

REPORT ON THE QUESTION OF AGRARIAN REFORM

June 14, 1950

Fellow members, comrades,

The Common Programme¹² of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference provides that the People's Republic of China shall "systematically transform the feudal and semi-feudal landownership system into a system of peasant landownership." Last winter the People's Government carried out and in the main completed agrarian reform in the suburbs of cities and in a number of other areas in north China and in half of Henan Province, involving a total rural population of 26 million. In general, no serious deviations occurred in the course of the reform. It went smoothly and very few disruptive incidents took place. The people, especially the peasants who have received land and other means of production, are content with the reform.

In addition, in the vast newly liberated areas the People's Government and the People's Liberation Army carried out campaigns to wipe out bandits, oppose local despots and reduce land rent and have set up peasants' associations in many areas. According to reports from east China and south-central China, the peasants' associations in these areas have a membership totalling 24 million and there are also one million people's militia there. In areas where these campaigns have been conducted, people's representative conferences and peasants' representative conferences at county, district and township levels have generally been held. Peasant activists have emerged in large numbers,

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more than 38,000 township governments have been re-established and the level of the peasant masses' political consciousness has been raised rapidly. About 180,000 cadres will be trained in east China and south-central China before the winter of this year for agrarian reform. Therefore, we consider that in these areas, where the peasant movement has developed and where preparations have been made, agrarian reform can begin this winter.

At present, agrarian reform in China has been nearly completed in an area with a rural population of 145 million (total population of the area is 160 million). There is still an area with a rural population of 264 million (total population 310 million) where agrarian reform has not yet been carried out. Requests for permission to start the reform this winter have been made by various areas with a total rural population of 100 million — 3.5 million in north China, 8 million in northwest China, 35 to 40 million in east China and 47 to 56 million in south-central China — covering more than 300 counties in all. These requests have to be discussed by the National Committee of the People's Political Consultative Conference and approved by the Central People's Government. In an area with a rural population of 164 million no agrarian reform is to be carried out this winter. However, it can be conducted in the greater part of this area following the autumn of 1951, in a smaller part following the autumn of 1952; and in the remaining part, mainly the areas inhabited by minority nationalities, it will be put off to some future date. It has been carried out in areas inhabited by Koreans and Mongolians in northeast China and it may be carried out in other areas where most people of the minority nationalities demand it. It is still impossible to decide today when agrarian reform will be carried out in other areas inhabited by a population of about 20 million minority nationalities. That will have to be decided on the basis of work among the minority nationalities and the level of political consciousness of the people there. We should give the minority nationalities more time to consider and prepare for reform among themselves and we must not be impatient. The Draft Agrarian Reform Law we have proposed shall not apply to areas inhabited by minority nationalities. This means that we plan to complete agrarian reform in the main throughout China in two and a half to three years, beginning from the winter of this year. This is only a general plan. If this plan is realized, it will be an extremely

great historic victory for the Chinese people, and it will mean rapid fulfillment of one of the basic historic tasks of the Chinese revolution.

It is necessary to formulate a general plan, enabling people's governments and people's organizations in the newly liberated areas to prepare and carry out their work according to this plan. We request that agrarian reform not be carried out in areas where it was decided not to carry it out this year. Even if the peasants want to go ahead with it of their own accord, they should be dissuaded from doing so. However, in areas where it was decided to carry out agrarian reform this winter efforts should be concentrated on making preparations in the summer and autumn in order that it can start immediately after the autumn harvest and collection of grain tax. All possible efforts should be made to complete basic agrarian reform correctly this winter in an area with a rural population of 100 million. If deviations should occur in some areas after agrarian reform starts and give rise to certain chaotic conditions that cannot be remedied quickly, the reform should be held up in these areas in order to correct the deviations and prepare to go on with it next year.

