

Comrade Amter (America):

The agrarian problem in America is one of most important the communists have to face, which the following facts will indicate: in 1910, 33% of those gainfully employed were agricultural workers. In 1920 this number did not increase in proportion

to the increase of population, but actually decreased to 26% of those gainfully employed. The output of the farmers has increased in 20 years by 37% but the number engaged in farming by only 5%. This indicates that there has been an increase in efficiency in farming methods, but not that the American farmer is in a better position than before. The contrary is true. Since 1880 the number of tenant farmers increased from 25% to 38% of the total number of farmers. The American farmer pays 16% of his income in taxes. He must pay interest on his mortgages. He must pay high transportation costs to carry his produce to the market, sometimes amounting to 34% of the value of the produce. He must pay the elevator companies 10% for storing his grain. The farmer gets about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the average income of the industrial worker.

In America the farmers do not constitute a distinct class. Farms are changing hands continually, and many farms are occupied by men who only recently took to farming. Country banks are failing because the farmers find it impossible to pay their mortgages, which increased from 4 billion dollars in 1920 to a total of 7 billion, 800 millions in 1924. The banks or the state are not even attempting to collect interest or taxes. There are 2 million agricultural workers in America who are unorganised except for 11,000 in the Industrial Workers of the World (I. W. W.). The poor farmers are a political factor. They are one of the most oppressed and exploited classes in America and are in rebellion. Their movement is vague and clouded, but they want political power.

The workers have some interests in common with the exploited farmers and the Communist Party must be given the credit for having exploited the discontent of the farmer to the full. The Farmer Labour Parties that have been formed show clearly the co-operation of the workers and exploited farmers.

In some sections the farmers have gone so far as to call themselves peasants instead of farmers.

The Ku Klux Klan is also trying to take advantage of the discontent of the farmers, and the farmers of the Middle West are a hotbed for the Ku Klux Klan. The communists must beware of this situation and lead the farmers in the right direction.