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STALINISM, FAMINE, AND CHINESE PEASANTS

Grain Procurements during the Great Leap Forward

THOMAS P. BERNSTEIN

A central issue in the relationship between Marxist-Leninist states and their peasantries is the extent to which resources are extracted from the countryside in support of the goal of rapid industrialization and urbanization. The extreme case of relentless extraction was Stalin's Soviet Union, where the state's relationship to the peasantry amounted to an instance of "internal colonialism."¹ The state's procurement program imposed compulsory grain delivery quotas on the collective farms, the unconditional fulfillment of which, regardless of objective conditions, became the "first commandment" for all rural officials.² At times, extraction was carried to the point of inducing not only severe food shortages in the countryside, but also widespread famine, particularly in 1932–33 and to a lesser extent in 1947.³ The enforcement of the procurement program necessitated the imposition of a tight bureaucratic straightjacket on the countryside, not only in the form of collective farms but also of associated institutions such as the Machine Tractor Stations. Scholars do not disagree on the severity of the extraction program, but they differ on whether it attained its goals, i.e., whether agriculture in fact made a major contribution to industrialization. Some have argued, for instance, that the process of forcing the peasantry into the collective farms from 1929 on and making them comply with the harsh procurement program caused so much destruction and resistance – peasants killed more than half the country's draft animals – that resource counterflows became essential for the very survival of agriculture, such as accelerated delivery of tractors.⁴ But if the rationality of the Stalinist extraction program as a net contributor to industrialization is in dispute, its consequences are not. It thoroughly alienated the peasantry and helps explain why output stagnated throughout the Stalin era.

The Stalinist extraction program typified the adversary relationship between the Soviet state and the peasantry, which grew out of an urban-based revolution characterized already in 1918–1920 by a high degree of conflict with the peasants over forced grain requisitioning, by the growth of mutual distrust and hostility between Bolshevik elite and peasants, by Communist organizational weakness in the villages, and by the regime's assumption of the existence of a significant surplus that could be taken from the village. All this combined to produce an extraction program, which the city imposed upon the village.⁵

The relationship between the Maoist state and the peasantry has long thought to have been very different from the Stalinist case, and with good reason.⁶ Relations between the Chinese Communists and the peasants had substantial cooperative and not just adversary components, stemming from a convergence of factors that ran in the opposite direction from those that operated in the Soviet Union. The Chinese revolution was based on the peasantry. In the revolutionary process, the Communists secured significant peasant support and rural organizational capabilities, which were successfully adapted to socialist transformation.⁷ Elite attitudes were not anti-peasant and there was an undoubted commitment to the improvement of peasant welfare. Most important, China's economic development problem dictated moderation in the use of agriculture to promote industrialization. Given low per capita output and rapid population growth, the central problem was not simply extraction but development, which in turn required attentiveness to peasant incentives.⁸

During the First Five Year Plan (1953–57), China had followed the Soviet model of giving absolute priority to heavy industry, yet deviated from Stalinist practice of enforcing an extremely harsh procurement policy. As in the Soviet Union, the state sought to meet the needs of the industrializing economy for grain by imposing a monopoly on its purchase and sale, but in contrast to the Soviets, the Chinese sought to limit requisitions such that peasant "enthusiasm for production" would not be adversely affected. Mao Zedong showed himself to be fully aware of these constraints in his 1956 speech, "Ten Great Relationships," in which he linked grain policy to peasant support. He noted that in 1954–55 the state had erred in requisitioning too much grain, leading to "criticism by the peasants." But in 1955, the state implemented the so-called "three-fix" policy, reassuring the peasants that the state's claims were limited. This, together with a bumper harvest, left more grain in the peasants' hands. Mao Zedong: "All those peasants who had criticized us in the past now no longer criticized us. They all said, 'The Communist Party is fine.' The whole Party should remember this lesson."⁹

But even after 1955 annual imbalances in the grain supply, occasioned by natural disasters, prompted the state to offset losses by increasing purchases in bumper-harvest areas, leading to renewed peasant anxieties and protests. In comparative perspective, however, Chinese grain procurement policy in the years before the Great Leap Forward was moderate and made possible increased peasant consumption.¹⁰

