

Indian Monthly "Liberation" Sums Up Experiences of Armed Peasant Struggle In Mushahari

Party members and guerrillas must be armed with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. It is essential to rely completely on the people. The special characteristics of smaller guerrilla units should be utilized in fighting. The art of fighting must be mastered under conditions of "encirclement and suppression" operations launched by the enemy. Middle peasants must be united.

THE Indian monthly *Liberation* carried an article entitled "Mushahari and Its Lessons" in its issue of October, 1969. It hailed the peasant struggle in Bihar for having entered its new phase of guerrilla struggle and summed up the experiences of the revolutionary peasant armed struggle in the Mushahari region of Muzaffarpur District.

The article said: "With the announcement of the formation of the revolutionary Party of the proletariat, i.e., the C.P.L (M-L), the revolutionary peasant struggle in Bihar enters its second phase, the phase of armed guerrilla struggle. The Party members, the guerrillas and the revolutionary peasants fighting under the leadership of the Party — all were immensely enthused and hailed the formation of the Party with a series of powerful and successful assaults on the class enemy."

In last August and September, it continued, the peasant guerrillas launched four attacks on the enemy in the District of Muzaffarpur with the Mushahari region as its centre, in which, 6 class enemies were killed, 16 injured, property worth Rs. 20,000 confiscated, documents of land and hand-notes worth lakhs of rupees destroyed. They also frequently attacked the notorious landlords under the conditions of "encirclement and suppression" operations released by the reactionary police, thus greatly boosting the morale of the guerrillas and the peasants, and badly frightening the enemy.

Recalling the first phase of peasant struggle in Mushahari, the article said, the first mass upsurge that overtook the Mushahari region had as its background continuous and all-round struggles between the landlords and the peasantry in about 12 villages with a

population of about 10,000 people. After the heroic struggle of the Naxalbari peasantry, a new consciousness dawned upon them, the consciousness of fighting for the political power. The poor peasant youths began studying Mao Tsetung Thought and very soon grasped the essence of the agrarian revolution. In April of 1968, under the leadership of the Party, peasants in Ganga-pur forcibly, i.e. with arms in hands, harvested the standing crops from the landlords' land in broad daylight and drove out landlords and their goondas, which tremendously enthused the peasantry of the whole Mushahari region.

The article went on: Soon, the peasants fought a 5-hour-long battle with the armed forces of the most notorious landlord of the area, Bijli Singh, who had to retreat with serious injuries to dozens of his men. The humbling of this very powerful landlord by the poor peasantry had a magic effect on the neighbouring villages. The landlords grew panicky and the peasants became further courageous and far more determined. Now they felt that the landlords could be beaten and driven out if peasants were united. On August 15, 1968, under the leadership of the Party, peasants in Mushahari organized armed guerrilla procession with several thousand peasants, which put forth the slogans: Land to the tillers, Naxalbari path, our path, and shouted: Long live Mao Tsetung.

In the harvest season, the Party aroused the peasant armed forces to seize crops on the land forcibly occupied by the landlords. Peasants and cadres clashed with police who were sent to suppress them, and quite a number of police officials received serious injuries.

Now the class solidarity had taken shape in the course of fighting. People began treating landlords and the reactionary regime alike. They also considered the entire toiling peasantry as one entity bound by blood relations.

It pointed out: "Now, the peasant struggle had reached the stage when it could be developed only by guerrilla struggle. The organized counter-revolutionary violence could only be resisted by organized revolutionary violence; either the peasants and the Party would surrender arms and bow down to the feudal authority in the village and obey the orders of the reactionary state or they should carry forward the democratic revolution by launching armed struggle, the basic form of which is guerrilla struggle. Only guerrilla struggle could now sustain and develop the peasants' resistance."

It went on to criticize some erroneous notions which prevailed in the first phase of the Mushahari struggle. One of these notions has been that without sufficient economic inducements the peasantry could not be organized for a political struggle. However, this wrong notion based upon the discredited theory of the "backwardness of the masses" has been completely shattered in the Mushahari struggle. Facts have proved that the peasants were for the political struggle, for a struggle to destroy feudal authority in the village and build their own authority step by step. This has been borne out by the fact that suffering at the hands of police and landlords, the peasants and cadres, instead of being demoralized, became more determined in opposing the reactionary regime and drew nearer to the Party. The lesson was, as Chairman Mao has put it: "We must have faith in the masses and we must have faith in the Party. These are two cardinal principles. If we doubt these principles, we shall accomplish nothing."

The second erroneous notion is excessive reliance on modern firearms. The contemptuous attitude to the traditional weapon paralyses the initiative of the people. The total strength of the people can not be applied against the enemy at a given time, if maximum use of traditional weapons is not made. This notion runs counter to the concept of people's war formulated by Chairman Mao and must therefore be liquidated for ever.

The third erroneous notion is that only with the help of experts, i.e., those who have already done some fighting or those who have had some training, can guerrilla actions be launched. This notion too had proved a powerful obstacle and we had to struggle hard to overcome it.

In summing up the experiences of armed struggle in this area, the article said, the first lesson is: "Great

success in launching guerrilla actions could be achieved as the Party and the guerrillas completely depend on the people. In all circumstances, whether gathering intelligence about the position of the enemy and the police or while moving in the areas or in taking shelter for rest or for food supplies or when conducting raids or when retreating and advancing, our guerrilla force depends on the active support of the people."

"The second lesson is that when massive police patrolling is resorted to by the enemy, i.e., in conditions of 'encirclement and suppression' campaign launched by the enemy, smaller guerrilla units alone can effectively and efficiently operate."

"The third lesson is that the art of continuing guerrilla actions and conducting political propaganda and building up of revolutionary organization in condition of 'encirclement and suppression' campaign launched by the enemy must be mastered."

"The fourth lesson is that we must place absolute faith in the landless and poor peasantry." "The Party must also be built up from amidst these two classes." "The main thing is to recruit the Party member and the guerrillas from the above two classes and equip them with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. This is the main method of building the revolutionary Party and a people's army while conducting armed struggles."

"The fifth lesson is that we must tirelessly work to rally the middle peasants around the banner of agrarian revolution." "It must be realized that without having the firm support of the middle peasant revolution cannot win. Sectarianism in this regard has to be combated and vigorous efforts to that end are absolutely necessary."

The article pointed out: The impact of armed guerrilla struggle in Muzaffarpur District has been tremendous on the whole political situation in our state. "In areas contiguous to Muzaffarpur, particularly in Darbhanga and Champaran, the peasantry has been roused and our organization is developing with a rapidity hardly witnessed before. In fact the entire North Bihar seems to be shaken out of its trance and it can be said with certainty that the approaching months would find many Naxalbaris there."

In conclusion, the article said: "Our Party... is being steeled and tempered in the fire of agrarian revolution, it is being Bolshevized. The Party ranks and the masses have shown boundless faith in revolution and Mao Tsetung Thought and are marching confidently for building up reliable revolutionary base areas in Bihar and liberate the entire Indian people from imperialism and its lackeys."