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into the fields in the afternoons to visit them or to discuss with them the best ways of planting cotton and rice.

Land reform has to be coordinated with the peasants’ productive activities. Our team spent a lot of time in discussing the ways and means of helping the peasants in their production. Most of the mass meetings were in the evenings so as not to interfere with the peasants’ productive work.

FIVE STAGES

Land reform is usually conducted in five stages. The first stage is for publicity and education. Since it is a mass movement, the peasants must first be politically awakened to carry out reform themselves. After thousands of years of feudal exploitation, some of the peasants do not realize that the landlords are fed by their labor and many of them believe that their suffering is due to fate. Before liberation, the peasants also had no way to stand up for their rights when the landlords were still "on top of their heads."

When we first went to Hsiao Miao Hsiang, land reform was still in the first stage. The central task of the team was the suppression of counter-revolutionaries. After the arrest of 11 bad elements in our village, the peasants felt much freer to express themselves and came more enthusiastically to mass meetings.

Besides the work in connection with the suppression of counter-revolutionaries, we went into the villages to help the peasants to work out their "Common Patriotic Pledges," which have become a common way of linking one’s own vocation with the Resist American Aggression and Aid Korea Movement. Among the farmers, such patriotic compacts usually include pledges to strive for an increase of production through the killing of insects and better spacing in cotton planting, support of the Chinese People’s Volunteer Army in Korea and pledges of support to Chairman Mao and the people’s government.

We soon realized that both the suppression of counter-revolutionaries and the working out of "Common Patriotic Pledges" helped in the political awakening of the masses.

In land reform we follow the policy of placing our reliance on the poor peasants and farm laborers, while uniting with the middle peasants, and neutralizing the rich peasants, in order to eliminate the feudal landlord class. The poor peasants and the farm laborers form the vast majority of the rural population and they are the people who have suffered the most under the system of feudal exploitation.

The poor peasants and farm laborers should unite with the middle peasants because the latter also belong to the exploited group, although better off. The rich peasants should be protected economically but neutralized politically in order to isolate them from the landlords. The landlords should be eliminated as a class but they, except the unlawful ones, are given a portion of land in order to reform themselves through labor.

The second stage is for the differentiation of class status. In general, there are the landlords, the rich peasants, the middle peasants, the poor peasants and the farm laborers. Actually, the classification is more complex than this. In Shanghai’s suburbs, the "sub-landlords" are more hated than the real landlords.
The latter usually live in the city and hardly know their tenants or where their land is located. They often pass their title-deeds around as commodities. It is called "kicking the football."

Taking advantage of this situation, there arose a class of "sub-landlords" who do not own much land but act on behalf of the landowners to exploit the peasants. The largest group of landlords is composed of industrialists and merchants who own some farmland in the suburbs. These people do not depend on the land for their living. Then, there are the "small land lessors" made up of office workers, teachers, doctors, engineers and professional laborers who own a little land in the suburbs but had to rent it out.

In Hsiao Hsiao Hsiang, we differentiated 12 different classes. We found four landlords, four sub-landlords, 137 industrialist and merchant landowners and 61 wealthier "small land lessors."

The vocation of the people in the suburbs is greatly diversified. There are not many pure farmers. The closer to the city, the greater is the number of those who work in the factories. Then there are ricksha pullers, peddlers, and small tradesmen.

Of the three villages at Hsing Chu Dien, the one where I worked is farthest from the city and has 300 workers and 262 farmers out of a population of 1,310. It is quite common to find farmers with their wives working in the factories or wives working in the fields with their husbands engaged as wage-laborers.

The poor peasants live in huts and their possessions are made up of hardly anything beyond a wooden bed and a few kitchen utensils.

Although there are not many landlords in the suburbs and their landholding averages about 30 mou, the feudal influence is great and it is made cruel by its alliance with imperialism and bureaucratic capital. For instance, the "sub-landlords" invariably had the protection of the reactionary Kuomintang and wreaked their greatest havoc in the days of the Japanese occupation.

CLASS STATUS

After the peasants fully understood the differentiation of the class status, they were faithful and dependable in carrying out the policies of land reform. They would not misjudge anybody and when they were in doubt, they spent hours and sometimes days in discussing the matter.

