imagination of the peasantry and the people all over India.

It was against this background that the three class organisations CITU, AIKS and AIAWU came together and organised 2 major joint nationwide mass actions in 2018. The first was the 5-lakh strong Jail Bharo (Court Arrest) struggle spread over hundreds of centres in several states on August 9. And the second was the 2-lakh strong Worker Peasant Nationwide Rally in Delhi on September 5. These two massive united actions enthused the working class and the peasantry.

And then, in September 2020, in the midst of the Covid pandemic, the Modi regime steamrolled the three Farm Laws and the four Labour Codes through Parliament, crushing all parliamentary opposition. This was an unprecedented attack on the peasantry and the working class. By its constant slashing of funds for MNREGA, the government had already been attacking agricultural workers. United and intensified worker peasant resistance to these steps was inevitable.

That resistance began on November 26, 2020, the day on which the Constitution of India was adopted by the Constituent Assembly. On that day, the Central Trade

Unions (CTU) gave a call for an All India General Strike, in which lakhs of workers not only struck work, but also came out on the streets. On the very same day, the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), which was formed with the coming together of numerous farmers' organisations, gave a clarification call to march to Delhi. Braving water cannons, tear-gas shells and lathi charges by the police, lakhs of farmers from the states adjoining Delhi reached the gates of the capital and blocked several national highways for a record period of one year and 15 days till December 11, 2021. This struggle spread across the country, with solidarity rallies of thousands of farmers and workers in several states. Over 700 farmers were martyred in this struggle. Finally, after a year, on November 29, 2021, the Modi regime was forced to repeal the three Farm Laws. It was an iconic victory.

One major outcome of this struggle was that it brought the peasantry and the working class much closer to each other. Co-ordination between the SKM and the CTU increased. The working class led by the CTU extended solidarity and support to all the action calls given by the SKM. In turn, the SKM extended solidarity to various action calls given by the CTU. The nationwide mobilisation of the AIKS, CITU and AIAWU in all these united actions was undoubtedly among the largest.

On September 5, 2022 a Joint National Convention of the CITU, AIKS and AIAWU was held at the Talkatora Stadium in New Delhi. Over 5,000 delegates attended. State level joint conventions were held, with the leadership of the three fronts participating in them. A joint campaign was carried out in many states very intensively and on April 5, 2023 the Worker Peasant Struggle Rally was held at the Ramlila Maidan, New Delhi with an impressive nationwide participation. A campaign fortnight from August 1 to 14, 2022 across the country was conducted.

Widening the ambit of united worker-peasant actions much further, on August 24,

2023 the CTU and SKM together organised another impressive All India Worker Peasant Convention at Talkatora Stadium in New Delhi. As per the call of that convention, three-day Mahapadavs were held from November 26-28, 2023 in front of the Raj Bhawans in all state capitals by the CTU and SKM. Lakhs of peasants and workers took part in these actions. They had a big political impact.

On February 16, 2024, the CTU and SKM jointly called for an All India Industrial Strike and Rural Bandh. Around 2 lakh people participated in the protest actions. On March 14, 2024 a big Peasant Worker Mahapanchayat at Ramlila Maidan in New Delhi saw impressive participation and created a political impact with the call to expose, oppose, and punish the BJP in the coming Lok Sabha elections.

BUILDING THE WORKER PEASANT ALLIANCE: A HERCULEAN TASK

The building of a worker peasant alliance in India is a Herculean task.

First, it will have to begin, as it has already begun, with united worker-peasant actions against the common class and political enemy. But this is only a small beginning. Much bigger united struggles will have to be waged. Conscious and politicisation of the people who come into our struggles is of paramount importance. Vastly more extensive and intensive agitational, political, ideological, and organisational steps must be taken to achieve our goal.

Thirdly, building up the worker peasant alliance also means patiently building up the unity of the Left and democratic forces in India, and radically changing the correlation of class forces. Such forces must first be identified in each state, and concerted efforts made to bring them together. Here again, it must be remembered that our independent strength will be a decisive factor.

The BJP-RSS-led central government, true to its class character, has now decided to launch new attacks on the working class and the peasantry. It has decided to implement the anti-worker and pro-corporate Labour Codes from April 2025. It has proposed the draft of a National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing, which is nothing but an effort to smuggle in the anti-farmer and pro-corporate Farm Laws through the back door. The entire trajectory of the Modi government in the last 11 years of its rule is to enrich and fatten the corporates, both domestic and foreign, at the expense of all sections of the working people.

Other burning issues of the people pending for years, are Price Rise, Unemployment, Privatisation, Legal Guarantee of a Remunerative MSP and Assured Government Procurement, Loan Waiver, Crop Insurance, Expansion of MNREGS, Food Security, Education, Health and Housing for All, Increased Pension, Land Ownership, Land Acquisition, and so on. Only extensive and intensive worker peasant struggles on these issues is the way forward.

But it must be clearly stated that all these are essentially economic issues. They are, no doubt, important and must be taken up with the utmost seriousness. But it must be underlined that building the worker-peasant alliance to carry out a radical transformation in society is fundamentally a political project, not an economic one. And therefore, our struggle must be extended to the politically crucial issues of the defense of Democracy, Secularism, Social Justice, and the Constitution itself. We must aim, in the current and immediate context, at the resounding defeat of the BJP-RSS-led central government and their state governments by uniting all the secular forces in India.

And while discharging the current tasks, our struggle must then transcend those towards the achievement of Socialism in the current Indian conditions.

Let us bend all our efforts to build the worker-peasant alliance of Lenin's dreams, which alone can succeed in achieving a truly revolutionary social transformation in our country. ■



VS: A Life Tempered with Fiery Struggles

Dr VIJOO KRISHNAN
(General Secretary, AIKS)



It is not an easy task to describe the life of a revolutionary who strode across the political life of a nation for nearly a century. Undoubtedly, none can make use of the inexhaustible time before one's birth nor the infinite time after death; rarely can one put the time between birth and death to create an indelible impact in the lives of people like Comrade VS Achuthanandan could. Comrade VS Achuthanandan, known as VS to his comrades, friends and political opponents, passed away on 21st July, 2025 after eight and a half decades of politically active life. The expanse of his political interventions spread across the last century ranges from struggles against feudal landlordism, caste oppression, British imperialism, the autocratic monarchy, capitalist exploitation, the ruling class onslaughts on the working people, state repression, authoritarian emergency, Zionist genocide in Palestine, communal fascists and the oligarchs in the neo-liberal era, violence against women, attacks on minorities, socially oppressed, environment, LGBTQ community, against proprietary software oligarchs like Microsoft, Coca Cola, the killer pesticide endosulphan, encroachments by real-estate mafia, illegal mining and much more. Incessantly on the streets in struggles, the indomitable spirit of the individual, strengthened by the collective that he was steadfastly associated throughout his life ensured that it does not remain opposition for the sake of opposition; it led to creative solutions that have come to be part of the Left Alternative that Kerala has shown. The outpouring of millions to pay respects to the departed comrade is a testimony to the sheer range of his interventions, the fact that it touc-

-hed the lives of the masses.

VS was born in a poor peasant family in Alappuzha in 1923. He lost his mother when he was merely 4 years old and subsequently lost his father when he was just 11. This forced him to quit his studies after finishing 7th standard in school. Circumstances forced him to work at a tailoring shop before he joined Aspinwall Co. as a coir worker. His childhood was punctuated with the economic horrors of great depression, including days of hunger. Unemployment, acute economic exploitation of workers and peasants by feudal landlords and the capitalist sections, food shortages accentuated by hoarding and black-marketing by traders, resultant high food prices rendering it inaccessible to the poor — all made life a living hell for the working people. Social oppression faced by the Dalits and the backward castes in Kerala also was infamous. The struggles to earn a living, to ward off hunger and resist caste oppression began from his early childhood and this lived experience all through ensured that he remained steadfast to the basic classes and their cause.

Alappuzha was the epicentre of the modern working-class movement in Travancore. He organised the coir workers for their rights and it was here that VS was drawn to the Communist Party by the advanced proletarian elements in 1940. P.Krishnapillai, also hailing from Alappuzha who was the first Secretary when the Communist Party was formed in Kerala and an ace organiser recognised his talent in dealing with issues of the working class, his organisational abilities and drafted him for bigger responsibilities. He was sent to Kuttanad to organise the predominantly Dalit and backward caste agricultural workers. It is here that VS having little formal education sharpened his political and organisational skills emerging as a prominent educator, agitator and organiser. He concretely applied Marxist-Leninist principles to organise socially and economically oppressed agricultural wo-

rkers and poor peasants against feudal landlords, a repressive state and against British imperialism. It is worth noting that in the pantheon of leaders of the Communist movement in India, especially of the CPI(M) who have passed away, ranging from the navaratnas who were in the first Politbureau till the present, E. Balanandan and VS emerged from the working class.

The revolutionary upsurge in Punnapra and Vayalar in 1946 and his role is legendary. He was one of the main leaders of the mass revolt of workers and peasants against the autocratic monarchy in Travancore and the Dewan C.P.Ramaswami Iyer's proposal for an American Model independent nation outside the Indian Union. The Communist Party gave the clarion call "Dump the American Model in the Arabian Sea." The uprising was suppressed using brutal force leading to the death of many but caught the imagination of the people, raised a class consciousness among the oppressed workers and peasants, emphasised the importance of worker-peasant unity and laid the ideological foundation for the rise of Left politics in the State. It also set in motion the process through which the autocratic monarchy was ended and the new, united linguistic State of Kerala came into being. The expansion of the Communist Party on the basis of class struggles for workers' rights and land rights, against imperialism and monarchy, numerous struggles like Kayyur, Karivellur and the confidence generated by the Punnapra-Vayalar struggle in no small measure contributed to the victory of the Communist Party in the first elections in 1957.

VS had to spend long time underground, faced arrests and torture many times. After Punnapra-Vayalar struggle in the police lock-up he was brutally tortured and pierced with a bayonet and presumed dead. The police sought to dispose him in the forest but a petty thief who noticed signs of life pointed it out leading to subsequent hospitalisation and return to active life.

Three months into the Emergency, VS was arrested and remained in prison for its entire duration. The brutal torture that he had to undergo in police lockup made him deeply sensitive about the ruling class violence on working people in general and rural proletariat in particular. He steadfastly resisted state violence throughout his political life.

VS was elected to the State Committee of the united Communist Party in 1956 and to its National Council in 1958. He was the last of the surviving 32 members of the National Council who left to form the Communist Party of India (Marxist). He served as the Secretary of the Kerala State Committee of the CPI(M) from 1980 to 1991. He was elected to the Central Committee of the Party in 1964 and became a member of the Politbureau in 1985. He was relieved from the Central Committee, of which he had become a Special Invitee, due to age, in 2022. He was elected to the Kerala assembly for seven terms. He served as Leader of Opposition for three terms where he stridently took up public causes like environmental protection, gender equality, wet-land conservation, tribal rights, better pay for nurses, transgender rights, and free software. His tenure as the Chief Minister from 2006 to 2011 was marked by several legislative and administrative measures for the welfare of the working people. He saw the Chief Minister's post as an instrument of struggle rather than a seat of power. He was organically linked to the revolutionary peasant movement. His writings and speeches detailed the ways in which the peasantry is looted by neo-colonialism. His contribution to the Golden Jubilee Series of All India Kisan Sabha on the Punnapra Vayalar and his writings clearly bring the role of the ruling classes and their compromise with imperialism. He led the working class and peasantry in Kerala when the Congress Govt. introduced the neoliberal economic policies. His trenchant critique of liberalisation policies in agriculture including "free trade" proved to be incisive in Kerala's political

