

Important Questions Arising During The Agrarian Reform In China

[We are reproducing here a report made in January 1948 to the Enlarged Session of the North West Peoples Liberation Army's Front Committee by com. Jen li-pen. The report described vividly the problems faced during the implementation of agrarian reforms in China such as the class analysis, feudal exploitation, unity with middle and rich peasants, methods of struggle and so on.

We consider this report is important even today to understand the prevailing semi-feudal conditions in India and to effect democratic revolution through agrarian reforms. – Editor]

What I want to speak about is several questions from the agrarian reform. These are several important questions, but are not the whole questions of agrarian reform. The agrarian reform movement of the various liberated areas has obtained great achievements within the vast liberated areas, given rise to ardent mass movement, and has already thoroughly wiped out, or is now thoroughly wiping out, the feudal and semi-feudal system of exploitation, which has existed in China for thousands of years, enabling tens of millions of Chinese peasants to “fanshon”(“fan shon” is the term used in the liberated areas to describe the peasants’ overthrowing of the feudal system and the establishing of a new democratic system politically, socially, economically and culturally. The words “fan shon” literally mean “to turn one’s body over” and are somewhat similar colloquially to the English expression “to get up on one’s foot”). This is the greatest people’s movement in the history of China, and is also the basis on which the war can to-day victoriously be develop. This is what imperialism and the Chinese Kuomintang reactionaries are most afraid of. The Agrarian Conference of September, last year, conducted an overall discussion on the question of agrarian reform, and made many important decisions. Based on the results of the Agrarian Conference, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist party published the Basic program on Chinese Agrarian Law, proposing that the governments of the various liberated areas should carry it out. The publication of the Basic program on Chinese Agrarian Law clearly and precisely pointed out before the people of the whole country the direction and methods of our party’s agrarian policy. With regard to this direction and method, we should firmly support them.... But the work of agrarian reform is a laborious and complicated one..... it is further necessary to correctly and concretely solve the various questions arising during the practical movement of the peasants. Based on the recent decision of the Central Committee, I now speak about the following questions, which occurred in the course of the great movement, and which must receive the attention of the entire party.

What is the Criterion for Demarcating Rural Classes?

The Central Committee recently re-issued two documents of 1933: “How To Analyse Classes” and “Decision On some Questions From Agrarian Struggles,” as reference documents for the demarcation of rural classes for the various areas. Although they are 1933 documents, they are in general still applicable to-day. They contain precise stipulations concerning landlords, rich peasants, middle peasants, poor peasants, farm labourers etc. The Central Committee has issued these two documents because mistakes have occurred in some localities in the demarcation of class standing. The criterion for demarcation of class standing of many people has been determined incorrectly so that the line of demarcation between the enemy and ourselves is not clearly known. Chairman Mao tells us that we must clearly draw the line of demarcation, clearly distinguish between the enemy and ourselves, isolate and disintegrate the enemy, and must not isolate ourselves. If the class standing of many people is determined incorrectly, this disorders our ranks.

The Case of Tsai-Chiaai

Now I cite a case from the Shansi-Suiyuan area demonstrating the seriousness of this danger. According to the Shansi-Suiyuan Sub-Bureau speaking last month on the correction of errors in determining class standing in the administrative village Tsai-chiaai in Hsinghsion county, out of the total 552 households in the whole administrative village of Tsai-chiaai, excluding one natural village Chaorhshang (equivalent to hamlet or settlement 124 households or 22.46 per cent of the total number of households were determined as landlords or rich peasants According to general estimates, landlords average approximately 5 per cent under the old regime. Added up together, landlords and rich peasants average approximately 8 per cent of the total households and approximately 10 per cent of the

population. In the old liberated areas, many landlords and old type rich peasants have already become members of other classes. The number of landlord and rich peasant households should be less than 8 per cent, but the number of landlord and rich peasant households in Tsai-chiaai exceeded the 8 per cent by nearly twofold.

Later, as a result of re-determination on the part of the sub-bureau working through the peasantry congress committee based on the principles of the 2 documents “How to Analyse Classes” and “Decisions on Some Questions from the Agrarian Struggles”, it was considered that among the 124 households, 11 households of bankrupt and declining landlords, and 20 households of “producing rich peasants” or 31 households in all, could be re-determined as well-to-do peasants. Thus, the number of landlords and rich peasants could be reduced to 93 households, or 16.84 per cent of the total number of households. Later, the time standard for determination was shortened from 1937 to 1940. Thus, the landlords and rich peasants of all Tsai-chiaai’s 579 households (including Chaorhshang) could be reduced to 71 households. This is still 12.26 per cent of the total number of households. If we consider landlords who have engaged in labour for 5 years and rich peasants who have ceased to engage in exploitation 3 years as middle peasants, then the number of landlord and rich present households should be even smaller.

