# Early Communist China

## Two Studies

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"The Fu-t'ien Incident, December 1930"
by Ronald S. Suleski

"Agrarian Reform in Kwangtung, 1950-1953"
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# THE FU-T'IEN INCIDENT, DECEMBER 1930

Ronald Suleski

## INTRODUCTION

The widening schism between Mao Tse-tung in Kiangsi and the Central Committee in Shanghai was clearly evident in 1930. Mao grew ever stronger in his conviction that a stable, secure guerrilla base was an absolute necessity if the communist movement in China was to succeed. He argued for an extensive organization of guerrillas, composed of loyal peasants, which would eventually expand to engulf the cities. Slowly he began building up his personal power and more determinedly defended his thesis.

Opposition from the Central Committee, then controlled by Li Li-san, likewise mounted. Li Li-san's official directives called for concentrated Red Army strength to attack key cities in central China, and further to precipitate a revolutionary situation by encouraging political strikes and local uprisings. In April, after Li had made his disapproval of Mao's policies clear, Mao was instructed to attend a conference in Shanghai. Li Li-san's probable plan, as Mao must have realized, was to reorganize the leadership within the Kiangsi Soviet, to censure Mao for his refusal to implement fully Central Committee directives, and possibly to attempt to remove him from the Soviet areas entirely. Without any sort of official reply, Mao ignored the summons and instead remained in the forested hills of central Kiangsi.

Initially neither Mao Tse-tung nor Chu Teh were willing to repudiate Central Committee orders openly. Mao realized that, given enough time, it would be possible for him quietly to assume complete leadership of the movement in Kiangsi and insure that Red Army units were under the firm control of trusted subordinates. Because of the Central Committee's insistence that armed attacks on key cities be launched immediately, however, Mao was denied the time needed to centralize his power within the relative safety of Kiangsi. Major attacks on Nanch'ang and Ch'angsha, ordered by the Central Committee, were launched by Mao and Chu Teh in July 1930. But the Red armies, as Mao had predicted, were unable to hold the cities or to spark revolutionary support from the populace. These failures decided Mao's future course

of action. Openly opposing the Central Committee, Mao and Chu Teh called off the attacks and shortly thereafter Mao began moving to eliminate political rivals within the Kiangsi Soviet.

It is in the context of these failures that the Fu-t'ien incident can best be understood. The events after September 1930 represent Mao's first dramatic steps to gain control over the Chinese communist movement, although at that time his goal was limited to Kiangsi and there is no evidence that he was hoping to get supreme authority over the entire movement. Actions taken to face the crises of the following seven months were certainly under the direct control of Mao, thus providing an example of the methods employed by Mao when not confined by directives from a higher authority.

To exercise his control over the civilian governmental structure, Mao was able to work through the General Front Committee, a legitimate organization whose membership was composed largely of pro-Mao communists. Serious opposition to Mao's leadership was presented by the Kiangsi Provincial Action Committee, which had been organized in the Soviet areas by Li Li-san to counteract the pro-Mao Front Committee.

The entire Fu-t'ien incident and its aftermath centers most strongly around Mao's efforts to remove the Action Committee from power and the Action Committee's continued support for official policies of the Central Committee. Mao was successful in removing the Action Committee from leadership, but factors beyond his control (chiefly the KMT encirclement campaigns and the Central Committee's move from Shanghai to Kiangsi) were responsible for delaying his accession to complete control of the Chinese communist movement.

## INITIAL ARRESTS: THE HUANG-P'O INCIDENT

With the bulk of the Red Army back inside the Soviet regions after their unsuccessful efforts to hold Nanch'ang and Ch'angsha, Mao was able to take the market town of Kian. Built on the banks of the Kan River, Kian would serve as an excellent administrative center for the areas Mao hoped to consolidate.

Shortly after the occupation of the town, documents concerning activities of the notorious Anti-Bolshevik (AB) Corps were discovered by the Red Army. Supposedly organized by and receiving funds from the KMT, AB Corps members operated as spies within communist organizations, collecting strategic information and sending it up through secret

AB Corps channels, or organizing dissatisfied communists to perform disruptive functions within the Soviet areas.[1] It was possibly known that the Corps was active in the area, but the extent of its penetration into communist organizations had not been discovered until the documents were found.

The captured documents revealed, after the KMT code had been broken, that five high-level CCP members, some of them Red Army commanders, had connections with the AB Corps.[2] Instead of immediate arrests, Mao and Chu Teh decided to initiate an investigation that might eventually uncover the entire organization and expose its membership.

Shortly thereafter, while the Soviet government was still establishing itself in the city, it was decided at a conference held by the General Front Committee that Kian must be evacuated. Increasing numbers of KMT troops were headed toward Kiangsi to attack the Soviet areas and Kian was likely to be a target of their attacks. The Front Committee resolved to adopt the strategy, developed by Mao and Chu Teh, of luring the enemy to penetrate deeply into the Soviets, where small communist guerilla units would have the advantage over KMT divisions.[3] The first step would be to lure the enemy into the Kian area. Members of the Provincial Action Committee, who had already located themselves in Kian, were informed of the decision and instructed to move their organizations from the city.

Some Action Committee opposition to the evacuation probably followed. The Committee favored Li Li-san's policies, which called for attacks on major cities, so they could hardly agree with voluntarily surrendering Kian. In addition, they saw the city's potential as a base for developing their power and disseminating propaganda. But the Committee could not defend the city alone, and during the first weeks of November, possibly after having resisted the move for a few days, they moved to the town of Fu-t'ien and Kian was retaken by the KMT.

We might expect that after the evacuation, while the Soviet government was relocating itself, the investigation into AB Corps activity continued. In late November, possibly because the investigation had been completed, Mao ordered mass arrests of suspected AB Corps members. Perhaps more than 4,000 officers and men of the 20th Army, including the political commissar, Hsieh Han-ch'ang, were arrested.[4] These arrests, carried out in the Huang-p'o district of Yung-feng county, became known as the Huang-p'o incident.

Outwardly the Soviet government was acting to supress the AB Corps. More significant, however, were those arrests which took place at the same time in Fu-t'ien, seat of the relocated Action Committee. Many members of the Action Committee were accused of membership in the AB Corps and arrested. They included the secretary-general, Tuan Liang-pi, and leading members such as Li Wen-lin, Ts'ung Yun-chang, and Chin Wan-pang.[5] Soon all but two members of the Action Committee were under arrest.

Little information is available concerning the Huang-p'o incident. One account credits Li Shao-chiu, Ch'en Cheng-jen, and Tseng Shan, all Mao supporters with organizing the arrests.[6] (Tseng Shan had recently been elected chairman of the Kiangsi Soviet.) Many pro-KMT accounts, although they fail to cite convincing evidence, claim that large numbers of Red Army personnel were executed at Huang-p'o.[7] It is certain, however, that none of the Action Committee members were executed, though they were arrested and held in the prison at Fu-t'ien. Perhaps Mao planned eventually to place them on public trial.

Official charges placed against those arrested accused them of falling prey to the influence of the AB Corps, being members of the Liquidationists, Social Democrat Party members--all political factions known to be operating within the Soviet areas.[8] Subsequent statements issued by Mao regarding the arrests referred to the entire charge and made little attempt to emphasize the AB Corps. But the charge that drew an immediate emotional response was that of possible AB Corps connections. Among the spectrum of anti-communist organizations, the AB Corps was the most feared. It was invisible, unlike the KMT armies, and it was said to be well organized and ruthless, unlike, for instance, the Social Democrat Party.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the charges Mao placed against the Action Committee began with an accusation of membership in the AB Corps. If the Corps thrived on lies and subversion, what acceptable proof could the Committee members offer of their innocence? Moreover, in the midst of high tensions and ever-present dangers, the charges were themselves sufficient to condemn the Action Committee.

The Action Committee had been caught in a wide net of purges, and with charges that elicited an emotional rather than a rational response. The stage was set for the drama of the Fu-t'ien incident which unfolded in December.

## THE FU-T'IEN INCIDENT

### Open Revolt

On either the 7th or 8th of December 1930, perhaps only a week after the initial mass arrests at Huang-p'o and Fu-t'ien, a battalion of the 20th Army rose in revolt. About 400 men stationed at Hsing-kuo, less than thirty miles from Fu-t'ien, rallied to the call of Liu Ti, their political commissar. The commander of the 20th army, Liu T'ieh-ch'ao, was arrested by Liu Ti, who then led the rebels on a march to Fu-t'ien. Attacking the prison at Fu-t'ien, Liu Ti's men set free some twenty members of the Action Committee, including Li Wen-lin.[9] Apparently they had moved so quickly that no serious resistance had been offered by pro-Mao Red Army units.

After opening the prison, the rebels began searching for Mao's supporters in the area, particularly those such as Li Shao-chiu, Ch'en Cheng-jen, and Tseng Shan, who held official positions.[10] The provincial Soviet government, which included many pro-Mao individuals, was overthrown and many members were arrested, with the exception of the chairman, Tseng Shan, who allegedly was allowed to escape.[11]

The reasons that originally prompted Liu Ti's revolt have never been made clear. According to one account, Liu Ti had been visited by Li Shao-chiu shortly after the Huang-p'o arrests, when Li suggested that political issues as well as membership in the AB Corps had been the cause of the arrests. Many of the high-ranking cadre who had been victims of the arrests, such as Tuan Liang-pi, Li Wen-lin, Hsieh Han-ch'ang and Chin Wan-pang, had outwardly worked hard for the success of the communist movement and, probably in Liu's eyes, if political issues were an important factor in the arrests, he, too, might be subject to arrest. John Rue has suggested that Li Shao-chiu's visit to Liu Ti was designed to incite Liu to revolt and provide further cause for pro-Mao elements to move against their opposition.[12]

This is a plausible interpretation, but still open to question. If Mao and Chu Teh were then engaged in an investigation into possible AB Corps activities and were able to arrest members of the Action Committee on unproven charges, why could they not take similar action against Liu Ti, if he was mistrusted by the Maoists? Secondly, even if Mao had wished Liu Ti to revolt, why weren't Red Army units waiting to suppress the rebels after Liu Ti had demonstrated his disloyalty? Although an armed revolt may not have been the action Mao expected Liu Ti to take,[13]

it is unlikely that Mao would have been willing to gamble with such a dangerous possibility, especially considering the success of the initial Huang-p'o arrests.

There are some further interesting possibilities that have thus far been overlooked. Liu Ti was stationed at Hsing-kuo, not far from the village of Tung-ku. The family homes of Tuan Liang-pi and Li Wen-lin, arrested by Mao a week prior to the revolt, were in Hsing-kuo and Tung-ku. Both men had recruited peasants from the surrounding areas to form a guerrilla band that probably had been active in the communist movement since 1928.[14] It is reasonable to assume that both men enjoyed a degree of status and support form families in the area. Perhaps Liu Ti, if not some of his officers and men, was a local man who felt a personal loyalty to the two arrested men. In addition, Li Wen-lin's father was a fairly wealthy and influential landlord who might have put some pressure on Liu Ti to take action.[15] The scarcity of information regarding the people involved in the initial stage of the revolt makes these merely speculations. The most likely, and logical, possibility is that Liu Ti sided with the Action Committee in its policy debate with Mao Tse-tung.

The revolt at Fu-t'ien underscored a basic difference of opinion among communist leaders in Kiangsi: whether to follow the radical innovations of Mao Tse-tung, who had decided to implement his policies by gaining supreme control of the communist movement in Kiangsi, or whether to remain loyal to the established and "legitimate" policies of the Central Committee in Shanghai. The revolt caused a crack in the Red Army at a time when KMT divisions were already enroute to attack the Soviet areas, and thereby threatened both the immediate and long term future of the communist cause. Mao had the opportunity to consolidate, in fact probably to increase, his power if immediately after the revolt he had been able to defeat the rebels decisively. But the rebels had gained the initiative.

## The Rebels Organize

In spite of their success in attacking Fu-t'ien and releasing the Action Committee members, the rebels must have been aware that Mao still held the balance of power and that they would be unable successfully to defend the town. After carrying out arrests of pro-Maoists, and possibly after some executions, the rebels retreated later the same day across the Kan River to the district of Yung-yang.[16]

Once in the relative safety of Yung-yang, Li Wen-lin summoned a "People's Conference" to explain the rebels' position on various issues and, as the meeting developed, to demand the overthrow of Mao. While discussing all of the policies that had caused a gap between the Front Committee and the Action Committee throughout 1930, criticism tended to center on Mao.[17] Mao's class background was analyzed. His father was labeled a wealthy landlord, and it was argued that Mao possessed traits common to that class: self-interest, narrow-mindedness, and conservatism.[18] To the rebels this analysis explained many of the policy differences they had with Mao.

Central among these policy differences was the question of the correct land policy. Mao favored a gradual approach to the problem of land confiscation and redistribution. His policy would allow middle and rich peasants to continue owning their land temporarily, until the party could investigate the peculiarities of each case and reach a decision. Because Mao faced the problem of finding adequate numbers of literate men who could assist in the administration of the Soviet areas, he was willing to give official appointments to landlords and rich peasants who would renounce their evil past and pledge to work for the peasants' benefit.[19] To the rebels, such ideas were tantamount to a betrayal of the revolution and they promptly issued slogans which explained their stand on the issue: "Oppose the Rich Peasants!", "Divide the Land Equally!", and "Oppose the Capture of the Government by Landlords and Rich Peasants!".[20]

Other criticisms were also made. Mao was accused of basing policy decisions upon his own opinions, thus failing to follow the correct policies of the Central Committee. His refusal quickly to launch attacks against key cities was a case in point. He was accused of using politics for his own ends, erroneously criticizing and censuring party members. Eventually the discussions reached the crux of the dispute. Mao was accused of trying to become a "Party Emperor." The rebels charged that by skillful political manipulation Mao had placed himself in a powerful position and was now deviating from the correct revolutionary policy, carrying out instead policies of his own making.[21] The outlines of the actual picture, that of Mao moving away from the Central Committee's control and maneuvering to consolidate his own power, are reflected in these charges.

The conference closed by issuing a "Decision Concerning the Fu-t'ien Incident,"[22] which contained these criticism. The rebels decided to dispatch Tuan Liang-pi to Shanghai to inform the Central Com-

mittee of their actions.[23] Shortly thereafter, Li Wen-lin organized a Provincial Communist Party Committee with which to administer the rebel Soviet.[24]

A rival Soviet existing just beyond the Kan River certainly meant that Mao could no longer hide the split that had been dividing the party in the Kiangsi Soviet since the beginning of the year. The issues in question, and the rationale behind each stand, were now in the open. Although he no doubt would have been willing to defend his investigation of the AB Corps activities, Mao was later saved from explaining his actions during November and December by the first KMT encirclement campaign, which turned the Red Army's attention toward the immediate need for defense, and also by Li Li-san's fall from power. After Li's removal, Mao was able openly to criticize Li's unworkable policies. The Fu-t'ien incident has since been interpreted by Mao as having been the result of Li's unwholesome influence on the rebels.[25]

The actions of the rebels, initially within the Action Committee prior to the arrests and later at Yung-yang after the revolt, are important because they so closely followed accepted communist procedure. As members of the Action Committee, they had worked hard to oppose Mao's policies and had attempted to gain the support of the Central Committee, but always by proceeding through the proper channels. In Yung-yang they retained the communist governmental structure and methods of public discussion. Convinced of the correctness of their actions, they dispatched a representative to Shanghai to gain the Central Committee's support.

Although they opposed the growing power of Mao--they put forth the slogan of "Crush Mao Tse-tung"--they continued to support the Kiangsi communist movement, evidenced by the second half of the above slogan: "Support Chu, P'eng and Huang." (Chu Teh, P'eng Teh-huai and Huang Kung-lüeh.)[26] Their actions appear to have been just as sincere as Mao Tse-tung's.

## Pro-Maoists React with Unity

A little more than a week after the revolt at Fu-t'ien, the three principal army commanders in the area, Chu Teh, P'eng Teh-huai, and Huang Kung-lüeh took a united stand unconditionally supporting Mao. Two public letters signed by all three men were issued, one on December 17th and the other on December 18th, 1930.[27]

Both letters contained accusations against the rebels and generally covered the same points. The second letter, intended for distribution to men of the 20th Army, seems also to have been rather clearly aimed at the rebels. It contained a stronger defence of Mao's policies and spent less time accusing the rebels. Historically the letters are very revealing, for not only do they recount the events at Fu-t'ien, but they also discuss policy questions and charges made by the rebels.

The army commanders fully defended Mao's military policies which, they said, were designed to bring about the victory of the communist revolution.[28] It was inferred that Tuan Liang-pi and Li Wen-lin had attempted to acquire personal military power.[29] Perhaps they had succeeded to some degree and, as earlier suggested, the rebellious 20th army troops lead by Liu Ti were members of their personal power organization. The rebel leaders were also accused of being officers in the AB Corps.

Mao's land policies were confirmed by the generals as correct. Countering the rebels' charges, the letter stated that Tuan and Li both had rich peasant backgrounds and had opposed the equal redistribution of land. It was asserted that Mao had always favored politically and economically opposing the rich peasants.

The strongest point made in both letters was the complete unity of Chu, P'eng, Huang, and the Red Army with Mao and his policies. The authors affirmed that Mao's policies followed the correct Bolshevik line and were in accordance with directives of the Central Committee, and charges that Mao engaged in political manipulation or was implementing his own policies were staunchly denied. Policy differences within the communist movement, the authors emphasized, could be solved at formal meetings; there was no need to resort to armed rebellion.[30] Finally the authors put forth what might have been a slogan of their own: ". . . Chu, Mao, P'eng and Huang, united to the end."[31]

Until the middle of January 1931 the situation between the Maoists and rebels appears to have remained the same. Most likely the rebels continued attempting to win Red Army units over to their side and possibly they also exchanged notes with Mao and Chu,[32] but each must have been unable to move decisively against the other. Mao and Chu could take no action because they urgently needed the Red Army to combat KMT divisions, and the rebels, who remained outnumbered and relatively isolated, had little power. It is interesting to note that Mao still failed to denounce the Central Committee or Li Li-san. Perhaps both sides,

feeling that the Central Committee would soon learn of these events, waited for word from Shanghai.

