Decision of the Central Committee on the Examination of Cadres
Date: 24 November 1953

The cadres of our Party are fundamentally politically sound, and the overwhelming majority have been tested through revolutionary struggle. In order to preserve the purity of this cadre corps, our Party has consistently sought to distinguish and evaluate cadres through the trials of revolutionary struggle, while at different historical periods adopting various measures to examine them repeatedly.

Since nationwide liberation, however, the cadre corps has expanded rapidly, and its composition has become more complex than at any previous period. Although through the campaigns to clean up the "middle" and "inner" levels (**中层、内层**), the Three-Anti Campaign, Party rectification, and various social democratic reform campaigns, we have gained a preliminary understanding of most new cadres and dealt with some of the most prominent problems among them, the urgent demands of work in recent years and the frequent reassignment of personnel have prevented leadership organs at all levels from conducting careful examinations of every cadre individually. Consequently, we still lack a comprehensive and reliable understanding of many new cadres.

At present, among the new cadres there remain considerable numbers whose histories are unclear or whose origins are unknown; even a small number of counterrevolutionaries continue to conceal themselves within their ranks. Among veteran cadres there are also some who have never been examined, some whose earlier examinations left certain questions unresolved, and some whose examinations originally found no problems but whose subsequent conduct has raised new questions. Some leading cadres have also become complacent, paying attention only to professional competence while neglecting political examination.

In light of these circumstances, the Central Committee believes that within the next two or three years it is necessary to conduct a thorough nationwide examination of all cadres, so as to gain a fuller understanding of our cadre corps and ensure the smooth fulfilment of the tasks of national construction.

Accordingly, the following decision is issued.

I. Purpose and General Principles

The examination of cadres is to be carried out after the First Five-Year Plan has already begun, at a time when construction tasks in every field are extremely demanding.

The work must therefore be closely integrated with current tasks and conducted in stages and with clear priorities. It must neither disrupt ongoing work by being carried out as a mass campaign nor be neglected because current work is heavy.

The purpose of examining cadres is to obtain a comprehensive understanding of them. The examination should focus primarily on political questions, clarifying each cadre's political identity and eliminating from Party and government organs all counterrevolutionaries, class-alien elements, and degenerate or corrupt individuals, thereby preserving the purity of the cadre corps.

At the same time, the examination should develop a broader understanding of cadres' ideological qualities and working abilities, so that they may be trained more systematically and employed more appropriately.

II. Scope and Order of Examination

The examination shall cover all cadres in:

- Party and government organs at every level;

- people's organizations;
- finance and economics departments;
- educational and cultural departments; and
- other relevant sectors.

The work shall proceed in the following order:

- Party members before non-Party personnel;
- leading cadres before ordinary cadres;
- key departments before ordinary departments;
- prefectural Party committees, administrative offices (and municipal leadership organs), and important state-owned factories and mines before county and district organs and secondary enterprises;
- cadres whose political identities are unclear, whose backgrounds are unknown, or whose histories contain unresolved questions before other cadres.

This order will allow central leadership organs and strategically important departments to be cleaned up first and placed firmly under politically reliable personnel, while permitting other institutions to be dealt with steadily and with fewer mistakes or disruptions.

III. Methods of Examination

Different methods shall be adopted according to different departments and different categories of personnel.

Ordinary government organs should conduct examinations alongside their regular work.

In factories and mines, provincial and municipal Party committees shall first examine the principal leadership of each enterprise and then rely upon those cadres to examine ordinary personnel while maintaining production.

Short-term cadre schools and training classes generally should not conduct examinations, since participants are unfamiliar with one another. If problems are discovered, they should be referred back to the original work unit for investigation.

Cadres whose overall situations are already completely understood need not be re-examined.

Those whose histories have been only partially examined shall be investigated only on the unresolved portions.

Those whose entire histories have never been examined shall receive a comprehensive examination.

Cases involving questions that cannot readily be clarified may be postponed.

This approach allows leadership to concentrate its strength on key problems and conduct examinations thoroughly and carefully.

IV. Leadership and Organization

Cadre examination must be conducted under the unified leadership of the Central Committee and Party committees above the county level, with responsibilities divided among different departments and implemented level by level.

Where necessary, Cadre Examination Committees may be established under Party committee leadership.

Responsibility shall be allocated as follows:

- principal leaders of higher-level organs shall be examined by the next higher Party committee;
- departmental leadership shall be examined by Party committees at the same level;
- ordinary cadres shall be examined by their own work units.

Cadres examined directly by Party committees shall be handled through the various Party departments under unified Party leadership.

Within each institution, the principal administrative leader shall personally organize the leadership core responsible for conducting examinations.

Leadership groups responsible for examinations must receive approval from the corresponding Party committee.

Where departments lack capable leadership, Party committees should assign experienced cadres to strengthen them; if this cannot be done immediately, examinations should be postponed rather than conducted poorly.

