

# 杨奎松：毛泽东是如何发现大饥荒的？ Yang Kuisong: How Did Mao Zedong Find Out About the Great Famine?

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FN 015 – Yang Kuisong on how Mao Discovered the Great Famine

进入专题：“大跃进” 饥荒

**杨奎松** (进入专栏)

1958年，工农业生产“大跃进”运动轰轰烈烈进行了一年时间，紧接着就爆发了中华人民共和国历史上最惨重的三年大饥荒，造成了全国范围内极其严重的非正常死亡现象。

对于这种情况的发生，无论是地方领导人还是中共中央，直至毛泽东，明显都缺少思想准备。最初发现后，都把它看成是像往年一样的春荒、夏荒，完全不曾意识到，高级社全面推行之后高度集体化的结果，农民不仅再也没有过去那种抵御灾荒的能力，而且干部为应对上级要求的浮夸虚报和强制性地地进行公共积累，还会人为造成农民口粮的严重匮乏，导致大规模饿死人现象的发生。事实上，还在1955、1956年，这种情况就已经开始出现了，中共中央对大量饿死人的事件也高度重视，并曾严加惩戒。然而，由于这种处置只是就事论事，几乎没有产生效果。

中央为何处分广西省委？

在中华人民共和国历史上，中共中央最早因饿死人事件处分省级领导人，发生在1957年。当年6月18日，《人民日报》和《广西日报》首次公开发表了中共中央和国务院处分广西省、地、县一批主要领导人的决定。广西省委第一书记陈漫远，书记郝中士、萧一

舟，以及中共平乐地委书记、副书记，中共平乐、荔浦、横县县委书记、副书记等十余人被罢免了党政职务，有些还受到留党察看的处分。决定说明，公开处分陈漫远等人的原因，是因为他们对广西省 1955 年和 1956 年发生大批农民逃荒，甚至饿死，负有不可推卸的责任。决定指出，广西省早在 1955 年就已经发生过农民逃荒和饿死的现象，国务院当时即发出过指示，要求“必须加强生产救灾工作，对某些情节严重的失职干部，应该予以严肃处理。”然而，广西省、地、县各级负责人“仍然麻木不仁，不能从事实中吸取教训”。1956 年春荒再度到来，“广西省的领导干部由于在工作中严重地脱离群众，不了解下情，对灾情发展估计不足，因而没有领导有关部门正确地贯彻执行这一政策，及时地作好粮食调度供应工作”，终至“造成平乐、荔浦、横县等地区农民大批逃荒和死亡的严重事件”，“不仅造成了人民生命财产的损失，而且也严重地损害了人民政府在群众中的威信。”

当时公布的广西省 1956 年因缺粮饿死的农民的数字，是“550 多人，其中以平乐、荔浦和横县最多”。这个数字是否准确，尚有争议，但中共中央的处分，显然不止是针对 1956 年的问题，而是包含着对此前死人事件的追究问责。国务院的决定对此已经讲的再清楚不过了，邓小平对此也有很明白的说法，即中央最不满的，是“事件发生后，省委对有关失职人员一直拖着不处理，患得患失，你推我，我推你，不仅缺乏群众观念，连‘人民’两个字的观念也没有。”这里讲的广西省委拖着不处理的“事件”，也就是国务院处分决定中所说的情况，即对国务院要求严肃处理造成 1955 年饿死许多农民的失职干部的指示拖着不办，以至于 1956 年再度发生大批饿死人的情况。

那么，1955 年广西饿死了多少人呢？目前尚未见有可靠统计，但从广西一些县志的记载可以看得很清楚，1955 年饿死人的情况要比 1956 年严重得多。如中共中央指出的 1956 年死人最多的横县，在县志里就没有具体记述当年死人的情况，倒是特别强调了 1955 年的灾情，称光是该县南乡、飞龙两个乡，1955 年就有 2971 人因饥饿患了浮肿病，死亡 434 人。宾阳县志也没有记述 1956 年的死人情况，但却特别说明 1955 年因给农民留口粮偏低，以致该县因缺粮死亡 667 人。浦北县志也没有讲到 1956 年的灾情，但说明：1955 年“全县断粮者最多时达 226959 人”，“患营养不良性水肿病 10639 人”，死多少人没有写出来。

## 中国饥荒常态化的影响

中共中央处分广西省、地级负责干部的时间非常微妙。因为它恰好是在 1957 年春夏之交。中央派人前往广西调查其问题是在 1956 年底，也就是在整风运动刚开始发动之际。中央书记处第一次讨论中央监委的调查报告是 5 月 16 日，读过沈志华教授反右运动研究的人都清楚，当时毛泽东正在警觉当中，反右的决策还没做出来，社会上反官僚主义的整风运动正热气腾腾。而书记处第二次，即 5 月 20 日讨论对广西问题的处理决定时，毛泽东恰恰决定要发动反右了。在这个微妙时刻坚持自曝家丑，一方面固然与整风反官僚主义的初衷有关，一方面反映出中共高层对广西省地领导人的极度不满。只是，这主要不是因为死了多少人，而是因为广西当地负责干部隐瞒下情、无视中央指示的行为。

灾荒，乃至于饿死人，在中国近代农村司空见惯。即使中共建国之后，每年还是会遇到春荒或夏荒。尤其是 1953 年实行统购统销之后，农民口粮被政府严格控制在较低的水平上，一些地方的农民在青黄不接之际，因缺粮而逃荒甚至饿病的情况，时有发生。1954 年，因发生全国性的灾荒，就曾导致几千万农民缺粮、断粮，不少省份都发生了饿死人的现象。其他年份，因国家太大，所谓“插花”式的这里旱、那里涝，出现广西那样的局部饥荒，屡见不鲜。在此之前，中共中央还从未因为饿死人而处分过省、地中高级干部。这也就是说，仅仅是因为有农民饿死，中共中央一般并不会轻易惩处下面的干部。

比如，就在所谓大跃进的 1958 年春天，就发生了大面积的春荒，一度有 16 个省都出现了农村缺粮、断粮，农民逃荒、饿死的情况，仅毛泽东批示要求各地注意者就有三四次之多。

据 1958 年 4 月 25 日中共中央转报办公厅所得各地的消息称，安徽有 130 万人缺粮，流浪到外省的农民有几千人。河北 4 个专区农民外出讨饭的有几万人，已发现 12 人因饥饿难耐而自杀。山东全省有 67 万人断粮，逃荒要饭的有 15 万人之多。广西壮族自治区 29 个

县 965 个乡缺粮缺钱的困难户超过 120 万，占该地区总人口的 16.2%，已经断粮的就有 5.7 万人。广东省 50 个县、市统计，因春荒断粮的近百万人，已知饿死 7 人，因饿病水肿的 69 人，卖孩子的 10 人，讨饭的 66 人。

中央转发的这份简报中，有两点特别值得注意。一是它指出：出现这种情况的主要原因，不是因为无粮可供，“首先是因为灾区的领导干部对粮食情况不摸底，对形势估计不足，特别是有些干部怕犯右倾，见喊缺粮不相信，不积极采取措施。加上有些地区供应工作本来安排不当，闹粮情况发生后，又未迅速抓紧统销工作，对真正的缺粮未及时供应，致使闹粮面积扩大。”

把这一点和上述国务院批评广西省委的错误稍加对照即可看出，中共中央很清楚，这类问题的发生，多半都是因为许多中高层干部“在工作中严重地脱离群众，不了解下情，对灾情发展估计不足”，以至于明明有粮有钱，却不能防患未然，人为造成饥荒死人。

另一值得注意之点是，简报在行文中对缺粮、断粮强调不多，它更多使用的“闹粮”一词，并且把缺粮、断粮与“闹粮”相提并论。因为把缺粮、断粮与“闹粮”混为一谈，结果，即使发现一些地方干部存在着严重渎职的现象，也未必会引起高度重视。如简报中明确讲，甘肃全省 21 个县断粮，严重的如徽县，人们把鸡、狗、猫都吃光了，多数人只能以树皮草根充饥。该县有 2031 人患了浮肿病，其中一个合作社的死亡人数就占到发病人数的 15%，4 户人家死绝，全县因饥饿已死亡近 800 人。简报称，该县并非没有粮食可用来救急。县委因为不相信下面缺粮，把 2000 万斤销售粮和存粮“全部扣在县上不下发，这些粮食可供应两个半月”。正是由于把徽县县委的此种严重渎职行为视为判断错误，简报不仅没有要求惩处该县县委，而且还特别表扬了甘肃省委，说甘肃提出的“‘全党动员，苦战三昼夜’，尽速解决问题”，是一种极好的态度。

当然，还有另一种看法也不能不提到。即主管经济工作的负责人多半认为，这主要还是全国范围粮食生产不足造成的。如谭震林在回复毛泽东 5 月 24 日询问山东农民缺粮情况的一个批示时就这样写道：

“山东省每人（年）平均口粮 360 斤，少数山区是 200 多斤，一般说是够吃的。去冬以来劳动强度增加，有一部分人不够吃，这是全国的现象。粮食问题主要是增产赶不上口粮增加的需要，这个困难，估计三五年内即可能解决，即全国每人平均有一千斤粮食：口粮 600 斤，种籽 200 斤，余粮 100 斤。”

这里的口粮斤数指的是原粮斤数，变为成品粮只及此斤数的 75%。也就是说，360 斤原粮等于 270 斤成品粮，平均到全年 365 天，山东农民当时最多每天只能吃到 7 两左右的粮食。如果是 200 斤原粮，则每天平均也就只能吃到 4 两左右的粮食。如此少的口粮，如何能不发生春荒夏荒，以至于饥荒呢？然而，对于这种情况，当时主管粮食及经济工作的领导人却相信“一般说是够吃的”。这看来也是几年来春荒夏荒持续不断的一个原因。

#### 毛泽东对死人问题的态度变化

中央在上述简报中一方面委婉地批评了甘肃省徽县县委的作法，一方面却并不要求甘肃省委“严肃处理”，还表扬甘肃省委在救灾问题上态度积极，很大程度上是因为甘肃省委第一书记张仲良在大跃进问题上受到过毛泽东的表扬，是当时国内各省农业大跃进的重要旗手。而能否实现大跃进，在 1958 年是衡量一个干部好赖的最主要的标准。何况，从毛泽东到中央绝大多数领导人，都是刚刚从革命战争年代里过来的。在他们的眼里，搞建设和打仗并没有多大的区别，大跃进其实也就是照战争打仗的思维设计和推动起来的。

查一下毛泽东 1958 年的历次讲话可以看得很清楚，一直到这一年 11 月底，他都是抱着“为有牺牲多壮志，敢叫日月换新天”的革命的逻辑思考问题的。

3 月 9 日，在中共中央召开的成都会议上，毛泽东就讲到过死人问题。在有领导人汇报到劳动中工伤事故增加较多时，他插话说：“花这一点代价赶上英国也是要付的。各省准备死 500 人，1 年 1 万多人，10 年 10 万人，无时不死人，要有准备。”

5月17日，在中共八大二次会议上，讲到战争与和平的问题，毛泽东更是明确讲：谁都不愿意打仗，但要准备有战争疯子。“打起来也要不大惊小怪，打起仗来无非就是死人。打仗死人我们见过，人口消灭一半在中国历史上有过好几次。原子仗现在没经验，不知要死多少，最好剩一半，次好剩三分之一，二十几亿人剩几亿，几个五年计划就发展起来了。换来一个资本主义全部灭亡，取得永久和平，这不是坏事。”

8月19日，毛泽东在北戴河会议上又讲：“打了那么多年仗，死了那么多人，没有谁能赔偿损失；现在搞建设，也是一场恶战，拼几年命，以后还要拼，这总比打仗死人少。”

11月1日，毛泽东在河南新乡与几个县委书记谈到土法炼钢容易发生死伤时还是在这样讲。他说：“这比打日本好，比打蒋介石好，打仗要死人，这也可能死一个两个的。”

分析毛泽东上面的这些说法可知，他并不是完全不在乎死人。他的看法很清楚，战争死人多，但躲不过，该打就要打，死人多，胜利了就不是坏事；搞建设死些人也是必然的，要高速发展不可能不付一点代价，不能因为死几个人就不去跃进了。然而，他认定一点，搞建设死人要少得多，一个工地“一个两个”，全国至多“1年1万多”，不会大规模死人。因此，一旦他发现像打仗那样去搞建设，可能会造成大批死亡的时候，他就再不这样讲话了。

毛泽东是何时发现用大跃进的方法可能造成严重死亡现象的呢？应该是在这一年的10月下旬到11月上旬。因为我们注意到，从这时开始，他在讲这个问题时态度一下子改变了，开始反复强调要让农民吃饱睡好，不要太过劳累了。

11月10日，毛泽东在郑州会议上的讲话中对此讲得更明白了。他说：一定要使生产者能够吃饭，吃得好一点，一定要保证食品中有足够的热量和营养。他特别提到：现在云南几个月中间就死了4万人，就是没有注意让人吃饱。“只要人家苦战，每天十几小时，吃得不够，休息得不够，粮食、油盐、蔬菜，那个东西不注意（是要死人的）。”这种强迫性