To sum up, we must see to it that no chaotic conditions shall occur and no deviation or confusion shall remain long uncorrected in agrarian reform in the future. Agrarian reform must be guided and carried out in a planned and orderly way in complete accordance with the laws and decrees promulgated by the Central People's Government and the people's governments at various levels and with the principles, policies and steps they have decided upon. Our future agrarian reform will be conducted on the biggest scale in history; only in this way can it conform with the interests of the great majority of the people.

In order to carry out guided, orderly agrarian reform in the future, the Central People's Government must promulgate an agrarian reform law and some other documents. The Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party has drawn up and submitted a Draft Agrarian Reform Law to the National Committee of the CPPCC for examination and discussion. As soon as general agreement has been reached, the draft law will be submitted to the Central People's Government Council for promulgation and enforcement.¹⁹ In order to elucidate the draft law and a number of questions that have to be considered in future agrarian reform, I should like to take up and explain the following questions.

I. WHY SHOULD AGRARIAN REFORM BE CARRIED OUT?

The essential content of agrarian reform is confiscation of the land of the landlord class for distribution to peasants who have little or no land. Thus the landlords will be abolished as a class in society and the landownership system characterized by feudal exploitation will be transformed into a system of peasant landownership. This is indeed the greatest and most thorough reform in thousands of years of Chinese history.

Why should such a reform be undertaken? In a nutshell, because the original landownership system in China was extremely irrational. In general, the land situation in old China was roughly as follows: Landlords and rich peasants, who constituted less than 10 per cent of the rural population, possessed approximately 70 to 80 per cent of the land and brutally exploited the peasants by means of their land. Poor peasants, farm labourers, middle peasants and others, who made up 90 per cent of the rural population, possessed in all only 20 to 30 per cent of the land. They toiled all year round but could hardly have a full belly and warm back. This situation has undergone some changes in the past ten-odd years of the War of Resistance Against Japan and the People's War of Liberation. Apart from the areas where agrarian reform has been carried out, more land in some areas has been concentrated in the hands of the landlords. In Sichuan and other areas the landlords possess about 70 or 80 per cent of the land. In other areas, such as the middle and lower reaches of the Changjiang (Yangtze) River, landownership is somewhat dispersed. According to data obtained in our recent investigation of a number of villages in east and south-central China, the situation is roughly as follows: Land owned by landlords and public land constitute 30 to 50 per cent; rich peasants possess 10 to 15 per cent of the land; middle peasants, poor peasants and farm labourers possess 30 to 40 per cent of the land, and persons renting out small parcels of land possess 3 to 5 per cent of the land. The total area of land rented out in the rural areas constitutes 60 to 70 per cent of the land. Land rented out by rich peasants accounts for 3 to 5 per cent, while land cultivated by rich peasants themselves constitutes about 10 per cent. In other words, 90 per cent of the land in the countryside is cultivated by middle peasants, poor peasants and a section of the farm labourers, who own merely a small part of the land; the greater part does not belong to them. This state

of affairs remains very serious. And herein lies the reason why our nation has become a victim of aggression and oppression and is impoverished and backward. This also constitutes the principal obstacle to our nation's democratization, industrialization, independence, unification and prosperity. Unless we change this situation, victory in the Chinese people's revolution cannot be consolidated, the productive forces in the rural areas cannot be set free, the industrialization of New China cannot be realized and the people cannot enjoy the fundamental gains of the revolutionary victory. To change the situation, we must, as stipulated in Article 1 of the Draft Agrarian Reform Law, "abolish the landownership system of feudal exploitation by the landlord class and introduce the system of peasant landownership in order to set free the productive forces in the rural areas and develop agricultural production, thus paving the way for New China's industrialization." For this basic reason and with this basic aim we must carry out agrarian reform.

