

REVOLUTION CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING.

— MAO TSE-TUNG

# The Indian Food Crisis and Armed Revolution

**T**HE food shortage in India, unchecked for years, has ballooned into staggering proportions recently. India is a big country with a large population and rich resources but starvation is spreading across the land. Why has the food shortage become so serious that millions have died and are dying of hunger? What is the way out for hungry India?

In the opinion of the reactionary ruling Congress Party, "Everything will depend on the monsoon and available foreign aid." That is to say, there is no way out except to rely on the handouts of the American overlords and the blessings of God Almighty.

The revisionists in the Indian Communist Party have come forward with "recommendations" for solving India's food problem. In high-sounding language, they call for "doing away with our dependence on the United States" and emphasize the need for a "fundamental agrarian reform" and so on and so forth. Who is supposed to take on this important job? Though beating about the bush, they in fact want the Indian people to rely on none other than the reactionary Congress regime, which represents the big landlords and the big bourgeoisie.

The Soviet revisionists have also chimed in with a "theory" that India's difficulties in agriculture lie in the method of utilizing the land and in the weakness of India's chemical industry, etc. They completely avoid the basic question of India's social system and talk only about methods of management and farming techniques, as if once these questions were out of the way India's food shortage, which results from the rule of the blood-sucking big landlords and capitalists, would automatically disappear.

The fact is India's serious food shortage is entirely due to the reactionary dark rule of the Congress government. At home, this government preserves intact the feudal system and boosts bureaucrat-capitalism, mercilessly exploiting and oppressing the Indian people. In foreign affairs, it hires itself out to and throws in its lot with U.S. imperialism and Soviet revisionism, following a policy of "letting the wolf into the sheepfold," selling out the national interests and bringing untold misery to the Indian people.

The teeming millions of India's toiling masses refuse to accept starvation as their fate. They have now risen to give battle, as witness the spring thunder from Naxalbari where the peasants have started armed struggle. Chairman Mao has said: "**Revolution plus production can solve the problem of feeding the population.**" The only way out for the hungry, suffering Indian people is to cast off by revolutionary means imperialism, Soviet revisionism, feudalism and bureaucrat-comprador capitalism, the mountains weighing down on their backs, and fight for a new India where the people are their own masters.

Following are four features: (1) Famine Stalks the Land; (2) The Crushing System of Exploitation; (3) Indian Revisionists Are Quacks; and (4) a "Renmin Ribao" commentary entitled "Experience Gained by the Indian Peasants at the Price of Blood." These articles demonstrate the truth that for the Indian people groaning under crushing exploitation and oppression revolutionary violence is the only way forward. The road of victory charted by Chairman Mao for the Chinese people is also the road to victory for the Indian people.

## Famine Stalks the Land

Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had to admit on July 6 at a meeting of state chief ministers that the food situation in India was "extremely difficult." The food crisis, already a major symbol of India's growing economic stagnation, is regarded as a big issue leading

to the eruption of a political upheaval and the sharpening of the class struggle in the country.

It is estimated that in the agricultural year ending last June, the total grain output was only

76 million tons. Jagjivan Ram, the Minister of Food and Agriculture, stated that even if the total output reaches this figure, "it will still be 12 million tons short of the state requirement." This is a greatly minimized figure of the actual grain shortage. In the next few months, while the new crop is still in the blade, the old stock will be consumed. At the earliest, the new grain will come on the market in December. As the government's grain reserves are depleted, the solution of the food problem will have to depend entirely on imports.

**Diminishing Production.** Natural conditions are really very favourable for agricultural production in India. But the Congress government follows a reactionary domestic policy of protecting feudalism and a reactionary foreign policy of collaborating with U.S. imperialism and Soviet revisionism. As a result, agriculture has been seriously affected. For years India has suffered from a grain scarcity and since 1960 India's annual grain output has stagnated at about 80 million tons. It has dropped successively for three years after the Indian Government flagrantly launched that large-scale military aggression against China in 1962 and stepped up its armament expansion and war preparations. In the meantime, the amount of grain imported annually from other countries, mainly from the United States, increased every year, rising to over 10 million tons last year.

