

# A CALL TO ACTION

BEING THE

**Resolutions, theses and Report presented  
to the Third Annual Conference  
of the Workers' and Peasants'  
Party of Bengal.**

**BHATPARA, MARCH-1928.**

**WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' PARTY OF BENGAL**

*2-1, European Asylum Lane. Calcutta,*

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## PREFACE.

This report is published by the Executive Committee, in the hope that it will prove valuable to some of these many who are striving towards a more practical and more effective political policy than has hitherto been offered to us. Although far more study is required, particularly of the question of the peasantry, the resolutions\* here given represent, in the opinion of the committee, a real attempt to found a political policy upon a thorough examination of the situation with which the policy has to deal. We do not attempt to conceal our sentiment in favour of national independence, and in favour of the poverty-stricken masses, but the study of the whole position has been carried out, so far as possible, in an objective manner, and the conclusions drawn therefore deserve more attention than any based on mere sentiment or on concealed class interest.

Much of what is contained in the resolutions may appear to be trite, but it is thought worthy of repetition, as the guiding thread throughout is the unfamiliar one of class interests and class struggle as the chief determinants of political events. But in addition to the analysis of the situation and the present and future lines of development, we want to draw attention to the lead given for the immediate future by the resolutions. The general policy is the development of mass movement, based on the economic and social needs of the masses, for which a suggested programme is given in the appendix. The chief battle cry put forward for the immediate future is that of a Constituent Assembly.

We contend that the call for a Constituent Assembly is the only practically useful lead which has been given since the Hartal on the arrival of the Commission was decided upon. The country is ready for this measure. The Commission and the Hartal have aroused the feeling of the public as it has not been aroused for years. It would be criminal to waste this opportunity, as we fear it is being wasted. The feeling of the public can be given expression to by a really-popular Constituent Assembly. The immense power of the masses, their vaguely felt grievance and protest against the present system, can be concentrated and clarified by this means. If the mass campaign for complete independence which Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar and others propose, is devoted, not to mere emotionalism, but to the practical work of rousing and organising the masses in preparation for a Constituent Assembly and a real struggle for their wants, then India will have taken a really valuable step towards freedom.

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\* The five main resolutions were originally drafted by a joint Committee of the Workers' and Peasants' Parties of Bengal and Bombay. All except that on the Peasantry have since been substantially altered.

Finally we wish to emphasise a point which causes some misunderstanding, though it is dealt with clearly in several passages of the Report and Resolutions, namely, our relations with the Congress and the bourgeois nationalist. For our criticism of the Congress and our support of the workers and peasants against the capitalists and landlords, we are accused of being anti-nationalist and of splitting the national forces. As is shown in the general resolution, we are not responsible for this split; we merely recognise the fact that it has occurred, and that it has a profound bearing upon the national movement. The split has been going on for many years. It took a decisive turn six years ago at Bardoli. Since then even that section of the Indian capitalist class which is associated with the Congress is in the main opposed to national independence. We conclude that the capitalist as a class are no longer capable of acting as the leaders of the national struggle for freedom, and that their interests and demands are no longer adequate to represent the whole nation. But the leaders of the Congress are still in the main class-conscious adherents of the capitalist class. We have therefore to oppose and expose their policy, with the object of removing them from their position of Congress leaders. But at the same time we build up our own organisation. The masses cannot wait until the Congress changes its policy and personnel so as to take up sincerely the work of organising and leading them. Nevertheless we are always willing to work with the Congress, even while criticising its leaders, for the attainment of common objects.

We propose to conduct in our organ "Ganavani" a discussion of the policy laid down in this volume. We invite contributions and criticism from those who are interested.

Executive Committee.

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# A CALL TO ACTION

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## WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' PARTY OF BENGAL

### THIRD ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

The Conference took place on Saturday March 31st and Sunday April 1st at Bhatpara, in a pandal erected near their central office by comrades of the Bengal Jute Workers' Association. The President, Atul Chandra Gupta M. A., B. L. was in the chair, and in all about 80 members attended, including representatives from Dacca and from the Mymensingh Branch, and from the Bengal Jute Workers' Association, which is affiliated to the Party. 100 to 150 visitors also attended. Messages were received from a member of the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bombay, the President and Secretary of the Bengal Trade Union Federation, and Mr. Atul Chandra Sen of Dacca, regretting their inability to be present.

On the first day the proceedings began at 3 p. m. when Comrade A. Roy on behalf of the Executive Committee read the Report, copies of which in Bengali and English were circulated.

The President then made a short introductory speech in Bengali, and the resolution on the general political situation was read and seconded. On the second day the general resolution was rendered in Hindi, and the remaining resolutions were moved and discussed.

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## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS.

The President gave a short speech in Bengali, in which he remarked that the prospects for our work now are brighter than a year ago. We have a larger and more active membership, and the political situation gives more scope for a militant and energetic policy. He warned particularly the "intellectuals" in the Party against neglecting the fundamental work of organising the workers and peasants. Whatever our theory and policy may be, without that work the Party cannot maintain its existence.

The circumstances of India render our work peculiarly difficult. We have to wage an effective fight against both our own exploiters and the foreign Government, and these two, though usually in alliance, are not necessarily or always so. We have to pursue a policy and conduct much of our work in the economic sphere, but at the same time if we keep aloof from politics our movement will have no value at all. Many labour leaders by doing this achieve the favour of the Government, and labour leaders generally are therefore looked upon with suspicion by many. Our

movement, while fighting for economic demands, must be a political one, and for the present our political work must be done to a large extent in connection with and within the Congress, which we must aim to capture.

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## GENERAL POLITICAL SITUATION.

**Introduction** :—An examination and analysis of the present situation of India, which is necessary for the formulation of a correct party policy, requires to take into account many factors. It is necessary to give a brief description of the world economic and political situation in its bearing upon India, the general situation of Imperialism and the colonial countries, the British Empire generally and in particular the position of India within it. In more detail it will be necessary to discuss the economic strength and political organisation of the chief forces and groups with India the British bourgeoisie, the various groups of Indians, Natives States, land-owning interests, financial, commercial and industrial bourgeoisie, middle classes, peasants, working class. In the light of this analysis current political events must be surveyed and Party policy in different spheres laid down.

**The International Position** :—(1) *Stabilisation*—The period of the struggle by the capitalist states for stability after the war is now coming to an end, a new and relatively stable position has been achieved. At no time has complete freedom from war or revolution on an important scale been actually reached, but the tendency is in this direction, and the conditions are preparing for a new plunge, as in 1914, into international chaos. (2) *Prospect of War*:—The chief features of the new situation are, the relative progress of capitalism in the backward countries and the U. S. A., and the recession of capitalist prosperity in the older countries. Exploitation of labour and unemployment have generally increased greatly, political reaction in an extreme form is triumphant, the pressure of international competition is greatly increased, armaments are larger than ever before, and war is manifestly to occur in the near future.

The Soviet Republics not only add greatly to the strength of the movements for emancipation all over the world but prove the possibility of socialistic reconstruction of society by the working masses alone. They constitute a menace to the stability of Imperialism and capitalist exploitation, and the capitalist world, especially Britain, prepares to attack and destroy this menace. Only the unstable state of international relationship in Europe and the class situation in Britain have prevented the consummation before this time of the policy of attack on Russia. The danger of

war against the workers' Republics is increasing and demands the attention of the masses. Simultaneously are developing between capitalist countries a number of conflicts of which the most dangerous is that between Britain and U. S. A. (3) *Strengthening of the Revolutionary Labour Movement.* At the same time, the labour movement in the capitalist countries is increasing in strength (The Norwegian Labour Government, recent victories in the German Elections, the British Miners, etc.). (4) *Colonial Question:-* The economic and political development in the colonial countries has given rise to movements of revolt against the imperialist powers led, e.g. in Egypt and China by the native bourgeois class which has come into existence as a by-product of industrial development. In China the movement was later taken up by the masses whose condition under the increased exploitation became intolerable. The movement acquired a mass character, and once again showed that the only real leadership for a movement of colonial freedom is the working class. The treachery and desertion of the bourgeoisie, in alliance with Imperialism, has brought the movement to a temporary halt, but it will inevitably be resumed. In Java the movement was from the first of a mass character. The British Empire generally, and India particularly, is experiencing the same development. The search for profits for British Interests has intensified. More Capital is invested in India, particularly since 1914, and this tendency still prevails, though in recent years it has been hampered by the decreasing surplus of British Capital available for external investment. Increased accumulation is, therefore even more urgently necessary, and attempts are being made to exploit Indian Agriculture more intensely and more efficiently. (The Agriculture Commission). There is a general tendency to increase land revenue and assessments. Attempts are made to usurp the exploiting function of the money-lenders (Co-operative Banks), to consolidate holdings with a view to more efficient cultivation (Bombay Small Holdings Bills) and to increase the production of raw materials for industry (Sukkur Barrage Scheme).

In the Political sphere, the British Empire is in a very serious position. It is threatened with the formal secession of the white Dependencies, and with freedom movements in the colonial countries, South Africa, Egypt, East Africa, Iraq, etc. Its industrial and financial supremacy is lost and its position still is declining, especially in comparison with the U. S. A. This critical situation leads the British Bourgeoisie to seek support within the Colonies, to secure its hold upon them, particularly in the event of war, which almost led to the separation of India on the last occasion. This political necessity, combined with economic developments, dictates the fundamental line of Imperialist political policy within India—the extension of the alliance with the Indian Upper Classes (Feudal

Rulers, Landlords, etc.) to the Bourgeoisie as a whole. This is the essence of the Reformed Constitution and the other Policies of Indianisation of Services, etc. which go with it.

**The position of the British Bourgeoisie in India:**—The British bourgeoisie as a whole derive wealth from India in four main ways : by selling British goods, by buying or producing cheap raw materials, by taxation, and by investment of Capital in Indian industries. Though the monopoly of India as a Market is lost, British goods still occupy the most important place, and in other respects British Capital is predominant. The direct holding of Capital from Britain in the big companies, usually registered in London, gives British Capital a practical monopoly of Railways, shipping, Banking and the Jute and Tea industries. London interests are also predominant in Coal and Steel and Engineering. Local British Companies, mainly in Bengal, have strong interests in Electric Power, Dock and Transport, Flour Mills, Rice Mills, Timber and Construction Companies, etc. Indian Capital is predominant only in cotton among the large industries (The Tata Steel Firm is now partly British and American, but owns small firms in all branches of Industry and controls most retail distribution, etc. Of the capital invested in Joint Stock Companies, over 80 per cent. probably 85 per cent. is British, and in these companies, British influence is extending. There is of course much unregistered Indian capital in small and private firms. The penetration of other foreign capital is not yet important but is likely to grow (Sir Dorab Tata's American Tour).

The central financial institution is largely under Government control, with participation of British and Indian industrial and financial representatives. The new scheme will probably not alter this position. The Indian bourgeoisie have been pressing for popular control, *i. e.* greater representation of their interests, but have been foiled up to the present. They have been especially anxious to achieve this control, since the exchange rate controversy, when the strongest (textile) section of the Indian bourgeoisie, with the small companies with business conducted in rupees, were defeated, and the Government and financial interests (British mainly,) with the big firms doing their business largely in London in sterling, were benefited.

