

Meeting of Working Committee of Punjab Khet Mazdoor
Sabha held at Jullundur on 4.5.1975.

(Master Hari Singh)

Presents: Bhaura(President), Ruldu Khan, M. Hari Singh, Sagar Singh and Dana Ram M.L.As', Sarwan Singh Charik and Bhagirath Rai, Gursewak Singh, Ujagar Singh Ropar, Azad Jullundur Santokh Singh Gurdaspur, Sarwan Singh Nagoke, Mohinder Singh Kasek, Hari Singh Partiala(14).

Late comers.

Basant Singh Kathania, Shadi Singh Ludhiana, Rattan Chand Hoshiarpur, Swaran Singh Ferozepur, Amar Singh Sangrur, Mand Singh Tahlia(6).

Absent: Malkiat Chand Mehli, Joti Ram, Ram Singh, Ferozepur, Kehar Singh Hoshiarpur, Jaswant Singh Chauhan Ludhiana(5).

Mothu Ram from Balachaur area also was present. He said that Kehar Singh was not quite so well.

Proceedings.

Com. Ruldu Khan reported on meeting of Bhartya Khet Mazdoor Union Council.

Review of Mansa Session.

On the whole a successful session. Reception Committee collected Rs. 13,487 and spent Rs. 10,633. Saving was Rs. 2854 of which 50%, Rs. 1427 should come to State Committee of the Sabha, not yet paid.

Besides, moneys are also due from certain donors. Rs. 720 from one donor.

Two posters 2000 each were issued by the Receipt Committee.

200 Wehra meetings and a Convention at Mansa in preparation for the Conference. Rally 5,000 attend. 3000 in procession. 306 delegates attend while last year 308 attended. Membership had increased from 74000 to 10,3044, but delegate attendance had decreased. Discussion on report good, but on Resolutions not satisfactory. District Sessions not well prepared for, were postponed many times due to other pre-occupations. Working Committee of 25 with 5 new members elected. New Working Committee decided to print 10,000 copies of resolutions.

Khet Mazdoor School: It will be held in the first week of June at Moga- all whole-timers to attend. It will be lecture-cum-discussion on important problems discussion on important problems of the movement.

Land struggles: Per decision of B.K.M.U. land struggle will be conducted in cooperation with C.P.I, Kisan Sabha and other mass organisations. Conventions will be organised at local, district and State levels. Wehra meetings, squad marches rallies, demonstrations and conferences will be organised. 20,000 Posters will be printed and distributed.

In concluding stage of the movement surplus lands of big land-lords will be occupied. Also evacuee lands will be retrieved from land grabbers.

The movement is to compel the Government to effect

Necessary amendments in Punjab Land Reforms Act and to implement it effectively.

Movement will also continue on the issue of wages, social oppression and for grant of free house sites.

Resolutions passed on following subjects-

1. Congratulations to heroic people of Cambodia and Vietnam
2. Against auction of evacuee land especially under occupation of poor abadkars.
3. Exposing State Government claim to have distributed house plots to about 2 lac persons.

Price of wheat, 105+ bonus.

Ferozpur

Wage In Lambi wage has come down to Rs. 5 a day due to competition from Rajasthan labour. Last year harvesting wage was Rs. 8-10 a day.

Wheat price Rs. 110-115.

May Day Observed in Gidderbaha and Moga Malout.

Ludhiana.

Wage for harvestings. 65-77 kilos of wheat per acre + 3 ;ands of Bhosa and no meals.

In Cash Rs. 60-75 per acre.

Threshings 10-12 or 12 kilos of wheat per day.

Work for long hours.

Wheat prices:- Rs. 105+ bonus.

Jullundur

Harvesting; Thekka system 1/20 to 1/21th of harvested wheat.
Employments 7 days.
Crop better this year.
Employers imported.;
Himechal labour too.

Threshings 16 Kilos a day .
Price of wheat Rs.105 + bonus.

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1. Congratulations to herod~~a~~ people of Cambodia and Vietnam.
2. Against auction of evacuee land especially under occupation of poor abadkars.
3. Exposing State Government claim to have distributed house plots to about 2 lac persons.
4. Calling upon the Government to appoint Minimum Wage Committee for Agricultural workers.

It was decided to write to the Chief Minister that no challan had been put up in the case of murder of Piara Singh of Goindwal area in district Amritsar.

District: reports regarding wages, harvesting, employment position and prices of wheat.

District. representatives who spoke gave information in the main regarding their own localities.

Amritsar. Harvesting of wheat. Mainly Lavi system. One Bhari a day. Theka 1/18 to 1/20th of harvested wheat. In some cases $1\frac{1}{2}$ and or 2 monds of grain per acre.

~~@@@~~ Employment more than last year.

Yield per acre in good land is 12.80 quintals per acres.
Price of wheat Rs. 105 + Rs. 8 bonus = Rs. 113 per quintal .
Land Convention on 20th June.

Bhatinda-Gursewak

Drought and canal closures affected crop. Wheat yield not good.

Harvesting wage: Rs. 7-8 a day.

Employment for 15 days- less than last year.

Land convention on 21st June.

5 Conferences to be held.

Ferozepur.

Harvesting wage 1/20th of harvested crop.

$1\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ monds of wheat per acre + 2 pands of Bhoosa.
+tea in the evening.

Cash wages: Rs. 14+ food per day. In Fazilka area -Rs. 6-7 a day
Rajasthan labour has affected wage level.

Price of what Rs. 105+ bonus.

Wx Ferozepur

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Jullundur
Harvesting

Theka system 1/20th to 1/21th of harvested wheat.

Employment Rs. 7 days.

Crop better this year.

Employers imported Himachal labour too.

Threshings

Price of what 16 kilos a day.
Rs. 105+ bonus.

Hoshiarpur

Mukerian; Kh.M.Sabha has been set up.

Wheat harvesting wage

1/18-1/19th of harvested crop.

1½-1¾ mds of wheat per acre, plus a tangar of Bhoosa

Threshings 1/10th of winnowed grain.

Employment 7 days.

Yield: 10-12 quintals an acre.

Patiala.

Wheat Yield 8-10 quintals an acre.