To alleviate the food crisis by importing grain is tantamount to drinking poison to quench one's thirst. The dumping of U.S. grain on the Indian market has further crippled India's grain production. In 1964, India was hit by a nationwide food crisis unprecedented in history. Indian newspapers disclosed in August 1965 that 300 million out of the 500 million population of India did not have enough food to eat.

According to an AFP report in December the same year, at least 10 million Indians invariably starve to death every year. Since the beginning of this year, the food situation has grown worse. The Indian weekly *Link* lamented: "The shadow of hunger is looming large all over the country from Kerala in the south to

Bihar in the north." More and more of the poor have to make do with tree bark and grass root. Death from starvation is a daily occurrence everywhere.

**Worst Famine of the Century.** The state government of Bihar was compelled to disclose in April this year that serious famine exists in one third of the state. At present, of the 50 million people in the state at least 40 million are starving. *The Times of India* reporting the situation in this area said: "The worst famine of the century has reduced millions to moving skeletons" and they "might not survive long."

The other 15 states of India fare no better. In West Bengal the grain rationing system of the so-called "non-Congress government" has collapsed. Out of a population of 38 million, at least 27 million people are starving. Of the 43 districts in Madhya Pradesh 38 districts are facing serious famine. In some regions in Uttar Pradesh grain shortage has all along been quite serious.

On the other hand, the Indian landlords, bourgeoisie and bureaucrats are indulging in gay life and debauchery and wallowing in luxury. Profiteers cashing in on the grain shortage are hoarding and speculating to amass fortunes.

Where there is oppression there is resistance. Living on the verge of starvation and death, the broad masses of the Indian people are rising to oppose the vicious rule of the reactionary Indian Government. Recently, incidents of seizure of government grain occurred in many places in India.

**Peasant Armed Struggle.** What is more encouraging is that the peasants in Naxalbari and other places in Darjeeling District, under the leadership of the revolutionaries in the Indian Communist Party, have started organized armed struggle and have set up Red areas. (See *Peking Review*, No. 29) They have overthrown local despots, distributed land, banned hoarding and speculation in grain, and repulsed the "mopping-up operations" by government troops and police.

## The Crushing System of Exploitation

**T**HIS revolutionary storm which broke over Naxalbari in India's Darjeeling District under the leadership of the proletariat sounded the clarion call for armed agrarian revolution, inspiring peasants in many other places to unfold the struggle for land seizures. It is pounding at the centuries-old savage feudal system of exploitation.

**Ruthless Exploitation of the Peasants.** As in old China, the fundamental problem of the Indian revolution is the peasant problem.

Soviet revisionist "experts," "scholars," publications and press, the renegade Dange clique and other Indian revisionists have misrepresented facts and rattled on endlessly that a "fundamental change" has taken place

in the Indian countryside since independence, that "agrarian reform" instituted by the Congress Party has "struck at and weakened feudalism," that the feudal system "no longer occupies a predominant position" in the countryside and that the Indian countryside has been turned "capitalistic" and similar rubbish. According to the logic of all these renegades, the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal revolutionary task had been accomplished by the Congress Party and now "peaceful transition" to socialism can be achieved through parliamentary elections. But what are the facts?

The "agrarian reform" laws promulgated by the reactionary Indian Government set "ceilings" for the holding of land by an individual or an individual peasant household. They provide that the land owned in excess of the "ceilings" is to be distributed by the Government among the peasants. But the "ceilings" set are so high that in some cases a family of five can own 360 acres of land. Thus, the big landlords continue to own large tracts of land and their holdings are considered "legitimate." In addition, landlords were allowed to break up their holdings nominally and apportion them to members of their families or their relatives and friends.

The "agrarian reform" laws provide for the abolition of the *zemindar* (landlord) system introduced by British imperialism during its colonial rule in India, under which a feudal landholder could, by paying a fixed revenue to the colonial government, grab a large area of land and collect heavy rents from the cultivators. The laws stipulate that the Government will collect rent directly for the land previously possessed by the *zemindars*. This in fact does not change the character of feudal exploitation.