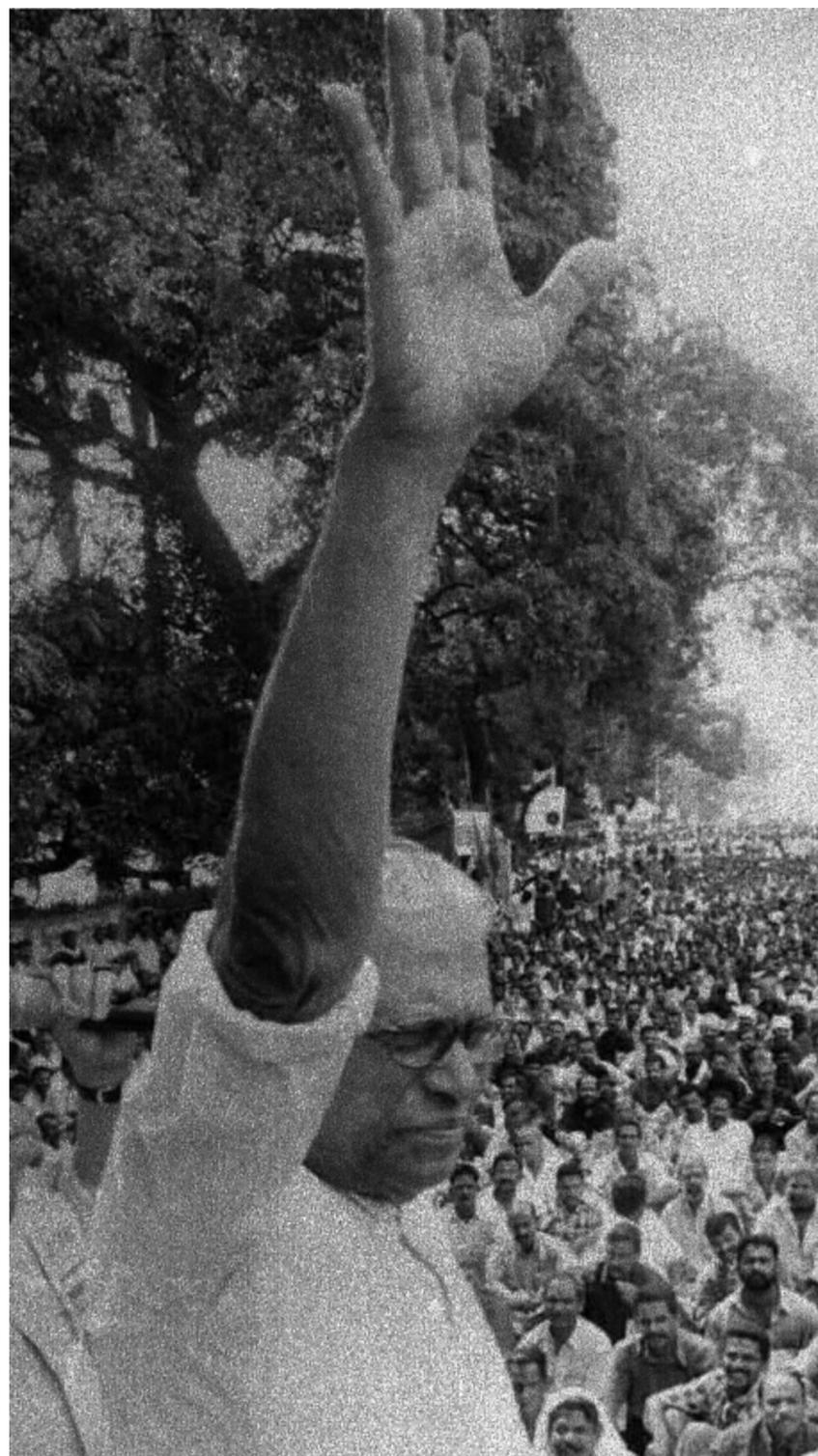
economy. His intervention against the India-ASEAN FTA is particularly worth mentioning today when we are faced with the prospect of a slew of unequal Free Trade Agreements that India is entering into. He met the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh asserting the federal rights of States and opposed the unequal FTA. He was clear and far-sighted in pointing out that it would lead to price crash and push farmers in Kerala into extreme distress, indebtedness and destruction. Deeply concerned with ecological questions, VS consistently pointed the corporate greed to commodify nature. There were a series of incidents of patriarchal violence against women in the State in the late nineties against which he led a relentless struggle.

His tenure as chief minister saw creative interventions in the agrarian political economy. The violently executed liberalisation policies by the successive Congress and BJP led union governments resulted in severe agrarian distress and farmer suicides. The LDF government led by VS initiated a Debt Relief Commission which would provide considerable succour to the peasantry. This was a pioneering model for the entire country and became a slogan of the peasants' movement across the country. His tenure also witnessed favourable policies for paddy cultivation with the best procurement support price in the country. Prof. Prabhat Patnaik was the Vice Chairman of the State Planning Board, Prof. Utsa Patnaik was Chairperson of its Agriculture Committee and I was a member on the Committee which recommended a massive incentive of Rs. 400/qtl for paddy over and above the centrally fixed MSP. This trend was continued by the LDF Govt., which is even now providing Rs. 2,832/qtl while centrally announced MSP is only Rs. 2369/qtl. The legislation against conversion of paddy lands and wet lands is also a landmark Act passed during his tenure. The administrative measures and his political ideological struggles exposed the bankruptcy of neoliberalism. As a lifelong organiser of cooperatives, VS, in

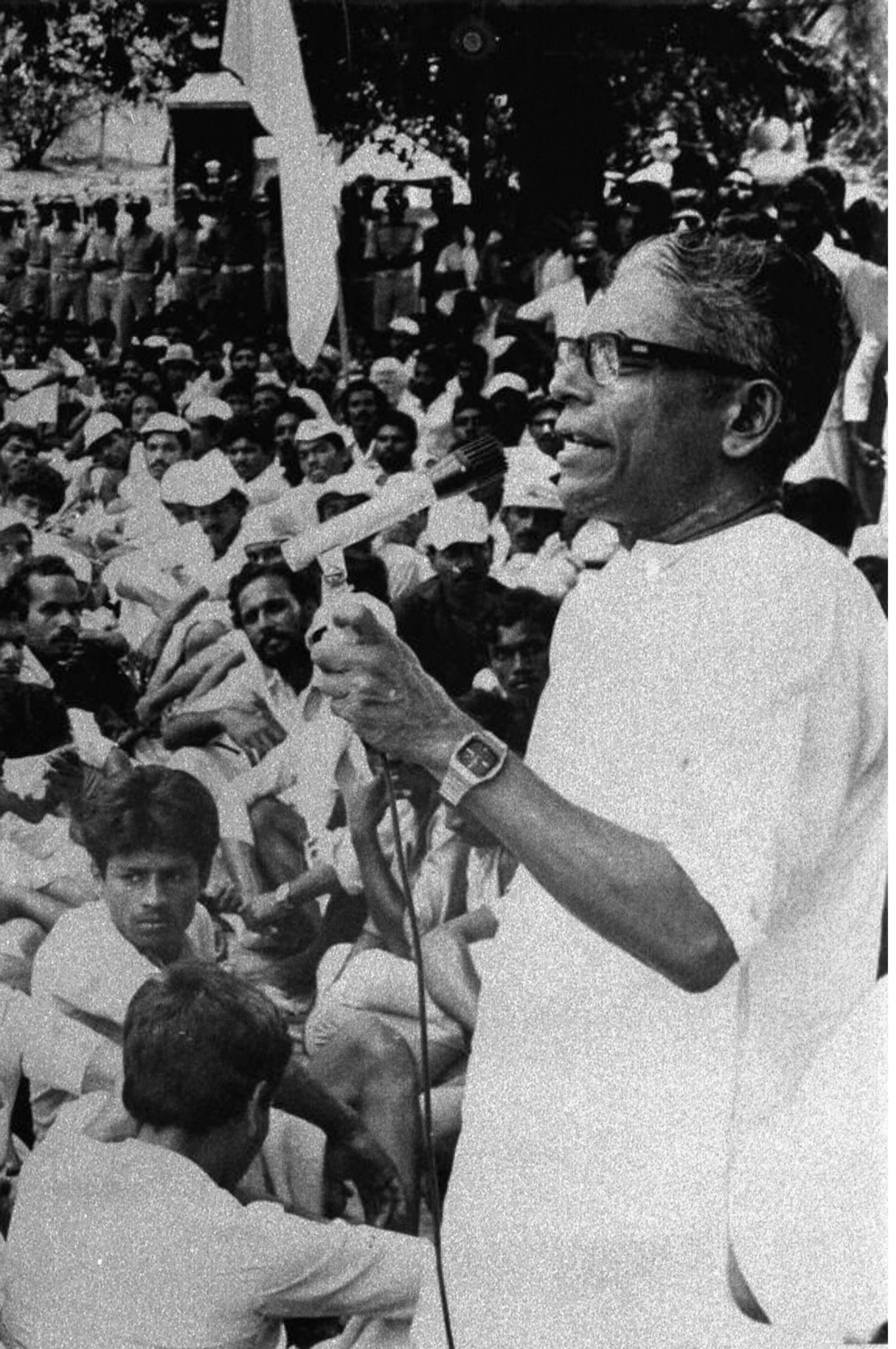
his last years, passionately wrote about the need to reorganise cooperatives as a bulwark against big business exploitation of the peasantry.

In his passing, the working people have lost their confidant and to fill the vacuum left by VS will undoubtedly be an uphill task. I have many memories of my long association with him. I remember fondly the last four decades from hearing his speech as a child, much bemused over his style of speech delivery, being a volunteer during the 18th Party Congress, being a part of the election campaign in Wayanad in 2006, interaction at the Kozh-ikode Party Congress and the Congress-es that followed, as a fellow member of the Party's Central Committee and much more. I was witness to the outpouring of love for him from young and old alike on many occasions before and the three days after his death till being consigned to flames at the memorial to the Punnapra-Vayalar struggle. His commitment to the liberation of the working people and steadfast position against corporate, communal, fascist forces will always inspire. The slogan that resonated through the streets of Kerala roughly translates as "Our Eyes and Our Heart VS; Who says he is dead? He is living in us".

The legacy of VS lives on! ■







Com. VS Achuthanandan: An Epic Life of a Communist Turning the Tillers Proletariat

NIDHEESH J VILLATT
(CKC Member, AIKS)



I vividly remember reading the legendary Malayalam writer Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai's classic novel "Randidangazhi" in my high school days. The novel depicted the socio-economic conditions of the largely Dalit agricultural workers and poor-tenant peasants and the anti-imperialist, anti-landlord resistance organised by Communists in Kuttanad, Alappuzha, known as the rice bowl of Kerala. The novel mainly captures the agrarian relations in the 1940s. For students in my generation, the extreme forms of exploitation and violence by the landlords on the working people depicted in "Randidangazhi" was unimaginable; for instance, the case of the heartbreaking and normalised sexual violence on agricultural workers and poor peasants. When I read the novel in 1999, the class correlation in Kerala had significantly changed that the incidents narrated in the novel looked so foreign to us. This epochal paradigm shift in social relations was the result of untiring work done by Communists for advancing the "agrarian revolution".

In the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, on 5 December 1922, the Commission on the Eastern Question drafted an important resolution titled "Theses on the Eastern Question". Politically supervised by Lenin, the resolution made a fundamental argument; "The Communist workers' parties of the colonial and semi-colonial countries have a double task: both to fight for the most radical possible resolution of the tasks of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, aimed at winning political independence, and also to organise the worker peasant masses in struggle for their particular class interests, profiting from all the contradictions in the nationalist bourgeois democratic camp".

With the passing away of Comrade VS Achuthanandan — popularly known as VS — the toiling people in Kerala have lost their uniquely battle-hardened comrade from a rare species of Bolsheviks, who joined the undivided CPI in 1940 to carry forward the "double task" theorised by the Communist International. VS would often speak how the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 and the work of the Communist International inspired his generation who grew up witnessing the miseries and horrors of the Great Depression of 1929. His birth into a backward caste, tenant household in 1923 made him experience the colonial brutalities as well as the bloodthirsty feudal exploitation, its violent repressions and caste discriminations. In his long journey of 102 years — where he rose from his humble origins to become the chief minister of Kerala and one of the most respected leaders of the CPI(M), the largest communist party in India, com. VS remained a staunch anti-imperialist committed to the revolutionary transformation of the world.

I became acutely aware of the greatness of VS after knowing from my communist maternal grandfather that VS was pivotal in ending landlord violence — feudal and capitalist — in Kuttanad which is narrated in the novel "Randidangazhi". As an avid reader of Malayalam newspapers during my schooling in Kerala, I also remember how two leading dailies of Kerala — Malayala Manorama (started by the indigenous Syrian Christian bourgeoisie) and Mathrubumi (initiated by the decaying upper caste Hindu landlords) — villainised VS as the obstructor par excellence. For the bourgeoisie and the landlords, VS was obstructing the neoliberal model of development which they were committed to as a class. For VS, the livelihood of the peasants, agricultural workers, plantation workers and all other working people as well as maintaining ecological balance was more important than becoming the poster boy of neoliberalism.

The decision of comrade P Krishna Pillai — the founding secretary of the undivided CPI in Kerala and who recruited VS — to send VS to Kuttanad changed the course of the emerging agriculture workers and the trajectory of the movement of the rural proletariat in Kerala. Initially trained to organise modern coir factory workers during his innings with Aspinwall company, VS went on to win the hearts and minds of the agricultural workers. When VS went to Kuttanad in the early 1940s, capitalist investment in agriculture was flourishing in several areas. By 1943, VS would concentrate in Kavalam and Kunnimal areas of Kuttanad. This area had big landlords like Joseph Murickan, Chalayil Panicker and Mankombu Swami. In spite of the capitalist investment, the landlords used the system of ‘attached labour’ that continued the horrific methods of feudal subjugation of serfs.

It was a bitter socio-political oxymoron that, instead of relieving the archaic feudal yoke of inhuman repressions of serfdom and the reactionary institution of caste system by the introduction of capitalist mode of farming, these ferocious infernal characters got reinforced with diabolic intensity. It was like the case of the textile mill industrial boom in Britain that made slavery flourish in the southern states of the USA, instead of wiping it out, in order to get raw cotton at the cheapest price! Later, it was the railway development in the northern states of the USA that created the objective background for the civil war that abolished slavery in the southern states!

