

1949	Speeches/Documents
Title: AGRARIAN REFORM AND GRAIN TAX IN NEWLY LIBERATED AREAS	
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Description:.	

Part One

1 Agrarian reform in the form of redistribution of land will not be carried out in the newly-liberated areas in East China, Central China, South China, Northwest China, and Southwest China prior to the autumn harvest of 1950, because the preparatory work and the consciousness and organisation of the masses have not reached an appropriate level.

After the autumn harvest of 1950 in the nine provinces of Kiangsu, Chekiang, Anhwei, Fukien, Kiangsi, Hupeh, Hunan, Kwangtung, Shensi and in the Chinese-populated areas of the three provinces of Kansu, Ning-hsia and Chinghai, agrarian reform in the form of redistribution of land should be carried out upon the decision of the provincial People's Governments concerned if the preparatory work is adequate, and if the consciousness and organisation of the masses have reached an appropriate level. In the above-mentioned provinces, if there are still places which are inadequately prepared or the consciousness and organisation of the masses are not adequate or there is banditry, the provincial governments may decide that agrarian reform in the form of land redistribution should not be carried out after the autumn harvest of 1950 but postponed until the autumn harvest of 1951.

2 In the six provinces of Kwangsi, Yunnan, Kweichow, Szechuan, Sikang, and Suiyuan it is decided that agrarian reform in the form of land redistribution should not be carried out prior to the autumn harvest of 1951. Following this, the provincial people's governments concerned will decide upon land redistribution.

3 Agrarian reform in the form of land redistribution should not be carried out prior to the autumn harvest of 1951 in Sinkiang and in other areas where national minorities are concentrated or where Chinese and other national minorities live together.

Whether land redistribution should be carried out in the above mentioned areas after the autumn harvest of 1951 is to be decided later on.

Part Two

4 Rent reduction should be carried out in all newly-liberated areas prior to the redistribution of land.

Decrees and regulations on rent reduction will be promulgated by the provincial People's Governments. Prior to the redistribution of land it will be considered lawful for the landlord to collect rent from peasants after the introduction of rent reduction. Peasants should pay rent to landlords, who shall still retain possession of the land. But the landlord shall not be permitted to split up his land by selling, mortgaging, or giving to others as gifts. All lands split up by landlords by sale or other of the above-mentioned forms after liberation should be proclaimed null and void. But the buying and selling of land between peasant? is not forbidden, because all land of middle peasants, poor

peasants and farm labourers belongs to them at present and in the future and will not be confiscated or redistributed.

'5 No land should be laid waste. The People's Governments of the various regions should protect the right of all tillers of land to reap whatever they have sown. If anyone allows his land to be laid waste, the People's Government will punish him and may allot the land to others for cultivation. The People's Government protects the right of tillers to reap whatever they have sown. The land of absentee landlords, the confiscated land of rural despots, and ownerless land will be temporarily placed in the charge of the local People's Government and will be cultivated by the peasants who originally cultivated the land.

6 The People's Government at all levels should prohibit all sabotage prior to the redistribution of land, such as killing draught animals, destroying farm implements, felling trees, etc. All persons proved guilty of engaging in such acts of sabotage shall be punished according to law.

Part Three

7 At present, in the newly-liberated areas, landlords in some places have reduced their rents; in other places this has not been done. In some areas peasants do not pay rent and the landlords dare not collect it.

Owing to these circumstances and the fact that the collection of grain tax in kind in the newly-liberated areas is a very important task and that there are shortcomings in the methods of grain tax collection, such as unfairness, a number of serious problems have arisen. For example, some landlords have to pay grain tax amounting to over eighty per cent of their total income while others have to pay the whole of their grain as grain tax and in some cases even this is not regarded as adequate. This is a shortcoming and a mistake which must be corrected and remedied, otherwise the steps which the People's Government proposes to take in its agricultural policy would be thrown into confusion and the proclamation of the People's Government (that the redistribution of land will not be put into effect before the autumn harvest of 1950 and that only rent reduction is to be applied) would become meaningless to some extent. And, in addition, the government grain collection has been so affected that in certain areas the program for the grain collection has not yet been fully worked out. In order to correct these shortcomings and mistakes, and in order to fulfill the task of grain collection, the following measures are hereby ordered:

(a) The grain tax to be collected by the Central People's Government should not exceed seventeen per cent of the total agricultural income in newly-liberated areas. The surtax on grain to be collected by the local People's Governments must not exceed fifteen per cent of the amount collected by the Central People's Government. That is, if the Central People's Government collects one hundred piculs in grain tax, the local surtax to be collected should not exceed fifteen piculs. If any local People's Government collected more than this amount a correction must be made by reducing the amount to the proper rate of fifteen per cent. When grain collection quotas are assigned for each area a comprehensive investigation should be conducted on the spot. If any of the quotas are found to be excessive they must be reduced accordingly.