## THE REBELLION IS SUPRESSED

### The Central Bureau is Formed and Pleads for Unity

In January 1931 word arrived from the Central Committee in Shanghai that both the General Front Committee and the Action Committee had been abolished and were to be replaced by a Central Bureau for the Soviet Areas. The Central Bureau, to be governed by a nine-man board, was to coordinate the consolidation and strengthening of all Soviets. Among the individuals named to the board, only three were then physically present in the Kiangsi Soviet: Mao, Chu Teh, and Tseng Shan, who had escaped arrest by the Fu-t'ien rebels early in December. These appointments unquestionably increased Mao's ability to exercise legitimate authority throughout the Soviet areas, and both Chu Teh and Tseng Shan could be expected to follow Mao's wishes.[33]

From his new position of power, Mao Tse-tung, in the second circular issued by the Central Bureau, published a "Decision on the Fu-t'ien Incident."[34] This document represented at least the fourth time since the revolt that pro-Maoists had recounted the incident and put forth their criticisms of the rebels.[35] The most significant remark about the rebels was an admission that ". . . it has not yet been proven that they [the rebels] were all members of the AB Corps or Liquidationists . . .".[36] Thus far the pro-Maoists had painted a very strong connection between the AB Corps and the Fu-t'ien rebels. This link, in fact, had been justification for the initial arrests and constituted the most effective charge for removing the Action Committee from power. Had Mao backed down on his original charges because he knew they could never be proven? Perhaps Mao no longer needed the charges. After their prison break, arrests, and open opposition to Mao, the Action Committee and their cohorts could legitimately be condemned as rebels who had split the communist movement. Such charges were easy to prove and Mao would still be able to accomplish his removal of the former Action Committee members.

Capitalizing on these facts, Mao stated that the rebels had aided counter-revolutionary forces by their action and had followed a "right opportunist" line. To insure that all signs of legitimacy were denied the rebels, they were expelled from the Party. Specifically named in the

circular were Tuan Liang-pi, Li Wen-lin, Hsieh Han-ch'ang, Liu Ti, and Chin Wan-pang.[37] Mao had succeeded in exercising his new authority to undermine the rebels and their arguments.

Emotional responses to the existence of an AB Corps network within the Soviet areas, and the fears and suspicions which produced these responses, had been growing since the Huang-p'o arrests. By January and February 1931, with the first KMT Encirclement and Annihilation campaign only recently ended and with the continued physical presence and activities of the rebel Soviet, tensions in the communist areas reached unmanageable proportions. In many areas the civilian population had been upset by the mass arrests, charges of subversive activity, and the Fu-t'ien revolt. This was particularly true in the areas surrounding Tung-ku and Fu-t'ien, where the people grew hostile toward the Red Army.[38] For a time during the first KMT campaign, the Red Army cautiously avoided maneuvering through this area.[39] Soon the air was filled with charges and counter charges as individuals and committees discovered suspected AB Corps agents. Party committees and individuals began issuing independent statements setting forth their own view of the Fu-t'ien incident, thus creating possibilities for conflicts that quickly threatened to undermine party discipline and authority.[40] Speeches and lectures directed against the rebels were often carried to extremes,[41] and after a time probably few were free from suspicion.

The Central Bureau had intended its "Decision on the Fu-t'ien Incident" to bring a halt to these extra-party activities concerning subversives. The Decision had called for all party members to unite behind the "correct line" in the face of the KMT threat,[42] but the circular had not stopped anxiety among the people, and by February the situation was almost beyond control. On 19 February 1931, in light of the dangers present, the Central Bureau issued a circular which emphasized more strongly than previous directives the urgent need for unity within the Party ranks.[43] The importance of "democratic centralism" was cited as a theme requiring that decisions of higher authorities receive absolute obedience. Various party headquarters were warned that failure to obey directives of the Central Bureau might result in disbandment. These remarks were aimed at reasserting party discipline. By its references to the Fu-t'ien incident, its stress on the immediate need for unity, and its remarks admitting again that the rebels may not all have been AB Corps members, the circular clearly reflected the disruption that fear of the AB Corps had caused within the Kiangsi Soviet.

In spite of his positive efforts to quell the AB Corps hysteria, it must be said that Mao Tse-tung was partly responsible for the explo-

sive situation of February 1931. His mass arrests and his use of the AB Corps charge had played on the fears of the populace. Reacting from fear, the people's behavior burst out of control. Mao's attempt to manipulate popular fear of the AB Corps and turn it against members of the Action Committee had seriously backfired.

## Removing the Rebels: Public Trials

Between May and July of 1931, Red Army units began moving against centers of rebel activity within the Soviet areas. These operations were undertaken in Fukien and Kiangsi,[44] where revolts against the Central Bureau's authority had supposedly occurred. In each of the three cases, Mao blamed the influence and activities of the AB Corps. Capturing the leaders of each revolt was recognized as an important goal. Agnes Smedley has written of the capture of the Fu-t'ien rebels.[45] According to her account, Mao proposed that he and the rebel leaders hold a conference in Yü-tu to discuss differences and to integrate the rebels into the Central Bureau's authority. The conference was a trap. The rebel leaders and their bodyguard were arrested by the Red Army. Physically reclaiming the rebel areas was probably an easy task after the leaders had been arrested. It is reported that by July 1931 up to 4,000 "counter revolutionary elements" had been captured,[46] and the decision was made to hold mass public trials at the town of Po-sha.[47] Late in the summer of 1931 the trials were convened. A Revolutionary Tribunal was elected, with Mao Tse-tung as its chairman, and many civilians attended the open air proceedings.

Each of the captured rebel leaders (including Li Wen-lin) were placed before the audience and charged with their crime. They were then given the opportunity to plead to the charges and to speak out in their own defense. As might have been expected, the defendants tried to gain the sympathy of the audience, but no doubt they also spoke fairly and honestly about the reasons for their actions. After their defence, the tribunal began questioning the defendants and offering documents or calling witnesses as proof of their charges. The old KMT documents, captured a year earlier at Kian, were brought out and placed against the rebel leaders as evidence. During this time members of the audience were permitted to make statements or ask questions of the rebel leaders.

The spectators soon became emotionally involved in the proceedings as more and more peasants yelled out to condemn or curse the rebel leaders. Then the tribunal brought out the charge of membership

in the AB Corps. In spite of earlier statements issued by the Central Bureau refusing to condemn all of the rebels on this charge because of lack of proof, the rebel leaders were confronted with this original accusation.[48] Like all subversives, the tribunal intimated, the rebel leaders were not speaking truthfully when defending themselves, but were lying to cover the truth of their treachery. The spectators grew very excited, accusing or yelling at the rebels, and the tribunal continued pressing its case, urging the rebel leaders to confess.[49] Tribunal members then turned to the audience and asked what the sentence should be. The people yelled, "death!". Although the trial lasted a week, the other rebels (soldiers and cadre) must in some cases have been tried in groups, considering the large numbers involved. Some were sentenced to imprisonment while others were reprimanded and released.

Five men, among them Li Wen-lin, were accused of being rebel leaders and received death sentences, but their sentences were not immediately carried out.[50] Instead they were sent, under guard, to tour the Soviet areas. In the small villages and towns they were forced to stand on platforms while speakers called the people together and told the story of the trial at Po-sha. After being so expertly used for their propaganda value, three of the rebel leaders were executed, while two of them were reportedly still in prison in 1934.[51]

In view of the disruptions caused by rebel activities, it is understandable that the Red Army took the first opportunity to suppress them. Initially, reemergence of the charge of AB Corps membership might appear surprising, but, in reality, it was still the strongest charge that Mao could bring against his old rivals. Mao had decided to follow accepted communist procedure and hold public trials, thus giving rise to the possibility that the rebels might prove themselves sincere and gain sympathy from the people. Understandably, Mao wanted to remove once and for all the opportunity for these men to challenge again his authority and disrupt the Soviet areas. By resurrecting the old charge of AB Corps membership, the tribunal was saying that the rebels' attempt at sincerity was in itself a move to dupe the people. The rebel leaders were condemned by the fears of the populace.

After nearly two years of trying to deal with the opposition of Tuan Liang-pi and Li Wen-lin to his policies, Mao had finally succeeded in removing them and the top cadre of the former Action Committee. But by the time this threat was completely overcome, new threats to Mao's leadership of the communist movement in Kiangsi had arisen. The KMT attacks and the Central Committee's move from Shanghai to

the Soviet areas were two such threats. Throughout his years in Kiangsi, supreme leadership of the communist movement in Kiangsi often seemed within Mao's grasp, but it was never unquestionably his.

## CONCLUSION

At the time Mao Tse-tung made his decision to gain absolute leadership of the communist movement in Kiangsi, probably during the fall of 1930, he already posessed a good deal of power within the Soviet areas. The immediate obstacle to an extension of Mao's authority was the Kiangsi Provincial Action Committee. The Action Committee enjoyed strong support from the Central Committee, particularly Li Li-san, in Shanghai. Leading members of the Action Committee, such as Tuan Liang-pi and Li Wen-lin for example, could also claim pockets of strong support within the Kiangsi Soviet, as in Hsing-kuo and Tung-ku in this case. Policies advocated by the Action Committee tended to follow without question the line set by Li Li-san and the Central Committee; thus the Action Committee asserted throughout 1930 and 1931 the "correctness" of their policy stand. Their claim to legitimacy was a strong one that could not easily be denied by Mao. Consolidation of his power meant but one thing to Mao: that the Action Committee must be removed from power.

It was undoubtedly obvious to Mao that he could not censure the Action Committee solely because of objections to its policies, since their claim to legitimacy was stronger than his. Mao never would have won in such a duel without admitting his growing independence from the Central Committee's control. The Action Committee could not arbitrarily be arrested in view of the strong backing it enjoyed both within Kiangsi and with the Central Committee. The most positive course of action, and certainly the one that Mao adopted, was convincingly to discredit the Action Committee and to turn popular opinion against them within Kiangsi.

Alledged connections with the AB Corps were the precise charges that Mao needed. Even if the Action Committee would deny the charges, as was to be expected, suspicion would already have been placed upon them. After being accused of thriving on lies, what could the committee members say to prove their innocence? Heightened emotional responses, the natural behavior of people living under tension, could be expected to place the burden of proof on the Action Committee members, thereby lending more credence to Mao's charges.

The timing of the November 1930 arrests was perfect, since Chu Teh was then directing an investigation into actual AB Corps activities and the Corps' possible infiltration into communist organizations. At one blow the Action Committee was included in the mass arrests and irrevocably linked with rumors of the AB Corps.

Unfortunately for Mao, events did not follow the course he had planned for them. It seems impossible, if we question the validity of the charge of AB Corps connections, to define clearly why Liu Ti and certain men under him revolted. Possibly, seeing the manner and scale of the arrests at Huang-p'o and Fu-t'ien, they feared that Mao might also strike out at them. They might have felt that the recent arrests proved the Action Committee's charges that Mao often acted without the sanction of the Central Committee. We should also take into account the possibility that because Tuan Liang-pi and Li Wen-lin had strong local support in the Hsing-kuo area, some sort of pressure, quite likely from relatives and friends of the two arrested men, was put on Liu Ti to aid the Action Committee.

Throughout the course of the Fu-t'ien incident and its aftermath, the rebels proved the sincerity of their policy stands and the fact that they were not members of the AB Corps. If they had been connected with the Corps they would have escaped from the Soviet areas after being released from prison, since they would no longer have had any usefulness to the Corps. If they had wished to remain near their homes, there was little point in establishing a rival Soviet and actively challenging Mao and the Red Army, especially considering that they were greatly outnumbered and had little hope of taking the balance of power away from Mao.

Instead, the rebels retained communist methods of organization, as was reflected in the People's Conference, the emphasis they placed on explaining their policies, and in the creation of a duplicate Soviet government to challenge Mao. The slogans they put forward opposed Mao, certainly, but they still called for unity within the communist movement by announcing support for Chu Teh, P'eng Teh-huai and Huang Kung-lüeh. The policies they favored concerning land redistribution and military strategy were the same policies they had advocated as members of the Action Committee. Most importantly, they dispatched Tuan Liang-pi to Shanghai to offer an explanation of their actions to the Central Committee.

Events of the Fu-t'ien incident have shown that Mao had already made the decision to maneuver for supreme leadership of the

communist movement within Kiangsi. He was, all along, unwilling to debate his policies with the Central Committee or with members of the Action Committee. [52] Had he been content to remain one among the many power holders in the movement, he would at least have sought the Central Committee's support for his policies or asked for assistance from the Action Committee, if only in the name of communist unity. Once his decision had been made, however, Mao had to remove the Action Committee and nothing could deter him. By the time Mao had successfully completed his first step toward greater power, the situation within Kiangsi had become more complicated and his subsequent steps met with less complete success. But with his first step, Mao had demonstrated that he was determined to see his endeavors through to the end.

NOTES

1. Useful comments on the origins and activities of the AB Corps can be found in: Wang Chien-min, Chung-kuo Kung-ch'an-tang shih kao (Draft history of the Chinese Communist Party), 5 vols., (Taipei, 1965), II, 528, 538-539, with a questionable interpretation of the designation "AB Corps" given on 528. Agnes Smedley also mentions the origins of the Corps in China's Red Army Marches (New York, 1934), 262. She gives the organizer's name incorrectly, based, I believe, on a misreading of the characters which should be read as Tuan Hsi-p'eng. Also see Robert Payne, Portrait of a Revolutionary: Mao Tse-tung, rev. ed. (New York, 1961), 121; Ch'eng Sheng-ch'ang, "Fu-t'ien shih-pien yü ch'ih-tang nei-pu fen-hua" (The Fu-t'ien incident and internal divisions within the Communist Party); Hsien-tai shih-liao (Materials on modern history), 3:278 (1934). For some comments on the activities of the communists during their 40-odd day occupation of Kian, see: "Chi 1930 nien 9 yüeh chung-kuo kung-nung Hung-chün chiai-fang Chi-an-ch'eng" (Recalling the September 1930 liberation of Kian by the worker's and peasant's Red Army); Li-shih chiao-hsüeh (Historical studies), 12:30-31 (1957).

2. According to Smedley, the five AB Corps members revealed in the document were all executed after a public trial in 1931. The only individual who can be traced through the entire Fu-t'ien affair is Li Wen-lin, a prominent member of the Action Committee and later a leader of the Fu-t'ien rebels. See Agnes Smedley, China's Red Army Marches, 267, 274-279. It is also uncertain how much time was required to break the KMT code, although the names apparently were quickly deciphered. See John E. Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition: 1927-1935 (Stanford, Calif., 1966), 222; Agnes Smedley, China's Red Army Marches, 267; Agnes Smedley, The Great Road: The Life and Times of Chu Teh, (New York, 1956), 280.

3. Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition..., 224-225; Agnes Smedley, The Great Road, 286.

4. Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition..., 231-232. This is a recounting of the Huang-p'o incident, although the incident is not specified as such. Also see Note 7 below.

5. These individuals were all fairly well known within the communist movement. Some of them no doubt had strong personal followings and, as in the case of Li Wen-lin and Tuan Liang-pi, partic-

ular districts where their power was concentrated. Comments about these individuals can be found in Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition..., 150n; Benjamin I. Schwartz, Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao, 5th printing, (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), 175-176; Edgar Snow, Red Star Over China (New York, 1961), 177. Li Wen-lin was also known as Li Po-fang. See Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition..., 199. Documents issued after the Fu-t'ien incident mention these individuals. See Hsiao Tso-liang, Power Relations within the Chinese Communist Movement, 1930-1934, 2 vols. (Seattle Wash., 1961), I, 98-113; Wang Chien-min, ...Kung-ch'an-tang-shih kao, II, 528-539. An intriguing, though unreliable, account of this event is given in Lu Ch'iang, Ching-kang-shan shang te "ying-hsiung" (The "hero" of the Chingkang mountains), (Hong Kong, 1964), 33-35. Ch'en Yi was assigned the task of making the arrests in the Fu-t'ien area--see Biographical Dictionary of Republican China, Howard Boorman, ed. 2 vols. published. (New York, 1967-1968), I, 256. According to the account in Boorman, these arrests took place on December 7th and constitute the Fu-t'ien incident. My chronology puts the arrests in late November and the revolt, i.e., the incident, on the 7th or 8th of December.

6. Lu Ch'iang, Ching-kang-shan..., 33-34.

7. The Huang-p'o incident generally, and specifically varying figures of persons reported killed (ranging from 500 to 4,400), can be found in Lu Ch'iang, Ching-kang-shan..., 35; Wang Ssz-ch'eng, Mao Tse-tung yu hung-huo (Mao Tse-tung and the red calamity),(Taipei, 1959), 212; "Ch'ih-fei fan-tung wen-hsien hui-pien" (Red bandit reactionary documents), 6 vols., (mimeographed), 451-452; Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition..., 231; Hsiao Tso-liang, Power Relations..., I, 107; Ch'eng Sheng-ch'ang, "Fu-t'ien shih-pien...", 268-269.

8. The best account of the various factions active in these areas is given in Wang Chien-min, ...Kung-ch'an-tang-shih kao, II, 528-529. Other sources are: Ch'eng sheng-ch'ang, "Fu-t'ien shih-pien ...", 263-264; "Ch'ih-fei fan-tung wen-hsien...", 451; Wang Ssz-ch'eng, Mao Tse-tung yü hung-huo, 213n.

9. The above account generally follows that given in the most authoritative source, the "Tui Fu-t'ien shih-pien te chüeh-i" (Decision concerning the Fu-t'ien incident), issued by the CCP Central Bureau in 1931, and reprinted in Wang Chien-min, ...Kung-ch'an-tang-shih kao, II, 530-533, mentioned on 534. In the Shih-sou Collection (Ch'en Ch'eng papers), 008.2107/5044/0008, reel #14. This document

is commented on in Hsiao Tso-liang, Power Relations..., I, 108-109. Other accounts appear in: Lu Ch'iang, Ching-kang-shan..., 35-36; Ch'eng Sheng-ch'ang, "Fu-t'ien shih-pien...", 281-284. The account with an incorrect date is in: Franklin W. Houn, A Short History of Chinese Communism, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1967), 82. See also Jerome Ch'en, Mao and the Chinese Revolution, (London, 1965), 164-165; Kan Yu-lan, Mao Tse-tung chi ch'i chi-t'uan (Mao Tse-tung and his clique), (Hong Kong, 1954), 176-177; K'o Ch'eng, "Mao Tse-tung te chuan-heng-lu" (Mao Tse-tung's record of tyranny), Hsien-tai shih-liao (Materials on modern history), 3:258, (1934); Ku Kuan-chiao, San-shih-nien-lai te Chung-kung (Thirty years of the Chinese Communists), (Hong Kong, 1955), 71-72; Li Ang, Hung-se wu-t'ai (The red stage), (Taipei, 1954), 122; Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition..., 232; Robert North, Chinese Communism, (New York, 1966), 120; Schwartz, Chinese Communism..., 176; Stuart Schram, Mao Tse-tung, (Baltimore, Md., 1967), 152-153; Shih Pu-chih, Ching-kang-shan te feng-huo (The beacon fire of the Chingkang mountains), (Hong Kong, 1964), 45; Snow, Red Star..., 182; Agnes Smedley, The Great Road..., 286; Wang Ssz-ch'eng, Mao Tse-tung yü hung-huo, 212. There are many discrepancies in the above accounts. Only a few among these are commented on in: Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition, 232n; Hsiao Tso-liang, Power Relations..., I, 99.