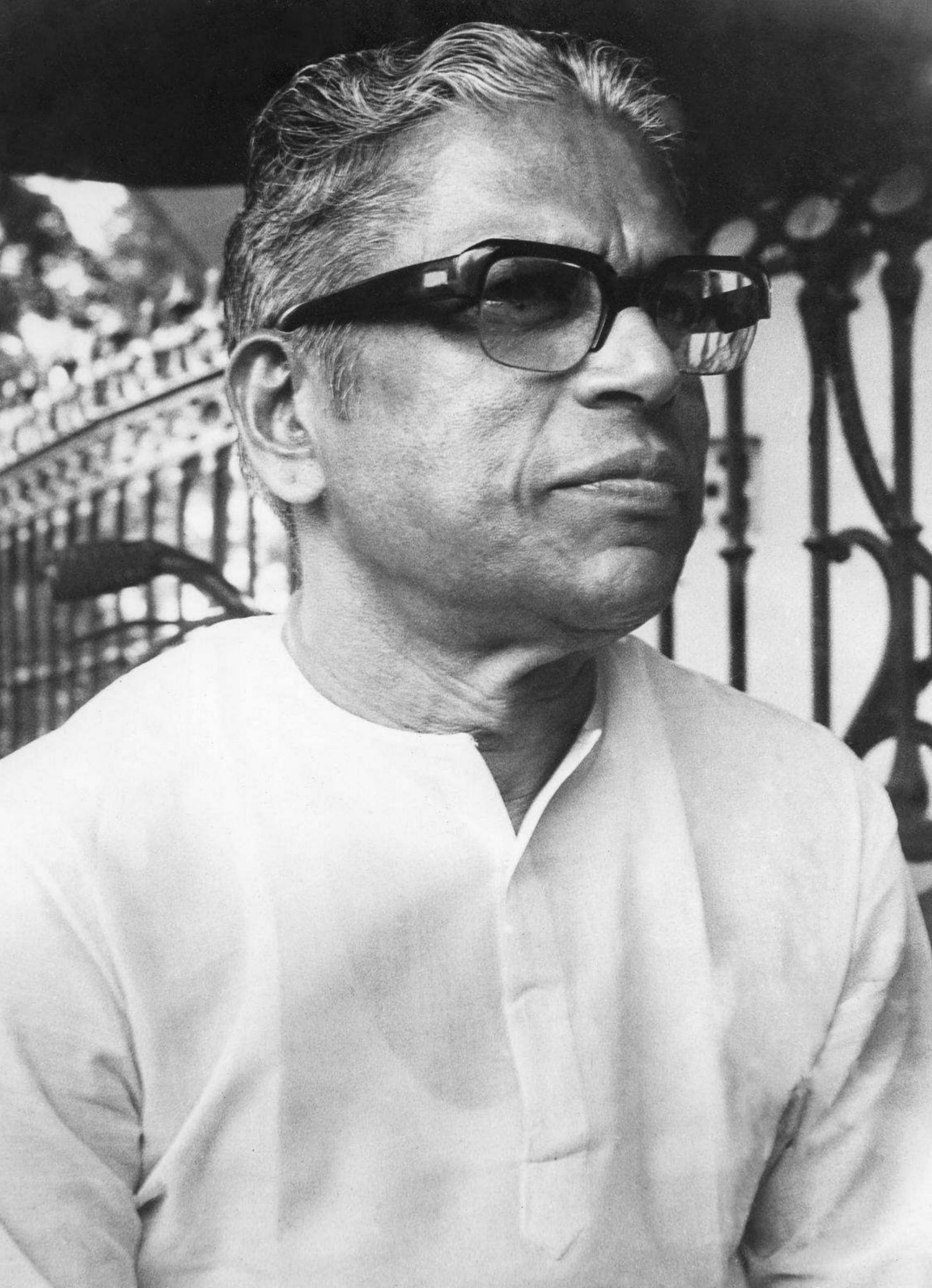
The said attached labourers were hailing mainly from Dalit castes of Pulaya and Paraya. The highly exploitative system of attached labour ensured intense work for meagre wages. Alex George documents that “enforced economic dependence, threat of eviction from homesteads, perpetration of physical violence and subjugation by the socially disabling rules of caste” were the devices by which landlo-

-rds controlled attached labour.

In his reflections on organising agricultural workers, VS has documented the challenges in unionising the attached workers who believed that it was the natural right of the landlords to physically torture and even kill them. VS steadily invigorated them, kindling fighting spirit, and patiently taught them about the malicious methods used by the landlords in order to exploit them utmost. With systematic efforts, VS succeeded in enthusing and convincing them. Eventually, the movement of the rural proletariat, that is the agricultural working class, was established in Kuttanad and then spread to different parts of Alappuzha and Kerala as an extension of the industrial proletariat in the realm of agrarian production in the rural. The Punnapra Vayalar revolt witnessed the heroic participation of the agricultural workers too.

When the Communist Party was banned in 1948, the landlords created a volunteer force called “Sannadha Sena” in Alappuzha to unleash violence on agricultural workers and tenants. By custom, the newly married women from the households of toiling masses were supposed to live with landlords like “Kocha” for three months. The politicised rural proletariat resisted these customs. NK Kamalasan narrates the story of a communist agricultural worker called “Gopalan” who was militantly resisting feudal violence. Nalukettungal Raman, the lieutenant of the landlord Kocha targeted Gopalan’s family with the connivance of the police. The police and the goons of the landlords stripped Gopalan and his mother and both were tied face to face. Gopalan’s wife was raped in front of him. In retaliation, Raman was killed by the workers.

The brutal anti-communist violence during the years of ‘Calcutta Thesis’ couldn’t eliminate the movement of the rural proletariat, that is the agricultural workers. Travancore Karshaka Thozhilali Union (T-KTU), the Kuttanad-based agricultural wo-



-rkers' movement founded by VS, was banned soon after the Punnapra Vayalar uprising in 1946. The difficult underground activities in this phase made TKTU more militant. The ban would be lifted only in 1951. In that year, VS played an important role in convening a historic special convention of agricultural workers at Kavalam. This convention came with a comprehensive Charter of Demands which would force the labour department to constitute a tripartite conference and agreement. However, the big landlords refused to implement the agreement on wages and working conditions. This accelerated militant strike actions. VS documents that between 1950 and 1957, there were 4279 labour disputes in Kuttanad.

The new form of proletarian militancy was evident in the militant struggles waged against "backwaters' kings" like Joseph Murikkan and KM Kora. The historic 1956 wage struggle against KM Kora, who was a big landlord as well as Congress leader and then agriculture minister in the Travancore-Cochin ministry, demonstrated the militancy of the rural proletariat. KM Kora unleashed police-goonda violence against striking workers. The intense violence couldn't break the struggle and finally Kora had to succumb to the class assertion of the working people. As a clear indication of the changing class correlation, Kora would later complain to a senior Communist leader that "we have no objection in raising the wages of agricultural workers; it's their swagger we can't stand. Just look at them — strutting about with moustaches, dhotis folded high up their knees, and towels twirled into turbans".

From Kora's words it was explicit that the new capitalist endeavour being a malicious amphibian beast that was traversing from a decadent feudalism to primordial agrarian capitalism, being driven by rabid profit fetishism, had spontaneous instinct to lower the costs of hiring labour opportunistically and hence chose to wield the feudal brutalities as instruments for extre-

-me exploitation and weapons of inhuman oppression. So, it was necessary for a revolutionary agency to complete the genesis of the newly budding agrarian proletariat as a "class in itself" and "class for itself" in one stroke. The undivided CPI and its pioneer cadre com. VS made this possible in Kuttanad. This was a unique transformation. This made the agricultural working class of Kerala a rare politically conscious edge of the proletarian being in the state, even excelling the otherwise organised segments of the whole proletarian legion in the state. It was similar to the communist experience in Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu, the Warli region in Maharashtra, in the tribal belt of Tripura, but distinct from those being a result of the relentless fight against the primordial agrarian capitalism, not against typical feudalism.

The militant movement of rural proletariat led by VS played a tremendous role in the formation of the "Unified state of Kerala" and the first Communist ministry led by EMS Namboodiripad in 1957. The "Agrarian Relations Bill", passed in 1959 and triggered a paradigm shift in Kerala's political economy, had provisions for giving hutment dwellers' rights. Apart from constituting Industrial Relations Committee (IRC) in Alappuzha district in 1957, EMS government also extended the operations of Minimum Wages Act (India) 1948 to the agricultural operations in 1958. The new police policy of the EMS — non-interference in labour disputes — also increased the confidence of the agricultural workers.

The attempt by the Communists to end landlordism witnessed a counterrevolutionary mobilisation by the bourgeois-landlord sections with American imperialist aid. The notorious "Vimochana Samaram" against the EMS ministry saw targeted attacks and casteist slurs on Dalit agricultural workers. The armies of landlords shouted "We will make you call us lords; we will make you drink porridge from a leaf; The Dalit can go till the field, Chacko (upper caste Congress leader) will rule the land". The months after the dismissal

of the EMS government in 1959 was synonymous with intensified attacks on working people.

Painstaking organisational and ideological work among the agricultural workers, that is the rural proletariat, led by VS significantly contributed to the formation of the second EMS ministry in 1967. He was central to the formation of the state-level separate organisation for agricultural workers, Kerala State Karshaka Thozilali Union (KSKTU) in 1968, which is affiliated to All India Agricultural Workers' Union (AIAWU). After the fall of the EMS ministry in 1969, KSKTU joined hands with AIKS to lead 'surplus land claiming agitation' called "Micha Bhumi Samaram".

This movement identified and disclosed details of the surplus land above ceiling to the government. The immediate purpose of the agitation was known as "Micha Bhoomi Samaram" (surplus land claiming agitation). KSKTU and AIKS volunteers valiantly entered surplus lands controlled by landlords and this pressure from below accelerated the process of the implementation of the land reforms. This would also result in violent physical clashes in several parts of the state with RSS cadres who worked as the right-wing vigilante goons of landlords. This political and street battle with landlords and the state machinery tempered the democratic fabric of Kerala.

VS was also a keen observer of the growing clout of global finance and its relation to the agrarian question. He consistently wrote and led movements against the neoliberal turn of the political economy. His much-documented struggles to conserve paddy and wet land as well as his critical interventions — ideological and organisational — to resist neoliberal depredations on cash crop agriculture like rubber is important. In the fag end of his active political life, he was completely convinced about the need to have a "next stage of land reform", where scientifically designed vibrant producing and marketi-

-ng cooperatives of workers and peasants would act as the foundation of enhanced worker-peasant alliance with advanced political economic content and advanced forms; and lead the Agrarian Revolution to its fulfilment.

Red salute, comrade VS! ■



Protect Right to Electricity: Build United Action of Employees & Consumers

SUDIP DUTTA & Dr VIJOO KRISHNAN



D RIVE TO PRIVATISE ELECTRICITY: IMPLICATIONS & RESISTANCE

The Narendra Modi-led NDA government is desperately moving to privatise all public power utilities. The highly profitable, efficient and low tariff Chandigarh Power Utility was forcibly privatised invoking draconian acts like the ESMA. The Chandigarh electricity employees, their family members, elderly people, women and children fought valiantly against this privatisation. Similar attacks have been unleashed on Purvanchal Vidyut Vitaran Nigam Ltd. (PVVNL) and Dakshinanchal Vidyut Vitaran Nigam Ltd. (DVVNL) of Uttar Pradesh. Electricity employees are struggling to resist privatisation and Kisans are also joining the protests. Farmers are the largest and most crucial stakeholder of the electricity and will be worst hit by privatisation. The time has come to plan concrete organisational and militant movement at specific areas where both AIKS, AIAWU and Electricity Employees' Federation of India (EEFI) have presence.

The Narendra Modi led Government's game-plan is to withdraw the cross-subsidy that was established through long struggle in India. Cross subsidy was pivotal to build India's food sovereignty and small-medium commodity production network. If such support is withdrawn, it will lead to abrupt increase in price of retail electricity, consequent defaults in payment and

eventually the forceful disconnections and denial to electricity service. Without cross subsidy, a farmer will have to pay exorbitant monthly electricity bill implying unbearable rise in Irrigation costs. Farmers who are already in an acute agrarian crisis and facing escalating costs of cultivation will be pushed to a situation of complete dependence on unpredictable rains for cultivation. A shift to Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) for agriculture will deny the real cultivators — the landless, tenants/sharecroppers who actually pay for the electricity. The deception in the name of DBT is already apparent to everyone through the experience of mounting price of cooking gas and a return towards non-LPG traditional fuels.

This was not all but just prelude of a dangerous blue print. Now the Ministry of Power has launched the disastrous prepaid smart metering project. Every individual consumer will have to pay Rs. 8,000 - 12,000 per prepaid smart meter for installation. Its maximum life-time is around 7-8 years. With around 26 crore consumers in India, it is a direct loot of Rs. $26 \times 10,000 = \text{Rs. } 2,60,000$ crore from people's pocket. The key players applying for installation of these smart meters are Adani and Tata! The farmers have to pay advance amount to the metering company to get the electricity. The consumers, who have less approved contractual load, will be in problem if suddenly the consumption exceeds the sanctioned limit. If there is some technical problem in the meter, or any overbilling, the consumers have to complain to the third party smart metering agency. If power is cut due to no-balance in prepaid smart meters (even due to some technical fault of the metering agency), the consumers have to pay fine and the re-connection may take hours. The Central Government is pressuring State Governments to install these meters through private companies and hand over the entire revenue collection operation to private players. A huge amount of money and scope for corruption is linked to this process.

