Decision of the Central China Bureau Regarding the Rectification of the Work Style of Rural Cadres and the Correction of the Erroneous Practices of Indiscriminate Beatings and Killings
17-06-1950

(I) Over the past six months, the vast number of rural work cadres in the Central China Liberated Area—bolstered by the impact of military victories and the effective assistance of military commanders and fighters—have waged an arduous struggle. They are successfully carrying out the tasks of suppressing bandits and local despots, supporting the front lines, and collecting grain, while transitioning toward a broader movement to root out bandits and despots and to reduce rents and interest rates. At present, millions of the masses are mobilizing and organizing themselves; they require firm and correct leadership from all capable cadres—both within and outside the Party—to engage in a larger-scale, more organized struggle. Such leadership is essential for effectively uniting the people, defeating the enemy, and securing further victories. Yet, amidst this victorious advance, instances of anarchism and indiscipline have emerged in many localities—most notably in the form of physical abuse, verbal insults, and, in isolated cases, even homicide. Far from opposing these spontaneous actions by the masses, some cadres have adopted a "tailist" attitude—lagging behind the masses rather than leading them—and have even gone so far as to personally commit, incite, or organize acts of physical violence. Regardless of the underlying motives, justifications, or pretexts, such behavior constitutes a grave error of principle that is absolutely impermissible. If left unchecked, these actions will lead to a serious alienation from the masses, hinder the development of the mass movement, and make it impossible to fulfill the tasks of organizing the broad masses and achieving social reform.

(II) Given that, in the course of the struggle to suppress bandits and root out local despots in rural areas, the heinous crimes committed by these elements have incited deep indignation among the masses—while, at the same time, the ideological composition of our own cadres remains significantly impure—there is a high risk of errors involving indiscriminate beatings and killings. At this critical juncture, leadership bodies at all levels must adopt necessary measures to strictly scrutinize such erroneous practices, and mobilize the broad ranks of cadres to consciously, promptly, and decisively correct and halt them. Individuals who persist in their errors and refuse to repent should be subjected to disciplinary action. Those who exploit the chaotic situation to undermine the bond between our Party and the masses, sabotage the mass movement, or commit other grave offenses should be referred to the people’s courts for legal prosecution.

(III) During mass movements, when the public holds meetings to denounce bandits, local despots, and other disruptive elements, it is essential to promote a method of struggle based on reasoned argument. Physical assault and corporal punishment must not be permitted. Those bandits, local despots, and other criminals who remain recalcitrant and unrepentant must be handed over to a people’s tribunal for trial and adjudication; they should not be dealt with summarily on the spot. The masses must be educated to utilize the people’s tribunal—an instrument of the people’s democratic dictatorship—to suppress counter-revolutionary activities and uphold the cause of justice. The people’s tribunal should encourage the masses to come forward with denunciations, accusations, and rebuttals, while also allowing the accused to present a defense—either personally or through others—thereby educating the broader public, helping them distinguish right from wrong and the gravity of various offenses, and ensuring appropriate handling. Moving forward, special attention must be paid to educating both the masses and cadres to respect the people’s government and abide by its laws, so as to consolidate the people’s democratic dictatorship and defeat the enemy.

(IV) In cases where a criminal must be executed, the charges must be made public; secret executions are strictly prohibited. For those whose crimes are so grave that the law cannot show leniency, necessitating a death sentence, the people’s tribunal must conduct a thorough, fact-based

investigation to secure compelling evidence. Furthermore, the process must garner the understanding and support of the broad masses. Following established legal procedures, the trial and sentencing must be completed, and—in accordance with the regulations of the Central Plains People's Government—the case must be submitted to the designated higher-level authority for approval before the sentence is carried out locally. This is because excessive or indiscriminate killing is highly detrimental to the people's revolutionary cause; the wrongful execution of even one person can alienate the masses and cause a loss of public sympathy. If one merely caters to the demands of a segment of the population while ignoring the differing views of the broader public—or if one acts solely on the basis of the masses' transient emotional fervor, without organizing them to present accusations and engage in discussions to reach a consensus among the overwhelming majority—then rushing to execute someone merely to vent anger will inevitably lead to public dissatisfaction or subsequent regret, and may even risk creating divisions within the ranks of the people. This must be guarded against with the utmost vigilance.

