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**Mao Tse-tung**

**SOLVE THE PROBLEM  
OF THE "FIVE EXCESSES"**

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*Prepared © for the Internet by David J. Romagnolo, [djr@marx2mao.org](mailto:djr@marx2mao.org) (November 1999)*

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# SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF THE "FIVE EXCESSES"

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1. In our work in the rural areas there are problems involving the serious alienation of our Party and government organizations from the peasant masses and violations of the interests of the peasants and peasant activists; these are known as the "five excesses". The "five excesses" consist of an excess of assignments, an excess of meetings and training courses, an excess of documents, written reports and statistical forms, an excess of organizations, and an excess of side jobs for activists. These problems have existed for a long time; with regard to some of them the Central Committee has issued directives to Party committees at various levels, urging them to give such problems proper attention and find solutions. But far from being solved, the problems are becoming more and more serious. This is because the issue has never been systematically raised in its totality and, what is more important, no struggle has ever been waged against decentralism and bureaucracy on the part of the leading Party and government organs at the five levels -- central, greater administrative area, provincial (municipal), prefectural and county. For, generally speaking, the "five excesses" in the districts and townships are not a local product but stem from above and are the consequences of decentralism and bureaucracy existing to a serious degree in the leading Party and government organs at the county level and above. Some of the "five excesses" are a legacy of the periods of the revolutionary war and agrarian reform and have remained unchanged to this day. Therefore, in carrying out the Central Committee's directive to combat bureaucracy, commandism and violations of the law and of discipline, we must put stress on overcoming bureaucracy and decentralism in the leading organs during 1953, and alter those rules and

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\* Inner-Party directive drafted for the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.

practices which have outlived their usefulness. Only thus can the problems be solved. As for the authority of the leading organs at various levels to assign tasks, call meetings and organize training courses, send out documents and statistical forms or ask for reports from subordinate units, determine the organizational structure of districts and townships and use the activists in the villages, from now on it is up to the leading comrades in charge of the Party committee and government at the county level and above to define the proper limits in the light of what is feasible; in some cases it is up to the central authorities to define the limits for all concerned. In the past, many departments of the Party, government and people's organizations at all levels, each on its own, gave assignments to the

subordinate units, casually summoned subordinates and village activists to meetings or training courses, issued floods of documents and statistical forms and thoughtlessly demanded reports from subordinates and villages. All these undesirable rules and practices must be resolutely abolished and replaced by ones that are standardized under the leadership and suited to the needs of the actual situation. As for the great variety of committees in every township and the excess of side jobs for activists, these too should be changed firmly but gradually since they hamper production and alienate the masses.

2. With regard to the departments of the Party, government and people's organizations at the national level, the Central Committee charges the responsible comrades of the Organization Department of the Central Committee, the Administration Council of the Central People's Government and its subsidiary financial and economic, cultural and educational, and political and judicial committees with the task of quickly clearing away all practices that have given rise to the "five excesses", working out appropriate rules and practices and reporting to the Central Committee.

3. In the greater administrative areas and the provinces and municipalities, the comrades in charge of Central Committee bureaus and sub-bureaus, provincial and municipal Party committees and the administrative apparatuses at the corresponding levels are held responsible for tackling the problem of the "five excesses", working out solutions and reporting to the Central Committee. To this end, the Central Committee bureaus and sub-bureaus and the provincial and municipal Party committees are each requested to send out an inspection team for the specific purpose of looking into this problem of the "five excesses" and to review the situation in one or two districts and town-

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ships (and in the city, one or two districts and neighbourhoods) under their administration, so as to gather reference material for solutions.

4. The provincial Party committees are held accountable for giving guidance to the prefectures and counties in solving their problem of the "five excesses".

5. Agricultural production is the overriding task in the countryside; to it all other tasks play a supporting role. Any assignment or method of work that hinders the production of the peasants must be avoided. Our present-day agricultural economy remains basically a scattered small peasant economy where old-fashioned implements are used; this is vastly different from the mechanized collective farming of the Soviet Union. Therefore, in the present transition period we cannot introduce unified and planned production in agriculture, except on the state farms, and interfere too much with the peasants. We can only guide agricultural production and co-ordinate it with industrial production by our pricing policy and necessary and practicable economic and political work so that it can be integrated into the national economic plan. Any "plan" for agriculture or any "assignment" for the rural areas which goes beyond this is bound to be unworkable and is certain to evoke peasant opposition and alienate our Party from the peasant masses who constitute over 80 per cent of our population. This can be very dangerous indeed. The problem of the "five excesses" in our work in the districts and townships is in a large measure a reflection of such excessive interference with the peasants (and in a smaller measure a survival of practices that arose out of the needs of the revolutionary war and the agrarian reform). It has aroused their dissatisfaction, so there must be a

change.