Over and above that, just after installation of smart meter, all consumers will be brought under Time of Day (ToD) tariff and price of electricity will be higher at evening or night time. It is obvious that, the household consumption is greater in night time and the irrigation is also done majorly after sunset. The consumption of electricity will be higher at peak time and as demand will be higher, the consumers have to pay higher and higher dynamic tariff for using electricity! Certainly, it is the deadliest course of attack on India's public electricity distribution sector. It will lead to massive de-electrification and food security of our country will be jeopardised. It is an attack on federal structure of India.

The united action of electricity employees and consumers has compelled the Trinamool Congress led West Bengal State government to withdraw the private sector prepaid smart metering project. We have to explore possibility of coordination between organisations of electricity employees and Kisan Sabha and take up these issues consistently to the consumers. A country-wide campaign programme with all sections of affected consumers and build resistance and defiance at all possible levels is the need of the hour.

RAJASTHAN ELECTRICITY CONSUMERS & WORKERS' CONVENTION SHOWS THE WAY

The Rajasthan State Committees of the AI-KS, AIAWU, CITU and EEFI showed the way and jointly held a Convention at Sikar. The initiative is worth replication in other States.

It is worth looking at the scenario in Rajasthan a land of inspiring Kisan struggles; Right to Electricity has always been a major issue in these struggles. As a state in dire need of water, the most pertinent issue for farmers is the ability to access and use pumped water services. However, the scope of electricity extends to household, commercial, and industrial consume-

-rs as well. Rajasthan has three electricity DISCOMs—Ajmer, Jaipur, and Jodhpur — with around 60 lakh consumers and a more or less similar tariff pattern.

In the agricultural sector, the DISCOMs have two tariff systems:

a) Without meter: the flat rate tariff is Rs. 745 per HP per month for block hour service and Rs. 895 per HP per month for whole-day service.

b) With meter: the tariff is Rs. 5.50 per unit for block hour service and Rs. 7.10 per unit for whole-day service.

In both cases, the fixed charge is Rs. 30 per HP per month. If calculated for a 10 HP pump operated for 5 hours daily, the average cost of electricity comes to around Rs. 9,000 to Rs. 10,000 per month. But due to historic struggles, Rajasthan's farmers are paying only Rs. 0.85 per unit or an equivalent flat rate tariff, with the remaining amount provided as a direct subsidy from the State Government. The domestic charge is ₹6.50 per unit for consumption up to 150 units, and Rs. 7.35 per unit for 150 to 300 units.

If a prepaid smart meter is installed, then to operate a 10 HP pump, a farmer will be compelled to recharge their electricity account with a minimum of Rs. 10,000 per month. The government claims that after some time, the money will be returned to their account through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) system. We are already facing the consequences of this DBT system in the case of household LPG connections. Moreover, the DBT can be credited only to listed consumers. As a result, lakhs of small peasants and agricultural workers will be directly excluded from subsidy benefits.

Rajasthan has a very peculiar form of tariff structure. In most parts of the country, industrial consumers pay higher tariffs, and the extra amount goes to support domestic and small commercial connections

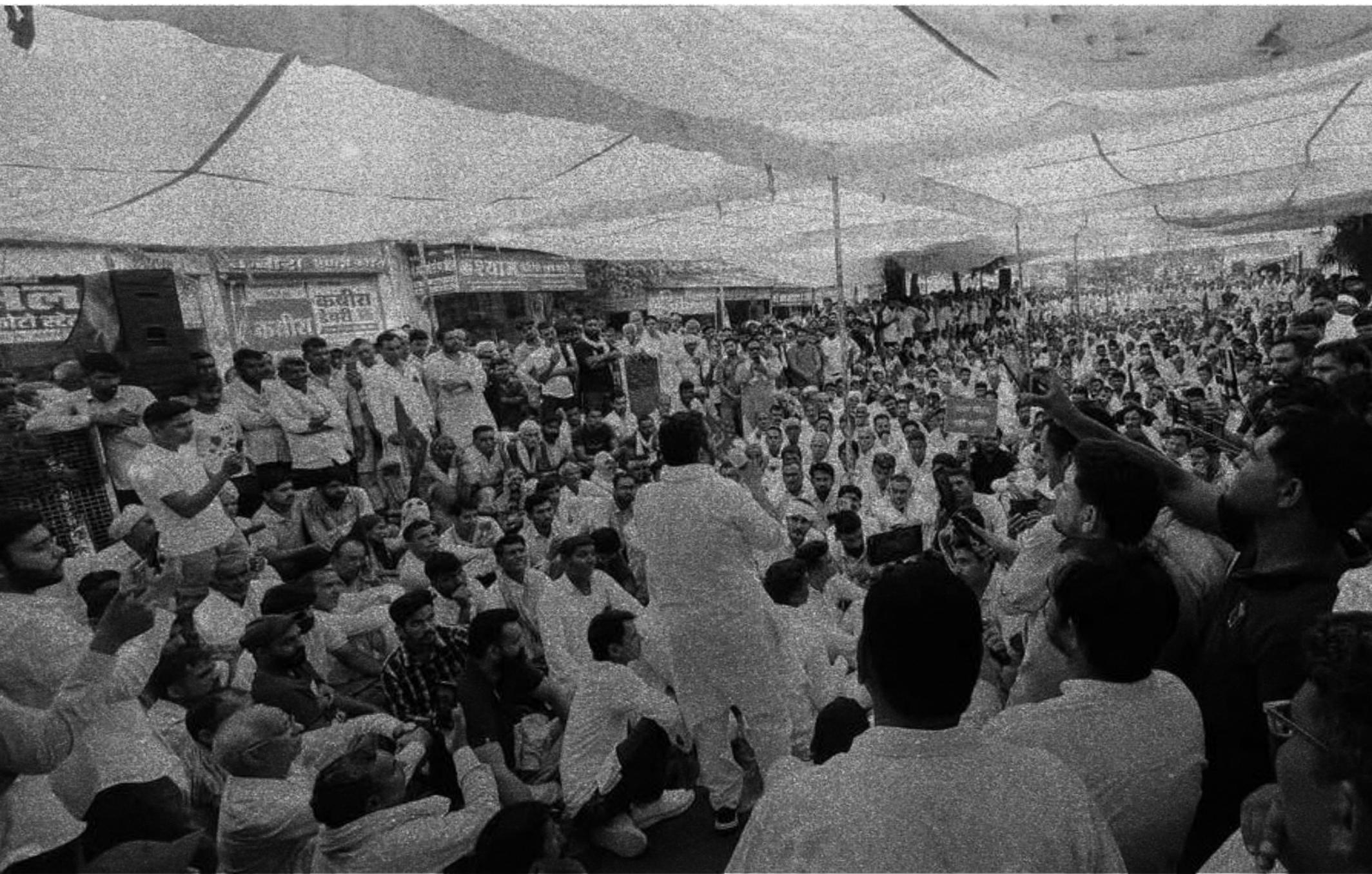
through cross-subsidy. But in Rajasthan, domestic connections, which account for 17% of total electricity consumption, have a tariff of Rs. 6.48 per unit, and commercial connections, with 6% of total consumption, have a tariff of Rs. 8.46 per unit. Strangely, industrial consumers, who account for 33% of consumption, pay a lower tariff of Rs. 6.15 per unit. So, in effect, domestic consumers are cross-subsidising large national and multinational industrial players.

Privatisation attempts have already been unleashed upon the Rajasthan power sector. 400 KV and 765 KV transmission lines and grid substations are being outsourced or privatised. Parts of the distribution companies are also under attack. The installed power generation capacity of Rajasthan is 8,340 MW, but the maximum actual generation reaches only around 7,000 – 7,200 MW. The peak demand is 14,000 MW or more. Hence, a large volume of electricity must be purchased from the market. This has pushed state-owned distribution companies into heavy losses, and power cuts are increasing significantly.

The government is now moving to privatise the Kota, Kalisindh, Chhabra, Surajgarh, Ramgarh Gas, Dholpur Gas, and Mahi Hydrel Power Stations. The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) plant in Rajasthan is also not operating at full capacity. Forty-five percent of Rajasthan's power generation comes from solar energy, which is almost entirely privately owned. Battery storage projects have also been handed over to private players. As a whole, the public power sector in Rajasthan is under severe attack, and this will gravely impact consumers — peasants, households, and commercial users alike. Such issues exist in every state that is taking the path of privatisation of electricity, not only those led by the BJP but also those ruled by the Congress and some of the regional parties. The LDF government in Kerala has clearly taken a position against privatisation of electricity.

The Rajasthan Convention at Sikar attend-

-ed by Vijoo Krishnan, AIKS General Secretary, Sudip Dutta, EEFI General Secretary, Amra Ram AIKS Vice President & Member of Parliament from Sikar as well as leaders of the three organisations decided to form an Electricity Consumers' Struggle Committee to fight privatisation of electricity and smart meters. This has an important bearing for such struggles in other parts of India and also helps build a broader worker-peasant unity against the corporate-communal forces. ■





Reducing the Import Duty: Modi Government Rubbed Salt on the Wounds of Cotton Farmers

MANOJ KUMAR
(CKC Member, AIKS)



Once again, the Modi government has made it clear where its commitment lies — with the capitalists or with the country's millions of farmers. On August 19, the Indian Union government announced that from August 19 to September 30, it will provide a free import by lifting the import duty on cotton by 11%. Later this date was extended to till December 31. The justification given for this relief is that it will boost India's cotton industry. However, in the government's press release, there is not a single mention of the impact this decision will have on farmers.

Cotton is a crop that has been cultivated in the Indian subcontinent for centuries and has been a primary source of income for a large section of farmers. But over the past two decades, the condition of Indian cotton farmers has been deteriorating day by day, largely due to government policies. In such a situation, reducing the import duty by 11% could devastate local farmers.

IMMEDIATE EFFECTS OF IMPORT DUTY REDUCTION:

Import duty functions as a protective barrier. It ensures that after the duty is added, international prices are equal to or higher than the domestic Minimum Support Price (MSP) or market price. Removing this protection will expose farmers directly to the unstable global market, where prices can be much lower — especially from major producers like the U.S., China,

Brazil, and Australia, whose production costs remain relatively low.

The reduction in import duty makes imported cotton cheaper. Textile mills, which are always trying to reduce costs, will naturally purchase more of the cheaper imported cotton. With this easy availability of cheap cotton, farmers — already burdened by the government's flawed policies—will be pushed out of competition due to their higher production costs. Farmers make sowing decisions months in advance based on expected prices. Sudden policy changes that alter market dynamics create massive uncertainty, making it difficult for the largely less-educated Indian farming community to plan their cultivation effectively.

The impact of this decision has already begun to show. According to a report in *The Times of India*, within two days of India cutting import duty, cotton prices fell by Rs. 1,100. The Cotton Corporation of India (CCI), which intervenes in the market by purchasing cotton at the MSP whenever prices fall and later sells processed bales in the open market, reduced rates by Rs. 600 per candy (356 kg) on August 20. The very next day, on August 21, another cut of Rs. 500 was announced. Following these two successive reductions, prices dropped into the range of Rs. 55,200–56,900 per candy.

THE PLIGHT OF COTTON FARMERS & MSP

For many years now, cotton farmers have been trapped in rising input costs, repeated crop failures, and the failure to get remunerative prices. This ongoing crisis has pushed them deeper into agricultural distress. As a result, the highest number of farmer suicides come from cotton growing regions — Marathwada in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Punjab's Malwa region, and Haryana's Bagar region. In all these areas, the suicide rate among cotton farmers is much hi-

-gher than in other parts of these states. The primary reason behind this distress is successive governments' neglect of farmers and their consistent intention to benefit corporates.

India is the world's second-largest cotton producer, yet its per-hectare productivity does not even rank among the top 30 countries. China, the world's largest producer, has a yield of 2,030 kg per hectare, Australia 2,390 kg, and Brazil 1,910 kg, while India's yield is merely 429 kg per hectare — and it has been steadily declining. In 2013–14, India achieved its peak yield of 556 kg per hectare, but since then, it has consistently fallen.

Instead of investing in indigenous research suited to Indian agro-climatic conditions, the government did little to strengthen productivity. No alternative arrangements were made for rainfed regions that already struggled with inadequate irrigation. The outcome is clear — cotton cultivation in India has been shrinking continuously. In the past five years, the area under cotton has steadily declined: from about 132.86 lakh hectares in 2020–21, it has dropped to just 112.30 lakh hectares in 2024–25. This shows clearly that farmers, unable to even recover their costs, are being forced to abandon cotton cultivation.