The main purpose of accurately determining the class status was to differentiate enemies from friends. A mass meeting was held to pass final judgment. The landlords and all types of landowners were asked to participate in this meeting and give their own estimate of their class status. This gave the oppressed peasants a chance to voice their complaints and pour out their bitterness against the landlords. This is called "struggle through reasoning," as no violence is permitted. The peasants naturally become emotionally aroused by the trickiness of some of the landlords at such meetings but their good behavior is demonstrated throughout.

When Hsing Chu Dien held such a meeting, two men of the industrialist and merchant landowner class were sharply criticized by the peasants from the floor. Chang Kuo-liang, a local rascal, refused to accept his class status and insisted that he
did not get his land by exploitation. The peasants accused him of extortion and cruelty before liberation. Tsou Sze-chi, a rich cotton merchant, shut his door on the tenant who called on him at his home and ignored the district government when the latter telephoned him to make some inquiries.

On the other hand, when one industrialist classified himself as concurrently a landlord, the peasants refused his classification because his land did not exceed the landlord average of 30 mou.

The third stage is for confiscation and requisition. Confiscation applies to the landlords and it includes five items: land, draught animals, farm implements, surplus grain and surplus houses. Actually, in the Shanghai suburbs, land is the chief item of confiscation since the landlords usually live in the cities. In Hsiao Miao Hsiang, land was confiscated from 11 landlords, sub-landlords, and other landlords who were concurrently industrialists or merchants. This brought in about 129 mou of land and very little of the other items. The other industrialists, merchants, and wealthier "small land lessors" were not regarded as political enemies and their land was simply requisitioned. Since their number is greater, the land requisitioned in Hsiao Miao Hsiang amounted to about 1,936 mou.

The different types of landowners were dealt with in three ways. First, a mass meeting was called for the whole district of Hsiao Miao Hsiang. All of the landlords were called to the meeting to hand in their title-deeds. Such a meeting is not smooth going as it usually involved a further struggle against the unlawful landlords. For instance, Sun San-long, a local despot in Hsiao Miao Hsiang, had fled to Hongkong, and his wife hid the title-deeds under the bushes and destroyed some of their best furniture. Such incidents show clearly that the landlords will never voluntarily give up their possessions, and that land reform cannot be carried out without a struggle.

Then, Ming Chu Dien held its own meeting for requisitioning the land from the industrialists and merchants. The atmosphere at this meeting was one of cordiality.

Finally, a series of interviews was arranged for the wealthier "small land lessors" in order to persuade them to turn over their land to the peasants for production.

The fourth stage is for the distribution of land. Unlike in the ordinary rural districts, the land confiscated and requisitioned in the suburbs is nationalized. Such a policy provides for expansion of the city and the future development of industry and commerce. The peasants who receive the nationalized land have the right to use the land without paying any rent to the government but they cannot sell or lease it.

It is to be remembered that the land confiscated or requisitioned is in the hands of the original tenants. How to get the land redistributed equitably is the difficult task during the fourth stage.

In the Shanghai suburbs, the farmland is not sufficient for its crowded population and equal distribution is thus out of the question. Hsiao Miao Hsiang has a population of over 10,000 but its farmland amounts to only 4,000 mou. The policy is therefore not to distribute any land to the workers but only to the tillers and their dependents.
We had to deal with the "thought conditions" of the different groups of people. With the working men, we helped them to realize that since they are the leading class of the people's democracy, they as "big brothers" should not compete with the peasants over the distribution of land. With the wives of the working men, who generally desire to have a small piece of land for growing vegetables, we would persuade them to see that land should be used for production to help in the development of industry.

The most difficult group to convince were the unemployed workers. They were led to see that unemployment is only a temporary phenomenon caused by Kuomintang rule and that New Democracy has a great future for industry and commerce.

With the middle peasants who hold more nationalized land than their share, we tried to show that nationalized land is not the same as their own land and that the whole purpose of land reform is to take care of the land-poor and the landless peasants. Then, with the poor peasants and farm laborers, we urged them to deal with the middle peasants with consideration and to understand that to receive even a small piece of land is liberation.

The actual process of distribution of the nationalized land was done by the peasants themselves. Those who were entitled to get land stated their own needs on the basis of their labor-power. Then their fellow peasants judged the fairness of their assessment. If the assessment was not justified, they lowered the allotment. But if the assessment was too modest, they increased the allotment. Those who were supposed to give away some of the nationalized land in their possession also stated the amount they were prepared to give up. Their fellow peasants then decided whether the amount stated was reasonable.