10. Lu Ch'iang, Ching-kang-shan..., 36.

11. Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition, 232n. The rebels were later charged with "driving him out." See Wang Chien-min, ...Kung-ch'an-tang-shih kao, II, 534. Rue states that over a hundred of Mao's supporters were killed at Fu-t'ien, and Chu Teh's wife may have been among those captured. See Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition, 233.

12. Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition, 232; Hsiao Tso-liang, Power Relations..., I, 104. The only account of this visit I have seen in Chinese is in Lu Ch'iang, Ching-kang-shan..., 35-36.

13. Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition, 232.

14. Ibid., 150n.

15. Agnes Smedley, China's Red Army Marches, 267. Also see comments in Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition, 222-223; Agnes Smedley, The Great Road..., 280, 286. Remarks on pro-Li Li-san feelings are in Jerome Ch'en, Mao and..., 164.

16. There has been some question concerning the length of time the rebels were able to hold Fu-t'ien and the activities they engaged in while there. It appears that they would have been quickly outnumbered if they had decided to defend Fu-t'ien and would consequently have wished to withdraw to a safer area to organize. Most sources discussing this sequence of events are vague (Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition, 233; Schwartz, Chinese Communism..., 176; Agnes Smedley, China's Red Army Marches, 268). Based on one source, however, which specifically states that the rebels withdrew the same day (Lu Ch'iang, Ching-kang-shan..., 37), and following what would seem a logical progression, I have arranged the events as they are presented in this section.

17. It is impossible to reconstruct the agenda of this conference; charges made at some time or another by the rebels will be mentioned below in conjunction with the conference. See Note 21 below.

18. Lu Ch'iang, Ching-kang-shan..., 37.

19. For a chapter discussing questions of the land policy see Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition, 189-203.

20. Schwartz, Chinese Communism..., 175.

21. The discussion of the charges put forth by the rebels represents a piecing together of about four accounts where, in some cases, the fact that a charge was later denied meant that a specific charge had once been made. See Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition, 233; Hsiao Tso-liang, Power Relations..., I, 101; Agnes Smedley, China's Red Army Marches, 268; Agnes Smedley, The Great Road..., 287. Also see Lu Ch'iang, Ching-kang-shan..., 37; Ch'eng Sheng-ch'ang, "Fu-t'ien shih-pien...", 284; Schwartz, Chinese Communism..., 175.

22. Lu Ch'iang, Ching-kang-shan..., 37. This was apparently the first document issued by either side concerning the revolt at Fu-t'ien. Later, in January 1931, the Central Bureau issued its own statement. The titles, identical in English translation, differ in Chinese. The rebel's was titled: "Yü-jih shih-pien chüeh-i", while the Central Bureau's was titled: "Tui Fu-t'ien shih-pien te chüeh-i-an". I have not been able to locate a copy of the rebel document.

23. See Wang Chien-min, ...Kung-ch'an-tang-shih kao, II, 529. I disagree with Professor Wang's implication that Tuan just abandoned the Soviet areas.

24. Ch'eng Sheng-ch'ang, "Fu-t'ien shih-pien...", 284; Agnes Smedley, China's Red Army Marches, 268; Schwartz, Chinese Communism..., 176. The rebels did attempt to win various Red Army units over to their side, but they were not very successful in this. For a circular issued by the rebels defending their stand (not the "Decision" cited in Note 22), see Hsiao Tso-liang, Power Relations..., I, 102-105. A reply by Mao (through the Front Committee) is then given Ibid., I, 105-107. Some comments are in Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition, 234. Further comments about the rebels and their activities will be found in Hsiao Tso-liang, Power Relations..., I, 109-111.

25. According to the account in Snow, Red Star..., 182.

26. Lu Ch'iang, Ching-kang-shan..., 36, 39; Chung-kuo Kung-ch'an-tang chih t'ou-shih (The Chinese Communist Party in perspective), (Taipei, 1966), 139. As a means of achieving the victory of their policies, as is indicated by their slogan, the rebels probably hoped for an open split between Mao and his top military commanders.

27. These letters are reprinted in Wang Chien-min, ...Kung-ch'an-tang-shih kao, II, 533-537. In the Shih-sou Collection, 008.22/3065, reel #14. They are commented on in Hsiao Tso-liang, Power Relations..., I, 98-102. References in this short section have all been taken from Wang Chien-min, ... Kung-ch'an-tang-shih kao, unless otherwise noted. In certain cases specific pages will be cited for the benefit of those wishing to consult the source.

28. The rebels had always strongly advocated Li Li-san's military policies. Apparently they had opposed halting the attacks on Nanch'ang and Ch'angsha in August and further opposed the decision to take Kian. See Wang Chien-min, ...Kung-ch'an-tang-shih kao, II, 534.

29. See Ibid. Mentioned also in Hsiao Tso-liang, Power Relations..., I, 100.

30. See Wang Chien-min, ...Kung-ch'an-tang-shih kao, II, 536; Hsiao Tso-liang, Power Relations..., I, 102. This is an interesting statement in light of the action taken by Mao at Huang-p'o and Fu-t'ien in November, particularly if my interpretation of these events is correct.

31. See Wang Chien-min, ...Kung-ch'an-tang-shih kao, II, 535.

32. Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition, 235.

33. There is a question as to when the plan for a Central Bureau was adopted by the Central Committee in Shanghai and who headed the Central Committee when appointments to the new Central Bureau were made. Rue feels that Li Li-san still controlled the Central Committee and he or his followers made the appointments. Mao's dominance over the board, according to Rue, was largely accidental (Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition, 235). It would have to have been accidental since it is quite unlikely that Li Li-san would have wished to grant more power to Mao, though, of course, it would have been difficult to form the board and ignore Mao's real authority within Kiangsi. But it seems to me the "returned students" group would have been inclined to appoint Mao, especially after seeing how he had tried to ignore the Li Li-san line, which the returned students themselves strongly criticized. Quite possibly they initially would have been inclined to support Mao if only because he, in fact, was in control of the Kiangsi area. See Shanti Swarup, A Study of the Chinese Communist Movement, (Oxford, 1966), 245. Credit for the returned students group forming the Central Bureau is given in Franklin Houn, A Short History of..., 43.

We also know that Mao Tse-tung openly criticized the Li Li-san line after Li fell from power, and his later interpretation of the Fu-t'ien incident was part of that criticism against Li. In the first two circulars issued by the Central Bureau, however, there is no criticism of the Li Li-san line, indicating that the full details of Li's fall from power were not yet known in the Soviet areas or, at least, had not been confirmed. Chu Teh said that only in March 1931 were they informed of the repudiation of the Li Li-san line. See Agnes Smedley, The Great Road..., 294.

34. This is the second document referred to in Note 22. The circular was issued on 16 January 1931. (Wang Chien-min, ...Kung-ch'an-tang-shih kao, II, 533.)

35. These had been done on 17 Dec 1930, 18 Dec 1930 (Hsiao Tso-liang, Power Relations..., I, 98-102) and later in December 1930 (Ibid., I, 105-107). Again in this circular, reprinted in Wang Chien-min, ...Kung-ch'an-tang-shih kao, II, 530-533. In the Shih-sou Collection, 008.2107/5044, reel #14, and commented on in Hsiao Tso-liang, Power Relations..., I, 108-109.

36. Wang Chien-min, ...Kung-ch'an-tang-shih kao, II, 532. Central Bureau Circular #11, issued on 19 Feb 1931, reiterated that specific charges of AB Corps membership could not be brought against the Fu-t'ien rebels. See Hsiao Tso-liang, Power Relations..., I, 112-113.

In the Shih-sou Collection, 008.2107/5044, reel #14. At least during these two months, then, the Central Bureau continued to back down on their original accusations. These statements will be discussed in a different light in the next short section.

37. Wang Chien-min, ... Kung-ch'an-tang-shih kao, II, 533.

38. Mao Tse-tung, Mao Tse-tung hsuan-chi (Collected Works of Mao Tse-tung), (Peking, 1951), I, 216-217. Stuart Schram, Mao Tse-tung, 159. Ku Kuan-chiao, San-shih-nien-lai te..., 53. Was this because the Red Army had arrested the Action Committee, revolted to free them, or had not strongly enough come to their assistance? It will be recalled that the families of Tuan Liang-pi and Li Wen-lin lived in this area, which may have become a factor in the response of the population. It also seems that Tung-ku was briefly occupied by KMT troops shortly after the Fu-t'ien incident. See Agnes Smedley, China's Red Army Marches, 268; Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition, 233; Agnes Smedley, The Great Road..., 287. A comment on the great degree of strain in the Kiangsi area, quoted from a statement supposedly circulated by Chou En-lai in January 1931, is given in Hsu Kai-yu, Chou En-lai: China's Grey Eminence, (New York, 1968), 85.

39. Stuart Schram, Mao Tse-tung, 160n. Mao considered that part of the population of Hsing-kuo had revolted against the authority of the Central Bureau, and in the spring of 1931 Red Army units moved into this area and arrested many "rebel" leaders. See Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition, 262-263. I have not found information on how well organized these rebels were or what activities they engaged in.

40. Hsiao Tso-liang, Power Relations..., I, 113.

41. Ibid., I, 112.

42. Wang Chien-min, ... Kung-ch'an-tang-shih kao, II, 532.

43. This was the #11 circular issued by the Central Bureau. It is in the Shih-sou Collection, 008.2107/5044, reel #14; commented on in Hsiao Tso-liang, Power Relations..., I, 112-113. My remarks will be based on Dr. Hsiao's comments.

44. I am not certain which three districts were involved. See Agnes Smedley, China's Red Army Marches, 268-269; Rue, Mao Tse-tung in Opposition, 262-263.

45. Agnes Smedley, China's Red Army Marches, 271-272.

46. Ibid., 261.

47. The trial and events surrounding it are discussed in Ibid., 261-279. The following remarks will be taken largely from this source. Trials for the rebels captured in Fukien were to be held in Fukien, as reported in Ibid., 269-271.

48. It is possible that after Hsiang Ying arrived in Kiangsi to assume his post as Secretary of the Central Bureau (spring, 1931), he also issued a statement on the Fu-t'ien incident which accused the rebels of AB Corps connections, and with this unquestionably official pronouncement the pro-Maoists felt they could continue branding the rebels with the original charge. Very few people would disagree, it seems certain, that if this was the case Hsiang Ying was only reacting under the influence of Mao. One such assertion is in Lu Ch'iang, Ching-kang-shan..., 44.

49. Smedley reports that Li Wen-lin did confess membership in the AB Corps--China's Red Army Marches, 276.

50. Smedley has stated that five men were accused of being important rebel leaders, but in her account of the trials she has mentioned only three by name. Besides Li Wen-lin, they were Chen Ming-chuen, a Red Army commander, and Chen Tong-tzu, from the Political Department of the Red Army Military Academy at Fu-t'ien. The other two may have been those whose names Smedley claims were decoded at Kian. If so, they would be Jhow Mien, Chairman of the Kiangsi Finance Committee, and Wang Hwei (Wang Huai?), a member of "the CCP committee guiding the five Soviets". See Agnes Smedley, China's Red Army Marches, 267, 274-279. Adequate biographical data on these men is lacking.

51. Ibid., 279.

52. This statement may be contradicted by a sentence in Smedley: "Chu and Mao had sent delegates to Shanghai to oppose the Li Li-san line of the Central Committee...." Ibid., 285. I have found no other references to these delegates, however, and so will let my sentence stand.

# GLOSSARY

Ch'en Cheng-jen 陳正人

Chin Wan-pang 金萬邦

Hsieh Han-ch'ang 謝漢昌

Li Po-fang 李伯芳

Li Shao-chiu 李紹九

Li Wen-lin 李文林

Liu Ti 劉敵

Liu T'ieh-ch'ao 劉鐵超

Tseng Shan 曾山

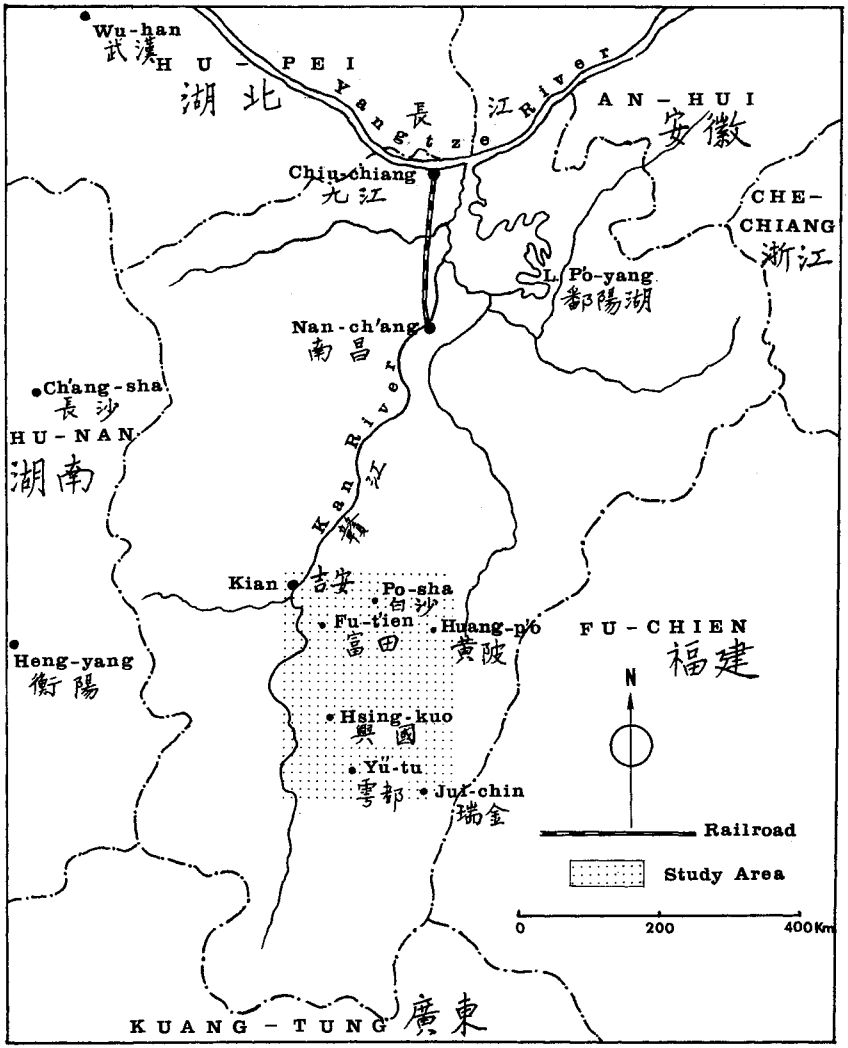
Tuan Hsi-p'eng 段錫朋

Tuan Liang-pi 段良弼

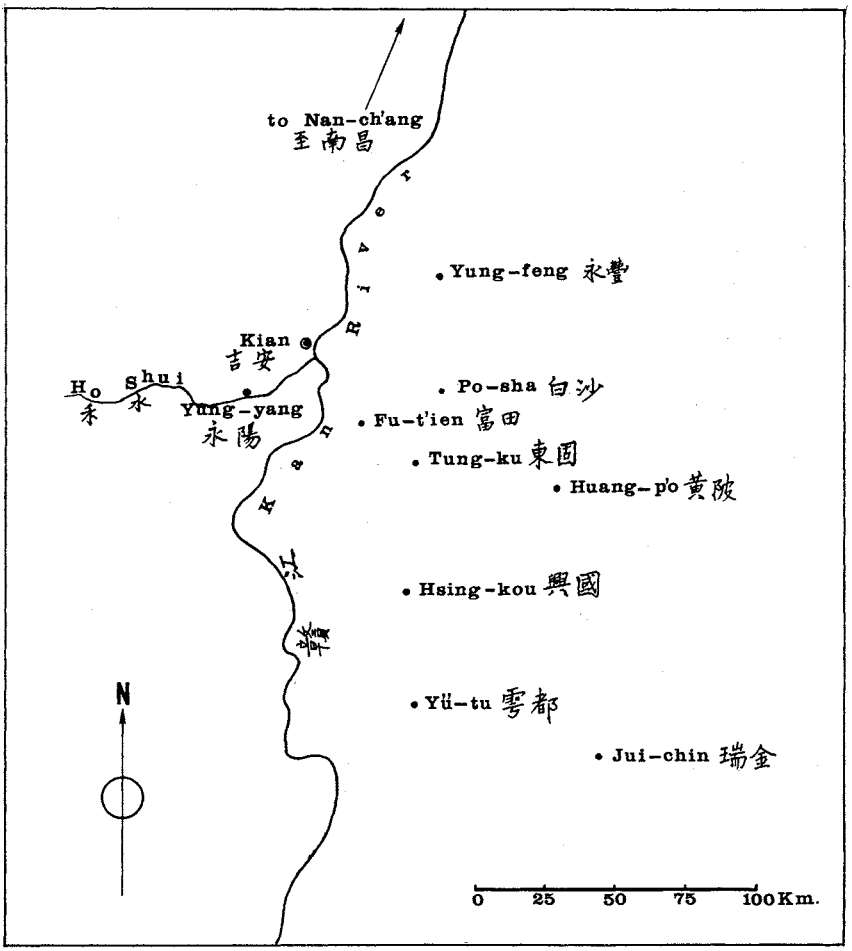
Wang Huai 王懷

Yü-jih shih-pien chüeh-i-an 虞日事變決議案
(Decision concerning the Fu-t'ien Incident)

THE AREA UNDER STUDY IN REFERENCE TO
KIANGSI AS OF 1930 江西省



# THE KIAN AREA
# KIANGSI PROVINCE



# AGRARIAN REFORM IN KWANGTUNG, 1950-1953

Daniel H. Bays

The Chinese Communists were no novices at agrarian reform when they finally gained control of the entire Chinese mainland in 1949. The Party already had behind it over two decades of trial-and-error experience in dealing with the complex problems of land distribution and landlord-tenant relationships in the rural areas where it had established its bases at various times since 1927. Moreover, it had learned to adopt a flexible and pragmatic approach to the question of land reform, making agrarian policy subservient to broader political needs and objectives. The major trends and shifts in this policy, from the Kiangsi Soviet period of the early 1930's through the Yenan period of wartime collaboration with the Kuomintang (KMT) to the civil war of the late 1940's, are well known, and require no review here.[1] What should perhaps be reemphasized is that, despite occasional changes in tactics, the ultimate goal of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in China's rural areas remained the destruction of the system of "feudal exploitation in the countryside," and development of the "socialist transformation of agriculture." This was decidedly not a policy of simple redistribution of land from landlord to tenant, though this was part of the process. Rather, it involved the rooting out of the totality of economic, political, and social dominance by the traditional rural elite, which stood as an obstacle both to establishment of CCP control and to eventual collectivization and massive social change in the greater part of Chinese society, and of which the system of landholding was only a part. This paper will analyze the phenomenon of agrarian reform as it occurred in one southern province, Kwangtung, from 1950 to 1953.

