

**DECISIONS ON MUTUAL AID AND CO-OPERATION
IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION ADOPTED
BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE
COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA**

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I

FOLLOWING the land reform, peasants show their enthusiasm for production in two ways: in the fields of individual economy, and mutual aid and co-operation. The peasants' enthusiasm for production in both fields is one of the basic factors in the speedy recovery and development of the national economy and the promotion of the country's industrialisation. Therefore, the Party's correct leadership in rural production is of very great significance.

II

AFTER liberation, the peasants' enthusiasm for production in the field of individual economy was inevitable. The Party fully understands this characteristic of the peasants as small owners and points out that we must not ignore or try forcibly to frustrate the peasants' enthusiasm for production in this field. In this respect, the Party persists in the policy of firmly uniting with the middle peasant. The rich-peasant economy is allowed to develop. In accordance with our country's present economic conditions, the peasants' individual economy will exist to a very large extent and for a considerable length of time. As the Common Programme adopted by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference points out: "All sectors of the social economy can, under the leadership of the state-owned economy, carry out division and co-ordination of labour and play their proper parts in promoting the development of the social economy as a whole," among which sectors is included "the individual economy of peasants and handicraftsmen." In addition to the above, the Common Programme has the following provisions:

On December 15, 1951 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China circulated these Decisions in draft form to Party branches at all levels to be experimentally carried out. On February 15, 1953, the Decisions were partly amended and officially adopted by the Central Committee, and published recently in the *People's Daily*.

In all areas where agrarian reform has been carried out, the ownership of the land acquired by the peasants shall be protected.

III

BUT the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China has always felt that in order to overcome the various difficulties which arise from small farming, to enable the broad masses of impoverished peasants to increase production and march on the road to prosperity rapidly, to bring to the state more commodity grain and other raw materials for industry than at present and thereby to increase the purchasing power of the peasants and create a wide market for the industrial products of the nation, the principle of "get organised" must be advocated and the peasants' enthusiasm for co-operation and mutual aid encouraged on the basis of voluntariness and mutual benefit. Co-operation and mutual aid at present means collective labour practised on the basis of an individual economy (private ownership of property by peasants); its future is collective and socialist farming. Past facts have proved the complete correctness of this policy of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. On the basis of the long experience of the people's liberated areas and the policy of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, it is also correctly stipulated in the Common Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference that:

In all areas where agrarian reform has been thoroughly carried out, it shall be the central task of the People's Government to organise the peasants and all manpower available for agriculture, for the development of agricultural production and side occupations. The People's Government shall also guide the peasants step by step in the organisation of various forms of mutual aid in labour and co-operation in production according to the voluntary principle and the principle of mutual benefit.

It is clear that the policy of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and that

prescribed in the Common Programme have educated the broad peasant masses and enabled them gradually to understand the vast superiority of mutual aid in labour and co-operation in production over the isolated individual economy, and have inspired them to take the road from individual economy to collective economy.

IV

THE peasants' mutual-aid and co-operative movement has followed different roads and taken different forms according to local economic developments and the demands of production. However, it may roughly be classified into three main types. The first type is the simple mutual-aid team. It is the simplest, and is mainly temporary and seasonal. It has been most widely adopted in the old liberated areas right from the beginning to the present time. This type of mutual aid tallies with the conventional mutual-aid practices of the peasants in newly liberated areas and can be widely developed. However, it is generally carried out on a small scale. With rare exceptions, it is desirable for this type of mutual-aid team to be organised on a small scale.

The second type is the year-round mutual-aid team, a form more advanced than the first. Some teams of this type have begun to combine mutual aid in agriculture with that in rural subsidiary occupations. They have adopted some simple production plans and will gradually combine mutual aid in labour with technical improvements and with a certain degree of division of labour. Some have gradually accumulated a certain amount of common property, such as farm implements and cattle. Mutual-aid teams of this type are not yet numerous. However, in areas where the simple mutual-aid teams are successful, that is, where the broad masses of the peasants have organised to overcome difficulties and have had some success in increasing their output and improving their living standards, the year-round mutual-aid team represents the demand of many peasants, and such teams are therefore increasing year by year. Membership of the above-mentioned two types of mutual-aid team has reached to 60 per cent of the peasants in North China and 70 per cent in Northeast China.