Land confiscated and requisitioned, however, was not of the same quality, size or location. How to match each piece to each peasant was not an easy task. The officers of the Peasants' Association worked one whole night to do the matching and used their best and most unselfish judgment.

Since the distribution of land is a matter to be decided upon within the ranks of the peasants, everything is done by this method of self-assessment and democratic consultation. After the distribution was completed, the peasants chose a day to put in markers to show which pieces of nationalized land were allotted to them.

Chu Hsiao-kao, a landless peasant, told me that day how he had previously lived from hand to mouth on practically nothing and now 3.5 mou of land had been allotted to him. He was full of thanks to Chairman Mao, the Chinese Communist Party, and the government and expressed his gratitude with tears in his eyes. Before liberation, it was not easy for poor people to get land even if they had the money, as land was under the control of feudalistic influences. Now he got it all free.

Chen Lin-sun, a Taoist practitioner, was also allotted 1.5 mou of land because his fellow peasants said that there is no future for such a "superstitious" profession. Chang Ah-sze, an old bachelor who had had to get along with one-eighth of a mou was now allotted 2.5 mou of nationalized land. He was all smiles that day.

The fifth stage was for inspection and winding-up. In the old liberated areas, such as in certain parts of Shantung province, a number of left-over problems came up two or three years after land reform was completed. It is therefore
better to provide a period of inspection right after the distribution of land.

Land reform cannot be regarded as concluded without having fulfilled the following three conditions: 1) the peasants are fully awakened politically; 2) the feudalistic influences are thoroughly eliminated; 3) all the left-over problems are cleared up. Thus, each district must spend a period of time to re-examine conditions in the different villages.

If the landlords are still rampant, they should be further dealt with. If mistakes are found in the determining of class status, they should be duly corrected. If any injustices are discovered in the distribution of land, they should be quickly removed.

After all the left-over problems are solved, then a mass meeting is called to celebrate the conclusion of land reform. At this meeting, the old title-deeds are burned in public and new title-deeds are issued. From then on, the peasants are to work out their plans to increase production and to enter into a period of political reform. Village administration will be abolished as the districts will be reduced in size. Formerly, each district averaged about 5,000 to 6,000 people, but the new district will be composed of 3,000 to 4,000 people in an area of not more than 1 1/2 (two-thirds of a mile). Eighty to 100 delegates may be elected directly to a district people's conference. This brings the government closer to the people.

It is difficult to say how much time is required for each stage in land reform as the conditions in each district vary. In Hsiao Miao Hsiang, the first stage of publicity and education took more than two months, the second stage of determining the class status nearly a month, the third stage of confiscation and requisition approximately two weeks, the fourth stage of distribution of land nearly a month, and the fifth stage of inspection and winding-up a month and a half.

From one stage to another, a Peasants' Representative Conference to examine the work of the previous stage and to plan the work of the next stage was held. Such conferences are an important occasion for political education to the peasants. Besides hearing reports, they participate in group discussions. The formerly despised peasants are thus trained to run their own affairs.

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After having spent three months in the countryside, I have become convinced that a political "turn-over" is essential to the betterment of the conditions of the peasants. All the sufferings of the peasants can be traced to the irrationality and the injustice of the feudalistic land system. As long as a few landlords lived on the sweat and blood of the poor peasants, any talk of agrarian reform is useless. The situation is made worse when these landlords are backed by a reactionary regime with imperialistic support.

The startling achievements of the land reform movement make our past efforts at "rural service" a joke. We used to think that the causes of peasant suffering were "poverty," "illiteracy," "physical weakness," and "selfishness." We overlooked the fact that these are only symptoms of a system supported by imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism. Unless this system is fundamentally changed, no land reform can really be carried out.
The Christians were once very enthusiastic in promoting literacy campaigns in the countryside, as we thought that the peasants are poor because they are illiterate. But this reasoning is now positively proved wrong in the present land reform movement. The peasants are illiterate because they are poor, and they are poor because they were cruelly exploited by the landlords.

After the land is redistributed, there is a great demand for education and more schools in the country districts. Furthermore, literacy is no criterion for leadership.

