

· Document 5 ·

Chairman Mao's words at the Shanghai Conference, March 25, 1959

TOP SECRET

The following document is to be handed out only to comrades attending the meeting and must be returned after the meeting.

[Comments] during Comrade Li Xiannian's⁷ report on the current trade and financial situation, as well as further suggestions.

[Li]: [. . .] The amount of agricultural products procured over the past few months has been rather disappointing.

[Mao]: It's more than just disappointing. In some aspects it's terrible. In some areas the problem is very serious.

[Li]: [. . .] Throughout the country, the grain procurement quotas have not been uniformly accomplished.

[Mao]: Let's publish the results showing who have fulfilled their quotas and who have not. We have got to be relentless. This will mean being precise and accurate; it can't be seen as being vicious. [. . .]

[Li]: [. . .] Many parts of the country have failed to allocate and transfer [agricultural products] effectively.

[Mao]: Announce their names and shame them.

[Li]: [. . .] Many major oil production areas have failed to achieve their procurement quotas.

[Mao]: Which are these areas? How come their names are not listed here? Afraid of losing votes?

[Li]: [. . .] It's essential to collect at least 15 billion kg of oil.

[Mao]: Before the end of this conference, let's make a pact with each province and decide how much oil they must hand in within the next three months.

[Li]: [. . .] Shandong, Hebei, and other regions have set a rule not to slaughter any pigs in the next three months, and residents living in cities must eat less pork so that more effort can be put into increasing productivity [in the countryside].

[Mao]: Excellent. Why doesn't the whole country follow their example? [. . .]

[Li]: [. . .] It is crucial for all Party members to put their efforts into achieving the [procurement] targets.

[Mao]: By this we mean provincial, regional, and county Party Committees. As long as the amount of grain being procured does not go above a third [of grain produced], peasants will not rebel.

[Li]: [. . .] Although the harvest was good throughout the country,

only Heilongjiang, Jilin, Henan, Hebei, Sichuan, Hunan, Shanghai, and Beijing have managed to seize the opportunity and succeed in grain collection. Each of these provinces “struck while the iron was hot” and paid close attention to [grain] procurement.

[Mao]: Why did the rest of the country fail? Every province must adopt Henan’s method: “He who strikes first prevails; he who strikes late fails.” This is a real lesson.

[Li]: [. . .] Our policy always puts the stress on procuring grain in good time. Let the prosperous regions support the less prosperous ones; each region should first eat what it has and leave the state granary as the last resort.

[Mao]: Let’s keep it that way for the next ten years. Even if we manage to solve the grain problem in ten years’ time, we should not disclose the news.

[Li]: [. . .] As for grain consumption, we should continue to be cautious, constantly “looking ahead and behind,” and economize at every stage to avoid going short. We should also continue the state monopoly over collecting and selling grain, taking one step at a time to slowly but steadily build up our grain reserves.

[Mao]: Excellent.

[Li]: [. . .] With regard to procuring local produce and waste—

[Mao interrupts]: There is no waste in the world. One man’s rubbish is another man’s food. [. . .]

[Li]: [. . .] Priority should be given to the domestic market and the export market should come second.

[Mao]: We should talk about this slogan. There are times when domestic trading should be subjugated to export needs. The export market is extremely important, and we mustn’t neglect it. We shouldn’t become too comfortable. We should eat and consume less. We should live frugally to guarantee the export market. We need to stress this. Some people don’t eat meat. Old Xu is a human being and he doesn’t eat meat, yet he has managed to live to eighty-three. Horses and cows don’t eat meat, but they are capable of plowing the fields. We should keep up with the spirit of Old Xu.⁸ [. . .]

In the course of Comrade Bo Yibo’s⁹ report on the implementation of the industrial development plan over the first quarter and arrangements for the second quarter, when [Bo] was talking about the arrangements for the second quarter.

[Mao]: It would be great if we could complete what’s on the list. Is this Marxism? If 90 percent [of targets listed] are accomplished, then it’s Marxism. [. . .]

When [Bo] suggested there were two ways to arrange production and construction over the second quarter:

[Mao]: [. . .] In the next three months we need to put our efforts into developing our industry. We must be forceful, relentless, and precise. Our leadership in charge of industry should act like the First Emperor of Qin.¹⁰

To distribute resources evenly will only ruin the Great Leap Forward. When there is not enough to eat, people starve to death. It is better to let half the people die so that the other half can eat their fill.

· Document 6 ·

A report on the criminal case of the counterrevolutionary Wu Xing and his followers in Encheng commune, to the Guangdong Provincial Party Committee, December 29, 1960

Wu Xing and some of his associates set up five illegal labor camps in 1958 using the commune and a need for deep plowing as an excuse. Under their evil influence, individual production brigades set up a further eighteen [illegal] labor centers. [. . .] Any cadres who were ill or happened to disagree with what Wu Xing and his group were doing were regarded as “right deviationists” and “lacking enthusiasm.” Any peasants who failed to turn up for work or showed discontent were labeled “stumbling blocks.” As a result, they were punished with hard labor.

It has been revealed to us that 605 cadres and ordinary people have been detained and sent to labor camps. [. . .] For example, Zhen Zifan, the Party secretary of Pingtang big brigade, could not go to work owing to severe tuberculosis, which caused him to spit blood. After learning this, the commune’s Party secretary Wu Qin not only refused to let Zhen have any treatment but even accused Zhen of “doing a bad job” and ordered him to be sent to the labor camp. For over ten months, from September of last year to July, Zhen was forced to do hard labor. [. . .]

In the first lunar month of this year, Wu Qin was staying at Jingjiang big brigade. At that time, peasants were collecting soil from the pond to make fertilizer. It was already 9 p.m., and as the weather was cold, many requested a stop to the work. Wu Qin reported this to Wu Xing. [. . .] Wu Xing then ordered the head of the militia to go to Jinjiang brigade, along with the cadre in charge of security for that brigade and another 120 militiamen. They surrounded the three villages and