的作法“现在我们必须制止。一个要吃饭，一个要睡足”。“搞社会主义有优越性，但是死人，成万的死”，这叫什么优越性？

十天之后，在武昌会议上，毛泽东的话讲得更重了。他说：不能像过去那样干了。“除特殊外，还是要睡一点觉。现在要减轻任务。”明年的生产指标要降下来，不能总是压得人透不过气来，否则，“我看搞起来，中国非死一半人不可。不死一半也要死三分之一或者十分之一，死五千万人。广西死了人，陈漫远不是撤了吗？死五千万人你们的职不撤，至少我的职要撤，头也成问题。”他指着安徽省委第一书记曾希圣说：“安徽要搞那么多（吗）？你搞多了也可以，但以不死人为原则。”他特别强调要把水利建设今冬明春全国的土石方量降下来，批评中央提出的在1958年的基础上提高两三倍的计划不合适。声称自己负不起这个责任，说“你们一定要搞，我也没办法，但死了人不能杀我的头”。

谢富治为什么没有被处分

云南省这时的第一书记是谢富治。云南省几个月死了将近4万人，远比一年前广西陈漫远在任时造成的损失要大得多。但是，谢富治却安然无恙。毛泽东不仅没有处分谢富治，而且还表扬谢富治的检查报告写得好。

谢富治的检查报告是怎么讲的呢？报告中说：

在今年春夏之间，云南曾发生严重死亡的情况。肿病至6月下旬和7月上旬发病率猛增，遍及全省70多个县市，并兼有痢疾等流行。我们虽曾采取了一些措施，先后4次派遣医疗队伍进行检查和帮助，并调拨专粮、专款，但制止无力。至10月10日止，全省累计发病38.8万多人，死亡39721人，其中因肿病而死的占半数。

云南全省死人以曲靖专区最为严重，共死亡 19072 人，占全省死亡人数的 48%。而该专区又集中在陆良、泸西、曲靖等县。仅陆良县即死亡 12917 人，占该区死亡人数的 67%，占全县总人口的 5.6%，因肿病死亡者 5205 人，占死亡人数的 40%。

经解剖尸体及临床治疗断定，这种病属于混合性营养不良型水肿，病因主要是过度疲劳和营养不良。据查，每个农民在正常劳动情况下，每天需要热量 2500 卡，劳动最紧张时需 3000 卡至 5000 卡。但今年六、七月间，青黄不接，口粮较紧，特别是去年歉收地区，有的农民每天只能吃到四五两粮食，而劳动强度很大，因而造成死亡。

报告承认发生问题的关键，是领导作风不深入，干部强迫命令，并举例说明陆良县死亡多与地方干部组织“督战队”，鞭打威逼农民，对群众生活不注意，留给农民口粮太少，农民劳动强度成倍增加有直接关系。

报告以省委名义请求中央给予处分，谢富治并特别写信给毛泽东表示要承担主要任。

毛泽东在谢的报告上批示道：

“云南省委犯了一个错误，如他们在报告中所说的那样，没有及时觉察一部分地方发生肿病问题。报告对问题作了恰当的分析，处理也是正确的。云南工作可能因为肿病这件事，取得教训，得到免疫力，他们再也不犯同类错误了。坏事变好事，祸兮福所倚。别的省分，则可能有一些地方要犯云南那样的错误，因为他们还没有犯过云南所犯的那样一种错误，没有取得深刻的教训，没有取得免疫力。在我们对于人民生活这样一个重大问题缺少关心，注意不足，照顾不周（这在现时几乎是普遍存在）的时候，不能专门责怪别人，同我们对于工作任务提得太重，密切有关。千钧重担压下去，县乡干部没有办法，只好硬着头皮去干，少干一点就被叫做‘右倾’，把人们的心思引到片面性上去了，顾了生产，忘了生活。解决办法：（一）任务不要提得太重，不要超过群众精力负担的可能性，要为群众留点余地；（二）生产、生活同时抓，两条腿走路，不要片面性。”

毛泽东的对策：硬着头皮顶住

1959年三四月，春荒时节到来，往年的灾难不仅重复上演，而且变得更加凶险了。

最严重的如山东济宁、聊城地区，1400多万人缺粮、断粮，三四十万农民四出逃荒，患水肿病的累计达到55万余人，且已报告的因饿病而死亡的人数即达1526人。其中，“因生活困难而自杀的163人，占10.68%；患水肿病致死的953人，占62.45%；因吃糠粃过多，大便干结致死的95人，占6.22%；因饿致死的315人，占20.64%。”另外，“卖婴弃子事件已发现者达58起”，仅金乡、单县两县即已死亡耕畜35600余头。

山东省委如实报告说，所以会出现这种情况，一个重要原因是去年的产量报高了，国家征了过头粮。报告称，去年山东省粮食产量确实取得了空前丰收，但制定国家征购计划前预计的粮食产量报得太高，秋天再度核定的数字还是偏高，实际产量和最初的预计可能相差一倍之多。再加上各级干部开会太多，未能深入实际，不了解下面缺粮的情况，反而还大搞反瞒产私分，“结果不仅未能反出什么粮食，反而对粮食的紧张形势起了‘火上加油’的作用，造成人心惶惶，有粮的无粮的都喊缺粮，真假难分，人口继续大批外流”。

类似的情况并不止于山东一个省。国务院秘书厅这时送来报告，说明全国15省发生严重春荒，至少2517万人缺粮、断粮，灾情严重。毛泽东看了也急，当即拟了一个《十五省二千五百一十七万人无饭吃大问题》的醒目标题，紧急批给周恩来，要求立即用飞机分送给15个省的省委第一书记“手收”。因为他怀疑“有些可能当地领导人还不知道情况，因而还未处理”。

到这个时候，毛泽东才意识到中央此前认定的那个1958年的粮食产量可能有较大问题。他在4月上旬开始的中共八届七中全会上，已经对六中全会制定的1959年全国粮食产量达到10500亿斤的指标表示疑问了。因为，统计局和粮食部核实过的1958年的粮食产量只有5000亿斤，比毛泽东估计的“定数”，即7400亿斤，还少2400亿斤。因此毛泽东开始承认，粮食、棉花的产量，要大幅超产恐怕是不可能的。他并且为自己去年相信并帮

着宣传徐水等百万亩“卫星”田的事辩解说，去年我只看了那几亩田，其他地方的都没看过。什么万斤亩，我就不信，除非一斤一斤称。现在的问题是，10500亿斤的指标已经公布了，“现在改也不好改，改了怕泄气，中国人、外国人（面前）都不好看。”只能寄希望“七凑八凑，多种蕃薯，把豆子也算上，可能达到万亿斤、9000亿斤”。

当然，哪怕1958年能落实的粮食产量只有5000亿斤，比1957年的3700亿斤还是增长了许多，故毛泽东相信这也是“大跃进”。因此，他对这一年的春荒紧张归紧张，却还是抱着年年春荒都能过去的信念，认为今年也不例外。故他一方面意识到今年形势比较严峻，因而同意李先念提出的压缩城乡，特别是城市粮食销量的提议，下令把城乡人口人均配给的粮食数额限制在每月28至30斤左右；另一方面则寄希望于春荒会快点过去。这种心情从一个小例子就可以看得很清楚。即4月17日刚刚心急火燎地批示要解决2517万人无饭吃的大问题，26日在得到内务部报上来的关于春荒有所好转的情况通报后，他又马上批转各地，宽慰人心。当然，他还是告诫各地党委：“务必要采取措施，妥善安排，度过春荒，安全地接上麦收和早稻”。还指示要“多种瓜菜，注意有吃而又省吃，闲时少吃，忙时多吃。千万不可大意”。

1959年春荒持续时间远较过去长，死人也远较过去多。光是一个山东，到5月中旬仍然有30多万水肿病人，有将近12万人逃荒在外。济宁地委即报告称，据不完全统计，该专区年初以来已有7569人因饿病而死。对这一报告，就连山东省委自己也不完全相信。因为巨野县一个县就已有报告称，半年间各种死亡人数达7536人，已知属于非正常死亡者达1860人；金乡县也报告称，半年间各种死亡6700多人，非正常死亡数1500人。这两个县半年的非正常死亡人数即超过3300人了，何况两县所报正常死亡人数也不大可信，因为它们都大大超出了往年半年中的正常死亡人数。粮食匮乏的严重程度，还可通过耕畜死亡反映出来。据济宁地委报告，专区原有耕畜65万头，半年多因没有饲料等原因一下子死了12万头，即使活着的耕畜也非常疲弱。政府按规定留给农民的口粮，每人每天本来也只有五六两原粮，相当部分还是薯干，原本就只能勉强维持生命。就是这样一点粮食，还会被各级管理部门层层克扣，或是8个人的定量均分给了10个人吃。因此，许多饥饿的农民最后竟把刚刚种下的青苗、花生种都挖出来吃了。人力、畜力本来就极度虚弱，春耕已经难以进行，好不容易种下一些粮食又被挖出来吃掉，春播、春种自然要受到严重影响，这又直接埋下了夏秋和来年进一步发生更严重饥荒的种子。

由于不少省份上一年虚报、浮夸十分过火，再加上“大跃进”期间到处“拔白旗”、打右倾，因此灾情已经十分严重，却没有哪个省会主动据实上报。各地即使发现了问题，也都尽可能隐瞒实情，以至许多严重情况还是中共中央或国务院从群众来信中了解到，批转地方查证才暴露出来的。在这种情况下，毛泽东和中共中央对于问题的严重性，特别是问题的覆盖面，仍旧缺乏足够的认识。如主管农村工作的副总理谭震林也知道各地死人很多，困难很大，但还是要求地方必须完成原定的征购任务。他甚至强调要动员农民照顾大局来完成任务。他在6月20日的一个报告中说，今年夏季粮食作物的情况是：一、亩产比去年高得多；二、粮食供应情况紧张，收购任务比去年大；三、播种面积比去年减少很多，总产量能不能比去年多还难说。因此，粮食困难的形势从全国看还没有转变过来，还要等夏粮全部打下来，粮食局面才可能转为主动。但无论如何，他都要求切实把粮食征上来。他强调，工作做到家，任务就能完成。他的理由是：“不要把农民估计得过低，应该把农民估计得高一点”。因为，“中国的农民在长期的革命锻炼中已经养成了照顾大局的观点”。

有了主管农业的谭震林等人的这种意见，毛泽东更相信这次春荒差不多过去了，形势已经好转了。6月底，他召集中央及各地领导人上庐山，准备开一个“神仙会”，大家优哉游哉，轻轻松松地一起来总结研究一下前面“大跃进”的经验与问题。

当然，毛泽东丝毫没有意识到“大跃进”出了严重问题，他的总结是守住一条底线，即成绩和错误要“九一开”。用他的话来说就是：“成绩伟大，问题不少，前途光明”。至于那一分错误，比如粮食大量增产却搞得如此紧张，他虽耿耿于怀，不得其解，却主张眼下不必深究，“说得清就说，说不清就硬着头皮顶住，去干，明年东西多了，就说清楚了”。

### 庐山转向并非彭德怀惹的祸

不知道问题出在哪，毛泽东又打算如何去改变粮食紧张的现状呢？以往的党史、国史著述，大都很重视庐山会议的转向问题。即认为会议原本是要反左的，彭德怀7月14日一

封上书，批评“小资产阶级的狂热性”，惹恼了毛泽东，会议于是从反左一下子转到反右去了。而这个说法，也是毛泽东事后自己多次讲过的。

然而，如果我们注意到庐山会议上从始至终毛泽东都没弄清发生问题的根子在哪，那么，说彭德怀不上书，会议就能形成一个解决问题的方案，就会一直坚持反左，也不那么可信。事实上，研究一下毛泽东在庐山会议前段提出的解决粮食问题的意见，就可以印证这一判断。

7月5日，毛泽东结合粮食部部长陈国栋的报告，就粮食问题专门提出了他的建议，主要有以下几点：一、假定今年年成确实比去年好的情况之下，还要多征购一点粮食，以备危急时国家手里有粮。二、下年度销售计划应该大力压缩，向1957年看齐。1957年大家不是过得挺好吗？“告诉农民，恢复糠菜半年粮，可不可以呢？苦一年、两年、三年，就翻过身来了。多储备，少食用，以人定量，粮食归户，食堂吃饭，节余归己，忙时多吃，闲时少吃，有稀有干，粮菜混吃，仍然可以吃饱吃好，可不可以这样做呢？”三、“多产粮，是上策。田头地角，零星土地，谁种谁收，不征不购，主要为了解决饲料，部分为了人用。恢复私人菜园，一定要酌给自留地。凡此种种，可以多收。既可多收，可以多吃”。四、“在今年秋收确实知道粮食比去年增产的情况之下，一定要划出牲口饲料、猪饲料两种，一定要比过去多些，是否可以有人粮的一半？人粮一斤，饲料半斤”。

从上述三、四两点可知，毛泽东是注意到了公社化导致农民日常生活受困的一些问题的，也提出了一些有助于解决农民饥荒问题的办法。但是，他的前提却还是“食堂吃饭”。

“食堂吃饭”是什么意思呢？这意味着农民还是不能自己开伙，意味着毛泽东还是希望坚持对农民实行平均主义的供给制，意味着农民还必须要过集体生活，自家的东西不能归自己所有，自家的房子多半也不能自己住。农民在连基本的家庭生活都不易维持的情况下，又如何去经营自留地、私人菜园、田头地角？如何能节约归己、自种自吃呢？

