

*Wage Struggle*

*Second Stage in  
Andhrapradesh*

## KHET MAZDOORS WIN MAJOR VICTORIES IN ANDHRA PRADESH.

Thousands of agricultural labourers of Andhra Pradesh are joining in a big way struggles being led by local units of the BKMU against the social and economic atrocities of the notorious landlords. They have already won some major victories in Godavary area, Nellore and Krishna districts.

The militant rural proletariat of Andhra Pradesh are no longer prepared to tolerate the growing economic misery and social oppression sought to be heaped on them.

The major victory the agricultural workers achieved is in Bhamdrachalam division villages dominated by 'Girijan' population on the banks of river Godavary. In an area of 60 miles covering tens of villages, Khet mazdoors led by Vyavasaya Karika Sangham achieved cent per cent wage increase. While the wages were Rs.2 to Rs.2.50 last year, this year the wages through their struggles were raised to Rs.4 to Rs.5 in number of villages. Since July a continuous campaign including rallies and demonstrations culminating in a three-day strike was carried out in this area.

At Kukunooru centre of Charla area, for example, agricultural workers achieved cent percent wage increase only after a strike for two days. Ploughing rates have increased from Rs.5 to Rs.6 to Rs.8 depending on the crop that is raised on the farm. Wages for 'paalerlu' who work for monthly wages in the fields of landlords, in Charla and Koonavaram centres, have been raised from Rs.40 to Rs.75 - 80.

The major victory in Nellore district is in villages of Kovooru taluq. In two villages Mudivarthi and Talamanchili workers achieved wage increase through strikes and workers in other villages inspired by these victories are going ahead with preparations for similar struggles. At Mudivarthi village landlords brought large contingents of police parties and the village was virtually turned into a police camp. The workers undeterred by such threats carried on the strike and in two days the landlords had to come to terms with the agricultural workers.

The transplantation of virginia tobacco has just begun in the state. In the coming 15 days intensive work will be there.

The Andhra Pradesh Agricultural Workers' Union discussed about wage increase in the transplantation season. In Prakasam, Guntur, Nellore, Krishna, West Godavari, East Godavari, Khammam, Karimnagar districts cultivation of virginia takes place in about twenty talukas. We wanted to take up the wage increase campaign in time. We have brought out a handbill (about 25000 copies) from the state centre. President and general secretary toured the districts. Two district meetings and four taluka meetings were conducted, besides many a local meetings.

In Ongole taluka, Pernamitta village there was a meeting of the agricultural workers following our Union, CPI, CPM, Congress. All of them decided to increase their wages, if necessary to go on a united strike.

In many villages general body meetings of the agricultural workers were held under the leadership of BKMU. Almost all the agricultural workers are attending the meetings, and express their willingness for a struggle. In Ongole district intensive campaign is going on.

The rates in transplanting season are very low. At present for a woman and man together the rate varies from Rs.4 to 6. We demand that 5 Kgs of Millets be paid to each man and woman.

The tendency among the agricultural workers is to fight unitedly. There will be a substantial increase in the rates.

The Executive meeting of the East Godavari district agricultural workers' Union was held in last week of September and decided to carry on a campaign for wage increase in the harvesting season for early crops.

In West Godavari district, Polavaram taluka, in four villages there was a successful strike for three days for increasing wages. There was an increase in wages from Rs.1.50 and 2 to Rs.3 and 4.

In Warangal district there was a strike for increase of wages in six villages. After a successful strike they got increased their wages. *⊕ In Hyderabad city Ratanrao Nagar university from where he was working, wages strike and got 10% increase in wage rates.*

Struggles are also being launched to protect the banjar lands the agricultural labourers had occupied during land struggles. Landlords in Mudivarthi, Nidavalooru and Chelika villages tried to evict the agricultural workers from the lands they had made fertile during these years by their sweat. Pattas were already given for 150 acres and 'eksaal' lease was given for another 150 acres and the tahsildar had assured to give pattas for the remaining land when the poor cultivators through the machinations of the landlords were served with eviction orders. The poor cultivators led by the Communist Party and Vyavasaya Karnika Sangham are fighting for scrapping of such orders and grant of pattas for the remaining land.

Similar attempts of eviction have been made in some areas in Krishna and Adilabad districts. At Siddhilakunta village in Nirmal taluq in Adilabad district agricultural workers were sought to be evicted from 65 acres of banjar land they have been occupying for long. The village was listed under rehabilitation scheme with 224 acres of the village land allotted from this village under the scheme. The taluq communist council has demanded that the land now under the possession of agricultural workers should be exempted from the scheme and those already cultivating the land should be forthwith given pattas.

In Bapatla taluq the local administration agents have colluded with the landlords for issuing 'false pattas' to the landlords on the banjar lands which were being cultivated by poor agricultural workers. The 'Banjar saagudars coordination committee' formed to protect the rights of the cultivators have warned that they will launch serious struggles if such attempts are not stopped. A memorandum to this effect has already been submitted to the district official and also the chief minister.

Faced with such militant struggles of the agricultural labourers and poor cultivators, the landlords are trying to mount social oppression on this community with desperate intensity.

In Nandigama in Krishna district a landlord on the September 12 ~~beating~~ ~~the~~ agricultural woman mercilessly and broke her head because she had the temerity to reply to the landlord's son when he charged a group of women for collecting grass from fallow land. Four other women were also beaten up. Local congress leader Nageswara Rao instead of trying to contact police and initiate action against landlords advised the local harijan leaders to arrive at a compromise with the landlords. At Rayannapeta of Madhira taluq in Khammam district the landlords have blocked the road which harijans constructed from their colony, The landlords are out to harass the agricultural workers in every way but the khet masdoors are getting organised to fight back the landlords' attack.

G. Yallamanda Reddy.