Dr. Sun Yat-sen put forward long ago the slogan of "equalization of landownership" and, later, the slogan of "land to the tiller".²⁰ Industrialization of China must rely on the vast rural markets at home. Without a thorough agrarian reform it would be impossible to realize industrialization of New China. This is too obvious to require much explanation. However, it is still necessary at the present time to explain clearly the basic reason for and the basic aim of agrarian reform, because they can explode the fallacy of the various excuses advanced for opposing and doubting agrarian reform, and for justifying the landlord class. At present, in fact, opposition to and doubts about agrarian reform remain.

We can see from the basic reason for and the basic aim of agrarian reform that the evils done by the landlord class in the past are rooted in the old social system. Landlords in general will only be deprived of their feudal landholdings and abolished as a social class; they will not be physically eliminated. A small number of them, on whom the people's courts should pass sentences of death or imprisonment, consist of landlords guilty of major crimes — rural despots who have committed heinous crimes and criminals who stubbornly resist agrarian reform. Therefore, it is stipulated in the Draft Agrarian Reform Law that after their land and other means of production have been confiscated, landlords will be given shares of land and other means of production so that they can also make a living on their own and re-

form themselves through labour. After undergoing long-term reform through labour, it is possible for landlords to become new men.

This basic reason for and the basic aim of agrarian reform are not designed only to relieve the poor, as is maintained by some people. The Communist Party has always fought in the interest of the labouring poor, but the viewpoint of Communists differs from that of philanthropists. The agrarian reform will benefit the impoverished labouring peasants, helping them to partially solve their problem of poverty, but its basic aim is not merely one of relieving the impoverished peasants. It is designed to free the rural productive forces from the shackles of the feudal landownership system of the landlord class in order to develop agricultural production and pave the way for New China's industrialization. The problem of poverty among the peasants can finally be solved only when agricultural production is greatly developed, the industrialization of New China is realized, the living standard of people throughout the country is improved, and China eventually embarks upon the road to socialism. Agrarian reform can solve only part, not the whole, of the problem of the peasants' poverty.

The basic reason for and the basic aim of agrarian reform are to develop production. Hence, every step taken in the reform should be suited to and closely co-ordinated with the development of rural production. Precisely because of this basic reason and aim, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party has proposed that the rich peasant economy be kept from being infringed upon in the reform. This is because the existence of the rich peasant economy and its growth within certain limits is advantageous to the development of the people's economy in our country. It is, therefore, also beneficial to the broad peasant masses.

This, in brief, is my explanation of why agrarian reform should be carried out.

II . CONFISCATION AND REQUISITION OF LAND

The Draft Agrarian Reform Law stipulates that land in the following categories be confiscated or requisitioned: 1) landlords' land; 2) rural land belonging to ancestral shrines, temples, monasteries, churches, schools and organizations, and other land owned by the public; 3) rural land of industrialists and merchants; 4) land of people who,

because they have other occupations or lack labour power, rent out land amounting to more than twice the average landholding in that locality and land rented out by rich peasants of a semi-landlord type. But, the land and other property of rich peasants should in general be kept intact, and so should land and other property owned by middle peasants, poor peasants, farm labourers and other rural people.

We allow the renting out of small plots of land and will not requisition them. This may have some, but not much, unfavourable effect upon rural production, because we believe the amount of land rented out in small plots will not exceed 3 to 5 per cent of the total acreage of arable land, and it is necessary to show consideration for the dependents of revolutionary soldiers and martyrs, and for workers, office staff, professionals and other people who have other occupations or lack labour power and allow them to rent out small plots of land. This is because China does not yet have social insurance for the unemployed or for those who have lost their labour power. Moreover, much of such land has been bought by individuals with the proceeds of their toil. Hence there are some advantages in allowing these people to retain this part of their land and continue to rent it or to cultivate it themselves.

Regarding the land and other property of the rich peasants, Article 6 of the Draft Agrarian Reform Law clearly stipulates:

First, land owned by rich peasants and cultivated by themselves or by hired labour and their other property shall be protected from infringement because only in this way can a rich peasant economy be preserved.