## I. The Era of the Agrarian Reform Law

A major shift in the Party line was announced in March, 1949, when the Central Committee(CC) of the CCP declared that "the centre of gravity of Party work is shifted from rural areas to the cities."[2] The end of the civil war was in sight, and the Party leaders were looking ahead to the tasks of ruling a unified China, its urban centers as well as its northern rural hinterland, and rehabilitating the devastated economy of the nation. Moreover, they were hoping, with the help of the Soviet Union, to modernize and industrialize the economy as quickly as

possible. Nevertheless, agrarian reform remained high on the list of priorities, especially in the vast area south of the Yangtse, where the influence of the Party prior to late 1948 and 1949 had been much smaller than in the North. In these provinces, implementation of agrarian reform became the chief task of the first few years of the new regime, and was an important vehicle for the establishment of administrative control in the countryside.

The Agrarian Reform Law of the Chinese People's Republic, promulgated by the Government Administrative Council (GAC) on June 30, 1950, defined the objectives of land reform as it was to be carried out in the "new liberated areas."[3] This law, plus a revised version of "Decisions Concerning the Differentiation of Class Status in the Countryside," originally issued in 1933, made it clear that the "general line" for the immediate future was to be "preservation of a rich peasant economy." In practical terms, this meant that the objectives of the regime for the coming period were limited ones, considerably short of total socioeconomic revolution and egalitarian redistribution of property in the rural areas. Agrarian reform was to be carried out in an orderly way, under strict central control, with the "administrative village," or hsiang, as the unit of implementation, and neither production nor tax collection was to be disrupted.[4] Only the largest landowners were to be expropriated, and the industrial and commercial properties of even these were not to be disturbed. Detailed class differentiations, such as that between "rich peasant" and "well-to-do middle peasant," were introduced to justify the continued existence of a certain amount of exploitation in the form of land rents and interest on loans. Finally, significant discrepancies in landholdings were to be permitted to survive agrarian reform.[5]

Many of these moderating aspects of the agrarian reform program were not new in 1950. They had begun to be imposed in early 1948, after the violence and extremism accompanying land reform in the "old liberated areas" had assumed serious proportions in the winter of 1947-48.[6] Local cadres, widely scattered and difficult for the Party to control in the turmoil of war and disrupted communications, had, besides permitting the beating and killing of many landlords and rich peasants, often encroached upon the interests of the middle peasants for the sake of gaining the support of the poorest. Moreover, such extremism had been at least indirectly encouraged by the Party itself when the civil war was at its height and all the resources of the Communist base areas had to be thrown into the struggle against the KMT. CC directives of October, 1946, and February, 1947, written by Mao himself, stressed that all surplus land was to be redistributed in order to gain the support of the

populace in the fighting, and in places where land reform was not thorough, cadres were to go back and "even up" the holdings.[7] Mao was even more explicit about the motives for a radical land policy in "The Present Situation and our Tasks," a report to the CC in December, 1947, when he said, "Because our Party adopted a thoroughgoing land policy, it has won wholehearted support from much broader masses of peasants than during the War of Resistance."[8]

By early 1948, however, the Party was confident of eventual victory, and began to call for a slowdown in the revolution on the land in favor of stability in the base areas and emphasis on agricultural production, which had been disrupted by the violence of the land reform. Thus, in a speech to cadres in the Shansi-Suiyuan Liberated Area in April, 1948, Mao declared, "We do not advocate absolute equalitarianism. Whoever advocates absolute equalitarianism is wrong."[9] Moreover, the very motive for agrarian reform had changed by this time. It was no longer a means of acquiring peasant support in the civil war; rather, as Mao said in the same speech, "The development of agricultural production is the immediate aim of the land reform."[10]

Thus it constituted no drastic change of policy when the measures taken by the GAC in 1950 indicated that there would be a partial moratorium on radical social and economic change in favor of consolidation of the revolution, establishment of a state administrative system throughout the country, and economic reconstruction. In an article on the Agrarian Reform Law published a few days before its promulgation, Liu Shao-ch'i frankly admitted that land policy during the civil war had been more radical so as to better satisfy the demands of the poorest and arouse their enthusiasm for the revolution; many "excesses" and "left deviations" had issued from this policy. Now less was expected from the poor peasants, and it was more important not to impair the productive power of the middle and rich peasants.[11]

Four general features of the projected approach to land reform in the newly liberated areas as of mid-1950 show the above concerns of the regime and its attempt to reconcile the demands of a socio-economic revolution with the need to maintain a relatively stable production atmosphere. The first of these was centralized control. While land reform in the base areas during the civil war was conducted by local cadres, residents of the area, now it was to be carried out by work teams sent in from the outside. These work teams were to be organized by hsien-level governments, and were to be supervised at all stages of their work by higher government organs.[12]

Another feature of the process in the early 1950's was the decreased role of the Party itself; there were simply not enough trained Party members to handle the task of agrarian reform in so large an area. In the article noted above, Liu Shao-ch'i took pains to point out that agrarian reform work teams were not to be limited to Party members alone; students and intellectuals from urban areas, as well as People's Liberation Army (PLA) units, would provide much of the personnel for the teams.[13] Non-Party cadres were, however, to be given training courses before being sent out into the field.

A third characteristic was that the hsiang, not the smaller ts'un, was to be the basic unit for the implementation of land reform. The peasants' association, which was to be organized on the hsiang level, presumably including representatives from all its constituent ts'un, was, with the guidance of the work team, to be the agent of land redistribution.[14] Even more important, it was made clear that poor peasant leagues were no longer to be organized in addition to the peasants' associations. The former had been established during the civil war, most at the ts'un level, prior to formation of peasants' associations, and included only poor and landless peasants in their memberships; even middle peasants were excluded. It is quite likely that the impetus for extremism had come from such bodies, and their prohibition at this time is an index of the determination of the authorities not to allow foci of mass power to exist as alternatives to the peasants' associations, in which middle as well as poor peasants were represented.

A final moderating feature of agrarian reform in this period was the formation of people's tribunals, separate from the regular system of people's courts, in every hsien where land reform was to be carried out. The law providing for their establishment, issued by the GAC in July, 1950, made it clear that their major, even sole, function was to serve as a part of the land reform process, and they were to be set up before agrarian reform began in any given hsien.[15] A Jen Min Jih Pao (JMJP, People's Daily) editorial appearing the day after this law was announced gave two purposes for the tribunals, which were to be composed of both outside appointees from above and representatives from the local areas: suppression and removal of those elements opposed to agrarian reform; and control of the peasantry and prevention of indiscriminate violence against "struggle objects."[16] The tribunals were plainly conceived as a device to introduce an element of orderly procedure into land reform, especially in the disposal of those who were to be expropriated and punished.

Thus there were significant differences, both in objectives and methods, between agrarian reform as outlined in 1950 and previous CCP experience. Other tasks, such as the Korean War effort, urban problems, and economic recovery, pressed hard upon the resources of the regime. The magnitude of the land area and population which was to be involved was staggering, and far outstripped the pool of trained cadres which could be spared for the effort. The role of Party personnel was necessarily smaller, and problems of discipline and coordination of the work teams could be expected to increase correspondingly. Because Communist organization in the areas in question had been almost nonexistent before 1949, much of the work had to be carried out by outsiders from northern provinces until new local cadres could be trusted, and many local officials had to be carried over from the old regime during this interim period. Finally, land reform was no longer linked directly to gaining support for a domestic war effort; production, not patriotism, was the order of the day.

For all these reasons, it could be expected that land reform in the newly liberated areas would be less thorough than it had been in the wartime northern bases; indeed, concentration on the hsiang, rather than the ts'un, as the unit of implementation in itself showed that this would be the case. Nevertheless, the regime was well aware that the traditional rural power structure in the fertile and populous central and southern provinces had to be drastically reordered, or its own continued existence could not be assured. The old rural elite had to be eradicated and the lower reaches of the fledgling administrative apparatus of the national government inserted in its place; this was a crucial prerequisite for a government capable of ruling the entire country and mobilizing its full resources. Agrarian reform, touching on the commodity most vital and precious to the vast majority of the Chinese population--land itself--was the only way to achieve this transformation of power, and it had to be carried out to at least a minimal degree by any and all means necessary.

In the following chapter I will try to describe briefly a "model" of the land reform process, as it was intended to occur, and for the most part actually did occur, in the central and southern provinces in the early 1950's, before considering the experience of Kwangtung province itself.

## II. A Model for Agrarian Reform

Despite the fact that the areas in which agrarian reform was carried out in the early 1950's varied widely in terrain and population

density, it is still feasible to speak of a single basic process which all of them experienced. The following description is derived mainly from the sources dealing with Kwangtung, but it seems very similar to that provided by the authorities of the Central-South Region as a whole. It is also not inconsistent with the organizational and methodological description presented by Chao Kuo-chun.[1]

The first stage in the process was, of course, the arrival of the work team in the hsiang where it was to operate, complete with printed propaganda, picture posters, and perhaps even a small drama group to enact plays showing the success of agrarian reform in other areas. The size and composition of the work teams must have varied widely, depending on the time, place, and other tasks in the region--as few as ten or less, or as many as a hundred, the larger ones certainly being led by Party members, but some of the smaller ones not. In general, the teams in the earlier stages of the work were probably much larger, and those in the later, broader phases close to the minimum number still feasible for effectiveness.[2]

The members of the team were to follow the "three-together" principle in establishing their relationship with the local peasants; that is, they were to live, eat, and work together with the poor peasants and farm laborers. Again, this policy could not be completely followed in all cases, partly because many poor peasants' huts scarcely had room for one more person.[3] Moreover, since the hsiang was the basic unit of operations, it is unlikely that many team members stayed in any one natural village (ts'un) permanently; most probably slept in the central hsiang village, coming to the outlying villages during the day to carry on their work.[4]

The first obstacle which the team members had to overcome was the natural reticence of the villagers to confide in them. After a few initial propaganda meetings, where the objectives of the land reform were explained, it would sometimes take a period of days, or weeks, of patient prodding by the cadres to get the peasants to air their grievances against local landlords and "despots" who had treated them harshly in the past. At this point the first struggle meetings could be organized, directed against a handful of the most hated and feared local gentry. These were "anti-despot" meetings (or "struggle" meetings, tou-cheng hui), with the work team cadres letting the peasants give full vent to their hatred of their former oppressors (this was called "taking a free hand with the masses"). These meetings were also to be coordinated with implementation of the first stage of real economic reform: an across-

the-board reduction of land rents and interest rates on loans, and refund of deposits which had already been paid by tenants on future rents.[5] Thus a few hated "local bullies" could be turned over to the people's tribunals for punishment, showing that the new Communist state did have the power to deal with them, and tangible economic benefits gained for many of the peasants, leading them to identify and cooperate with later stages of the land reform. Confiscation and distribution of the surplus grain stores and agricultural tools of the first individuals to be struggled against also helped to achieve this objective.

The next stage of the process was one of organization. Here, the cadres of the work team focussed their efforts on those individuals who had spoken up unequivocally in denouncing the "despots" in the first struggle meetings, and who had displayed the most enthusiasm for redistribution of land and property. These were the "activists," and they were to be carefully fostered by the cadres as leaders of the mass organizations which were being formed in the hsiang.

The most important of these mass organizations was the peasants' association; as noted above, this was to be the actual agent of confiscation and redistribution of land. It was important that the majority of peasants, excluding only those designated as landlords or rich peasants, be enrolled in the membership of the peasants' association. This was both to ensure that the interests of the middle peasants would not be neglected because of their lack of representation, and to give the association the voice of authority vested in large numbers; later it might become the local people's government.

Another very important organization which was formed at this time was the militia. With the lack of established state authority in the countryside in the last decades before the Communist takeover, many individuals had acquired arms and formed local strongarm organizations, often associated with powerful landlords.[6] These groups had hidden many of their arms with the arrival of the PLA, but would not shrink from unearthing them for purposes of intimidating cadres and peasant activists when the land reform campaign began to threaten their interests. PLA units stationed at various places were able to confiscate many of these hidden weapons before the land reform got under way on a large scale, but it was still desirable for each village to maintain an armed militia to preserve public order. Finally, a women's mass organization was usually also formed to inform them of their changed legal status under the new regime and enlist their support for the agrarian reform and other campaigns.

Once these organizations were established, and in particular, when decisions made by the peasants' association would be respected by most of the populace, the real business of land reform could begin. First, all the land of the hsiang had to be surveyed and registered. Every area had its share of "black lands," or land left unregistered through various subterfuges under KMT rule for purposes of tax evasion; accurate registry of these lands was necessary for tax collection, as well as for determination of landholding patterns in the hsiang.

The next step was the most crucial. As actual confiscation and reallocation of land was regulated in great detail by the Agrarian Reform Law, and was based on the class status of the individual peasant, the assignment of a certain class status determined what was to become of one's future livelihood, perhaps even personal safety, during actual implementation of agrarian reform. The peasants' association was to make the class demarcations, after which the listings would be sent to higher government authorities for approval, along with the appeal of anyone who felt that he had been classified wrongly. This procedure was designed to maximize the number of people who acquiesced in their class assignments, and who would therefore be cooperative in the remainder of the land reform process. Despite these safeguards, however, this must have been a time of great anxiety and uncertainty in the villages, especially for the more prosperous, who hoped to get by with a "middle peasant" or even "well-to-do middle peasant" label, dreading the consequences of being designated rich peasants. Even though it was the stated policy of the regime not to harry this latter class, rich peasants were excluded from the peasants' association, the locus of power and decision-making. For larger landholders, who could hope only for a rich peasant label at the very best, this must have been a time of despair; some of them fled to urban areas at this stage, taking with them what they could of their movable property.

After higher-level approval of the class demarcation listings, there remained the task of actual expropriation of landlords and some rich peasants who owned more than the generous allowed differential for that class (about twice the average holding per capita). The fact that the great majority of the population was to gain, or at least not be damaged, by the final settlement ensured that it would be carried out in a satisfactory manner, and the power of the local militia usually sufficed to coerce those few who resisted transfer of their property to someone else. At this point, the work of the agrarian reform work team complete, it would presumably move on. After passage of a few weeks or months, an inspection team from higher government organs would check on the results, and if all was in order, the peasants would be issued new title deeds to their land, which could now in theory be freely bought and sold.

The entire process in any given locality would probably take from several weeks to a few months, with the original agrarian reform work team present for most of this time.[7] The first hsiang to be tackled in an area undoubtedly took longer than the later ones, due to increased experience on the part of the cadres and more familiarity with the program on the part of the population as the work spread. The pattern of agrarian reform in a larger area, for example a hsien, was to follow the principle of "proceeding from points to areas," concentrating efforts on a few strategically-placed hsiang and doing a thorough job there, thus facilitating implementation in the surrounding hsiang.

One last general feature of this model is that the work teams, so as not to disrupt production, were to carry out the most important stages of the program, those requiring much mass participation, between the periods when peasants were burdened with heavy work loads on the land. Thus, in the southernmost provinces, the times of spring planting (April), the summer harvest (August), and the autumn harvest (November) were taboo for struggle meetings, class differentiation, or actual property redistribution. This must have given the movement a stop-and-go nature in most places, because the areas where the entire process could be completed between any two of these intensive farming periods were probably few.

## III. The Case of Kwangtung

Kwangtung province is an appropriate one in which to follow the process of agrarian reform in detail for several reasons. In the first place, more information seems to be available for Kwangtung than for any one other province in the general area with which we are concerned. In particular, the Nan Fang Jih Pao (NFJP, Southern Daily), Canton, published many of the provincial government and Party directives and reports on land reform from 1950 to 1953, as well as articles having to do with the progress of land reform and the various problems it encountered in different parts of the province.

There are other reasons for choosing Kwangtung with which to work. Traditionally one of the last provinces to be conquered and pacified by any dynasty, and one of the first to break away in times of dynastic decline, Kwangtung might be expected to reveal in clearer terms some of the problems of reimposing an active central state authority in rural areas which had long enjoyed only a nominal allegiance to a national government.

Another characteristic of many of the southern provinces which could conceivably influence agrarian reform there was the widespread existence of clans and local kinship organizations, which were larger and more powerful than their northern counterparts. Nowhere were these institutions more prevalent and deeply rooted than in Kwangtung. Moreover, they were not just socially powerful; in 1950, provincial authorities, although basing their figures on surveys of the 1930's, estimated that 30 per cent of the cultivated land of the province was owned by clan organizations.[1]

Finally, Kwangtung, as the original home of the majority of overseas Chinese, could be expected to show in starker relief than any other province the complications created for land reform by the landholdings of these expatriates. They were not insignificant. In 1950 it was estimated that, of the more than six million overseas Chinese from Kwangtung, as many as 30 per cent had landholdings in their home districts, and that, in such crowded hsien as Taishan, where especially high percentages of the population had relatives overseas, many families depended on the rent from these landholdings as a supplement to the remittances from abroad which constituted their livelihood.[2] Statistics on individual local areas suggest that overseas Chinese may have owned as much as 10 per cent of the cultivated land of the province.[3]

In other respects, Kwangtung was probably not atypical of most of the provinces where land reform had to be begun from scratch in 1950. Both the incidence and severity of tenancy in Kwangtung were considerably greater than in the North, but this characteristic was shared with several other provinces.

Perhaps at this point we should take brief note of the place of Kwangtung in the broader regional and national administrative structure during these years, and the basic pattern of levels of authority within the province as well. First and most important, the chief Party authority of the province was the South China Sub-bureau of the CC of the CCP (hereafter simply referred to as the South China Sub-bureau), based in Canton and responsible also for Kwangsi.[4] First secretary and most powerful member of this body was General Yeh Chien-ying; Yeh was also commander and top political commissar of the South China Military District Command, in charge of the PLA troops stationed in Kwangtung and Kwangsi.