至于一、二两点，就是要求“多购少销”。“多购少销”是中共中央自实行统购统销政策以来的一贯方针，但是，在粮食供应已经开始与民众生活需要严重脱节，许多地方已经出现严重断粮并开始大量饿死人的情况下，以中央主席的身份明确提出这一要求，一旦确定

下来，岂不会带来更严重的灾难性的后果吗？毛泽东所以看不到这一点，显然是因为他并不清楚粮食问题的危险程度。他的信心和数据依旧是从主管经济和粮食工作的负责人那里来的。他所以要在全会上专门就粮食问题发表这几点意见，原因也就在于多数省份的领导人都在喊粮食困难，要求中央减少 1959 年度的粮食征购数量，放宽 1959 年度的粮食销售额度。而中共中央主管经济、财政、粮食工作的负责人和地方领导人之间已经出现顶牛现象，他出面要求其实是帮中央做说服各地领导人思想工作的。

毛泽东的依据是：一、1958 年就算粮食总产量只有 5000 亿斤，也还是比 1957 年增产了 35%，实现了“大跃进”。如果照谭震林等人报告的情况，1959 年虽然播种面积有减少，但年成肯定比 1958 年还好，亩产还要高，产粮总数不会低于 1958 年，那么，为什么不可以仍旧比照 1958 年，征购到 1100 亿斤呢？二、1957 年全国只销了 839 亿斤，没有出任何问题，1959 年为什么不可以向 1957 年 839 亿斤的销售量看齐，甚至再低一点，“是否可以调整为 800 亿斤，或者 810、820 亿（斤）呢？”扣除军粮、出口和养猪饲料 120 亿斤，这一进一出之间，中央和各地不就可以净储备 160 亿斤，以弥补现有 300 多亿斤库存的不足了吗？

显而易见的是，靠听汇报了解全局的毛泽东这时不仅不了解全国粮食问题的实际状况，而且不了解 1958 年工业、水利“大跃进”所造成的城乡人口结构的改变，带来粮食供需关系极大改变的情况。他只注意到 1958 年度粮食销售了 1018 亿斤，超出 1957 年度 839 亿斤太多，却没有想到城乡工业“大跃进”和大搞水利建设后，城市人口一下子增加了 2000 万，农村企业和兴修水利也使相当一部分农民转去吃商品粮了。光新增 2000 万城市人口，就需要差不多 100 亿斤以米、面为主，不含地瓜干的粮食。再加上全国上亿农民被投入到大型水利建设工程中去，所需商品粮数量十分巨大。只要保持现有人口结构不变，继续各项“跃进”政策，1959 年度的粮食销售量根本就不可能低于 1958 年度的水平。粮食部最初也是按此水平计划的，原定 1959 年度的销售额为 1020 亿斤。但是毛泽东会上一提出质疑，粮食部马上就动摇了，改调到 855 亿斤。对这个数字，毛泽东却还是觉得多，总觉得应该可以“和 1957 年看齐”，即所谓 1957 年大家不是过得挺好吗？告诉农民，恢复糠菜半年粮，可不可以呢？苦一年、两年、三年，就翻过身来了。

值得注意的是，毛泽东不是很了解城乡人口结构的这一变化情况，至少对这方面问题不敏感。中共中央负责经济、农村和粮食工作的领导人则不然，他们早就谈到过这方面的情况。可是，他们这个时候也没有意识到需要从这个方面着手来解决问题。相反，他们从缓解自身主管的国家粮食储备紧张的角度，马上接受了毛泽东的建议。不仅如此，对毛泽东所提恢复社员自留地，自种自吃、免征公粮的意见，他们还表示不同意，认为对国家粮食利益影响太大。李先念就特别提醒毛说：“按照自留地占耕地面积 5% 计算，全国约减征 23 亿斤细粮，折人民币 2 亿元左右。我建议，免征的这部分公粮，可以暂时转由公社或者基本核算单位交纳，执行一年再看。”

上述这一切讨论和决策，都发生在庐山会议初期，即彭德怀上书的 7 月 14 日之前。事实上，彭德怀也一样不清楚 1958 年度粮食的实际产量，更不了解当时粮食问题的严重程度，他同样认为“粮棉增产 30% 是肯定的”。换言之，7 月 14 日之后，毛泽东虽然因彭信转而发动批右，会议对粮食问题的看法以及毛泽东在会议前期所拟解决问题的方案，其实并未改变。

7 月 31 日，中共中央按照毛泽东的提议，制定了下一年度粮食征购和销售的指标，计划总产量 5000 亿斤，购 1100 亿斤，在征购量与上年度基本持平的情况下，却较上年度减少了近 1/4 的销售额，确定为 820 亿斤。加上增拨国家生猪生产基地饲料 20 亿斤，即 840 亿斤。这一数字基本与 1957 年 839 亿斤持平。而且，计划中粮食出口还有所增加，即由 1958 年的 82 亿斤，变成了 100 亿斤。

粮食部部长陈国栋在解释这一方案的报告中称：按照这一购销计划，并不会减少农民的口粮，相反，较 1955 年所定的 417 斤的标准还有增加，全国农民年平均每人留有口粮可到 440 斤，约相当于 330 斤成品粮，平均到每天每人可以有 9 两粮食吃。“如果在有瓜菜的季节里，掺食一些瓜菜，并有计划地加工一些干菜，储备起来，和粮混着吃，不但可以吃得饱，而且可以吃得好。”

从陈国栋的上述算法和介绍中可以清楚地看出，即使是粮食部部长本人也不了解，农民实际到手的口粮数是不能这样在纸面上平均推算出来的。除了种子粮、饲料粮未算外，光是

一个公社化带来的县社提留的所谓公积金、公益金及各种机动粮，就从中截去了农民大量的口粮数。

毛泽东年初在郑州会议上就尖锐批评过公社一级“积累太多”，什么都“共产”，“实际是抢产”。他举的例子是河南，说河南除国家征税 7%以外，县社一级从生产队的总收入中抽去的“积累”就占 26%，生产消耗至少 20%，还要收百分之几的公益金、管理费，如果再算上 20%以上的统购数……农民年平均口粮数最多也只有两三百斤原粮，根本不可能达到 440 斤原粮的水平。

如果我们注意到柯庆施介绍的情况，就更能了解纸面上的计算有多不靠谱了。他讲，华东各省社队两级干部为工作便利，甚至为自身谋利，存在大量提留机动粮的情况。据江苏镇江 9 个公社 15 个大队调查，社员每人每年负担机动粮达 31 斤。有的大队为此不惜克扣社员口粮，本来每人年应得基本口粮只有 226 斤，竟被克扣去 80 斤，致社员实际到手只有 146 斤。

随后的情况也很快证明了粮食部的算法完全脱离实际。由于各地粮食已经非常紧张，根本不可能照人均 440 斤原粮水平给农民留口粮。在无法抗拒中央征购任务的情况下，各地不久即纷纷要求压缩农民口粮以满足征购所需，中央对此也只能迁就同意。一个多月后，即 9 月 17 日，中央正式批转甘肃省委关于粮食工作的报告给各地，同意“农村一般每人全年平均留原粮 400 斤上下，最低不少于 365 斤”。这意味着，农民即使能够按照官定的标准拿到全部口粮，每人每天也只能吃到七八两粮食（此处指成品粮，原粮转化为成品粮的比率一般为 70%~80%）。不要说农民每天所得的这七八两粮食相当部分是杂粮，不仅包括豆子在内，还有不少地瓜干。就是这些并不完全顶数的粮食，多半也还会因为各种中间过程的损耗和上述各种克扣、贪污而大打折扣。许多地方农民一天只能吃到四五两粮食，甚至更少，严重断粮乃至广泛饥荒的发生，是不可避免的。由此可

知，在 1959 年粮食问题已经相当严峻的情况下，无论庐山会议批左还是批右，只要毛泽东和中共中央还没有意识到问题的严重性及其症结所在，继续坚持制定并实行“多征少销”的方针，就必然会加剧饥荒大面积的扩散与发展。

## 反右倾创造出的虚假成绩

庐山会议转而批右，使得从中央到地方，大批试图向中央反映基层严重问题的干部成批成批地被打成了“右倾机会主义分子”，受到严厉处罚。湖南 80 多个县，有 30 多个县委第一书记挨整。河南信阳地区 16 个县的县委第一书记被撤职。山东聊城一个地区，2 万多干部被批判或定性右倾，并且批斗了数万名群众。由此带来了两个极其严重的负面影响：一是各级干部吓破了胆，只能更加不顾一切地采用各种强力措施向农民催逼征粮；二是虚假信息更加盛行，中共中央和毛泽东看到的情况与实际愈加脱节和扭曲了。

因为各地干部尽心竭力地为完成中央交付的“多征少销”指标而努力，1959 年秋冬到 1960 年年初，国家购销指标完成得异乎寻常的好。粮食部为此极为兴奋，在 1960 年 1 月 26 日粮食部给毛泽东和中央的报告中，上来第一句话就是：“当前粮食局势好得很。”

据粮食部报告称，按照 1959 年度（即从 1959 年 7 月到 1960 年 6 月）的征购计划，不过半年时间，即到 1959 年 12 月 25 日，就已经完成了 94%。加上 1960 年 5 至 6 月份将征购到的新夏粮，肯定会超额完成计划。粮食销售计划的执行也十分稳定，1959 年 7 月至 12 月仅销售了 401 亿斤，比 1958 年同期减少了 42 亿斤。同样，粮食出口供应计划也顺利完成，而且超额。报告说：“从以上情况来看，多购少销，争取粮食工业变被动为主动……已经做到了。”受此鼓舞，国务院总理周恩来更明确提出，要争取国家粮食库存（包括周转粮在内）到 1962 年时，能够达到 1000 亿斤。李先念也提出，有必要争取使粮食总产量到 1962 年达到 7500 至 8000 亿斤。

据此，中共中央于 1 月 30 日正式批准了国家计委关于 1960 年国民经济计划的报告，其中粮食一项的目标被规定为 6000 亿斤，比 1959 年要增长 11%。中共中央相信，1959 年粮食总产量达到了 5400 亿斤，比 1958 年增长了 8%，因此 1960 年粮食产量理应争取更进一步的生长。

这个时候，毛泽东和中共中央领导人不是完全没有渠道发现问题。像新华社的《内部参考》就还在零星地反映报道一些比较真实的基层情况。比如它在年初一段时间里就接连反映了江苏、甘肃、湖北、宁夏、贵州等地出现农民断粮逃荒、浮肿干瘦、非正常死亡、弃婴死婴、妇女子宫脱落，乃至人吃人等情况。但是，和1959年上半年毛泽东高度评价《内部参考》刊登农村实情的消息，并几度批示的情况不同，1960年上半年毛泽东对《内部参考》这种零星的报道明显不重视。他主观上显然更乐于相信来自中共中央和各地党政领导人的形势判断，更愿意听到他们讲，“目前形势很好，去年春夏都没现在好”，“社会主义建设的新阶段，是从1958年开始，1959年巩固，从1960年看，是更前进了一大步”。

受此心态影响，这一年3月，中央发现山东再度出现春荒，农民外流10余万人，肿病9万多人，死亡1000多人，也只是认为，问题出在省里各级干部没有安排好农民的生活。只要重视起来，做好工作，粮食不是问题。

几乎同时，周恩来读到反映安徽省和县、无为县大批饿死人的群众来信，也只是批转安徽省委第一书记曾希圣称：“转上一信，请阅后派人前往两县一查，也许确有此事，也许夸大其词，但这类个别现象各省都有，尤其去年遭灾省份，更值得注意。主席在批转山东省六级干部会议文件上，也曾着重指出这一点”。

如此政策下粮食问题的大爆发是迟早的事。进入三四月份以后，各地粮食紧张即导致粮食销量无法抑制地猛增，原定1959年度销售计划被大大突破了。还在2月底，中共中央就已经不得不同意各省关于增加粮食销售数额的要求，把原定销售820亿斤的计划修改为917亿斤。到4月中旬，中央吃惊地发现，各地粮食销售的数量还在增加，年度销售指标很可能会超过1050亿斤。

与此同时，还是有大批农民得不到粮食，因而越来越多的地方发生严重的饿死人事件。鉴于无数群众来信雪片般地飞往北京，许多中央高级干部也通过亲友了解到农民饿毙的惨况，许多地方难以隐瞒，不得不把一些情况上报到省委和中央来了。

3月中旬，江苏省委上报了所属“高淳县在1958年冬和1959年春，发生了浮肿病、消瘦病、妇女子宫下垂患者14000多人，非正常死亡6000多人和外流人口10000多人的严重事件”。

4月初，河南信阳地委上报，“从去年十一月份以来……全区发生浮肿病、紫疔病和其他疫病累计596176人次，死亡71658人（包括正常死亡在内），占总人口的0.85%”。

事实上，凡是这时地方自报的死人情况都有隐瞒。如中央赴信阳工作组6月调查即发现，信阳地委上报的死亡数字被人为地大大缩小了。实际死亡人数超过43万，其中非正常死亡人数竟然达到28万之多。

毛泽东就推动“共产风”做自我批评

从1960年5月开始，全国性粮食紧张的情况已经是再明显不过了，大量发放粮食救急，国家各地粮库也日渐露底了。国务院财贸办并粮食部从5月下旬开始，接连4次向各地发出“紧急指示”，并以中央名义几度召开各省、区农业负责人电话会议，要求全力完成中央计划和部署的调运粮食任务，但各地自顾不暇，纷纷向中央告急，始终不能照中央要求行事，以至于由中央负责供应的北京、天津、上海、辽宁三市一省也面临断粮之危了。

