

# Indian Peasant Armed Struggle Rages Like a Prairie Fire

**T**HE reactionary Indian Government and feudal landlords ruthlessly exploit and oppress the peasants and grab their land by force. Made homeless and living in utter misery, the peasant masses in many parts of India are taking up arms in a heroic revolt against the criminal rule of the landlord class and the reactionary Indian Government. Like a prairie fire, the peasant armed struggle is rapidly developing.

## Ruthless Exploitation and Oppression By Landlord Class

In the Champaran District of northern Bihar, thousands of peasants reclaimed nearly 10,000 acres of farmland from an area overgrown with thickets after more than ten years of hard work. But early in 1968, acting on orders of the landlords, reactionary government officials and police evicted the peasants from it.

In the Thana District of Maharashtra State, 10,000 peasants carved 20,000 acres of land out of the forests by the sweat of their brow. The reactionary Indian Government recently issued orders to seize this land. The peasants were threatened with confiscation of their ploughs, bullocks and all other assets together with their land if they refused to comply with the orders.

In many places in Uttar Pradesh, government officials, feudal lords and big capitalists unjustifiably took possession of thousands of acres of fertile land, while the peasants were not allowed to cultivate land lying fallow. With the backing of the reactionary government, big landlords in Bahraich District forcibly occupied 25,000 acres of land.

With the help of the reactionary Indian Government, landlords and usurers in Srikakulam District, Andhra State, seized large tracts of land on the plains from the Girijan people. Many Girijans were forced to move to the mountainous areas to make a living. Even there they could not escape oppression and exploitation by the reactionary officials in charge of the forests, by the tax collectors and usurers. Debt reduced many of them to slaves of landlords and local bullies.

In the Darjeeling District, the fertile land of many plantations had been hacked out of jungles on mountains infested with wild beasts by industrious peasants after years of back-breaking labour. But this product of their sweat and blood was grabbed bit by bit by the landlords and plantation owners. The real masters of the land thus became hired labourers who are brutally exploited by the plantation owners. Like medieval slave overseers, the plantation owners lash, rage at and dismiss the agricultural workers as they please. Many of these workers have died of starvation and sickness.

The great leader Chairman Mao pointed out: "The ruthless economic exploitation and political oppression of the peasants by the landlord class forced them into numerous uprisings against its rule." Indian peasants in more and more places, rising in armed rebellion and using revolutionary violence against the tyrannical rule of the feudal landlords, are today embarked on the road of armed struggle.

## Guns for Revolution Create Red Power

A phenomenal expansion of the red area of revolutionary armed struggle is taking place in Srikakulam and various other districts of Andhra, according to a report in the July issue of the Indian monthly *Liberation*. Despite vicious enemy suppression campaigns, more than 300 villages have been turned into red areas. Panic-stricken landlords have fled for their lives, it adds.

The report says: "Here no machinery of the reactionary government operates. Here no forest or revenue official of the reactionary government, no *panchayat samiti* man, can enter. The guerrillas and members of village self-defence squads try their best to protect the villages from police marauders. The administration is run, production is looked after, and disputes are settled by the *ryotanga sangrama samithi*, the revolutionary mass organization of the peasants." It goes on to say that this organization has more than 8,000 members in the special area alone. Here the *ryotanga sangrama samithi*—the new power structure—is carrying on investigations of the land whose owners have escaped or have been wiped out by the guerrillas, and investigations of the land handed over by the landlords. The *samithi* is expected soon to distribute all this land among the poor and landless peasants. Here, in every village, justice is meted out to the enemies of the people by the people's court.

In every corner of Srikakulam and other parts of Andhra, the report says, the people wrote to the landlords in the name of the *ryotanga sangrama samithi* or the Communist Party to denounce them as despotic landlords and warn them that they will be executed and their property confiscated. The landlords in some areas have fled, while in other areas they dare not spend the night at home.

## Peasant Guerrillas Set Off Struggle to Wipe Out Enemy Agents and Local Despots

The flames of armed struggle have spread to some areas in Bihar and Punjab States. Relying on the masses, the peasant guerrillas in Bihar have been active in unleashing a struggle to wipe out enemy agents and despots, and this has greatly heightened the rev-

olutionary fighting will of the broad masses of the peasantry.

On July 5 peasant guerrillas in the Muzaffarpur District launched a successful attack on a big despotic landlord who was bitterly hated by the peasants for his ruthless persecution and sending armed police to rob them of much of their property. In co-ordination with the local masses, the guerrillas punished this despot and confiscated all his property, thus revenging their class brothers.

On June 13, peasant guerrillas in Bihar State attacked the estate of another despotic landlord, killing this reactionary landlord who had barbarously oppressed the peasants and attempted to stamp out the peasants' revolutionary struggle. They confiscated all his deeds and made a public bonfire of them. The securities the peasants had been forced to mortgage to the landlords were returned to their owners.

Relying closely on the landless and poor peasants and uniting with the middle peasants, the guerrillas in Bihar have fought the enemy with simple weapons made by themselves and, at the same time, armed themselves with weapons seized from the enemy.

In Uttar Pradesh, the guerrillas in Lakhimpur District's Pallia area have frequently ambushed reactionary police sent there on "mopping up" operations, scoring one victory after another.

The raging flames of armed struggle of the Indian peasants have greatly raised the morale of the poor peasants and deflated the arrogance of the feudal landlords and reactionary bureaucrats. No matter what suppressive and deceitful tactics the reactionary Indian Government and the feudal landlord class resort to, they can in no way hold back the Indian peasants from rushing forward along the road to liberation.