Besides, the landlords are allowed to retain large tracts of land allegedly "for their own cultivation" which enables them to continue their feudal exploitation. According to the figures released by a parliamentary committee in 1966, 20 per cent of the total of 100 million rural households own 75 per cent of the land, while 80 per cent hold the remaining 25 per cent. These figures show that after the so-called "land reform" was carried out by the Congress Party, the landlords and rich peasants who form a small minority of the rural population still own most of the land while the poor peasants and farm labourers who constitute the large majority are left with little land or no land at all.

It is also common for landlords to use any conceivable pretext to evict peasants from the farms they rent. Such evictions were especially widespread when the reactionary Indian Government began implementing its sham "land reform," and the practice continues in various parts of the country. In the original State of Bombay, the number of evicted peasant households in the period from 1949-53 accounted for 47 per cent of the total of tenant-peasant households.

After the so-called "land reform," "share-cropping" remained very common in the Indian countryside. Under this system, the tenant peasant pays part of his crop as rent to the landowner. Although according to the "land reform" statutes the portion paid to the landowner should be one-third, one-fourth or even one-sixth of the total crop, yet even official Indian documents had to admit that actually a half or 60 per cent or even more is often exacted.

The Soviet and Indian revisionists have sought to prove that the "land reform" carried out by the reactionary Congress government is "anti-feudal" in nature. They have vociferously claimed that one-third of the Indian rural population consists of agricultural workers who are "wage labourers" and that this is proof that capitalism has come to the Indian countryside. All this is bunkum. As a matter of fact, an overwhelming majority of the Indian "agricultural workers" are farm labourers like those in old China. They are tied to the land owned by the landlords or plantation owners and subjected to barbarous feudal oppression and exploitation. They have to serve the landlords day and night and toil 10 to 14 hours a day.

Shocking usury is an important form of feudal exploitation in the Indian countryside. The annual rate of interest is often as high as 100 per cent, and sometimes 200 or even 300 per cent. It is still nothing uncommon for poor peasants to be born in debt, grow up in debt, die in debt and leave their children in debt.

**Armed Agrarian Revolution Is the Road to Emancipation for the Peasants.** Writing about the countryside of colonial, semi-colonial and semi-feudal China, our great leader Chairman Mao pointed out: "The exploitation of the peasantry by the landlord class, which is the basis of the system of feudal exploitation, not only remains intact but, linked as it is with exploitation by comprador and usurer capital, clearly dominates China's social and economic life." This applies to India today.

The fiercer the oppression, the greater the resistance. Indian peasants have at last taken up arms to wage revolutionary struggles. They are the main force of the Indian revolution and the most reliable ally of the Indian proletariat. The Indian revolution cannot triumph without reliance on the peasants, without armed agrarian revolution and without the establishment of rural revolutionary base areas. The revolutionaries in the Indian Communist Party have realized this truth of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tse-tung's thought. They have begun to go deep into the countryside to arouse and organize the peasant masses and unfold armed struggle. This is an important development of the Indian revolution.

The revolutionary struggles of the Indian people will prove that the Chinese people's road to victory pointed out by Chairman Mao is also the road for the Indian people. Comrade Lin Piao

has put it well: "It must be emphasized that Comrade Mao Tse-tung's theory of the establishment of rural revolutionary base areas and the encirclement of the cities from the countryside is of outstanding and universal practical importance for the

present revolutionary struggles of all the oppressed nations and peoples, and particularly for the revolutionary struggles of the oppressed nations and peoples in Asia, Africa and Latin America against imperialism and its lackeys."

## Indian Revisionists Are Quacks

**W**HILE millions of the Indian people are struggling on the verge of starvation and death, the revisionists in the Indian Communist Party who dream about "peaceful transition" have tried hard to cover up the class and political reasons which caused the food shortage. They are trying to whitewash the reactionary government and openly serve the reactionary ruling classes.

In an article on the food question published in April, the Indian revisionists did not dare even once to refer to the system sustaining the evil rule of Indian reaction or call on the Indian people to rebel against such tyranny. On the contrary, they proposed that the Congress government "carry out a fundamental land reform," "stop imports of American food," "purchase all surplus grains," "control prices of all commodities," etc. All this claptrap can serve no other purpose than to help the reactionary hierarchy deceive the Indian people.