7月12日，国务院财贸办和粮食部负责人不得不联名求助于李先念，要求救急。李先念随即先后向周恩来和邓小平，乃至毛泽东告急，说明：“现在粮食库存，北京、天津只够销4天，上海只够销2天，辽宁只够销6天，如果不加速调运补充库存，照当前这个样子下去，是会出乱子的。”

到8月初，中共中央已经发现此前的乐观估计又错了。1960年的粮食产量不仅无法达到计划中的6000亿斤，很可能只能收获4500亿斤。粮食产量一下子缩水1/4，无论是购还是销，原来的计划全都无法实现了。这一情况让中共中央十分紧张，开始提出，全国下一年度的粮食安排必须马上“按需要从低的原则”妥善部署计划。按照这一思路制定的

1960 年度粮食收支调拨计划，仍旧是站在国家的立场上，坚持要大大增加国家征购粮的数量。1960 年度的征购数字被进一步增加到了 1325 亿斤，虽然销售粮数也相应提升到 1108 亿斤，出口粮数降低到 48 亿斤，但在粮食总产量已经低于 1957 年水平的情况下，即使纸面上全国农民每人全年口粮也只能安排到 360 斤原粮。不要说留给农民的这部分“粮食”不少是靠白薯、大豆之类充数，即使农民真的能够拿到这个数字的粮食，每人每天平均也只有 7 两的东西可吃。

眼看粮食真的出了问题，毛泽东第一个反应是，必须坚决压缩水利等农村基本建设工程，“挤出一切可能挤出的劳动力，加强田间生产的力量”。他显然很着急，但并没有想到解决眼下问题的办法，而是指望来年下大力生产粮食。他提出：“民以食为天，吃饭第一，必须全党动手，全民动手，大办粮食。”

9 月 7 日，中共中央发出的指示更是不切实际。它要求进一步压缩城乡口粮标准，并且提出，农民口粮按淮河南北划线，一般应维持平均每人全年 360 斤原粮，一些地方应压到平均每人 300 斤以下。指示介绍称：“据河北省委调查，平均每人每天有 0.8 市斤原粮，加上 2 斤到 2.5 斤菜，大小人口调剂着吃，劳动力可以维持通常的劳动。”

可想而知，正是在此前后，因实在无粮以救饥馑，大家纷纷异想天开地构想种种含有这样或那样蛋白质及碳水化合物的“代食品”来充数。从毛泽东一直到地方，各级党政主管部门也都信以为真，想方设法地进行鼓吹，并且投入大量人力、物力、财力去组织生产。

连续两年“大丰收”，为什么还会发生如此严重的缺粮现象，并且会出现粮食产量大幅下滑的情况呢？毛泽东这时无论如何不能不去寻找答案了。而他这个时候也终于考虑出了一个模糊的答案。

1960 年 10 月到 12 月，在毛泽东的指示下，中共中央接连撤换了饿死农民人数太多的山东、甘肃、河南 3 个省的省委第一书记。与此同时，毛泽东把造成农村问题的症结归纳成

“五风”（即共产风、浮夸风、强迫命令风、干部特殊风和对生产瞎指挥风），并据此要求各地整风整社，“以纠正‘共产风’为重点，带动其余四项歪风的纠正”。

11月27日，毛泽东在各中央局汇报时再提粮食增产、丰收，“为什么还会出现饿死（人）的现象”这一问题。他自然不承认“大跃进”或人民公社的基本方针政策有什么问题，而是强调这根本上是“共产风、浮夸风、干部特殊化”闹的。至于为什么会刮起“共产风”呢？毛泽东带头承认自己“有缺点、有错误”，说“第一个要负责的是我，北戴河会议决议，有些内容写过了头”。

第二天，毛泽东借转发甘肃省委关于贯彻执行中央紧急指示信的机会，用“中央”之口再度就他在推动“共产风”问题上的责任做了更具体的检讨。他写道：毛泽东“自己也曾犯了错误，一定要改正。例如，错误之一，在北戴河决议中写上了公社所有制转变过程的时间，设想得过快了”。而且，当时没有注意到不能由公社来“共”生产队的产，不能搞“一平二调”，不能多搞公共积累，不能过多地搞公共工程，等等。

毛泽东主动检讨后，中共诸多领导人也纷纷在各种场合进行了自我批评。至此，建立在“大跃进”思想基础上的粮食计划指标也迅速降下来了。

1961年1月中共中央还估计1961年度的粮食产量可以达到4100亿斤，但春夏粮食全面紧张，全国十几万个粮站存粮降到160多亿斤，京、津、沪粮食供应全面告急；夏收时更发现全国粮食产量最多可能只有2800亿斤，甚至2650亿斤左右。鉴于此，中共中央不得不大幅调低1961年度的粮食征购数。因粮食严重减产而造成粮食供应缺口，中共中央除下决心将城镇人口压缩2000万以外，还被迫决定动用国家黄金储备41万两、白银储备1.4亿两，以每吨70美元的价格进口上百亿斤粮食来填补。但即使这样，主管经济工作的领导人计算来去，还是认定必须要征购780亿斤粮食，并要把农村粮食销量从418亿斤压缩到空前低的300亿斤。

按照毛泽东 1959 年 2 月的说法，粮食征购不超过总产量的 1/3，农民就不会造反。但周恩来在 1960 年 8 月 24 日中央工作会议上承认，1957 年以前征购比例一般在 1/3 以下，即 27%至 28%左右，最高也只有 29%。但 1958 年因估产过高，征购比例实际上已经超过 35%。1961 年如果征 780 亿斤，合原粮 900 多亿斤，恐怕也要占到总产量的 33%了。考虑到这一比例可能带来的危险，最终这一征购数字不得不下调到 717 亿斤。当然，这已经无法阻止 1961 年更加严重的饥荒全面发生了。

1961 年 1 月上旬，在中共中央工作会议上，3 位被处分的省委第一书记也都正式做了检讨。

甘肃省委原第一书记张仲良承认：甘肃工作中的错误是十分严重的，“1958 年粮食产量公布 220 亿斤，最后落到 110 亿斤；1959 年粮食数字开始提 400 亿斤，公布 370 亿斤，以后定为 270 亿斤，实际产量仅仅 85 亿斤。”“从 1958 年春季，几个县就发生外流、浮肿、死人。1959、1960 年发生问题的面积愈来愈大，时间愈来愈提前，情况愈来愈严重。死人数字是骇人听闻的。现在知道，总数 85 万人（包括非正常死亡），耕畜死亡 70 多万头”。

河南省委原第一书记吴芝圃也痛切表示：“估计从 1959 年 10 月到 1960 年 11 月全省共死亡人口 200 万左右……受灾最严重的地方，人民被摧残得家破人亡，几乎人人戴孝，户户哭声，有的整个村庄变为废墟，令人目击泪下。”

山东省发生严重饿死人的情况 1958 年底就开始了，持续时间更长，故山东省委原第一书记舒同也不能不受到更多的批评。

实际上，除此三省外，其他许多省的死人情况也非常严重，只是多数地方盖子还没有揭开。即使是那些开始揭盖子的地方，由于粮食紧张的局面一时无法改变，因此饥荒死人的现象难以很快得到遏止。好在，毛泽东终于不再坚持办公社食堂了。1961 年 2 月，他第一次在食堂问题上松了口，表态说：“办食堂或搞别的事，不要千篇一律，一定要适合情

况，一定要根据各地的特点。如果不适合情况，比方办食堂，势必要垮台，也应该垮台”。

据此，谭震林于3月初在中央会议上提出，办不办食堂的问题和要不要继续实行供给制的问题，农民很关心，但又不敢公开提出来，是否可以讨论一下。

4月15日，毛泽东的秘书胡乔木在毛泽东家乡韶山公社调查报告中提出：“从群众反映看来，大多数食堂目前实际上已经成了发展生产的障碍，成了党群关系中的一个疙瘩。因此，我们认为，这个问题愈早解决愈好。”报告并列举了食堂破坏性作用的种种例证。

4月下旬，毛泽东、刘少奇、邓小平均表示，在食堂问题上受了骗。大家一致同意胡乔木的报告，主张“当机立断”。周恩来说得好：“食堂不解决，什么也不能解决。因为自留地要人来种”。

这一年夏天，对农村生产及农民生活破坏性最为直接的公共食堂终于停办了。食堂散伙后，供给制亦废止了，社队从农民手中“抢”去的各种私人财物等部分退赔给农民，农民重新回到家庭生活当中来了。这样，农民又可以养猪、养鸡、积肥，自主经营自留地了，也因此再度有了一些自我应对粮食困难的调节能力。

除此之外，中共中央这时也意识到了解决粮食紧张问题的另一个关键点，即工业、基建、水利“大跃进”的严重副作用，特别是1958年大办钢铁、大办工业、大办水利等猛增出来的吃商品粮的2000多万人。他不得不痛下决心将这些增长出来的人口强行“精简”到农村去，并且对工业、基建、水利等诸多大中型项目建设实行“关、停、并、转”，全面缩短工业、水利战线。如此，持续三年多的严重饥荒，又经过了一年左右的时间，才逐渐得以告一段落。

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## Yang Kuisong: How did Mao Zedong find out about the Great Famine?

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Topic: "Great Leap Forward" Famine

Yang Kuisong (Enter the column)

In 1958, the "Great Leap Forward" campaign of industrial and agricultural production was carried out vigorously for one year, followed by the outbreak of the worst three-year famine in the history of the People's Republic of China, which caused extremely serious abnormal deaths throughout the country.

There was a distinct lack of ideological preparation for this occurrence, both on the part of local leaders and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), right up to Mao Zedong. After the initial discovery of the situation, they all regarded it as a spring or summer famine like the previous years, not realizing at all that, as a result of the high degree of collectivization after the full implementation of the high level societies, not only did the peasants no longer have the same kind of ability to withstand the calamities as they did in the past, but also the exaggerated and false declarations of cadres in response to the demands of their superiors and the mandatory public accumulations, which would also create an artificial and serious lack of food rations for the peasants, would also cause a large-scale famine and deaths of starving people. As a matter of fact, such a situation had already begun to appear in 1955 and 1956, and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China also attached great importance to the mass starvation deaths and had severely punished them. However, since such dispositions were only on the matter, the Unit hardly produced any effect.

Why did the Central Committee discipline the Guangxi Provincial Committee?

In the history of the People's Republic of China, the earliest time that the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) disciplined a provincial leader for a starvation death occurred in 1957. On June 18 of that year, the People's Daily and the Guangxi Daily published for the first time in public the decision of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council to discipline a group of major leaders of Guangxi province, prefecture and county. Chen Manyuan, the first secretary of the Guangxi Provincial Party Committee, Secretary Hao Sergeant, Xiao Yizhou, as well as the secretary and deputy secretary of the CPC Pingle Local Committee, and the secretary and deputy secretary of the CPC Pingle, Lipu, and Hengxian County Committees, were dismissed from their party and government positions, and some of them were also put on probation. The decision stated that the reason for publicly disciplining Chen Manyuan and others was that they bore unshirkable responsibility for the large numbers of peasants fleeing famine and even starving to death in Guangxi Province in 1955 and 1956. The decision pointed out that as early as 1955 in Guangxi Province has occurred in the phenomenon of farmers fleeing and starving to death, the State Council at that time, that is, issued a directive, requiring "must strengthen the production of disaster relief work, on some serious cases of dereliction of duty cadres, should be seriously dealt with." However, the people in charge at all levels in Guangxi province, prefecture and county "remained insensitive, unable to learn from the facts", and when the spring famine came again in 1956, "the leading cadres in Guangxi province failed to lead the relevant departments to correctly carry out this policy, due to their serious detachment from the masses, their lack of understanding of the situation below them, and their insufficient estimation of the development of the disaster situation. departments to correctly carry out this policy and make timely food dispatch and supply work", which eventually "caused serious incidents of mass exodus and deaths of peasants in Pingle, Lipu, Hengxian, and other areas", "not only causing loss of people's lives and property, but also seriously damaging the people's government's position among the masses". not only caused loss of people's lives and property, but also seriously undermined the prestige of the people's government among the masses."

The number of peasants who died of starvation due to lack of food in Guangxi province in 1956 was announced at the time as "more than 550, with Pingle, Lipu and Hengxian counties being the most numerous". Whether this figure is accurate or not is debatable, but it is clear that the CCP Central Committee's disciplinary action went beyond the 1956 issue, and encompassed accountability for previous deaths. The decision of the State Council has made this more than clear, and Deng Xiaoping also made it clear that what the Central Committee is most dissatisfied with is that "after the incident, the provincial party committee has been dragging its feet in dealing with the negligent officials concerned, and has been suffering from a sense of loss and gain, and has pushed you to push me, and me to push you, and has not only lacked the concept of the masses, but has also lacked the concept of the word 'people'. Not only do they lack the concept of the masses, they don't even have the concept of the word 'people'." The "incident" that the Guangxi Provincial Party Committee has been dragging its feet in dealing with is the situation described in the State Council's disciplinary decision, that is, it has been dragging its feet in dealing with the State Council's directive to seriously deal with the negligent cadres who caused the starvation deaths of many peasants in 1955, so that a large number of starvation deaths occurred again in 1956.