Wage Rs. 4-7 a day.

Harvesting 1/20th to 1/25 th of harvested crop- 15 days' work.

Threshings 10 kilos a day + food.

Price of wheat Rs. 105-110-115.

Ropar.

Yield per acre- 8-13 quintals.

Wage Rs. 5 plus food.

Harvesting of wheat- 1/20th to 1/25th of harvested wheat.

Employment- 15 days.

Price of what Rs. 105+ bonus.

Sangrur.

Harvesting 20 kilos a day.

Thekka 90 kilos per 6½ bigha or 1½ acre.

Threshing 16 kilos a day + meals.

Wage for other work Rs. 6-7 a day plus food.

Gurdaspur Employment- 20 days,

Yield per acre 8-10 quintals

Harvesting 2 mds per acre.

Threshing 16 kilos a day + one Pand of Bhoosa.

Balochaur in Hoshiarpur district

Harvesting 1/15th to 1/16th of crop.

Rs. 50 per acre.

Threshing -16 kilos a day.

Hari Singh.

12⁵/₇₅ Hari Singh

for B.K.M.U

VI meeting of Working Committee at Ludhiana on 12.10.75

Present: M. Hari Singh, Huldu Kha, Ujagar Singh Ropar, Joti Ram, Dana Ram M.L.A, Gursewak Singh, Sarwan Singh, Rattan Chand, Bhagirath(10).

Late: Jaswant Singh Chauhan, Maura, Mohinder Singh Kasek, Amar Singh, Swaran Singh, Santokh Singh, Jagat Singh Azad, Ram Singh, Sarwan Singh Charik, Kehar Singh Bharawal, Basant Singh Kathmania(11).

Leave: Malkiat Chand Mehli and Shadi Singh (2).
Com. P.K. Kodiyan, Secretary, B.K.M.U, also attended the meeting.

Present in time = 10
Late = 11

} 21 out of 25.

Proceedings

Com. P.K. Kodiyan reported on international Conference of Agricultural Workers held in Moscow in last May and on Emergency, 20-point programme and present situation and movement of agricultural workers in the country.

Com. Huldu Khan made report on work in Gurdaspur, Ropar, Jullundur and Amritsar.

Master Hari Singh reported on two recent decisions of the State Government.

1. Decision to distribute 21280 acres of evacuee land, now with Forest Department, to Scheduled Caste agricultural workers and tenants. Distt-wise figures of such land have been given in the circular issued. Distt. Comrades should get village-wise figures from Divisional Forest Officer's Office. Deserving persons should be helped to put in applications by 3rd November, 1975. Some applications in cyclostyled copies were given to district Comrades. The beneficiaries will pay no price of land. The allottees will pay land revenue, water rates and other taxes. They will plant trees in the land as instructed by Forest Deptt. and cultivate rest of the land. They will not sell, mortgage or sub-let the land. At the death of an allottee, evacuee land will pass on to his heirs.

2. District level committee with 8 members each have been set up to take cognizance of complaints of agricultural workers, especially Harijans, regarding social disabilities and illegal restraints. Official members are D.C, S.S.P, Distt. Welfare Officer and Labour-cum. Conciliation Officer of the district. Among non-official members two represent landed interests and two the agricultural workers. Out of 24 representatives of the agricultural workers in the twelve district 8 are members of our State Working Committee - two each in Amritsar Ferozepur, Faridkot and one each in Jullundur and Bhatinda. The second representative in Bhatinda belongs to A.I.T.U. In Ropar district a representative who has been member of the Sabha and C.P.I. for long has been taken. In Kapurthala district President of District Kisan Sabha and a CIPU representative has been taken.

A letter has been written to the Labour Minister welcoming Govt. decision and demanding the General Secretaries of District Sabha Units be included in Committees of Sangrur, Patiala, Ludhiana, Ropar, Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur.

It was decided that District Sabhas should make use of these Committees for redressal of grievances of agricultural workers about Wakabandi, Social oppression. Those

who are members of the Committee should go to Committee meeting with full preparation.

Complaints should be sent to the Labour-cum-Conciliation Officer who is Secretary of the District Committee.

Congress President's guide-lines for implementation of land reforms.

Reporting was made on the subject. Also on proposals jointly ~~made~~ made by C.P.I., Kisan and Khet Mazdoor Sabhas for implementation thereof in case of Punjab.

It was decided that Sabha units should carry on agitation in the light of these proposals. Resolutions should be passed and sent to Government in support of the Proposals.

Minimum wage question.

Having discussed the issue, the working Committee decided to urge the Government:-

1. To set up a separate Directorate under Labour Commissioner for enforcement of minimum wage rates in relation to agriculture.
2. To appoint Labour Inspector in each Block as in Bihar for enforcement of minimum wage rates.
3. To frame a legislation on Kerala pattern for protection of interests of agricultural workers.

District Reports.

Ropar: Enrolment= 2500- paid 800, Committees set up in 25 villages. Wage rate ranges between Rs.5-10 + food. Rs.400 fund collection. One meeting of District W.C. held. No wehra meetings held since last W.C. meeting. Three general body meetings held. They were addressed by Com. Ruldu Khan, Adhoc Tehsil Committees set up in Kharar and Ropar.

No work done in connection with house sites. Govt. has set up a Society at Anandpur Sahib to make available Consumer articles at fair prices.

District Amritsar.

2 Working Committee meetings held. One was successful. A G.B. meeting was held at Vashhoa, Tehsil Ajnala- 150 attended. A. G.B. meeting was held at Chheharta 350 attended from 22 villages. A Joint agrarian Convention was held in Amritsar on 27.9.75. 350 attended.

Enrolment. 5000 paid 1000.

82 villages Committees set up.

30 Wehra meetings with attendance ranging between 25 to 50

40 Applications put in regarding complaints in relation to house sites.

20 Applications sent for Corporation loans.

Survey regarding house-sites. 130 villages surveyed. Their break-up is Khadoor sabhi 50, Verka 37, and Majpitha 43.

In Khadoor plots given in 5 villages. In village Dinawal the plots are in a pond. In Khadoor Sahib, half the 200 plots are in a pond.

* In Verka Block, the position is better.

