

The Agrarian Problem in India*

III. The Struggle of the Indian Farm Labourers and Peasants

The Indian villages have their own experience of struggle and their own experience of failures and defeats. In the previous century they rose in rebellion more than once against the foreign invaders, destroying the moneylenders and sometimes seizing the land of the landlords. These movements compelled invaders to use more cunning, deceit, and plunder. The leaders of these movements, consisting of nobility and rich people, frequently helped the oppressors after the defeat to strengthen their power, and the villages were left without any gains. During the last quarter of a century there has not been a single national people's movement which has not excited the peasant masses. In the days of Tilak, the villages saw many bold young people who foretold the end of the British raj. But after this movement there was a rapid decline. Even the best of the sons of the Zemindars and other rent receivers could not and did not want to rally the masses of toilers for a real struggle to liberate the country from the yoke of imperialism and the chains of the landlords and moneylenders.

Then came the World War. It took hundreds of thousands of people and hundreds of millions of rupees from India for the battlefields of British capitalism. It became impossibly expensive for the poor in India to live. But the town capitalists got rich out of war contracts, began to build factories and establish banks and commercial offices. The soldiers who returned from the war, the workers who were crowded in the towns, the peasants who had been excited by war and poverty, demanded national independence and liberty, freedom from servitude and slavish dependence. However, it turned out that the whole business was led not by them but by smart lawyers, capitalists who had got rich after the war, "good" landlords who did not forget to rob the tenants, and Gandhi with the National Congress of the educated and rich. They promised to free India from national slavery with the help of satyagraha, but after the shame of Armitisar they led the country to the victory of the General Dyers and their Ministers in London. They preached charka in order to turn the eyes of the villages away from the land of the imperialists and landlords. When this failed and the peasants began to plunder the landlords, the National Congress made a decision in 1922 to stop civil disobedience because the peasants were threatening the property of the landlords. The struggle of the Sikh and Moplah peasants and the tribes on the North-West Frontier brought forward thousands of bold fighters, but the leaders of the Congress disorganised the movement. In order to save the landlords and the moneylenders they sold the cause of national liberty, and the peasant masses were deceived and defeated.

A new upsurge of the mass struggle began under the influence of the courageous struggle of the Bombay textile workers in 1928-29. India once more got into motion and again the National Congress enticed the masses from the path of struggle by a will-o'-the-wisp. One day they announced that the chief aim of the struggle was to abolish the salt tax, another day it was civil disobedience, and a third day it was negotiations in London, or the abolition of restriction for the untouchables.

They fawn, bargain, sell and betray the country to the British invaders. Only in isolated cases, when they have not the power to hold back the mass onslaught, the Congress organises peasant actions so as to lead them later into an impasse. But the struggles of the workers, the strikes in Bombay, the insurrections in Sholapur, organised by the workers, the struggles of the workers' leaders, the Meerut prisoners in the court and in the jail, show that in the towns, along with the capitalists who deceive the peasants, is rising another revolutionary force—the proletariat. In 1930 above all, in the districts which produce grain and jute for export, the indignation of the peasants grew against the moneylenders, zemindars, landlords, talukdars and tax collectors, against the seizure of the forests, and national slavery. The rising in Kisheroganj seemed to give a signal for general peasant discontent. The revolutionary wave in 1930-31 and 1932 swept over Bombay, Bengal, Behar, Berar, the North-West Frontier, the Central and United Provinces, Madras, Punjab, Alwar, Kashmir, Burma, etc. In a number of cases (e.g., in Buldan, in Behar, and in some parts of