Hsinghsion County’s Tsai-chiaai may be taken as a place in this area where landlords and rich peasants are comparatively concentrated. Most of the villages in this county do not have as many landlords and rich peasants as Tsai-chiaai. But the experience of Tsai-chiaai teaches us an important lesson; we must demarcate classes and carry out agrarian reform in accordance with the actual situation, and must absolutely not artificially demarcate those who are not landlords and rich peasants as landlords and rich peasants, thus erroneously enlarging our “area of attack”, disordering the revolutionary front, helping the enemy and isolating ourselves. This is an extremely important question, and must receive the attention of comrades of the whole party.

But how did the comrades working in the agrarian reform at Hsinghsion’s Tsai-chiaai erroneously demarcate class standing? It is reported that the reassigning of 31 households into the lower classes was owing to the following reasons: (1) 15 households were determined incorrectly because their fathers or grandfathers had exploited people. They themselves had by 1937, a year before the establishment of the Democratic Anti-Japanese Government, or before, exploited others very little or not at all; (2) 5 households were wrongly determined because they had in their early years enjoyed the livelihood of landlords or rich peasants but since before the anti-Japanese war (the latter half of their lives) they had laboured and did not exploit others, or exploited only very-slightly; (3) 7 households were determined incorrectly because they had many possessions though they were industrious labourers engaging in only slight exploitation; (4) 3 households were determined incorrectly because though they mainly engaged in labour themselves, and exploited others very little or not at all, they had been adopted or sold to landlords or rich peasants as sons, when very poor in their early years; (5) 1 household (in the widow and orphan category) was determined incorrectly because being without labour power, there was a period when the orphan hired others. His father was a peasant and he himself became a peasant when he grew up—that is to say, he accidentally lost labour power and hired full-time farm labour. (6) Apart from these, in the determining of class standing in the past, the political attitude of those whose economic conditions and relations of exploitation were very difficult to determine, was often used to assign them to the lower or higher classes.

Exploitation the only Criterion

To sum up, in Tsai-chiaai, and other parts of Shansi-Suiyuan in the past, so many criteria as exploitation, history, livelihood, and political attitude were used to determine class standing. Aside from exploitation, the taking of any other conditions as criteria for demarcating class standing is entirely wrong. Thus, in one administrative village of Tsai-chiaai alone, more than 50 households or approximately 300 persons were demarcated incorrectly into the enemy camp. This is not isolating the enemy but is self-isolation. What a serious mistake it is to send people from our own rank into the camp of the enemy!

And what was the attitude of the peasant towards the incorrect determination of the class standing of such a number of persons? Comrades of the sub-bureau say that during the discussion by the committee of the peasant Congress, all committee members endorsed the method for demarcating classes of 1933 in “How to Analyse Classes” but were afraid to rectify. Some said that quite clearly there were poor peasants and farm labourers who felt that the class enemy had been worked up to too many, but they did not dare to speak. They were afraid that others would say they were covering up for landlords or rich peasants. The majority of the committee members said that there were some so-called producing rich peasants who were in fact middle peasants, and were demarcated as

rich peasants by straining the point. They said that their not serving in the army was disadvantageous to us. They said moreover that demarcating "producing rich peasants" engaging in slight exploitation as middle peasants would cause the middle peasants to produce without fear and is beneficial to production. It may be seen from this that the peasants are not satisfied with having a large number of people demarcated incorrectly as landlords or rich peasants. They consider that this is making too many enemies and their own strength is thus weakened, and it endangers the development of production. This is a very correct way of looking at things.

It must be pointed out here that I am raising the question of the incorrect determination of class standing at Hsinghsion's Tsai-chiaai only as an example. It can be affirmatively stated that in other villages of the Shansi-Suiyuan Area in Northwest, there is sure to be quite a number of cases of the sort as incorrect determination of class standing that took place in Tsai-chiaai, to cases more or less similar to this. All leading comrades engaging in agrarian reform work must seriously examine this question of determining class standing, and publicly and definitely rectify mistakes they have committed. Even if only a single person is determined incorrectly, this must nevertheless be rectified.

Such criterions of determining class standing as were employed at Tsai-chiaai are incorrect. But what, after all, is the correct criterion for determination of class standing? This is the first thing we must clarify. There is only one criterion for demarcating class standing: that is, determine the various classes according to the various relationships of people to the means of production. The only criterion for demarcating classes is the various relationship of exploiter and exploited produced by the possession or lack of the means of production, how much and what are possessed and how they are employed.

Who are Rich, Middle and Poor?