Both the Party and the military authorities for "South China" (Kwangtung and Kwangsi) seem to have been directly responsible to

central authorities in Peking.[5] The South China Sub-bureau, in particular, had a full panoply of offices under it, perfectly parallel to the organization of the Central-South Sub-bureau of the CC, based in Wuhan, and the other major regional sub-bureaus. On the surface it would thus appear that, in Party and military affairs, the authorities for South China had no other regional unit standing between them and Peking.

However, the situation was much more complex than this, for the South China region did not have its own state administrative apparatus. The Central-South Sub-bureau and Military District Command in Wuhan, both led by Lin Piao at this time, were responsible for Honan, Hupei, Hunan, and Kiangsi provinces; but the Central-South Military and Administrative Committee (MAC), under the GAC and also headed by Lin Piao, was responsible for these four provinces plus Kwangtung and Kwangsi.[6] Only the Economic-Financial Department of the Central-South MAC had a South China branch, and this was not independent of Wuhan's authority. Moreover, with the Chinese Communist penchant for interlocking and overlapping of Party, state, and military organs, the potential ambiguity of the relationship between Wuhan, Canton, and Peking becomes quite apparent. For example, Yeh Chien-ying, besides his South China Party and military offices noted above, was a vice-chairman of the Central-South MAC, as well as Chairman of the Kwangtung Provincial People's Government, and as such responsible to the Central-South MAC. At least two other members of the South China Sub-bureau, Fang Fang and Chao Tzu-yang, were also vice-chairmen of the Kwangtung provincial government.

Altogether, this is not such an extraordinary administrative pattern for Communist China, where normal rules of bureaucratic organization have often been abandoned in favor of the regime's own interpretation of "democratic centralism" or immediate political needs. Indeed, this particular pattern could have simply enabled the Standing Committee of the CC to keep especially close watch on certain events in South China, while leaving administrative responsibility with the Central-South MAC. Yeh Chien-ying was also a member of the CC, and thus could provide such a link, as could Ku Ta-ts'un, member of the South China Sub-bureau and a vice-chairman of the Kwangtung provincial government, who was an alternate member of the CC. Nevertheless, the potential for ambiguity and even conflict of authority was certainly present, especially if, as Schurmann has speculated, the Northeast and East China regions were not the only ones to enjoy a certain measure of autonomy in the early 1950's.[7] In our particular area of interest, this potential was aggravated by the fact that both the Kwangtung state government and the South China

Sub-bureau contained organs responsible for the implementation of agrarian reform.

Within the provincial Party administration of Kwangtung there also existed something of a quirk, apparently not present in other provinces. Structurally, it was typical to have a number of "special districts" (chuan-ch'ü), each comprised of several hsien, between the provincial and hsien levels; these could perhaps be compared to the "circuits" (tao) of Ch'ing times. Kwangtung had eight of these special districts, each with its own Party committee. However, between these and the provincial Party organization there existed yet another level of authority. This was the "area" committee of either East or West Kwangtung, the province being divided approximately in half by the two. [8]

Further down the power structure within the province, the next level below the special district was the hsien, which had both government and Party administrations. Including Hainan Island, which contained sixteen hsien, Kwangtung at this time had ninety or more hsien. Statistics given in late 1950 claimed a total of ninety hsien for the province, but by the time agrarian reform was complete in 1953, there were ninety-one; there were also six separately-administered municipalities. [9] Below the hsien were the ch'ü, and finally the hsiang units, both with their respective Party and government organs, although many hsiang did not have their own Party committees until after the conclusion of land reform.

In 1950, the authorities estimated the total population of the province to be over twenty-seven million, with less than twenty million residing in rural areas. [10] This estimate was much too low, and it was later revised upwards. It was also calculated that there were nearly fifty-two million mou of land under cultivation in 1950. [11] This figure was probably more accurate than that for population, and was not drastically revised during the period under examination. Thus in 1950 it appeared that there was available more than two mou of arable land per capita of farming population, while by 1953 it was apparent that this was actually less than two mou per capita.

## IV. The Course of Agrarian Reform in Kwangtung

Land reform in Kwangtung was not begun on an extensive and systematic scale until the autumn of 1950. After the inauguration of the Central-South MAC in February as the top state authority in the region, the first tasks set for the provincial administrations were those of tax

collection and bond sales to the people, not land reform.[1] These exactions (the bond sales were forced ones) caused a certain amount of unrest, even riots, and were followed by a period of economic stagnation, with some shops closing and others refusing to accept the new paper currency of the regime.[2] The only arm of the new regime in evidence in most areas for some time was the PLA, and it was under its shield that taxes were collected. As William Skinner observed at this time in Szechuan, this situation did not facilitate the acceptance of the first political workers in the countryside, most of whom were attached to PLA units.[3]

In March, 1950, the Central-South MAC gave orders to press ahead with organization and political work in the rural areas; peasants' associations and people's militia units were to be formed, as well as new local governments, where possible, and the campaign of rent and interest reduction and refund of deposits was to be begun.[4] This did not seem so much an eagerness to push ahead with the process of land reform itself as an attempt to establish order and carry on propaganda, reassuring the peasants that the land and property of the poor would be protected under the new regime. It was claimed that this movement had been extended to parts of seventy-five hsien in Kwangtung by the end of May.[5] Since large numbers of agrarian reform cadres had not yet been trained by this time, it was probably the political workers of the PLA who handled most of the work, as in Skinner's area in Szechuan.

This campaign encountered problems almost immediately. As early as April 18, the Central-South MAC had to reduce the intensity of the movement to secure rent reductions and deposit refunds, issuing strict standards for cadre work so as not to disrupt agricultural production.[6] Most local areas in Kwangtung were probably not even touched by the initial phase of rent reduction at this time. A more important task was to lay a solid foundation for eventual large-scale implementation of agrarian reform by extending the government structure at least as far down as the hsien level, and establishing agrarian reform committees in each hsien to begin organizational work.[7] Until the fall, the PLA continued to "suppress bandits" and confiscate arms, and mass organizations were formed in some areas of the countryside.[8]

## First Steps: October, 1950 to April, 1951

The absence of any large-scale effort to implement even the first stages of agrarian reform in Kwangtung for most of 1950 can be seen from the modesty of the plan for the winter of 1950-51. This was revealed by the authorities on October 8, in a report to the First Con-

ference of Representatives of All Circles of the People of Kwangtung Province by FangFang, Chairman of the Kwangtung Agrarian Reform Committee.[9] Fang Fang disclosed that during the coming winter, land reform would be initiated in the three hsien of Hsingning, Chiehyang (near Swatow), and Lungchuan (in the East River area), plus seven ch'ü in the suburbs of Canton; these areas included a total of forty-three ch'ü, with an estimated population of 1,860,000.[10] To carry out the work, 2500 agrarian reform cadres were to be trained; of these, 1000 would come from the rural areas actually to be involved, 500 from other rural areas, and 1000 were students of Nanfang University in Canton.[11]

This could not be termed an overly-ambitious program; the area to be covered was not large, and it would certainly not be over-saturated with land reform work team cadres. There would be available only one newly trained cadre (of the 2500) for each 700-plus of population involved; unless these cadres were to be supplemented by more than equal numbers from PLA units and other sources, the work team in a typical hsiang would have less than ten members.

Moreover, it was made clear that land reform in Kwangtung was to be consistent with the guidelines set down by the national government, stressing orderly procedures and careful supervision. On November 2, 1950, the Kwangtung Provincial People's Government Council issued a directive entitled "Measures for the Enforcement of Agrarian Reform in Kwangtung Province."[12] These regulations emphasized that "adequate research and study" had to precede actual implementation, much preparatory time had to be devoted to the peasants' associations and the militia, and that great care should be taken not to make mistakes in the differentiation of class status. All plans had to be approved by higher authorities, the people's tribunals were to be used properly, and, most important, each stage of agrarian reform was to be carefully coordinated with the development of production. Fang Fang, in the speech cited above, had given a preview of this law, and had summarized its provisions in four steps: (1) a preparatory stage consisting of "investigation" of the local area, cadre training, consolidation of the peasant associations, reorganization of the militia, and strengthening of the government machinery; (2) survey and registration of land, and assignment of class status to the population; (3) confiscation of land and redistribution through the peasant association; and (4) issuing of new title deeds and devotion of all energies to production.[13]

Neither Fang Fang's report nor the provisions of the document itself laid any great stress on the need for "struggle" against landlords

and oppositional elements, though this was perfunctorily stated. In fact, Fang Fang seemed confident enough of not encountering any serious obstacles that he speculated upon the prospects of early nationalization of five million mou of alluvial flats in the Pearl River delta, because this rich area was suitable for large-scale cultivation.[14]

During the winter and early spring of 1951, the scope of the original campaign was expanded to include thirteen hsien, with a population of over four million, though this fact was apparently not officially confirmed until September, 1951.[15] At that time, it was also claimed that 1,600,000 mou of land had been redistributed in these areas (less than one third of a mou per capita, a smaller ratio than that later claimed for the province as a whole), as well as great quantities of farming tools, sections of housing, and surplus grain stores.[16] However, at the time all this was going on, early 1951, there do not seem to have been any specific references to it in the official newspapers.

In April, 1951, the South China Sub-bureau called an enlarged conference of Party cadres, attended by more than one hundred persons, which decided to expand the agrarian reform campaign to the entire province on the basis of a new three-stage program, replacing the four-stage one outlined by Fang Fang in October, 1950.[17] This new program placed much more emphasis on "struggle," and on suppression of those opposed to land reform, than did the previous one. Its first stage was called "the movement for rent reduction, deposit refund, suppression of bandits, and fight against despots," and was to be a full-scale mass campaign in itself. On the basis of success in this campaign, the second stage, that of class assignment and actual redistribution of land, could be carried out. The third stage would be a final evaluation and the issuing of title deeds.[18] A new militancy is evident in the very terminology, especially that describing the first stage of the new program. This new emphasis on struggle was perhaps reaffirmed by Yeh Chien-ying, in a speech to this cadres' conference, when he pointed out that because of the scarcity of cadres, special reliance would have to be placed on the PLA for enforcement of agrarian reform.[19]

The South China Sub-bureau may have received some outside pressure that moved it to expand the land reform movement at this time, and in such a distinctly more militant manner. Late in 1950, the central Party and government authorities in Peking began to find fault with the administration of justice on the local level, especially criticizing the lenient treatment of "counter-revolutionary" elements. In October, the Supreme People's Court concluded that "boundless magnanimity" was

characteristic of local justice,[20] and in November, Chou En-lai condemned the same thing;[21] a JMJP editorial of December 28, 1950, was entitled "Rectify Thoroughly the Deviation of Misinterpreting the 'Policy of Magnanimity.'"[22] Finally, the GAC itself promulgated a very strict law for the punishment of counter-revolutionaries in February, 1951.[23] "Counter-revolutionaries," of course, could manifest this unfortunate designation, among other ways, by opposing land reform. The fact that railing against counter-revolutionaries was not unrelated to agrarian reform was shown in an article by Mu Lin in Hsin Kuan-ch'a (The New Observer), December, 1950, in which he identified the most serious mistake being committed in the land reform movement as "peaceful distribution of land," with the cadres not fully arousing the masses and thinking that the landlord class could be defeated without a fierce struggle.[24]

These criticisms were probably not at all unjustified. In one of the villages involved in land reform at just this time, C. K. Yang was able to observe that the work team cadres did indeed neglect the arousal of the poorer peasants. Middle peasants were the ones chosen, as "activists," to lead the peasants' association and the militia. Moreover, class status demarcation was not carried out through the peasants' association, as intended, but decreed by the work team cadres themselves.[25]

Pressure from Peking to increase the pace and intensity of agrarian reform was as much as admitted by Ku Ta-ts'un in his general report on the work of the provincial government at the September, 1951, Conference of Representatives of All Circles of the People. He reviewed the campaign against "boundless magnanimity" which had begun in Kwangtung in March, the month after the new rules of the GAC on dealing with counter-revolutionaries were issued.[26] Moreover, he stated that the campaign for the reduction of rent and refund of deposits had taken place "on the foundations of the successes in the movement for the suppression of counter-revolutionaries".[27]

More direct evidence of outside pressure in the spring of 1950 was the presence at the April cadres' conference of Li Hsüeh-feng, chairman of the Agrarian Reform Committee of the Central-South MAC in Wuhan. He made a major speech at the conference, calling for province-wide implementation of land reform.[28] It was reported that Fang Fang approved of his suggestion, stressing the "free hand policy" in mobilization of the masses.[29] It is conceivable that the authorities of the Central-South Region were in fact the initiators of this conference, ostensibly called by the South China Party apparatus.

Results to the Autumn of 1951

This more militant large-scale approach to land reform began in May, 1951, after the spring planting. Naturally it entailed the training and assignment of vast numbers of new cadres, and in August, 1951, it was claimed that over 40,000 cadres had been trained. Moreover, by this time (August) the work teams had begun the first stage of the revised program in sixty-three hsien with a population of fifteen million, and over seven million peasants had "participated."[30]

However, not all was well. In early July, two editorials in the NFJP pointed out some serious deviations in the conduct of the movement.[31] These included neglect of the policy of "extending from points to surface areas," meaning not enough thorough preparation in the "points" before moving on to surrounding areas, and abuse of the policy of "taking a free hand with the masses," meaning that cadres were not taking responsibility for what the aroused peasants did, allowing them to do precisely as they pleased. A result of the latter deviation was, in clan-dominated areas, the spectacle of entire villages "struggling" against landlords of different villages and with different surnames, landlords of the same surname being treated lightly. A July 10 editorial of the Ch'ang Chiang Jih Pao (CCJP, Yangtse Daily), Hankow, the official organ of the Central-South authorities, was even more critical.[32] Concerning the Kwangtung land reform movement, it pointed to "many unhealthy signs...all closely related to the impurity of the local basic organizations." Many of the local Party branches, peasants' associations, hsiang governments, and militia units were impure, because their leadership had fallen into improper hands. Opponents of land reform were exploiting the low political consciousness of the peasantry and making use of clans and secret societies to confuse the peasant movement, and the work team cadres were not taking adequate measures to prevent this. The following week saw more criticism levelled at the peasant movement in Kwangtung, from both Canton and Wuhan. On July 13, the NFJP published a June 26 directive of the South China Sub-bureau on the progress of the last two months in land reform.[33] This admitted that confusion was rampant in many localities, and again warned against hasty extension to "surface areas" without thorough preparation in the "points." On July 17, another CCJP editorial berated the Kwangtung agrarian reform cadres for making a "satire on our policies and plans" by not being solidified with the masses.[34]

These criticisms were severe, but did not warrant truly drastic corrective measures. The basic problem was seen as misunderstanding and inexperience on the part of the land reform cadres; if they could be

made to understand and implement a consistent and thoroughgoing "work style," they would still be able to succeed in uniting the poor and middle peasants and leading them in the overthrow of the landlord class. There was as yet no question of a purge of the cadres themselves. Regardless of precisely what the real problems involved were, the general situation had become bad enough to suspend temporarily the land reform movement throughout the province in mid-July. Thus in September it was admitted that at this time efforts had been "redirected" to production and summer grain tax collection,[35] while in October, 1951, a NFJP editorial was more frank about the campaign simply coming to a halt in July.[36]

On August 6, the South China Sub-bureau convened an all-province enlarged conference of cadres from the hsien level and above to "summarize" experiences thus far in the agrarian reform.[37] Again, a top official from Wuhan came to Canton for the conference; this time it was Tu Jun-sheng, chief executive officer of the Central-South Sub-bureau and vice-chairman of the Agrarian Reform Committee of the Central-South MAC, who was to direct the proceedings of the conference. Despite the presence of Tu Jun-sheng, the main report at the conference was given by Chao Tzu-yang, vice-chairman of the Kwangtung Agrarian Reform Committee.[38] As in all "summarization" meetings, Chao tried to distill the experiences encountered thus far into a few points, and to draw lessons for the improvement of future work out of the mistakes of the past. Correct interpretation of the "free hand" and "points to surface areas" policies was reemphasized, as well as assiduous mobilization of the poorest peasants. Again, reliance on the PLA was stressed, and the help of several thousand soldiers thus far in the work was acknowledged. Only passing reference was made to serious defects in the attitude of the cadres themselves, this a warning against self-satisfaction and "relaxation" in the conduct of land reform.

It is probable that very little was done in the way of either expansion or intensification of the agrarian reform campaign from mid-July to November, 1951. Chao Tzu-yang, in his concluding analysis of "present tasks" at the August cadres' conference, outlined these as continued implementation of the first stage (arousal of the masses) between the summer and autumn harvests, strengthening of local organizations, and transmission of the lessons of the conference to lower-level personnel by those who had attended.[39] At the Second Conference of Representatives of All Circles of the People of Kwangtung Province, held September 3-15 in Canton, the general report by Ku Ta-ts'un, and that on agrarian reform by Fang Fang, described the results of the year's efforts in much more glowing terms than those used at the August cadres' conference,

but the same shortcomings were admitted.[40] Moreover, land reform was complete through the second stage (class assignment and land redistribution) in only seven of the original thirteen hsien where it had been begun in the winter of 1950-51.[41] The immediate task was to "deepen" first-stage operations, where already begun, until the autumn harvest, then introduce the second stage before the spring planting, with the entire province to be basically completed by the autumn harvest of 1952.[42] More evidence that land reform had been stalled until November appeared in a NFJP editorial of October 3, which strongly criticized cadres who wanted to move on to the second stage of land reform already, without correcting the "muddled thinking" which had resulted in a "crude job" being done earlier in the year.[43]

The Kwangtung authorities had acknowledged many defects in the land reform, but they were still not ready for a drastic reappraisal and reorganization of the movement as a whole. Great emphasis was still placed upon order and production, and other major reports at the September conference boasted of increased agricultural output for the past year and prompt fulfillment of the tax quota of the province. Yeh Chien-ying himself made the following revealing statement in his concluding remarks on the last day of the conference: "Agrarian reform shall be subservient to the industrialization of the nation."[44] There was as yet no recognition of a conflict between social revolution and increased output.