Bengal and the United Provinces), the agricultural proletariat was the initiator and organiser of the peasants' struggle against the moneylenders, landlords and tax collectors. The peasants demanded above all to stop the seizure of the peasant harvests, peasant property and land, to stop the collection of arrears of taxes, rent, and interest on moneylenders' debts. By direct action they seized the harvests on the fields of the moneylenders and landlords (Berar, United Provinces), drove out the tax collectors and the British oppressors and drove their cattle into the forests and pastures which had been taken from them. In many places they formed people's courts to deal with the landlords, moneylenders and British invaders. More and more frequently, compared with the past, they began to seize the land of the landlords, the property and implements of the landlords and moneylenders. In a number of places the peasants took up arms and courageously revolted (the insurrection in Talampur in 1930, in the United Provinces in 1931). The struggle of the farm labourers and peasants of India in 1930-31-32 showed that the overwhelming majority of the Indian villages are thirsting for a complete revolutionary annihilation and reconstruction of the entire land system. They are striving towards this, they are seeking the path towards this aim. This is the **guarantee of the coming victory** of the toiling majority of the Indian villages. The lack of success of the movements in recent years was not caused by the peasants going too far in their demands. It was the very reverse. It was caused by the fact that they did not see far enough, that they did not yet completely realise who were their friends and who were their enemies, and had not yet become steeled in the struggle. Lack of success was caused by the scatteredness of the peasant movements, by the fact that in the various districts of the country the peasant actions are distinguished by various degrees of consciousness and organisation. It was caused by the fact that the struggling peasant masses had not firm proletarian leadership.

Over 300,000,000 of the inhabitants of the Indian villages are scattered in 500,000 villages, and many as a rule know little of railroads, post, telegraph, factories, newspapers and the organised political struggles of the masses. They are scattered, downtrodden, tied up with ancient prejudices of caste, tribes, etc. However, necessity teaches how to carry on struggle. Necessity compels the toiling majority of the Indian villages to open their eyes and unbend their backs so that they will not be utterly crushed by poverty and slavery.

British imperialism is the strongest, most merciless and dangerous enemy of the toilers of India. It knows this, and sets its hopes on the Rajahs, the richest and strongest landlords and moneylenders who have grown fat on the plunder of peasant goods and peasant land. It gives them a share of the "power," converting them into its trusted officials. It helps them to take the land from the peasant masses, clearing the land for British plantations, for big estates worked half by labourers and half by serf tenant labour. To this selected upper circle of agents it tries to join part of the most shameless kulak land grabbers, making it possible for them to grow rich at the expense of the backward villagers. In order to weaken the sharp outbursts of peasant discontent, here and there, it makes insignificant reductions in tax arrears and peasant debts. But its basic line consists of military billets which ruin whole provinces, courts to deal with non-payers of taxes, the confiscation of the land from the poor and middle peasants with the aim of making Indian raw material still cheaper, with the aim of receiving still higher profits. The policy of imperialism is simultaneously the policy of its agents—the landlords, moneylenders and commercial agents.

Imperialism and the landlord and moneylender strata are seeking a way out of the crisis by a still more unbearable enslavement of the villages, and the complete suppression of the revolutionary move in the country forms the basis of all their calculations for oppression.

Imperialism and its herd of landlords and moneylenders protects itself from a peasant revolution by still further taking the land from the peasants and increasing the power of the strongest

landlords. Violence, terror, the power of the bayonet and the stick is the strongest but not the only weapon of the imperialists against the revolt of the peasant masses. Taking advantage of the ignorance of the toiling masses (which is caused by the rule of imperialism itself), the British exploiters try to divert the growing indignation and rage of the peasants from their real enemies to imaginary ones, try to inflame the hatred of religion, caste and tribe, to introduce discord into the ranks of the struggling masses. When the toiling Mussulman peasants rise against the landlord and the moneylender, the agents of imperialism try to present things as if the evil is not that the landlord and moneylender are plundering and despoiling the peasants, but all that is evil is that the landlord and the moneylender have not the same religion as those whom they plunder. From time to time in those districts of India where landlord oppression and peasant ruin are strongest, imperialism makes so-called rent laws, makes various categories of tenants with various rights. Does the situation of the peasants improve from this? No, it does not. The peasants, both poor and middle, who according to the letter of the law become "protected tenants," nevertheless remain under the heavy oppression of the landlords. The landlords can always bribe officials, get round the law or turn it to their own use. And who gets the benefit from the "protected tenants' rights? It is the officials, merchants, kulaks or moneylenders who buy them and again reduce yesterday's "protected tenant" to a position without rights. The position of the toiling peasants has become worse. Besides the old landlord, a new parasite bears down on him in the form of the moneylender or merchant who has become a "protected tenant." Imperialism received definite benefits from the "rent laws"—by splitting the ranks of the peasants into various divisions with various rights, splitting the solidarity of the villages.