AIKS and SKM have been continuously agitating over the issue of MSP, which concerns all farmers, including cotton growers. Although cotton, being a cash crop, experiences international price fluctuations, the government, if it truly wished, could still protect farmers by ensuring procurement of the entire crop at a fair, remunerative MSP. Instead, it has chosen to betray farmers once again.

For 2025–26, the government has declared an MSP of Rs. 7,710 per quintal for cotton. But according to the CACP's (Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices) estimated cost of Rs. 6,717 per quintal, the C2 + 50 % formula price should have been Rs. 10,075 per quintal. This means farmers are being

denied Rs. 2,365 per quintal. Yet, the Modi government continues to make the false claim that it is providing MSP in accordance with the $C2 + 50\%$ formula.

MODI GOVERNMENT BOWS BEFORE IMPERIALISM

No matter how many claims the Modi government makes that it will not bend under American pressure, the truth is that PM Modi has remained completely silent on the unilateral tariff war declared by the Trump administration. The 11% cut in cotton import duty is not only a move to appease textile mill owners but also an attempt to please America. From August 27, Indian goods will face a 50% tariff in the U.S., and America is using the threat of this tariff to force open Indian markets for its agricultural products. Through so-called free trade agreements, it seeks to push Indian markets wide open for its agricultural and other goods.

Instead of using India's large population and vast market to strengthen its own economy, the BJP-RSS government has completely surrendered to the West. The U.S. is the world's largest exporter of cotton. It holds cotton stocks of 2.87 million tonnes, of which it plans to export about 2.72 million tonnes. Large American farmers, who receive a major share of their production costs as subsidies, can afford to sell their products at very low prices. But if the protective mechanism of import duty is dismantled, Indian farmers will not be able to withstand this situation.

Yet, bowing before imperialism, the Modi government remains more loyal to foreign masters than to the farmers of its own country.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that if Indian cotton farmers are forced to face the open market, their backbone will be broken. The cent-

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-ral govt. must protect the interests of the country's farmers in the Indian market and ensure that they receive remunerative prices for their crops. To improve cotton productivity, it is necessary to promote research at the local level and expand farmer support centers.

But we know that instead of taking steps in the interests of farmers, the Modi govt. is engaged in serving the interests of corporates and imperialist forces. In such a situation, the only path left before the farmers is the path of struggles. ■

Reverse Neo-Liberal Economic Policies & Adopt People Centric Development Trajectory

AIKS STATEMENT

AIKS is of the opinion that nothing is farther than the truth than the claim by PM Narendra Modi that “welfare of farmers is the highest priority” for his government. The statement in the context of US Tariffs being raised to 50 % and arm-twisting for a bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is an attempt to find favour with the farmers. Indian farmers are not going to fall for such claims as they have heard many such jumlas and false promises from him in the last 11 years.

In fact, the NDA Govt. has ruined the competitiveness of farmers during its 11 years rule. The PM did not fulfill the promise made in the 2014 election manifesto of the BJP of Minimum Support Price @ C2 + 50 % for all crops with guaranteed procurement as recommended by MS Swaminathan, chairman of National Farmers Commission. The lack of remunerative prices and spiraling input costs have put Indian agriculture in an acute crisis. Farmers are facing abysmal indebtedness and distress migration is rampant.

As per govt. data, daily 31 farmers commit suicide in India. But the PM did not initiate any debt relief scheme so far. In contrast, corporate debt amounting to Rs. 16.11 lakh crore has been waived during the last 11 years.

About 48% of the Indian workforce depends on agriculture and around 60% of families live in rural India. The peasantry's suffering under the neo-liberal regime emerges clearly from Indian data. In rural India, the percentage of population not having access to 2200 calories per person per day (which was the benchmark for rural poverty originally adopted by the country's erstwhile Planning Commission), was 58 in 1993-94, that is, roughly around the time when the neo-liberal regime was introduced in 1991; it increased to 68 in 2011-12. By 2017-18 the situation had become so bad that the government withdrew the survey data of that year from the public sphere, and even changed the method of data collection; but from whatever information available briefly in the public domain before the data was withdrawn, the percentage below this calorie norm was 80.5 per cent in 2017-18.

In contrast to PM Modi's claim that his government will never compromise on the interests of farmers, fisherfolk and livestock rearers, the policies rigorously enforced during the last 11 years have pauperised the agrarian classes and all the resources of agricultural land, forest, minerals and water have been put into the hands of the corporate companies both foreign and domestic.

The 3 pro-corporate farm laws aimed at destroying the existing APMC Markets, restricting MSP system and PSD imposed by the Modi Government were thwarted by the year-long historic farmers' struggle that sacrificed the lives of 736 farmers. The introduction of the National Policy Framework on Agriculture Marketing (NPFAM) 2024 and the National Co-operation Policy (NCP) 2025 are a strategic attack on the constitutional rights of state governments and federal rights of people and to open Indian economy to the predatory agribusinesses including Multinational Corporations.

The four labour codes enacted for supply of cheap labour to corporate companies and the policy of privatisation have denied minimum wage to the working class and done away with the concept of permanent employment. Unemployment is at peak in last 45 years making the future of youth bleak. The RSS chief has recently publicly stated that education and health have become out of reach of common people due to indiscriminate privatisation exposing duplicity of RSS-BJP combine but the fact remains.

For the last three decades, advocates of trade liberalisation have pushed the false promise that export opportunities would benefit Indian farmers while progressively opening Indian markets to agricultural imports from developed countries. This is clear from increased import dependence for edible oils, pulses, fruits, rubber and many other commodities including cotton. The ASEAN FTA has devastated the cash crop sector especially natural rubber, tea and coffee. FTAs has the potential to open

the Indian economy to the vagaries of international trade and speculation and endangering peasantry and the entire working people to face the intensifying agrarian crisis and domination of foreign agri-business on the domestic industry. Imports at zero duties will lead to price crash for Indian farmers and not ensure remunerative prices for farm products.

Instead of strengthening multilateralism, the Modi government has completely succumbed to pressure from developed countries and is busy signing bilateral trade deals. India sticking to rule-based multilateral system of trade should have rallied other less-developed countries also towards this goal. On the contrary, India is becoming isolated and being bullied by the US Imperialist power.

The AIKS, SKM and several kisan organisations had consistently demanded the Union Government must table the details of negotiations in the Parliament and no FTA should be signed without the House's approval.

India being predominantly an agrarian economy, instead of the current path of export-oriented development has to follow agriculture led growth under the aegis of the state. Confirming remunerative price to farmers and minimum living wage to workers to enhance the purchasing power of the 140-crore people of India is the alternative path to expand vibrant domestic market that could effectively absorb domestic industrial consumer products and compete with and advance in the world market. AIKS strongly demands the Indian Parliament to review the three decades of neo-liberal reforms and adopt people centric trajectory of development.

The need of the hour is to rebuff the anti-people Modi Government that compromises and fails to solidly resist the bullying by US Imperialism. AIKS calls upon its units across India to make the August 13, 2025 protest action called by SKM a resounding success by ensuring massive participation with the combined strength of the worker-farmer unity. ■



SIR is a desperate bid by BJP to usurp power in Bihar

ARUN MISHRA
(State Vice President, CITU Bihar)



In their grand plan of ushering in Hindu Rashtra, the BJP is trying to usurp power in Bihar on its own. Till now, Bihar has remained elusive to the party's long-term politics of making India a majoritarian theocratic state, as it has failed to reap political harvest there by communalising the society. The state, given its powerful history of political awareness and the role its people played in different stages of the country's political life including the anti-imperialist movement and the fight against Emergency, is a hard nut to crack for the BJP's game plan. BJP has been in power in Bihar for a long time in alliance with Nitish Kumar's JD(U). In the last assembly election, its efforts to cut JD(U) to size succeeded to some extent. However, despite emerging as the largest party in the state, it had to concede chief ministership to Nitish Kumar. Nitish Kumar is now perceived as an unreliable figure whose actions cannot be predicted at the potential danger of losing his chief ministership. Nevertheless, BJP seems to have tightened its grip on the regional party with most of the JD(U) advisers now seen taking orders from BJP.

With JD(U)'s organisational structure in shambles and Nitish Kumar's waning influence on the same BJP is dreaming of usurping power on its own in the state.

But, no amount of simple tactics of social engineering and communal mobilisation is going to help BJP in its road to power in Bihar. Facing the powerful combined opposition of Mah-agathbandhan, it has resorted to the most sinister game plan of disenfranchising the vast number of voters through the exercise of special intensive revision of electoral rolls.

After their victory in Maharashtra and Haryana, the party has tasted blood and using the election commission as a tool, BJP wants to fulfill its ambition in the coming election in Bihar. All the internal surveys conducted by the BJP have indicated the distinct edge for the Mahagathbandhan under the leadership of RJD.

In this context, the announcement of SIR on June 24 by the EC came as a rude shock as the last parliamentary election had been fought on the basis of the same electoral rolls. The hasty move ahead of the polls that are due in a few months left the larger masses perplexed. EC announced that the exercise will be carried out in a month's time by conducting door-to-door enrolment of voters.

From June to August, a large section of Bihar's population remains engaged in agricultural work. Rains and floods make life miserable for the vast masses of the rural population. It is to be seen what magic wand the election commission possesses to undertake such a massive exercise during this period and do justice to voters at large and the poor, Dalits, minorities, women and migrant workers in particular.

CPI(M) brought this issue to the notice of the EC in Delhi and simultaneously the Mahagathbandhan constituents held a press conference raising pointed questions regarding the SIR.

EC announced that every eligible voter will have to produce one of the eleven documents, regarding birth, inheritance, residential certificate, matriculation certificate, passport and so on. Epic card, ration card, MNREGA card and Aadhaar card were excluded from the 11 mentioned documents despite the repeated advice of the Apex court. Clearly, the intent of the entire exercise seems to be to exclude the voters rather than to include them.

Around 80% of the population do not possess the documents mentioned in the list.

As many as 2 crore workers, who migrated to different states to earn their livelihood, are the worst affected.

EC also notified that all those born after 2004 will have to produce the birth certificates of their parents. The married women who reside in their husband's home will have to produce their parents' birth certificates within the stipulated time. The whole exercise has created strong resentment among the masses, which reflected on July 9.

Bihar observed complete *bandh* and all the national leaders of the Mahagathbandhan including Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, CPI(M) general secretary MA Baby, CPI general secretary D Raja, Deepankar Bhattacharya of CPI(ML), VIP leader Mukesh Sahni and RJD leader Tejaswi Yadav came together to lead a march to the office of the chief electoral officer of Bihar. They unanimously voted not to allow BJP to steal the mandate in Bihar.

Since then, much water has flown down the river Ganges and the election commission declared the exercise complete with the publication of electoral rolls on August 1. But now the whole country knows that 65 lakh voter names have been deleted. They have been declared either dead or missing. The way the whole exercise was carried out was exposed through social media platforms.

Ground reports by Ajeet Anjum, a Delhi-based YouTuber, exposed the drama bei-

“Around 80% of the population does not possess the documents mentioned in the EC's eligibility list. As many as 2 crore workers, who migrated to different states to earn their livelihood, are the worst affected.”

-ng enacted in the name of SIR with the tacit approval of the EC. In its bid to cover up the sordid exercise, it filed an FIR against Ajeet Anjum in the name of interfering and obstructing constitutional work.

Every day, voters are themselves posting the anomalies and the fraud being perpetrated in the name of SIR. It is hilarious to see instances where son and father bear the same name and age, husband's name becoming the father's, so on and so forth.

Such glaring and hilarious mistakes apart, the names of dead persons belonging to families close to BJP have been included in the voters list.

It remains to be seen what will happen to those voters' forms filled without any supporting documents and how many would be further excluded from the electoral rolls.

Now it has become as clear as day that the whole exercise was carried out at the behest of BJP. In each district more than 1 lakh voter names have been excluded. The EC has

mainly targeted the mass bases of the Mahagathbandhan comprising of marginalised sections of the society. It is so committed to further the cause of BJP that it has ignored the repeated advice of the Supreme Court to allow the Aadhaar card, Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC) and ration card to be accepted as legitimate proof of voter registration.

The one month's time that has been given to voters to produce documentary evidence is pointless if the legitimacy of Aadhaar, ration and Epic cards are not accepted.

National newspapers like The Hindu, The Indian Express and Dainik Bhaskar have reported targeted deletion of the minority, women, Dalits and other vulnerable sections of the society. EC has lost its credibility in the eyes of Bihari voters and they are seething with anger.

The opposition parties must resolve and act quickly to thwart the conspiracy in its embryonic stage and mobilise the people to save the democracy that the BJP is trampling under its feet every day. ■



Maharashtra Special Public Security Act: Not Public Security, Special Security to Autocracy

AJIT NAWALE
(National Joint Secretary, AIKS)



The BJP-led Mahayuti state government finally got passed the infamous Maharashtra Special Public Security Bill on July 10, 2025 in the legislative assembly and on July 11 in the upper house of the state, despite staunch opposition by democratic forces.

The ruling BJP and its lapdog allies claim that the Bill was necessary to curb what they term “Urban Naxalism”. The state government’s claim is being roundly criticised by various sections of public opinion which have highlighted the government’s true intention of crushing every voice raised against the anti-people and pro-corporate policies of the union and state governments.

The Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis, who also holds the Home portfolio, claimed in his speech while placing the Bill in the House that Naxalite activities are now confined to only two tehsils in the state. The Union Home Minister Amit Shah too has claimed that Naxal activities are now curbed to the extent of 72 per cent. This is sufficient proof, by the government’s own admission, that the existing laws are enough to control Naxalism. Therefore there is no rhyme or reason to bring in more draconian acts to combat a so-called ‘waning menace’. This very question is being raised in the state. Apart from the state-specific Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA), Central acts like the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) are being used in the state against the Left and Centre (turning a blind eye to the anti-national, violent and disruptive activities of the Right!). In this scenario the government’s specious claim of the need for another draconian law reeks of its authoritarian intentions. It is obvious that, raising the bogey of Naxalism, it is actually preparing to target democratic dissent.

REAL TARGET

The government claims that the Special Public Security Act (SPSA) is targeted at organisations and their members who are involved in “unlawful” acts. This Act gives the state government the power to ban such organisations and severely punish their members. The term “unlawful act” is deliberately loosely defined to cover any act that the government perceives to be detrimental to public order. Even a simple opinion criticising the government can be construed as unlawful. The government has arrogated to itself the right to declare organisations and their members as unlawful. Participating in their activities, collecting funds for or donating to them, spreading and publishing the views of such banned organisations, and even to encourage these acts is termed as ‘criminal’. The punishment for such acts is imprisonment ranging from two to seven years, plus fines ranging from Rs. 2–5 lakh. Personal property, even private belongings of persons and organisations can be confiscated.

The definition of an unlawful act has been intentionally kept ambiguous. Consequently, any views — spoken or written — and/or gestures criticising the government can be construed as ‘harmful to public order’ and hence ‘unlawful’. A social media post, cartoon, story, poem, joke, pamphlet or even a reaction could be branded as ‘unlawful’. Similarly, obstruction to the duties of a government servant, or civil disobedience becomes unlawful. Opposing land

acquisition by the government or opposing a corporate-driven project will be termed unlawful. Already, thousands of peasants walking with bloodied feet, in the historic AIKS-led Kisan Long March, the defenders of the Constitution and the truth-seeking followers of Mahatma Gandhi have been castigated as 'Urban Naxals'. They will now be lawfully so.

WHY? FOR WHOM?

Why and for whom has this Act been passed? The state has been witnessing a flurry of so-called development projects by corporate profiteers like Adani and Ambani. This is payback time for the money used to topple the earlier MVA government, the unprecedented money used to hijack the last assembly election and the money anonymously donated to the RSS/BJP. The new Act is aimed at deftly and easily removing any democratic and constitutional opposition to the corporate loot in the form of Shaktipeeth Expressway, Wadhvan Port, large corporate projects in Gadchiroli and other districts, and the takeover of Asia's largest slum Dharavi in Mumbai by Adani, all this by displacing tribals, peasants, fisherfolk, and unorganised workers who are slum-dwellers. The Act will be freely used to browbeat mass organisations fighting for the rights of workers, farmers, farm labourers, women, youth, students and their democratic aspirations.

As is now amply evident, the RSS/BJP are proceeding to force a Hindu Rashtra in place of the Constitution which has stood as a bulwark protecting our multicultural, multilingual and multireligious country. They want to foist a dictatorship based on communal hatred. The very being of the Hindu Rashtra is constituted by unidimensional structures such as One Nation One Election (ONOE), one religion, one language and one culture. The core of this project is to install a beastly, inhuman, backward looking and unequal society. The main obstacle to this project is the Consti-

-tution that guarantees democracy, secularism and basic human rights. The new Act is one of more means to attack the Constitution.

The bluntly stated objective of this SPSA is to target extreme left and 'similar' organisations. It is beyond comprehension how a person holding an ideology can be treated as criminal. This understanding of our Constitution is starkly against its core values. The more crucial point is why the left organisations alone? The current reality is diametrically opposite — in recent years it is the right-wing extremist organisations that have murdered public intellectuals like Dabholkar, Pansare, Kalburgi and Gauri Lankesh, violently attacked minorities, especially Muslims and dalits in the state. It is Hindutva extremism that is fomenting lawlessness against the state. It is against this reality that the BJP-led state government is using unconstitutional means and enacting anti-democratic laws, to suppress political opposition.

The extreme Left organisations, in the purview of this bill, are supplemented with a weird expression "and similar organisations", leaving out any specific definition of them. Which are these similar organisations? It is deliberately and cunningly left ambiguous. This categorisation gives blanket powers of suppression to the government of any element perceived to be detrimental to the realisation of the sinister projects conceived and hatched by the RSS and the BJP. The government claims that the Act is aimed at Left extremist organisations. What are the criteria for determining the ideology of an organisation or a person as 'left'? How will its degree of extremism be measured — in terms of generally left? moderately left? extremely left? In short, the government will call an organisation or act 'unlawful' when it finds the latter to be politically inconvenient. The net result will be destruction of democracy and consolidation of authoritarianism.

The Act proposes to appoint a committee

comprising a retired High Court Judge, a retired District Judge and the government pleader in the High Court for deciding the criminality of an organisation. It is beyond any doubt that these personnel will be those who will be only too willing to please the government. Our recent experience of the functioning of the ED, CBI and even the ECI and the Judiciary proves that they can be partial in this respect.

The punishment proposed in the Act too is extremely draconian. There is no provision for granting bail. An appeal can be made only in the High Court or the Supreme Court. This is an onerous condition put on those who choose to fight for poor tribal people or toilers of various kinds. Those arrested will be destined to rot life-long in prisons without bail.

GROWING RESISTANCE

The CPI(M) has been in the forefront of the struggle against this Bill right from the beginning and has demanded its withdrawal. It launched its struggle in a planned manner. A statewide awareness campaign was conducted as soon as indications of the government's intention of introducing the Bill were detected. A campaign of collecting lakhs of signatures, following the true message of launching struggles with a mass line, was planned and the district committees executed the decision with enthusiasm. The Party state committee took the lead in conducting a joint meeting of all Left and secular parties and mass organisations on March 28 in Mumbai. The meeting decided to take the struggle all over the state.

Large and militant joint demonstrations by the Left parties were held on April 22 in which over 50,000 people participated all over the state. The CPI(M)'s participation was 35,930. Party leaders met all the top leaders of the MVA in an effort to rope them in the joint struggle. As the Bill was under the consideration of the house joint committee, more than 12,000 objections were

submitted to it. Of these, there were more than 9,000 objections, spearheaded by the CPI(M) and social movements, clearly demanding not amendments but the entire scrapping of the Bill. On June 30, on the 1st day of the State Assembly session, a large dharna of Left parties, social organisations and MVA leaders was held at Azad Maidan in Mumbai to condemn the Bill.

Finally, the Bill was introduced by CM Devendra Fadnavis on July 10. However, despite consistent efforts by the CPI(M) and Left parties, other parties of the MVA did not oppose the Bill on the floor of the Assembly. The CPI(M) MLA Vinod Nikole, newly-elected Central Committee member, was the sole member of the Vidhan Sabha who spoke and clearly put on record his opposition to the Bill. This was widely reported in the print and electronic media. As a consequence, the Bill was passed not unanimously but with a majority. Our disapproval of the MVA position was communicated to them on July 10 itself. This, and the adverse criticism from several quarters, forced them to oppose the Bill when it was taken up for consideration in the Legislative Council the next day, and hence MVA MLCs staged a walk-out from the House in protest against the Bill.

Thus, it is more than clear that the MSPS Act is being enacted, not to curb Naxal and Left extremist activities as is being claimed, but to decimate all opposition to the ruling dispensation in the state. It will also be used against all those who stand in the way of foisting authoritarian, communal and casteist rule on the nation. There is an urgent need to intensify the struggle to squash this anti-Constitution, anti-democratic Act. The CPI(M) has called upon the people of the state to intensify the popular struggle opposing this authoritarian Act. ■



July 29 Shimla Chalo March: Understanding why Apple Trees are Being Felled in Himachal Pradesh

SHUBHOJEET DEY
(CKC Member, AIKS)



On July 29, hundreds of flags of AFFI (Apple Farmers' Federation of India) and Himachal Kisan Sabha, both affiliated to the All India Kisan Sabha, fluttered in the lanes of Shimla as apple growers of the state thundered against the arbitrary cutting of their fruit trees and the sealing of their homesteads by the forest department. Coming from all apple growing districts of Himachal Pradesh (HP), the orchardists staged a powerful protest outside the Secretariat, facing the police and heavy barricading with courage. Seeing the militancy of the demonstration of the 'Shimla Chalo' call, the Chief Minister Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu was compelled to invite the farmers and their leadership for a meeting.

Why was the state suddenly axing the trees whose produce contributes five per cent to HP's GDP, the cultivation of which supports 1.75 lakh agricultural households and has halted out-migration of the people seen so pervasively in the neighbouring hilly state of Uttarakhand? The current flashpoint has come after a spree of disastrous orders adjudicated by the High Court of HP since January this year. The orders in essence state that farmers have illegally encroached into "forest land", that apple tree is not a native species, and hence both the farmer and his crop must be evicted lock, stock and barrel.

This is not the first time that the state, under orders from the judiciary, has felled apple trees. The same happened in 2018 and then too the Himachal Kisan Sabha was at the forefront to defend the rights of small growers, the most affected group. The story of the war on apple growers is a long murky tale of how the state at both the provincial and federal level has used ecological conservation to pursue its class agendas.

In HP, more than two-thirds of all land is classified as 'forest', while empirical evidence suggests that just 22 per cent is the actual forest cover in the state. This strange and vast gap between what scientifically is forest on the ground and what is forest in the bureaucracy's files come from a government notification in 1952. This was a time when HP was not full-fledged state but a 'C-state', administered in effect by a lieutenant governor.

The order classified all lands understood loosely as 'wasteland' (since a revenue settlement was not implemented) to be forest land. This meant that HP had only two kinds of lands in its revenue records — those privately owned and those deemed as forest land. Thousands of square kilometres of barren, rocky or presently not under cultivation lands were now imagined as protected forests, not to be utilised for any developmental activity that can pull the masses out of poverty.

As time went on, under popular pressure, the provincial government after statehood in 1971 enacted some progressive land reform legislation, and even gave titles to actual marginal and rocky lands in the villages to landless, sharecroppers and Dalits for their subsistence (under the Nautor rules). It is through these farmers' backbreaking effort that these wastelands were turned arable; many of them planted apple trees on steep slopes with no road links.

Then came the Forest Conservation Act (FCA) in 1980, a millstone around farmer's neck across the country. This act in essence usurped the state government's legal ability to re-classify forest land within its territorial boundaries and handed this right to the Centre. And

since the revenue settlement was, out of laxity on the state government's part, still not undertaken, whatever land was classified as 'forest' in the 1952 notification became a permanent fact after 1980. The land that the marginal and landless farmers received under land reform before FCA, which was actually wasteland, was now deemed permanently as forest land. These peasants who made wastelands productive were now deemed as 'encroachers' under the eyes of law.

The land redistribution process came to a complete standstill. Even those households in dire need of subsistence like widows of martyred army jawans could not be given an inch of land by the government. Indeed, after FCA, the government had practically no land for developmental purposes or for fulfilling its responsibilities of ensuring social justice.

But the rural masses of HP were in no mood to accept this manifest injustice, couched in the terminology of environmental conservation. They pushed the state government to do something, find some solution. In 2001, under pressure the HP assembly past an amendment to its land revenue act, inserting a clause that if a farmer had encroached into forest land, s/he could apply for regularisation of that land. Before a petition challenging this amendment was filed in the High Court the very next year, already more than 1.6 lakh applications had been filed by farmers! This showed the extent of the problem of land-use classification in the state, and how many farmers could potentially be robbed of their livelihoods if eviction orders were set off by either the forest department or the courts.

Before the amendment's constitutionality was assessed and adjudicated upon, the High Court gave the eviction and tree felling orders this year. It need not be denied that some large landowners have felled forest species and shrunk the actual forest cover of the state to further expand their plantations, as stated by the judges.

But to use this as fodder to train guns on small farmers, many of whom received land during the land reform days, is arbitrary and exposes a class-bias of the state.

Before the Supreme Court passed an interim order on July 28 staying the tree felling and homestead sealing happening in the apple belt in Shimla district, AFFI and Himachal Kisan Sabha's activists had reported how the forest department's executioners had landed on the tiny orchards of BPL (below poverty line) families. As the poor farmers stood helplessly, these executioners used power chainsaws on fruit-laden trees and then billed the farmers for clearing their orchard!

In the meeting on July 29 after the Shimla Chalo call with the CM and the revenue minister, apple growers along with the AFFI and Himachal Kisan Sabha leadership that included Rakesh Singha, Sanjay Chauhan, Dr. Kuldeep Singh Tanwar and others, presented their demands to the government. Singha said that officials carrying out illegal evictions must be stopped immediately, and the government should first file an affidavit in the High Court stating that until a policy on encroachments is formulated, evictions will be put on hold.