The agricultural producers' co-operative is the third type, its special characteristic is that the peasants join the co-operative with their land as shares. Such co-operatives thus earn the name of land co-operatives. This type includes some of the main characteristics of the second type. These are the combination of agriculture with subsidiary occupations, a certain amount of planning in production, division of labour, ownership of more or less improved

farm implements for common use and other forms of common property, etc., as described above. But these characteristics are more strongly marked than those of the second type. The joint use of some improved and new-type farm implements, the division of labour and assignment of specialised occupations to some extent, the building of irrigation projects and reclamation of wasteland have led to the demand for the unified employment of the land for production. This kind of agricultural producers' co-operative is nevertheless built on the basis of the private ownership of land. The peasants may join it with their land as shares on the principle of voluntariness and mutual benefit. They may likewise withdraw from it if they want to. So far as production is concerned, the agricultural producers' co-operative can, on the one hand, make use of the land according to a unified plan and plant such crops as suit the quality of the soil and promise the best yield. Or, on the other hand, it can make better use of the labour power of its members, who work either full-time or half-time, by carrying out the division of work so as to promote labour enthusiasm. These two advantages will gradually bring about the elimination of some of the weak points of a small-peasant economy. The land or the subsidiary occupations managed by this third type of agricultural co-operative can generally yield a much larger crop or income than the ordinary, provided that the society is organised according to the voluntariness of the masses and that the management of the society is reasonable. In general, this kind of agricultural co-operative which the peasants join with their land as shares can only be organised on the basis of a successful mutual-aid movement and is at present an advanced form of the agricultural mutual-aid movement. Today, co-operatives of this kind can only be found in a few districts and in small numbers. However, in North China and Northeast China, there are over 300 such co-operatives and their number is increasing.

The above-mentioned three forms of organisation in various places do not necessarily have distinct lines of demarcation, nor are they developing evenly from one stage to another. There are some special cases where the peasants pool their land as shares shortly after they have been organised. As the local conditions are different, so the masses organise different co-operatives with some or all of the characteristics of the above-mentioned three types. The development of the co-operative movement within different localities also varies greatly. Generally speaking, the mutual-aid movement is advancing on a definite and winding road. It would, of course, be wrong, and will certainly do harm to the development of the mutual-aid and co-operative movement, if attempts are made to apply abstract formulas

mechanically, regardless of the conditions and actual experience of the masses.

In accordance with the general law of the development of the movement and with the necessity of developing agricultural production, the Party's policy concerning the development of the mutual-aid and co-operative movement at the present period shall cover the following three aspects:—

1. Large-scale and guided development of the first form of mutual-aid and co-operative movement, i.e., temporary, seasonal and simple mutual aid throughout the country, especially in the newly liberated areas and those where the mutual-aid movement is still weak. It is wrong to belittle this elementary form of mutual aid, which has the possibility of being accepted at the present time by the broad masses of the peasants, or to assume a passive attitude towards guiding its promotion on the ground that such temporary, seasonal exchange of labour cannot be regarded as mutual aid and that only year-round mutual-aid teams can be regarded as such.

2. Guided and systematic promotion of the second form, i.e., year-round mutual-aid teams, richer in content than simple mutual aid, in areas where the mutual-aid movement has gained a basic foundation. It is also wrong to continue to be satisfied for too long with temporary, seasonal mutual aid instead of striving for its further consolidation and evolution so as to enable the peasants to win greater benefits through year-round mutual aid.

3. Guided development on a selected basis of the third form, i.e., agricultural producers' co-operatives with land as shares, in areas where the masses have accumulated relatively rich experiences in mutual aid and where comparatively strong leading activists have emerged. It is of course wrong to adopt a formalistic and adventurist working style, that is, to be too ambitious to proceed with the third form simply by command from above, without taking into account the peasants' needs in production, the foundations of the mutual-aid movement, the leading activists, the peasants' enthusiasm, their readiness or other conditions.