The rights of the Indian bourgeoisie, both Hindu and Mussulman, are restricted by the domination of the British invaders. The imperialists do not allow them to touch the main levers of economy. The share of the Indian capitalists in foreign trade is only 15 per cent. The Indian accumulations in the banks produce British super-profits. The internal market is full of imported manufactured goods, and there is no scope for Indian industry. It is difficult for them to be satisfied with this. It compels them to wish for liberation from British rule. But at the same time the Indian bourgeoisie, Hindu and Mussulman, and some of the landlords who are nearest to them and who pretend to love the people, are afraid of a national revolution. Indian capital has invested hundreds of millions of rupees in land and obtains millions in income from rent servitude. Indian lawyers grow fat, like spiders, from never-ending law cases concerning land, while the Indian manufacturers take advantage of the helpless situation of the workers and peasants in order to buy labour power and peasant raw material for low prices. The national revolution will begin with the overthrow of the imperialists and the punishment of the landlords, and then it can advance further to the struggle against wage slavery and take the path of the Russian Bolsheviks. Therefore, the Indian bourgeoisie and the landlords who are nearest to them prefer a bargain with British imperialism to a national revolution. If it were possible to get rid of the British yoke without a national revolution, the Indian capitalists, with their landlord friends, would probably after coming into power undertake to make an alliance between the Indian landlords and the Indian kulaks, without the leading participation of the British imperialists, with the aim of taking the land from the peasant masses and turning them into an army of farm labourers with a small plot of land. But so far there has been no chance for this, and therefore the programme of bourgeois reforms on the land question is in reality an attempt to save landlord ownership under the wing of British imperialism. The treachery at Bardoli in 1922 showed with a sharp plainness that the Indian bourgeoisie who stand behind the back of the National Congress are always ready to sacrifice national freedom and independence to save the landlords and moneylenders. On August 31, 1928, the Conference of bourgeois and landlord parties of India, including the National Congress, adopted a project for the future constitution of India. In order to "calm the fears of the Zemindar landlords" (as was emphasised by Pandit Malavia) it was specially provided that all titles of private and personal land and property is hereby guaranteed to its owners, when the power passes to the future self-governing Indian government. In 1931, in order to conceal the bargain which was being prepared between Gandhi and Lord Irwin, the Congress adopted a loud-sounding resolution on "justice

for the toilers." Even in this resolution it only promised the peasants a considerable reduction of the land tax and the rent paid by the peasants from uneconomic holdings.

Since 1919 the National Congress has tried to bargain with the British imperialists for concessions for the Indian capitalists and landlords. For this purpose it has taken advantage of the discontent and indignation of the masses, to make the enslavers of India more favourable as to these concessions. At the same time, it has tried in every way to confuse the Independence movement. It has weakened and paralysed the movement. It advised the masses of the people non-resistance to violence, in order to distract the masses from the revolutionary struggle. It sent its lawyers, leaders, "good" landlords, and capitalists into the villages in order to prevent the peasants revolting against landlord-moneylender slavery. It always advocated national unity for the liberation of the country, and every time it turned this unity to the benefit of the British rulers, the Indian landlords and moneylenders. It found a certain support in the villages among some of the kulaks who were also fearing for their incomes from usury and the renting out of land.