The policy of Imperialism in India to retain its position of dominance, is a threefold one. It secures firm control of the chief industries, communications, administration, etc. and extends the area of its support among the ruling, landowning and bourgeois classes in India. Secondly, by encouraging internal conflicts of various kinds it disintegrates the forces of opposition to it. Finally it conducts a policy of direct suppression of movements dangerous to its rule.

The British bourgeoisie in India control a large proportion, as aforesaid, of the active capital operating in India, and with it the apparatus of the law, the administration, at any rate in rural areas, the educational system, the chief commercial organs of the press, the Police and armed forces. In addition there is practically complete control of the rulers of the Native States, who are almost completely despotic, and are allowed wide powers within their own territories. Imperialism is actually opposed to the introduction of democratic forms of Government within the States, and assists them in the suppression of internal revolt (Recent passing of order for deportation of State subjects from British India into certain States at the wish of the ruler). Further, Imperialism has firm support from the big landowning class and from those sections, especially in Upper India, whose capital is invested in British firms, ( Sir R. N. Mukherji, G. D. Birla, etc. ) The industrial bourgeoisie, and with them the professional class, lawyers, University teachers, etc. are increasingly in the position of constitutional supporters.

Imperialism finds further firm support in the Anglo-Indian community, which supplies a substantial part of the skilled artisans, and to a less extent among the Indian Christian community, under the influence of missionaries.

Nevertheless the support of these section of the population is not sufficient, and especially after the great agitation of 1917-22, further means have been adopted not so much to gain support as to weaken opposition. There has, throughout the period of Imperialist control, been a systematic encouragement of differences of religion, community, castes, etc., and it has been a settled policy to perpetuate religious and customary evils which retard physical, intellectual and social development. The mass of the people is moreover kept illiterate, and severe restrictions are placed upon the education given to the middle classes in schools and Universities. Specific cases of the encouragement of difference among Indians are the development of the Non-Brahmin movement in South India (Madras and Maharashtra) against the chief political and intellectual leaders, who are Brahmins. The depressed classes representatives have been won over to support Imperialism against the caste Hindus, even to the extent of opposing Boycott of the Commission. Even certain parts of the labour movement are in the same position. These movements have all a genuine basis in the oppression of these sections by the higher classes, but Imperialism has been enabled to make use of them to perpetuate its own existence and therefore to secure the continuance of the evils against which these movements protest.

The most important case of this policy of fomentation of differences is that of the Hindu-Muslim divergence. While partly

an artificial result, e. g. of the agitation of the British owned press on the alleged atrocities during the Malabar rising, the dangers of a Moslem invasion from the North-West, etc. and of the communal electorates, the trouble has a certain class basis. In the Punjab most of the peasantry is Mussulman, while the exploiting money-lenders, etc. are mainly Hindus. As also in Bengal, most of the peasants are Mussulman and the Zamindars and money-lenders largely Hindus. These are the chief centres of communal feeling. Further, a considerable class of communal leaders has sprung up, whose popular influence and income depend upon the inflation of communal passion, and the direction of the natural discontent of the exploited masses away from political avenues where it could produce useful results, into the communal channel.

At the same time the policy of Imperialism has been one of continued suppression of efforts to extend the basis of the National movement to include the masses. The men returning from Russia with radical or communist ideas have been practically all imprisoned and victimised. Others with similar ideas have been treated in the same way, e. g. in the Cownpore conspiracy case. There is a continuous series of prosecutions in different parts of the country of writers and speakers, for "inciting" the masses to hatred against the Government. Finally there is maintained a vigorous censorship of mails, especially foreign, and wholesale proscription and seizure of literature with a radical tendency.

It is manifest that an Imperialist rule of this strong and ruthless character, which is at the same time subject to the most intense pressure and competition in other parts of the world, will not at any time grant considerable concessions to any of those from whom it derives its sustenance. The hope of compromise by India as a whole with Imperialism is vain.

### LANDOWNERS, NATIVE STATES, ETC.

Nearly one fourth of the population of India is included in the Native States, which constitute on the whole the most economically and culturally backward, and politically reactionary section of the country. In practically no case is there any important industrial development, and even communication is poor. Almost all States are under a complete despotism, only a few being tempered by some rudiments of democracy. The rule is in practice often harsh and arbitrary to an intolerable degree, and outbreaks of opposition by peasants often occur. Almost all rulers of Native States are active or passive supporters of Imperialism.

A large part of British India is also under the dominance of big landholders, zamindars, etc., who in some cases wield powers approximating to those of the States rulers. In many

districts forced labour and other feudal dues are still exacted from peasants, and arbitrary expropriation of peasants' holdings is common. Rents are forced up usually to the maximum possible limit, often many times higher than the Government tax assessments.

The Princes and the big Zemindars of the eastern (and to a smaller extent the Western) Provinces are the chief owners of the land of the country, and the chief obstacle to the economic advance and prosperity of its main occupation, agriculture.

The Chamber of Princes and the various Zemindars' Conferences, the organs of these sections, are practically without exception loyal to Imperialism and for long represented its chief support within the country. It is a part of the policy of Imperialism to maintain the Native States and to some extent the Zemindary system, as a stronghold of reaction and political backwardness within the country. Political advance within the States is discouraged, suppression of opposition movements supported. Similarly in British India, the landlords in their own interests suppress peasants' movements or capture and lead them for their own purposes.

**The Indian Bourgeoisie:**—As shown previously the Indian Bourgeoisie is in a position of subordination to British capital, and is relatively weak and backward. It is partly allied with British Capital in industry and finance, especially in Northern India but even in Bombay, to a less extent. And it is partly independent, chiefly in Bombay, but also to an extent which is politically important, in Bengal. In general its development is blocked by the competition of the established large scale British industries and British control of finances and tariff policy. In Bombay the Indian interests, more compact and independent, have long ago developed an attitude of constitutional and co-operative opposition. Only where their interests are seriously threatened, e. g. over the ratio, will they seriously oppose. In North India the bourgeoisie is more divided. A section is practically loyalist while other, especially in Bengal, where the pressure of British supremacy is most felt, is still in vigorous, though constitutional, opposition, and constitutes the strength in that province of the Swaraj Party and the Congress. Bengal is now almost the only province in which the bourgeoisie takes direct part in the Congress.

The political organisation of the Indian Bourgeoisie is weak. Apart from the Chambers of Commerce etc., which seek no popular support, there are several political parties, mainly the product of successive splits from the Congress. Of these the Liberal Party, primarily an industrialists' party, alone has achieved permanence

and membership outside the Councils. The Independents, etc., are all shifting and unstable groups, their evolution determined by personal and other minor motives. Nevertheless their members are individually influential in their constituencies and in humanitarian, religious and other organisations, and own important organs of the Press.

None of the Bourgeois parties, in any case, has attempted or achieved a mass membership, except the Congress. Even Congress membership has near been more than a formality, though at the period of its greatest activity a large proportion of members were active. There has never been close organisation or discipline. Subscription is low. Since 1922, when the Swaraj Party was formed to enter the Councils, the Congress has split into successive fractions, and steadily lost ground.

The essence of the policy of the bourgeoisie as a whole, and now even of the left section, is compromise with Imperialism. The policy in the Assembly on all questions affecting the economic position of the Indian bourgeoisie has been one of pressing for concessions and a *modus vivendi*. All parties have been united on these occasions. Similarly on political questions. The united demand of the Indian representatives in the Assembly has always been a Round Table Conference—a means of compromise. Swaraj and Independence agitation have been a means of bring pressure to bear and no more. Even the Labour movement, which is still largely in bourgeois hands, is looked upon in this light (cf. Resolution on Labour organisation by Liberal Federation, Session 1927). The bourgeoisie by the policy of acquiescence are obstructing the progress of India. Even the elementary rights of political democracy are no longer demanded by them. (See the constitutions drafted by an ex-President and ex-Secretary of the Congress, one demanding "literate suffrage," and the other the present suffrage). The bourgeoisie on the contrary is opposed to the interests of the masses (e.g., opposition in the Assembly to the proposed concessions to Tata's workers) and is afraid of their movement. It deserted and broke up the N. C. O. movement for fear of mass action, and for the same reason seeks to keep the labour movement under its control. The bourgeoisie as a whole can no longer be looked upon as the leader of a national movement in the interests of the mass of the Indian people.

**The Petty Bourgeoisie:**—Consists of various sections, but a large part of it suffers more or less abutely from poverty. The pressure of exploitation and the retarded economic development of the country lead to an excess of supply over demand of small retail businesses of all kinds, and of small industrial undertakings. For similar reasons there is intense competition among the clerical and professional classes. These sections suffer from unemployment

and undercutting due to the competition especially of small landowners who attempt to supplement their incomes from urban occupations. The stagnation of industry in recent years has intensified this position, and all but the upper grade of even the learned professions are in a position of economic insecurity. Technical education for industry is scanty, and in most firms European technicians are largely employed, while the reservation of a large part of the services for Europeans is a standing grievance.

The membership of the Congress has for long been predominantly petty bourgeois. After the collapse of the N. C. O. movement due to the desertion of the bourgeoisie, it split into various factions. The No-change section, where it exists, represents mainly village craftsmen, small landholders, and others of independent means, who left their professions and had no urgent need to return to them when the policy was abandoned. This section is dominated by personal loyalty to Gandhi and is typically peasant in its mentality—religious, submissive to fate, obstinate and unchangeable in its outlook. As representing an economically obsolescent class, of small landowners and village artisans, its policy is reactionary (opposition to industrialism, etc.) through there is a radical section, principally of those who left employment or universities, ect, under the influence of N. C. O., and were later abandoned by the bourgeois leaders without means of support. The No-change section as a whole is declining with the practical withdrawal of its one important leader from politics, and is ceasing to be an important factor in the Congress.

Another section, primarily urban small business men, etc., followed the majority of the congress leaders into the Swaraj Party and the Councils. Beginning with a programme of obstruction it rapidly degenerated into co-operating, openly or covertly, for the purpose of securing gains for its supporters, who now constitute the strongest section in the Congress.

Though as a whole vague and vacillating in its policy, the petty bourgeoisie has split into these two main sections. The class difference within the Congress membership has been accentuated, the upper strata following the bourgeoisie and its Council Policy, the lower falling into indifference or a radical policy. This growing difference is widely felt within the Congress, but is often misunderstood, being attributed to a conflict between Youth and Age, etc.

The lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie, the unemployed, etc. a section of the Non-co-operators, and the remnant of the terrorist parties, are the unformed "left" of the Congress and constitute part of the ground from which the Workers and Peasants' Parties are now rising.

**Peasants:**—The peasants, which form the bulk of the nation; are notoriously in a condition of great poverty and backwardness. The land of the country, from which the peasants derive their living is in the hands of three, main agencies, the big landlords, including the State rulers, the Government, and religious institutions, all of which demand their quota from the cultivators. All suffer from the gradually increasing demands of the Government for direct taxes, as well as from indirect taxation, e.g. on salt and other imported goods. The excessive payments for irrigation water, often unnecessary and excessive in amount, are a similar burden in certain parts. Rents to landlords and intermediaries, of whom there may be several strata, are perhaps the heaviest burden which the peasants have to bear, and many suffer also from insecurity of tenure, and from forced labour, etc. The class of money-lenders and village shop-keepers, often identified with the landlord, by entangling the peasants in debts at high rates of interest, add to their misery and economic insecurity. Exaction for religious purposes and the support of a priest class constitute a further heavy burden.