Second, small plots of land rented out by rich peasants shall remain as they are. However, in certain special areas the land rented out by rich peasants may be requisitioned in part or in whole with the approval of the people's government at the provincial level or above. In general, the amount of land rented out by rich peasants is not great. In order to neutralize the rich peasants and protect the middle peasants and small land lessors, it is also necessary to allow the rich peasants to retain this portion of the rented-out land. In certain special areas the situation is different; the land rented out by rich peasants is of considerable size, and if it were not requisitioned, the poor peasants would be unable to get an appropriate amount of land. Therefore, in these areas, the land rented out by rich peasants may be requisitioned in part or in whole to solve the problem, if this is ratified by the people's government at the provincial level or above.

Third, large amounts of land rented out by a small number of rich peasants should be requisitioned in part or in whole. For instance, if a rich peasant rents out more land than the land he cultivates by himself and by hired labour, then he is no mere rich peasant; he is a rich peasant of a semi-landlord type. Therefore, the Draft Agrarian Reform Law stipulates that where large tracts of land are rented out by a rich peasant of a semi-landlord type, exceeding in area the land cultivated by him and by his hired labour, the rented-out portion should be requisitioned.

There are also members of landlord families who throughout the year are mainly engaged in farm work, cultivating part of their land but renting out the major portion. Such persons should be given consideration. Basically, they should be allowed to retain the land they cultivate themselves after appropriate readjustment, but the rest should be confiscated.

Landlords' draught animals, farm implements, and surplus grain and houses in the countryside should be confiscated, too. The furnishings of a house should be confiscated and distributed along with the house, but for convenience they may be readjusted. Surplus grain is grain retained by landlords in excess of their own needs after rent reduction and delivery of grain tax. Surplus houses are houses in excess of the needs of the landlords and their families. It is necessary to confiscate surplus grain, houses, furniture, draught animals and farm implements along with the land and distribute them, but a share must be left to the landlord. Since these are essential means of agricultural production, the peasants who have received land must have such means before they can produce. Of course, these means of production are far from enough. To increase production the peasants must themselves work hard and help each other, along with government assistance.

Except for the above, the landlords' other property, including their industrial and commercial enterprises, shall not be confiscated. No doubt, after long years of exploitation, most landlords have a great deal of property. According to past experience, if these possessions are to be confiscated and distributed, the landlords will try to hide and disperse them and the peasants will search for them, which will lead to chaos and the waste and destruction of great quantities of social wealth. It is therefore better to allow the landlords to keep these enterprises of theirs so they can earn a living or put them into operation. This will also be beneficial to society. This way of dealing

with landlords in the forthcoming agrarian reform is far more lenient than in the past. However, many landlords may still stubbornly oppose and sabotage the reform and the People's Government. We must resolutely punish such obstinately reactionary landlords and not be lenient or let them have their way.

Certain members of the landlord class will most likely conduct a great deal of sabotage before and during agrarian reform, such as killing of draught animals, felling of trees and destruction of farm implements, water conservancy projects, buildings, crops and furniture. The people's governments throughout the country should work out detailed measures to strictly prohibit such activities. Landlords should be ordered to take good care of the property still in their hands and not to destroy, hide, disperse or sell it. They must pay compensation or be punished for any violations. Persons other than landlords who destroy such property shall also be punished.

III. PRESERVATION OF THE RICH PEASANT ECONOMY

The provisions in the Draft Agrarian Reform Law regarding the land and other property of the rich peasants are aimed at preserving the rich peasant economy and, in the course of agrarian reform, neutralizing the rich peasants politically and rendering better protection to middle peasants and persons renting out small parcels of land, in order to isolate the landlord class and unite all the people in carrying out agrarian reform and eliminating the feudal system in an orderly manner.

Why did we allow the peasants to requisition the surplus land and property of rich peasants during the agrarian reform in the past and why do we now advocate preservation of the rich peasant economy in the coming agrarian reform? Chiefly because a fundamental change has occurred in the political and military situation in China.

