

## **The CPC Central Committee forwarded the Central South Bureau's comments on the report on land reform work**

(December 13, 1951)

The Central-South Bureau also informs the East China, Southwest China, Northwest China, and North China Bureaus and requests that they forward this report to all provincial, municipal, and regional Party committees:

(1) The Central Committee approves the Central-South Bureau's report of December 10, 1951, on the analysis of the progress of land reform work in the Central-South region and the guidelines for land reform work in 1952, and considers this report completely correct. The Central Committee believes that at this juncture, land reform in the new areas of the country is roughly halfway complete, but the remaining half requires concentrated efforts (those already allocated still require review). If we rush things, there is the danger of becoming a formality and failing to effectively resolve the problem. At this juncture, the Central-South Bureau comrades' submission of this analysis is timely and absolutely necessary. The Central Bureaus and provincial and regional Party committees are requested not to relax their leadership of land reform work in 1952 just because the Central Committee has proposed a policy of shifting the main leadership direction at the provincial level and above to cities and industry in a timely manner based on the progress of land reform. To do so would be a mistake. The Central Committee points out: Regarding the specific solutions to the distribution of leadership attention and the shift of leadership priorities between rural and urban areas, land reform, and industry, all Central Bureaus, Provincial Committees, and District Party Committees are requested to carefully manage this issue and avoid inappropriate distribution or untimely shifts.

(2) This report from the Central-South Bureau should be distributed to all Central Bureaus and provincial, municipal, and district Party Committees for emulation and publication in internal Party publications.

December 13, 1951,

Central Committee Central-South Bureau Report on the Analysis of the Progress of Land Reform in the Central-South Region in 1951 and the Guidelines for Land Reform in 1952 (December 10, 1951)

Central Committee and Chairman: (Additionally, to the Branch Bureaus and Provincial and District Party Committees) I hereby report on the progress of land reform in the Central-South Region as follows:

1. Last winter, this spring, and in the summer and autumn, land reform was completed in areas with a population of 80 million. This winter and next spring, we plan to continue this work in areas with a population of 50 million. At the same time, we will conduct a review and issue land certificates in the areas with a population of 60 million that have already been completed. By next winter and the following spring, we will have eliminated the remaining 10 million in Guangdong and Guangxi, and the review will be concluded. The entire task is being rushed, and this winter and next spring will be a crucial juncture.

2. Second, based on the areas where work has already been completed, the peasants have received a total of 69 million mu of land (ranging from one to three mu per person), 784,000 oxen (it is estimated that farmers with few or no oxen will receive one ox for every four households), and 5.2 billion jin of grain (including the 100 jin of grain that poor peasants previously received for every grain shortage). According to surveys in fourteen counties, after the land distribution, the average per capita land ownership by each class compared to the local per capita average was: landlords accounted for 80%, poor and hired peasants for 90%, middle peasants for 110%, rich peasants for 130% (some as high as 150%), and small land lessors for 150%, generally in line with the central government's overall policy. In terms of the depth of the work, 20% of the villages have relatively good peasant unity, a few core cadres, and effective control of the dominant position. 50% of the villages have weak organizational strength, are unable to resist landlord counterattacks, or have a balanced balance of power. 30% of the villages are still under the control of landlords, either openly or covertly. Regardless of the type of township, the following phenomena exist to varying degrees: unfair land distribution, misclassification of class status, poor relations between officials and the masses, escaping landlords and unconfiscated property, and constant landlord counterattacks, seizing peasants' harvests, and forcing them to pay rent and debts. Some backward masses have not yet been mobilized, and the democratic system has not been truly established. Furthermore, in some areas, counter-revolutionaries have not yet been eliminated, secret societies are still active, and riots have occurred (over 20 in Hunan alone). All of this shows that the rural position is still not very solid. The problem lies in the short time of land reform, the uneven quality of cadres, and the scarcity of capable cadres (less than one per district on average). Furthermore, the influence of the traditional landlord rule is significant, and freeing the peasants from feudal influences and organizing them according to the principles of class democracy is an extremely difficult task. Our work requirements have already exceeded the limits permitted by subjective and objective factors; and it is understandable that we are prone to impatience and cannot achieve satisfactory results.
3. Third, this year's tasks are greater, the cadre strength is relatively weakened, and the class situation has become more complicated. After the three major campaigns, the landlords used widespread property dispersal (over 70 percent of the people in a township hid their property) to divide and control the peasants, attempting to replace genuine land reform with a sham, landlord-style, peaceful land reform. The peasants' confidence in the success of land reform grew, but they were misled by the landlords' trap. Under these circumstances, any slackness or carelessness could lead to formalism or the errors of fighting in a chaotic camp. What is needed now is more intensive and arduous work, and more focused and specific guidance. However, an atmosphere of acute slackness and a distraction of energy pervades all quarters.
  - (a) Leading bodies are eager to complete land reform and rush into construction;
  - (b) Veteran cadres are eager to leave the countryside and rush to the cities;
  - (c) New cadres are eager to graduate and become leading cadres in government agencies;
  - (d) Government departments and people's organizations are eager to capitalize on the foundation of land reform to implement a host of new programs;
  - (e) Last year's work, while somewhat successful, has left many comrades burdened with experience, while truly experienced cadres are actually quite rare. Every region has overestimated the impact of land reform. For example, it was generally believed that 30 percent of the townships would be first-rate, and 20 percent would be backward. Actual

inspections revealed the exact opposite, with most townships exhibiting numerous problems.

(f) Because there was no war in the country and a large number of armed forces were stationed in all directions, weaknesses in the work were not easily exposed, and most people were not fully aware of this.