What are the means of production? The means of production in industry are factories, machinery, raw materials and other capital. The means of production in agriculture are land, ploughing animals, agricultural implements, houses, etc. The only criterion for demarcation of rural classes is the various relationships of exploiter and exploited produced from the possession or lack of land, ploughing animals, agricultural implements, houses and other means of production, how much and what is possessed, and how they are employed (tilling himself, hiring labour or renting out).

Based on the above criterion, it is very easy to differentiate between the various class standings in the rural areas. The principal class standings in the rural areas can in general be demarcated follows:

(1) Those who possess much land, do not labour themselves, specially relying on exploiting the peasants' land rent, or concurrently engage in usury, profiting without working, are landlords

(2) Those who possess much land, ploughing animals and farm implements, participate themselves in the principal labour, and at the same time exploit the hired labour of peasants, are rich peasants. China's old-type rich peasants are strongly feudal in nature. Most of them concurrently engage in usury or rent out a portion of the land. On the one hand, they labour themselves, thus being similar to peasants and on the other hand they engage in feudal or semi-feudal exploitation, thus being similar to landlords.

(3) Those with land, ploughing animals and agricultural implements, labouring themselves and not exploiting or only slightly exploiting other peasants are middle peasants. (5) Those not possessing land, ploughing animals or agricultural implements, selling their own labour power, are farm labourers.

The principal class standings in rural areas should in general be demarcated thus. But should all those who rent out land or hire full-time labourers be dealt both as landlords or rich peasants without exception? There are exceptions, too. For example, those who have lost labour power like widows, orphans, cripples and invalids may be permitted to rent out their small plots of land. Others like doctors, primary school teachers and workers, whose families have a little land and cannot concurrently till it because of their employment and who can just maintain themselves, also cannot be considered as landlords and rich peasants although they rent out their land or hire others to till it. Aside from these, there are some other complex circumstances which must be stipulated in detail. The things spoken of here are some of the most typical conditions.

How to differentiate between rich peasants and middle peasants is a question which must be dealt with very carefully. Speaking in general, middle peasants do not exploit others, but [even] those [who do] both only slight or incidental exploitation, should still be considered middle peasants. On this question, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist party recently decided to adopt a policy more liberal than in 1933. This is those engaging in slight exploitation (such as hiring others to herd cattle or sheep hiring part-time labourers, or labourers on a monthly basis, or even one full-time labourer or so; perhaps renting out a little land or lending out small loans), the income from which

does not exceed 25 per cent of their gross income are still considered middle peasants. This is more lenient than the stipulation in 1933 limiting the income from this kind of exploitation to not exceeding 15 per cent of the gross income. Only those whose exploitation exceeds 25 per cent of the gross income for 3 successive years are considered rich peasants.

In New and Old Liberated Areas

In new areas, landlords or rich peasants, who had already gone bankrupt and become middle or poor peasants a year before the establishment of the democratic regime should be recognized as middle or poor peasants. The fact that one year before can determine this change in class standing is because under those circumstances they are forced down by the extortion under Koumintang rule. But with regard to peasants who climb from poverty and become rich through long years of accumulation and hard labour and become landlords or rich peasants, 3 years are required before they can be considered as landlords or rich peasants.

In old liberated areas with regard to the landlords and rich peasants who have declined under the democratic regimes because of just distribution of burden, reduction of rents and interests, "setting up accounts" struggles or other reasons, all landlords who engage in agricultural labour and do not again exploit others for 5 successive years should have their class standing changed to peasants (determined as middle peasants, poor peasants or farm labourers in accordance with the actual conditions) while rich peasants who have ceased their exploitation for 3 successive years should also have their class standing changed to middle peasants. But those among them who still retain many feudal possessions should give up their surplus possessions for distribution to the poor farming people. After the landlords and rich peasants have changed their class standing, whether or not they may join peasants' union and poor peasants' league should be decided individually by the peasants' union league should be decided individually by the peasants' union and poor peasants' league after examination.

In the 1933 "class Analysis," it is stated: "With regard to elements in the Red Army from landlord or rich peasant families, regardless of whether they are commanders or fighters, and on condition that they resolutely battle for the interests of the workers and peasants, they and their families have the right of being distributed land. But recently in some places, only considering social origin and not political manifestation, the land already distributed to Red Army fighters of landlord and rich peasant origin who resolutely do battle for the interests of the workers had been reconfiscated. This is incorrect." This was the measure taken with regard to Red Army commanders and fighters of landlord and rich peasant origin in 1933. At the present time, with regard to the small number of landlords and rich peasants, who have been permitted to join the people's Liberation Army, and who have separated themselves from their families, received revolutionary education, and undergone the tests of battles; if they are resolute and brave in battle and do not engage in activities to cover up for landlords and rich peasants or disturb agrarian reform, they should also have their class standing changed, and should enjoy the treatment of revolutionary military men in general. Because they have taken part in sanguinary combat, their time limit for the change should be made shorter than that required for those engaged in civilian work. In the army landlords, rich peasants and other exploiters who satisfy the above conditions and who have served for 2 full years, and the intelligentsia from families of landlords, rich peasants or other exploiters who have served for a full year, can be changed to the class standing of revolutionary military men. The land and property distributed to these people themselves and their families must not be less that of the peasants in general (and should not be more than that of peasants in general). Those fallen in action, disabled, or retired should be treated as revolutionary military martyrs and disabled or retired veterans.