The rural population is also disturbed by the introduction of manufactured goods, which deprive the village craftsmen of their employment and add to the class of landless labourers. The fractionation of holdings renders cultivation less and less efficient, and there is a strong tendency for the land to pass out of the possession of small cultivators into the hands of mortgage holders, landlords, etc. The consequent overpressure on the land is increased by the retention of large tracts uncultivated, and by the appropriation of large areas for the production of industrial crops.

The official claim, that the peasants as a whole are increasing in prosperity, is untrue, as many investigations show. The great majority are becoming increasingly poor, many are taking to wage labour, either on the land or in industry, while only a small section, successful peasants, money-lenders, etc. of the village population, is improving its economic position. An increasingly intense class struggle is developing in the rural areas, between the mass of the rural poor, the 25 millions of wage labourers, the artisans and the poor peasants on the one hand; and the big landlords, the religious institutions, the money-lenders, shop-keepers, etc. on the other.

The peasants have taken hitherto little part in politics. At the height of the N.C.O. movement, the peasants joined in large number (Bombay, U. P.) but on the abandonment of the policy of non-payment of taxes, out of regard for the interests of the landlord class, which at any rate in its lower strata was strong in the congress, they left again. Many peasants societies were then in existence, especially in U. P. but if radical, they were ruthlessly

suppressed, and those now in existence are small, and under moderate guidance. In the Punjab (The Akali movement) a partial success was achieved, and in Rajputana and Central India, and in Bengal, peasant societies of Radical tendencies exist. Feeling in Rural areas is becoming strong, particularly in U. P. but the movement finds little organized expression, peasants often allowing themselves to be misled by their class-opponents (Alibag agitation).

#### **Workers:—**

The main mass of workers outside agriculture, in the cotton, jute railway, docks, marine, building, metal and other minor industries, in all 30 million persons, with dependents, live in extreme poverty and bad conditions. Wages are low—Rs. 10 to Rs. 40/- for most; hours are long, 10 per day being usual. Housing conditions are almost universally bad, sanitation defective and death rate high; illiteracy and general ignorance is the rule. Insecurity of employment, victimisation and arbitrary expulsion, by jobbers, and excessive fines, etc. render the life of the workers of his class intensely miserable. While in some industries, competition and mismanagement render profits apparently low, there is reason to suspect hidden profits, and in many cases high profits are acknowledged year after year, (Jute, Tea, etc.). Workers are taught by experience that there is no difference between European and Indian employers, who equally profit during disputes by the use of state forces, the law and the police. The number and importance of strikes is increasing and a sharp class struggle is developing in Indian industry.

Nevertheless, trade unionism is weak in the chief industries, though it is growing slowly. Organisation is strong in Government Departments (Posts, Telegraphs, Currency, etc.) and among similar classes but these are superior grade workers (earning Rs 50—200/- or more) who have by a policy of isolation and the intimidation of superiors, acquired a reactionary mentality, and fallen under the leadership of middle class individuals, lawyers, etc. who encourage this. Some Unions of lower grade workers have grown strong, but the movement still as a whole is dominated and held back by ideas of sectionalism, local or craft, abstention from politics, fear of victimisation, etc. inculcated by employers or leaders. It has been the conscious policy of the bourgeoisie to control the labour movement, and they have succeeded largely in spreading their ideas, and restraining independent action by the workers. The T. U. C. itself is strongly influenced by this school of thought.

Some sections of workers are achieving emancipation from this influence, and others at times force their leaders to act in a militant manner. The increasing pressure from the employers

(cotton, railways) in the past two or three years has led to a considerable increase in military and class-consciousness and in actual organisation. The position of the workers forces them into active struggle, in which class-consciousness and the need for organised action are clearly shown, and these effects are being made manifest. Political consciousness also is growing (three unions' decision for one day strike on the landing of the Commission).

**Recent developments:**—In spite of its faults of leadership, the bourgeoisie has remained in control of national politics, and this circumstance has led to a stagnation of political life since 1922 when the bourgeoisie and the landowners woke to the realisation of the dangers of the mass movement they were creating, and caused its collapse. The movement was quickly suppressed by Imperialist forces, and an interval of quiet occurred. Since 1924 a number of factors have brought about a gradual revival of political feeling and class differentiation within India and its bearing on the national movement, are being felt. The general tendency is for the lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie to take up the National struggle once more, and to unite with the workers and peasants, hampered and opposed to a greater or less extent by the bourgeoisie and its followers. A section of the bourgeoisie (Bengal and Madras particularly) still maintains a verbally militant leadership, but exposes its class position by opposing the tendency to seek mass support. The bourgeoisie as a whole drifts away from Nationalism into a working agreement with Imperialism. The advent of the Simon Commission, while giving a great impetus to the growth of National feeling, has driven part of the bourgeoisie once again into the National camp. The situation is obviously not stable, and differences are already appearing (failure of leaders to agree to Hindu-Moslem pact, etc.)

**Conclusion:**—To summarise: We have shown the gradual growth of class differences in all spheres of Indian life. The Imperialist bourgeoisie exploit India from all directions, middle classes, peasantry and workers, and generally obstruct economic and cultural development. Allied with the Imperialists are the state Rulers and big landowners, who exist on the exploitation of the great mass of the rural population; and to an increasing extent, the Indian Bourgeoisie, in a position of subordination but alliance with the Imperialist bourgeoisie, exploiting the middle class and the peasants, but most of all the Industrial workers.

The Imperialists and their allies control the political life of the country, restraining it within such narrow bounds that the exploited masses cannot find expression except in direct action, through strikes or no-tax campaigns. The alliance of exploiters is opposed to National freedom, democratic institutions and the

expression of opinion, or the development of indigeous culture, and even such elementary physical necessities as adequate sanitation, elementary education, and a tolerable standard of life.

The movements for the attainment of these necessities are being and must be co-ordinated in a great mass movement of the exploited sections of the population, the workers, the peasants, and the middle classes, against Imperialism and its allies, the state rulers, the big landowners and such of the bourgeoisie as will not sacrifice their immediate economic intrests to the higher intrests of the great mass of their countrymen. This movement will incidentally provide the only ultimate solution of the communal questions which have split India's ranks in the past. Co-operative work for the fundamental needs of the masses will swallow up the minor differences of race and creed.

The bourgeoisie, the traditional leaders of the National movement, have already to a large extent forsaken the movement and are betraying their unfitness for leadership. They are no longer interested in attaining Independence. They do not fight for political democracy, or for any other demands of the people. On the contrary their vacillating policy of opposition to Imperialism in words and acquescence indeeds, is opposed to the progress of the movement. All experience of similar movements shows that the Industrial working class alone is fitted to lead this struggle through to the end, and to fight consistently for the interests of all the Indian people. The working class through its own struggle learns discipline and organisation, the tactics and the strategy of political struggle. It alone can provide the steel frame necessary to guide the scaattred and vacillating masses of the urban middle class and peasantry to freedom. It alone has the determination and agresive spirit necessary to push the struggle to the end in the interests of all.

It is, therefore, essential that working class organisations, the trade unions and T. U. C., fight and obtain freedom from bourgeois control, under which most of them now exist. They must also obtain freedom from the reactionary and confused ideas which the bourgeoisie cultivate among them. These things require an independent workers' political party to educate, organise, and lead the workers in their struggle.

Under the leadership of the industrail workers, the movement of the masses can go forward to abolish foreign exploitation, to establish democracy, and those elementary per-requisites of life which 95 per cent. of the populations of India still lack. By means of strikes, demonstrations, hartals and the more laborious means of organisation and education, the class-consciousness and the solidarity of the masses will be raised to the level necessary. before its task can be achieved.

Almost the most important problem which the masses will have to solve is the agrarian question, the relation of the cultivators to the soil on which they work. No solution can be satisfactory unless the central question of the ownership of land is decided; against the reactionary system of the partition of land among a few big owners with arbitrary powers of expulsion and exploitation; for the principle of land for the cultivator himself. Only if this is achieved can the minor problems of technical development, credit, credit education, etc., be solved usefully. And only the organised power of the immense majority of the peasants and landless labourers exerted in conjunction with the general nationalist and labour struggle can bring about this solution.

This mass movement is slowly developing. But in the early stages it requires conscious and intelligent guidance and this is the function of the workers' and Peasants' Party. The Party has its task to gather all sincere fighting elements from the ranks of the workers, the peasants, the exploited middle class and the militant National movement, and to fuse them into one united whole for conducting their united struggle. It will establish particularly close relations with the youth, the future leaders of the country, and the trade unions, the source from which most of its strength will be drawn.

The future of the country, its economic development, education, culture, and the well-being of the masses depend upon the rapid development of this mass movement of [the exploited millions, united and guided by the Workers' and Peasants' Party.

**Present Political situation:**—The collapse of the Non-Co-operation movement was not at first realised and expectation of its resumption and triumph continued for some time. But years went by, the policy of the Council Parties became more and more compromising and no effort was made to revive a mass movement. Hope of progress along the old lines gradually faded, and at the same time the class conflict within the country and the Congress made itself increasingly felt. At first reaction on the part of Congress supporters was growing indifference, but later it developed into a vague but increasingly acute discontent. The lower strata of the petty bourgeoisie who had been drawn into the N.C.O. movement were becoming impatient for a forward move. This tendency has been assisted by various factors—prolonged economic stagnation, the growth of a war-atmosphere (preparations on the frontiers, failure to disarm, despatch of troops to China, etc.), disappointment at the complete failure of the British Labour Government to do what had been expected of a party pledged to self-determination and a fight against Imperialism, the Chinese and Javanese events, continued provocation by Imperialism (the Exchange question, the Bengal detentions and other repressive measures). Saklatvala's propaganda,

Miss Mayo's book and its alleged official patronage, all have had their effect. A new policy is being sought, and a national feeling is once again arising, with a partial abandonment of the old ideas. The rise in various provinces of an organised Youth Movement after the absorption of the previous generation of the organised Youth in Congress agitation and subsequent stagnation, is symptomatic of the process. The increasing organisation and militancy of the workers, as shown in numerous recent strikes, adds to the volume of protest against the existing order.

On the other hand the bourgeoisie, with their supporters among the professional and other middle classes, were moving in the opposite direction. The long awaited Statutory Commission was having its expected effect upon them, and draft constitutions, all contemplating Dominion Status as the goal of nationalist effort, were being prepared for acceptance by the Congress. ("Dominion Status" has for some time been the accepted aim of most schools of bourgeois nationalist thought. The essence of the idea is the maintenance of imperialist exploitation, but with the Indian bourgeoisie in a more favourable position, and with the imperial forces ready to defend bourgeois interests, as now).

The appointment of the Statutory Commission without Indian members rendered a policy of conciliation by the bourgeois leaders for a time impossible. So great was the general indignation that even the most compromising groups among the bourgeois nationalists have been forced to support the policy of Boycott, conditional or absolute.

The result has been to prevent a further exposure of the bourgeoisie, and to strengthen them temporarily as the national leaders. It has further hampered a serious campaign of mass opposition on the basis of the Boycott agitation. Nevertheless public feeling has developed very strongly, in spite of all efforts to accentuate the communal divisions, so that the Congress and even the Liberal and other groups have had to go further in the direction of mass opposition than they at first wished (the Independence Resolution and the agreement by the Benares meeting to an All-India hartal). The masses too are entering the movement to a certain extent. In Bombay three Unions took formal decisions to strike, and more than thirty thousand workers actually struck and demonstrated. Many workers took part in other places).