The CM assured that the govt. would present the farmers' case in court and would also advocate for them in the Supreme Court to secure relief. The revenue minister said that the Cabinet, on the same day, would order the forest secretary to stop tree-cutting and the sealing of homesteads, and would instruct strict implementation of the Forest Rights Act. He further said that if any official is found obstructing these claims, strict action will be taken against them. The AFFI and Himachal Kisan Sabha could contact him directly by phone to lodge complaints.

The CM said that soon a committee would be formed to address issues related to evictions and a farmer-friendly policy would be framed, with inputs also taken from AF-

-FI and Himachal Kisan Sabha. He said that the issue of 68 % of the land being classified as forest land would be taken up with the Union environment minister, and that apart from the 22 % land that actually has forests, the state government should have the right to allocate the remaining land to people. He added that he would personally go to Delhi to raise this matter with the concerned minister.

After the meeting, it was decided at the ra-

-lly that the government would be given 15 days to act; if no decision was taken in the interest of farmers, the ongoing movement would be intensified. On August 13, AFFI and Himachal Kisan Sabha has planned to hold protests on eviction and other land-related issues at the block level to up the ante. Our position is clear: ecological conservation has no meaning if it up-roots livelihoods of the rural masses, the actual custodians of the same ecology the law and the courts are so frantic to protect.■





Karnataka: Channarayapatna Farmers' Victory: A Historic Struggle against Land Acquisition

T. YASHAVANTHA
(State Secretary, AIKS Karnataka)

The farmers' struggle against forced land acquisition in the 13 villages of Channarayapatna Hobli, Devanahalli Taluk, in Bangalore Rural district, has ended in victory after 1,198 days of continuous protest since April 4, 2022.

On July 15, 2025, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah met with leaders from the Channarayapatna Anti-Land Acquisition Struggle Committee and Samyukta Horata Karnataka, and agreed to drop the forced acquisition of 1,777 acres of farmland.

The acquisition was being carried out under the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development (KIAD) Act of 1966. This draconian law empowers the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB) — which has increasingly functioned as a real estate facilitator in the neoliberal era — to use coercive, unjust, and authoritarian methods to dispossess farmers of their land, denying them democratic rights and adequate legal protections.

There are 13 notified villages in a 5 km periphery. 1,300 acres of land along the boundaries of these villages were already acquired in 2018-19 for the Aerospace and Defence Park (Phase 2). Including earlier acquisitions for the Phase 1 of this Park, for the Bangalore International Airport, and the Aerospace SEZ, this Hobli has already lost 6,000 acres. Habitable areas of the villages are rapidly shrinking.

In 2022, the then-BJP-led state government issued a preliminary notification for yet another round of acquisition. Most of the targeted farmers had already lost land in previous rounds or had witnessed the devastation faced by friends, relatives, and neighbours — many of whom were rendered bankrupt after losing their land which is their primary source of livelihood.

At that time, the Congress party — then in opposition — had promised to withdraw the no-

-tification if it came to power in the 2023 state election. However, after forming the government, it not only reneged on its promise but accelerated the process by issuing the final acquisition notification.

The lands under threat are fertile and highly productive. Local farmers grow food grains, vegetables, grapes, mangoes, and also engage in cattle rearing, sericulture, and floriculture — forming a diversified and sustainable rural economy.

Determined to resist the acquisition of their land, the affected farmers formed the Channarayapatna Anti-Land Acquisition Struggle Committee and launched an indefinite protest in front of the revenue sub-office in Hobli. They also sought the support of the AIKS-affiliated Karnataka Pranth Raitha Sangha (KPRS), which has played a pivotal role in the movement since the beginning.

KPRS state president at the time, the late GC Bayya Reddy, laid the foundation for the movement and provided vital leadership until his untimely death on January 4, 2025.

The leadership gap was overcome with the active and militant support of Samyukta Horata Karnataka (SHK), which helped broaden the struggle's reach and deepen its mass base. The movement gained national prominence with the involvement of SHK's constituent organisations, including AIKS, CITU, AIAWU, AIDWA, various groups of the KRRS led by Badagalapura Nagendra, HR Basavarajappa and Chukki Nanjundaswamy, as well as the Joint Committee of Trade Unions, and organisations of dalits, youth, women, students, and others.

In support of the farmers' resistance in Channarayapatna Hobli, the Samyukta Horata Karnataka (SHK) called for a Devanahalli Chalo—Jail Bharo protest on June 25, 2025, following a resolution adopted at the state-level Janagraha Samavesha (People's Demand Convention) earlier that month.

This convention had sharply questioned the moral legitimacy of the state government's Sadhana Samavesha (Success Convention). The call to protest received unprecedented support across Karnataka. Farmers, workers, dalits, women, students, and youth gathered in large numbers, undeterred by police obstruction. Prominent film actor and activist Prakash Raj also joined the protest.

Despite the peaceful nature of the protest, police — who had refused to grant permission — responded with unprovoked and excessive force, dragging and violently arresting hundreds of protesters as the day progressed. In a powerful act of defiance, all arrested leaders and protesters refused conditional release, insisting either on being jailed or on the cancellation of the forced land acquisition.

Facing mounting public pressure, CM Siddaramaiah invited movement leaders for talks on July 4. In the lead-up, protesters launched an indefinite day-and-night sit-in in Bengaluru, replacing the Jail Bharo call to maintain momentum and intensify the pressure on the state government.

The protest drew widespread solidarity. Leaders from across Karnataka's people's movements addressed the crowds, including KPRS general secretary T Yashavantha, president U Basavaraja, AIAWU state secretary Chandrappa Hoskera, president M Puttamadu, and CITU leaders S Varalakshmi and Meenakshi Sundaram. They were joined by CPI(M) Karnataka state secretary K Prakash, veteran activists such as Noor Sridhar, and grassroots leaders from Bangalore Rural district including Prabha N Belavangala, Chandra Tejaswi, Narasimhamurthy and Harindra.

The gathering was also addressed by Prof. Prakash Kammardi, former chairperson of the Karnataka Agricultural Price Commission, and retired Supreme Court Justice V Gopalagowda.

From the national platform of the SKM, se-

Several senior leaders traveled to Bengaluru to express solidarity. These included AIKS general secretary Vijoo Krishnan, AIAWU general secretary B Venkat, Rakesh Tikait, Darshan Pal, Sunilam and Yudhvir Singh. They warned the state government that the struggle would expand nationwide if the farmers' legitimate and legal demands were not met.

Amid this escalating pressure, CM Siddaramaiah held discussions with movement leaders on July 4 and requested 10 days' time to resolve the issue. However, during this period, some local leaders, in collusion with ministers, attempted to sow division among the farmers. They falsely claimed a section of farmers was willing to give up their land, parading individuals who were later exposed as real estate agents, not villagers or genuine farmers. This attempted sabotage was immediately and widely denounced.

Finally, on July 15, 2025, in a decisive meeting with the struggle committee, Siddaramaiah announced the withdrawal of all land acquisition notifications — marking a historic victory for the farmers of Channarayapatna after 1,198 days of struggle.

This win was hard-fought. The movement endured police repression, fabricated charges, and divide-and-rule tactics, yet emerged triumphant through unwavering unity and mass mobilisation.

The lands under threat are fertile and highly productive. Local farmers grow food grains, vegetables, grapes, mangoes, and also engage in cattle rearing, sericulture and floriculture — forming a diversified and sustainable rural economy.

This victorious struggle waged by movements across the ideological streams — green, blue and red — has written a new chapter in the history of movements in Karnataka. It has created great hope among the exploited people.

The consistent and active support of the Left parties, including the CPI(M), at every stage of the struggle, played a crucial role in this historic achievement.

UNIQUE VICTORY

This victory stands out for its many unique features and can serve as a model and inspiration for other farmers' movements resisting land acquisition across the country.

Spanning more than three years, it is perhaps the longest and most determined struggle by peasants in recent history. Unlike most land acquisition protests, which often focus on negotiating compensation or specific conditions, the farmers of Channarayapatna unanimously rejected the very idea of giving up their land. They refused to engage in any discussion about terms or compensation, holding firm in their decision. Neither threats nor inducements could break their resolve or unity.

This unyielding resistance stemmed not only from the fertility and productivity of the land, but also from a deep awareness — shaped by past experiences — of the State's failure to honour promises made during previous acquisitions in the region and elsewhere in Karnataka.

A key factor behind the success of this struggle was the extraordinary unity and solidarity among peasant organisations, trade unions, and mass movements of students, youth, women, and dalits. Their collective strength and shared commitment turned a local farmers' resistance into a broad-based people's movement — a historic victory etched into Karnataka's political and social landscape. ■

AIKS Maharashtra Holds First Sugarcane Farmers' State Convention at Kolhapur

AIKS STATEMENT

A IKS Maharashtra State Council organised its first Sugarcane Farmers' State Convention at Kolhapur in the midst of the sugar belt of the state. Despite torrential rains and floods, over 450 farmers from various districts attended the convention held at the renowned Shahu Smarak Hall.

The convention was presided over by AIKS State President Umesh Deshmukh. Peasants and Workers Party (PWP) leader and Reception Committee Chairperson Babasaheb Deokar welcomed the delegates. AIKS State Vice President Dr Uday Narkar in his introduction, explained the objective of the convention. It was inaugurated by AIKS National General Secretary Vijoo Krishnan. AIKS State Council member Amol Naik placed the main resolution, which was seconded by Deepak Lipne, Yuvraj Bhosale, Sampatrao Savant, A B Patil, Uddhav Poul, Bhagwan Bhojane and Sangram Savant.

The convention was addressed by AIKS National Vice President and President of the All India Sugarcane Farmers Federation (AISFF) D Raveendran and by AIKS Central Kisan Committee member Pushpendra Tyagi. CITU-affiliated Sugarcane Cutters Union General Secretary Dr Subhash Jadhav greeted the convention. A 15-member State Sugarcane Farmers Coordination Committee with Umesh Deshmukh as Convenor was elected. AIKS National President Dr Ashok Dhawale concluded the convention. AIKS Kolhapur District Council member Chandrakant Kurane proposed the vote of thanks.

The main speakers placed valuable points exposing the exploitation of cane farmers through the neoliberal policies of both central and state governments and the rapacious sugar factories.

Many activists of the Mukti Sangharsh Samiti from four tehsils of Kolhapur district under the leadership of Sangram Savant joined the AIKS in this convention and they were welcomed by the AIKS leadership by giving them the AIKS flag.

The Convention decided to organise a statewide agitation of sugarcane farmers in October on the State Sugar Commissioner's office in Pune around the following demands: Give Rs 5,500 per tonne to cane farmers at 9.5 recovery base; start the system of a remunerative State Advisory Price (SAP) in the state; reduce the cost of inputs like fertilisers, pesticides, diesel, power etc; give a part of the profits from secondary by-products like ethanol etc. to the cane farmers; increase the minimum sale price of sugar to Rs. 45 per kg with a dual pricing system for domestic (subsidised price) and industrial (higher price) use; stop the manifold systemic loot of farmers, sugarcane cutters and sugar factory workers by the government and sugar factories; central government must follow a consistent policy regarding foreign trade in sugar in the best interests of cane farmers and the sugar industry; ensure transparency in sugar factory weighing scales; and strengthen the cooperative sugar sector manifold through concrete steps.

Two other important resolutions were also adopted:

1. Stop the proposed but unnecessary Shaktipeeth Highway with the accompanying large land acquisition in several districts,
2. Vest all temple trust lands and inami lands in the names of the cultivating peasants.

On the next day, a meeting of the AISFF coordination committee was held at the salubrious hill station-cum-historical fort town of Panhala. Apart from other decisions, it elected Pushpendra Tyagi as the AISFF General Secretary in place of N K Shukla, who stepped down due to reasons of age and health. The earlier day, the committee also visited a sugar factory in Kolhapur.

The AIKS Kolhapur District Committee had made excellent arrangements for both the above programmers. ■



Fraud & Failure in Paddy Procurement by the Union government in Tamil Nadu

B. THULASI NARAYAN
(State Joint Secretary, AIKS Tamil Nadu)



In the first week of May, farmers from Chengalpattu and Tiruvannamalai districts contacted AIKS Tamilnadu district leaders to report a serious crisis: they had supplied their harvested paddy to procurement centers operated by the National Cooperative Consumers Federation of India (NCCF), yet even after 45 days, they had not received a single rupee in payment. The agents responsible for the procurement had failed to make any settlements, causing deep worries to the farming community.

Immediately, under the leadership of State Secretary B. Thulasi Narayan, a delegation from AIKS, comprising V Hari Krishnan, K Vasudevan, T Vijayakant (Chengalpattu district), and TK Venkatesan, S Arunkumar, S Jayakumar, M Damodaran (Tiruvannamalai district) visited the affected farmers and inspected the procurement centers. The field investigation confirmed the validity of the farmers' complaints.

The findings revealed severe shortcomings at the centres. They lacked even the most basic infrastructure, with no concrete flooring to protect the paddy and no storage facilities such as godowns or sheds. There were no office buildings, and even essential items like tarpaulin sheets to cover the paddy were missing. Payments had been pending for over 60 days, while paddy was found dumped in the open, fully exposed to sun and rain.

