

Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai's Telegram to Liu Shaoqi Regarding the Publication of the New Area's Land Reform and Grain Collection Instructions (17-02-1950)

Comrade Shaoqi,

We've received your draft instructions on land reform and grain collection in the new areas. Overall, it's quite good and should be released promptly. However, we suggest delaying the publication of the fourth part as it involves the distribution of land, which might raise concerns. Comrade Stalin once proposed that the distribution of landlord's land and rich peasants' land should be divided into two longer phases. While we won't prohibit peasants from demanding the allocation of excess land from rich peasants, we shouldn't confirm this in our legal texts. We've explained our understanding of the semi-feudal rich peasants in China and clarified that we won't confiscate the land of capitalist rich peasants. He cited the Soviet Union after the October Revolution as an example, suggesting that we should consider the struggle against rich peasants as a serious matter. The central idea is to neutralize rich peasants during the elimination of the landlord class and ensure that production is unaffected. This issue was also discussed at the November 1948 Political Bureau meeting, which emphasized the need for caution when dealing with rich peasants in land reform in Jiangnan. This not only concerns rich peasants but also the national bourgeoisie. Therefore, the laws for land reform in Jiangnan must differ from those in the North. Some modifications are needed concerning the documents from 1933 and the 1947 Land Law.

We propose that for now, the Government Council should only release the first three parts of the instructions for land reform and grain collection in the new areas. The fourth part should be discussed after our return. If there are modifications needed, it can be postponed and published as a separate document in April. If agreed, we can explain to democratic individuals outside the Party that the fourth part represents a policy to be implemented in the areas after this autumn. We can take our time to deliberate on this, and a final decision can be made and announced after Chairman Mao returns.

Mao Zedong

Zhou Enlai

February 17th, 7:00 AM

Published based on the revised text by Mao Zedong.