So how many people starved to death in Guangxi in 1955? At present there is no reliable statistics, but from the records of some county records in Guangxi can be seen very clearly, the starvation deaths in 1955 was much more serious than in 1956. Such as the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China pointed out that the most dead in 1956 Hengxian County, in the county records did not specifically record the deaths of that year, but especially emphasized the disaster in 1955, said that the county Nanxiang, Failong two townships alone, in 1955, there were 2,971 people suffered from starvation due to edema disease, 434 people died. The Binyang County Record also did not record the deaths in 1956, but specifically stated that in 1955, because of the low rations left for the farmers, 667 people died due to lack of food in the county. The Pubei County Record also does not talk about the 1956 disaster, but states that in 1955 "the maximum number of people who were deprived of food in the county was 226,959" and "10,639 people suffered from malnutrition and edema", but the number of deaths is not written out.

## Impact of the normalization of famine in China

The timing of the CCP Central Committee's disciplining of the responsible cadres at the provincial and local levels in Guangxi was very subtle. For it happened to be in the spring and summer of 1957. The Central Committee sent people to Guangxi to investigate its problems at the end of 1956, just as the Rectification Movement was beginning to be launched. The first time the Central Committee's investigation report was discussed in the Secretariat of the Central Committee was on May 16th. Anyone who has read Prof. Shen Zhihua's study of the anti-rightist movement knows very well that Mao Zedong was in the midst of an alarming situation at that time, that the anti-rightist decision had not yet been made, and that the anti-bureaucratic rectification movement in the society was in full swing. When the Secretariat discussed the decision to deal with the Guangxi issue for the second time, on May 20, Mao decided to launch the anti-rightist campaign. The insistence on exposing oneself at this delicate moment was certainly related to the original intention of the rectification and anti-bureaucracy campaign on the one hand, and on the other hand reflected the extreme dissatisfaction of the CCP hierarchy with the provincial and local leaders in Guangxi. Only, this is not mainly because of the number of people who died, but because of the behavior of the local cadres in charge in Guangxi in concealing the situation below and ignoring the instructions of the central government.

Famine and even starvation are commonplace in modern rural China. Even after the founding of the CCP, there were still spring or summer famine every year. Especially after the introduction of the unified purchasing and marketing system in 1953, the farmers' rations were strictly controlled by the government at a low level, and in some places, when there was a shortage of food, farmers fled or even starved to death from time to time. In 1954, due to the occurrence of a nationwide famine, there had been tens of millions of peasants who lacked or cut off food, and starvation deaths had occurred in a number of provinces. In other years, because the country was so large, the so-called "flower-planting" type of drought here and there, and localized famines like the one in Guangxi were not uncommon. Until then, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China had never punished any provincial or local middle- or high-level cadres for starvation. That is to say, the

CPC Central Committee generally did not easily punish the cadres below just because some peasants died of starvation.

For example, in the spring of 1958, the year of the so-called Great Leap Forward, there was a large-scale spring famine, and at one time, 16 provinces were experiencing food shortages and food cuts in the countryside, and peasants were fleeing the famine and dying of starvation, with Mao Zedong's instructions alone calling for the attention of all regions on as many as three or four occasions.

According to the CPC Central Committee on April 25, 1958, the CPC Central Committee reported to the General Office of the news from all over the world that 1.3 million people in Anhui Province were short of food, and thousands of peasants had wandered into other provinces. Tens of thousands of peasants in the four prefectures of Hebei had gone out to beg for food, and 12 people had been found to have committed suicide because of starvation. In Shandong province, 670,000 people were deprived of food, and as many as 150,000 people fled to beg for food. In the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, there are more than 1.2 million households in 965 townships in 29 counties, accounting for 16.2% of the region's total population, and 57,000 people have been deprived of food. In Guangdong Province, 50 counties and cities counted nearly one million people who were deprived of food due to the spring famine, and it is known that 7 people died of starvation, 69 people suffered from starvation sickness and edema, 10 people sold their children, and 66 people begged for food.

Two points in this brief forwarded by the central government are particularly noteworthy. One is that it points out: the main reason for this situation is not because there is no food available, "first of all, because the leading cadres of the affected areas of the food situation is not mapped, the situation is not enough to estimate, especially some cadres are afraid of committing a right leaning, see the cry of lack of food do not believe that do not actively take measures. In addition, the supply work in some areas was improperly organized, and after the occurrence of the grain shortage, they did not quickly grasp the work of consolidation and marketing, and did not supply the real grain shortage in time, resulting in the expansion of the area of grain shortage."

By comparing this with the State Council's criticism of the Guangxi Provincial Party Committee's mistakes mentioned above, we can see that the CPC Central Committee is well aware that most of the problems of this kind are due to the fact that many middle- and high-ranking cadres "have been seriously detached from the masses in their work, do not understand the situation below them, and have made insufficient estimation of the development of the disaster situation," and so, even though they clearly had the money and the grain to pay for them, they were unable to take precautionary action, thus artificially causing the famine and death of people. This is why, despite having food and money, they were unable to prevent the disaster and caused the famine and deaths artificially.

Another point worth noting is that the brief does not emphasize much on food shortages and food cuts in the text; it uses the term "food riots" more often and compares food shortages and food cuts to "food riots". Because of the lack of food, food and "food" mixed together, as a result, even if some local cadres are found to exist in serious malfeasance, may not attract great attention. As the briefing clearly said, Gansu province, 21 counties out of food, such as Hui County, people eat all the chickens, dogs, cats, most people can only to the bark of the grass roots to feed the hungry. In the county, 2,031 people suffered from edema, with one cooperative accounting for 15 percent of the deaths, four families dying, and nearly 800 people dying of starvation in the county. The brief stated that the county was not without food available for emergency relief. The county committee, because it did not believe that there was a shortage of food down there, held back 20 million pounds of grain sales and stockpiles "in the county and did not distribute them, which could have been supplied for two and a half months." It is because of the Hui County County Committee of such serious malfeasance as an error of judgment, the briefing not only did not call for punishment of the county committee, but also particularly praised the Gansu Provincial Party Committee, said that Gansu proposed "'mobilization of the whole party to fight for three days and nights', to solve the problem as soon as possible," is an excellent attitude.

Of course, there is another view that cannot be left out. That is, most of the people in charge of economic work thought that this was mainly due to the insufficient production of food on a national

scale. For example, Tan Zhenlin wrote in reply to one of Mao's instructions of May 24 inquiring about the shortage of food for the peasants in Shandong:

"The average ration per person (per year) in Shandong Province is 360 pounds, and in a few mountainous areas it is more than 200 pounds, which is generally said to be enough. Since last winter, labor intensity has increased, and some people do not have enough to eat, which is a national phenomenon. The food problem is mainly the increase in production can not catch up with the need to increase the ration, this difficulty, it is estimated that within three or five years that may be solved, that is, the national average per person has a thousand pounds of food: 600 pounds of food rations, 200 pounds of seeds, 100 pounds of surplus food."

Here the ration catty refers to the original grain catty, into the finished grain and only 75% of this catty. That is to say, 360 pounds of raw grain is equal to 270 pounds of finished grain, averaged over 365 days a year, Shandong farmers at that time, the most they could eat every day only 7 two or so of grain. If it is 200 pounds of raw grain, the average daily can only eat about 4 taels of grain. With such a small amount of rations, how could there not be spring and summer shortages, to the point of famine? However, the leaders in charge of food and economic work at that time believed that "generally speaking, there is enough to eat". This seems to have been one of the reasons for the persistence of spring and summer famine for several years.

### Mao's Changing Attitude Toward the Dead

In the above briefing, the Central Committee politely criticized the practice of the county committee of Hui County in Gansu Province, but on the other hand, it did not ask the Gansu Provincial Party Committee to "deal with the matter seriously", and praised the Gansu Provincial Party Committee for its positive attitude towards the issue of disaster relief, to a large extent because Zhang

Zhongliang, the first secretary of the Gansu Provincial Party Committee, had been praised by Mao Zedong for his efforts in connection with the Great Leap Forward, which was an important factor in the agricultural leap forward of various provinces in China. The Great Leap Forward in agriculture in all provinces was an important flag bearer. Whether or not the Great Leap Forward could be realized was the most important criterion for measuring a cadre's performance in 1958. Moreover, most of the leaders from Mao Zedong to the Central Committee had just come from the revolutionary war era. In their eyes, there was not much difference between building and fighting, and the Great Leap Forward was actually designed and promoted according to the thinking of fighting a war.

Check Mao Zedong's 1958 speeches can be seen very clearly, until the end of November of this year, he was holding "for the sacrifice of many strong will, dare to call the sun and moon for a new day," the logic of the revolution to think about the problem.

On March 9, at the Chengdu meeting convened by the CPC Central Committee, Mao Zedong talked about the problem of the dead. When a leader reported a high increase in workplace accidents in labor, he interjected, "This is a small price to pay to catch up with Britain. Be prepared for 500 deaths in each province, more than 10,000 in one year, 100,000 in 10 years, and deaths all the time."

On May 17, at the second meeting of the Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China, speaking of war and peace, Mao Zedong was even more explicit: no one wants to go to war, but be prepared to have war nuts. "Fighting should also not make a fuss, fighting a war is nothing but death. War dead we have seen, the population wiped out half in China's history there have been several times. Atomic war is now inexperienced, I do not know how many people have to die, the best left half, the second best left one-third, more than two billion people left a few hundred million, a few Five-Year Plans on the development. In exchange for the total demise of capitalism and the achievement of permanent peace, this is not a bad thing."

On August 19, Mao Zedong in the Beidaihe meeting again said, "After so many years of war, so many people died, no one can compensate for the loss; now engage in construction, but also a vicious war, fight a few years of life, and later to fight, which is always less than the death of the war."

On November 1, Mao Zedong in Xinxiang, Henan Province, with a few county party secretaries talked about the easy deaths and injuries that occur in the clay method of steelmaking is still speaking in this way. He said, "This is better than fighting Japan, better than fighting Chiang Kai-shek; if you have to die in a war, this may also kill one or two."

Analyzing these statements above by Mao Zedong it is clear that he did not completely care about the deaths. His view is very clear, the war dead more people, but can not be avoided, the fight should be fought, the death of more people, the victory is not a bad thing; to engage in the construction of the death of some people is inevitable, to high-speed development is impossible not to pay a little price, can not be because of the death of a few people do not go to leapfrog. However, he identified a point, to engage in the construction of the dead much less, a construction site, "one or two", the country up to "1 year more than 10,000", will not be a large-scale deaths. Therefore, once he realized that building like a war could cause mass deaths, he stopped talking like that.

When did Mao realize that using the Great Leap Forward method might cause serious deaths? It would have been from late October to early November of that year. Because we notice that from this time onwards, his attitude changed all of a sudden when he was speaking on this issue, and he began to emphasize repeatedly that the peasants should be well-fed and well-slept, and that they should not be overworked.

On November 10, Mao Zedong made this even clearer in his speech at the Zhengzhou meeting. He said: We must enable the producers to eat and eat well, and we must make sure that there are enough calories and nutrients in the food. He made special mention of the fact that 40,000 people had now died in the middle of a few months in Yunnan, because no attention had been paid to

making people well fed. "As long as people are fighting hard, more than ten hours a day, not eating enough, not resting enough, food, oil and salt, vegetables, that thing is not paid attention to (is to die)." This compulsive practice "Now we must stop it. One must eat, the other must sleep enough." "There is superiority in practicing socialism, but people die, tens of thousands of them." What kind of superiority is this?

Ten days later, at the Wuchang Conference, Mao's words were spoken even more heavily. He said: you can't do it like you did in the past. "Except in special cases, it's still necessary to get a little sleep. Now the tasks have to be lightened." Next year's production targets have to be lowered, and people can't always be overwhelmed, otherwise, "I see that if we get into it, half of China will have to die. Not half of them will have to die one-third or one-tenth of them, and 50 million people will die. Guangxi died, Chen Man Yuan is not withdrawn? Dead 50 million people your job is not removed, at least my job to be removed, the head is also a problem." He pointed to Zeng Xisheng, the first secretary of the Anhui Provincial Party Committee, and said, "Anhui wants to engage in so much (?)? It's okay for you to engage in more, but on the principle that no one will die." He particularly emphasized the need to bring down the amount of earth and stone in water conservancy construction nationwide this winter and next spring, and criticized the central government's plan to raise it two or three times from the 1958 level as inappropriate. He claimed that he could not afford to take the responsibility, saying, "I can't do anything about it if you have to do it, but you can't kill my head if you die".

Why Xie Fuzhi was not punished

The first secretary of Yunnan Province at this time was Xie Fuzhi. Nearly 40,000 people died in Yunnan Province in a few months, far more than the losses caused by Chen Man Yuan in Guangxi a year earlier when he was in office. However, Xie Fuji was unharmed. Mao Zedong not only did not punish Xie Fuzhi, but also praised him for his well-written inspection report.

What did Xie Fuji's inspection report say? The report said:

Between the spring and summer of this year there were serious deaths in Yunnan. Swelling disease to late June and early July the incidence of a surge, more than 70 counties and cities throughout the province, and dysentery and other epidemics. Although we have taken some measures, has 4 times sent medical teams to check and help, and allocate special food, special funds, but stop powerless. To October 10, the province's cumulative morbidity of more than 388,000 people, deaths of 39,721 people, of which half of the deaths due to swollen disease.