Institutions directly subordinate to central departments but stationed in local areas shall generally be examined by the local Party committee, with assistance from the relevant central department.

V. Preparatory Work

To conduct examinations in a planned, organized, and well-led manner, thorough preparation is essential.

Preparations include:

1. ensuring that leading cadres share a correct understanding of the significance, purpose, and principles of cadre examination;
2. selecting politically reliable, upright, and capable cadres to carry out the work and providing them with prior training;
3. classifying examination targets according to existing materials so investigations can proceed systematically; and
4. conducting pilot examinations in selected departments before expanding the work gradually.

The work must not be launched comprehensively all at once.

VI. Investigation and Research

The key to successful cadre examination lies in careful investigation and research.

Since national liberation has improved transportation, raised popular political consciousness, and produced abundant materials through campaigns such as the clean-up of the "middle" and "inner" levels and the Three-Anti Campaign, while many enemy archives have also come into Party hands, present conditions are more favourable than ever before.

The examination should proceed by:

1. collecting and organizing all existing personnel files;
2. identifying key problems and investigative leads;
3. conducting further investigations; and

4. analysing all evidence before reaching conclusions.

Investigations must be meticulous and truth-seeking.

Investigators must avoid:

- carelessness,
- subjective speculation,
- coercive interrogation and forced confessions ("逼供信"),
- becoming entangled in trivial details rather than essential questions.

Clear distinctions must be maintained between:

- political and ideological problems,
- historical and current problems,
- family and personal responsibility,
- differing degrees of seriousness and guilt.

VII. Conclusions and Disposition

A conclusion should be reached promptly after each examination.

Where an individual's entire history has been clarified, a definitive conclusion shall be issued immediately.

If only isolated questions remain unresolved because evidence cannot presently be found, a positive conclusion may be issued regarding the verified portions while continuing investigation into the remaining issues.

Cadres who were previously assigned to secondary positions because unresolved historical questions had been reserved, but who have consistently performed well and are now cleared, should be promoted boldly and employed according to their virtue and ability.

Cadres found to have political problems shall be dealt with according to relevant Central Committee regulations, including:

- the Measures for Handling Communist Party Members Who Concealed Political and Historical Problems During the Clean-Up of the "Middle" and "Inner" Levels;
- the Interim Measures for Handling Reserved Political Suspicions During Cadre Examination; and
- the Regulations for Handling Those Who Surrendered or Betrayed the Revolution.

The individual concerned must be informed of the conclusion and permitted to present a defence.

Those dissatisfied with the Party organization's conclusion may appeal to a higher Party committee, and both the conclusion and the individual's views must be submitted together.

VIII. Handling Major Political Suspects

Individuals found during examinations to be under serious political suspicion shall be promptly removed from important positions by appropriate means and investigated by the public security organs.

If counterrevolutionaries are discovered whose arrest is necessary, arrest must be approved by Party committee discussion and by higher Party committees and public security organs before being carried out.

The work of eliminating counterrevolutionaries must never be confused with ordinary cadre examination.

IX. Improving Cadre Administration

Cadre examination should be closely integrated with strengthening and improving cadre administration.

During the examination process, standardized personnel management should gradually be established, especially:

- regular personnel file management; and
- standardized procedures for transferring personnel files and certificates.

These measures will eliminate disorder in cadre administration and gradually place Party personnel management on a regular institutional footing.

X. Responsibilities of Party Committees

Cadre examination is an extremely delicate and complex undertaking.

Party committees and administrative heads at all levels must personally exercise careful leadership.

The following matters require Party committee discussion and decision:

- formulation of plans,
- selection of priorities,
- organization of personnel,
- determination of examination targets,
- disposition of important cadres and major cases.

Throughout implementation, Party committees must conduct regular inspections, provide concrete guidance, summarize experience promptly, exchange lessons, and correct deviations.

After receiving this decision, Party committees shall formulate detailed local implementation plans and submit them to higher Party committees for approval.

XI. Examination of Military Cadres

The number of military cadres has increased rapidly in recent years, and their composition has likewise become more complex.

A thorough examination shall therefore also be conducted within the armed forces.

The General Political Department of the Military Commission is instructed to formulate a military implementation plan based on the principles of this decision and submit it to the Central Committee for approval before implementation.

XII. Examination of Non-Party Cadres

The examination of non-Party cadres shall follow the above principles and refer to the spirit of the Central Committee's earlier Directive on Cleaning Up the "Middle" and "Inner" Levels.

Democratic personages and upper-stratum figures among minority nationalities generally shall not be examined.

Ordinary minority cadres shall be examined according to the principle of preserving cadre purity without undermining ethnic unity. The Central Bureaus and Branch Bureaus shall formulate plans for such examinations, which shall be implemented only after approval by the Central Committee.