Two years ago, the revolutionary forces of the people and the counter-revolutionary forces were engaged in a ruthless war. The people's forces were still in a relatively inferior position, and the outcome of the war was not yet decided. On the one hand, the rich peasants were still not convinced that the people could win the war and they leaned to the side of the landlords and Chiang Kai-shek and opposed the agrarian reform and the people's revolutionary war. On

the other hand, the people's revolutionary war required that the peasants make the greatest sacrifices by joining the army and supplying public grain and labour service to support the war and strive for victory in the war. Victory was in the supreme interest of the Chinese people, and everything had to be subordinated to this need. It was precisely under such circumstances that we allowed the peasants to requisition the surplus land and property of the rich peasants and to confiscate all the property of the landlords, so as to satisfy to a greater extent the demands of the impoverished peasants, rouse to a high degree their revolutionary enthusiasm to participate in and support the people's revolutionary war, and overthrow Chiang Kai-shek's regime, which was backed by U.S. imperialists. This was both necessary and correct at the time, when, without extremely thorough agrarian reform in the liberated areas and full satisfaction of the impoverished peasants' demands, it would have been hard to overcome the difficulties encountered.

Things are diametrically different now. The people's revolutionary war on the mainland has for the most part been completed, and the Chiang Kai-shek gang is undoubtedly doomed to destruction. The two tremendous tasks required of the peasants — military service and labour service — have entirely been fulfilled and the burden of grain tax has also been comparatively lightened. The present basic task for people throughout the country is to undertake economic development on a nationwide scale, to rehabilitate and develop the economy. The fight for Taiwan remains a colossal task, and the People's Liberation Army has adequate strength to shoulder it. The difficulties we confront today are different in character from those we encountered during the war in the past. Our present difficulties are mainly financial and economic, arising in the course of the restoration, reform and development of the economy. At the same time, the great revolutionary unity of all nationalities, all democratic classes, all democratic parties and all people's organizations in the country has already been established politically and organizationally, and the political attitude of the rich peasants, in general, has also undergone a change. If the People's Government pursues a policy of preserving the rich peasant economy, it will enable the rich peasants in general to take a neutral attitude, better protect the middle peasants and dispel certain unwarranted misgivings of the peasants with regard to the development of production. Therefore, in the present situation, it is necessary both politically and economically to adopt a policy of

preserving the rich peasant economy in the coming agrarian reform. It will help overcome the current financial and economic difficulties and thus benefit the state and the people.

Between July 1946 and October 1947 when the peasants and our rural cadres carried out agrarian reform in many places in north China, Shandong and northeast China, they failed to follow the directive issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party on May 4, 1946, which stressed that the rich peasants' land and property should be kept substantially intact. Instead, they acted as they liked and confiscated the land and property of rich peasants as they did the landlords'. This is understandable, because it was the period of the most tense and bitter struggle between the Chinese people and the Kuo-mintang reactionaries. It was during this period that most of the deviations in agrarian reform occurred — the interests of part of the middle peasants were encroached upon, some industrial and commercial undertakings in the rural areas were impaired, and indiscriminate beatings and killings occurred in some places. These things happened mainly because of political and military tension at the time. It was also because most of our rural cadres had no experience in agrarian reform, did not know how to define class status correctly in the rural areas, and mistook a number of rich peasants for landlords and middle peasants for rich peasants. In view of this situation, the Central Committee of the Party made public on October 10, 1947, the Outline Agrarian Law, under which the class status of the rich peasants and landlords was differentiated, but the surplus land and property of the rich peasants were allowed to be requisitioned. In the winter of the same year the Central Committee issued a document on the differentiation of class status in the countryside. Chairman Mao Zedong issued a statement on "The Present Situation and Our Tasks"²¹ and Comrade Ren Bishi spoke on the question of agrarian reform.²² After that, certain chaotic conditions in the rural areas ceased and agrarian reform was conducted along the right path. It is necessary to draw attention to past experience so that our comrades do not repeat past mistakes in agrarian reform in the newly liberated areas. Now that we are working under entirely new conditions, it is absolutely necessary to adopt a policy in our proposed agrarian reform law to eliminate the feudal system and preserve the rich peasant economy.