Yunnan Province, the death of the most serious Qujing area, a total of 19,072 deaths, accounting for 48% of the deaths in the province. And the area is concentrated in Luliang, Luxi, Qujing and other counties. Only Luliang County, that is, 12,917 people died, accounting for 67% of the number of deaths in the area, accounting for 5.6% of the county's total population, 5,205 deaths due to swelling, accounting for 40% of the number of deaths.

After autopsy and clinical treatment, it was concluded that the disease belonged to mixed malnutrition type edema, the cause of which was mainly excessive fatigue and malnutrition. It is found that each farmer needs 2500 calories per day under normal labor conditions, and 3000 to 5000 calories when labor is most intense. However, in June and July of this year, when there was a shortage of green and yellow food, rations were tighter, especially in areas where last year's harvest was poor, and some farmers were only able to eat four or five taels of food per day, and the intensity of their work was so great that deaths were the result.

The report acknowledged that the key to the problem, is the leadership style is not deep, cadres forced to order, and cited the death of Luliang County with local cadres to organize the "supervisory team", whipping and coercion of peasants, the masses do not pay attention to their lives, leaving the farmers with too little food rations, the farmers' labor intensity doubled has a direct relationship.

On behalf of the provincial party committee, Xie Fuzhi requested the central government to take disciplinary action against him, and wrote a special letter to Mao Zedong, saying that he would take the main responsibility.

Mao Zedong authorized Xie's report, saying:

"The Yunnan Provincial Party Committee made a mistake, as they said in the report, in not realizing in time that the problem of swelling and disease was occurring in a part of the country. The report has analyzed the problem appropriately and handled it correctly. The work in Yunnan may, because of the swelling and disease, learn a lesson and be immunized, and they will never make the same kind of mistake again. Bad things have turned into good things, and what goes around comes around. Other provinces, there may be some places to make the same mistakes as Yunnan, because they have not made the same kind of mistakes that Yunnan has made, have not learned a deep lesson, have not gained immunity. In our people's lives for such a major problem lack of concern, insufficient attention, poor care (which is now almost universal), can not be blamed on others, with our work for the task is too heavy, closely related. A thousand pounds of heavy burden pressed down, county and township cadres have no choice but to do it, less work is called 'right-leaning', people's minds to one-sided up, care about production, forget about life. The solution: (1) Don't make the task too heavy, don't exceed the possibility of the masses' energy burden, leave some leeway for the masses; (2) focus on production and life at the same time, walk on two legs, don't be one-sided."

Mao's response: toughing it out

In March and April 1959, when the spring famine season arrived, the disasters of previous years were not only repeated, but also became more menacing.

The most serious areas, such as Jining and Liaocheng in Shandong, where more than 14 million people were short of food or cut off food, 300,000 to 400,000 peasants fled the famine, and the cumulative number of people suffering from edema reached more than 550,000, and the number of people who had reportedly died of starvation reached 1,526 people. Among them, "163 people, or 10.68%, committed suicide due to difficulties in life; 953 people, or 62.45%, died of edema; 95 people, or 6.22%, died of dry stools due to eating too much chaff; and 315 people, or 20.64%, died of starvation." In addition, "58 cases of selling babies and abandoning children have been discovered," and more than 35,600 heads of farm animals have died in Jinxiang and Shanxian counties alone.

The Shandong Provincial Party Committee truthfully reported that so this situation will occur, an important reason is that last year's production was reported high, the state levied excessive grain. The report said that last year, Shandong Province grain production did achieve an unprecedented harvest, but the development of the national requisition plan before the expected grain production reported too high, the fall again approved figures are still on the high side, the actual production and the initial projections may be more than double the difference. Coupled with too many meetings of cadres at all levels, failed to penetrate into the actual situation, do not understand the following shortage of food, but also a big anti-concealment of production and private sharing, "the result is not only failed to counteract what food, but on the contrary, to the tense situation of the grain has 'added fuel to the flames', resulting in panic, with food without food are shouting shortage of food, hard to distinguish between true and false, and the population continues to be in a state of panic, and it is difficult to distinguish between true and false. The population continued to flow out of the country in large numbers.

Similar situation is not only in Shandong province. Secretary of the State Council Office sent a report at this time, indicating that the country's 15 provinces in a serious spring famine, at least 25.17 million people lack of food, food, the disaster is serious. Mao Zedong read also anxious, immediately drew up a "15 provinces 25.17 million people without food big problem," the eye-catching title, urgently approved to Zhou Enlai, and asked to immediately use the airplane to send the first secretary of the provincial party committee of the 15 provinces, "hand received. He suspected that

"some of the local leaders may not be aware of the situation and therefore have not yet dealt with it".

It was only at this point that Mao realized that there might be a major problem with the 1958 grain output that the central government had previously determined. At the Seventh Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), which began in early April, he had already expressed doubts about the target set by the Sixth Plenary Session of reaching a national grain output of 1,050 billion pounds in 1959. Because the grain output in 1958, as verified by the Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Grain, was only 500 billion pounds, 240 billion pounds less than Mao's estimate of a "fixed figure," i.e., 740 billion pounds. Mao therefore began to recognize that it was impossible to significantly exceed the production of grain and cotton. He also defended himself for last year to believe and help publicize Xushui and other million mu of "satellite" fields, said, last year I only looked at the acres of fields, other places have not seen. What 10,000 catties of mu, I do not believe, unless a catty by catty weighing. Now the problem is, 1050 billion pounds of indicators have been announced, "now change is not good to change, change for fear of discouragement, Chinese, foreigners (in front of) are not good." Can only hope that "seven to put together, a variety of sweet potatoes, beans are also counted, may reach a trillion pounds, 900 billion pounds".

Of course, even if only 500 billion pounds of grain production could be realized in 1958, it was still a huge increase over the 370 billion pounds in 1957, so Mao believed that this was also the "Great Leap Forward". Therefore, he was nervous about this year's spring famine, but still hold the belief that every year the spring famine can be passed, that this year is no exception. Therefore, on the one hand, he realized that this year's situation was rather severe, and therefore agreed with Li Xiannian's proposal of compressing the sales of grain in urban and rural areas, especially in cities, and ordered to limit the per capita grain ration of urban and rural populations to about 28 to 30 pounds per month; on the other hand, he hoped that the spring famine would pass quickly. This mood can be seen clearly in one small example. That is to say, on April 17th, has just anxiously authorized to solve the big problem of 25.17 million people without food, on the 26th in the Ministry of the Interior reported on the spring famine has improved the situation of the circular, he immediately

approved the transfer of all over the world, so as to relieve the hearts of the people. Of course, he still warned the local party committees: "must take measures to make proper arrangements to survive the spring famine, and safely catch up with the wheat harvest and early rice". He also instructed to "plant a variety of melons and vegetables, pay attention to have to eat and save food, eat less during leisure time, eat more during busy time. Do not be careless".

Spring famine in 1959 lasted much longer than in the past, the deaths are much more than in the past. Shandong alone, by mid-May there were still more than 300,000 edema patients, nearly 120,000 people fled the famine. The Jining local committee reported that, according to incomplete statistics, 7,569 people had died of starvation since the beginning of the year. Even the Shandong Provincial Committee itself did not fully believe this report. Because a county in Juno County has reported that the number of deaths during the six months amounted to 7,536, and 1,860 were known to be unnatural deaths; Jinxiang County also reported that more than 6,700 people died during the six months, and 1,500 died in an unnatural way. The number of unnatural deaths in these two counties in six months exceeded 3,300, not to mention that the number of normal deaths reported in the two counties was not very credible, for they were much higher than the number of normal deaths in six months in previous years. The severity of the food shortage can also be reflected by the deaths of farm animals. According to the report of the Jining local committee, the original 650,000 heads of farm animals in the prefecture died all at once in more than half a year for lack of fodder and other reasons, and even those that were alive were very weak. The rations left by the government to the peasants were only five or six taels of grain per person per day, and a considerable portion of it was dried potatoes, which could barely sustain life. Such a small amount of food would be deducted at various levels of management, or the ration for eight people would be divided equally among 10 people. As a result, many hungry peasants ended up digging up and eating the seedlings and peanut seeds they had just planted. Manpower and animal power were already extremely weak, and it was already difficult to carry out spring plowing, so it was not easy to plant some grain and have it dug up and eaten, so spring sowing and planting naturally had to be seriously affected, which in turn directly sowed the seeds of a more serious famine in the summer and fall and in the following year.

Because many provinces had overreported and exaggerated in the previous year, coupled with the "Great Leap Forward" period of "pulling out white flags" and fighting the right leaning, the disaster was already very serious, but no province would take the initiative to report it truthfully. Even if problems were found, they were concealed as much as possible, so that many serious situations were revealed only after the CPC Central Committee or the State Council learned about them from letters from the public and authorized the local authorities to check them out. Under these circumstances, Mao Zedong and the CPC Central Committee still lacked sufficient understanding of the seriousness of the problems, especially their coverage. For example, Tan Zhenlin, the vice-premier in charge of rural work, also knew that there were many deaths and great difficulties in various places, but still demanded that the localities had to fulfill the original requisitioning tasks. He even emphasized the need to mobilize the peasants to take care of the overall situation to reach the task. In a report on June 20, he said that the situation of this year's summer grain crops was as follows: first, the mu yield was much higher than that of last year; second, the situation of grain supply was tight, and the task of requisitioning was larger than that of last year; third, the sown area was much smaller than that of last year, and it was difficult to say whether the total output could be more than that of last year. Therefore, the difficult situation of food from the national point of view has not been transformed, but also to wait for all the summer grain down, the food situation may be turned into a proactive. But in any case, he asked the actual grain levy up. He emphasized that if the work is done, the task will be accomplished. His reasoning was: "Don't underestimate the peasants; you should estimate them a little higher." For, "China's peasants have developed the view of looking after the big picture during their long revolutionary exercise."

With Tan Zhenlin in charge of agriculture and other such views, Mao Zedong believed that the spring famine is almost over, the situation has improved. the end of June, he summoned the central and local leaders to Mount Lu, ready to open a "fair meeting", we are leisurely, relaxed and summarize the study of the front! The "Great Leap Forward" experience and problems.

Of course, Mao Zedong did not realize that the "Great Leap Forward" out of a serious problem, his summary is to keep a bottom line, that is, the achievements and mistakes to "nine open". In his words: "great achievements, many problems, the future is bright". As for that one point of error,

such as a large increase in food production but made so nervous, although he was nagging, not understand, but advocate that now do not have to look into it, "said clear on the said, said not to say that the hard head on the top, to do, next year something more, it is clear".

Lushan turn is not Peng Dehuai trouble

Do not know where the problem is, Mao Zedong and how he intends to go to change the status quo of food tension? Previous party history, national history, most of the writings attach great importance to the Lushan meeting of the turn of the problem. That is to say, the meeting was originally to anti-left, Peng Dehuai July 14, a letter, criticizing the "petty bourgeois fanaticism", annoyed Mao Zedong, the meeting from the anti-left all of a sudden turned to the anti-right to go. And this statement, Mao Zedong himself said many times afterward.

However, if we note that from the beginning to the end of the Lushan meeting Mao Zedong did not figure out where the root of the problem was, then it is not so credible to say that Peng Dehuai did not submit a letter to the meeting, the meeting would have been able to form a solution to the problem, and would have insisted on anti-left, too. Indeed, a study of Mao's views on the solution of the food problem in the first part of the Lushan meeting will corroborate this judgment.

On July 5, in connection with the report of Chen Guodong, Minister of Grain, Mao made his suggestions specifically on the grain problem, which included the following points: First, assuming that this year's crop is really better than last year's, more grain should be requisitioned, so that the country will have grain in its hands in case of a crisis. Second, the sales program for the next year should be vigorously compressed, on a par with 1957. 1957 wasn't a good year for everyone? "Tell the peasants that it is possible to resume the chaff and half-yearly grain. Suffer for a year, two years, three years, and then turn over a new leaf. More reserves, less to eat, to people rationing, food to households, canteen meals, savings to their own, busy time more food, idle time less food, there are rare dry, grain and vegetable mixed food, can still eat well, can not do so?" Third, "Producing more grain is the best policy. Field corners, sporadic land, who grows who collects, not levy or purchase,

mainly to solve the fodder, partly for human use. Restoration of private vegetable gardens, must be discretionary to self-reserved land. All such, can be more income. Both can harvest more, can eat more." Fourth, "in this year's fall harvest do know grain production than last year under the circumstances, must be set aside livestock feed, pig feed two, must be more than in the past, whether it can be half of the human grain? One pound of human grain, half a pound of fodder."

It can be seen from the above two points, Mao Zedong was aware of some of the problems of communization that led to the hardship of the peasants in their daily lives, and he also put forward some solutions to help solve the problem of peasant famine. However, his premise was still "eating in the cafeteria". What does "eating in the canteen" mean? It meant that the peasants still could not feed themselves; it meant that Mao still wished to insist on an egalitarian supply system for the peasants; it meant that the peasants still had to lead a collective life, that they could not own their own things, and that they could not live in their own houses for the most part. How could the peasants run their own plots, private gardens, and corners of fields when it was not easy for them to maintain even a basic family life? How can they economize for themselves and grow their own food?

