

Suppression of the Reactionaries and Land Reform

In March 1950, the CCP announced “Orders to Strictly Suppress Reactionary Elements,” which is historically known as the movement of “suppression of the reactionaries.”

Unlike all the emperors who granted amnesty to the entire country after they were crowned, the CCP started killing the minute it gained power. Mao Zedong said in a document, “There are still many places where people are intimidated and dare not kill the reactionaries openly in a large scale [8].” In February 1951, the central CCP said that except for Zhejiang province and southern Anhui province, “other areas which are not killing enough, especially in the large and mid-sized cities, should continue to arrest and kill a large number and should not stop too soon.” Mao even recommended that “in rural areas, to kill the reactionaries, there should be over 1/1000 of the total population killed...in the cities, it should be less than 1/1000. [9]” The population of China at that time was approximately 600 million; this “royal order” from Mao would have caused at least 600,000 deaths. Nobody knows where this ratio of 1/1000 came from. Perhaps on a whim, Mao decided these 600,000 lives should be enough to lay the foundation for creating fear among the people, and thus ordered it to happen.

Whether those killed deserved to die was not the CCP’s concern. “The People’s Republic of China Regulations for Punishing the Reactionaries,” announced in 1951 even said that those who “spread rumors” can be “immediately executed.”

While the suppression of reactionaries was being hotly implemented, land reform was also taking place on a large scale. In fact, the CCP had already started land reform within its occupied areas in the late 1920s. On the surface, land reform appeared to advocate an ideal similar to that of the Heavenly Kingdom of Taiping [10], namely, all would have land to farm, but it was really just an excuse to kill. Tao Zhu, who ranked 4th in the CCP afterwards, had a slogan for land reform: “Every village bleeds, every household fights,” indicating that in every village the landowners must die.

Land reform could have been achieved without killing. It could have been done in the same way as the Taiwanese government implemented its land reform by purchasing the property from the landowners. However, as the CCP originated in a group of thugs and lumpen proletariat, it only knew how to rob. Fearing it might suffer revenge after robbing, the CCP naturally needed to kill the victims, stamping out the source of trouble.

The most common way to kill during the land reform was known as the “struggle meeting.” The CCP fabricat-

ed crimes and charged the landowners or rich farmers. The public was asked how they should be punished. Some CCP members or activists were already planted in the crowd to shout “We should kill them!” and the landowners and rich peasants were then executed on the spot. At that time, whoever owned land in the villages was classified as a “bully.” Those who often took advantage of the peasants were called “mean bullies;” those who often helped with repairing public facilities and donated money to schools and for natural disaster relief were called “kind bullies;” and those who did nothing were called “still or silent bullies.” A classification like this was meaningless, because all the “bullies” ended up being executed right away regardless of what “bully” category they belonged to.

By the end of 1952, the CCP-published number of the executed “reactionary elements” was about 2.4 million. Actually, the total death toll of former KMT government officials below the county level and landowners was at least 5 million.

The suppression of the reactionaries and land reform had three direct results. First, former local officials who had been selected through clan-based autonomy were eliminated. Through suppressing the reactionaries and land reform, the CCP killed all the management personnel in the previous system and realized complete control of rural areas by installing a Party branch in each village. Second, a huge amount of wealth was obtained by stealing and robbing during the land reform and suppression of reactionaries. Third, civilians were terrorized by the brutal suppression against the landowners and rich farmers.

The “Three Anti Campaign” and “Five Anti Campaign”

The suppression of reactionaries and the land reform mainly targeted the countryside, while the subsequent “Three Anti Campaign” and “Five Anti Campaign” could be regarded as the corresponding genocide in cities.

The “Three Anti Campaign” began in December 1951 and targeted corruption, waste and bureaucracy among the CCP cadres. Some corrupt CCP officials were executed. Soon afterwards, the CCP attributed the corruption of its government officials to the temptation by capitalists. Accordingly, the “Five Anti Campaign” against bribery, tax evasion, theft of state property, jerry-building, and espionage of state economic information was launched in January 1952.

