

Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai's Telegram to Liu Shaoqi on Issuing Instructions for Land Reform and Grain Collection in Newly Liberated Areas

(February 27, 1950)

Comrade Shaoqi:

We have received your draft of instructions regarding land reform and grain collection in newly liberated areas. Overall, it is quite good and urgently needed for timely issuance. However, the fourth section, as it touches upon the issue of land distribution itself, may need to be temporarily withheld from publication.

This is because Comrade Stalin, during our report to him on the land reform policy, suggested dividing the distribution of landlords' land and rich farmers' surplus land into two longer stages. While we should not prohibit peasants from demanding the allocation of surplus land from rich farmers, we also should not explicitly affirm this in legal provisions at present.

Although we have explained the concept of China's semi-feudal rich farmers and clarified that we will not confiscate the property of capitalist rich farmers, Stalin still referenced the example of post-October Revolution Soviet Union, urging us to view opposition to rich farmers as a significant struggle. His central point was to neutralize the rich farmers and ensure production is not disrupted while overthrowing the landlord class.

This issue was also raised during the Politburo meeting last November regarding cautious handling of land reform in the Jiangnan region. This is not only a matter concerning rich farmers but also relates to the national bourgeoisie. Therefore, the land reform regulations for Jiangnan must differ from those in the northern regions. Adjustments must also be made to the 1933 documents and the 1947 Land Law.

Thus, we propose that the GAC currently publish only the first three sections of the instructions on land reform and grain collection in the newly liberated areas, while reserving the fourth section for discussion upon our return.

If revisions are necessary, the publication of another document specifically addressing land reform can be delayed until April. If agreed upon, it can be explained to non-Party democratic figures that the policy outlined in the fourth section is intended for implementation only after this autumn. There is no harm in taking a long-term approach and deciding on this matter after Chairman Mao's return.

Mao Zedong

Zhou Enlai

February 27, 7:00 AM