All this teaching was and is counter-revolutionary, because the Congress strongly supported the very basis of the land servitude of the peasants and declaimed against revolution. First, in one place, then in another, the Congress-ites seized on one demand or another, first for the reduction of the land tax, then the demand for the election of the panchayats, but every time their aim was to weaken and undermine the movement. They tried to unite the peasants and landlords on the demand for the reduction of the land tax, so that they could depict the landlord as a benefactor and secure their own profits. They tried to put obstacles everywhere in the path of the peasant movement, so as to prevent it from joining into one all-Indian stream. They energetically collected the land tax for the British treasury in a number of provinces in 1931 and faithfully served imperialism. They advised the peasants to resist "standing on their knees" and they themselves connived at their suppression, hypocritically turning their eyes away. The leaders of the Congress invited British punitive troops against the peasants in every place where the peasants conflicted with the landlords. However, the Congress never lost sight of the steady growth of the resistance of the labourers, the village poor and the toiling peasants to their enslavers and exploiters. From their ranks came people like young Nehru, Subhash Bose, etc., who claimed that they were not with the bourgeoisie but with the toilers, that they wanted a system without exploitation. These double-tongued servants of the bourgeoisie submit to it when it gives them orders and are revolutionaries and socialists in words when it is necessary to use more cunning deceit. They have greatly assisted in the defeat of the peasant movements. The young Nehru helped Gandhi to bring the Red Shirts to heel. At the instructions of the Congress he went to quiet down the peasants in the United Provinces. When he was accused of calling for the seizure of the land of the landlords and the struggle for a workers' and peasants' republic he denied it. He only said that "The swaraj we are seeking must be the power of the panchayats."

In the panchayats the master is not the poor peasant but people of high caste, land grabbers, kulaks. The camp of imperialism, the rajahs, landlords and moneylenders, is the camp of the open and deadly enemies of revolution. The camp of the bourgeoisie and the landlords nearest to them is the camp of the money bag which sells national freedom to save its own exploiting rights.

The question of the reconstruction of the entire land system of India is firstly a question of the national liberation of India from the yoke of British imperialism. Secondly, it is a question of forcible revolution: only by overthrowing the power and breaking the strength of those who have seized the land, water, forests, mines and all the wealth of the country, is it possible to deal with them according to the will of the majority of the nation, the toilers and the exploited. Thirdly, it is a question which cannot be solved by any conspiracy of a handful of bold people against the invaders. Its solution is the national revolution. Fourthly, it cannot be solved in such a way as to benefit all classes together, both the landlords and the peasants, the bourgeoisie and the workers, the kulaks and the farm labourers and poor peasants. It is a question of the struggle of classes. Fifthly, it is a question of the alliance of the working class and the peasants, because only these two forces are capable of marching to the end for the freedom of India from the imperialist yoke and from the oppression

of the landlords and moneylenders. Sixthly, it is a question of the organised, definite, self-sacrificing and leading participation of the proletariat in the struggle for the cause of the peasants.

The class of hired workers cannot have any other basis and vital aim than the struggle for the abolition of classes, for the destruction of all exploitation of man by man. It is not bound by any property and under no circumstances is it interested in the exploitation of anybody. It stands at the levers of machines creating miracles and able to give labour, peace, freedom and bread to all toiling and exploited mankind. Day after day it is compelled to carry on a struggle against capital, which appropriates its labour power. Life teaches it that only the dictatorship of the proletariat and social ownership of the chief means of production can open the path to classless socialist society, where every possibility for the exploitation of man by man will be rooted out, finally and irretrievably. Before the eyes of the proletariat is the great example of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. The October Revolution in 1917, which was carried out by the workers in alliance with the poor peasants, took all the land from the landlords and gave it to the peasants. It took the factories, railways, banks and other wealth from the bourgeoisie and put an end to the rule of capital. It established the power of the Soviets, which are elected only by the toilers. The Soviet Power is the power of the working class, which does not want any rights of exploitation for itself, but seeks only one thing—the complete liberation of labour from all exploitation. On this basis, while educating and drawing the whole mass of toilers into the government administration, it leads the general alliance of all who were previously oppressed and exploited against capital. The October Revolution set free the tsarist colonies and created national Soviet Republics in which all the previously oppressed nations had the full possibility to build up their national governments, to develop their national culture, and make a radical improvement in their situation. The backward and downtrodden agricultural country was converted by the Soviet Power, led by the Communist Party of Lenin, into a country of the foremost Socialist industry and advanced Socialist agriculture. The peasants received from the workers tractors and fraternal labour support, and saw in practice the advantages of collective social labour, and in place of scattered individual farms they began to build up collective farms. The poor peasants and farm labourers who never hoped to have a cow of their own are rapidly advancing to a well-to-do life, obtaining cows and other animals to improve the food supply of their families who work on the socialised fields. The kulaks who oppressed the poor and small peasants have been finally eliminated. The Soviet Union has not only formed its invincible Red Army and defeated the attacks of the imperialist Powers. It is overtaking the richest countries of capitalism. In these capitalist countries there are tens of millions of unemployed, but in the U.S.S.R. unemployment has been abolished. In those countries the peasants are impoverished and ruined, but in the U.S.S.R. the peasants in the collective farms are confidently building up a well-to-do life. In those countries there is the dungeon for the workers, but in the U.S.S.R. there is the government of the people who work. In those countries there is the jail and oppression of weak and downtrodden nations, but in the U.S.S.R., the Uzbeks, Tajiks, Azerbaidjans, Georgians, Armenians, Ukrainians and others are masters of their own Soviet Republics.