There were in fact two other problems in Kwangtung at this time compounding the difficulties encountered in land reform; their solution, the authorities might presume, could be expected to make any more drastic corrective measures unnecessary. The first of these was the chaotic state of financial administration. In August, 1951, the provincial government called for a stop to the random and indiscriminate collection of miscellaneous taxes by local authorities, and published the official legal tax rates.[45] This was followed in September and October by critical reports from some local areas where former KMT taxes had been continued, where new administrations used old local officials who still, out of habit, levied arbitrary exactions upon the populace, or where shoddy bookkeeping had facilitated gross peculation and waste.[46] The NFJP editorial accompanying the initial complaint pointed out, logically enough, that such practices made it difficult for the peasants to distinguish between the old KMT regime and the new Communist one.[47]

The other problem bedevilling land reform was the swollen size of administrative units in most parts of the province. For general purposes of efficiency, a hsiang was to have an ideal population of between 1500

and 2500, administered, at least until after the completion of agrarian reform, by a skeleton hsiang government apparatus of only three or four paid full-time officers.[48] For such a small staff, a population of more than 2500 would certainly be difficult if not impossible to manage. Yet in July, 1951, 1110 hsiang, about one quarter of the total number in the province, had populations of more than five thousand; over nine hundred of these contained between ten and fifty thousand people.[49] Many ch'ü, the administrative level above the hsiang, were also disproportionately outsized. In its July instructions to subdivide these units, the provincial government stipulated that this was to be accomplished before or in conjunction with land reform, and at any rate before the end of the year. Still, the lack of cadres at the ch'ü level and below necessitated some delay in this reorganization, and the hsien authorities were also cautioned to be careful of complications arising from clan jurisdictions when demarcating the new boundaries.[50]

That Kwangtung was not alone in its land reform problems was shown at the Fourth Session of the Central-South MAC in November, 1951. This was a large meeting, attended by seventy-three of the ninety-five regular members of the commission, plus over four hundred "observers."[51] Though agrarian reform was still the "most basic and urgent task" in all six of the provinces in the Central-South Region, it was not mentioned in any of the individual provincial reports (that for Kwangtung given by Li Chang-ta, a vice-chairman of the provincial government). However, Tu Jun-sheng, who had directed the August cadres' conference in Kwangtung, gave a report on agrarian reform in the region as a whole.[52] It was not congratulatory. Tu claimed that in 1100 hsiang throughout the region where agrarian reform had ostensibly been completed in the summer of 1951, reexamination had shown the work to be far from satisfactory. Only 20 per cent of the results were acceptable; 50 per cent were "doubtful," with the majority of the peasants as yet unorganized (presumably into peasants' associations), and 30 per cent of the work was "half raw" and entirely unacceptable. The main problem, continued Tu, was the poor organization and political consciousness of the masses, due to defective work on the part of the cadres; reexamination would have to be carried out as soon as possible in most areas where land reform had already been completed.[53] This last order did not affect Kwangtung as much as some of the other five provinces only because so few areas in the province had seen agrarian reform completed.

A new factor also began to enter the picture at this meeting. In the major report by Teng Tzu-hui, acting chairman of the Central-South MAC, he referred to the efforts to combat bureaucratism and impure

elements within Party and government organs which had recently begun in the North in August and September.[54] This, of course, was the beginning of the "san-fan" campaign. Moreover, Tu Jun-sheng, in the course of his report, found cause to criticize sharply the "downhill mentality" of many cadres, naming three local cadres as examples of this bad tendency.[55] Here were the seeds of what would develop into a new approach to the problems of agrarian reform in 1952.

It seems clear that, in the spring of 1951, a faulty assumption lay behind the decision to expand the agrarian reform campaign in Kwangtung. This was that responsible Party and government officials at intermediate levels would be able to function as the bridge between the provincial authorities and the more than forty thousand raw trainees who were expected actually to carry out land reform; that hsien and ch'ü officials would be able to infuse the local, hastily-trained work team cadres with both a sense of dedication and a feeling for correct working procedures to implement agrarian reform in a consistently proper manner. The result of the 1951 program was just the reverse; mistakes already being made on a small scale were only expanded in scope.

## November, 1951 to April, 1952

On November 20, 1951, the NFJP announced a new plan for the completion of agrarian reform by the autumn of 1952.[56] This plan, in two phases, had been put forth by the South China Sub-bureau, and had already been given to a long meeting of the secretaries of local Party committees held November 4-17.[57] Its first phase was to move on to the second stage of agrarian reform, and complete the entire process before the summer harvest of 1952, in twenty-nine hsien and parts of others with a total population of about fifteen million. Remaining areas, with a population of ten million, would then be completed before the autumn harvest.

A concentration of forces on a smaller area than previously attacked could thus be seen, as well as a more informed estimate of the rural population of the province. But the most remarkable part of this communique was its listing of the new forces which were to be marshalled in the battle for land reform. The following personnel were to be switched to full-time agrarian reform duties: one half the cadres of the South China Sub-bureau itself and other provincial-level mass organs; six thousand men from the South China Military District Command; and one-third of the cadres of the Kwangtung provincial government. Many of the provincial organs

must have been reduced to skeleton staffs in order to devote more trained manpower to land reform.

The people's tribunals were also to play a new and more active role in agrarian reform. In November, sources from Peking began to call them the "driving force" in the land reform; more branch tribunals were to be established, at least one in every ch'ü, and they were to draw more judges from the "progressive elite" of the peasantry.[58] Nothing more was said about the tribunals' function of restraining the violent impulses of the peasants; now, they were to help mobilize the masses and encourage them in their struggle.

It seems that the Party organization began to play a more important role in land reform from this time on. In Kwangtung, for example, the majority of the highly-placed cadres drafted for work on agrarian reform were probably Party members. Many of the more than forty thousand cadres "trained" the year before for use in land reform, and of whom the vast majority were undoubtedly not Party members, must have been dispensed with in the more selective campaign begun in November. The Party and its members were also the object of the next scrutiny of the land reform movement. By early 1952, the "san-fan" movement had reached the Central-South region, in some places even drawing energies away from land reform.[59] More importantly, it began to draw attention to problems of agrarian reform not seriously considered before. Now, not inexperience and confusion at the lower levels, but defects of "ideology" and "class standing" of higher-level cadres, most of them Party members, were examined in the search for the bottleneck which was hampering the land reform program.

As early as September, 1951, the CCJP took note of a campaign in Hunan (much more advanced in land reform than Kwangtung) against the complacency and "political lethargy" in agrarian reform exemplified by one unfortunate Li Ssu-hsi of Changsha hsien, a fairly high-ranking Party cadre.[60] Early in 1952, even more serious accusations began to be levelled. Reexamination of agrarian reform in two Honan hsiang, one a so-called "advanced" hsiang, revealed not only that leading cadres had become complacent and slackened off after initial successes, but that landlord influence was still rife, the "feudal rulers" having "bought over" many cadres.[61] The essential defects were none other than "rightist ideology" and bad "class standpoint" on the part of the cadres who had directed agrarian reform in these areas.[62] An April, 1952, critique of work in the Central-South region since December, 1951, again censured rightist ideological trends and consorting with landlords, among many other faults.[63]

Thus it probably came as no great surprise when, early in April, 1952, the South China Sub-bureau called yet another all-province cadres' conference to discuss the problems of agrarian reform.[64] At this conference, a new timetable for the completion of agrarian reform in Kwangtung was issued, which will be discussed presently. Of more immediate importance was the fact that this conference marked the beginning of a brief but intense campaign termed the "reform of the rank-and-file" of cadres responsible for land reform. From mid-April, after the end of the provincial conference, through early May, Party cadre conferences were held in all of the eight special districts, and in thirteen individual hsien as well; more than 7700 persons participated, including over four hundred who held office at the hsien level and more than nine hundred ch'ü officials.[65] All had to undergo a thorough review of their work in agrarian reform.

The NFJP provided especially complete coverage of the cadres' conference convened by the Party committee in the Central Kwangtung Special District, at which over 1300 land reform cadres from nine hsien, one municipality, and one market town met from April 12 to May 1, 1952.[66] T'ao Chu, at this time fourth secretary of the South China Sub-bureau, directed the conference personally. It began with criticism and self-criticism of the top leaders attending--the hsien and ch'ü agrarian reform cadres--then proceeded to the "rank and file" of lower-level cadres. It was claimed that, right from the start of the conference, serious faults in the "class standpoint, ideology and work style" of many of the cadres were thus exposed.[67]

On April 16, after hsien secretaries and other officers had submitted themselves to criticism, and before lower officials were to undergo the same process, T'ao Chu spoke very frankly about the need to investigate the Party's own ranks of workers responsible for agrarian reform.[68] He said, "We have gone astray so much and there is still not a path that is relatively straight. This is what defies explanation." The results had been worse than a simple lack of experienced cadres could have caused; the roots of the difficulty lay far deeper, in defective class standpoint, ideology, and work style. As an example, he pointed to intellectuals from landlord families who sowed confusion in agrarian reform units by their inability to side completely with the poor peasants against the landlord class. Such serious faults could not be countenanced in Party members and agrarian reform leaders, and had to be punished more severely than the same faults in inexperienced local cadres, where they were more to be expected. A concrete example of the sort of thing to which T'ao Chu referred was the "Chung Tsai Ling Incident," a scandal exposed later in the year, but growing out of charges made at this cadres'

conference that government and Party officials in Yanping hsien had colluded with landlords to imprison and execute local peasant activists.[69] Subsequent investigation revealed these charges to be true, and ultimately the vice-president of the Yanping People's Court and the director of the Yanping Public Security Bureau were both sentenced to death and executed, and the hsien magistrate, a Party member, was imprisoned for five years.

The conference continued with criticism and self-criticism for everyone, and was concluded on April 24.[70] It was later reported that, during the course of the conference, several persons became struggle objects; of the twenty-six "conspicuous" individuals thus "strongly attacked", thirteen were expelled from the Party; on the other hand, there were many cadres who were praised and promoted.[71] In other areas, even larger numbers may have been disciplined; at a similar conference in another special district, for example, 178 persons became struggle objects.[72]

The seriousness with which the Party authorities viewed this rectification of its own members' faults was shown in T'ao Chu's speech at the end of the conference. He reviewed the defects which had been exposed and hopefully corrected, and warned: "To make a bad job of the task will lead one to severe punishment by History."[73] Moreover, to avoid any distraction from completion of their tasks, cadres assigned to agrarian reform work were to be spared the rigors of the "san-fan" movement (the rectification campaign being carried out within the Party at that time elsewhere in the country) until after the autumn harvest. The "reform of the rank and file" just completed was apparently thought to have performed the same function, at least for the time being.

Kwangtung was not the only province to experience a Party rectification campaign in direct connection with agrarian reform. Reports of the Honan and Kiangsi authorities on rectification meetings held for land reform cadres at the time of the New Year's holiday in 1952 indicated that much the same events transpired there, and for the same reasons.[74] Loss of class standing and cooperation with landlords compelled the Party authorities to take remedial action, and, in conferences like the one described above, 6 per cent of the agrarian reform cadres (507 of 9200 who participated) were found guilty of serious deviations; of these, 115 were expelled from the Party.[75] The situation among local, non-Party hsiang cadres was far worse; 60 per cent of them were estimated to be plagued by impure ideology and working style.[76]

In its commentary on these developments in Honan and Kiangsi, the Central-South Sub-bureau observed: "The failure to lay stress on the reorganization of the ranks during 1950/1951, when ground work was laid

for land reform and reexamination work, has been a painful lesson."[77] The Kwangtung authorities could well have echoed this regret in the spring of 1952. The task of agrarian reform in a large, densely populated province, previously practically untouched by the revolution, required both responsible leadership by trained and experienced Party and government officials at an intermediary level, and active participation by relatively inexperienced non-Party cadres to fill out the work teams which actually carried out the work in the villages. The massive and diffuse effort of 1951, spread over the whole province, and even the more concentrated program of the winter of 1951-52, had evidently placed too great a strain on the latter element, at the same time presuming a degree of effective leadership and coordination which was not forthcoming from the former. New cadres had been trained too hastily and left to their own devices, largely unsupervised by higher-level officials who were themselves prey to apathy and complacency. Even the infusion of large numbers of workers from the top Party and government organs in the province after November, 1951, apparently could not break the slump into which agrarian reform had fallen.

It was this situation which the drastic measures of April and early May, 1952, were designed to improve. On the one hand, the ranks of the Party itself had to be shaken up and revitalized in order to provide the overall leadership and direction for land reform, and trained personnel made to work at lower levels, where their skills could be more readily applied to local operations. On the other hand, vast numbers of local workers recruited the year before had to be pruned and sifted, only the most effective being permitted to continue in the work of agrarian reform.

## The Drive to Completion of Agrarian Reform

Aside from the rectification campaign to foster better work habits and attitudes among key land reform personnel, the timetable for the entire program had again been overhauled. In spite of the demands of the relatively new plan of November, 1951, by April, 1952, it was apparent that land reform would not be complete before the autumn harvest. On April 29, in one of the concluding speeches at the Central Kwangtung Special District cadres' conference discussed above, T'ao Chu outlined the new program.[78] All the forces of agrarian reform were to be concentrated on forty hsien, to be completed by the autumn harvest; the remaining twenty-six mainland hsien, as well as the sixteen of Hainan Island, were to be handled during the winter, and by the 1953 spring planting at the latest.[79]

By mid-May, the program had been developed in more detail. The NFJP revealed that, in each hsien included in this phase (the number had now been set at forty-two), an average of nineteen hsiang had been carefully selected as "keypoints," with two subsidiary hsiang attached to each of these.[80] Land reform would be extended into the subsidiary hsiang after its thorough implementation in the keypoints. At this time, it was already claimed that the work was complete in over three hundred of these hsiang, and it was hoped that all of the keypoints and many of the secondary areas, a total of a thousand hsiang, could be finished before the summer harvest in August, with the remainder of the forty-two hsien to be done by autumn.[81]

May and June actually seem to have been months of deliberate and relatively slow progress, laying the foundations for the huge and intensive campaign which would take place later in the year. Some time was undoubtedly needed for cadres who had attended one of the April conferences to transmit its lessons to their own subordinates and instill them with a renewed spirit. Many cadres had been shifted to new positions in the April shakeup, and time was needed to consolidate the new administrative hierarchy within the Party and government agencies responsible for agrarian reform. More important, it seems that this period saw the bringing of a significant number of personnel from outside the province into the Kwangtung land reform apparatus, as will be discussed below. These were apparently all in place and prepared to go to work by June.

From June 26 to 29, 1952, an enlarged meeting of the South China Sub-bureau was held in Canton; over thirty people attended, including the secretaries of the East and West Kwangtung Party committees and the eight special district committee secretaries.[82] This meeting was an important one. It reviewed with general approval the work of the past two months, revealing specific indices of progress, and decided to embark upon a greatly intensified program which would make possible attainment of the goal of completion of agrarian reform in forty-odd hsien, the major part of the entire task, before autumn.

On the first day of the meeting, Chao Tzu-yang reported on the present state of the new timetable established in April.[83] He revealed that the area it was hoped could be encompassed by autumn was now pegged at forty-seven hsien, including three on Hainan and parts of three of the original thirteen which reexamination had shown to be deficient. In these areas, 768 hsiang had been designated as keypoints, and 1497 as subsidiaries, almost every keypoint thus having two hsiang of secondary priority attached to it. Of this total of over 2200 hsiang, 1082 would be completed before the summer harvest, and the first stage of agrarian

reform would be finished in the remainder. Moreover, land reform had actually been successfully implemented in 678 hsiang in these hsien before May, 1952, so that by August, 1760 hsiang, with a population of about five million, would be completed under the new program.[84]

This was a great improvement over the work of the previous year, but still greater tasks remained. There were 3597 hsiang in these "phase one" areas (the forty-seven hsien), with a population of approximately ten million, as yet untouched by agrarian reform. The entire process had to be initiated and carried through in these hsiang before November in order to stick to the timetable--this in addition to completion of the last two stages in the 1100-odd hsiang which would be partially completed before August. Chao noted that the magnitude of this remaining task was such as to prohibit the careful extension from keypoint to subsidiary hsiang which had apparently characterized the movement for the previous two months. Since the second batch of hsiang would have to be processed in less than three months of working time (starting in August, presumably, after the harvest was in), work would be "simultaneously developed in keypoint as well as subsidiary hsiang, with the keypoint areas proceeding just a short pace ahead."[85] This projected step-up in the pace of the campaign reflected a certain amount of confidence on the part of Chao that the new program could be seen through to final success. In fact, he noted that the cadres' work style was much better now, the "free hand" policy and "penetration of the masses" being much more closely attended to than before.[86]

Several other members of the sub-bureau spoke at the meeting, but the next important event, for our purposes, was the "summing up" by T'ao Chu on June 29.[87] He seemed to share the cautious optimism of Chao Tzu-yang, and elaborated upon several reasons why, at long last, a successful conclusion for agrarian reform was in sight. In the first place, the "reform of the cadre rank and file" begun in April had been on the whole successful, and many cadres had developed good work styles in the past two months. The "free hand policy on the foundations of penetrative development," i.e., concentration of personnel and arousal of the peasant masses against landlords, had thus shown positive results. But T'ao Chu also referred to unity between local cadres and "those from outside" as a factor in the improved prospects for success. Including these "outside" cadres, there were now thirty thousand cadres assigned to agrarian reform in Kwangtung, and this number was adequate. These individuals, whatever their original jobs--in the Party, government, or army--would be frozen in their posts until the job of agrarian reform had been concluded throughout the entire province. With the help of the outsiders, and through promotion within the ranks of workers from the

province itself, leadership at the hsien and ch'ü levels could be strengthened to the point that most work teams could be headed by a ch'ü level cadre, and hsien cadres would also see "active service" in the front lines of agrarian reform.[88]

Yeh Chien-ying himself, in his concluding address, again noted the large number of cadres transferred to Kwangtung by the Central-South Sub-bureau and, indeed, the CC itself.[89] It appears that most of the outside help consisted of PLA personnel; it was reported that Yeh made special reference to the "army cadres from the North" who would be assisting in agrarian reform.[90] He also observed that "there is no further need for us to attend to the reform of our ranks with such great effort as we had in the past," and reemphasized the urgency and magnitude of the work to be done in the coming three months.

Thus the combination of a fairly satisfactory reorganization of the province's own personnel resources and the influx of a significant number of presumably highly trained and effective cadres from northern areas provided the basis for the intensive effort which was determined upon at the June meeting of the South China Sub-bureau. One other factor which must have facilitated such a great effort at this time, and which had operated against that of 1951, was the situation at the local administrative level. From the figures quoted by Chao Tzu-yang on June 26, it is apparent that at least the hsiang, and implicitly the ch'ü, units had been reduced to a much more manageable size during the previous months. In the more than forty hsien in question, the hsiang averaged less than three thousand each of population.[91] This must have been a necessary prerequisite for land reform in any locality, and its accomplishment was no mean task in itself.

The June meeting of the sub-bureau left no doubt that all resources at the disposal of the provincial authorities would be thrown into the struggle on the land in the next few months. T'ao Chu demanded that "all other tasks should be made subservient to the task of agrarian reform,"[92] and Yeh Chien-ying predicted that the task at hand would constitute "the fiercest revolutionary movement yet in the history of the people of Kwangtung."[93] There was no more talk of land reform being subservient to production, or being designed to improve and increase production, such as had always accompanied pronouncements on agrarian reform in the past. The inherent contradiction between social transformation and increased agricultural output was thus tacitly admitted.