The policy of the Central Committee of the Party is a policy of steady advance based upon the requirements and possibilities of the development of production and determined by existing conditions. Party branches in the various rural areas should, in accordance with the policy of the Party's Central Committee, educate their members actively to join the various types of mutual aid and agricultural producers' co-operatives.

V

IN relation to the problems of mutual aid and co-operation in agricultural production, there are two main kinds of erroneous tendencies. First, there is a passive attitude towards the mutual-aid and co-operative movement resulting from a failure to understand that such a movement is an inevitable road for the broad masses of peasants to follow, under the guidance of our Party, in their gradual advance from a collective economy characterised by the large-scale employment of machinery in ploughing and harvesting. Those who take such an attitude deny that the various kinds of agricultural producers' co-operatives already in existence are a transitional form leading to the socialisation of agriculture, and that these agricultural producers' co-operatives possess any elements of Socialism. This is an expression of the Right erroneous ideology.

The second tendency is the idea that we can today build Socialism in its fullest sense in the rural areas at one stroke. Hence the impetuous attitude which prematurely and inappropriately seeks to deny or to impose restrictions on the private ownership of property by the peasants who have joined the agricultural producers' co-operatives, or to enforce absolute equalitarianism among the members of mutual-aid teams and agricultural producers co-operatives, or hastily to organise socialist collective farms of a still higher level without considering such prerequisites as the voluntariness of the peasants or economic preparations. This is an expression of the "Left" erroneous ideology.

These two kinds of erroneous ideological tendencies have been criticised by the Central Committee of the Party, which holds that the mutual-aid organisations of the labouring peasantry and the various forms of agricultural producers' co-operatives which have been developed on the basis of the mutual-aid movement are of paramount, positive significance. The Central Committee has made an evaluation of the dual character of these mutual-aid organisations and agricultural producers' co-operatives, namely, the character of private ownership and the character of co-operation. Despite the fact that its members have full private ownership of their respective means of production, the temporary mutual-aid team has the characteristic of collective labour, and this is Socialism in embryo. This embryo of Socialism is further developed in the year-round mutual-aid team. The agricultural producers' co-operative retains the character of private ownership in that it is organised on the basis of private ownership and that the peasants have private ownership of land and other means of production, receive a

share of the output according to the amount of land invested and are reasonably paid according to the implements and draft animals pooled. It possesses more socialist elements, however, than the year-round mutual-aid team inasmuch as it includes unified utilisation of the land, rational employment of implements, collective labour, payment according to the number of workdays contributed, distribution of bonus according to the amount of labour pooled, and has certain items of property under collective ownership. This dual character indicates that although the existing agricultural producers' co-operative is a higher form of the mutual-aid movement in the present transitional period, yet compared with the socialist collective farm in its fullest sense, i.e., the agricultural producers' co-operative of a higher level, it is a relatively lower form and therefore only a transitional form leading to socialist agriculture. This transitional form leading to Socialism is, nevertheless, precisely the form which is full of vitality and has a promising future. The correctness of the Party's policy lies in the right evaluation of the above-mentioned dual character of the various kinds of organisation in agricultural production and the prudent and active guidance of their advance on the basis of gradual development. Neglect of either aspect of this dual character will give rise to errors in our work. For instance, the Right tendency, namely, neglect of the latter aspect of this dual character, is bound to result in "tailism," which lags behind realities, while the "Left" tendency, of failing to understand the former aspect, will certainly lead to adventurism, which runs ahead of the possibilities of existing conditions.

VI

EXPERIENCE gained in the past shows that in the mutual-aid and co-operative movement in agricultural production, both compulsion and command and laissez-faire practices in the method of leadership are erroneous. Apart from violating the principles of voluntariness and mutual benefit, the method of compulsion and command is liable to harm the policy of uniting with the middle peasants, and it cannot help to consolidate the gains of the movement even if the movement is temporarily flourishing. Laissez-faire practices, besides causing a gradual decline and disintegration in the mutual-aid and co-operative movement, will nurse the growth of capitalist tendencies within the mutual-aid teams and agricultural producers' co-operatives, thereby aggravating the production difficulties of the needy peasants and compelling more and more of them to sell their land. This is of course very harmful, because instead of helping to raise the economic

status of the former land-poor and hired peasants, it will help the development of the rich-peasant economy.