"To carry out a fundamental land reform" is definitely an urgent task in the countryside of India. But how can the Congress government which represents the interests of the landlords and bureaucrat-comprador bourgeoisie be expected to carry out a fundamental land reform? Since the proclamation of India's independence in 1947, the Congress government has adopted many bills on "land reform," but it is all pretence. The result is that the ownership of land in the countryside is more concentrated and feudal exploitation more serious with the number of poor peasants and farm labourers steadily increasing.

In point of fact, there was a genuine land reform, but that did not take place anywhere under the reactionary Congress government of landlords and bureaucrat-comprador bourgeoisie. It happened 20 years ago in Telengana, southeast India, where the armed struggle organized by the peasants led to the establishment of a Red regime and a genuine land reform in the liberated area (see *Peking Review*, No. 33, for details about the Telengana uprising). One million acres of land were confiscated and distributed among peasants who had no or only little land. Thus the peasants in Telengana for the first time shook off the feudal yoke. However, came the betrayal by the revisionist leaders of the Indian Communist Party, and the fruits of victory won by the revolutionary peasants in the armed struggle were completely lost.

**Historical Lesson.** This historical lesson once more proves that the following statement of Chairman Mao is an absolute truth: "**The oppressed peoples and nations must not pin their hopes for liberation on the**

**'sensibleness' of imperialism and its lackeys. They will only triumph by strengthening their unity and persevering in their struggle.**" If the Indian people want to "carry out fundamental land reform," they can only do it by taking up the gun to overthrow the Indian reactionaries, there is no other way.

"Stop imports of American food"? Year after year, grain production in present-day India has declined and the amount of grains imported from the United States has risen. From 1956, when the first grain agreement was signed between India and the United States according to "Public Law 480," to the end of 1965 a total of 37,280,000 tons valued at 11,120 million rupees were imported. The amount of rupees in the hands of the U.S. Embassy in India is estimated at one quarter to a half of the total Indian currency in circulation. U.S. grain dumping (most grains were rotten) has enriched the U.S. monopoly capitalists, the Indian bureaucrat-comprador capitalists and landlords, and has made the Delhi government more and more dependent on U.S. imperialism. With the rural economy still more severely dislocated as a result of the U.S. dumping and large numbers of peasants drifting into the cities, the government has found itself in an inextricable predicament; it must depend on the United States for food. A Congress official who was once Food Minister admitted long ago that without the greatest possible import of grains there would be no way out, and it would mean suicide without a foreign grain supply.

The talk about "purchase all surplus grains" and "control prices of all commodities" by the Congress government is humbug. In present-day India, the black market in grain is rampant, grain prices are soaring, and the landlords and bureaucrat capitalists are raking in huge profits. Even much of the rationed grains which are nominally handled by the government finds its way into the black market and is sold at high prices because of the racketeering of the capitalists and politicians. Therefore, the famished Indian people often cannot buy even the meagre grain rations promised by the government. Then how can the reactionary Congress government be expected to "purchase" the grains from the landlords and the profiteering merchants and "control" the market prices?

**Change the Social System.** Harsh facts have taught the Indian people that the various fraudulent "reforms" advertised by the revisionists in the Indian Communist Party can achieve nothing. India's food crisis can be solved completely only by the seizure of power by armed force and a thorough change in the social system.

# Experience Gained by Indian Peasants at the Price of Blood

**T**HE Naxalbari path is our path!" This is the correct conclusion drawn by the Indian revolutionary peasants from the historical experience of their prolonged struggle.

Since the proclamation of the "independence" of India 20 years ago, there have appeared three high tides in the peasant movement. The first (1946-51) was the mammoth armed struggle in and around Telengana which shook the whole of India. The second (1953-55) was the mass struggle against eviction by landlords. The third one (1959-62) was another mass struggle for land and against exorbitant taxation. All these mass struggles failed as a result of the brutal suppression by the reactionary regime and the betrayal by the revisionists. However, as the saying goes, "a fall into the pit, a gain in your wit" and more and more peasants have gained in their understanding, thanks to the experience of their past struggles.

