

## **The Central Committee Approves the East China Bureau and Anhui Province's Measures Following the Hudong Reform-through-Labor Camp Killing Incident and Instructions to Party Committees at All Levels**

**Date:** August 1953

The East China Bureau's reply of July 7, 1953, concerning the Anhui Provincial Committee's report, "Notice Regarding the Serious Incident in Which Armed Guards of the Hudong Reform-through-Labor Team Shot and Killed Civilians," together with its attachments, has been received and examined. The Central Committee approves the proposals of the East China Bureau and the Anhui Provincial Committee for handling this incident and hopes that they will be earnestly implemented without delay.

There are approximately 1.5 million reform-through-labor prisoners nationwide. Incidents in which state enterprises compete with the people for resources undoubtedly still exist in many places. Unless these problems are investigated and corrected, incidents similar to the Sanxingwei affair in Hudong County, Anqing, are bound to occur again. Therefore, this notice is issued for your attention. This document and its attachments may be published in Party journals.

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### **Attachment 1: Comments of the East China Bureau**

The July 4 report concerning the serious incident at the Sanxingwei labor reform farm in Hudong County, where armed guards opened fire and killed civilians, together with Comrade Su Yiran's supplementary report, has been received.

We believe this incident is extremely serious. After the flooding occurred, the farm cadres not only failed to act in defense of the people's interests by voluntarily opening the dikes to release water, but instead disregarded the lives of the masses, prevented the release of floodwaters, and ultimately escalated matters to the point of opening fire and killing civilians.

The cadres and troops responsible for the bloodshed possessed serious erroneous thinking characterized by competing with the people for interests and even treating the people as enemies. This demonstrates severe bureaucratism among the responsible leadership organs.

We agree with the Provincial Committee's proposed measures for dealing with the incident and hope responsibility will be clearly established and punishment strictly imposed. If the circumstances described in Su Yiran's July 4 report prove accurate, then the principal culprit, Zhou Wenqing, should be sentenced to death, while other responsible individuals should receive appropriate punishment according to the seriousness of their offenses. This is necessary to appease public anger and restore the Party's political standing.

The fundamental cause of this incident, however, lies in the mistaken construction policy of the labor reform farm itself, which violated the Central Committee's principle that state farms must not compete with the people for interests.

The Provincial Committee has already criticized itself for failing to inspect and correct these problems earlier, which is commendable. Further examination of the labor reform farms' construction policies is required, and responsible leadership organs should conduct a thorough investigation of their own leadership responsibilities. This bloody lesson should be used to educate the entire Party and deepen implementation of the "New Three-Anti Campaign."

Please report the results of your investigation and handling of this matter promptly.

The Anhui Provincial Committee's report and Comrade Su Yiran's July 4 report are hereby forwarded to all regions. Please investigate and correct instances in which state farms compete with the people for resources and prevent similar incidents from occurring.

July 1953

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## **Attachment 2: Anhui Provincial Committee Notice on the Serious Incident at Sanxingwei**

The Provincial Public Security Department reports the serious incident in which armed guards at the Sanxingwei labor reform farm in Hudong County shot civilians, killing two and wounding five.

The Provincial Committee generally agrees with the reports submitted by Su Yiran and Xing Hao'er. The Committee considers this incident extremely serious and believes it exposes two major problems:

### **1. Competition with the People for Interests**

The establishment of the Sanxingwei farm fundamentally conflicted with the interests of local residents. The farm was established without consultation or obtaining the consent of the people.

When flooding occurred, the peasants sought to breach the dikes and release water in order to save their crops. This was natural and reasonable. Yet farm personnel insisted on protecting the farm at the expense of the villagers, preferring to sacrifice the people's dikes while preserving the farm, showing no concern for the lives of local residents.

Not only did they refuse to release water, but they committed the grave crime of opening fire on civilians, causing severe political damage to the Party among the masses.

### **2. Breakdown of Discipline in the Public Security System**

This incident demonstrates lax discipline, weak ideological leadership, and violations of law and discipline within the public security system. Even after the "New Three-Anti Campaign," these problems had not been fundamentally resolved, and such a serious incident occurred. This is intolerable.