Nevertheless the desertion of the majority of the bourgeois leaders, both within the Congress and without, is certain, and is already taking place. They have partially abandoned the policy of a abstention from the legislatures. Many, e. g. in the Assembly debate, openly appeal for Indian membership of the Commission, and admit the right of Imperialism to the last word in deciding the

future of India. Boycott on principle was abandoned by the Assembly resolution which merely declared unacceptable the "present constitution and scheme of the Commission". The decision to draft a Constitution by the All-Parties' Conference is an admission of the right of the British Government to decide whether it shall be granted or not. Otherwise a statement of rights and a programme of action are all that are required of the All-Parties' Conference. The formula which it has accepted, "Full responsible Government" and the apologetic plea that "Dominion Status is a step towards Independence" mark the collapse of the Congress programme of complete independence. The quibbling over the communal differences show that no fundamental change in the nature of the Government is sought, and the petty sectional interests of to-day are allowed excessive importance. The decision not to advocate the alteration of the despotic regime prevailing in the Indian States, means that that fight which the nationalist movement must carry on against feudal oppression is to be shirked. The almost unanimous opinion in favour of a second chamber based on some restricted franchise show the reactionary and unrepresentative nature of the conference, and effectually disposes, of the pretence that mass support is to be sought to enforce the demands. The almost entirely bourgeois composition of the conference determines its intentions and policy. The participation of the Trade Union Congress is of no significance, as it is rightly believed to be under bourgeois control. How seriously the inclusion of the Trade Union Congress is taken is shown by the decision not to admit the right of strike among the "rights of workers and peasants".

Those Congress leaders who have agreed to the All-Parties Conference decisions have clearly shown that their advocacy of complete independence is insincere. The plea of Unity put forward to justify this action is entirely specious. Unity is possible only on the basis of a common principle. Those who want complete independence cannot compromise with those who are opposed to it. The sacrifice of complete independence for the sake of unity with the bourgeois parties is a betrayal of the immense majority of the population for the favour of a minute reactionary minority. Even the agreement of the bourgeois majority to many democratic principles, embodied in the All-Parties Conference decisions, is no adequate again to weight against the abandonment of the forward policy implied in the principle of complete independence, and those who have agreed to this bargain are guilty of a serious tactical mistake, if not more.

The agitation in the country of the Congress leaders, led by Bengal, is confined to the Boycott of British goods. This is a reformist weapon, intended to extort a compromise—alone it can do no more—from the Government. The bourgeois class is demonstrating once more its inability any longer to lead the national movement.

The middle classes, to whom the Boycott propaganda is directed, are reacting to it only in a half-hearted manner. Confidence in the majority of the bourgeois leaders has not yet been restored by their verbal radicalism over the Commission, and the masses generally are unwilling to be exploited for what they now know to be only the compromising ends of the bourgeoisie. There is a grave danger that the mass protest and indignation caused by the Commission will be allowed to die away in disappointment. Nothing but a militant and uncompromising practical lead will restore it to life and enable it to grow. It is the task of the Workers and Peasants Party to supply that lead.

**Tasks of the party** :—The fundamental work before the Party is to organise the working class and give it sufficient political education to enable it to come forward as the leading section of the mass movement which is now rising in India. It is the duty of all who are concerned with obtaining national freedom, establishing democracy within the country, and rescuing the population generally from its poverty, ignorance and social backwardness, to assist in this work. The chief immediate task for the Party is, by putting forward its correct, consistent and uncompromising policy, in contrast to the un-historic, vacillating and timid policy of the present leaders, to gather together all fighting progressive forces from all sections, and thereby to establish its own organisation, which will enable it to carry out its ultimate function. A strong, conscious and well-disciplined Workers' and Peasants' Party is the most pressing need of the present.

The policy of the Party must be to carry forward the campaign for the boycott of the Commission to the utmost extent in spite of any sabotage. Strikes and hartals must be encouraged, and the masses brought into the movement by associating their demands with the national slogans. The campaign must demand complete national independence, and must work for the calling of a Constituent Assembly elected by universal adult suffrage which will concentrate and express authoritatively the diverse demands and scattered struggles of the masses. The Constituent Assembly, which can give the masses the united and militant lead which the All-Parties Conference failed to give, will be the nation's real answer to the British Government and the Simon Commission, and will constitute a definite step forward in the struggle of the masses for complete independence and the satisfaction of their pressing economic needs.

The slogan of the Boycott of British goods may be supported as a means of arousing enthusiasm, but only as a subsidiary to the slogan of a Constituent Assembly. As opposed to the programme of the All-Parties Conference, the Party must demand on behalf of the masses Complete Independence, and the establishment of democracy—Universal adult suffrage, freedom of speech, etc., the abolition of the Native States and the landlord system, and the

guarantee of the economic, political and social rights which the workers and peasants as classes require.

The Party must also carry on propaganda in relation to International affairs. The League against Imperialism must be supported, and its propaganda for the alliance of the revolutionary Labour movement and the colonial revolutionary movements be assisted. Solidarity must be encouraged with the Russian and Chinese revolutions, particularly in view of the danger of war. And a definite campaign must be conducted against war, especially among the peasants, who supply the soldiers, and among the workers, who supply the materials and transport. The slogan must be advanced of non-co-operation with the Government and the war machine in the event of war.

The work of the Party in particular spheres may be summarised as follows:—

(1) We must endeavour to make the Congress adopt a programme of mass demands and to support them in its current propaganda. We and our sympathisers must become members of the provincial and All-India Congress Committees, and take active part in such work as leads towards the development of mass movement. We must support the Congress while it fights Imperialism, but must not hesitate to criticise the compromising tendencies of Congress leaders, however prominent. The alliance of the Party with the petty-bourgeois left of the Congress must be consolidated, on the basis of direct action for complete independence, as against the compromising bourgeois leadership.

(2) We must conduct propaganda among the youth that they may assist us in our work. The ideas of youth are sufficiently fluid and free from obsolete prejudices to enable us to enlist them on the side of the masses. We must assist in the establishment of a youth organisation with an advanced programme of demands and action, which shall broaden the social basis of the existing, primarily middle-class, youth movement.

(3) We must undertake the organisation and political education of the masses of workers and peasants. With the industrial workers our task is twofold (a) We have to organise the unorganised masses. (b) We have to emancipate those which are organised from false ideas and false leadership. The former can only be done by consistent work on the basis of a radical programme of demands for improvement in working and living conditions. The middle class leaders have failed to bring about effective organisation of the enormous mass of lower grade workers. We must utilise their numerous spontaneous outbursts of protest, to carry on the work of organisation and propaganda among them.

In regard to (b) we must show by the superiority of our work and fighting policy that ours is the only correct policy to follow. We have to push forward all methods for increasing the possibilities of militant action. We must encourage the amalgamation of overlapping unions, and the formation of central bodies such as Trades Councils. Within the Unions we have to urge the adoption of democratic forms of organisation, and the participation of the workers themselves in the organisations, formation of branches, based upon the place of work or residence, the holding of regular and frequent meetings, the discussion by members of political and business subjects, educational work within the unions on working class lines. We must further establish fractions within unions of our sympathisers and members who will urge our policy and further our programme of demands. We must urge the acceptance of our policy in the T. U. C. and other central bodies, and endeavour generally to purge it of the careerist element by getting rid of its present status of a semi-official institution recognised by the Government as recommending safe persons for councils and Geneva Conferences.

Secondly, Peasants. The masses of the peasants require organisation almost from the beginning. We must take advantage of Congress and Youth Association work in rural areas, and such occasions of peasant disturbance as protests against increase of land assessment, to bring about organisation of peasants on sound lines. We must also undertake visits by our own members to villages, and induce our members and sympathisers among Trade Unionists, especially railwaymen and migratory workers, to do such work.

The programme of demands for peasants, which will differ somewhat from province to province and district to district, will contain the following items:—

Rescue of peasants from the tyranny of the landlord, by division of uncultivated land, establishment of security of tenure, abolition of forced labour and other compulsory or customary dues. Freedom from the exploitation of moneylenders, by legal limitation of the rate of interest on loans and the provision of credit through banks. Provision of educational facilities, liberal, technical and hygienic. Reduction (ultimately abolition) of rents. Control of village life by village panchayat.

The village is the unit of organisation natural for the peasants. Independent organisation of rural wage labourers should be formed.

**PARTY.**—Most important of all, we require a party, with a large membership, efficiently organised, disciplined, and active. It should have propaganda organs in Bengali and English and an agitational organ in Hindi. Each branch of the Party should have its sub-committees for various classes of work, Trade Union, Peasants, Youth, Congress, Training.

The time is now ripe for big developments in the Party and the opportunity must be seized. At present the membership is far too small to undertake efficiently the numerous and laborious tasks which the Party has to perform. The most urgent need is the propaganda of the unfamiliar but profoundly important idea of the function of a Party, recruitment of members, and training them to carry out party policy in the various spheres.

The party must be prepared to co-operate, without losing its identity, with all parties and organisations, which will fight for the liberation of India from Imperialism. But the establishment of our own organisation is our first task, which is fundamentally necessary, and which cannot be abandoned. It is necessary further to co-operate with organisations fighting for the freedom of the oppressed nations, and with the militant anti-imperialist working class of the imperialist countries.

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## YOUTH.

An analysis of the situation of India at the present time reveals that the Nationalist movement is undergoing a rapid change. The old movement, based upon the sectional interests of the capitalist class and its conflict with imperialism, is almost played out. The partial satisfaction of its needs and the new policy of alliance with Indian capitalism which Imperialism has adopted, have deprived it of almost all inclination to revolt against Imperialism domination. At the same time the interests and sentiments of other strata of the population are forcing them to take up the struggle for freedom. The masses are becoming less amenable for use by the bourgeoisie for the peaceful extortion of concessions, and are tending to come forward on the political field as an independent force, acting in their own interests. The nationalist movement is being rapidly transformed from a movement of the wealthy and educated to a mass movement of the workers, peasantry, and lower middle classes.

Imperialism denies to the masses of India the elementary rights of personal and national freedom, democratic institutions, the free development by society of its own material resources and culture, and even a tolerable standard of life. The Indian bourgeoisie, who claim to be the protagonists of the whole people, have ceased to fight for these elementary necessities. Only when the masses themselves take in hand their own struggle will success be in sight.

The urgent need of the present, for the interests of the whole population, and its future economic and social development, is the organisation and education of the mass nationalist movement, now slowly and hesitatingly making appearance on the political field.

The most serious obstacle to its progress is the absence of a clear outlook and system of ideas corresponding to its needs and the circumstances of the time. Organisations of all kinds are still dominated by bourgeois interests and bourgeois mentality and timidity.

The Youth is the only section of society able to free itself from the obsolete ideas of the older nationalist movement, and it is therefore upon the youth that the responsibility rests of forming and educating the new mass nationalist movement. The efforts of the old bourgeois school to retain its control over the Congress, the Trade Union movement, etc., can only be defeated by the new, more vigorous ideas developed by the youth.

