

MARX ON THE AGRARIAN QUESTION IN INDIA

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AT ONCE A HUMANIST and an internationalist Karl Marx set before himself the ideal of the liberation of mankind. But a realist that he was, he did not consider the people of the world as one undifferentiated mass. He grouped the countries of the world into two categories—the oppressing countries and the oppressed countries or, alternatively, the metropolitan countries and the colonies. For the oppressing countries (where capitalism had become dominant and where the *bourgeoisie* were at the helm of power) he advocated the proletarian revolution. For the colonies he pleaded for the struggle for national liberation from foreign domination.

In fact, Marx was the first social scientist who discovered clearly the organic connection between capitalism and colonialism, the connection between colonialism and national oppression, and finally the connection between the proletarian revolution in metropolitan countries and the national liberation movement in the colonies.

Why was Marx interested in the study of the agrarian problem?

Marx put special emphasis on the national (anti-colonial) aspect of the liberation movement in the colonies. Since those countries were brought under the yoke of foreign colonial domination, the movement in those countries assumed the form of national resistance.

It is interesting to note that many of Marx's articles were written in the eighteen-fifties when powerful anti-colonial movements developed in Asia. He studied weekly, monthly, periodically the events in India which culminated in the national revolt of 1857. Marx and Engels made the developments in China, particularly the Taiping Rebellion, the powerful 'national war'¹ against foreign invasion, the subject of their special study. Similarly, Engels wrote feelingly about the gallant, though ineffective, resistance by the Persians against the British intruders. The attention of Marx and Engels was also

¹ ENGELS, 'Persia and China', *Marx and Engels On Colonialism* (Moscow), pp. 114-15.