

Mao Zedong's Criticisms on the Implementation of the "Suspended Death" Policy

(June 15, 1951) The situation reported by

the central bureaus and branch bureaus, provincial and municipal party committees, prefecture committees and county committees: Tong County, Hebei Province [1] is worth noting.

The policy of suspending execution for two years should never be interpreted as not executing criminals who have blood debts or other serious crimes that the people demand to be executed. It would be wrong to do so. We must explain clearly to district and village cadres and the people that those who have committed extremely heinous crimes and are deeply indignant at the level of the people must be put to death in order to express the people's indignation. Only those who are not deeply indignant and do not demand the death penalty, but are guilty of capital crimes, can be sentenced to death with a two-year suspended sentence and forced labor to see the effects.

According to the publication notes of Mao Zedong's manuscript

[1], it refers to the report of the North China Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China to the Central Committee on June 12, 1951, regarding the implementation of the policy of a two-year suspension of execution of death sentences in Tong County, Hebei Province. The report said: After the central government issued the new spirit of "sentence to death, suspended for two years, and reform through labor to see the effects," there were many reactions from village cadres and people in Tongxian County, Hebei Province. Some cadres believe that suspending execution means complete leniency, and waiting to see the consequences means writing it off. The public actively pressed for arrests and demanded that they be killed as soon as possible. It also had a great impact on counterrevolutionaries. The original ideological situation of the arrested counterrevolutionaries was to wait for death and "resign themselves to fate". Some are afraid that if they say too much, they will add to their sins. After listening to the report on the implementation of the new spirit, they began to waver. They believed that the policy of "sentence to death and suspended execution" gave them a glimmer of hope to atone for their crimes and survive. Their emotions were greatly stabilized, and many people asked to confess. The only concern of the currently imprisoned counterrevolutionaries is whether they will be killed in two years, and they have repeatedly asked for answers.