In the conflict now developing in India, there are only two sides. Increasingly the upper classes, including a large section of the bourgeoisie, fight on the side of Imperialism against the rising mass movement. Any effort to find a middle course must necessarily fail. All experience of movements based on the middle classes proved that they must take sides, either with the bourgeoisie or with the working class. Fascism, a movement mainly of the middle classes, always and everywhere serves the interests of capitalism. Indian Fascism can only serve the cause of Imperialism, since Imperialism and Indian capitalism are in ever closer alliance. By striking at the working class organisations Fascism would destroy the only force which can free India from Imperialism.

The rising generation is faced with two lines of action. It may pursue the path of traditional pure nationalism, which will inevitably lead it to the defence of capitalism, and hence of Imperialism and of political and social reaction. Or it may take the side of the historically progressive mass movement, assist it in its difficulties, and advance the cause of national independence, democracy, and economic and cultural progress.

The youth of all India is now awakening to consciousness on a great scale. It is essential that the Workers' and Peasants' Party should attract to its banner the newly organising forces of the youth. It must take energetic measures to draw as large a proportion as possible to the side of the masses, and to give them its scientific social outlook and energetic radical policy.

There must be established an Independent Youth organisation which shall have as its main functions to draw the youth into the political struggle, and to broaden the social basis of the traditional youth organisations by recruiting working class and peasant youth. It shall undertake the following tasks:—(1) participation in the political nationalist movement. (2) advance the cause of trade unionism among young workers, and study their working conditions. (3) fight for the redress of the special grievances of the youth,

especially the unemployed. (4) political study and self preparation. (5) conduct of education in political and economic subjects among workers, villages and students. (6) act as a centre within the existing general youth organisations for the propaganda of radical ideas and the advancement of a sound policy.

The Party must appoint a sub-committee to work with the youth organisation.

#### RESOLUTION ON THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT.

The Trade Union movement, which must in the future play a very important part in the political struggle of the country, is yet in a very backward condition. To remedy this is one of the most important tasks before the Party, and demands a large part of its attention and energy.

The chief weaknesses of the movement are:—

- (1) Insufficient organisation, resulting particularly in the lack of provision for the effective participation of the members in the work, and determination of policy.
- (2) The tendency to restrict the organisation to narrow bounds, of locality, trade or craft, and its result in the prevalence of rival and overlapping unions.
- (3) Absence of a militant policy; paying excessive attention to minor grievances, and neglecting the important questions, wages, etc.
- (4) Fear of politics.
- (5) Unbusiness-like methods, which reduce efficiency and open the door to corruption.

The Trade Union movement has not yet learnt to avoid the mistakes committed by older movements. In particular the British Trade Union movement, universally taken as a model, illustrates the necessity of participation in politics, and the dangers of sectarianism and insularity on the part of unions.

The chief root of the faulty organisation and policy of the movement is its domination by leaders drawn from the middle classes, who may have little or no knowledge of Trade Unionism or politics, and who in some cases act as conscious agents of capitalism. They have shaped the movement to their ends, and imbued it with their outlook.

Grosser cases of exploitation of the movement by un-principled leaders have already called forth many protest from the workers,

and there has grown up in some cases a dangerous distrust of "outsiders" of all kinds, and even of Trade Unionism itself. Even the best-intentioned among the older leaders have to confess to a relative failure to organise at any rate the great mass of lower-paid labour. The defects of a non-militant leadership have been very clearly shown recently in the B. N. Railway strike, and the Bombay textile strikes. In neither cases did the leaders attempt even to maintain the already demnable economic conditions of the workers, in spite of the magnificent stand which they were making.

The workers are ready for the sound and militant lead which the Workers and Peasants' Party alone can give.

**The task of the Party** is to transform the existing organisation so that it will give expression to real working class demands and to make the leadership such that it will give a courageous, militant and correct lead. To assist in the development of organisation so that it will be an efficient and capable machine able to secure for the workers their immediate demands such as better working condition, hours, wages, etc.; and ultimately assist in the economic emancipation of the masses.

**One Union for one Industry.**—In many Industries we find a number of trade unions catering for one trade. This multiplicity of Unions means overlapping of work and finance; this spells inefficiency. The fact that we find members of one Union working whole members of another in the same trade are in dispute is to be deplored since this means weakness and defeat. This question must be vigorously dealt with and amalgamation must be advocated and achieved. There must be one Trade Union for Railwaymen, one for Textile workers, etc. Party members must always oppose the formation of splitting or rival unions, except where they only union existing is controlled by Government or by employers.

**T. U. C. and Trades Councils.**—The Trade Union Congress must be made the co-ordinating body linking up the activities and struggle of the workers throughout India, and in this sphere the members of the Party must play an active part. All Unions must affiliate to the Trade Union Congress, and to its Provincial Committees where they exist.

Trades Councils must be set up in all big Industrial Towns in which the rank and file of the T. U. Movement should participate. These Trades Councils will be the bodies closely knitting up the activities of the workers in the Towns, co-ordinating the struggle of the workers, dealing with industrial and labour questions, and organising demonstrations, etc. A net work of these should be set up all over the country.

The party considers that propaganda and preparatory work for the formation of Trade Councils in Howrah and Calcutta, with the participation of all Unions and branches, should be begun at once.

**100% Trade Unionism.** The only way to wring any improved conditions from the employer is by the organised power of the workers and by their being prepared to use their power. Therefore, 100 per cent. organisations must be our Slogan. The Council set up by the T. U. C. for this purpose must get to work and members of the Party should use every effort to achieve this.

**Organisation** :—It is necessary to put the Trade Unions on a proper basis, e. g. arrangement for membership cards, proper collection of dues, financial records and for regular meeting of members to elect officers, etc. As far as possible the officers should be actual workers and the rank and file should take a much greater part in running the trade union. Definite Trade Union branches should be set up so that the members can actively participate, and weekly or fortnightly meetings should be regularly held.

**Factory Committees** :—Workers in factories, etc. should elect Factory committee from among themselves. Representatives should be elected from Departments which would form the Committee. They should look after the interests of the workers, take complaints to the employers, inspect T. U. cards, and assist in bringing about 100 per cent. Trade Unionism.

**Youth** :—Vigorous work must be carried on among the youth. They must be organised in the Trade Union movement on the same footing as older members and have the same rights of voting, etc.

**Immediate Demands** :—Members of the Party should wherever practicable be members of Trade Unions, actively participating in the work of the Union and every day struggle of the workers. It is necessary for our members to attend consistently to their work in the Trade Union Branch, E. C. and Management Committees. They should group around themselves the left wing and best elements in an organised fashion. To get the policy of the Party supported and prepare the future leadership of the Trade Union Movement, a constant fight is to be carried on against reformist leadership, and Circles and Classes on Trade Unionism and political questions must be organised. The workers must be rallied around the following programme of immediate demands on a National scale :—

- (1) Eight hour day ; (Two weeks holiday with pay per year).
- (2) Abolition of child labour.
- (3) Abolition of system of fines.
- (4) Minimum living wage.

- (5) State support for unemployed, old age pensions, Maternity benefit, sickness benefits.
- (6) Improvement of laws regarding workmen's compensation and employers' liability.
- (7) Installation of modern safety appliances in factories, mines, etc.
- (1) Abolition of the system of sardars.

**Immediate Demands for Individual Industries** :—It is necessary for the Party to work out a programme of immediate demands for individual industries, such as one for miners, one for Railway men, Textile, etc., with slogan that will rally the workers of those particular industries around the Party in their struggle for better conditions.

### RESOLUTION ON PEASANTS.

Three fourths of the population of India, or to be more precise, 221 millions out of a total of 320 are dependent on agriculture. Thus the very numerical strength of the peasants and their importance in the total production of social wealth and the basic, vital necessities of life must compel on our part a predominant attention to their needs and their position and part in the general National struggle for freedom.

Every section of public thought and organisation, including pro-government investigators repeat without a mistake, like a school lesson the fact that the peasantry in India is poverty-stricken and debt-ridden. A general analysis of the causes of peasant poverty and starvation reveals that the peasant is exploited by Government's high taxation and rent, the money-lender's exploitation and the exactions of the landowner. On the top of all this is the excessive subdivision into uneconomic fragments of land, and the merchants-trader's machine-manufactured goods entering the village, ruining the handicrafts and making hundreds into wage-earners. The money-lenders taking possession of land on failure to pay debts or the huge interest is creating landless-labourers, slaves of an absentee landlord. Matched against this poverty, and land-hunger, meagre strips of a few feet, worked upon by a primitive plough and rickety bullock stand the huge unbounded estates of the Talukdars, Zamindars and Rajahs of Bengal, Bihar and U. P. exacting tributes and high rent from their tenants and spending their loot in the cities of the land or elsewhere. Such idlers living on the incomes derived from the peasants toil are a Crore in the 22 Crores dependent on agriculture, but they hold more than 70 per cent. of the whole land in their possession and their levy on the peasantry amounts

to the huge figure of 190 Crores. In Bengal alone the landlords pay 2½ Crores in revenue but they make more than 13 Crores on mere idling and holding the scrap-paper of title to the land. Where the landlords are absent, as in Ryotwari, the Government takes almost whatever the peasant produces in rent. And apart from this, he is saddled with indirect taxation, which he does not see but feels. The effect of all this that a handful of five per cent. of the whole people own nearly 30 per cent. of the wealth of the land, while 60 per cent. of the people, mostly poor peasants and workers get only 30 per cent. of the wealth i. e., half of what they ought to have. No wonder, the result is that the bitterness in social relations, the class-cleavage between the excessively rich and the excessively poor is growing and the inevitable contradictions between their interests is becoming clearer.

Recognizing, where this class-cleavage would lead to and partly dictated by the needs of their own position, the Government has started taking stock of the potential resources of the peasantry and accentuating re-construction of Indian agriculture in the capitalist basis. This would temporarily raise the productive power of the individual peasant and thus make him a better consumer of industrial products and help the British heavy industries to their feet again. But, it would again embitter the class-struggle more by creating peasant unemployment and the expropriation of the poor peasants of his holdings. The Reserve Bank will replace the village money-lender and the Consolidation Bills will create rich farmers but the grip of the state, allied with rich Zamindars and farmers will be more thorough in its exploitation and will aggravate the struggle.

The Workers' and Peasants' Party therefore unequivocally stands for giving land to the peasants-cultivator, eliminating all idlers living on the tributes from the peasants. Uneconomic holdings must be made economic, not by capitalist consolidation and looting the poorest peasant but by adding to the share of the poor holder from the big limitless stretches of the absentee landlords. The Party stands for allowing none to exploit him by way of interest on debts or tributes or free labour. He must be absolved from all compulsory obligation including highrent and the heavy load on his produce. He must be under obligations to none but the State, representing his own interests and himself.

Therefore to achieve this ultimate aim in view, and to widen the outlook and develop capacities of class-conscious resistance on the part of the peasantry, the Party adopts the following programme of immediate needs.

- (1) Elimination of all mid-agencies between the peasant and the State.

- (2) Direct representation of the peasant on the State apparatus through an adult universal franchise, working through peasant Panchayats.
- (3) Immediate provisions of land from big estates.
- (4) Substantial reduction in rent.
- (5) Review of the debt and interest obligations through peasants-courts with a view to their extinction.
- (6) State credit to the peasants.