There has been no Nakabandi this month.

* The Deputy Commissioner will be met on 15th October in connection with house-sites.

Election to Z.P. Our State W.C. member Basant Singh Kathania has been elected Z.P. member. Also Kh.M. activist Mangal Singh in Valtha (5 others elected).

* In Fatehabad. There has been one more murder case this time. Land lord Ravisher Singh is responsible for it.

Faridkot. On 5th October, W.C. meeting had been held. Present 22 out of 25.

* Enrolment: 10153. villages covered- 128. Committees set up in 58 villages. 132 Sabha meetings. 8 Conventions. in 3 of them Congress Panches and Sarpanches participated. Attendance ranged between 65 and 250.

Nakabandi in 5 villages in Kot Kapura area for 5 days. Those villages are Matha, Burj Jawahar singhwala, Dal Singhwala, Sedhasinghwala, and Jhakarwal. It is in connection with wage dispute.

The employees trying to reduce the daily wage from Rs. 7^{Rs}8 + food. In Jawaharsinghwala to Rs. 5 for instance. In Dalsinghwala to Rs. 6 + food and payment for cotton picking from Rs. 1 to 10 as per Panseri.

Deputation of the sabha met the S.D.O. who wrote to S.H.O.

In Kot Kapura path to cremation ground is sought to be blocked.

Indebtedness. In village Shehna Khara Lambi Block money lender Hari Singh S/O Ganda Singh has loaned Rs. 60,000 - rate of interest 5 to 7% per month. Due from Khet Mazdoors.

In Mithri Budhazir. Surinder Singh S/O Harohand Singh Badal has Rs. 80,000 loan to recover Rs. 45,000 is due from poor peasants and Rs. 35,000 from agricultural workers.

In Banialwali (Kot Kapura) Naib Singh money lender has to realise Rs. 60,000. A Khet Mazdoor was called in the Police Station to press him to pay the debt. Later he was released.

Santa Singh Rora of Kot Kapura has to recover loan of Rs. 2 lacs in 1500 pronotes. Rate of interest is 5% per month.

Regarding Housesites: Deputation have met the B.D.O's almost in all Blocks.

* 248 villages surveyed. Plots given in 42 villages. Deputation met S.D.O. Muktsar. He agreed no land for house-site village given in a pond. The ponds will be filled up or new land acquired.

Depots: In Malout area- depots started in 3 villages. In Block Moga-I. Deputation have met the officials in connection with house-sites. Plots given in 34 villages. Plots given in Charik 168, Kokri Kalan 220, Dandhar 240.

Ferozenpur: Local Committee meetings have been held. 139 villages surveyed. Representations sent to Ministers and D.C. Plots given in Brahnke 17. Kot Isa Khan 150. In village Behniwal land is in a pond. Also in Langarh. In Fatehgarh, it is near the cremation ground. In village Aminwala, opponents have occupied even the cremation ground.

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Whra meetings 139 villages.

Enrolment. 1600. No details regarding village Committees et up.

Nakabandi. In village Dhindsa- wage dispute . Landlords reduce the wage from Rs.8 to Rs. 5.50.

Hoshiarpur. Enrolment-2500 in 42 villages. Committees set up in 32 villages.

Wages. Garhshankar Tehsil Rs. 7 with or without food..
In Mukerian side- Rs. 6 without food.

Nakabandi. In Chhota Deonwal Nakabandi for 6 days- wage dispute. It has ended.

Sarpanch of Mehdiapur molested a Harijan Girl. Had to apologize.

Indebtedness. Mehar Singh money lender of Bhatian has to recover Rs. 40,000. Putting pressure on loanees.

In village Rattewal Ilaqa Palachaur- Modi and Lekh Raj moneylenders have to recover Rs. 50-60 thousand ruppes. Case has been filed against loanee Bachna Ram . Bachna moneylender of Kathgarh has to recover Rs. 30,000.

Auction of evacuee land. In village Vachhoi-price per acre went up to Rs. 8 to Rs.10,000.

No. W.C. meeting held this time. 3 local Committee meetings had been held. No fund collection. No wehra meetings held.

Rassan Chand from Mukerian reported that Rs. 5 were taken from each person who was given a Parchi for a plot. Section 107/151 used to harass poor persons. Plots given actually in a few villages- Dhaula Khara and Salehrian - Samra and Longarh.

In Pur na Bhagala there was dispute over passage of water. Congressmen sided with owners. Passage for water now opened.

Lands reserved for village Panchayats at time of Consolidation ~~Opn~~ being divided up by the land-owners.

Patiale. Enrolment- 2000. Payment for 850 made. For the rest payment will be made on 14th October.

Two meetings of District W.C. held. Tehsil Committees 5. No fund collections. Dues of the State Sabha will be paid at next meeting of the W.C.

* 27 Wehra meetings. Participation in 4 conventions.
* Wage rate Rs. 5-8=food. In harvesting paddy 1/10th or 1/11th of the harvested grain.

Plots. Helped secure plots in 13 villages. In 15 villages applications send. Plots have been given in most villages.

Mastan Singh, President of the district Sabha, has been elected Z.P. member.

Bhatinda. W.C. meeting held on 10th October. Present 11/22. No fund collection. Price of copies of Resolutions will be paid in next meeting of W.C. 50 wehra meetings held. 100 Kh.M. ladies took part in Istri Conference at Bhatinda.

Nakabandi- in four villages. Sardargarh, Phul, Dhanpura and ~~Tailian~~ regarding wage dispute. Deputations met authorities. Sarpanch of Bardargarh was arrested.

Wage Rates: In some blocks it is Rs. 5 -6+ food and in others Rs. 6-7+ food.

Plots. In sangat Block, in villages Dookhali, Chak Attar Singh Ghurdo, Bachal, Nandwali only ~~some~~ ^{new} parchis given. In V. Salawan-70 plots given but were ploughed up. Plots given possession of in Pucca, Geri, Dhurike, Mahalan and Daneke Kalar. Crops are good. Moneylenders are landlords who charge high rates of interest.

Gurdaspur

Enrolment- 1000. village Committees 15, Wehra meetings 33, Fund Collection Rs. 300. No district Working Committee held. Dues will be paid to the state at time of next W.C.