Our great leader Chairman Mao Tse-tung has taught us: "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." He has also said: "Experience in the class struggle in the era of imperialism teaches us that it is only by the power of the gun that the working class and the labouring masses can defeat the armed bourgeoisie and landlords."

The experience of the various peasant revolutions in the history of India boils down to this: it is imperative to follow the road of armed seizure of power and the encirclement of the cities from the countryside, under the leadership of the proletarian revolutionaries and the guidance of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tse-tung's thought. This is the decisive factor in the outcome of a revolution. With a revolutionary army, the peasants will have land and rights, and they will win their liberation. Without a revolutionary army, the peasants will have nothing. And to stop the armed struggle is to forfeit all fruits of the peasant revolution.

It is entirely necessary for India's poverty-stricken peasants to wage a mass struggle to combat eviction, seize land, obtain rent reduction and resist taxation. But the various forms of mass struggle must be combined with the general struggle for seizing power by armed force; the armed struggle must be the main form of struggle. Otherwise it is impossible to destroy the feudal system root and branch and to win complete liberation for the peasants. Agrarian revolution is a basic task of the new-democratic revolution in India at the present stage and this revolution will inevitably be a peasant armed revolution.

For several thousand years, domestic and foreign ruling classes had invariably fooled the Indian people and did everything possible to prevent them from know-

ing the truth about the necessity of taking up arms. Once the masses of Indian workers and peasants are awakened and take up arms, they must never lay them down again. The betrayal of the Telengana peasants' armed struggle by the Indian revisionists is a lesson paid for in blood by the Indian people. If the revolutionary people lay down their arms after having embarked on the road of armed struggle, the result will not be "concessions" and "reforms" by the ruling classes but only brutal suppression, sanguinary slaughter and mad vengeance-seeking counter-attacks. In short, the most ruthless class vengeance from the enemy. Revolutionary armed struggle can never be abandoned halfway. The revolutionary people must surmount every difficulty and persist in unyielding and protracted struggle until final victory.

The history of the Indian peasants' revolutionary movement has proved that the Dange clique and other Indian revisionists have all along been renegades betraying the Indian peasants' revolution and have been accomplices and running dogs in the service of the big landlords and bourgeoisie in the country. These despicable and shameless types have tried in every way to bring the peasant movement into the orbit of their revisionist political line — the "parliamentary road" and "peaceful transition." When the peasants' revolutionary struggle has broken through the confines set up by the revisionists, especially when the reactionary rule of the big landlords and bourgeoisie is threatened by the peasants' armed struggle, these renegades will try their best to undermine the revolutionary movement and hoodwink the peasants into laying down their arms and giving up their armed struggle. The Indian revisionists had, in this way, forfeited the peasants' armed struggle in Telengana. Now they again stretch out their sinister hands at the peasants' armed struggle in Naxalbari trying to stamp out this revolutionary spark. To push the peasants' revolution forward on to victory, the Indian proletarian revolutionaries must redouble their class vigilance and wage a resolute struggle against betrayal and sabotage by the revisionists.

The Soviet revisionist renegade group and China's Khrushchov, too, have always preached the "parliamentary road" — the so-called "India's road" — in an effort to prevent the Indian people and other oppressed nations and people from taking the road traversed by the Chinese revolution to victory. All revolutionary people must thoroughly criticize and repudiate this counter-revolutionary fallacy advanced by the Soviet revisionist clique and China's Khrushchov and eliminate its noxious influence.

Chairman Mao Tse-tung has taught us: "Like every other activity in the world, revolution always

**follows a tortuous road and never a straight one.”** He emphasized that **“it is only through struggle and hard work, and over a long period too, that we can . . . prevent setbacks or even reversals in the revolution.”**

The peasant revolution in India has been advancing in tortuous struggle. So long as they are good at summing up their historical experience and forge ahead along the road charted by our great leader Chairman

Mao Tse-tung for armed struggle to seize power, the Indian proletarian revolutionaries certainly can, by prolonged, arduous struggle and hard work, turn the armed struggle, initiated in Naxalbari, into a sweeping revolutionary torrent to overthrow the criminal regime of the big landlords and bourgeoisie and win complete victory in their country's new-democratic revolution.

*(“Renmin Ribao” Commentator, September 5.)*