The policy we have adopted to preserve the rich peasant economy is of course not a temporary but a long-term policy. That is to say,

throughout the stage of new democracy we shall preserve the rich peasant economy. It will become unnecessary only when fanning is mechanized on a large scale, collective farms are organized and socialist transformation is carried out in the rural areas. This will become possible only in the rather distant future.

This is why we advocate preservation of the rich peasant economy at present.

Of course, in areas where agrarian reform has been completed, rich peasants shall not be permitted to take advantage of this to regain land from the peasants; such cases should be strictly prohibited.

IV. SOME PROBLEMS CONCERNING LAND DISTRIBUTION

As for how to distribute land, it must first be made clear that this is a question of readjustment by subtraction and supplementation based on the holdings and of taking into account the interests of the present tillers of the land.

Land distribution on this basis can help avoid excessive and unnecessary changes and benefit production. When rented land is taken away from a tiller for distribution to others, proper consideration must be given to him. The land distributed to the tiller, plus his own land, if any, should be slightly and appropriately greater than the land possessed, after land distribution, by the peasants who had little or no land to begin with, thus in principle enabling the tiller to have land that equals the average acreage owned by each peasant in the locality. Since too much land taken from that rented by tillers would cause them loss, giving them this consideration will mean they suffer little or no loss. This is necessary. After agrarian reform if a portion of land remains to be rented out, it can be rented to tillers who have had too much of their land taken away, as an adjustment and compensation. The best portion of the land of the tillers should not be taken at all or only a little should be taken. Experience shows that the tillers will feel satisfied after such proper consideration is given to them. They will be happy because the land they rented from others now becomes their own, they have no more need to pay rent or curry favour with the landlords, their social status is raised, they receive more land than others and they are better off.

During the distribution of land and other means of production certain specific problems facing people who have little or no land in the rural areas should be dealt with properly. Where conditions permit, more land should be given to people able to work it, such as impoverished peasant households with one or two members. Less land or no land at all may be distributed to certain people, such as village handicraftsmen, pedlars, professionals and members of their families, salaried personnel of the people's governments and people's organizations who live in the countryside, other professionals who live elsewhere but have families in the countryside, and so forth. These people, whose income is sufficient to support themselves, should not be given land. However, some land — the amount can be less than the shares of the peasants — should be given to people whose income cannot regularly support them or is not sufficient to support them. Appropriate solutions to these problems must be based on the specific circumstances of each village and each individual, and concrete decisions must be based on consultation and discussion among the peasants and the individuals concerned.

Dependents of martyrs, as referred to in the Draft Agrarian Reform Law, include the immediate relatives of those who were killed in action during the various revolutions since the Revolution of 1911,²³ the War of Resistance Against Japan and the People's War of Liberation. The martyr himself should be counted as one of his family members and allocated a portion of land as a form of compensation to his dependents. This is necessary.

Unemployed workers and their families who return to the countryside with credentials from municipal people's governments or trade unions should be distributed shares of land and other means of production similar to the peasants' if they demand them and are able to engage in agricultural production and if local land conditions permit. This will help part of the unemployed workers to settle down and will be advantageous to society.

Monks, nuns, Taoists, priests and imams in the rural areas, landlords who ran away and other people who worked for the enemy but who have now returned to the villages, and their families should be given shares of land and other means of production similar to the peasants' if they have no other means of livelihood and are willing and able to engage in agricultural production; otherwise they will become jobless vagabonds, disturbing public order and harming the people.