Conventions: Kh.M. 7. ³ joint with Congress. Santokh Singh Randhawa addressed 3 conventions.

Nakabandi in village Dhaki is going on over land dispute. A big landlord Kesho Dass is responsible for it. In 40 villages surveyed- no plots had been given. Plots had been given in village Kala Afghanan. No survey regarding debts. No depots in villages.

Ludhiana. : Enrolment- 1500. In 29 villages. Committees set up in 25 villages. Paid for membership 400. 8 adhoc committee (Block) held. No fund collection. 3 blocks surveyed for plots- in Dehlon block -41 plots given only in village Lehali. In Doraha block, Parchis had been given in 21 blocks and none in 44. There were 67 villages in Pakhowal block. No where had even parchis been given.

Deputations had met B.D.O, and S.D.O's .

Gurdasham moneylender of Malod. Suits for recovery of debts filed by him against over two dozen Khet Mazdoors.

Depot of Rangarh Sardoran cancelled as a result of our agitation- Dharna at Malod. 50 ration cards restored and sugar given.

Jullundur Enrolment -1400. Fee for 1000 being paid. Two distt. Working Committee meetings held. 76 Wehra meetings. Landlords pay below minimum rate ~~in~~ in Jadia, Shehpur, Mahalo and Gujarpura Rs.5 without food.

Five Blocks surveyed for plots. No. of villages- 388. Plots given in 84 villages. In the other 214 villages, Parchis given in some villages. In 6 village Govt. land has been given. In 50 villages stay orders.

Two deputations met S.D.O. Nawanshehr. From 98 villages representations had been sent complaining of unsuitable land-ponds.

Indebtedness. Suit filed by Cha'n Singh' S/O Chhaju Jat of ^{Amargarh} Amar Chand S/O Birco Kh.M. A loan of Rs. 300 had risen to Rs.700.

Sangrur. Enrolment-1700. Two joint Conventions.

Nakabandis: Kup Kurd, Nianakpial, Kheri Jatan over wage issue. In Kup Khurd wage increase from Rs. 5 to Rs.6. In Manakwal also wage increased from Rs. 5 to Rs.6 . In Kheri Jatan wage of Rs.5.50 + food.

House sites. In Malerkotla Block, there are 110 villages. In 80 villages plots had been sanctioned but received only in 40 villages. In Amargarh 100 plots have been sanctioned. 100 applications put in for Corporation loans, 70 for oldage pension.

In village Gwara, a moneylender Ganga Ram has to recover Rs. 1 lac mainly from Khet Mazdoors.

Functioning of office bearers.

It was decided that: President Com. Bhaura should give 4 days to each district a year except Bhatinda and Sangrur.

Vice Presidents Saggur Singh and Dana Ram M.L.A's, should give 4 days a month outside Faridkot distt.

Malkiat Chand Mehli will give 2 days a month outside Jullundur.

Office Secretary: should have joint Secretary with State Kisan sabha and pay half his wage.

Next meeting of W.C. Next meeting of W.C. will be held on 13th and 14th December at 2 P.M. on 13th at Malerkotla.

Handwritten note: 15 to 20 minutes

V meeting of Working Committee of Punjab Khet Mazdoor Sabha held at Ludhiana on 7th September, 1975.

20 out of 25 members were present.

Those present: 1. Buldu Khan, 2. Hari Singh, 3. Dana Ram, 4. Sagar Singh, 5. Jyoti Ram, 6. Jawant Singh, 7. Bhagirath Rai, 8. Gajan Singh, 9. Malkiat Chand, 10. Nagoke, 11. Shadi Singh, 12. Sarwan Singh Charik, 13. Sarwan Singh Ferozepur, 14. Ran Singh, 15. Jagat Singh Azad, 16. Mohinder Singh Kasel, 17. Gursewak Singh, 18. Kehar Singh, 19. Basant Singh Kala, 20. Nand Singh Tahlia.

Absent: Bhaura had written a letter that he had to attend anti-Fascist Convention in Bhatinda, but that Convention had been postponed. Rassam Chand too had applied for leave. Other absent: Santokh Singh Gurdaspur, Amar Singh Sangrur, Hari Singh Patiala.

Sagar Singh presided in the absence of Bhaura.

Proceedings

General Secretary R.K. reported on meeting of Executive Committee of B.K.M.U. and work since last meeting of W.C. held on 12.7.1975. W.C. meeting had been held in all Districts except Ropar. They were successful extended meeting. In Ferozepur G.B. meetings had been held in 3 places. Emergency and tasks arising out of it had been worked out in each district. Deputation of the Sabha had met. Housing, Social Welfare, Civil Supplies Ministers and Memoranda were sent or presented to C.M. and Labour Minister. 5000 Folders on Emergency and Kh.Ms. distributed.

Master Hari Singh reported on recent retrograde amendment to Punjab Land Reforms Act and what steps had been taken to counter the move including meeting the Governor.

Distt. Reports.

Faridkot: Enrolment +2427 in 16 villages. 5 village Committees set up. Fund collections saving Rs. 6200 out of about Rs. 10,000. Wehra meetings = 179 with attendance ranging between 60 to 100.

8 Conferences and 2 Conventions held. wages ranged between Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 plus food. In Moga area it was Rs. 8-10 plus food, in Faridkot from Rs. 6 to 8 with food and in Muktsar Sub-division from Rs. 5 to 8 with food. There had been no strike or nakabandi this year. Due to continuous heavy rains, workers got less employment.

Regarding distribution of plots. 248 villages had been surveyed. In 42 villages plots had been distributed. In 6 villages plots were allocated in unsuitable land or in ponds. No plots were given in 190 villages. In 10 villages, they were distant from the abadi and in 3 near grave-yard. In some cases donated Panchayat lands have again been brought under cultivation.

Indebtedness legislation: - Relief is welcomed but anxiety that no credit will be available in future from private sources. Need for alternate arrangements by the Government.

Two Distt. Working Committee meetings had been held in this period. Attendance two third of membership. Whole-timers 6 - they submit reports of their work.

Condition of crops. American cotton crop affected in low lying areas.