As for the first and second points, it is the requirement of "buying more and selling less". "More purchases and less sales" has been the consistent policy of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) since the implementation of the policy of centralized purchasing and sales. However, at a time when the food supply has already begun to be seriously out of line with the needs of the people, and when there are already serious food shortages in many places and a large number of starvation deaths have begun to take place, this demand, which is explicitly put forward by the Chairman of the Central Committee, will not bring about even more serious and disastrous consequences once it has been finalized, if it is confirmed? even more serious and disastrous consequences? Mao Zedong did not see this, apparently because he was not aware of the extent of the danger of the food problem. His confidence and data continued to come from those in charge of economic and food work. The reason why he had to make these points in the plenum specifically on the grain problem was also that the leaders of most provinces were crying out about grain difficulties and asking the Central Committee to reduce the number of grain requisitions for 1959

and to liberalize the amount of grain sales for 1959. And the CPC Central Committee in charge of the economy, finance, grain work between the head and the local leaders have appeared top cow phenomenon, he stepped in to ask in fact to help the Central Committee to do to persuade the leaders around the ideological work.

Mao Zedong based on: First, even if the total grain output in 1958 was only 500 billion pounds, it was still 35% more than in 1957, realizing the "Great Leap Forward". If according to Tan Zhenlin and others reported that in 1959, although there is a reduction in the sown area, but the success of the year is certainly better than 1958, mu yield is also high, the total amount of grain production will not be lower than 1958, then, why can not still be compared to 1958, requisitioned to 110 billion pounds it? Second, in 1957, the country only sold 83.9 billion pounds, without any problems, why not in 1959 to the 1957 83.9 billion pounds of sales, or even a little lower, "whether it can be adjusted to 80 billion pounds, or 81, 82 billion (pounds)?" Deducting 12 billion pounds of military grain, exports and pig feed, between this in and out, the central and local authorities can not be a net reserve of 16 billion pounds to make up for the existing shortfall of more than 30 billion pounds of stock?

Obviously, by listening to the report to understand the overall situation of Mao Zedong at this time not only do not understand the actual situation of the national food problem, but also do not understand the 1958 industrial, water conservancy "Great Leap Forward" caused by the urban and rural demographic structure of the change in the relationship between supply and demand for food, brought about by a great change in the situation. He only noted that in 1958 grain sales of 101.8 billion jin, exceeding the 1957 annual 83.9 billion jin too much, but did not think of the urban and rural industrial "Great Leap Forward" and water conservancy construction, the urban population increased by 20 million people, rural enterprises and water conservancy construction has also made a considerable portion of the peasants to eat commercial food. The 20 million new urban population alone required almost 10 billion kilograms of grain, mainly rice and noodles, excluding dried groundnuts. Together with the hundreds of millions of peasants who have been put into large-scale water conservancy construction projects throughout the country, the amount of commercial grain needed is enormous. As long as the existing demographic structure remained unchanged and the

"Leap Forward" policy was continued, it was simply impossible for grain sales in 1959 to fall below the 1958 level. The Ministry of Grain initially planned for this level, with sales in 1959 originally set at 102 billion pounds. But as soon as Mao Zedong questioned this at the meeting, the Ministry of Grain immediately wavered and switched to 85.5 billion pounds. Mao Zedong, however, still feels that this figure is too much, always feel that should be able to "and 1957 on a par", that is, the so-called 1957 is not everyone living quite well? Tell the peasants to return to half a year's grain of chaff and vegetables, is it possible? If you suffer for one year, two years or three years, you will be able to turn over a new leaf.

It is worth noting that Mao Zedong was not well aware of this changing demographic situation in urban and rural areas, or at least was not sensitive to this aspect of the problem. This was not the case with the leaders of the CCP Central Committee responsible for economic, rural and food work, who had long talked about this aspect of the situation. However, they did not realize at this time that they needed to address the problem from this aspect. On the contrary, they immediately accepted Mao's suggestion from the point of view of easing the tension in the national grain reserves under their own charge. Not only that, but they also expressed their disagreement with Mao's proposal to restore members' self-reserved land for self-growing and self-feeding and to exempt them from the levy of public grain, believing that it would have too great an impact on the national grain interests. Li Xiannian then reminded Mao in particular, "Calculating on the basis that the self-reserved land accounts for 5 percent of the cultivated area, the country will reduce the levy by about 2.3 billion jin of fine grains, which translates into about 200 million yuan. I suggest that this part of the grain exempted from levying can be temporarily transferred to be paid by the commune or the basic accounting unit and implemented for one year before looking at it."

All of this discussion and decision-making above took place at the beginning of the Lushan Conference, i.e., before July 14, when Peng Dehuai submitted his petition. In fact, Peng Dehuai is just as unclear about the actual production of grain in 1958, not to mention the seriousness of the grain problem at that time, he also believes that "30% increase in grain and cotton production is certain". In other words, after July 14, although Mao Zedong turned to criticizing the right because

of Peng's letter, the meeting's view of the grain problem and Mao's proposed solution to the problem in the early part of the meeting did not change.

On July 31, the CPC Central Committee, in accordance with Mao's proposal, set the targets for grain requisition and sales for the next year, with a planned total output of 500 billion pounds and 110 billion pounds to be purchased; while the requisition was basically the same as that of the previous year, it was reduced by nearly one-fourth of sales compared with that of the previous year, which was set at 82 billion pounds. Plus an additional 2 billion pounds of feed allocated to the national hog production base, or 84 billion pounds. This figure was basically the same as the 83.9 billion pounds in 1957. Moreover, there was an increase in grain exports under the plan, i.e., from 8.2 billion pounds in 1958 to 10 billion pounds.

In a report explaining this program, Minister of Grain Chen Guodong said: according to this purchase and sale plan, there will be no reduction in farmers' rations; on the contrary, there is an increase over the standard of 417 pounds set in 1955, and the national annual average of farmers' retained rations per person can go up to 440 pounds, which is equivalent to about 330 pounds of finished grains, and averages out to nine taels of grain per person per day. "If in the season when there are melons and vegetables, mixed with some melons and vegetables, and systematically processed some dried vegetables, reserve, and grain mixed with food, not only can eat enough, but also can eat well."

It is clear from Chen Guodong's algorithm and presentation above that even the Minister of Grain himself did not understand that the actual number of rations in the hands of the farmers could not be extrapolated in this way on average on paper. In addition to seed grain and fodder grain, the so-called provident fund, public welfare fund, and various kinds of mobile grain retained by the county commune brought about by communization alone cut off a large number of the farmers' rations.

At the beginning of the year, Mao Zedong sharply criticized the commune level for "accumulating too much", "communalizing" everything, and "actually robbing production". He cited the example

of Henan, saying that in addition to the state tax of 7%, the "accumulation" of the county commune level from the total income of the production team accounted for 26% of the production consumption of at least 20%, but also to collect a few percent of the public welfare, management fees, if you count more than 20% of the number of unified purchasing ... ..the average annual ration of the peasants was at most two or three hundred pounds of raw grain, and it was impossible to reach the level of 440 pounds of raw grain.

If we pay attention to the situation presented by Ke Qingshi, we can better understand how unreliable the calculations on paper are. He told of the situation in which cadres at the two levels of the communes in the provinces of eastern China, for the convenience of their work, or even for their own benefit, retained large quantities of motorized grain. According to Zhenjiang, Jiangsu Province, nine communes, 15 brigades survey, each member of the annual burden of mobile grain up to 31 pounds. Some brigade for this reason, not hesitate to withhold members of the ration, originally each person should get the basic ration of only 226 pounds per year, was deducted to 80 pounds, to the members of the actual hands only 146 pounds.

The subsequent situation also quickly proved that the Ministry of Food's algorithm was completely divorced from reality. As grain was already very tight everywhere, it was simply impossible to leave rations for the peasants at the level of 440 pounds of grain per capita. Unable to resist the central government's requisitioning mission, the localities soon demanded that the farmers' rations be reduced to meet the requisitioning needs, and the central government could only agree to this. More than a month later, that is, on September 17, the central government officially approved Gansu provincial party committee on food work report to the localities, agreed that "the rural areas in general per person yearly average of 400 pounds of grain to stay up and down, the minimum of not less than 365 pounds". This means that even if the farmers can get all the rations according to the official standard, each person can only eat seven or eight taels of grain per day (here refers to the finished grain, the ratio of raw grain into finished grain is generally 70%~80%). Not to mention the fact that a considerable part of the seven or eight taels of grain that the peasants received each day were miscellaneous grains, including not only beans, but also a lot of dried groundnuts. Even these not-quite-top-quantity grains are often greatly reduced because of the losses in various intermediate

processes and the various deductions and embezzlement mentioned above. In many places, peasants could eat only four or five taels of grain a day, or even less, and serious food shortages and even widespread famine were inevitable. From this we can

We know that in 1959, when the food problem was already quite serious, no matter whether the Lushan Conference criticized the left or the right, as long as Mao Zedong and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) did not realize the seriousness of the problem and its crux, and continued to insist on formulating and practicing the policy of "levying more and selling less," the proliferation of widespread famines and the development of famines would inevitably be aggravated.

False achievements created by the anti-rightist tendency

The Lushan Conference's shift to criticizing the right led to the fact that a large number of cadres from the central to local levels who tried to reflect serious problems at the grass-roots level to the central government were branded as "right-leaning opportunists" in batches and severely punished. In more than 80 counties in Hunan, more than 30 first secretaries of the county party committees were severely punished. The first secretaries of the county committees of 16 counties in the Xinyang area of Henan Province were dismissed. In one area, Liaocheng, Shandong, more than 20,000 cadres were criticized or characterized as right-leaning, and tens of thousands of people were criticized. This had two extremely serious negative effects: first, the cadres at all levels were scared out of their wits and could only use all kinds of forceful measures to force the peasants to collect grain even more recklessly; second, false information became more prevalent, and the situation as seen by the CPC Central Committee and Mao Zedong became more and more disconnected and distorted from the reality.

Because the cadres in various places worked hard to fulfill the target of "levying more and selling less" set by the central government, the national purchasing and marketing target was fulfilled unusually well from the fall and winter of 1959 to the beginning of 1960. The Ministry of Grain was

extremely excited about this, and in the Ministry's report to Mao Zedong and the Central Committee on January 26, 1960, the first sentence that came up was: "The current grain situation is very good."

According to the report of the Ministry of Grain, according to the requisition plan for the year 1959 (i.e., from July 1959 to June 1960), in but half a year, i.e., by December 25, 1959, 94 percent of the requisition had been completed. Together with the new summer grains to be requisitioned in May-June 1960, the program will certainly be exceeded. The implementation of the grain marketing plan has also been very steady, with only 40.1 billion pounds sold between July and December 1959, a decrease of 4.2 billion pounds from the same period in 1958. Similarly, the grain export supply program was successfully completed and exceeded. The report said, "From the above situation, more purchases and fewer sales, and strive for the grain industry to become passive to active ..... has been done." Encouraged by this, Premier Zhou Enlai made it even more clear that it was necessary to strive for the national grain stock (including turnover grain) to be able to reach 100 billion pounds by 1962. Li Xiannian also proposed that it was necessary to strive to make the total grain output reach 750 to 800 billion pounds by 1962.

Accordingly, the CPC Central Committee formally approved on January 30 the report of the State Planning Commission on the national economic plan for 1960, in which the target for grain was set at 600 billion pounds, an increase of 11% over 1959 levels. The CPC Central Committee believed that since total grain output in 1959 had reached 540 billion jin, an increase of 8 percent over 1958, it was logical to strive for a further increase in grain output in 1960.

At this time, Mao and the CCP Central Committee leaders were not entirely without channels to identify problems. The Xinhua News Agency's Internal Reference, for example, was still sporadically reflecting and reporting on some of the more realistic grass-roots situations. For example, in the early part of the year, it reflected one after another the emergence of peasants in Jiangsu, Gansu, Hubei, Ningxia, and Guizhou who had fled the famine with no food, were swollen and skinny, died unnatural deaths, had abandoned their babies to die, had women's wombs detached, and were even being eaten by human beings. However, unlike the first half of 1959, when Mao Zedong highly valued the news of rural realities published in the Internal Reference and gave several instructions, in

the first half of 1960 Mao Zedong paid apparently little attention to such sporadic reports in the Internal Reference. Subjectively, he was apparently happier to believe the judgment of the situation from the CCP Central Committee and party and government leaders from all over the world, and was more willing to hear them say, "The situation is very good at present; it was not even as good as it is now in the spring and summer of last year," and that "the new stage of socialist construction, which began in 1958 and was consolidated in 1959, is a great deal more advanced than that of 1960, when we look at it from the perspective of 1960. The new phase of socialist construction began in 1958, was consolidated in 1959, and from 1960, it was a big step forward".

Affected by this mentality, in March of this year, the central government found that the spring shortage in Shandong again, the farmers outflow of more than 100,000 people, swollen and sick more than 90,000 people, more than 1,000 people died, but also just that the problem in the province at all levels of cadres did not arrange for the livelihood of the farmers. As long as attention is paid, do a good job, food is not a problem.

Almost at the same time, Zhou Enlai read the mass letter reflecting Anhui Province and County, Wuwei County, a large number of starvation deaths, but also just approved the first secretary of the Anhui Provincial Party Committee Zeng Xisheng, said: "transfer a letter, please read and send people to the two counties to check, perhaps this is the case, maybe an exaggeration, but this kind of individual phenomenon of the provinces, especially last year, the disaster provinces, it deserves more attention. This point was also emphasized by the President in the document he approved for the meeting of the six-level cadres of Shandong Province".