As punishment, no land shall be given to persons in the villages who have been confirmed by the People's Government as Chinese collaborators, traitors, war criminals, counter-revolutionaries guilty of heinous crimes, or criminals who are bent on sabotaging the agrarian reform. While some of these persons have been identified, others remain to be identified during the agrarian reform. These cases should be investigated and carefully dealt with by the local people's government.

If the land and other property to be nationalized according to the Draft Agrarian Reform Law lack management, the local people's government should immediately send people to take over and manage them, so that they will not be damaged or wasted. Otherwise, the existing managers may continue to manage it if the state does not need it for the time being, but they may not rent or sell it or let it lie waste. When they do not need the land, they must hand it back to the state.

The local people's government must send people to take care of scenic spots and historical relics, so that they may not be damaged.

These are explanations of certain questions concerning land distribution.

V . POINTS FOR ATTENTION DURING AGRARIAN REFORM

Agrarian reform involves systematic and fierce struggle. According to the general line for the forthcoming agrarian reform, it is essential to rely on the poor peasants and farm labourers, unite with the middle peasants and neutralize the rich peasants, systematically and discriminately to eliminate the feudal system of exploitation, and to develop agricultural production. The peasants' associations should be the main organizational form and executive organs of the forces in agrarian reform. Peasants' congresses at all levels, committees of the peasants' associations and the people's representative conferences at all levels²⁴ should be the centres of activity during reform. Honest peasant activists and cadres sent by higher authorities to carry out agrarian reform should form the backbone of the reform. Higher-level leading bodies in the provinces where agrarian reform is being carried out should set up telephone connections with rural areas to establish close contact with lower levels. Leading members and inspection

teams should be sent down from every level to the next lower level to provide practical leadership of the movement. Measures and plans for the reform are to be worked out beforehand from the township upwards and are to be put into effect upon approval by the higher level. If any problem arises that a lower body cannot solve, it should be submitted to a higher body for instruction. The latter should immediately dispatch people to help solve the problem. Major unambiguous problems that are ripe for solution and have a vital bearing on the majority of the people should be solved first, while ambiguous or controversial problems that affect only a small number of people should be settled later, lest solution of the latter should get in the way of efforts to solve the former. These are the points to be borne in mind by cadres directing agrarian reform at different levels.

Before agrarian reform is unfolded everywhere, leading bodies at the county level and above must conduct experiments in a few districts or townships to gain experience for use in training cadres and directing the reform.

Purity of the leadership of the peasants' associations at all levels should be ensured. The masses should be mobilized to elect new leadership where it is impure. Here "purity" does not mean the adoption of a closed-door attitude towards farm labourers, poor peasants or middle peasants who have committed certain errors and denying of their admission into the peasants' associations. On the contrary, they should be welcomed into the associations, educated and united with. "Purity" here means to prevent landlords, rich peasants and their agents from joining the peasants' associations and, still more important, from holding leading positions in the associations. The chief leaders of the peasants' associations must be chosen from among the poor peasants and farm labourers, but real efforts must be made to form an alliance with the middle peasants and, above all, to protect the land and other property of the middle peasants (including the well-to-do middle peasants) from encroachment. At the same time, activists among them must be absorbed into the leadership of the peasants' associations. It should be stipulated that one-third of the leadership of the peasants' associations at all levels be chosen from among the middle peasants. This is absolutely necessary. No poor peasants' leagues nor trade unions should be organized in the villages besides the peasants' associations. Meetings or representative meetings of poor peasants, farm labourers and handicraft workers can be held within the peasants' associations to discuss questions affecting them.

Meetings of this kind, however, should be open to representatives of the middle peasants.

The peasants' associations must pay earnest attention to recruiting peasant women as members and to drawing activists among them into the leadership. It is necessary to call women's meetings or women's representative meetings within the peasants' associations, so as to protect their interests during agrarian reform, uphold their social rights and discuss all kinds of their problems.