(g) Peasant cadres wanted to retire early, peasants wanted to divide the land early, and landlords wanted to escape early. These factors have led to a situation where progress is rushed, regardless of effectiveness, and the willingness to cut corners is paramount, creating the greatest danger in this year's work. Past experience suggests that achieving speed is not difficult; the key is how fast. Cutting corners and achieving speed will inevitably lead to many adverse consequences, the most obvious of which are: landlord rule cannot be overthrown, the masses cannot take power, class struggle becomes entangled in factional struggles, and it is difficult to fully develop and establish a reliable base. It is not difficult to foresee the negative impact these consequences will have on land reform itself and on construction work.

4. Based on the above, the following aspects of land reform are emphasized: (1) Educate cadres to appreciate the importance of winning over the peasants politically during land reform, which requires struggle: A. Effectively establish numerous reliable political bases in the countryside. B. Rely firmly on the poor and hired peasants and unite 90 percent of the rural population. C. Build strong township peasant associations, cultivate leading cadres who are pure in composition, resolute in struggle, democratic in style, upright in character, and trusted by the masses, and establish a connection between the peasant associations and the peasant masses. This connection is based on political trust, not simply organizational subordination. D. Fully utilize the experience of class struggle to educate the masses, raise their patriotic consciousness, and encourage them to wholeheartedly accept the leadership of the Communist Party and Chairman Mao. (2) To achieve the above goals, the current plan must not be expanded. It will be completed before next summer in Hunan, Hubei, and Jiangxi provinces. It will be completed this winter and next spring in Guangdong and Guangxi in areas with a population of 25 million, and in the remaining areas with a population of 10 million by next winter. If this plan is completed, it will be sufficient to ensure the transition to construction. On the one hand, we must not, for fear of leaving a last digit, overshoot the mark and rush things, resulting in a haphazard approach everywhere. On the other hand, we must resolutely concentrate our efforts this winter and next spring on this major campaign and must not disperse them. We must be willing to reluctantly let go of or relax non-urgent tasks. If we want to gain time today, we must know how to use it; otherwise, we are wasting it.

(3) To achieve the above-mentioned goals, the plan to complete land reform in three stages must be adhered to. A systematic review campaign must be conducted after land reform. Without this review, land reform will be incomplete, and in some villages, it will be very incomplete. Alternatively, the remnants of feudal influence and disunity among the peasantry left behind by the review could be carried over into the production movement, leading to lax rural organization, a weakened dictatorship, insufficient political motivation for production, and an inability to withstand the storm. This would then make the leadership even more passive. However, the review should not lead to a relaxation of the current guidance of the land distribution movement.

(4) Not only is the review necessary, but a democratic movement must also be launched during the transition to production to eliminate feudal restoration activities, establish the

democratic system of the People's Congress, and strengthen patriotic production efforts.

(5) This year's work must emphasize in-depth work—reaching deep into the masses and engaging in in-depth struggle. Reaching deep into the masses means reaching deep into the poor and hired peasants and the backward masses. In-depth struggle means repeatedly waging the struggle against the enemy through several steps. Politically, we must thoroughly overthrow the evil bullies in power, eliminate counter-revolutionaries, and force the enemy to submit, daring them to speak or act recklessly. Economically, all feudal properties that must be confiscated must be confiscated. This in-depth approach is intended to implement the policy of fully mobilizing the masses to combat feudalism, not to engage in in-depth work without struggle or to engage in in-depth work that is divorced from the demands of the masses. Using individual connections to establish or organize peasant organizations and employing mass self-perception campaigns to raise peasant consciousness has yielded excellent results in the past and should be further expanded.

(6) Implementing the policy. First, we must prioritize land distribution, not prioritize superficial wealth over land. We must ensure fair distribution to meet the needs of the vast majority of poor and hired peasants for land reform. Second, we must prioritize class demarcation to prevent and correct erroneous demarcations. District governments and farmers' associations should promptly review the class ratios in each township. Third, we must treat landlords differently, resolutely cracking down on bullies, saboteurs, and large landlords. For law-abiding, subservient middle-class landlords, confiscation should be limited to land and the four major superficial wealth. Small landlords already in dire straits may, with the consent of the masses, demand only land and less or no grain. Differential treatment emphasizes the boundaries and limits of struggle, not simply focusing on differentiation without engaging in struggle.

(7) In areas where counter-revolutionaries have not been thoroughly suppressed, we must first focus on mobilizing the masses to eliminate counter-revolutionaries. Land reform is the most favorable opportunity for suppressing counter-revolutionaries and must not be missed. After preparing for land reform, we should launch a struggle against the anti-communist factions according to the circumstances. Winter production must be carried out without delay.

(8) During or after land reform, the townships should be divided into smaller groups. The entire region should be divided into 100,000 townships, with an average of 1,500 people per township, to cultivate and develop the masses' ability to manage the government. After land reform, the peasant associations should not be abolished but should be strengthened to maintain the class unity of the masses and their tradition of struggle against the old ways, thereby strengthening the people's dictatorship. Based on the peasant representative conferences, people's congresses should be convened to implement democratic elections. In order to overcome the long-standing tendency of township cadres to suppress democracy and to ensure full democracy in future elections, democratic criticism campaigns must be carried out repeatedly during land reform and the review. The courage of the masses to criticize cadres is the first manifestation of democracy, and this fine tradition must be established in the countryside.

(9) In areas where the review is completed, training of township activists should begin,

starting with 1.5 million next spring.

(10) Each province must create several model counties through land reform, and each county must create about one-tenth of model townships or advanced townships to lay the foundation for the production movement. Cadres in model counties and townships will not be transferred for a long period of time.

Please give your instructions on the above. Printed by the Central South Bureau on December 10th