In areas where the mutual-aid movement is beginning to develop, the errors committed are mainly of the first kind, while they are mainly of the second kind in areas where agricultural production has developed on a relatively large scale, where the middle peasants have become the majority of the local population and where there is the need to continuously foster the mutual-aid movement. Comrades in some localities committed the error of compulsion and command at the beginning, as in the case of the "compulsory organisation of teams," "overall organisation of teams," "organisation of large-scale labour-exchange teams," seeking blindly after "higher forms," etc. These comrades, however, went to the other extreme, i.e., laissez-faire, once they met with difficulties. And after criticism and rectification of this laissez-faire tendency, they tended to fall victim to impetuous adventurism again. Therefore, we must pay constant attention to correcting and preventing these two erroneous methods of leadership and master the art of correct leadership. The correct method of leadership is, first and foremost, the method of creating model examples and popularising them step by step; in general it is the method of expanding from the small to the large, increasing from the few to the many and developing from a lower to a higher level. Secondly, in the course of work everywhere, we must study the experiences and collect the opinions of the masses, we must educate them and develop all that is correct while avoiding any repetition of what is wrong. Thirdly, in dealing with any of the problems existing within the mutual-aid and agricultural producers' co-operatives, two principles must be absolutely observed, i.e., the principles of voluntariness and mutual benefit.

VII

THERE are many ways to set up model examples. But whatever is done must be aimed at really raising productivity so as to produce more grain or other crops and to increase incomes. Only under the call to produce more grain and to increase incomes can the peasants be mobilised to organise themselves. And it is only by really achieving these aims that agricultural mutual-aid teams and agricultural producers' co-operatives can be said to truly serve the peasants and hence be welcomed by them, thus consolidating them and making their influence felt by the peasants far and near, who will then begin to organise themselves. The criterion of the work of mutual-aid teams and agricultural pro-

ducers' co-operatives is, therefore, whether they have raised productivity, produced more grain or other crops than individual farmers and increased the income of their members. If this does not appear to be happening, then thorough investigations must be made, so as to eliminate all the defects or errors.

VIII

ACCORDING to materials collected from various places, the following are the important and key problems arising from within the agricultural mutual-aid teams and agricultural producers' co-operatives, which have an important bearing on their consolidation and development, and demand our close attention:

1. Agricultural production must be earnestly and carefully carried out. Every form of work in the village centres round agricultural production and serves its interests. Thus agricultural production has priority over all other kinds of work. Activities and working methods, whatever they may be, that hamper agricultural production must be avoided.

2. Intensive cultivation, water conservancy and soil amelioration should be carried out. Wherever possible, dry land should be converted into irrigated land. The planting of various kinds of crops and the improvement of seeds should be undertaken systematically.

3. Under conditions compatible with local needs, mutual aid should be applied to the joint development of agriculture and subsidiary occupations such as handicrafts, processing industries, transport enterprises, animal husbandry, forestry, horticulture, fishery, etc. In accordance with the requirements of agriculture and the special ability of each individual, a rational division of labour and assignment of specialised occupations should be carried out. Women and part-time labourers should also be organised so as to make everyone contribute his or her share of work. Under the present conditions in the villages, however, the division of labour and the assignment of specialised occupations should be done with some flexibility, strict rigidity being quite impracticable.

4. To meet the requirements of expanded production, new capital may be raised through democratic consultation and with the entirely voluntary participation of the members so as to purchase additional communally-owned means of production and draught animals. At present, certain year-round mutual-aid teams and agricultural producers' co-operatives adopt the method of accumulating reserve funds as well as public welfare funds, which are used respectively as the material basis for expanding pro-

duction and for giving aid to the victims of natural calamities. This method is feasible if it comes from full voluntariness of the masses. But it is not advisable in cases where the masses are still reluctant. At present, the amount of reserve funds and public welfare funds should never be too large a percentage of the annual income of the mutual-aid teams or agricultural producers' co-operatives. Generally speaking, 1-5 per cent would be a comparatively reasonable amount; during the period of a poor harvest, however, the accumulation of reserve funds may be discontinued. Members withdrawing from a mutual-aid team or from a co-operative are entitled to withdraw their investments in capital and reserve funds. But if a member of a producers' co-operative who bought his shares with land wants to withdraw, it is better that he does so only after the year's crops have been harvested. In case a co-operative has spent large sums of money in improving the soil or in constructing irrigation facilities on the land of a member who now wants to withdraw, then the said member should pay a reasonable sum to the co-operative to compensate for the loss.