Prices: Wheat selling Rs. 105 to Rs. 125. Gur price risen from Rs. 2.15 to 2.65 to Rs. 2.75 a kilo.

Vanaspati: price rises from Rs. 8-Rs. 11-10. Now Rs. 9.50 a kilo.

Sugar Distribution: Instead of 700 grams only 300 gms. distributed.

In villages Dabra, Chak Samkot, T mkot and Phulewal instead of allocation of 33 quintals 11 Quintals given. In most villages 500 grams per person given instead of 700 grams for August.

- Kh. Ms asked to pay chulah tax before distribution of sugar.
- allocation on basis of 1971 census. Growth in population ignored.

District Ludhiana.

Enrolment 699 in 13 villages. Committees elected in all villages.

Six Conventions held- attendance 367 from 51 villages.

Wehra meetings- 66- attendance 23-25.

Strikes and Nakabandis. They occurred in three villages-Tihara, Daulatpur and Dehlon. In these villages, employers tried to impose wage cut. Akalis and Naxalites behind them. In Tihara attempt to reduce wage from Rs. 6 to Rs. 5, in Daulatpur from Rs. 5 to 4 and in Dehlon from Rs. 6 to Rs.5. It was foiled.

Housesites. 112 villages surveyed. In 11 villages, plots given. In Blocks like Dehlon, Sudhar- no plot distribution.

Evobuee land. Resistance to auction of abadkars land successful in Kot Manan, Talwara, Kot Umra and Gursial. In villages Bhattha Dhola, Bahwal; Banianwal and Ghumnewal abadkars were able to purchase the land. In Bhaini. Traian auction could not defeated.

In auction land fetches very high prices in some cases. 6 acres of land in one place fetched Rs.42000 and 2 acres Rs.22500 in another place.

17 persons helped to send applications for oldaged pensions. Under MFAL-16 buffaloes secured with one-third the price as subsidy.

Working Committee- two meetings held one of which was an extended meeting. ~~Krop~~

Crop: Maize crop damaged. Paddy, groundnut and sugar-cane good. Whole timers- two.

Price: wheat available at Rs.105-125 per quintal. Sugar is not given in all villages.

In Ramgarh Sardaran, sugar not given to 50 families.

Jullundur District. Rs.4400 fund collected. Rs. 2000 saved. Four conventions held. Kh.Ms. came from 33 villages. Attendance in all 422. In three of them local Congressmen also join.

Wehra meetings 80 One hundred villages surveyed for house plots. actual distribution in a few places. Enrolment 350 in 5-6 villages. Committees set up only in 2 villages.

Nakabandi in 3 villages. Daulatpur, Dholeta and Chak Dana. In former two villages wage of Rs. 8 (without food) and Rs. 8 received. Nakabandi continues in Chak Dana.

Prevalent wages rates. Rs. 5 to Rs. 9 with food, without food Rs.6-10. Even Rs. 7 with food.

House-plots: 200 villages surveyed. House sites given in 15% villages. In villages Kulthran and Dohd Majra where inauguration had been performed by the C.M. on 4.2.1973, plots had not been given as yet. The allotted Panchayat lands had been leased out by Panchayats.

In Mahal Chhlan. Panchayat land had not been distributed.

In Bhutt (Banga Block) and Paddi Jagir in Goraya Block

-Government allotted acquired land. But owners have ploughed it up. In village Talianpur of Aur Block, house sites demarcated, but ploughed up again. In village Charan, land for house sites is distant and low-lying. In villages Chahal and Bains, it is under water.

Indebtedness.: In village-Mehra Rs. 60,000 debt wiped out. In village Chak Guru near Behran Rs. 45000 due to money lender Jeeta wiped out- in Burj Balma Rs. 70,000. There are 4 whole-timers in the district.

Two working Committee meetings Extended 103 attended. 6th sept. only 8 out of 29. Crop is on the whole good. Wheat price Rs. 110-125 New maize Rs. 120 per quintal.

In Nawanshehr Sub-division. Re. Indebtedness. 25 villages surveyed. In 4 villages debt of Rs. one lac wiped out (villages Amargarh, Sahlon, Bains and Chahal Khurd). Laddy money-lender Chann of Chahlan loses Rs. 25000. In village Amargarh moneylender Karma Jat loses Rs. 40,000.

House-sites. 25 villages surveyed. In 2 villages Amargarh and Gujarpura plots given. In 23 villages, parchis given but no land. In village Gujarpura former lease-holder ploughed up the land allotted for house-sites.

District Hoshiarpur. : Two W.C. meetings held. Extended meeting attendance 161. Fund collected through coupons Rs. 280. Wehra meetings 90.

Housesites. In Tehsil Garhshankar, out of 482 villages plots had been given in 300.

Old age pension. 15 persons assisted to apply. Of them 8 have received pensions.

Evacuee land auction. In 19 out of 30 cases auction defeated. In Bhatrahs in Hoshiarpur Tehsil auction failed.

Enrolment: 1200- in 22 villages- Committees set up in 20 villages. W.C. meetings. 3 held. Crop: Good in Kandhi side. Damaged in plains.

Prevalent wages. In Garhshankar area Rs. 7 to Rs. 7.50 without food.

District Gurdaspur. 3 working Committee meetings have been held. One of them was an extended meeting- in which 36 attended.

Two G.B. meetings were also held-attendance in one 25 and in another 60.

Four Conventions. attendance from 60 to 225.

House-sites. Plots given in Pathankot Tehsil here and there. In Gurdaspur and Batala Tehsils no plots given.

In village Lehori Brahmanan or the Basti where Joti Ram lives 13 plots given 13 miles from the Basti.

Indebtedness. Anxiety is expressed about future credit needs. He gave an example of a debtor who took Rs. 90 as loan. He had already paid Rs. 700, but it had only now been wiped out.

Evacuee land: In village Jagowal Bet auction was failed.

Floods: Khet Mazdoors were worst effected but had not been given fodder or cash.

Price. Wheat price ranges from Rs. 105 to Rs. 125.

District Ropar. Enrolment 1000 in 25 villages: 5 Committees setup. Wehra meetings- 50.