Another index of the intensity of the coming campaign was the incorporation of the urban sector into the forces being marshalled for

the struggle. A notification issued jointly by the Kwangtung provincial government and the Canton municipal government on July 15, 1952, attempted to clarify the role that urban areas were expected to play in land reform, in anticipation of the "unprecedentedly large" movement about to be launched.[94] It noted that city governments had previously paid insufficient attention to land reform, while some agrarian reform cadres, for their part, had neglected the policies of protection of industry and trade, and maintenance of law and order, when pursuing landlords into cities. The guidelines laid down in this document reaffirmed certain limits to what could be properly demanded in the way of rent refunds and confiscation of assets from absentee landlords residing in cities, especially if they were presently engaged in industrial or commercial activities. Moreover, peasant cadres coming into cities either to settle financial accounts with a landlord or to arrest him and take him back for trial had to have papers properly drawn up and signed by the hsien or ch'ü officials of the area. However, non-commercial property of landlords was fair game, and all efforts were to be made to ensure that the peasants received satisfaction in their quest for "struggle fruits." Cities were instructed to beef up their urban-rural liaison offices, and to have special personnel on hand to assist the peasants in their search for landlords who might be in hiding or who had tried to conceal their assets.

The notification of July 15 also stressed the importance of urban propaganda, calling for meetings of urban cadres and joint worker-peasant mass rallies to express support for agrarian reform. An editorial in the same issue of the NFJP outlined the proper content of such propaganda: first, land reform was righteous and proper; secondly, it would promote urban prosperity by improving the purchasing power of the peasants; and finally, it would assist the "democratic reform" campaign presently going on in the cities.[95] Several measures were taken during July and August to stir up enthusiasm for agrarian reform in Canton, the most important city in the province. On July 18, an agrarian reform exhibition was opened in the city, depicting the crimes of the landlords and the struggle of the peasants for justice.[96] On July 16, the South China Sub-bureau held a forum for leaders of the various democratic parties on land reform, and on July 21, Ku Ta-ts'un addressed a meeting of one thousand Party and government workers, calling on them all to organize discussions on agrarian reform where they worked, and on those from landlord families in particular to write letters to their home districts urging relatives to submit peacefully to the redistribution of land.[97] In late July and early August, meetings of overseas Chinese organizations, labor unions, and PLA units were held to mobilize support for the revolution going on in the rural districts.[98]

That such a degree of urban agitation was encouraged at a time when the "wu-fan" movement (directed against the bourgeoisie) and the "democratic reform" campaign (aimed at the labor unions) had just been concluded or were still in their final stages shows the importance of the next phase of agrarian reform. Addressing a joint meeting of the provincial and Canton municipal consultative committees in early August, Fang Fang admitted how much pressure from above had been brought to bear on the Kwangtung authorities. He noted that the Central-South authorities, the central government, and Chairman Mao himself had all demanded that land reform be completed before the spring cultivation, 1953, and that this meant processing a population of eighteen million in the coming eight months (areas with a population of ten million already having been completed).[99] To the three reasons why the cities should support land reform which had been set forth in the NFJP July editorial, Fang Fang added another, and in so doing made a significant commentary on the Chinese revolution as a whole: it had been the rural areas which had liberated the cities, and now that the countryside needed support in its own struggle, the cities were morally obliged to come to its aid.[100]

Thus, in middle or late August, 1952, began the most crucial phase of agrarian reform in Kwangtung. The decisions of the high-level meeting of late June had by this time been passed down through cadres' conferences in the special districts, hsien, and even some ch'ü units, and the work teams had left for their assigned areas in late July or early August.[101] Much effort had been spent in mobilizing urban support and cooperation for land reform. Finally, another directive of the provincial government on August 13 reemphasized the important role of the people's tribunals in "assuming leadership of the masses."[102] Even top provincial leaders themselves had personally gone to the "front lines" to direct operations, discover problems and deal with them on the spot, and serve as examples to lower-level cadres; T'ao Chu, Chao Tzu-yang, and Li Ming (director of the Department of Organization, South China Sub-bureau), among others, were engaged in these duties.[103]

There do not seem to have been any progress reports issued by the authorities during this huge campaign until after another enlarged cadres' conference held by the South China Sub-bureau from October 20 to 26, 1952. The proceedings of this conference, however, revealed that the party leaders were confident of success before the spring deadline. The agenda of the conference itself shows this. The first item on the agenda was, predictably, the matter of the full conclusion of "social" (i.e., agrarian) reform; but other important items discussed were the development of economic production and the expansion of Party member-

ship and organization in the province.[104] In fact, the next few months would be characterized by the "transition from the full conclusion of reforms to the commencement of economic construction."[105]

The NFJP did not print the report of Chao Tzu-yang on rural work, but T'ao Chu's report on the current situation and tasks for the immediate future touched directly on the progress and prospects of agrarian reform.[106] T'ao Chu expressed basic satisfaction with recent results and confidence that, by mid-November, the targets set at the June meeting would be fully reached. Agrarian reform would then be complete for about twenty-one million people, with only seven million remaining to be processed before spring. Success was due to the foundations of the "spring movement" (meaning the rectification among land reform cadres), as well as cooperation between local cadres and those from outside the province. He noted that deviations in cadres' work styles had been fewer, and leftist rather than rightist; in September, the authorities had had to restrain the excessive confiscation of surplus grain from landlord-industrialists and overseas Chinese families. There was also some urban disruption, due to land reform being pushed so zealously right on the heels of the "wu-fan" campaign.[107] T'ao Chu showed great relief at the prospect of land reform being completed in the near future, acknowledging that the "burden of agrarian reform has been heavy on our shoulders these past three years." Its completion would be welcomed because recently, "the initiative in various tasks has not been held in our own hands." Pressure and intervention from Wuhan and Peking seems to have assumed significant, perhaps irritating, proportions, judging by this statement.

Despite the fact that success was within reach, however, there was to be no letup in the campign. In the same speech, T'ao Chu observed that Kwangtung was "still half a year behind other areas" in agrarian reform, and the thirty thousand land reform cadres were to stay at their posts. Agrarian reform was to retain its absolute priority until the spring planting of 1953, after which major attention could be transferred to production. Meanwhile, since the "san-fan" movement had not yet been carried out in Party organs at the hsien level and below, this task was to be begun soon. Finally, T'ao Chu referred to the general expansion of Party membership in the rural areas which would accompany the final phase of land reform.

This last item mentioned by T'ao Chu--Party expansion--is an interesting one, for it is apparent that the conscious policy of the Party at this time was not to promote an increase in either membership or number of basic Party units until agrarian reform was complete, or nearly so,

in a given locality. An article in the NFJP of late October, 1952, pointed out that in the recruitment and training of new Party members, "we must stress duty of leadership in production...and how to organize the peasants for mutual aid in production."[108] Nothing was said about promoting Party expansion to help with agrarian reform. In one Kwangtung ch'ü where land reform had been completed, of 590 individuals attending a four-week Party training class begun in October, 1952, almost two hundred were already hsiang magistrates, deputy magistrates, or chairmen or vice-chairmen of peasants' associations.[109] Thus, while land reform had, on the whole, not been led by local Party men, for many areas simply had no Party members among the populace, it was expected that the mutual aid movement would be. It is difficult to say whether this was conscious policy from the start, or the result of misgivings at not having pushed Party expansion until it was too late to be of any use to agrarian reform.

After the cadres' conference of late October, agrarian reform in Kwangtung moved into its final stage. An interim report presented by Fang Fang before the provincial consultative committee in December, 1952, declared that "first consideration shall still be given to agrarian reform," but it was appropriate to begin planning for the imminent switch-over to the fostering of production and mutual aid in agriculture.[110] As the deadline of the spring harvest approached, one final directive was issued by the South China Sub-bureau on March 5, 1953, calling on all cadres to redouble their efforts in the last month in order to consummate the success of the campaign.[111] This directive took an interesting slant when it complained of some cadres becoming careless now because of worry over pending reassignment or unemployment; the sub-bureau felt constrained to reassure them that "fear of unemployment following conclusion of agrarian reform is entirely unfounded."[112]

In mid-April, 1953, the Kwangtung authorities declared that agrarian reform had been successfully concluded for the ninety-one hsien and six municipalities of the province, with a rural population of twenty-eight million, except for five hsien of a minority "autonomous region" on Hainan which contained a total of only 270,000 people.[113] Moreover, reexamination had been satisfactorily completed for fifty-four hsien and five of the municipalities, with the remainder to be finished before the summer harvest.[114] Twenty-three million mou of land had been confiscated and redistributed; this included 100 per cent of the "public land", 80 per cent of the land owned by landlords, and 15 per cent of the land formerly rented out by rich peasants. The resulting landholding pattern ranged from a minimum of one mou to a maximum of just over 1.4 mou per capita. It was also claimed that practically all of the surplus housing units, draft

animals, and agricultural tools of the landlords had been reallocated, and that 910 million catties of surplus grain had been surrendered as a result of the movement.[115]

Some comment on these statistics, especially those for land confiscation and redistribution, seems in order. In the first place, they seem quite credible. If the figures cited by Fang Fang in 1950 (fifty-two million mou of cultivated land in the province, of which 30 per cent was "public", or clan-held, and 23 per cent belonged to landlords[116]) were approximately correct, confiscation of all public land and 80 per cent of landlord land alone would have provided 25.2 million mou for redistribution, more than was actually claimed. However, the great amount of land that changed hands should not lead to overestimation of the number of people adversely affected by land reform. A significant number of small landlords, classified as "rich peasants" at this time, could have retained their property without invalidating the claimed figures.

## The Aftermath of Agrarian Reform

By the time agrarian reform had been completed in Kwangtung, most other areas in the country were already well into the campaign for mutual aid in agriculture, which was the next step in the timetable of the regime for the eventual socialization of agriculture. Kwangtung, however, did not plunge directly into the mutual aid movement. There were too many problems remaining in the countryside, some a direct carryover from the social disruption caused by the land reform, which only a period of stability and an absence of agitation could alleviate.

Some of these problems were, strictly speaking, economic ones. In February, 1953, an article in the NFJP pointed to a few of them: a shortage of credit in rural areas; the burden of the agricultural tax and bond sales; marketing problems; a rising differential between farm prices and the cost of daily necessities; and the fact that the peasants were not reinvesting enough of their income in production.[117] Outside analyses agree that these factors did indeed constitute the most important trouble areas at the time.[118] On the surface, it would seem that these problems could be at least partially solved by a prompt and thorough promotion of cooperation and mutual aid in agricultural production, marketing, and formation of consumers' cooperatives, especially since the economic status of the majority of the peasants was now at a comparable level. Land reform, after all, in one sense had really brought about no "economic" revolution at all. Production patterns and methods remained

much the same, and the new agricultural income tax largely took the place of rents formerly paid to landlords. Moreover, increased fragmentation of landholdings prejudiced improvement in the agricultural production outlook.

Purely economic problems, however, were not the most important ones. Mutual aid was desirable, and would certainly be enthusiastically promoted in the near future, but for the period immediately after land reform, a respite from campaigns of any kind was even more desirable. As Yeh Chien-ying announced in April, 1953, at the very moment that agrarian reform was declared successfully concluded, the most important immediate task was to "unite" people of all classes for production. [119] What Yeh meant was that many peasants were afraid that agitation was not over, the more prosperous among them fearing that their property might be the next to be attacked, and that these attitudes were hampering agricultural production. At the first congress of the Kwangtung New Democratic Youth League in June, 1953, T'ao Chu again observed that "production relationships" in the rural areas were not yet "stabilized," and that many peasants feared a "second revolution." [120]

Thus the policy of the provincial authorities for several months after the conclusion of agrarian reform was to reassure the peasants that the land to which they now held title was theirs to do with as they saw fit--whether to till it themselves or rent it out. As a high Party official stressed in June, at the same congress which T'ao Chu addressed, it had to be explained clearly to the masses that "the peasants may work their own land and grow rich on it, not only today, but also in the future; there will be no further struggle, no further division." [121] Only with confidence in their land tenure could peasants logically be persuaded to begin steps to combat some of the economic problems mentioned above; to devote more investment funds to tools and fertilizers, and to make loans without fear of being attacked as exploiters. Therefore it was necessary to proceed at first with great delicacy on the issue of mutual aid in agriculture, and provincial leaders from Yeh Chien-ying on down stressed the principle of strict voluntarism in participation in mutual aid teams at this time; no pressure was to be put on peasants to join. [122]

## V. An Evaluation

Thus was ended, within the span of three years, a movement which probably affected more people, and in more profound a manner, than had any other in the history of the province. Agrarian reform had occupied the attention of the provincial leaders and the energies of many

of its most skilled political workers for the most part of these three years, and it seems on the whole to have been brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Huge quantities of land and other property had been confiscated and redistributed, and considerable political support from the poorer peasants who received it had undoubtedly been gained. No less important, the principal target of agrarian reform--the traditional rural elite--had been dealt a blow from which it could never recover. Beyond these general results, however, some specific aspects of the agrarian reform process in Kwangtung stand out as worthy of reemphasis.

First is the fact that land reform seems to have been the major means by which the regime's political control was firmly established at a fairly low level in society, the hsiang. Peasant associations often became the first hsiang governments, and it will be recalled that the successful completion of land reform and the reduction of unwieldy administrative units to manageable size were complementary processes in Kwangtung. A corollary of this feature was the secondary role played by the Party, as opposed to the fledgling state administrative apparatus. Whereas the Party undoubtedly directed the overall campaign, at the level of implementation there were simply not enough Party personnel to handle operations properly, even when most of the Party cadres of the entire province were assigned to agrarian reform work in the latter part of 1952. As noted above, Party recruitment was not emphasized until after agrarian reform, and many of the trainees were those who had been prominent in the peasants' associations and were already local government officials.

Agrarian reform also involved a problem with which the regime was already familiar from Yenan days, that of maintaining control over the actions of lower-level cadres spread over a large area. The task of penetrating and overturning the social structure of a village, or of several villages such as were encompassed by a hsiang, was one requiring perception and leadership, yet patience and tact--a good "work style." Many of the early work team recruits, hastily trained and poorly supervised, obviously made a mess of their assignments, which had to be redone at a later time. The shortage of Party members in the South only compounded this problem. More serious than the lack of Party cadres, however, was the fact that some old functionaries were actually carried over from KMT days, at least temporarily, and that many such individuals who were not from poor backgrounds attempted to play leading roles in the peasants' associations in order to protect their property and position in local society, managing to corrupt some government and Party officials in the process. In later years, despite efforts at selective Party expansion and rectification, this same phenomenon would occur again.

In the events in Kwangtung can be detected a certain amount of tension between the center of state and Party power in Peking and the regional authorities. Regionalism is a factor which must be considered in any period of Chinese history, and semi-independent provincial bases of military and administrative power were certainly present in the early 1950's, as shown by the later purge of Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih. The extent to which Yeh Chien-ying and other powerful Kwangtung leaders found themselves in conflict with either Peking or their nominal government superiors in Wuhan is referred to only indirectly in the materials used for this study, but some friction is evident from certain of their remarks which have been quoted. After 1951 the Government Administrative Council and the Central Committee of the Party were obviously prodding the provincial authorities to finish agrarian reform as soon as possible, and judging from the comment of Yeh and others on maintenance of stability in rural areas after its completion, the decision to push the "cooperativization" (mutual aid) movement very hard later in 1953 may have come as an unwelcome surprise in Kwangtung.

What is quite clear, however, is that the North was the bastion of the revolution during these years. Southern areas such as Kwangtung were, compared with the tremendous upheaval experienced in the north during the civil war, relatively passive recipients of social transformation. The influx of cadres and PLA troops from the North during the last stages of agrarian reform is some evidence of this. The level of violence involved in struggle meetings and land confiscation also seems to have been less than in the North; the people's tribunals, originally formed to restrain the anticipated enthusiasm of the peasants, were finally given considerable responsibility for arousing them to action.

Finally, the history of land reform in Kwangtung shows a basic ambiguity in the relationship between social transformation and economic development strategy which first appeared near the end of the civil war and which has continued to plague the regime in the 1960's. Essentially, this is the incompatibility of the Maoist urge to "make revolution," to transform social institutions and imbue the Chinese peasant with a new set of motivations, and the desire to increase agricultural output enough to support sustained industrialization. An authoritative national spokesman claimed in 1954 that agrarian reform, now complete throughout the country, would "set free the rural productive forces, develop agricultural production and thus pave the way for China's industrialization."[1] In other words institutional reorganization and ideological indoctrination alone were expected to increase output; scarce capital inputs were to be reserved for the modern sector of the economy. The best indication of this

problem in Kwangtung was the injunction against mass agitation during the crucial sowing and harvesting seasons, and the concern, up until late 1952, that land reform not be so disruptive as to affect production adversely. There was even a fiscal consideration in the treatment of land owned by overseas Chinese; the authorities went to great lengths to emphasize that such landholdings would be dealt with somewhat more generously, and that poor relatives of overseas Chinese would actually receive land, in hopes of keeping remittances flowing into the country.[2]

As noted above, the final statistical results of agrarian reform may be indicative of more "revolution" than actually took place. The bonds of the old social order and the grip of traditional behavior patterns had been shaken by agrarian reform, but ingrained social habits and many of the elements which had constituted the old order had not been completely eradicated. They had only been suppressed, and would reappear from time to time in later years to irritate and bedevil the regime. Throughout the 1950's, more and more drastic methods of "mobilization politics" would be used in attempts to achieve increased agricultural output, and only in the early 1960's, after the fiasco of the "Great Leap Forward," would policy come to reflect recognition of the fundamental conflict between social revolution and orderly economic development on the part of some elements of the leadership.

# NOTES

## I. The Era of the Agrarian Reform Law

1 (p. 1). A good study of both theoretical and organizational changes in agrarian policy before 1949 is provided by Chao Kuo-chun, Agrarian Policy of the Chinese Communist Party 1921-1959 (London, 1960), Chapter 2.

This is not to say that there is universal agreement as to the importance of agrarian policy relative to other aspects of the Chinese Communist movement, especially during the war against Japan. See, for example, the differences of opinion between Chalmers A. Johnson, Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power (Stanford, 1962), and Donald G. Gillin, " 'Peasant Nationalism' in the History of Chinese Communism," The Journal of Asian Studies 23.2 (Feb., 1964), 269-289.

2. Chao Kuo-chun, pp. 74-75.

3. The Agrarian Reform Law of the People's Republic of China, Fourth Edition (Peking, 1953). Also contains "Decisions Concerning the Differentiation of Class Status in the Countryside," regulations on the organization of peasants' associations, and Liu Shao-ch'i's "Report on the Agrarian Reform Law."