The “Five Anti Campaign” was essentially stealing capitalists’ property or rather murdering the capitalists for their money. Chen Yi, the mayor of Shanghai at that time, was debriefed on the sofa with a cup of tea in hand every night. He would ask leisurely, “How many paratroopers are there today?” meaning, “How many busi-

nessmen jumped out of high buildings to commit suicide?” None of the capitalists could escape the “Five Anti Campaign.” They were required to pay taxes “evaded” as early as the Guangxu Period (1875-1908) in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) when the Shanghai commercial market was initially established. The capitalists could not possibly afford to pay such “taxes” even with all their fortunes. They had no other choice but to end their lives, but they didn’t dare to jump into the Huangpu River. If their bodies could not be found, the CCP would accuse them of fleeing to Hong Kong, and their family members would still be held responsible for the taxes. The capitalists instead jumped from tall buildings, leaving a corpse so that the CCP could see proof of their death. It was said that people didn’t dare to walk next to tall buildings in Shanghai at that time in fear of being crushed by people jumping from above.

According to Facts of the Political Campaigns after the Founding of the People’s Republic of China co-edited by four government units including the CCP History Research Center in 1996, during the “Three Anti Campaign” and “Five Anti Campaign,” more than 323,100 people were arrested and over 280 committed suicide or disappeared. In the “Anti-Hu Fang campaign” in 1955, over 5000 were incriminated, over 500 were arrested, over 60 committed suicide, and 12 died from unnatural causes. In the subsequent suppression of the reactionaries, over 21,300 people were executed, and over 4,300 committed suicide or disappeared [11].

The Great Famine

The highest death toll was recorded during China’s Great Famine shortly after the Great Leap Forward. [12] The article “Great Famine” in the book Historical Records of the People’s Republic of China states, “The number of unnatural deaths and reduced births from 1959 to 1961 is estimated at about 40 million...China’s depopulation by 40 million is likely to be the world’s greatest famine in this century.” [13]

The Great Famine was falsely labeled a “Three-Year Natural Disaster” by the CCP. In fact, those three years had favorable weather conditions without any massive natural disasters like flooding, drought, hurricane, tsunami, earthquake, frost, freeze, hail or plague of locusts. The “disaster” was entirely caused by man. The Great Leap Forward campaign required everyone in China to become involved in steel-making, forcing farmers to leave their crops to rot in the field. Despite this, officials in every region escalated their claims on production yields. He Yiran, the First Secretary of the Party Committee of Liuzhou Prefecture, fabricated all by himself the shocking yield of “65,000 kilograms of paddy rice per mu [14]” in Huan-

jiang County. This was right after the Lushan Plenum when the CCP’s anti-rightist movement spread out to the entire country. In order to demonstrate that the CCP was correct all the time, the crops were expropriated by the government as a form of taxation according to these exaggerated yields. Consequently, the grain rations, seeds and staple foods of the peasants were all confiscated. When the demand still could not be met, the peasants were accused of hiding their crops.

He Yiran once said that they must strive to get first place in the competition for highest yield no matter how many people in Liuzhou would die. Some peasants were deprived of everything, with only some handfuls of rice left hidden in the urine basin. The Party Committee of Xunle District, Huanjiang County even issued an order to forbid cooking, preventing the peasants from eating the crops. Patrols were conducted by militiamen at night. If they saw light from a fire, they would proceed with a search and raid. Many peasants did not even dare to cook edible wild herbs or bark, and died of starvation.

Historically, in times of famine, the government would provide rice porridge, distribute the crops and allow victims to flee from the famine. The CCP, however, regarded fleeing from the famine as a disgrace to the Party’s prestige, and ordered militiamen to block roadways to prevent victims from escaping the famine. When the peasants were so hungry as to snatch cereals from the grain depots, the CCP ordered shooting at the crowd to suppress the looting and labeled those killed as counter-revolutionary elements. A great number of peasants were starved to death in many provinces including Gansu, Shandong, Henan, Anhui, Hubei, Hunan, Sichuan and Guangxi provinces. Still, the hungry peasants were forced to take part in irrigation work, dam construction, and steel-making. Many dropped to the ground while working and never got up again. At the end, those who survived had no strength to bury the dead. Many villages died out completely as families starved to death one after another.

In the most serious famines in China’s history prior to the CCP, there were cases in which families exchanged one another’s children to eat, but nobody ever ate his own children. Under the CCP’s reign, however, people were driven to eat those who died, cannibalize those who fled from other regions, and even kill and eat their own children. The writer Sha Qing depicted this scene in his book *Yi Xi Da Di Wan* (An Obscure Land of Bayou): In a peasant’s family, a father was left with only his son and daughter during the Great Famine. One day, the daughter was driven out of the house by her father. When she came back, she could not find her younger brother, but saw white oil floating in the cauldron and a