House-sites : 20 villages surveyed. In village Sandhuan plots given (Block Chamkaur Sahib) In Ropar and Majri blocks no plots.

Old-age pensions : 20 widows helped get old age pension. 30 more applied. Wheat price - Rs. 110-125 per quintal. Crops: Good.

Indebtedness. In village Bhartgarh-Munilal money-lenders loans of Rs. 25000 wiped out. Wages. Rs. 4-5 + food.

Fund collection Rs. 400

Bhatinda. Enrolment 0. Mehra meetings- 80- attendance 30 to 100 In joint rally at Bhatinda on 15th August 70% were Kh.Ms. including 100 women. Congress Conferences 13. Fund collection Rs. 1215. Wages: Rs. 5-7+ food.

House-site 80 villages surveyed. Plot distribution in a few place? Even in villages Bhagiwander where C.M. had performed inauguration plots not given.

Crop Condition is good. Wheat available at Rs. 125 to Rs. 140. In certain areas it is not available.

Ferozepur Enrolment 200 in two villages. Election held.

Whra meetings- 50 3 General Body meetings held attendance Jalabad-67, Abchar 110 and Zira -70.

Oldage pensions. 11 applications put in. 5 granted pension. Evacuee land: Auction foiled in Sherpur, Fatehpur Bhangan and Rerwan. In village Kishanpura 4 1/2 acres auctioned for Rs. 76,000.

Wages: Rs. 1 per hour in Jalalabad area and food Rs. 8 and food per day. Crop condition- good

Distt. Amritsar.

"2.W.C. meetings held , attendance 26 and 20 respectively. G.B. meeting 65. Enrolment-1800, villages 22, Committee 15, Mehra meetings-57. Convention 10(40-100) Successful.

Wages: Rs. 5-7 plus food. Average Rs. 6+ food. Jhona- Rs. 35-40 per acre and food or no food.

Nakabandi. In village-Bangan on wage question for 5 days. Rice transplattation wage increased from Rs. 35 to Rs. 38 per acre. Put in 20 applications for oldage and 10 for loans.

House-sites : In Verka Block 13 villages surveyed. In 7 villages plots given. Applications for 29 villages sent to Housing Minister in connection with house-sites. 21 applications sent for depots.

Crops- Maize damaged. Paddy good, wheat price Rs. 110-115 per Ql.

Fund Collection. Rs. 332.50 through Conventions and coupons.

Whole-timers 5. Reports from them read.

Surplus land : 18 persons were given possession of surplus land But the land-owners dispossessed them.

Resolutions and decisions : Resolutions were adopted on the following:-

- (1) On Bangla Desh tragedy as counter-revolutionary handi-work of

of U.S. imperialism and Internal reaction. Tributes to Mujib.

- (2) Support to Helonski Conference decisions as victory of U.S.S.R. policy of detente.
- (3) For relief to food-affected people of Gurdaspur and Amritsar. Districts-especially to agricultural workers.
- (4) Demanded for rescinding recent amendment to Punjab Land Reforms (Amendment) Bill.
- (5) On indebtedness legislation and for steps to meet credit needs of rural poor.
- (6) On House-sites question-reports exaggerated- progress halting. Call for acceleration of effort.
- (7) For withdrawal of caes against workers involved in evacuee land struggle in Swatantar Nagar. Gondwal land struggle in district Amritsar and anti-Mehngai struggle in Ludhiana town.
- (8) Regarding defects in sugar distribution and demand for chullha tax in some places.

Other decisions.

1. The next Annual Session of the Sabha be held in the first week of January, 1976 in Doraha, District Ludhiana.
2. Next meeting of W.C. be held in Ludhiana at 11 A.M. on 12th October next.
3. The month of September be observed for Special Enrolment drive.
4. Letter be written to Social Welfare Minister enclosing list of nominees on District Welfare Committees. Distt. General Secretaries be included in the list. Also since concrete suggestions be made in regard to Social Welfare measures.

Hari Singh.
9.9.1975.

W.C. meetings in all except Sangrur
+ Particle = 7000
29 conferences : 35 publications
during first two months of emergency
Fund collection about 20,000
out of which Rs. 9,189 saved.
Enrolment 7676 in 104 villages
Committees elected in 45 villages

Meeting of State Khet Mazdoor Sub-Committee
held at Ludhiana on 28.9.1975.

President: Bhaura, Ruldu Khan, Malkiat Chand Mehli, M.Hari Singh.

By Special invitation: Saggar Singh and Dana Ram, M.L.A's.

Decisions Taken :-

1. P.K.Kodiyan's Programme.

On 12th October he will address working Committee meeting on Inter-national Khet Mazdoor Conference and latest position in the country. On 13th he will address G.B. meeting of Kh.M. Workers of Sangrur district at Malerkotla and on 14th October a similar meeting at Patiala.

2. Functioning of office-bearers.

For further development of the movement, it is necessary that other office-bearers besides the General Secretary assist the district, Bhaura and two Vice presidents Saggar Singh Dana Ram should give some days a month to address Wehra meetings, Conference etc. in the Distt. Their duties will be assigned at each working Committee meeting or in between when possible. Malkiat Chand Mehli will also be sent to other districts now and then.

3. Functioning of State Kh. M. Office.

It has become essential to function office of State Kh.M. efficiently. It cannot be done without appointing an office Secretary. Consultation may be had with Kisan Sabha to have a Joint Secretary to begin with.

4. Arrears due from districts.

Arrears of Rs. 503 were still due from districts for the period before the Mansa Session of the Sabha Rs. 1980 were from district as price of R. solutions of Mansa Session. The total arrears are Rs. 1583. Faridkot and Ferozpur districts have paid up their dues. Other districts should be pressed to pay.

5. Minimum wage schedule.

The Minimum Wage Schedule was published in a Folder form last time in 1972-73. The State Labour Department should be asked to issue a folder again this time containing the Schedule of revised wages and other relevant information.

6. Anti-Fascist Convention.

Khet Mazdoor Sabha Units have participated in Anti-fascist Conventions at District and Lower levels. Anti-Fascist Convention at State level is being held at Jullundur on 8-9 and 10 November, 1975.

Khet Mazdoor should be mobilised in full force for participation in the Convention.