(V) To implement and correct the mistakes of indiscriminate killing, we must conscientiously convene the county representative meetings from all walks of life and the district and township farmer representative meetings. All decisions made by the party shall be submitted as suggestions to the representative meetings for discussion and approval, and they shall be communicated to the lower levels in an organized manner, so that the party's policy becomes the policy of the masses, and is realized with the supervision and support of the broad masses. All party and non-party cadres must conscientiously implement the decisions of the representative conference. Correct the past habit of deciding issues only in cadre meetings within the party and promoting implementation through only a few cadres. All mistakes that occur among the masses should be corrected through their own organizations and meetings and decided by the majority of the masses. All mass work cadres should accept the supervision of the masses and be criticized or approved by the masses. Only in this way can responsibility to superiors, the party and the masses be unified. All mass work cadres who meet the conditions should join peasant associations, trade unions and other mass organizations through certain procedures. They should also enjoy the rights and obligations of a member and carry out activities on a completely equal footing and in a democratic style. We must not have any privileges to force the majority of the masses to obey us. At the same time, we must pay attention to adhering to the policies of the party and the government. We must patiently persuade and educate the erroneous tendencies among the masses, raise the level of consciousness of the masses, and correct them. We must not adopt a tail-minded attitude of "let the masses do whatever they want."

(VI) This autumn and winter should be used to hold planned meetings to rectify the work style of cadres. We should use party consolidation meetings, working meetings, and training classes to examine and discuss the mistakes of beating, cursing, killing, and lack of discipline and government, mobilize the majority of cadres to overcome this mistake, strictly criticize and correct all styles of commandism, bureaucracy, and tailism, and study and praise democratic methods and styles in actual work. Regarding the erroneous views and sayings among popular people and cadres, such as "As long as you hit the enemy and not your own people, it is not a mistake!" "Hitting and killing people is the demand of the masses!" "If you want to let go, you must beat and curse people!" and other excuses, use the method of actual comparison and theoretical explanation to distinguish the good and bad, and sort them out. Only by drawing a clear line between right and wrong in terms of ideology, policy regulations, and working methods can the above provisions be understood by cadres and implemented conscientiously. Only by truly and effectively overcoming the erroneous bureaucratic tailism style of beating and cursing people can we better mobilize cadres to strengthen contact with the masses and lead an increasingly large-scale mass movement.

(VII) In cases where disciplinary action against an individual cadre is unavoidable, it must be preceded by patient persuasion and education, aimed at encouraging a voluntary change in attitude.

Furthermore, all cadres should be made to understand the necessity of such disciplinary measures, thereby raising the overall level of political consciousness among the cadre ranks.

(VIII) In areas where the conduct of cadres is poor or their class composition is problematic, the rectification of the cadre ranks must precede the launching of any mass movement; it is better to proceed slowly than to rush. For the time being, efforts should be focused on conducting localized pilot projects, selected based on the specific conditions of the cadres and the masses in those areas. Given that the conduct of veteran cadres exerts a decisive influence on the conduct of the large number of new cadres, the rectification process must prioritize the veteran cadres. They should be guided to leverage their own high level of political consciousness to take on the honorable task of educating the new cadres.

(IX) It is essential to reiterate the decision to oppose indiscipline and anarchism, to establish a system of seeking instructions and submitting reports, and to strengthen discipline. On one hand, leading bodies must provide clear, timely directives—grounded in practical experience and the Party's policy principles—regarding specific policy issues that could easily lead to chaos (such as indiscriminate coercion, beatings, or killings) during mass movements. Examples include: clarifying that civilian-owned firearms should not be confiscated during the struggle to suppress bandits (but rather reserved for the future establishment of a people's militia; only weapons seized from bandits should be collected); discouraging the practice of digging for hidden assets during campaigns against local despots; and clearly defining the criteria for identifying "local despots" or those who collude with bandits. Such guidance will provide lower-level units with a clear framework to follow, helping to minimize errors. On the other hand, all comrades must conscientiously adhere to the system of seeking instructions and submitting reports. No significant policy actions falling outside established guidelines may be taken without prior authorization. When superiors mandate an inspection, it must be carried out and reported on diligently—perfunctory compliance is unacceptable. If superiors issue an incorrect directive, they must conduct a self-critique. Any policy that experience proves to be flawed must be promptly reported, with a request for revision. The entire Party must understand that policy is the starting point for all our actions; failing to implement the correct policy inevitably means implementing an incorrect one, and an incorrect policy will inevitably lead the masses down a path toward failure. Empiricism, localism, and tendencies toward seeking independence are absolutely impermissible today.

(X) Regarding the above decisions, all provincial, prefectural, and county party committees shall convene special meetings to discuss and review them, adopt their own resolutions, and report these upward through the established hierarchy; any experience gained during implementation should also be reported as it arises.