5. In the agricultural producers' co-operatives with land as shares, the distribution of harvested crops to members according to their shares of land and the amount of labour expended should not be too rigidly fixed in the beginning, but should be based on the voluntariness of the members, giving due consideration to the local conditions of economic development to ensure that members with more labour power but less land and members with more land but less labour power should all receive reasonable profits. However, in the course of the development of production and the amelioration of land as a result of the efforts made by the members, the distribution of earnings may be adjusted gradually according to the level of political consciousness of the members themselves and the increase of their income, so that it may be more equitable and also acceptable to all concerned.

6. On the question of fair or mutually beneficial exchange, it is necessary, on the one hand, to oppose any method which fails to settle accounts and to calculate the exchange of human labour and draught-animal labour on the principle of equal value; and on the other hand, to oppose all mechanical, complicated and formalistic methods of settling accounts. Due attention should be given to the various forms of mutual benefits in actual life and in practice, and also to simple and easily carried out methods of settling accounts familiar to the peasants.

7. Simple and easily carried out systems of management and labour discipline should be established.

8. Members' representative conferences, group and family meetings which are easy for the masses to arrange, and of no fixed form, should be held at regular intervals and as required; these should discuss, examine and improve production plans, tackle the problems which crop up in the process of production, the problems of mutual benefit, the problems of mutual care and assistance in the event of natural calamities or other adversity, and practise such criticism and self-criticism as are necessary, etc.

9. Campaigns should be promoted for the mutual learning and teaching of new and old production methods. What is useful and rational in the old methods and experience should be popularised and raised to a higher level so as to gradually combine them with new techniques for steady improvement of farming technique.

10. Patriotic emulation for a high crop yield should be promoted between teams and co-operatives and among the members themselves. It is necessary to make a call for patriotism in the villages so that the peasants' production will be brought into line with the needs of the country. It is wrong to raise the slogan "develop the family and get rich" by itself; it is equally wrong not to link the call for patriotism with the betterment of the life of the peasants.

11. Activists and skilled workers should be educated and given appropriate encouragement; production group leaders should be given training. Members of the Communist Party and the Youth League must act in accordance with the principles of mutual aid and co-operation, take an active part in production and observe discipline. They should set an example to all peasants, but should not attempt to make undue profits in the mutual-aid teams and co-operatives.

12. The exploitation of hired labour (exploitation by rich peasants) should not be permitted in agricultural mutual-aid teams and co-operatives. Members of mutual-aid teams and producers' co-operatives are not permitted to hire farm labourers to work as their substitutes in these organisations. Nor are mutual-aid teams and co-operatives allowed to hire regular farmhands to till the land. If such a situation already exists, the members of the teams and co-operatives should hold meetings to discuss the matter and take steps to rectify it. The mutual-aid teams and producers' co-operatives can, however, hire farmhands, herdsmen or technicians for a limited period if the needs of production require.

13. The Party should strengthen its political work within the mutual-aid teams and the agricultural producers' co-operatives, establish a system of

regular political and cultural education, raise the political consciousness of the masses and stimulate their enthusiasm for production.

The Central Committee of the Party has repeatedly pointed out that in introducing concrete measures for the solution of the problems of the mutual-aid teams and producers' co-operatives, or in formulating practical systems of work for them, allowances should be made for differences not only between different regions but in different *hsiang* and villages and even between different mutual-aid teams and co-operatives in the same *hsiang* or village. The measures should, therefore, be flexible, and should allow for gradual improvement; hard and fast decisions simply for the sake of uniformity should not be made.

IX

SUPPLY and marketing co-operatives should make contracts for sale, purchases and loans with the agricultural mutual-aid teams and producers' co-operatives and should help them to overcome production difficulties (e.g., shortage of capital) or exchange difficulties (e.g., distance from the market), aiming at a full and reliable co-ordination of potential agricultural production and its subsidiary occupations with the trading potentialities of the domestic and foreign markets.