On this side of the Himalayas there is the domination of the British jackboot. On the other side of the Himalayas there is the Power of free labour.

The foremost proletarians and poor peasants will learn from this example. They know that this cannot be achieved at one blow. The liberation of India from the yoke of British imperialism, the seizure of all the land of the imperialists, rajahs, landlords and moneylenders and its division among the peasants, the seizure of all industrial undertakings, railroads, banks and other property of the imperialists and their transfer to national property, and the Power of the Soviets elected by the workers, peasants and the toilers of the towns, this is the first decisive step. By their firm and undeviating struggle for this, the workers of India must rally around themselves the toiling peasant masses. By their struggle and bold help to the organisation of the farm labourers and poor peasants, they must plainly show to the peasants that in addition to the path of slavery and bourgeois deceit covered by empty talk about the freedom of India, there is an independent path for the workers and peasants, the path of

revolution against imperialism, landlord oppression and moneylenders.

The Communist Party of India is the Party of the workers who stretch out their hands to the peasants for a joint struggle.

It calls on the peasants to learn the necessary lessons from the struggle of the Chinese workers and peasants. In China there are Soviet districts which unite tens of millions of people. There the land of the landlords and the moneylenders had been confiscated for the benefit of the peasants. There all the old taxes, moneylenders' debts and contracts of servitude have been annulled. There the Soviets rule. There the workers and peasants have their own Red Army. For four years the British, American, Japanese, French and other imperialists, together with the Chinese capitalists and landlords, have been trying to crush the Soviets. But they cannot succeed because the support of the people is growing and strengthening for the Soviets, which are liberating the country from imperialist slavery and serfdom to the landlords and moneylenders. The Chinese Soviets show that the enslaved East has found its path to freedom, that the alliance of the workers and peasants is an unconquerable force.

In India the working class is only beginning to rally and organise itself, to forge out its fighting forces. The Indian bourgeoisie try in every way to disorganise its ranks. But the cause of the workers cannot be killed either by British oppression or by the trickery and deceit of the Indian bourgeoisie. This cause is going ahead and will conquer, because the British imperialists and the Indian capitalists are compelled to gather the workers in factories, railroads and docks. They cannot prevent the workers making common cause among themselves, and cannot prevent new fighters coming forward.

The alliance of workers and peasants is the guarantee of the success of the revolution in India. But to carry it out there must be stubborn work and organisation. If a person calls himself a Communist but does not stand in the first ranks of the masses, nobly struggling against imperialism, he is worthless. If he is for the workers and peasants in words, but does not teach the masses in practice to struggle for their vital demands, he is worthless. If he speaks of the alliance of the workers and peasants, but in practice cannot distinguish the village rich from the farm labourers, and does not wish to work to rally together the village poor, he is worthless. India is taking its first steps on the field of the class struggle.