But as for those who manifest vacillation in battle or commit such crimes and those who manifest opposition or disruption in the agrarian reform, even if they have been in the army for a very long time, they should still be resolutely expelled.

Is there any danger in changing the class standing of landlords who labour for 5 years and rich peasants who do not exploit others for 3 years? I think there is no danger. Because their land and property (for rich peasants, it is requisition of their surplus property, not all their property) have been equally distributed, and they also have these many years of labour, they can therefore be reformed. With regard to landlords and rich peasants in the liberated areas whose class standing has not changed, during this period of deepening agrarian reform struggle, it is advisable to suspend their rights to join the army, in general, for the time being, with the exception of individuals who obtain permission. As for taking part in stretcher bearer corps and other work in support of the front, this should still be allowed to them.

Firmly Unite All Middle Peasants

Elimination of the feudal classes is a ruthless struggle. We must rely on the poor peasants and farm labourers as the backbone, satisfy their demands, and firmly unite with all the middle peasants before we can do this well. The 8th Congress of the Communist party of the Soviet Union (1919) specially emphasised that the importance of uniting with the middle peasants is necessary, and stated furthermore that confusing the rich peasants with the middle peasants is “against all the principle of communism.” The question is posed thus seriously because encroaching on the interests of the middle peasants necessarily causes them to vacillate and can even be utilized by the landlords and rich peasants, causing the poor peasants and farm labourers to become isolated. Should this happen, the revolution would fail.

20% Middle peasants

The middle peasants under the old regime made up approximately 20 percent of the population. In old liberated areas in general, they made up 50 percent more or less. After the through, equal distribution of land, the overwhelming majority of the people in the rural areas become middle peasants with only a minority who are not middle peasants. In the past in the fight against Japan, the middle peasants contributed not a little strength and money. They have done meritorious work in the fight against Japan. Also at the present time in fighting the KMT reactionaries, they are relied on for a large part of the man-power and grain. In our Liberation Army at present, 30 to 40 per cent are middle peasants. If we injure the interests of the middle peasants, or even go so far as to stand in opposition to them, this will cause us to be defeated in the war. In the economic construction of new democracy, in the process of development from individual economy to collective co-operative economy, the main reliance is on the new and old middle peasants. They have rich production experience which deserves to be learned by poor peasants and farm labourers.

Their production implements are also comparatively better made and can help the poor peasants and farm labourers. In the future, the middle peasants can travel with us onto Socialism. Therefore, the middle peasant is our permanent ally.

But according to available information, in many places of all liberated areas where the agrarian reform movement has been not motion, a “leftist” tendency to encroach on the interests of the middle peasants and to exclude the middle peasants has occurred. This Kind of tendency is manifested in the following questions:

Interest Encroached

First of all, the class standing of some middle peasants has been determined incorrectly. For example, in the above mentioned Tsai-chiaai administrative village alone, there were more than 50 households of middle peasants and well-to-do peasants (and even some poor peasants) who were erroneously determined as so-called producing rich peasants or bankrupt landlords. In many places, those whose class standing has been erroneously determined also have their possessions confiscated and in some cases, they have even been beaten.

Secondly, it is expressed in not wanting the middle peasants to take part in managing affairs. The middle peasants doubt whether they are still wanted or not. Except for the old areas in which equal distribution has already been carried out, it is necessary for the poor peasants and farm labourers to unite and organise the poor peasants’ leagues to act as the backbone leading the agrarian reform movement. But some places have arrived at a state where the poor peasants and farm labourers practically run everything. This is erroneous. For example, in the electing of delegates to the peasants’ congress or members of committees, only poor peasants and farm labourers, and no middle peasants, are elected; in making decisions on many important questions, such as determining class standing, distributing the fruits of the agrarian reform and apportioning tax burden and services, middle peasants are not allowed to participate. This causes the middle peasants to feel that their fate is completely in the hands of the poor peasants and farm labourers and to manifest great uneasiness.

Thirdly, it is expressed in not giving consideration to the middle peasant on the question of public duties, especially, in increasing the middle peasants’ burden. In some places, it has been discovered that only the poor peasant farm labourer’ group discusses and makes decisions on the apportioning of the public grain tax; and, because, after agrarian reform, the landlords and rich peasants are not in position to meet their responsibilities, the public grain burden is placed on middle peasants and even the delivering of public grain is apportioned more to them. This way of doing things is also bound to arouse the opposition of the middle peasants.