7. Efforts should be continued to forge joint front of Khet Mazdoor under our influence and those under Congress influence for implementation of 20-point programme.

8. Land Reforms:- Latest position was explained. Congress

President's guide-lines on the subject. Joint movement should be built for amendment of Punjab Act in the light of Congress President's guide-lines and experience of implementation of the Act.

9. House-sites: Situation reviewed. Struggle for house-sites has become main struggle of the current period. Mass upsurge on the issue. Concrete struggle. There is more activity on official level too.

10. Indebtedness legislation. Complaints received of attachment of property in lieu of court decree in Bareilly area and of Court decrees being issued in Anandpur.

The Act received assent of Governor on 12th August and was notified in the official Gazette on 13th August. Any proceedings against beneficiaries on 13th August and thereafter are illegal.

Com. Sagger Singh reported that A.S.I. Gurdev Singh of Bahgapurana had compelled Khet Mazdoor debtor Jagat Singh of Ghansdiana to pay up Rs. 700 to the money lender. He was kept in Police custody for two days on 14th and 16th August. He was coerced into handing over his buffalo in lieu of debt.

But his wife and other remonstrated with the Police and money lender.

Sagger Singh brought the conduct of A.S.I. to the notice of S.P. Faridkot who retired the official pre-maturely.

Khet Mazdoor Sub-Committee of Ludhiana District had met. It had been decided to collect Rs. 15000 for Doraha Session of Punjab Khet Mazdoor Sabha.

In this period, there had been Nakabandi of Kh.Mazdoors on issue of wages in village Kup Khurd district Sangrur. Khaura had talked to I.G. ~~10000000~~ and D.I.G.(Bawa) at Chandigarh on this issue. S.P. had been telephonically instructed from Chandigarh to intervene.

R.K. had met Housing Minister Gurinder Kaur and also Secretary Vohra of the Department. They noted complaints in relation to house-sites and promised to write to Deputy Commissioners.

1/6
75
H.K. Singh

PUNJAB KHET MAZDOOR SABHA

345, Ajov Bhavan,
Sector 21-A,
Chandigarh.

Resolutions adopted by 16th Annual Session of Punjab Khet Mazdoor Sabha held at Mansa on 21st, 22nd and 23rd March, 1975.

1. Make Nakabandi a cognizable offence

To suppress struggles of agricultural workers for better wage and other rights, the rural rich enforce socio-economic boycott or Nakabandi against them. The workers are not allowed to cut grass even from foot paths or graze cattle in Common Lands. Sometimes shopkeepers are forbidden to sell them estates or other consumer articles. An employer who employs any worker at a higher rate is fined. Kheti Bari Union rich in Ludhiana district even go round neighbouring villages exhorting land-owners not to employ striking workers of a particular village.

The Punjab Khet Mazdoor Sabha has for years agitated demanding that such Nakabandis be declared a cognizable offence and the culprits be meted out deterrent punishments.

This session welcomes unanimous adoption by Punjab Vidhan Sabha in the Budget Session, 1975, of a resolution moved by Sabha Working Committee member Sagar Singh, M.L.A., to the effect that Nakabandi be made a cognizable offence.

The Session urges the State Government to frame a suitable legislation on the subject to defend the interests of agricultural workers.

The session further demands that Anti-untouchability (offences) Amending Bill pending before Parliament be passed at an early date and provision be included in it making Nakabandi a cognizable offence.

2. Struggle for wage increase

In pursuance of decision of third Conference of B.K.M.U., the agricultural workers of Punjab launched wage struggle in the summer months of 1974.

Working Committee of the Sabha brought out 20,000 posters besides hand bills by some local units. Dharnas and demonstrations were held at twenty district and sub-divisional headquarters. For a week from 23rd to 29th July, twenty-two squads flag-marched covering 725 villages. In this period, 131 public meetings and 682 Wehra meetings were held covering tens of thousands of agricultural workers.

In dozens of villages in almost all districts of the State Agricultural workers struck work to secure wage increase and better conditions of employment. In some cases, strikes lasted up to 3 to 4 weeks.

In most cases, they came out successful despite severe Nakabandi and secured increase in daily wages by Rs. 1 to Rs. 2 and

even more. Wages for transplanted of paddy were also increased.

This session demands that:-

1. A fresh Committee be set up immediately for up-ward revision of minimum wage rates for agricultural workers in consonance with increase in the cost of living since 1972 when the minimum wage schedule was last fixed. Minimum wage rate for a day's work be fixed at Rs. 7 plus food and for attached worker Rs. 1800 a year plus food.
2. Daily hours of work should be fixed at 8.
3. Over-time payment be made at twice the normal rate.
4. A legislation be passed on Kerala pattern to safeguard interests of agricultural workers.
5. A separate Inspectorate under Labour Department be set up to look after implementation of minimum wages for agricultural workers.

3. Question of House sites.

The Central Scheme for distribution of free house sites to rural wage workers in the Silver Jubilee Year of Independence from 15th August, 1972 to 15th August 1973 proved a fiasco in our State. Narora Congress Camp had again promised distribution of house sites by 15th February, 1975, but it too is proving illusory.

In the meanwhile, the original scheme has been whittled down. Due to financial stringency, the Central Govt. has expressed its inability to finance the scheme which has now been transferred to the States. Now 40 workers are being accommodated on each acre of land as against 20 proposed to be accommodated on an acre of land originally. No finances are being ear-marked to develop the land. It will lead to emergence of slums.

Of 3.20 lac persons whose applications for house sites had been accepted, only a small percentage were given actual physical possession of land. But by September 1973 a lying claim was made that 1.84 lac workers had been given possession. But mostly it was paper allotment.

The Gram Panchayats had placed 7098 acres of Panchayat lands at the disposal of State Government which has, however, failed to utilise them for the purpose for which they were given. Rs. 1080 crores were budgetted for 1974-75 for land acquisition and Rs. 2 crores more have been ear-marked for the year 1975-76. But the pace of land acquisition is slow and the amount so far budgetted will not suffice to purchase the area required to accommodate all the beneficiaries of the scheme.