The Party makes it clear that the above are merely immediate demands, which are ultimately to lead to a Swaraj of unexploited and free peasant and worker, each working his own destiny, unhampered by Zamindars or money-lenders or an Imperialist Government or a capitalist investor. The Party is willing to co-operate with every organisation working for the realisation of the above demands, with a view to ultimately secure a social reconstruction to emancipate the peasant. All the same, it does not countenance the reversion to mediaeval forms of labour or addition of work to the peasants life, but is radical, scientific and advance guard in political, social and economic matters.

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### THE LILLOAH WORKERS.

This conference expresses its sympathy with the relatives of those were killed and the wounded in the outrage at Bamungachhi on Wednesday.

It protests against the action, taken by the Government forces, and European Staff, which has now become a regular practice in strikes, of shooting upon strikers with the object of disheartening and defeating them.

It congratulates the E. I. Railwaymen now locked out, and those on strike in sympathy with them, both on the railway and in other works, and promises them the full support of the Party.

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### WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' PARTY OF INDIA.

This Conference endorses the action of the Executive Committee in attempting, in agreement with Parties and groups in other parts of India, to establish the "Workers' and Peasants' Party of India," and appoints comrades (1) Muzaffar Ahmad (2) Dharani Kanta Goswami (3) A. Roy (4) Abdul Halim to form a sub-

committee to represent the Party in making arrangements to form the united Party and to hold an All-India Conference in December next.

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### LEAGUE AGAINST IMPERIALISM.

This Conference welcomes the formation of the "League Against Imperialism" and approves of its work for the alliance of the revolutionary working class of the imperialist countries and the revolutionary nationalist movements in the subject countries. It urges the formation of a centre for conducting the propaganda of the League in India, and protests against the proscription of the publications of the League by Government.

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### WORKERS' WELFARE LEAGUE OF INDIA, LONDON.

This Conference congratulates the Workers Welfare League of India upon the service it has rendered for years past to the masses of India, and deplores the action of the Executive Council of the All-India Trades Union Congress in breaking off relations with it.

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### WORKERS' DEFENCE CORPS.

In view of the fact that it is the general practice with the capitalists to try to break strikes by violence, this conference urges upon the T. U. Movement, the necessities of organising disciplined Workers' Defence Corps for conducting strikes, demonstrations etc., in an effective manner.

### ORGANISATION.

If the Workers' and Peasant's Party is to fulfil its role, to form correctly and carry out successfully its decisions, it must pay for more attention than hitherto to organisation. The political effect of the Party, and its ability to carry out its main function, that of leadership, depends very largely on its state of organisation. Thoroughly organised, even if numerically weak, the Party can become a power to be reckoned with in the industrial and political world. Without this condition energy will be wasted, and the movement which the Party attempts to lead will remain chaotic and ineffective.

(1) The Party must be on such a basis that decision can be easily transmitted, correctly understood and quickly put into effect.

(2) It must be able to remain constantly in touch with the masses; and to ascertain quickly all their trends of thought and action.

(3) It must be able to participate actively in the every day struggle of the masses, to show them the value of the Party, and to rally them to itself.

(4) It must be able to receive, train and organise in its ranks those who agree with its policy and want to help it.

#### PLAN OF ORGANISATION.

Subject to alteration upon the establishment of the All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party, the following should be the plan of organisation:—

(1) There shall be an Enlarged Executive Committee representing all branches and affiliated bodies, and an Executive Committee consisting of members resident within a short distance from the Central Office.

(2) Branches should be set up in Towns, Districts, Subdivisions and Villages under the direction of the Executive Committee.

(3) Groups set up in Factories, Railways, Mines, etc. should work on Factory Committees.

(4) Fractions or Groups should be set up in Trade Union Branches, Management Committees, Executive Committees etc. and also in Provincial Congress Committees. This applies to the T.U.C. and A.I.C.C.

(5) A definite Youth Organisation should be brought into being to work in the existing Youth movement, Trade Unions and Congress Committees, etc.

(6) A Women's Section must be set up to work among women and organise them where possible in Trade Unions, and in special women's organisations.

#### OPERATION OF ORGANISATION.

1. Study Circles must be started forthwith in order that members may understand and correctly apply party policy. The Study Circle should be begun under the leadership of a member approved by the Branch or E.C. as capable. He must submit a report at the end of the course of study on the work of the group and the progress of each individual.

2. It is essential that all Committees, Branches, and Fractions should meet regularly. and keep up to date with current events.

The Executive Committee must meet at least every two weeks and Branches and Fractions or Groups every week.

3. The entire Branch Membership shall be grouped in accordance with their special party work, *e. g.* in Trade Union Groups, Congress groups, Peasants groups, etc. Each member must belong to at least one group. Each group shall appoint a group leader, who shall be responsible to the Central or Branch Committee according to size.

4. Fractions or working groups must elect a group leader who shall be responsible to the Central or Branch Committee. These Fractions must carry out the decisions of a higher body. These decisions will be conveyed to the group by the group leaders. After discussion and decision by the group or fraction on a resolution or nomination official position, etc. the decisions of the group must be binding on the whole of the group. The work of the party groups within the Trade Unions and Congress Committees shall in the main be guided by the programme and policy of the party. The demands of the party must be pressed forward for acceptance by these bodies, it is important that adherents and new members be gained and the propaganda of the party thus advanced. This applies to groups operating in the T. U. C. and A. I. C. C.

5. **Branch Committees** :—The branch Committee shall co-ordinate the entire work of the own or village and be responsible to the Executive Committee to which it must report all work, and receive instructions on general lines of policy, which it should convey to the groups.

6. **Executive Committee**:—This Committee shall coordinate the whole party activity. It conveys instructions on policy to the Branches, groups, etc. and must receive report regularly from Branches groups, etc. on work done, future meetings or organisations, election of officers, etc. The Executive Committee shall have power to deal with all problems, and to issue manifestoes and leads in the name of the workers' and Peasants' Party.

7. **Committees elected**:—Branch Committees and office bearers shall be the Chairman, Secretary, Executive Members and Treasurer, who shall be elected by the whole branch membership and with group leaders shall constitute the E. C. of branch.

8. **The Executive Committee**:—This Committee shall be elected by an annual meeting of representatives, elected by party Branches and groups affiliated organisations.

**Reporting**:—It is essential that group and fraction leaders report after each meeting of their group or fraction, or more often,

if necessary, on work, done future work difficulties, new developments etc.,. The reports should go to Branch Committee and thence to the E. C. The correct formulation of policy and concentration of energy by the Branchwhole party, depends upon accurate and complete knowledge of the statuation, obtainable only form such reports.

**Training** :—New members admitted to the Party as individuals should be incorporated in study circles as soon as possible. The E. C. should prepare an outline syllabus suitable for a short course of such study.

**Fraction**:—Should be set up in all existing Trade Unions, Congress Committees, Youth Organisations, Peasants' Unions and Branches of same.

**Groups**:—Branch Committees and E, C. must divide work into suitable groups, which shall co-ordinate the work of fractions, study groups, etc.

**Meetings**:—In order to push forward work, and maintain contact, Party meeting of all kinds must take place for more regularly and frequently than hitherto. All committees and groups should meet weekly at a fixed time and place.

**Membership**:—The basis of individual membership shall be the acceptance of the Party programme, the payment of dues, and the performance of organised work. Admission should be subject to the approval of the E. C.

**Affiliated bodies**:—Particular attention must be paid to affiliated unions and Peasants' associations. Affiliation to the Party must be made a reality to the members of the Union. Branches of of the Union should be affiliated to the local branch of the Party and close relations established. Party members, must undertake the political education of the affiliated members, and must assist the organisation especially at periods of struggle. Fraction building within the affiliated body must be carried on vigorously, as the only guarantee for the hold of the Party policy upon the organisation is the existence within it of a strong fractions of Party members.

**Discipline**:—It is essential for Party work that individuals should observe the requirements of a Party discipline. Decisions once taken by the appropriate organ of the Party, must be obeyed.

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# THE WORKERS' AND PEASANTS' PARTY OF BENGAL

## CONSTITUTION.

1928.

1. NAME :—The name of the Party is the *Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bengal*. It will be styled in Bengali as *Bangiyā Krishak-O-Shramic Dal*.

*N. B.*—This party shall be the integral part of the *Workers' and Peasants' Party of India* which is yet to be formed.

2. OBJECT :—The object of the Party is the attainment of *Complete Independence* from *British Imperialism* and thorough democratisation of India based on economic and social emancipation and political freedom of men and women.

3. MEANS :—The rallying the People to Mass Action will be the principal means for the attainment and realisation of the above objects.

4. EXTENT :—The activities of the Party will extend to the entire province of Bengal and the Bengali speaking districts of Assam and Bihar & Orissa.

5. MEMBERSHIP :—(a) The membership of the Party shall be of two kinds.

(1) Individual and (2) Affiliated.

(b) Any person not below the age of 18 years who will subscribe to the object, constitution and programme of the party may be taken in as an individual member of the party subject to the approval of the Executive Committee. Every individual member, except students and women will have to become a member of some workers' or peasants' union within two months of this becoming a member of the Party.

(c) The Executive Committee of the Party shall have power to affiliate with it any workers' or peasants' union which is in sympathy with the object and programme of the Party. The Party shall undertake the work of giving the members of affiliated unions class-conscious education in trade unionism and politics, and shall assist the work of the unions by advice and propaganda.

6. SUBSCRIPTION :—(a) Each individual member of the Party shall pay in advance an annual subscription of Rupee One.

In the case of the individual being a worker or a peasant the subscription will be Four Annas annually. The Executive Committee may exempt any body from subscription if it thinks so desirable.

(b) Affiliated organisations shall have to pay annually at the rate of One Pice per member with a minimum of Rs. 5/- No organisation shall be compelled to pay more than Rs. 50/- annually.

#### MANAGEMENT.

7. (a) The work of the Party shall be conducted in the following way :—

There shall be held an *Annual Conference* of the Party. This Conference or the Congress of the proposed "Workers' and Peasants' Party of India" shall direct and control the policy and programme of the Party.

(b) The Annual Conference of the Party shall be held with all individual members and affiliated societies so long as the membership of the Party does not reach a sufficient number. With the growth of members the Conference shall be held with individual members and delegates of the affiliated unions.

(c) **SPECIAL CONFERENCE** :—In case of emergency the Enlarged Executive Committee or the Executive Committee shall have power to summon a special Conference, one third of the members of the Enlarged Executive Committee or two-thirds of the members of the Executive Committee agreeing such a Special Conference may be convened.

(d) **ENLARGED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** :—There shall be an Enlarged Executive Committee of the Party. This Committee shall be constituted within one month after the Annual Conference or meeting of the Party. The members of this Committee shall be elected from amongst the individual and affiliated members, the affiliated unions and branches of the Party electing one representative for every 1000 members, provided that every affiliated union or branch shall in any event elect one representative.

(e) If between two annual elections there is vacancy in the Enlarged Executive Committee of the representatives of any affiliated union or if any new union is affiliated the affiliated union concerned shall elect some of its members to fill up the vacancy or to represent it thereon as the case may be and if there is a vacancy of representative of the individual members the Enlarged Executive Committee shall fill up the vacancy by nominating a member from amongst the individual members.

(f) The work of the Party shall be conducted under the guidance of the Enlarged Executive Committee which shall meet every three months.

(g) Whenever required the Executive Committee on its own motion may, or if requisitioned in writing either jointly or separately by one fifth of the members of the Enlarged Executive Committee must, convene a meeting of the Enlarged Executive Committee. Fifteen members of the Enlarged Executive Committee shall form a quorum for the purpose of a meeting.