The imperialist yoke and serfdom to the landlords and moneylenders can be destroyed only by a real revolution and the establishment of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasants in the form of the power of the Soviets. The leading role of the working class, the farm labourers and the poor peasants in the Soviets will be a condition for the really complete and undoubted victory of the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution, because only on this condition is it possible mercilessly to crush all the plots of counter-revolution and paralyse the attempts of the bourgeoisie to behead and betray the revolutionary struggle of the masses. At the same time, this leading role of the proletarians and the poor peasants will be the guarantee for the further deepening and widening of the revolution and the transition to the direct struggle against capital, without which no victory can be stable and guaranteed. The town bourgeoisie and the kulaks will inevitably struggle to turn the revolution to their own benefit, with the aim of widening and consolidating a system of hired slavery and the seizure of the government power by the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the working class, supported by the poor of the towns and villages, will strive to consolidate and strengthen the Soviet system, to reorganise the confiscated enterprises of the imperialists on Socialist lines, to rally the agricultural proletariat in support of the poor against the kulaks, really to consolidate the right of the toilers to the land which they cultivate directly with their own labour. Foreseeing the inevitability of these battles, the bourgeoisie try in every way to bring the petty-bourgeois sections under their influence, concealing and slurring over their own efforts to attain complete class domination. The upper ranks of the petty-bourgeoisie who live from the exploitation of the labour of others, as represented by the well-to-do strata of the bourgeois intelligentsia, merchants, handicraftsmen, and kulaks, also display a selfish interest in not making any distinction between the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution and the destruction of the system of wage slavery. The power of national suppression and the oppression of feudal relics helps to spread among the masses the idea that the overthrow of imperialism and

the landlords makes it unnecessary and superfluous to struggle against the Indian capitalist exploiters. Here is to be found a tremendous danger for the cause of the revolution and the alliance of the workers and peasants. The struggle against the class deception of the bourgeoisie and against the petty-bourgeois pretence that bourgeois-democratic demands are Socialist demands is absolutely necessary for the victory of the Soviet revolution and the consolidation of the Soviet system in India.

In the course of the differentiation of classes in the country in recent years, there have arisen various groups and even parties connected with the peasants. An example of a revolutionary peasant organisation is the Punjab Workers' and Peasants' Party. This Party, which is being drawn more and more into the orbit of proletarian influence, expresses in its chief slogans the revolutionary desires of the peasants to put an end to the servitude to the imperialists and the feudalists. It represents its democratic demands as Socialist demands, not realising that the carrying out of the democratic changes is not Socialism in itself, but only clears the path and creates the conditions for a further successful struggle to destroy the capitalist system and create Socialist society.

The Workers' and Peasants' Party does not yet understand that not only the struggle for Socialism, but also the struggle against imperialist domination and serfdom to the landlords and moneylenders can be successfully organised and carried to its conclusion only in alliance and under the leadership of the proletariat headed by the Communist Party. The experience of all peasant movements, including the movement in the Punjab, shows that although the peasants are at present a revolutionary force, nevertheless they cannot play an independent leading role.

All peasant actions which have taken place have had a spontaneous local character and have therefore been defeated, or else they have been led by the rich elements of the villages (which found expression in a number of the partial demands formulated by the Punjab Workers' and Peasants' Party) and dragged at the tail of the bourgeoisie. The peasants are incapable of playing an independent leading role. They either march under the leadership of the bourgeoisie and are defeated, as has been the case hitherto in India, or enter into alliance with the proletariat and follow the lead of the Communist Party, and in spite of possible temporary defeats they take the revolutionary path, overthrow the power of the imperialists, landlords and moneylenders, and establish the power of the workers and peasants, as in Soviet Russia. The whole experience of workers' and peasants' parties teaches that unless there is clarity on this fundamental question, no revolutionary peasant organisation which is really trying to secure the liberation of the toiling masses from the yoke of the imperialists and other exploiters will be capable of successfully helping the cause of the Indian revolution.