Aside from all these, in the distribution of the fruits of agrarian reform there are cases in which nothing at all is distributed to middle peasants. This causes the middle peasant to feel that at the time of struggle, his participation is wanted, and he loses much time from his work; whereas at the time of

distributing the fruits, there is no share for him, and he is not even allowed to take part in the meeting to distribute the fruits.

The above tendency to encroach on the interests of the middle peasants and not to give them consideration, and to exclude them is extremely dangerous. It is a tendency of anti-Marxist, ultra-leftist adventurism, which should receive the attention of the whole party, and this erroneous tendency must be resolutely rectified. Otherwise, it will isolate us and lead the revolution towards defeat.

They are Exploited Too

The poor peasants and farm labourers have some differences with the middle peasants, but they can be settled. The middle peasants in the old society are in general exploited and oppressed. On such basic question as opposing imperialism, striking down KMT reactionary regime, wiping out the feudal system and demanding political democracy, they have all the conditions for common struggle together with the poor peasants and farm labourers under the leadership of the communist party. The difference between them lies mainly with the dissatisfaction of the poor peasants and farm labourers over the insufficient firmness displayed by middle peasants in struggling against the landlords and rich peasants, sometimes vacillating and hesitating.

This kind of weakness on the part of the middle peasants really exists, but only [if] the leadership principles instructed by Chairman Mao Tse-tung are carried out, namely resolutely leading the middle peasants to struggle against the feudal classes and to win, and at the same time not injuring their interests and giving them political education, they can be led in concerted struggle. Secondly, in the equal distribution of land, well-to-do middle peasants may be unwilling to hand out part of their land. The equal distribution of land is the most thorough and best method of wiping out the feudal system. In the equal distribution of land, the overwhelming majority of the middle peasants neither has handed out land nor has distributed the land to them. Only a small number of well-to-do middle peasants may give out a little and (their other possessions cannot be touched at all) while lower middle peasants may be distributed some land. The middle peasants under the new regime obtain many political, economic and cultural benefits, and therefore the middle peasants in general are in favour of the equal distribution of land. But in the carrying out of the equal distribution of land, it is necessary to talk things over with the middle peasants and obtain their agreement. If when a portion of the land of well-to-do middle peasants is drawn on, the well-to-do middle peasants themselves express opposition, concession should be made to them and their land should not be touched. In the distribution of the fruits of agrarian reform, it should be explained to the poor peasants and farm labourers that a portion of the fruits should be distributed to the middle peasants for the sake of unity. To sum up, attention must be given to uniting all the middle peasants on all kinds of question, it should be understood that the uniting of 90 per cent of the rural population is the basic condition for our wiping out of feudalism and winning the war. No matter what, the "area of attack" should be confined within the sphere of the true feudal exploiting classes and should absolutely not be permitted to overstep this sphere. In the places originally ruled by the Kuomintang to which the people's Liberation Army arrives, the "area of attack" must be narrowed down even more. In such places, at first only the big landlords, big evil gentry, tyrants, landlords' armed forces, the "pao chia" system and special service agents should be struck at. Then in accordance with conditions of military success and the consolidation of base areas and the level of consciousness and organization of the masses, gradually proceed to the wiping out of the entire feudal system.

How to Unite

To unite all the middle peasants, we should, first of all, see to it that their interests are not infringed on and their class standing is determined correctly. Those who have already been determined incorrectly must be re-determined. It must be explained to them that, in the past, mistakes were made because the analysis of classes had not yet been learned. Those whose things have already been confiscated should as far as possible receive them back. If those things have already been distributed and used, they should be compensated for by drawing on a portion of the fruits of confiscation from the landlords. If those things include surplus grain of the middle peasants which the poor peasants and farm labourers urgently need, such grain may be borrowed. If middle peasants contribute some grain on their own volition for calamity relief, that, of course, is very good.

Secondly, the middle peasants must certainly be absorbed in the managing of affairs. Middle peasants must be among the delegates to peasant congresses and members of peasant union committees, so that the middle peasants really enjoy political rights. In places where the poor peasants and farm labourers are in the majority, the middle peasants may occupy approximately one-third of the peasants' congress and the peasant union committee, with the poor peasants and farm labourers occupying approximately two-thirds. In old liberated areas where the middle peasants are in the

overwhelming majority (among labourers), the percentage occupied them being many middle peasants who have risen from the poor peasants and farm by the middle peasants should be raised. The poor peasants and farm labourers may occupy approximately one-third, and the middle peasants occupy two-thirds. Each level of government organization should have the participation of middle peasants. On all questions, such as determining class standing, apportioning the distribution of burden, distributing land and property etc., the poor peasants' leagues (or groups), may discuss them first, but they must be finally passed by the peasants' unions, comprising all the peasants, before they may be carried out. Moreover, in the meetings, the middle peasant's opinions should be carefully respected and his good opinions should be adopted. If middle peasants hold incorrect opinions, they should be patiently persuaded or given appropriate criticism. But [though] criticisms are under special conditions even necessary, struggle is still for the fundamental principle of uniting all the middle peasants.