(h) **Executive Committee:**—There shall be an Executive Committee of the Party elected every year from amongst the individual and affiliated members, residing in or near Calcutta during the Party's annual conference.

(i) If between two elections there is any vacancy in the Executive Committee the Committee shall itself fill up the vacancy from among the individual or affiliated members.

(j) The Executive Committee shall be entrusted to carry out the programme of work of the Party and it shall be responsible to the Enlarged Executive Committee for its work. The Executive Committee shall submit an annual report of its work duly passed by the Enlarged Executive Committee to the Annual Conference of the Party.

(k) For facilitation of works there shall be different groups in the Executive Committee. The members of the Executive Committee shall not exceed twenty and five members of it shall form a quorum for the purpose of a meeting. The Executive Committee shall meet at least once per month.

(l) The member of the Executive Committee shall automatically be considered as members of the Enlarged Executive Committee.

(m) **office Bearers:**—The Executive Committee shall elect from its members one Chairman, two Vice-Chairmen, one General Secretary, two or more Group or Sectional Secretaries and one Treasurer.

#### BRANCHES.

8. (a) A branch of the Party shall be established under the supervision of the Executive Committee in any town or village where there are twelve members.

(b) The branch shall elect a secretary, chairman, treasurer and branch committee.

(c) The branch secretary shall receive instructions from the Executive Committee and shall report on branch activities etc., to the Executive Committee, at least monthly.

(d) Branches of affiliated unions shall be affiliated to the local branch of the Party and shall be represented on its committee.

(e) The Secretary and Treasurer of the branch shall collect subscriptions from the members. Funds collected shall be allocated as decided upon between the Branch Committee and the Executive Committee.

(f) The branch committee shall subject to the direction of the Executive Committee, supervise and direct all Party work and propaganda within its area.

#### RULES

9. (a) The Enlarged Executive Committee shall have power to frame general rules for carrying out the programme of the Party.

(b) Every member of the Executive Committee and the Enlarged Executive Committee shall have to raise some subscription for the Party.

(c) Any member of the Executive Committee who fails to attend four successive meetings shall automatically cease to be a member.

## The Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal.

### Report of The Executive Committee, 1927-1928.

**History of the Party** :—The Executive Committee, in presenting its report of work done to the Party Conference has thought fit to deal with the whole history of the Party from its formation, since no report has previously been issued.

The original motive of the formation of the Party as a group within the National Congress, was dissatisfaction at the stagnation of the Congress, and the apparent inability of its leaders to originate any fruitful policy, and at the same time indignation at the way in which the Congress and the Swaraj Party were dominated and used for their own ends entirely by the landlord and capitalist classes.

The Party came into existence as the "Labour Swaraj Party of the Indian National Congress," on 1st November 1925, and a provisional constitution and statement of policy were issued over the signature of Quazi Nazrul Islam. The statement declared that, all other means for attaining independence having failed, the Party will seek to achieve Swaraj and the salvation of the country by the organisation of Labour and Peasantry, who form eighty per cent of the population, so that they may wrest freedom from the hands of vested interests by their own might and for their own interests. The Party would fight for the economic interests of workers and peasants and would support candidates for legislatures who would put these items in their programmes. It proposed also to send its

own members into the legislatures, and to co-operate when possible with other organisations engaged in National service. Party members were allowed to be members of the Swaraj Party.

The chief among those who were identified with the foundation and early work of the Party were Comrade Shamsuddin Husain, of Birbhum, who has since died, Comrade Hemanta Kumar Sarkar, who has left Bengal, Comrade Qutbuddin Ahmad, who has left the Party, and Comrade Quazi Nazrul Islam, who is politically inactive.

An All-Bengal Tenants' Conference was held on 6 February 1926 at Krishnagar, under the Presidentship of Dr. Naresh Chandra Sen Gupta, M. A., D. L. Many representatives of peasants and tenants were present, and several members of the Labour Swaraj Party. It was decided forthwith to form the "Peasants' and Workers' Party of Bengal," in which the Labour Swaraj Party was merged, and a committee was elected with Dr. Naresh Chandra Sen as Chairman and Comrades Hemanta Kumar Sarkar and Qutbuddin Ahmad as secretaries respectively of the peasants' and workers' sub-committees. A constitution was approved and published, embodying the main points of policy of the Labour Swaraj Party.

The second conference of the Party was held in Calcutta on 19 and 20 February 1927 under the presidency of Comrade Atul Chandra Gupta M. A., B. L., when an address of welcome was given to Comrade S. Saklatwala, M. P. About 40 members were present, and about 300 visitors. A new programme of demands and organisation was adopted.

**Organisation and work :—**During 1926 the membership remained at about 40, and was confined to Calcutta, except for the branch at Mymensingh. (The "Mymensingh Peasants' and Workers' Party" had been in existence for some time before the formation of the Labour Swaraj Party, and on the formation of the Bengal Peasants' and Workers' Party it entered as a branch). The national movement was still in a state of apathy and disorganisation, and funds being short and the political level of the membership low, the Party was able to make little progress.

In 1927 conditions generally improved. New life began to appear, if slowly, in the Labour and political movements, and the Party was able to effect a certain amount of substantial work.

(1) In the labour field: (a) The Party conducted propaganda among the Jute workers, in conjunction with the "Bengal Jute Workers' Association." The President Vice-President and General Secretary of the Association are Party members, and it affiliated to the Party in October 1927. Re-organisation and extension of the work of the Association are now being carried on.

(b) Party members are engaged in re-establishing the "Dakeswari Cotton Mill Workers' Union" at Dacca.

(c) Party members are reorganising according to Trade Union principles the "Bengal Glass Workers' Union."

(d) In January 1928 under the auspices of the Party was formed the "Scavengers' Union of Bengal," begun at Calcutta, with branches already formed at Howrah and Dacca, and one in process of formation at Mymensingh. A successful strike was fought by the Calcutta Scavengers in March.

(e) Party members have established the "Workers' Protection League," which has contested in court many cases under the Indian Workmen's Compensation Act.

(f) In December 1927, Party members rendered assistance in organisation and propaganda in the strike of dock-workers at Calcutta.

(g) Some Party members went to study the situation at Kharagpur during the dispute of October and November 1927, but in the absence of close contact with the men, and with inadequate resources, were unable to take any useful action. In the conflict which developed between the leaders, both sides seemed to be adopting wrong tactics, for improper motives, and the men, in spite of their great fight, achieved only a very partial success.

(h) In the prolonged conflict between the two rival Trade Union Federations, the Party has seen no reason to take up a position on either side. It is, however, in favour of strengthening the association of Bengal Trade Unions, and now that the dispute has apparently ceased, it will urge all unions with which it is connected to affiliate.

(2) In regard to peasants: A new branch of the Party has been formed recently to cover Atia and Tangail, and it is making rapid progress. (In the Tangail sub-division of the Mymensingh District, the Government, in agreement with the zamindars has declared "Protected Forest" an area of 104 square miles, covering 104 villages, and a population of over one lakh. The villagers have been prevented from cutting trees, grazing cattle, fishing, etc., and even from carrying goods or driving carts along roads. The object of the policy is to cause the area to revert to forest, which owing to its timber etc. will be more profitable. Cultivation is already declining, disease increasing, and if the policy is allowed to continue, the area will be depopulated within a short time.)

Nevertheless the Peasants' and other sub-committees of the Party have not worked, while the workers' sub-committee has acted

only in an unorganised manner. As the work of the Party extends, the efficient operation of the Central Office and its departments will become essential, and they should be put a sound footing at once.

During the year the individual membership increased, and is now 125, consisting of peasants and intellectuals in about equal proportions, with a few workers. A branch of the Party is to be established shortly at Dacca. The affiliated membership, including branch membership, is over 10,000. The numbers, social composition, activity and political education of the members are far from satisfactory, but some progress has been made in all these respects.

**Relations with other organisations:**—A few of our members were able to attend as delegates the Delhi and Cawnpore Sessions of the All-India Trade Union Congress (March and November 1927) and in agreement with comrades from Bombay and the Punjab were able to press our point of view with some success. Two of our members are in the Executive Council of the Trade Union Congress.

Three of our members were elected in 1927 to the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, and two to the All India Congress Committee. At the Madras Session of the Congress (December 1927) with comrades from Madras, Bombay, Ajmer-Merwara and the Punjab, we formed a fraction which was able to give effective expression to our views in the subjects committee.

At the Dacca Young Men's Conference in August 1927, one of our members was elected to preside over the Workers' and Peasants' section.

**Publications:**—On 16 December 1925 the "Langal" ( Plough ) was started as a Bengali weekly paper, the organ of the Labour Swaraj Party. Qutbuddin Ahmad provided all the initial expenses and Quazi Nazrul Islam conducted it. Fifteen issues were published, the last on 15th April 1926. It was stopped owing to financial embarrassment. It reappeared under the name "Ganavani" (Voice of the People) the official organ of the Peasants' and Workers' Party, on 12 August, and was edited by Muzaffar Ahmad. Nine numbers appeared, the last on 12 October 1926, when it ceased publication owing to lack of money, and the ill-health of the editor and the manager. Again from 14 April to 27 October 1927, 23 numbers appeared, and publication then ceased for lack of money. The paper was able to run only because of the assistance of many comrades, among whom should be mentioned Dr. Nazesh Chandra Sen, who gave Rs. 170, and Comrade Atul Chandra Gupta, who gave Rs. 50. Qutbuddin Ahmad also suffered much loss on account of the paper.

Both papers, which were intended primarily for the student class, intellectuals, etc., were partly propagandist, partly agitational.

At the beginning we had a circulation of about 5000, but after the Hindu-Muslim riots of 1926, it decreased considerably. Nevertheless we were successful in creating an atmosphere in Bengal favourable to the ideas of the Party.

The Bengali weekly "Jagaran" (Awakening), published from Kustia in the Nadia District, though not a Party organ, is conducted by a Party member, and supports our policy.

(2) In April 1926, on the occasion of the first communal riot, two manifestoes in Bengali, and one in Urdu, were issued, giving a clear account of the origin and consequences of communalism. In December 1927 the Party published in English a manifesto addressed to the Indian National Congress. Copies were circulated at Madras, and in other provinces. It urged the Congress to declare for unconditional Boycott of the Simon Commission, not to be obsessed with the necessity of unity with the hesitating bourgeois parties, but to declare boldly for complete independence, and to call for a National Constituent Assembly, based upon universal suffrage, and to adopt a programme of popular demands to rally the people.

**Parties in other Provinces:**—In 1926 was formed in Bombay a "Congress Labour Group," which in 1927 changed its name to Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bombay. For some months in that year it published "Kranti" (Revolution) a workers' weekly paper in Mahratti. Some members of the Party have from time to time met and corresponded with the Bombay comrades for the purpose of common action and the formulation of common policies. Similarly the Party has been in touch with the Workers' and Peasants' group at Lahore, which published an Urdu weekly "Mihnatkash" (Worker), and the group at Amritsar which publishes "Kirti" (Worker), a Gurumukhi monthly, and has recently started a monthly Urdu "Kirti." It is proposed to form a joint Committee to decide upon the formation of an All-India Workers' and Peasants' Party, and to hold an All-India Conference.