The partial demands of the Punjab Workers' and Peasants' Party mainly express the interests of the well-to-do peasants. With the development of the revolutionary consciousness of the peasant masses the growing discontent with the reformist policy of the Congress, all the most downtrodden sections of the villages are beginning to take part in the movement of the Workers' and Peasants' Parties, and this is expressed to some extent in the work of these parties.

The Communist Parties are not only struggling for the destruction of the power of imperialism and oppression of the landlords, but simultaneously for the destruction of wage slavery. The first duty of the advanced worker-Communists is to help the struggle and organisation of the agricultural workers, to form trade unions of farm labourers, which will struggle every day for the vital interests of the agricultural workers against the planters, landlords, capitalists and kulaks. The formation of peasant committees for carrying through the non-payment of taxes, rent and debts to moneylenders, or for the struggle for the use of forests and pastures, or for the abolition of exactions, etc., is the best form of uniting forces and must be based on the active participation of the farm labourers and poor peasants in them. We cannot let pass a single case of violence by the landlords, tax collectors or moneylenders without offering resistance in one form or other (leaflets, meetings, demonstrations, etc.). In the struggle of the poor and toiling middle peasants, they must learn to unite, to be firm and ably to defend their interests.

In India there are many organisations calling themselves peasant organisations but in reality following the lead of rich, pettifogging lawyers, the Zemindar landlords. The Indian bourgeoisie, led by the National Congress, creeps into all the peasant

organisations, holds peasant conferences and land leagues with a definite aim. It is afraid that the toilers and exploited of the villages will take the struggle for their interests into their own hands, and then it is good-bye to peace between the Zemindars and the peasants, and it will be impossible to deceive the peasants by little campaigns and concessions.

Communists do not lead the peasants by the nose, but teach them how to carry on the struggle. The city workers know the cunning and treacherous tricks of the capitalists better than the village farm labourers and poor peasants and can understand them better. The working class and its vanguard also know that only the organised efforts of the toiling masses and not isolated shots at English invaders and their servants can overthrow the power of the British bayonets and capital in India and put an end to servitude to the landlords and moneylenders. This is taught by the experience of all revolutions. It is not isolated heroes who liberate the masses of the people. They are liberated by their own struggle in every factory, in every village, in the street, in the fields, everywhere it is necessary to put an end to violence by the force of their own organisations and consciousness.

The Platform of Action puts forward the following programme of peasant demands:—

(1) The Communist Party of India stands for the confiscation without compensation of all the lands and estates, forests and pastures of the native princes, landlords, moneylenders and the British government and their transfer to the use of the toiling masses of the peasants through peasant committees. The Communist Party of India stands for the complete destruction of mediæval land ownership, for a destruction which would cleanse the whole of the land from all mediæval rubbish.

(2) The C.P. of India struggles for the immediate nationalisation of all plantations and for putting them at the disposal of revolutionary committees elected by the plantation workers to be used in the interests of the entire Indian people.

(3) The C.P. of India struggles for the immediate nationalisation of the entire irrigation system, the complete annulment of all debts and taxes and the handing over of the direction and control over its work to revolutionary peasant committees elected by the toiling peasant.

(4) The C.P. of India calls on the peasants and the village proletariat to carry out all kinds of political demonstrations, to make collective refusals to pay exactions and taxes or to carry out the decisions and regulations of the government and its agents.

(5) The C.P. of India calls for a refusal to pay rent, the cost of irrigation, contributions, and to refuse to carry out any work whatever (begar) for the landlords, native princes and their agents.

(6) The C.P. of India calls for a refusal to pay debts and obligations to the government, landlords and moneylenders in any form whatever for the landlords, native princes and their agents.

(7) As a practical slogan of agitation among the peasants and as a means of giving the greatest consciousness to the peasant movement the C.P. of India calls for the immediate organisation of the revolutionary peasant committees with the aim of carrying on a struggle to carry out all the revolutionary democratic changes in the interests of freeing the peasants from the oppression of Anglo-Indian imperialism and its feudal allies.

(8) The C.P. of India calls for the independent organisation of the village proletariat, especially the plantation workers, for fusing it with the proletariat of the towns under the banner of the Communist Party and for electing representatives of it to the peasant committees.