Thirdly, the just and equitable distribution of public duties must be achieved. For example, the public grain burden support to the front and all other mobilization of man-power and financial power must absolutely not be all placed on the middle peasants because the landlords and rich peasant cannot bear them. This is what the middle peasant fears the most, and is also incorrect. Appropriate consideration for the poor peasants and farm labourers on the matter of public duties is necessary, but it must not vary too greatly from that of middle peasants, and the final distribution of all public duties must be discussed and passed by the peasant union, comprising all the peasants.

So long as the class standing is not incorrectly determined, the interests of the middle peasants are not infringed on and they are absorbed into managing affairs and so long as the distribution of public duties is just and equitable, day-to-day. Consideration is given to middle peasants, and they are constantly educated, the entire body of middle peasants can surely be united very well. This then is in accordance with the principles of Communism. Leading organs must be constantly attentive and conduct inspection at all times; if tendencies to infringe on the interests of, or exclude, the middle peasants are discovered, they must be [made] public. It must be made known to all and be published in the newspapers.

(Note: The term "producing rich peasant" used in the text is an incorrect term formerly employed by some workers in the Shanshi-Suiyuan area, incorrectly classifying as rich peasants some peasants who did not engage in exploitation, but whose family possessions were comparatively high. Taking quantity of possessions or standard of living, instead of relationship and degree of exploitation as criterion in demarcating people as rich peasants, is entirely wrong, and Jen Pi-shin employs this term in criticizing its incorrectness.

Methods of Struggle against Landlords and Rich Peasants

Economically to eliminate the landlords as a class is no easy thing. It is a fierce battle. After the landlord class has been overthrown politically, they devise all possible schemes to maintain their strength economically, scheming at all time for a restoration. Landlords and rich peasants exhaust all time methods of boring their way into the government and party, giving their daughters in marriage to working personnel, buying over stooges, bad personnel and bad party members, Therefore the consistent carrying out of agrarian reform requires much of delicacy and art in leadership. Only when the masses of the people are really set in motion, can the feudal classes be eliminated. Simple and hasty methods must absolutely not be applied.

The elimination of the landlord class and the wiping out of the feudal system consists mainly in confiscating the property of the landlord class — land, grain, ploughing animals, agricultural implements, etc. — and requisitioning the surplus property of the rich peasants for distribution to peasants. The most basic of these is distribution of the land. The government should issue agricultural loans to help the peasants solve their difficulties after the distribution of the land, the peasants must be called on to produce industriously, improve agricultural technique, develop the mutual aid co-operative movement so that the livelihood of the peasants will be improved. The democratic government and the People's Liberation Army have sufficient public grain in the interests of conquering the enemy, so that daily increasing quantities of grain and raw materials are sold as commodities providing the urban population and industries with sufficient agricultural products.

The struggle against landlords should be differentiated from the struggle against rich peasants. The Basic Program on Chinese Agrarian Law stipulates the abolition of the rights of land ownership of the landlord class and the confiscation of the landlords' ploughing animals, agricultural implements, buildings and other property. With regard to rich peasants, apart from the land, which is equally distributed in common, only the surplus portion of the above named property is requisitioned and not total confiscation. Struggling against the rich peasants in the same way as against the landlord is not

only confusing the above differentiation, but, even more important, may lead to fear and vacillation on the part of the middle peasants.

As for the methods of struggle against landlords, distinction should also be made between big, medium and small landlords, between despotic and non-despotic landlords. Big landlords and tyrants should be dealt with more sternly as a warning to other landlords, those who give up their land and property need not necessarily be dealt with through mass meetings.

Social Security

We adopt a policy of elimination toward the class exploitation system of the landlords, but we do not adopt a policy of elimination toward the landlord as a person. All landlords, with the exception of small number of traitors and civil war criminals tried and convicted by the courts, should be given land and property neither more nor less than the peasants, in accordance with the Basic program on Chinese Agrarian Law. They should be made to work, and reformed. This is because landlords, after participating in labour, are no small productive force. This is also because if we do not distribute necessary land and property to them, they will rob, steal and beg, bringing about social insecurity and the peasants will thus suffer. Even criminal elements, whose crimes are not of a degree deserving to be given the death penalty by the courts, must also, be given the necessary share of land and property. Only thus can there be social security. If the landlord has industry and commerce sufficient to support his livelihood, land of course need not be distributed. If his industry and commerce is too small to support his livelihood, it is necessary to distribute a portion of land to him.