(b) The amount of grain tax should be decided according to the actual agricultural income of each family. The highest grain tax to be paid by a landlord family should in general not exceed sixty per cent of their total agricultural income. Even under special circumstances, it should not exceed eighty per cent. Any collection exceeding this amount should be reduced, and part must be returned

to the landlord who has paid in excess. But this is not applicable to landlords who sold their grain prior to the collection of the grain tax.

(c) Those who have to pay the grain tax must, in general, be not less than ninety per cent of the village population.

(d) Landlords who do not reduce rent or who collect rent in advance must pay an appropriate grain tax due on the land, the tenant farmer is under no obligation to pay this tax.

(e) Landlords who have already reduced rent by twenty-five per cent should pay the grain tax equally with the tenants except for that part of his land on which a progressive rate of tax is due, and which must be paid by the landlords. The grain tax to be paid by landlords and tenants should be adjusted according to whether the amount of rent reduced was in excess of twenty-five per cent or less.

(f) In cases where the landlords do not collect rent or where the tenants do not pay rent, the grain tax should be paid by the tenants and not by the landlords.

(g) In accordance with the above provisions, necessary and appropriate modifications should be made in the measures taken by the local governments for the collection of the progressive agricultural tax.

8 The People's Governments at all levels should Work out detailed measures according to the above provisions and actual investigations should be carried out.

The grain tax should be made up to its full amount by those who did not pay the tax or who paid insufficiently, as the case may be. Reductions should be made in the case of those who were over-taxed. To those who are without means of livelihood on account of having paid too much grain tax a portion of the grain should be returned, or a receipt given for the grain tax for the coming summer or autumn. Those who wish to buy government bonds with the amount returned should be permitted to do so.

9 The People's Governments at all levels should correct all shortcomings and mistakes which occurred in the grain tax collection so as to promote the people's trust in the government, bring about stability in the rural areas and carry out spring sowing; otherwise this year's sowing will suffer serious harm.

Part Four

10 The Government Administration Council of the Central People's Government will promulgate the necessary decrees on agrarian reform in order that land redistribution may be carried out successfully in all newly-liberated areas after the autumn harvests of 1950 or 1951. All People's Governments in the newly-liberated areas and all Military and Political Councils should make maximum use of the time to combine the spring sowing, production, and famine relief in order to speed up the preparatory work. This preparatory work should consist of the following measures: steps to map out measures for the redistribution of land in accordance with this directive and other decrees on land reform issued by the Central People's Government; to allocate competent cadres for conducting experimental work and to utilize successful experiences as models for other areas. These measures should also include: the training of cadres in great numbers for carrying out agrarian reform; rapid formation of peasant unions, the convening of peasant congresses at all levels; the election of peasant committees at all levels; and the calling of people's representative conferences at

all levels for the purpose of thoroughly reconstructing the government bodies at sub-district and village levels. In the course of carrying out these measures it is necessary to unite as far as possible all the enlightened gentry who support agrarian reform.

11 Banditry should be speedily stamped out in those places where it still remains and rents should be immediately reduced in places where they have not yet been reduced. If there are rural despots who have committed the worst kind of crimes and other elements who resist the peasant movement or undermine agrarian reform, the provincial and county People's Governments should take the initiative in arresting them at the proper time and bring them before the People's Tribunals for trial and appropriate punishment. There should be no delay in this respect. The peasants should be allowed to file charges against such elements, but such acts as unlawful beating, unlawful killing, unlawful arrest and unlawful punishment including tarring and feathering, should be strictly forbidden. If the provincial and county governments and judicial bodies should fail to take the initiative in time to arrest, try and punish these criminals then it will be very difficult to avoid the previously-mentioned disorders which may take place in the course of the upsurge of the mass movement.