The C.P. of India is firmly convinced that the complete, consistent and firm carrying out of the above-mentioned political and social demands can only be achieved by overthrowing British rule and forming an Indian Federated Workers' and Peasants' Soviet Government.

With the aim of developing the mass movement and the masses of farm labourers and peasants into the revolutionary struggle, on the basis of defending their immediate and most vital needs, it is advisable to develop partial actions, using such partial demands as:—

(1) Refusal to pay local taxes for the support of the police and the village administration, forming 7-15 per cent. of the land tax.

(2) Refusal to pay the exactions collected by the Zemindars, landlords, taxildars and village elders.

(3) Refusal to carry out any forced labour for landlords, Zemindars and village administration; refusal to fulfil a begar in any form whatever.

(4) Refusal to make any forced gifts to the landlords, moneylenders, police, etc.

(5) Refusal to carry out transport obligations for the tax collectors, administration and landlords.

(6) The demand for the abolition of unpaid road-making obligations, which are especially burdensome in the native states, and refusal to carry them out.

(7) The immediate stoppage of the seizure of the peasant harvests, property and land for the non-payment of taxes, rent and moneylenders' debts. The organisation of detachments of farm labourers and peasants to defend the peasant harvest, property and land.

(8) The demand to withdraw the troops and police who are sent to be billeted in the villages and the abolition of all punitive fines.

(9) The boycott of landlords, moneylenders and kulaks who seize peasant land.

(10) The demand for the supply of food and clothing to starving peasants and unemployed farm labourers at the expense of the landlords and moneylenders through elected committees of peasants and farm labourers. The organisation of public works for the starving and the guarantee of the minimum cost of living, under the control of an elected committee.

(11) The demand for the abolition of debt slavery.

(12) The demand for the immediate revising of all rent contracts with the aim of lowering rent.

(13) The demand for the removal of hereditary patels and village elders appointed from above.

(14) Panchayats consisting of the "best" families and rich people and which frequently settle conflicts between peasants and distribute some lands, must be reorganised into freely-elected peasant organs with the participation of farm labourers and household servants.

(15) Immediate release of the arrested peasants and farm labourers.

(16) The boycott of English courts and the settling of all land cases and disputes by elected peasant committees.

(17) The abolition of all forms of personal, rank and caste inequality in the sense of disposing of personality, property, freedom of travel, signing contracts. A boycott of people who use this inequality for their slavish interests. The free use of all public places and institutions independent of caste, religion and sex.

(18) The abolition of all restrictions and prohibitions as to the use of forests by the peasants, and the collective use of forests by direct action.

(19) The demand for the return of public pastures which have been seized, and the pasturing of cattle on these lands by direct action.

(20) The demands for the return of water sources which have been taken from the peasants and their use by direct action.

(21) The abolition of the existing false weights and measures in the bazaars and a struggle against secret compacts among buyers. The abolition of bazaar fines and payments. Besides these there might be other demands too.

In the interests of the agricultural workers, the Communists should put forward such demands as:—

(1) The abolition of debt servitude and all kinds of personal slavery and all kinds of contract labour. The abolition of the forced recruiting system. Free employment through labour exchanges organised by the trade unions.

(2) The compulsory signing of labour agreements and compulsory payment of wages in money. The establishment of payment by a definite wage scale, the employers to give the worker travelling expenses and two weeks' wages if he breaks the agreement and goes away; obligatory official registration of these agreements.

(3) Wages not lower than the cost of living.

(4) The limitation of the working day and the abolition of all supplementary work for the employer by the labourer and his family. The payment of overtime work.

(5) The eight-hour day, which may be extended to ten hours at seeding-time and harvest-time with extra pay.

(6) Good housing conditions; the abolition of the debts of the workers to the moneylenders.

(7) Recognition of the trade unions.

The struggle for the freedom of all the workers' and peasants' organisations must be the basic slogan of all the work in the villages. The toilers of the village must be taught the stubborn struggle for their rights and interests.