X

THE Party and the People's Government should adopt the following measures so as to give effective help in the development of agricultural mutual-aid teams and agricultural producers' co-operatives:

First, state enterprises should conclude all possible economic contracts, either directly or through the supply and marketing co-operatives, with agricultural mutual-aid teams and agricultural producers' co-operatives.

Secondly, peasants should be helped to organise themselves effectively by the loan of seeds, fertiliser and farm implements. Taking into consideration the needs of the state and the people, particular attention should be paid to assisting the peasants in certain areas to form mutual-aid teams and producers' co-operatives for such industrial crops as cotton, hemp, groundnuts, tobacco, etc.; to forming producers' co-operatives for various kinds of subsidiary occupations and handicraft; to forming mutual-aid teams and co-operatives for the rehabilitation of water conservancy, repairs to sandbanks, afforestation, and the handling of marine products, and animal hus-

bandry etc. Among the above-mentioned, it is especially important to organise the cotton-growers into mutual-aid teams and co-operatives.

Thirdly, as a result of the development of mutual-aid teams and agricultural producers' co-operatives, a vast amount of labour power has been saved. Great care should be taken in the present conditions to employ this surplus labour power in improving the soil and developing all possible forms of the local rural economy, gradually absorbing numbers of people in a planned way into the factories and mines according to the needs of industrial development. To make fuller use of the existing rural labour power, the people's governments of all levels should gradually introduce, in co-ordination with the national economic development plan, useful and feasible public undertakings such as state-operated workshops (for manufacturing farm implements, chemical fertilisers, medicines and so forth) and state-operated processing industries, large-scale afforestation schemes, water conservancy, road building, etc.

Fourthly, the people's governments and the Party committees of all levels above the county level should appoint persons or set up proper organisations to maintain close contact with the financial and economic organisations and the supply and marketing co-operatives at various levels; to study the situation in the agricultural mutual-aid teams and agricultural producers' co-operatives with relation to their organisation, production plans, supply, transport and sales; to give them timely guidance; and to set up necessary classes for training their cadres.

XI

STATE farms should be popularised. Apart from setting up a number of mechanised and semi-mechanised state farms according to plan, each county should establish at least one or two experimental state farms to demonstrate, by improved farming technique and use of new-type farm implements, the superiority of such modernised farms in order to educate all the peasants. At the same time, agricultural mutual-aid teams and agricultural producers' co-operatives should be given technical help and guidance where possible. With the full consent of the peasants, collective farms of

a socialist nature may also be tentatively set up in places which have appropriate economic conditions. For instance, each province may have one or more such collective farms so as to obtain experience and set an example for the peasants.

XII

A REPRESENTATIVE conference of agricultural mutual-aid teams and agricultural producers' co-operatives at district or county level may take place before the spring ploughing and after the autumn harvest every year. A work conference on a provincial or national scale may be convened once every year in which appropriate cadres will take part.

XIII

FOLLOWING the solution of many problems concerning agricultural mutual aid and co-operation, the Central Committee of the Communist Party considers it necessary once again to draw the attention of the Party committees of all levels, of all comrades who are working in the countryside and of non-Party activists, to the need for care, assistance and the patient education of the individual peasants with enthusiasm and sincerity. They must remember that individual farming is lawful (as stipulated in the Common Programme and Land Reform Law). They must refrain from scoffing at the individual peasants or calling them backward; furthermore, any attempts to frustrate them by means of intimidation or restrictions are forbidden. Agricultural loans shall be reasonably issued both to the mutual-aid and co-operative organisations and to the individual peasants. Such loans should not be given exclusively to the former while the individual peasants are refused them or given smaller amounts. Even in a village where the overwhelming majority of peasants have joined the mutual-aid teams or co-operatives and where only a very small minority of peasants remain individual farmers, the attitude of respecting and uniting such a minority should be adopted. We must realise that our present concern for and proper care of the individual peasants will make it possible for them gradually to join the mutual-aid and co-operative organisations in the future and will also make it possible for us to reach our ultimate goal in the countryside—leading the whole peasantry to Socialism and Communism.