Peasants' associations should draw in impoverished revolutionary intellectuals and other labouring people in the rural areas. Moreover, they must unite with all people outside the associations who are opposed to feudalism, including enlightened gentry who support agrarian reform, so as to form a united front in the common struggle against the feudal system of exploitation. The people's government should call together the rich peasants, inform them of its policy and explain the actions of the peasants' associations, in order to set their minds at ease. It should also call the landlords together and inform them of its policy and decrees, so that they also can understand the content and procedure of agrarian reform. They must also be warned not to resist or engage in subversive activities, but honestly to obey the decrees of the government and the decisions of the peasants' associations. Then the government will treat them with clemency. Only those landlords, enemy agents and counter-revolutionaries who conspire to organize resistance and carry out subversive activities shall be ruthlessly suppressed, and all their resistance crushed in good time.

During the period of agrarian reform widespread propaganda and explanation should be carried out not only in the rural areas but also among people in every walk of life in the cities and among the People's Liberation Army units. The agrarian reform policy and decrees of the People's Government should be explained to workers, students, office staff, industrialists, merchants and the commanders and fighters of the armed forces to enable them to understand, sympathize with and help the peasants and not to sympathize with or help the landlords, still less to protect the landlords or those among their own relatives and friends. And the landlords must be told that they must observe honestly the decrees of the People's Government and the decisions of the peasants' associations and should not resist or engage in subversive activities if they want to avoid punishment. This is also very important in organizing the united front against feudalism.

During the agrarian reform cadres of the democratic parties, teachers and other democrats in the cities who are willing to participate should be allowed to do so. They don't have to avoid their native places, because this will enable them and the peasant masses to undergo useful tests and education.

People's tribunals should be set up to suppress and punish without delay the resistance and subversive activities of despots, enemy agents, counter-revolutionaries and landlords and to deal with the charges lodged by the peasants against these elements during the agrarian reform. They should hand over to ordinary courts and public security organs for decision ordinary criminal and civil cases and particularly complicated cases that need long-term investigation before settlement can be reached, so that they can concentrate on dealing with violations of the law during the agrarian reform and maintaining revolutionary order in the rural areas. They should carry out their work in accordance with the regulations promulgated by the government and should not deal with criminals at will. People's organizations and institutions other than the people's tribunals and public security organs shall not detain, try or deal with criminals. People's governments at all levels should pay special attention to helping the people's tribunals and to strengthening and training the cadres of the people's tribunals, thus enabling them to shoulder their own task. Otherwise, order may be endangered during the agrarian reform.

Differentiation of class status in the countryside is a complex and extremely important task in agrarian reform. Leading organs at all levels must tackle this in earnest, in accordance with the decisions promulgated by the Central People's Government. Prudence should be exercised in differentiating the landlord class, because this involves the confiscation of their land and other means of production. The class status of the overwhelming majority of the population in rural areas is clear and can easily be differentiated without much controversy. It should be dealt with first. A small number of people whose class status is unclear, difficult to ascertain and controversial should be dealt with after careful study and upon instruction from higher authorities. Impatience in this matter must be avoided, lest errors be made that lead to their dissatisfaction. In short, no person's class status should be wrongly determined. Once a mistake is made, it must be corrected.

The key to correctly carrying out these tasks and the other tasks of agrarian reform lies in rectifying the work style of our cadres,

especially in correcting authoritarianism. The movement for rectifying work style is now under way in various areas.¹⁴ If this work and the study of agrarian reform are well carried out, I believe the coming large-scale agrarian reform movement will surely be conducted systematically, discriminatingly and in accordance with the laws and decrees of the Central People's Government. Completion of agrarian reform will create decisive conditions for bringing about a fundamental turn for the better in our country's financial and economic situation. Moreover, it will get the peasant masses organized politically. Then our country and the People's Government will be stronger and more consolidated than ever.

This is my report on the question of agrarian reform. I hope you will examine and discuss it.