4. It should be remembered that, in these first years, the agricultural tax was a much more important source of government income than in later years, when revenue could also be derived from industry.

5. All these features are in the Agrarian Reform Law itself and the rules on class status, cited in note 3.

6. Land reform in the period of the civil war deserves much more attention than it has received thus far. Franz Schurmann devotes an interpretive section to it in Ideology and Organization in Communist China (Berkeley, 1966), pp. 412-437, and David and Isabel Crook have recorded the process as they witnessed it in a Shensi village in Revolution in a Chinese Village, Ten Mile Inn (London, 1959). A recent and valuable addition to the resources available on this period is William Hinton, Fanshen (New York, 1966), a detailed account of his observations on land reform in a Shansi village in 1948. The Crooks and Hinton books must be used with care, and allowance made for the political bias of the

authors, but they are both important sources. Another recent work containing much information on pre-1949 land reform, though in anecdotal form, is Jan Myrdal, Report from a Chinese Village (New York, 1965).

7. Mao Tse-tung, Selected Works, Vol. IV (Peking, 1961), pp. 116, 123-4.

8. Ibid., p. 170.

9. Ibid., p. 236.

10. Ibid., p. 237.

11. "Report on the Agrarian Reform Law," in Agrarian Reform Law of the People's Republic of China, pp. 71, 74.

12. Agrarian Reform Law, Section 5.

13. p. 83. This policy did not begin in 1950 either. For example, the team that William Hinton observed in Shansi in 1948 included students from the nearby Northern University, which had been relocated in guerrilla-held territory.

14. The Agrarian Reform Law itself, rules on the organization of peasant associations, and the article by Liu Shao-ch'i all stressed the fact that there were to be no official organs below the hsiang level. Any spokesman for a single ts'un could function only in informal liaison with hsiang organs. Many of these peasants' associations latter seem to have been converted into "representative" hsiang governments, replacing the initial appointed ones.

15. See Current Background (CB) (Hongkong, U.S. Consulate-General), No. 151, for this law and other major statements concerning the people's tribunals.

16. JMJP, July 21, 1950, in CB, No. 151, pp. 7-9.

## II. A Model for Agrarian Reform

1. Chao, pp. 102-124.

2. I have found it very difficult to estimate the size of a "typical" work team. For example, Chao (p. 125) notes that a group of four hundred trainees was divided into four sections of one hundred each and sent

to four different experimental hsiang in late 1950. On the other hand, the work team which William Hinton accompanied consisted of about fifteen members; despite its being in an "old liberated area," its tasks were much the same as those of the early 1950's in the South. One indicator of size is that the official regulations for enforcement of agrarian reform issued by the Kwangtung People's Government Council in November, 1950, provided that an extra cadre would be provided for each "additional" one thousand of population in a hsiang (Chapter V, Article 34; see CB, No. 47, p. 9ff). Since the average hsiang population at this time was probably four to six thousand, this points to the basic work team being as small as ten or less in number. On the other hand, there are later references to too many land reform cadres in some areas, constituting a burden on the local population--for example, the Nan Fang Jih Pao (NFJP, Southern Daily), September 17, 1951, in CB, No. 129, p. 10.

3. For example, Hinton's work team lived in the compound of the former Catholic church.

4. This seems to have been the case in the small village near Canton where C. K. Yang was able to observe the process of land reform. See A Chinese Village in Early Communist Transition (Cambridge, 1959), p. 131ff.

5. The practice of requiring cash deposits on future rents seems to have become widespread only in the last two or three decades before 1950; this was an especially onerous burden on the poorer peasants.

6. For example, the "crop protection association," a private militia with underworld connections, that existed in Yang's village near Canton. See Yang, p. 109ff.

7. Again, this is hard to estimate, since none of the primary materials deal with the question directly. In Yang's village near Canton, it was about eight months from the arrival of the first cadres in June, 1950, to the actual confiscation and redistribution of property in February, 1951; but this was one of the first areas to undergo land reform, and it could be expected to take longer than the norm. William Hinton's work team, which had a base of already-completed land reform to build on, stayed in its village for over six months. Yet the last stages of land reform in Kwangtung, in late 1952 and early 1953, were so intensive that a work team could not have spent more than three months in any particular village, and some must have been completed in only a few weeks.

III. The Case of Kwangtung

1. NFJP, November 6, 1950, in CB, No. 51, p. 2.

2. NFJP, August 28, 1950, in CB, No. 165, p. 4ff.

3. See CB, No. 165, for these scattered statistics.

4. Much of the following information on regional administration can be found in CB, No. 170, entitled "Regional Organization of Communist China (April 1952)".

5. Schurmann, who terms what I have called a sub-bureau a "central branch bureau" to distinguish it from the larger "central bureaus" (which I also call sub-bureaus), also supposes that the party organization was a direct arm of the CC (pp. 147-8).

6. After November 15, 1952, the Military and Administrative Committees were replaced by simple Administrative Committees, their former military powers apparently being shifted to other channels of authority.

7. Schurmann, p. 148.

8. Outsiders first noted this arrangement in June, 1952 (CB, No. 184, p. 6), although it had probably been in existence for some time already. These two "areas" were also designated "ch'ü," and were referred to as "tung ch'ü" or "hsi ch'ü" to distinguish them from the eight lower chuan ch'ü.

9. Fang Fang, third secretary of the sub-bureau, said there were ninety in an October, 1950, report (NFJP, November 6, 1950, in CB, No. 51, p. 2), but the authorities claimed 91 hsien in April, 1953. See Ta Kung Pao (Hong Kong), April 24, 1953, in Selections from China Mainland Press (SCMP) (Hong Kong, U.S. Consulate-General), No. 557, p. 26. Moreover, it is possible that as many as four hsien which were traditionally part of Kwangtung were shifted to the jurisdiction of Kwangsi in 1950 or 1951. See CB, No. 131, p. 1.

10. See the report of Fang Fang cited in note 9.

11. Ibid.

IV. The Course of Agrarian Reform in Kwangtung

1. New China News Agency release (Hankow), September 28, 1950, in CB, No. 20, p. 19.

2. Ibid., p. 20. Also Ch'ang Chiang Jih Pao (CCJP, Yangtse Daily), September 17, 1950, in CB, No. 39, p. 5, where Teng Tzu-hui, then acting chairman of the Central-South MAC, admitted, "The Victory Bond subscriptions and tax collections represented quite a heavy burden on the people."

3. G. William Skinner, "Aftermath of Communist Liberation in the Chengtu Plain," Pacific Affairs 29.1 (March, 1951), p. 63.

4. See "Report on Agrarian Reform," by Tu Jun-sheng, vice-director of the land reform committee, at the second session of the Central-South MAC in Hankow, September 1950. CCJP, September 18, 1950, in CB, No. 39, pp. 22-23.

5. Ibid., p. 23.

6. Ibid., pp. 23-25. These rules were: to no longer enforce a 37.5 per cent top limit on rents, to grant exemptions from refund where it would cause hardship to the landowner, and to combine rent reductions with the tenants' regular rent payment in the autumn. It was admitted that this policy change naturally embittered many who had already been forced to return rent deposits.

7. As late as September, 1950, Tu Jun-sheng complained that most hsien governments had not yet set up agrarian reform committees. Ibid., p. 27.

8. NFJP, November 6, 1950, in CB, No. 51, p. 4. It was claimed that over three million peasants had been organized into peasants' associations at that time. Rent and interest reduction began in September, or even before, in villages within a few miles from Canton, however, including the one in which C. K. Yang was doing his field work, where it began in June.

9. See Ibid., pp. 1-9, for his report in its entirety.

10. Ibid., p. 2.

11. Ibid., p. 4.

12. NFJP, November 6, 1950, in CB, No. 47.

13. CB, No. 51, p. 9.

14. Ibid., p. 8.

15. At the Second Conference of Representatives of All Circles of the People of Kwangtung Province. See CB, No. 124, p. 3.

16. Speech by Fang Fang at this same conference, in NFJP, September 19, 1951, in CB, No. 125, p. 5.

17. NFJP, May 8, 1951, in CB, No. 128, p. 5.

18. The May article in the NFJP (note 17) did not spell out these three stages in detail. They were described more specifically in later documents, for example Chao Tzu-yang's report on the first stage in August, 1951 (NFJP, September 5, 1951, in CB, No. 128, pp. 17-21), and Fang Fang's September, 1951, report to the Conference of All Circles of the People (NFJP, September 19, 1951, in CB, No. 125, pp. 9-12.)

19. NFJP, May 8, 1951, in CB, No. 128, p. 5.

20. See JMJP, March 15, 1951, in CB, No. 101.

21. Hsin Hua Yueh Pao (New China Monthly), December, 1950, in CB, No. 101.

22. Also in CB, No. 101.

23. Likewise in CB, No. 101.

24. In CB, No. 63, pp. 1-6.

25. Yang, p. 131ff.

26. NFJP, September 18, 1951, in CB, No. 124, p. 4.

27. Ibid., p. 3.

28. NFJP, May 8, 1951, in CB, No. 128, p. 5.

29. Ibid.

30. These figures from the report by Chao Tzu-yang, NFJP, September 5, 1951, in CB, No. 128, p. 17. Presumably these sixty-three hsien were in addition to the original thirteen, thus probably accounting for all of the mainland hsien under the jurisdiction of Kwangtung at this time.

31. July 4, 6, 1951, in CB, No. 128, pp. 7-9.

32. In CB, No. 128, pp. 10-12.

33. In CB, No. 128, p. 14.

34. In CB, No. 128, p. 13.

35. Ku Ta-ts'un's report, NFJP, September 18, 1951, in CB, No. 124, p. 3.

36. NFJP, October 3, 1951, in CB, No. 128, p. 22.

37. NFJP, September 5, 1951, in CB, No. 128, p. 15.

38. Chao's speech is in NFJP, September 5, 1951, in CB, No. 128, pp. 17-21.

39. Ibid., p. 21.

40. These reports are in NFJP, September 18, 1951, in CB, No. 124, and NFJP, September 19, 1951, in CB, No. 125, respectively.

41. Fang Fang's report, NFJP, September 19, 1951, in CB, No. 125, p. 3.

42. Ibid., p. 12.

43. In CB, No. 128, p. 22.

44. NFJP, September 22, 1951, in CB, No. 125, p. 15.

45. NFJP, August 27, 1951, in CB, No. 129, pp. 3-6.

46. These are all in CB, No. 129.

47. NFJP, August 27, 1951, in CB, No. 129, pp. 7-9.

48. CCJP, June 19, 1951, from a June 13 directive of the Central-South MAC on the reduction in size of ch'ü and hsiang units. In CB, No. 131, p. 2.

49. NFJP, August 4, 1951, from the July directive of the Kwangtung provincial government, obviously inspired by the order of the Central-South MAC (note 48). In CB, No. 131, p. 4.

50. Ibid., pp. 5-6.

51. CCJP, December 13, 1951, in CB, No. 157, p. 5.

52. His report from CCJP, December 9, 1951, in CB, No. 157, pp. 35-38.

53. Ibid., pp. 36-37.

54. CCJP, December 13, 1951, in CB, No. 157, p. 24.

55. CCJP, December 9, 1951, in CB, No. 157, p. 37.

56. See SCMP, No. 220, pp. 17-18.

57. How far down the hierarchy "local" meant was not stated, but it probably referred to the hsien level.

58. JMJP editorial, November 13, 1951, in CB, No. 151, pp. 12-14.

59. A circular of the agrarian reform committee of the Central-South MAC, from CCJP, February 5, 1952, in SCMP, No. 282, pp. 33-38.

60. CCJP, September 2, 1951, in SCMP, No. 182, pp. 14-17.

61. CCJP, January 16, 1952, in SCMP, No. 268, pp. 17-20, and CCJP, February 22, 1952, in SCMP, No. 296, pp. 27-34.

62. CCJP, February 22, 1952, in SCMP, No. 296, p. 34.

63. CCJP, April 7, 1952, in CB, No. 184, pp. 9-12.

64. Reference in a speech by T'ao Chu, NFJP, May 5, 1952, in CB, No. 184, p. 33.

65. NFJP, May 17, 1952, in CB, No. 184, pp. 50-51.

66. CB, No. 184, pp. 20-35, contains all the documentary material on this particular conference.

67. NFJP, April 18, 1952, in CB, No. 184, pp. 20-21.

68. His speech from NFJP, April 18, 1952, in CB, No. 184, pp. 25-29.

69. The whole story was brought to light in the NFJP of July 21, 1952, which devoted two full pages to coverage of the incident. In CB, No. 204.

70. NFJP, May 3, 1952, in CB, No. 184, p. 22.

71. Ibid., pp. 30-32.

72. There were many reports in the NFJP at this time on the rectification movement in various areas. See the articles from the issues of April 26, 28, and May 4, 5, 20, 22, 23, in CB, No. 184, pp. 36-49.

73. NFJP, May 5, 1952, in CB, No. 184, p. 34.

74. These reports from CCJP, March 1, 1952, in SCMP, No. 299, pp. 10-14.

75. Ibid.

76. Ibid.

77. Ibid., p. 10.

78. NFJP, May 5, 1952, in CB, No. 184, p. 33.

79. These figures add up to a total of 95 hsien for the province, which was probably not the case at this time (see Chapter III, note 9). Perhaps four of the original thirteen hsien were to be entirely redone.

80. NFJP, May 18, 1952, in CB, No. 184, p. 52. Perhaps it should be noted again here that the actual three-stage process of agrarian reform, set in early 1951, was still to be used. Only the pattern and the timetable of implementation was changed.

81. Ibid.

82. NFJP, July 12, 1952, in CB, No. 211, p. 22.

83. His speech, including all the fugures cited below, appeared in the NFJP, July 13, 1952, in CB, No. 211, pp. 24-26.

84. These presumably in addition to the original thirteen hsien of the winter of 1950-51, for a total of about 9.6 million persons having successfully undergone land reform by August, 1952. The 678 hsiang "completed" before May, 1952, must have been what was acceptable of all the work of April, 1951-April, 1952.

85. NFJP, July 13, 1952, in CB, No. 211, p. 26.

86. Ibid., p. 25.

87. His speech from NFJP, July 13, 1952, in CB, No. 211, pp. 27-29.

88. It should be noted that, even with thirty thousand cadres on the job, if over 3500 hsiang were to be attacked, personnel resources would be spread very thin. Work teams would probably consist of less than ten members.

89. Yeh's speech from NFJP, July 12, 1952, in CB, No. 211, pp. 30-31.

90. Ibid., p. 22.

91. From Chao's figures for the 47 hsien:

| hsiang | population (millions) |
|---|---|
| 1760 (finished) | 5 |
| 1181 (first stage complete) | 3.3 |
| 3597 (not yet begun) | 10 |
| 6538 | 18.3 |

average: 2799 per hsiang

92. NFJP, July 13, 1952, in CB, No. 211, p. 29.

93. NFJP, July 12, 1952, in CB, No. 211, p. 30.

94. See NFJP, July 15, 1952, in CB, No. 211, pp. 32-34.

95. Ibid., p. 35.

96. Articles in NFJP, July 18, 19, 1952, in CB, No. 211, pp. 18-21.

97. NFJP, July 20, 24, 1952, in CB, No. 211, pp. 36-37.

98. Several issues of the NFJP refer to these meetings; all are in CB, No. 211, pp. 37-52.

99. His speech in NFJP, August 11, 1952, in CB, No. 211, pp. 46-50.

100. Ibid.

101. Ibid., p. 53.

102. NFJP, August 23, 1952, in CB, No. 211, pp. 58-61.

103. NFJP, August 21, 1952, in CB, No. 211, p. 56.

104. NFJP, October 28, 1952, in CB, No. 226, pp. 3-4.

105. Ibid., p. 3.

106. His whole speech in Ibid., pp. 5-10.

107. In fact, in some areas where the "wu-fan" campaign was still in progress, it was temporarily suspended in August, when agitation in urban areas for land reform was at its highest pitch. See NFJP, December 25, 1952, in CB, No. 226, p. 26.

108. Fang Shu, Campaign of Party-Expansion of the Chinese Communist Party in 1952 (Hong Kong, 1953), p. 26.

109. From NFJP, October 21, 1952, in Fang Shu, p. 31.

110. NFJP, December 25, 1952, in CB, No. 226, p. 26.

111. NFJP, March 6, 1953, in SCMP, No. 527, p. 19.

112. Ibid., p. 20.

113. See Ta Kung Pao, April 24, 1953, which printed the official dispatch from Canton, in SCMP, No. 557, pp. 26-28.

114. Ibid., p. 27. The final statistics for all administrative units, as announced by the agrarian reform committee of the provincial government, were as follows:

| | Reexamination complete | Reexam. to be done by August, 1953 | Land reform not yet begun |
|---|---|---|---|
| hsien | 54 | 32 | 5 |
| municipalities | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| ch'ü | 571 | 244 | 18 |
| hsiang | 8418 | 3775 | 187 |
| population | 21 million | 7 million | 270,000 |
| population per hsiang | 2495 | 1854 | 1444 |

As can be seen from the figures for population per hsiang, even more progress had been made since mid-1952 in reducing the size of administrative units.

115. These figures all from Ibid., p. 27.

116. NFJP, November 6, 1950, in CB, No. 51, p. 2.

117. See NFJP, February 19, 1953, in SCMP, No. 527, pp. 21-24.

118. See, for example, Weng Shao-er, Chinese Farm Economy after Agrarian Reform (Human Resources Research Institute, Chinese Documents Project, Report No. 34; Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, 1955), and "Economic Status of the Chinese Peasants after Agrarian Reform," Land Economics 29.1 (February, 1953), pp. 35-43. Also Dwight H. Perkins, "Centralization and Decentralization in Mainland China's Agriculture 1949-1962," The Quarterly Journal of Economics 77.2 (May, 1964), pp. 208-237.

119. From Ta Kung Pao, April 24, 1953, in SCMP, No. 557, p. 28.

120. NFJP, June 6, 1953, in SCMP, No. 625 (supplement), p. ii.

121. Speech by Li Shen-ching, director of the propaganda department, South China Sub-bureau, from NFJP, June 11, 1953, in SCMP, No. 625 (supplement), p. ix.

122. See for example, Ibid., p. ix, and note 119 above.

V. An Evaluation

1. Teng Tse-hui, The Outstanding Success of the Agrarian Reform Movement in China (Peking, 1954), p. 7.

2. A directive of the GAC, November 6, 1950, and NFJP, December 22, 1951, in CB, No. 165, pp. 12, 14-19.

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