It was only a matter of time before the food problem broke out under such a policy. After entering March and April, the grain shortage in various parts of the country led to an unstoppable surge in grain sales, and the original 1959 annual sales program was greatly exceeded. At the end of February, the CPC Central Committee already had to agree to the provinces' request for an increase in the amount of grain sales, revising the original plan to sell 82 billion pounds to 91.7 billion pounds. By mid-April, the Central Committee was surprised to find that the amount of grain sold around the

country was still increasing, and that the annual sales target would probably exceed 105 billion pounds.

At the same time, a large number of peasants still had no access to grain, and consequently serious starvation deaths were occurring in an increasing number of places. In view of the countless letters from the masses flying to Beijing like snowflakes, and many senior cadres of the Central Committee also learned of the tragic situation of the farmers' starvation deaths through their friends and relatives, many places could hardly conceal the situation and had to report some of the situation to the provincial party committees and the Central Committee.

In mid-March, Jiangsu Provincial Party Committee reported the belonging to the "Gaochun County in the winter of 1958 and the spring of 1959, the occurrence of edema, emaciation, women with prolapsed uterus patients more than 14,000 people, more than 6,000 people died of unnatural deaths and more than 10,000 people out of the population of a serious event.

At the beginning of April, the Xinyang District Committee of Henan reported that "since November last year ..... there have been a cumulative total of 596,176 cases of swelling disease, purple noma and other epidemics in the whole district, with 71,658 deaths (including normal deaths), accounting for 0.85 percent of the total population" .

In fact, any local self-reported deaths at this time were concealed. For example, the June investigation by the Central Committee's working group in Xinyang found that the deaths reported by the Xinyang local committee had been artificially and greatly minimized. The actual number of deaths exceeded 430,000, including 280,000 unnatural deaths.

Mao Zedong's Self-Criticism on Promoting "Communist Winds

From May 1960 onwards, the nationwide food crunch was more than obvious, with large quantities of grain being distributed for emergency relief, and grain depots all over the country becoming more and more exposed. Finance and Trade Office of the State Council and the Ministry of Food from late May, four times in a row to all parts of the "emergency instructions", and in the name of the Central Committee several times to convene provinces and districts in charge of agriculture teleconference, requesting the completion of the central plan and deployment of the task of transferring food, but all parts of the self-care, one after another to the Central Committee to tell the emergency, has not been able to act in accordance with the requirements of the Central Committee! So much so that the central government is responsible for the supply of Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Liaoning, three cities and one province is also facing the danger of food cuts.

July 12, the State Council Finance and Trade Office and the Ministry of Food responsible person had to jointly turn to Li Xiannian, asking for emergency relief. Li Xiannian then successively to Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping, and even Mao Zedong emergency, explaining: "Now the grain stocks, Beijing, Tianjin, only enough to sell 4 days, Shanghai only enough to sell 2 days, Liaoning only enough to sell 6 days, if you do not accelerate the transportation to replenish the stock, according to the current situation, it will be out of order."

By the beginning of August, the CPC Central Committee had already found that the previous optimistic estimate was wrong again. 1960 grain output not only could not reach the planned 600 billion pounds, it is likely that only 450 billion pounds could be harvested. Grain production had shrunk by one-fourth, and the original plan could not be realized, either in terms of purchase or sale. This situation makes the CPC Central Committee very nervous, began to put forward, the country's grain arrangements for the next year must be immediately "according to the principle of the need from the low" properly deployed plans. The 1960 plan for the transfer of grain income and expenditure formulated along these lines remained on the side of the state, insisting that the amount of grain purchased by the state should be greatly increased, and the figure for 1960 was further increased to 132.5 billion jin, although the amount of grain sold was correspondingly raised to 110.8 billion jin, and that exported was lowered to 4.8 billion jin, but under the circumstance that the total output of grain was already lower than that in 1957, even if on paper the national peasants could not

realize this plan, it was not possible to realize it. Even on paper, the annual ration for each farmer in the country could only be arranged to 360 pounds of raw grain. Not to mention that this part of the "grain" left to the peasants is quite a lot of white potatoes, soybeans and so on, even if the peasants can really get this number of grain, each person can only eat an average of 7 taels of things per day.

Seeing the real problem of food, Mao Zedong's first reaction is that must be resolutely compressed water conservancy and other rural capital works, "squeeze out all possible labor force, strengthen the power of field production". He was obviously anxious, but did not think of a solution to the immediate problem; instead, he counted on a major effort to produce food in the coming year. He proposed, "Food for the people is the most important thing, food comes first, the whole party must take action, the whole people must take action, and make a big effort to produce food."

On September 7, the CPC Central Committee issued a directive that was even more unrealistic. It called for further compression of urban and rural ration standards, and proposed that peasant rations according to the north and south of the Huaihe River line, generally should maintain an average of 360 pounds of raw grain per person for the whole year, and some places should be pressed to an average of 300 pounds per person below. The instructions described that "according to the Hebei Provincial Committee survey, the average person has 0.8 city catty of raw grain per day, plus 2 pounds to 2.5 pounds of vegetables, the size of the population to transfer to eat, the labor force can maintain the usual labor."

As you can imagine, it was before and after that, because there was really no food to save from hunger, people had whimsically conceived all kinds of "substitute foods" containing this or that kind of protein and carbohydrates to make up the difference. From Mao Zedong to the local level, party and government authorities at all levels believed in the idea and tried to promote it by all means, and invested a lot of manpower, material and financial resources in organizing production.

After two consecutive years of "bumper harvests", why was there still such a serious shortage of grain, and why was there a sharp decline in grain production? Mao Zedong at this time in any case can not help but to look for answers. And he finally considered a vague answer at this time.

From October to December 1960, under Mao's instructions, the CCP Central Committee successively replaced the first secretaries of the provincial committees of three provinces, Shandong, Gansu, and Henan, where too many peasants had died of starvation. At the same time, Mao Zedong summarized the crux of the rural problems as the "Five Winds" (i.e., the Communist Wind, the Wind of Boastfulness, the Wind of Forced Commands, the Wind of Special Cadres, and the Wind of Blind Command of Production), and accordingly asked all localities to rectify the winds and rectify the societies and "correct the 'Communist Wind' as the focus, and drive the rest of the winds". and accordingly called for the rectification of the winds and societies everywhere, "with the correction of the 'communist wind' as the focus, and the correction of the remaining four crooked winds as the driving force.

On November 27, Mao Zedong again raised the question of "why there is still the phenomenon of starvation" when reporting to the Central Bureaus on the increase in grain production and harvests. Naturally, he did not admit that there was anything wrong with the Great Leap Forward or the basic policy of the people's commune, but emphasized that it was basically the result of the "Communist wind, the wind of boastfulness, and the specialization of cadres". Why did the "communist wind" arise? Mao Zedong took the lead and admitted that he had "shortcomings and mistakes", saying that "the first one to be held responsible is me, the resolution of the Beidaihe Conference, some of the contents of the over-writing".

The next day, Mao Zedong took the opportunity to forward the Gansu Provincial Party Committee on the implementation of the urgent instructions of the Central Authorities, with the mouth of the "Central Authorities" once again on his responsibility to promote the "communist wind" issue to do a more specific review. He wrote that Mao Zedong "himself had made mistakes that must be corrected. For example, one of his mistakes was to write in the Beidaihe resolution that the timing of the process of transforming the communal ownership system had been envisioned too quickly".

Moreover, it was not noted that the communes could not "share" the production of the production teams, could not engage in "one leveling and two adjustments", could not engage in more public accumulation, and could not engage in too many public works projects, etc. Mao took the initiative to review the situation.

After Mao Zedong took the initiative to review the situation, many leaders of the CCP also made self-criticisms on various occasions. At this point, the grain program targets based on the idea of the "Great Leap Forward" were rapidly reduced.

In January 1961, the CPC Central Committee also estimated that the 1961 annual grain output could reach 410 billion pounds, but the spring and summer grain tensions across the board, the country's more than 100,000 grain stations in the grain stocks fell to more than 16 billion pounds, Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, a total emergency supply of grain; summer harvest even more found that the national grain output may be up to only 280 billion pounds, or even 265 billion pounds or so. In view of this, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) had to drastically reduce the number of grain requisitions for the year 1961. As a result of the shortfall in food supply caused by the severe reduction in grain production, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, in addition to resolving to reduce the urban population by 20 million people, was also forced to decide to use the country's gold reserves of 410,000 taels, silver reserves of 140 million taels, and tens of billions of kilograms of grain imported at a price of 70 U.S. dollars per ton to fill the gap. But even then, the leaders in charge of economic work did the math and determined that 78 billion pounds of grain had to be requisitioned and that rural grain sales had to be compressed from 41.8 billion pounds to an unprecedentedly low 30 billion pounds.

According to Mao in February 1959, the peasants would not revolt if grain requisitions did not exceed 1/3 of total production. But Zhou Enlai admitted at the Central Work Conference on August 24, 1960, that before 1957 the proportion of requisitions was generally below 1/3, i.e., about 27 to 28 percent, with a maximum of 29 percent. But in 1958, because of the overestimation of production, the requisition ratio had actually exceeded 35 percent. In 1961, if 78 billion jin were requisitioned, or more than 90 billion jin of raw grain, I am afraid that it would have accounted for

33 percent of the total production. Considering the possible dangers posed by this ratio, eventually this requisition figure had to be adjusted downward to 71.7 billion jin. This, of course, could no longer prevent the even more severe famine of 1961 from taking full effect.

In early January 1961, at a working meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, the three First Secretaries of the Provincial Party Committees who had been disciplined also made formal reviews.

Zhang Zhongliang, the former first secretary of the Gansu Provincial Party Committee, admitted that the errors in Gansu's work were very serious: "In 1958, grain production was announced at 22 billion jin, and finally fell to 11 billion jin; in 1959, grain figures began to mention 40 billion jin, 37 billion jin were announced, and later set at 27 billion jin, with actual production of only 8.5 billion jin." "From the spring of 1958, outflows, swelling, and deaths occurred in several counties. 1959 and 1960 saw the problems occurring over a larger and larger area, earlier and earlier, and in a more and more serious manner. The death toll was appalling. It is now known that the total number was 850,000 (including unnatural deaths), and more than 700,000 heads of farm animals died."

Wu Zhipu, the former first secretary of the Henan Provincial Party Committee, also said bitterly: "It is estimated that from October 1959 to November 1960 the province's total death population was about 2 million people ..... In the worst affected places, people were devastated to the point that their families were broken, and almost everyone wore mourning, and families cried, and in some cases entire villages were turned into ruins, making one witness tears."

The severe starvation deaths in Shandong province began at the end of 1958 and lasted much longer, so Shu Tong, the former first secretary of the Shandong Provincial Party Committee, could not help but be criticized more.

In fact, in addition to these three provinces, the deaths in many other provinces were also very serious, only that the lid had not yet been lifted in most places. Even in those places where the lid had begun to be lifted, the famine deaths could not be curbed quickly because the situation of food shortage could not be changed for a while. Fortunately, Mao Zedong finally stopped insisting on running communal canteens, and in February 1961, for the first time, he loosened his grip on the issue of canteens, stating: "If you run a canteen or do anything else, don't do it in a uniform way, but adapt it to the situation, according to the characteristics of the place. If it does not suit the situation, let's say running a cafeteria, it is bound to collapse, and it should collapse."

Accordingly, Tan Zhenlin raised at the Central Committee meeting in early March the question of whether or not to run canteens and whether or not to continue the supply system, which the peasants were very concerned about but did not dare to raise openly, and whether it could be discussed.

On April 15, Mao Zedong's secretary Hu Qiaomu proposed in the report of the investigation of Mao Zedong's hometown, Shaoshan Commune, that "it seems that most canteens have actually become an obstacle to the development of production, and a pimple in the relationship between the Party and the masses. Therefore, we believe that the sooner this problem is solved, the better." The report also cited various examples of the destructive role of canteens.

In late April, Mao Zedong, Liu Shaoqi, and Deng Xiaoping all said that they had been cheated on the canteen issue. They unanimously agreed with Hu Qiaomu's report and advocated "decisive action". Zhou Enlai put it well: "If the canteen problem is not solved, nothing can be solved. Because people have to come and plant the land they have left behind".

In the summer of that year, the public canteens, which were the most directly destructive to rural production and the life of the peasants, were finally discontinued. After the cafeteria was disbanded, the supply system was also abolished, and some of the various personal belongings that the community team had "snatched" from the peasants were returned to the peasants, so that the

peasants returned to their family life. As a result, the peasants were able to raise pigs, chickens, and fertilizers, and to manage their own land on their own, thus regaining the ability to cope with food difficulties on their own.

In addition, the CPC Central Committee at this time also realized another key point in solving the problem of food tension, namely, the serious side effects of the "Great Leap Forward" in industry, infrastructure and water conservancy, especially the more than 20 million people who ate commercial grain in 1958, which had been increased by the big operation of iron and steel, industry, water conservancy, etc. He had to make a painful determination to reduce the growth of these people. He had to resolve to force these population growth out of "streamlining" to the countryside, and industry, infrastructure, water conservancy and many other large and medium-sized projects to implement the construction of "shut down, stop, and, turn", comprehensively shorten the industrial, water conservancy front. As a result, the severe famine that lasted for more than three years was gradually brought to an end after another year or so.

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