Rich Peasants – New Type

There should also be a differentiation between dealing with new – type and old-type rich peasants. Some poor farming people in the past have through labour and production in the democratic regime rose to become new-type rich peasants, in this period of equal distribution of the land, they should be treated as well-to-do middle peasants. During equal land distribution their land in excess of the level of middle peasants in general can only be drawn upon with their agreement. If they themselves do not agree, their land should not be drawn upon. In the past, we encouraged this kind of rich peasant people like Wu Wan-yu (well-known labour hero of the Yen-an Border Region—Editor). For instance, develop their production. This played a great role in stabilizing the middle peasants and stimulating their production enthusiasm.

Policy on Industry and Commerce

Industry and commerce in general should be protected. Not even industry and commerce operated by landlords and rich peasants should be confiscated. It should likewise receive the protection of the democratic government. The party's policy is only to confiscate the industry and commerce of bureaucratic capital and really big despotic counter-revolutionary elements, and place them under the ownership of the state or the people. Furthermore, it is definitely laid down that of this industry and commerce to be confiscated, that which is needed by the national economy must be enabled to continue and not cease operations; and still less should it be damaged or be arbitrarily dispersed. But what about landlords who during the period of reduction of rents and interests sold their land and invested in industry commerce— can confiscation be carried out against them? Both in the past and in the present, we protect and encourage this sort of industry and commerce because this is beneficial and necessary for the prospering of China's economy. In acquiring the landlord's hidden wealth, it must be stipulated that the landlord is not permitted to destroy his industry, on pain of punishment.

Partial and temporary interest must be subordinated to the over-all, long-term interest. For example, if the landlord operates coal pits, the peasants may, from the point of view of their present partial interest, show their hands in support of confiscating and distributing them, because if everyone is distributed a portion of the tools and materials from the coal pits, it may temporarily solve their own problems. Under these circumstances, we must persuade the peasants to understand the advantages of having the coal pits in existence intact. And that if dispersed, the coal pits will be ruined and they themselves will have no coal to burn. This would hinder the economic development of the liberated areas.

If we want to be independent, public-operated, private-operated and people's co-operative handicraft industry, and rural agriculture must be enabled to develop, producing large quantities of necessary goods and grain for the people's Liberation Army so that our trade with the outside can maintain equilibrium or even a favourable trade balance and not rely on goods from areas controlled by Chiang Kai-shek or America.

At present, the government trading companies within the liberated areas do not yet have the strength to set up stores universally. Co-operatives have not developed universally, and are sometimes badly run. Therefore, the existence of private commerce is necessary. Merchants, of course, engage in exploitation: the commercial activity of merchants, in itself, does not produce any value but the

question is not to destroy commerce, but to give leadership to commerce. While his sort of policy is beneficial to the people, it is also beneficial to legitimate merchants.

We must collect taxes from industry and commerce, but we must fix proper tax rates and we must see to it that they are not too heavy. This sort of tax rate should be based on the principle of not affecting their operations and development.

The Intelligentsia and Enlightened Gentry

The majority of professors, teachers, scientists, engineers, artists, etc, come from landlord, rich peasant or capitalist families. But the work they themselves do is a sort of mental labour, toward these mental labourers, the democratic regime should adopt policies of protection, and should as much as possible win them to serve the people's Republic.

Under the KMT rule, the overwhelming majority among them lead a life economically very difficult and politically very unfree. Among them, moreover, are not a few unemployed. As for their opportunity for scientific creations and inventions, this is extremely slight. The overwhelming majority, seeing all sorts of corruption and reaction of Chiang Kai-shek's and American imperialism, express dissatisfaction with the Kuomintang rule and American imperialist aggression. If we carefully guide them politically and ideologically, and give them proper education and reformation, their knowledge and technique can serve the new democratic state of the Chinese People's Republic.

As for the students, regarded in the light of the experience of the student movement in Kuomintang-held cities during the past few years and our movement for reformation of ideology and style of work and cadre-examination, the overwhelming majority of students are dissatisfied with Chiang Kai-shek's reactionary dictatorial rule and demand democracy. Only a part of them, or only a very small part, are incorrigible reactionary elements, specially working against the revolution and disrupt the student movement. Therefore, we should help students and the intelligentsia to progress and draw them into the struggle against imperialism and for democracy.

If we want to build a new democratic country, we must have knowledge. For example, in establishing a hospital, if we want to establish departments of medicine, surgery, gynecology, pediatrics, dentistry etc., we must have many doctors, medical assistants and nurses.