Further inquiries revealed similar conditions in all 23 centers across Chengalpattu and 27 centers in Tiruvannamalai, raising widespread concern. In response, AIKS mobilised farmers and organised roadblock protests demanding immediate government intervention. A press statement issued by State General Secretary, Com. Sami Natarajan, brought further media attention. Following this, protest demonstrations and road blockades were immediately held on behalf of AIKS. In response to these movements, the state government immediately paid attention to this issue and initiated the following measures.

Procurement of stranded paddy was immediately started by the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation (TNCSC). Intensive efforts took by district administrations to settle outstanding payments and achieved. All farmers have been paid the due payments.

The state government took over all the procurement centers operated by NCCF.

Despite these actions, our primary concern remains: these measures were taken only after farmers suffered enormous losses. It was only when lakhs of bags of paddy were spoiled in the rain that the administration began to respond. If the government or its officials have answers, we are prepared to listen.

We now raise the following critical questions:

1). On what basis was NCCF, despite having no infrastructure, granted permission to open over 150 procurement centers across eight districts: Chengalpattu, Kanchipuram, Tiruvallur, Tiruvannamalai, Vellore, Ranipet, Tirupattur, and Villupuram?

2). Reports indicate that pending payments amount to over Rs. 500 crore in these districts. How many legal cases have been filed against the responsible parties? If none, why?

3). Why did the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation, Revenue Department and Agriculture Department remain silent for over 1,440 hours, despite regulations mandating payments within 48 hours of procurement?

4). Was the procured paddy milled and subsequently delivered to the Food Corporation of India (FCI)? Did the district administrations monitor this process?

5). NCCF reportedly received an advance of Rs. 170 crore from TNCSC. Has the equivalent quantity of rice been delivered to Tamil Nadu? Why has NCCF not yet submitted proper accounts? This is not a minister's personal fund — it is public money, collected from taxpayers. This is our money!

6). Are IAS officers and economists with doctoral degrees in government services unaware that such irresponsible handling of procurement weakens the public procurement system, endangers food security, and devastates the livelihoods of farmers?

In conclusion, last year, the TN state unit of AIKS emphatically warned the state government against involving the Union Government's NCCF in paddy procurement. We raised our concerns and voices across Tamil Nadu. Unfortunately, those warnings went unheeded. Today, our predictions have become a harsh reality.

Yes, It's a lesson to the state's ruling government! In future too, let the Tamil Nadu State government alone handle all aspects of paddy procurement. This serves as a wake-up call not only for the farmers of Tamil Nadu but for the entire farming community of India. It highlights the Modi government's inability to effectively procure the valuable produce cultivated by our farmers. ■



Gujarat: Death of a Dairy Farmer AIKS Delegation Visits Himatnagar

DAYABHAI GAJERA
(State President, AIKS Gujarat)

An AIKS delegation visited Himatnagar on July 21, 2025, following the tragic death of 42-year-old dairy farmer Ashok Choudhury. The delegation, led by AIKS leaders, demanded a judicial inquiry into the circumstances surrounding Choudhury's death and called for compensation of Rs. 1 crore to his family, among others.

Choudhury's death is rooted in the long-standing issue of corruption within the BJP-controlled Sabarkantha District Milk Producers Union (Sabar Dairy). Dairy farmers in the region have been raising concerns about mismanagement and corruption in the cooperative. Last year, following a successful AIKS-led agitation, the dairy was forced to increase its dividend. However, this year, the management reduced the dividend, angering farmers. On July 14, an anonymous message prompted a large gathering of farmers outside the dairy, where they were met with excessive police force.

Ashok Choudhury, who was seated in a vehicle parked in front of the dairy gate, was caught in the police crackdown. As heavy teargas was used, the fumes trapped inside the vehicle caused suffocation. Unable to escape due to the ongoing lathi charge, Choudhury's blood pressure dropped dramatically. Unfortunately, despite being rushed to one hospital after another, he could not be saved.

Farmers have voiced concerns over rampant corruption and politically biased recruitments within the dairy cooperatives controlled by the ruling party. They allege that funds are being diverted to organise political events, including visits from high-profile dignitaries such as the Prime Minister and Governor, while dairy farmers are denied their rightful share. This illicit diversion of funds has exacerbated the distress faced by farmers, who are already struggling with rising production costs and low milk procurement prices.

The delegation visited Jijva village in Idar tehsil, where they met with the family of the victim. They expressed their condolences to Choudhury's wife and three children. The delegation also engaged with the president of the Jijva Dairy Cooperative, Jijva Dudh Utpadad

Mandali, and other farmer leaders from the village.

Earlier, an AIKS-led meeting of dairy farmers was held at Patidar Wadi in Himatnagar. Despite efforts to dissuade farmers from attending, a significant number gathered to mourn Choudhury's death and criticise the BJP-led state government for its insensitivity to the plight of farmers. Several speakers condemned the government's arrogance, corruption and failure to address farmers' issues.

A key concern raised at the meeting was the large gap between the consumer price and the procurement price of milk, which currently stands at Rs. 17 per litre. The dairy cooperative, the farmers claimed, is accumulating large profits without sharing the benefits with the producers. The meeting demanded that all dairy cooperatives share their surplus as dividends with the milk-producing farmers and called for the procurement price to be raised to Rs. 60 per litre. Additionally, the farmers requested that the state government provide a subsidy of Rs. 10 per litre to alleviate the financial burden on dairy farmers.

Speakers also highlighted that cooperatives, once run by farmers, are now dominated by the BJP, which is allegedly using them for political gain. It is noteworthy that Sabar Dairy's reported profits have declined significantly — from a consistent 16-17.5 % return in previous years to just 9.5% this year — despite stable operations. This decline, it is alleged, is due to the diversion of cooperative funds for political purposes.

The delegation included Muralidharan, central leader of democratic movement; HI Bhatt, state leader of democratic movement; Krishnaprasad, finance secretary of AIKS; Pushpendra Tyagi, secretariat member of AIKS; and Dayabhai Gajera and Parshotam Parmar, general secretary and secretary of the Gujarat Kisan Sabha, respectively. ■

Haryana: 23 Martyrs of the 1935 Loharu Farmers' Revolt Remembered

INDERJIT SINGH
(National Vice President, AIKS)



Burdened by the merciless taxes imposed by the Nawab of Loharu princely state — ranging from camel tax, bull tax, sheep and goat tax, cloth cutting tax, platform tax, iron tax, weight and measure tax, tools tax, tree-cutting tax, and many more — farmers, workers and artisans, reeling under severe exploitation, eventually refused to pay these levies.

During this time, under the pretext of supporting Britain in World War efforts, the British Government further pressured princely states to increase land revenues drastically. With British backing, princely rulers unleashed brutal tax collection drives, crossing all limits of cruelty.

The region bordering Rajasthan frequently suffered from droughts, yet there was no tax relief even during such hardships. In fact, people were tortured for forced collections. From 1922–23 onwards, a wave of resistance began to emerge. Community councils (panchayats) were held, involving people from all communities.

One such mahapanchayat (mass gathering) was planned in February 1935, expecting large participation from neighbouring princely states like Rajasthan, Patiala, and Jind. But the Nawab's army forcibly prevented the gathering, which only further ignited the flames of rebellion.

As punishment for not paying taxes, the Nawab's police set fire to the nearby village of Chahad Kalan. It is said that only one house was spared because a woman farmer stood guard at her door wielding a sickle (a farming tool), warning that anyone who tried to enter would not leave alive. Other villages — such as Mandhauri, Kasni and Gokulpura — also faced brutal crackdowns.

On 8 August 1935, a major council was held in the village of Singhani, where a parallel administration was declared, appointing Subedar Dilsukh as the leader. To crush this declaration, the Nawab's forces opened indiscriminate fire on the assembly, killing 23 farmers, including 1 woman and members of the Dalit community.

The next day, newspapers across the country reported the massacre. Senior ministers and farmer leaders from Punjab's Unionist Party — Chaudhary Chhotu Ram, Chaudhary Lajpat Rai of Alakhpura and Pandit Neki Ram Sharma — rushed to Singhani to support the victims and arrange medical aid for the injured. Protests titled "Singhani Atrocity Opposition Day" were held in cities like Bhiwani, Shimla, Jodhpur and Delhi.

List of the martyrs: Ramnath Sheoran, Daulat Ram, Piru Ram, Bhola Ram, Nambardarni Sundari Devi, Amarchand, Mala Ram, Amin Lal, Gutti Ram, Shyochand, Mani Ram, Nemaram, Lalji Agrawal, Shiv Bakhsh Agrawal, Mamchand Khati, Shyochand Dhanak, Poorn Ram, Heera Ram, Kumla Khedar, Dhanna Ram Rao, Chunni Lal, Sultan Singh, Ramlal Guddi.

Apart from this major incident, several farmers were martyred in separate land-tax revolts across other villages before and after this event.

In an attempt to negotiate, the Nawab offered to abolish all taxes except the camel tax. The rebelling farmers rejected the offer outright.



On 8 August 2025, the 91st Shaheedi Diwas (Martyrs' Day) was commemorated by the Singhani Youth Club. A massive procession — also joined by protestors from the ongoing agitation in Loharu against an insurance company scam — marched to the martyrs' memorial. Numerous men and women from the village, school children, NCC cadets, and social activists participated. A blood donation camp was also organized.

Prominent participants included Inderjeet Singh, Master Jagroshan, former MLA Somveer, Pramendra Sheoran, Advocate Brahmanand, Advocate Kavita Arya, Master Umrao Singh, Karan Singh Jenawas, Ravi Azad, Mukesh Nambardar, Vinod Haryawas, Principal Prithvi Singh, and others.

On behalf of the Kisan Sabha and Samyukt Kisan Morcha, Inderjeet Singh paid tribute to the martyrs and stated “Once again, imperialist forces—through pressure on the Modi Government — are trying to gain control over Indian agriculture and our vast market. To defeat them, we must overcome communal and caste-based forces. Only then can we protect our livelihood, food security, and national sovereignty. The sacrifice of these martyrs gives us this very message today.” ■

जबरिया बेदखली एवं अधिग्रहण के खिलाफ

भूमि अधिकार सम्मेलन

ग्वालियर चंबल संभाग



म.प्र. किसान सभा



Land Rights Movement in Madhya Pradesh

ASHOK TIWARI
(State President, AIKS Madhya Pradesh)



On 17 August 2025, the Madhya Pradesh Kisan Sabha organized a Land Rights Regional Convention at Rajmahal Garden, Gwalior. The event witnessed participation from hundreds of farmer leaders and activists across the Gwalior-Chambal division, including districts such as Morena, Bhind, Gwalior and Datia.

Key issues raised in the convention:

Forced land acquisition without proper compensation, Non-implementation of the Land Acquisition Act, 2013, Displacement of farmers in the name of development projects (like highways, bypass roads and industrial zones); problems related to land leases (*pattas*) for agriculture and housing; exploitation of tribal farmers in areas like Dabra, Ghatigaon and Malnpur; demands for housing rights and land ownership regularisation for rural and urban poor.

Badal Saroj, National Joint Secretary, AIKS, spoke about the legacy of farmer struggles from British colonial times to the recent 13-month protest against farm laws. He emphasised unity and criticised capitalist and communal policies of the government. Ashok Tiwari, State President of MP Kisan Sabha, called for intensifying struggles and strengthening the organisation. Akhilesh Yadav, State General Secretary, proposed a massive protest rally on September 25 in Bhopal, which was unanimously supported.

Local Leaders Report on Ongoing Struggles:

Rakesh Shukla (Chambal Valley Committee) highlighted the resistance against the Atal Progressway, a 416 km road project affecting over 1,07,000 small and marginal farmers in Bhind, Morena and Sheopur. Due to farmer pressure, the project was halted in March 2023. Jitendra Arya advised on housing rights for tribal families in the Dabra region. Shivcharan Yadav Patel (SAADA) pointed out the failure to provide promised compensation and employment. Siyaram Singh and Ramprakash Singh discussed the Greenfield Expressway, which passes through 25 villages in Morena. Farmers are protesting for fair compensation, demanding parity with the standards followed in Uttar Pradesh. Virendra Singh Kushwaha (Malanpur) reported ongoing struggles against illegal land grabbing and demanded jobs for locals in industrial zones. Naresh Goswami (Sabalgarh Bypass) highlighted opposition to crusher installations in Malanpur and SAADA land acquisition in Gwalior. A campaign is underway to realign the bypass route to protect agricultural land. Omprakash Shrivastava (Morena) shared victories in housing and land lease movements in Joura and Kailaras.

The convention concluded with a unified call for a massive militant protest on September 25 in Bhopal, pledging to mobilise thousands of farmers across the state. Leaders vowed to intensify campaigns and build wider solidarity. ■



SOLIDARITY WITH
CUBA
IS OUR DUTY





In support of Palestinian liberation

**The ongoing genocide in Gaza is not only unacceptable
but a stain on our collective conscience.**