**Policy:**—The policy pursued by the Party has been in the main that laid down at its formation—to work, in alliance so far as possible with other national bodies, for the development of a mass movement for national freedom of the workers and peasants, based upon their economic and general interests. In regard to communalism, we have proposed not to abolish or limit it by agreement, a policy which inevitably fails and does more harm than good, but to undermine it by the creation of a movement based on the genuine interests of the masses. The policy proposed by us in connection with the Commission agitation have been dealt with above. We have tried to draw the Trade Union movement into politics in an anti-imperialist direction. We have approached the Youth by pointing out that the

Party policy is the only one capable of attaining national freedom and democratic institutions, and that the policy of other nationalist parties is calculated to attain no more than minor concessions, and in addition is indifferent to the welfare of the great majority of the nation. Our policy and tactics in connection with the national movement and the Congress require careful determination. On the one hand we have not been sufficiently aggressive. Especially in the absence of our organ, the Party policy has not been brought sufficiently before the public which has been allowed to suppose that on such important questions as the Boycott of the Simon Commission, or the Boycott of British goods, we had no policies at all, or none different from those of the Swaraj Party. On the other hand we must be careful not to oppose the National Congress without sufficient definition of our opinions, or we shall enable our opponents to claim that we are anti-Congress, or even antinational, and that we stand merely for the sectional claims of labour. Recent developments in the policy of the Congress leaders, their action in connection with the Scavengers' strike (recruiting blacklegs) etc., show that there is a tendency to mobilise nationalist sentiment against us a Fascist manner. It is unnecessary to say that this development may become an extremely dangerous one for us and for the movement. We must maintain our alliance with as large a stratum as possible of the middle class, and can ally with any section, whatever its social basis, which fights against imperialism. The basis of our opposition to the Swaraj Party is not that it is bourgeois, but that it is not whole-heartedly for national independence. This must be made clear in our propaganda.

**Our duty** :—Nevertheless our task in the coming year lie mainly in the sphere of organisation. The revival of the nationalist and labour movements will be fruitful only if it is accompanied by the growth of a Party. The increased work required of us will only be possible on the basis of a larger membership and an improved organisation. Our membership must be increased, especially from the working class, study circles must be instituted, and our whole apparatus tightened up. We must pay particular attention to the organisation of groups of our members who are also members of other organisations, Trade Unions and their committees, Peasant Societies and their committees, Congress committees, Youth organisations, etc., so that our policy may be put forward to the members of these bodies in a systematic manner. Finally all Party committees, central or local, branches, groups, fractions etc., must make a point of meeting frequently and regularly and of reporting their activities. Without these things, the Party work, as distinct from the work of the individual members, cannot go on.

**Representative Abroad** :—In April 1927, the general Secretary of the Party, S. N. Tagore was sent to Europe to study the labour

political and movements. He has studied particularly in Germany. In October 1927 an invitation was received from the Federation of Russian Rural Co-operatives to send a representative to take part in the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. As the time was short, and passports are difficult to obtain, Comrade Tagore was asked by us to represent us. He was however, not able to do so.

**Class Struggle Victims:**—Two of our comrades of the Cownpore Bolshevik Conspiracy Case, S. A. Dange of Bombay, and Shaukat Usmani of Bikaner, were released in the period under review. Comrade Muhammad Shafique, of N. W. Frontier Province, after suffering three years' imprisonment for conspiracy, and 18 months' detention in his native village, was also released. Comrade Ramchandra Kapur of Lahore, the first editor of "Mihnatkash," was sentenced to six months imprisonment for sedition and was released in February 1928. Comrades P. Spratt of the Labour Research Department, London, and S. S. Mirajkar, Secretary of the Workers' and Peasants' Party of Bombay, were prosecuted for the publication of a pamphlet "India and China," but were acquitted. Comrade Malik Fazl-i-Ilahi Qurban of Lahore, was sentenced in August 1927 to five years' imprisonment, reduced on appeal to three, for conspiracy, he having been a student of the Eastern University of Moscow. Comrade D. Campbell of the Communist Party of Great Britain was sentenced in March 1927 to 18 months' imprisonment for being in possession of a counterfeit passport, etc. Comrade Muhammad Akbar Khan is still in prison, having been sentenced in 1921 to three years, and in 1922 to seven more years' imprisonment for conspiracy.

**Our Mails:**—The Executive Committee desires to make a public protest against the petty persecution suffered by the Party at the hands of the C. I. D. Our mails, especially foreign mails, are not delivered to us properly. They are always late, and often not delivered at all. A registered cover posted to us in Bombay on 11th February has not been delivered yet. A second registered and insured cover posted later was so long delayed before delivery that it was useless for its original purpose. The Federation of Russian Rural Co-operatives sent us two telegrams in September and October 1927. The first was not delivered, and the second arrived too late to be of use. The General Secretary sent us by M.O. from Germany in December last £40 which he had collected for the publication of a paper for Jute workers. It has not yet been delivered. A similar sum sent to Bombay for a Textile workers' paper has also not been received. All periodicals sent from abroad, whether proscribed or not, are withheld (except the "Press Reports" of the I. F. T. U.) Our protests to the authorities are met with promises of "inquiry",

and a denial of our assertion that the C. I. D. interferes. We have our own ocular evidence to prove that the C. I. D. officers habitually search the mails. In some cases ignorant persons are employed at this work, who indiscriminately carry away all packages addressed to suspects.

**Proscription:**—Similarly we wish to protest against the practice of proscribing books and periodicals. Proscription has now gone so far that it amounts to nothing short of throttling the intellectual life of the country. Many publications of an objective and theoretical kind are banned; a recent case is that of "The Future of Indian Politics", by Comrade M.N. Roy. Even under the present law such proscription could not be defended in the court. A still clearer case is that of the pamphlet "India and China". The Government has refused to remove the ban from it, although the author has been judged not to be guilty of sedition in writing it. The Press and other defenders of the public have been lacking in their duty in not conducting a more persistent propaganda against this and similar tyrannical practices, which constitute a serious obstacle to the progress of the national movement.

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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1927-28

### President:

- (1) Atul Chand Gupta, M. A., B. L.

### Vice-President:

- (2) Naresh Chandra Sen Gupta, M. A., D. L.

### General Secretary:

- (3) Saumyendra Nath Tagore, B. A. (Abroad).
- (4) Muhammad Abdur Razzak Khan (Acting).

### Sectional Secretary (Labour):

- (5) Dharani Kanta Goswami

### Sectional Secretary (Peasant):

Vacant.

### Members:

- (7) Pyari Mohan Das
- (6) Muzaffar Ahmad

- (8) Kalidas Bhattacharya.
- (9) Faizuddin Hosain.
- (10) Quazi Nazrul Islam.
- (11) Abdul Halim.
- (12) Aftab Ali.
- (13) Nirod Kanta Chakraverty.
- (14) Nishi Kanta Patra.
- (15) Gopendra Krishna Chakraverty.
- (16) Ramesh Chandra Das Gupta.
- (17) Sanat Kumar Mukherji.

**The Statement of Accounts.**

RECEIPTS.			EXPENDITURE.		
<i>Subscription—</i>	Rs.	A. P.	<i>Loan—</i>	Rs.	A. P.
March 1927 to Feb. 1928	... 325	6 0	Munshi Pear Muhammad	... 30	0 0
<i>Donation—</i>			Travelling	... 246	3 0
Atul Chandra Gupta	... 161	0 0	Printing	... 228	12 0
Sundries	... 471	3 9	Postage & Telegrams	... 118	7 6
<i>Loan ...</i>			Stationery	... 25	2 9
Satish Chandra Bose	... 44	0 0	General	... 88	4 0
Qutbuddin Ahmad	... 30	0 0	Books purchased	... 37	5 0
S. N. Chakravarti	... 50	0 0	House Rent	... 400	0 0
			Cash in hand	... 7	7 6
Total	Rs. 1,081	9 9	Total	Rs. 1,081	9 9

*The 31st March, 1928.*

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 1928.**

**Chairman.**

1. Atul Chandra Gupta, M.A., B.L.

**Vice Chairman**

2. Naresh Chandra Sen Gupta, M.A., D.L.

**General Secretary**

3. Muzaffar Ahmad.

**Sectional Secretary (Labour).**

4. Dharani Kanta Goswami.

## MEMBERS.

5. Kalidas Bhattacharya
6. Ashutosh Roy
7. Gopendra Chakravarty
8. M. Abdur Razzak Khan
9. Abdul Halim
10. Aftab Ali
11. Nirod Kanta Chakravarti
12. Pyari Mohan Das
13. Sudhindra Nath Chakravarti.

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## APPENDIX

*The demands formulated in the Second Congress of the*  
**"PEASANTS' & WORKERS PARTY OF BENGAL"**  
*held on the 27th February 1927.*

### IMMEDIATE DEMANDS

#### (A) Political Demands.

- I. Universal adult suffrage.
- II. Removal of all racial and cast distinctions
- III. Complete liberty of the press, of speech and the right of associations.
- IV. Removal of all obstacle in the path of the Trade Unions and guaranteeing to them all the rights which would place them on a footing of equality with the Trade Unions of all progressive countries.

#### (B) Economic Demands

- I. Abolition of all indirect taxes as far as practicable and fixing the scale of Income Tax on a progressive scale on incomes of Rs. 200/- or over per month.
- II. Abolition of landlordism and nationalisation of land.
- III. Legislation permitting leasing out of agricultural lands direct to the actual peasants.

- IV. Fixing the minimum scale of the rental for all arable land in proportion to the produce so that in no case should the scale fixed exceed ten per cent. of the actual produce.
- V. Starting of State Co-operating Banks for advancing loan to the cultivators on which the maximum rate of interest should be 7 per cent. per annum. This legal rate of interest should also be binding on those who carry on private banking.
- VI. There should be no transfer of land in case of failure of the peasants to pay their debt.
- VII. Measure for educating the agriculturists on the modern scientific methods of agriculture.
- VIII. Reduction of working hours for Industrial Labour to 8 hours per day and five days and half in the week. The women and child workers should have their working hours still more reduced.
- IX. The establishment of National Minimum wage for the industrial workers by statutory measures. This should be 33 per cent. above what is required to satisfy the essential human needs of the workers.
- X. Legislative measures for the institution of old age pensions sickness and unemployment Insurance Funds in every industry.
- XI. The Workmen's Compensation Act which determines the extent of employers' liabilities should be liberally recast and prompt measures should be taken to give due effect to it.
- XII. To compel the employers by means of legislation to introduce the use of those improved appliances invented for securing the workers against dangers incidental to working in the mines and other industries.
- XIII. Payment of weekly wages.

**(C) Social Demands.**

- I. To drive out illiteracy amongst the masses completely.
- II. Establishment of hospitals and health resorts for the Workers and the peasants and of maternity homes for women workers about to become mothers.
- III. Measures for imparting lessons on sanitation and hygiene to the masses.

- IV. Compel the employers to make proper housing arrangements for the workers and charge rents that may not be beyond their means.
- V. Measures prohibiting the employment of women and child labour on work attended with danger.
- VI. Legislative measures against employment of children below the age of 14.

In view of the fact that the only means for the successful working of this programme is COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE OF INDIA FROM BRITISH IMPERIALISM the "Peasants and Workers' Party" would never hesitate to work in co-operation with all parties who are in agreement with this ideal and ready to work for its realisation.

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