In contrast to dismal record of Punjab State Govt., Kerala Govt. had built 1 lac houses by mobilising local resources and voluntary labour and gifted them to agricultural workers.

This session demands that:-

1. The area of Panchayat lands made available to the State Govt. be distributed immediately.

A note on
Punjab Land Reforms (Amendment) Bill passed by Punjab
State Assembly on 9th August, 1975

(By Master Hari Singh)

The Bill was passed by the Assembly on 9th August after a very brief discussion, Copies of the Bill were supplied to members very late.

It is a retrograde measure which seeks to legalise a category of Benami transaction i.e. purchase by collusive tenants of landlord of surplus lands under section-18 of Punjab Security of Land Tenures Act, 1953, (Called Punjab Law under Punjab Land Reforms Act of 1972) in violation of provision of Section 10-A(a), (b) and (c) of the Act. It is land reforms in reverse gear. It is paradoxical that such a measure should have been passed by our Assembly after the declaration of Emergency and urgent call given by the Prime Minister to step up implementation of land reforms a most important item in her 21-point programme. On 30th July, Chief Minister Giani Zail Singh declared on the floor of the Assembly that all Benami transactions would be cancelled and land thus secured would be distributed among the rural poor. But on 9th August, quite contrary to this policy declaration, Revenue Minister Umrao Singh staged a legislative coup d'etat by rushing through this Bill legalising certain benami transactions violative of the provisions of the Punjab Law.

The Bill makes amendments in the main to section 15 of the Act.

What is section 15 ?

Section 15 of the Act enables a tenant with 6 years of continuous occupation of his tenancy land (outside the reserved area of the landlord) to purchase his tenancy land at concessional price of Rs. 200 per acre or 90 times the land revenue (whichever was less). This concession was already in existence under the PEPSU law and was now extended to tenants of erst-while Punjab.

Section 18 of Punjab Law

Under this section also a tenant with 6 years, continuous occupation of his tenancy land (outside the reserve area) could purchase it, but at a high price of three fourth of the market price. Most of the deserving tenants could not therefore avail of their right to purchase land at such prohibitive price.

The landlords however put up collusive tenants to apply for purchase of surplus lands to defeat the objective of the Act.

Insertion of Section 10-A

Through amendment of section 10 of Punjab law, provision was made to safeguard the declared or potential surplus area so that State Govt. could utilise it for resettlement of eligible tenants (i.e. tenants of small land owners or those ejected or ejectable from reserved areas of landlords).

Section 10-A(a) was added by Act 11 of 1955 and was made applicable with effect from 15th April, 1953, through a subsequent amendment.

Section 10-A(c) reads as follows:-

"The State Govt. or any officer empowered by it in this behalf, shall be competent to utilise any surplus area for the resettlement of tenants, ejected or to be ejected, under clause (a) of sub-section (1) of Section 9".

This amendment was made to prevent landlords from inducting collusive tenants on surplus lands after the commencement of the Act and making them apply for purchase of land. But the landlords in collusion with certain Revenue Officers continued to violate this provision. The amending Bill seeks to condone these violations.

Why this amending Bill ?

In the statement of Objects and Reasons, attempt has been made to show that it is an innocent piece of legislation to enable deserving tenants with 6 years' of continuous occupation to purchase their tenancy lands. If the aim is to help deserving tenants, why legalise purchases made by so-called tenants in violation of provisions of section 10-A. The Supreme Court judgment to which reference has been made clearly lays down that a tenant inducted by a landlord on surplus area after 15th April, 1953, i.e. after commencement of the Act, is not entitled to purchase land under section 18 of Punjab law. The Supreme Court was not thereby making any new law. It was merely giving correct interpretation of section 10(A) of the Punjab Law.

The judgment was delivered on 21st January, 1974, in Civil Appeal No. 17550-1756 of 1967- State of Punjab and others-Appellants Vs. Amar Singh and another-respondents.

Relevant portion of the judgment reads:-

" The person who is entitled to purchase under section 18 is a tenant i.e. a person lawfully inducted on the land as tenant. Once a land is held to be part of the surplus land of the landlord, it rests with the State Govt. For being disposed of for resettlement of tenants and any disposition of the same by the landlord after April 15, 1953, would be invalid, against the Govt's claim to dispose of it. That is the effect of section 10-A(a) and (b). Therefore in respect of any land to which the State Government makes a claim for resettlement on the ground of its being surplus, any person inducted by the landlord after April 15, 1953, would have no right to it as a tenant, and would not be able to avail of section 18".

The logical consequence of this judgment was that all purchases of surplus land by collusive tenants were invalid and such surplus areas should have been taken over by the Government. If it really wanted to cancel benamis, this judgment gave it legal weapon to cancel one category of Benamis.

The Revenue Minister, however, as representative of landlords has rushed through a Bill to legalise these Benamis.

Was any amendment of Section 15 needed ?

Under Section 15 of the Act, 7778 tenants had applied for purchase of their lands. Of them 593 applications had been accepted and 1649 were rejected, while 5536 were pending as in March, 1975. Only one year's time was given i.e. till 1st April, 1974, to the tenants to put in applications. Those who could not apply in time lost the benefit accruing under this section.

Therefore amendment should have been effected to remove this time bar.

Some pro-landlord Collectors, for instance that of Fazilka mis-interpreted the Supreme Court judgment to mean that only those tenants were eligible to purchase land under Section 15 who were tenants of the tenancy lands also in 1953. Such Collectors asked applicants to produce Girdawari records for 20 years since 1953 whereas the law provided for production of proof of continuous occupation for 6 years only.

We have always held and do still hold that this is misconstruction of Supreme Court judgment.

If, however, amendment is to be made to clarify the confusion, it may be provided that tenants with continuous occupation of their lands for 6 years as on the appointed date i.e. 24th January, 1971, or thereafter shall be eligible to purchase their lands under section 15.

In fact an amendment like this proposed by former F.C.R. Mr. I.C. Puri in the State Land Advisory Committee was readily agreed to by us.

It is a paradox that Punjab State Government in its appeal to the Supreme Court fought for securing this judgment and when the verdict was given in its favour it has sought to nullify fruit thereof through an amending Bill.

Hari Singh
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15.8.1975.

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