The lessons of this incident are extremely painful. The Provincial Committee admits that it failed to supervise the establishment of the Sanxingwei farm, insufficiently criticized the mistaken thinking of competing with the people for interests, and inadequately implemented policy education.

The Committee therefore requests appropriate disciplinary action from the East China Bureau and proposes using this case as a model for educating all cadres.

Its recommendations include:

1. Immediately breach the dikes and release the water.
2. Arrest the perpetrators and comfort the local population.
3. Investigate responsibility and hold public trials.
4. Execute the principal offenders and punish others according to their crimes.
5. Educate all cadres and public security personnel.

6. Review all state farms and water-control projects to ensure they do not harm local interests.
  7. Abolish farms whose conflicts with the people cannot be resolved.
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### **Attachment 3: Report by Comrade Su Yiran**

Su Yiran's report describes the circumstances in detail.

The neighboring Daxinwei embankment area contained approximately 6,800 mu of farmland. The Sanxingwei area, originally marshland, was developed after a 1952 policy encouraging labor reform institutions to become economically self-sufficient. About 2,000 mu had already been reclaimed and cultivated by 440 prisoners guarded by an armed unit.

Sanxingwei lay at a lower elevation than Daxinwei. Historically, during floods, water had always been drained into Sanxingwei through eight culverts.

Heavy rain on June 26–27 caused severe flooding:

- Over 4,000 mu in Daxinwei were inundated.
- More than 1,000 mu in Sanxingwei were flooded.

Villagers repeatedly demanded that the culverts be opened. Local authorities delayed action. On June 30, more than 300 villagers gathered to breach the dike themselves in order to save their crops.

Farm officials and armed guards decided to intervene. Two squads of guards were sent to the site. The guards demanded that villagers surrender their shovels. During the confrontation:

- One soldier fired a warning shot.
- Deputy political instructor Zhou Wenqing fired another shot.
- Zhou then ordered the soldiers to pursue the crowd.

The soldiers fired more than forty rounds and two machine-gun bursts.

The result:

- 2 civilians killed.
- 5 wounded.

After the incident:

- The dikes were opened.
- Officials apologized publicly.
- Zhou Wenqing was arrested.
- Farm leaders Yao Ziyou and Wang Deyao were suspended and later arrested.
- Compensation and grain relief were provided.
- The guards were withdrawn.
- The Sanxingwei project was abandoned and the land transferred to local peasants.

Su Yiran also accepted personal responsibility, acknowledging failures of leadership, bureaucratism, inadequate oversight of labor reform farms, and insufficient political education among public security personnel.

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#### **Attachment 4: Comments of the Ministry of Public Security and East China Public Security Bureau**

The Ministry of Public Security stated that it generally agreed with the East China Public Security Bureau's recommendations. The responsible officers should be interrogated, responsibility determined, and sentences imposed after approval by higher authorities.

The East China Public Security Bureau described the incident as "extremely serious." It argued that the leaders involved had:

- Ignored the suffering of the people.
- Disregarded popular interests.
- Treated the people as enemies.
- Caused enormous political losses to the Party and government.

The Bureau recommended:

- Capital punishment for those who ordered and directed the shooting.
- Punishment of all responsible personnel.
- Using the case as a lesson in the "New Three-Anti Campaign."
- Strengthening leadership responsibility and political education.

The emergency measures ordered immediately after receiving the news included:

1. Opening the dikes and draining the floodwater.
2. Public apologies to villagers.
3. Arresting the farm and security leaders.
4. Providing medical treatment and compensation.
5. Relocating most prisoners.
6. Instructing all labor reform farms not to forcibly prevent villagers from releasing floodwaters.

The report concluded that the incident exposed severe bureaucratism and revealed that some public security cadres had forgotten their obligations to the people. Officials pledged to investigate responsibility at all levels and use the case to combat anti-people attitudes within the public security system.

**Source:** Anhui Provincial Archives (unnamed archive collection).