These personnel can only be trained after many years of study and forging in practical work. At present, we still do not have many specialists. We must unreservedly win over and use China's existing intelligentsia and specialists to work for the people. On the one hand, we use this group of intelligentsia, and on the other hand, we re-educate and reform them correcting the habits of slighting the people and isolation from the masses among many of them. Most of them have enthusiasm for construction, and in the great construction work of new democracy, most of them can certainly make progress.

In eliminating the feudal system, we must guard against the excluding of all intelligentsia who have connection with the feudal system. This is detrimental to the people's cause. At the same time, we must pay even more attention to the training of the intelligentsia of worker and peasant origin enabling the workers and peasants who have emancipated themselves to obtain knowledge and train the finest among them or their sons to become intelligentsia and shoulder the tasks of construction.

During the anti-Japanese war, there was a group of enlightened gentry like Li Ting-Ming and others who took part in the governments and the people's congresses. This was entirely correct and necessary. This had very good effect on the whole country. In the past they fought Japan together with us, and now they fight Kuomintang reactionaries together with us. They have shared hardships in common with us. A deliberate attitude must be adopted towards those people. Their land must be distributed, but not through mass meetings. If they make mistakes, they may be criticized but their persons should not be violated. Those with meritorious deeds in the past, who at present approve of agrarian reform and the striking down of KMT reactionaries, may still continue to work.

The Question of Violence and Capital Punishment

The Communist Party is resolutely opposed to unwarranted beating and killing, and to the adoption of corporal punishment of criminals. Indiscriminate beating and killing and corporal punishment are the products of feudal society. They are only practiced by the feudal lord towards his serfs and warlord towards his soldiers.

During the agrarian reform movement not few cases of beating people and incidents causing death have occurred, and this is the more so because there are impurities within the party; landlords, rich peasants, opportunist elements and lumpen proletarian elements seize opportunities to create trouble, thus giving rise to phenomena of indiscriminately beating people or incidents causing death. Some persons whose crimes did not deserve death-penalty were killed. This should have our serious attention.

We are opposed to indiscriminate killing of people, but this does not mean that there is no capital punishment at all. With regard to really arch counter-revolutionary elements and arch tyrannical elements whose crimes are really extremely great and who the people of the whole country say should be executed, after they have received death sentences by the people's courts, and their sentences have been approved by a government organ (committees organized by county sub-region or higher levels of government), they should be executed and their crimes published (no one may be executed in secret). But no one must be arbitrarily accused of crimes and sentenced to death. Except in war where the killing of many of the enemy is unavoidable on the firing line, arbitrary and mistaken killing not only cannot solve problems, but furthermore may put off the solution of problems and even lead to temporary defeat of the revolution. This is because it must of necessity lose the sympathy of the masses of people and meet with the opposition of many people. Landlords and rich peasants in the Chinese countryside occupy approximately 10 per cent of the population. Their number amounts to approximately more than 30,000,000. After the system of feudal exploitation has been thoroughly done away with, and land and property equal to that distributed to peasants are distributed to them so that they rely on their own labour for a livelihood, they can then be gradually remade into forces creating wealth for society and beneficial to society. If many landlords and rich peasants who do not resolutely sabotage the war or agrarian reform are arbitrarily killed, this will not only lose the sympathy of the masses and isolate our-selves, but moreover will be a loss to the country's labour power so that society produces less wealth. If the family of those killed cannot make a living because they lack labour power, this will further increase the burden on society.

We also oppose the beating of people. In the course of the mass movement, if the real righteous indignation of the masses leads them to raise their hands against their oppressors whom they hate passionately, Communists should not stand in their way. Communists should sympathise with the righteous indignation of the masses, otherwise we may become estranged from the masses. But Communists and working personnel of the democratic government should not, under non-combat circumstances, organize physical attacks against people.

The examination of cadres and party members in rural areas who have committed mistakes, at party meetings attended by the masses, is a very good method. At the same time, we should explain to the cadres being examined that, they must earnestly admit their errors to the masses and must guarantee that no future retaliation is permitted on pain of punishment by the government in accordance with the law. At the examination meeting, the examined must have the full right of stating their case—not allowing them to state their case is undemocratic. No matter whether in the rural areas, in the cities, in the army, in the organs of schools, in any meeting to examine any party member of cadre, the examined will have the right to state their case.

Aside from this, the masses must also be granted the right of direct removal from office of any working personnel under examination, or of suggesting removal. With regard to the worst among them, whose actions have violated the law, the masses have the right to accuse them before the people's court. We persuade the masses not to beat people, but if we do not give the masses such rights, they will not dare to criticize. To sum up in the examination of cadres and party members, or in dealing with individual elements among the masses, the principle of using verbal criticism as much as possible and telling reason and not permitting the beating of people should be adopted. As a result of this stipulation, the masses will dare to criticize and the examined will also have the opportunity to state their case.