I have also come to understand the basic difference between "serving the people" and "serving society as a whole." The term "people" excludes the political enemies whereas the term "society" makes no distinction between the enemies and the friends. When we talked of "social service," we meant to serve all blindly. Thus, when we Christians started a rural service station in the countryside, we took care to cultivate the landlords and the latter also took care to assist our work as it helped to ease tension between them and the exploited peasants.

The Chinese Communist Party has won the wide support of the people because it is a party that links itself with the broad masses of the exploited. Land reform is not done by fiat, but through the awakening of the people. Unless the peasants are ready to carry out the reform themselves, such reform will not last. Thus, the peasants know why the present government is a government of the people.

To eliminate exploitation in society involves a struggle. Thus, Liu Shao-chi, Vice-chairman of the Central People's Government, says that land reform is a series of systematic and fierce struggles. History shows that the exploiters will never willingly give up their possessions. The peasants must fight them. In this struggle, the landlords often use unscrupulous means to confuse the peasants through bribery, cajolery, and threats. We Christians can learn a great lesson in this struggle.

In a society where there are exploiters and oppressors, the Christian duty is to fight them in order that love for the people can be genuine and sincere.

Through personal participation in the land reform movement, I have come to understand the true meaning of the leadership of Chairman Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Communist Party. They are entitled to hold the leadership because they represent the most progressive class of the people, namely the working class.

**PEASANTS CONSERVATIVE**

In the country district, I found that the peasants were conservative and individualistic. Their conservatism and individualism was ultimately due to the atomistic nature of their production. They carried on their livelihood without too much dependence on other peasants. Consequently, they were concerned with their own problems and welfare. They are ready to fight the landlords but they can easily be satisfied once some land is given to them.

Their conservatism is shown in cotton planting. According to experiences elsewhere, seeds should be widely spaced. But hours were spent to persuade them to leave sufficient space. They would make use of the space for beans and melons. Since spray-machines to kill insects were too expensive for each family to possess,
the plan was for cooperative buying. It took many, many meetings to convince the peasants of the advantage of this scheme.

On the other hand, the working class, by the nature of its having to work together in modern factories, can more easily appreciate the need of organization.

We can see that the peasants by themselves cannot lead the revolution to ultimate victory. It also explains the failures of all the agrarian revolts in Chinese history.

We intellectuals of the petit-bourgeois class also cannot take the lead in revolution, as we stand in between the exploiters and the exploited. We have a desire to become exploiters and yet, to a certain extent, we are also exploited in a class society. This makes us waver in the fight against the exploiters. Our wavering can only be eliminated when we ally ourselves with the exploited.

The united front under the New Democracy is exhibited in the land reform movement. All the democratic parties and individuals are welcomed to participate in the teams of cadres. The fact that a number of Christians and Mohammedans took part in such teams in Shanghai's suburbs is another evidence that the united front does not exclude people of religious affiliations.

RELIGIONS RESPECTED

I sensed no discrimination myself and heard no disrespectful remarks about religion. The authorities make sure that the Christians could go to the cities for church services on Sundays and that the Mohammedans were served with orthodox food. I heard that some Mohammedans were unintentionally assigned to work in a village called Chu Hong (Pig Market). The authorities quickly realized their mistake and immediately reassigned the Mohammedans to another village. At this new place, the other comrades refrained from eating pork for a couple of months.

NO HASTY DECISION

All the land reform cadres were trained to act with caution and avoid making hasty judgment. If there is anything in doubt, it is discussed in many meetings, and, if necessary, finally referred to higher authorities for approval. Then the people often submit their opinions and criticisms directly to the authorities and these are usually taken into serious consideration. The teams also hold frequent meetings of "criticism and self-criticism" to expose and correct mistakes among the cadres.

We were also trained to put the interests of the people uppermost in our hearts. I shall never forget our experience during the typhoon in the latter part of August. Most of the fields were flooded and a number of the huts were blown down. For two or three nights, all our comrades were on duty and did not go to bed. We went out to help the peasants to move into safer quarters despite the terrific rainstorm. The country police did the same. It made me think of how in former days the KMT officials would have kept themselves behind closed doors and played mahjong. A government responsible to the people can be truly called a people's government.

I have come back with the conviction that land reform is just and necessary and that participation in land reform is a real education, and is of special value for intellectuals, as it enables them to get rid of many erroneous concepts and gives them an entirely new perspective on this fundamental development in new China.