The Great Leap Forward – an unprecedentedly intense mobilization effort launched in 1958 to achieve a developmental breakthrough – suggests that the prevailing image of Maoist China as differing fundamentally from Stalin’s Russia must be reexamined. That the Great Leap Forward should have brought China closer to Stalinist practice is at first glance a paradox. The Leap was Mao Zedong’s effort to chart an independent developmental and ideological road by breaking with the preceding years of emulation of the Soviet model. “Why can’t we innovate?” Mao exclaimed in 1958.¹¹ But Mao Zedong also became a penetrating critic of the realities of the Leap, and it was he who in early 1959, during a first phase of retrenchment, pointed to similarities with Stalinism on the issue of concern here, that of squeezing the peasants:

We should make a comparison between Stalin’s policies and our own. Stalin had too much enthusiasm. With the peasants, he drained the pond to catch the fish. Right now, we have the same illness.¹²

Mao, it is worth noting, referred not so much to state procurement of grain as to the extraction of peasant resources by the newly-established, outsized people’s communes. This was being done to boost local accumulation and does reflect distinctively Chinese approaches to development. A few years later, in August 1962, Mao, however, clearly indicated that China’s Stalinist “illness” had also included state procurement of grain:

In 1959 and 1960, certain things were mishandled because of the lack of experience of a considerable number of people and their failure to understand the problems. This consisted largely in excessive procurements where there was not enough grain but we insisted that there was and issuing of blind commands.¹³

Data that have been released only recently show that procurement of grain reached extraordinary heights, even while output fell to the level of 1951. The following table shows this clearly, especially in the case of 1959, when the state purchased grain at a rate not again seen until the 1980s. Two Chinese economists, Yang Jianbai and Li Xuezeng, provide further data, noting that between 1959 and 1961, procurements “cut” into peasant rations.

TABLE 1

Year	Grain output (MMT, unhusked)	Grain marketings (MMT, trade grain)	Marketings as percent of output (trade grain, inclu- sive of resales)
1951	143.7	-	-
1952	163.92	39.03	28.7
1953	166.83	43.05	31.1
1954	169.52	50.89	30
1955	183.94	47.54	31.1
1956	192.75	40.22	25.1
1957	195.05	45.97	28.4
1958	200	51.83	31.2
1959	170	64.12	45.4
1960	143.5	46.54	39.1
1961	147.5	36.55	29.1
1962	160	32.42	24.4
↓	↓	↓	↓
1979	332.12	60.10	21.8
1980	320.56	61.29	23
1981	325.02	68.46	25.4

Column 1: *Zhongguo Nongye Nianjian 1980* (Chinese Agricultural Yearbook, 1980), ed. Zhang Zizhong and Luo Hanxian, (Beijing: Nongye Chubanshe, 1981), 36, and *Statistical Yearbook of China 1981*, comp. State Statistical Bureau (Hongkong: Economic Information and Agency, 1982), 145.

Column 2: *Statistical Yearbook of China 1981*, 345. This calendar year series includes state procurement, taxes, above-quota sales and other marketings. See Nicholas R. Lardy, *Agriculture in China's Modern Economic Development* (New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming), Table 2-1 and comments.

Column 3: Lardy, Table 2-1, calculated after converting unhusked grain into trade grain at a ratio of .83. These data do not include resales to the peasants, i.e., to those who are grain-deficient and those who grow economic crops. Resale data are not available for the GLF.

Because our country's agriculture is backward, the rate of marketable farm produce is not high, generally fluctuating between 15–20 percent. But we have had not a few years in which the net rate of grain procurement exceeded 20 percent and in a few years 25 percent [i.e., net of rural resales]. The most glaring example was 1959, when it exceeded 28 percent. From 1959 to 1961 the actual situation was that output dropped, but because of false reports and the wind of exaggeration, procurements were set according to the reported production figures, cutting into the rations of the peasants. For three years the amount of grain left for the peasant after grain procurements was reduced to 100 million tons in 1959 and 1960 and especially in 1961 to only 92.95 million tions.¹⁴

Another contemporary economist, Xue Muqiao, reports that excessive procurements “undermined peasants’ health” and caused peasant incentives

greatly to deteriorate.¹⁵ The impact of procurements on peasants was put even more starkly by Liu Shaoqi, then the State Chairman, during a visit to his home province of Hunan in 1961:

Some people below reported a per mow output of a thousand catties, a thousand and five hundred catties, two thousand or five thousand catties. The Central Committee knew only how to procure more grain. The result was that people starved and families were torn apart.¹⁶

These statements link procurement to the hunger and famine of the crisis years of the Great Leap Forward (1959–61). The extent to which famine struck China during those years, it is important to stress, has not been fully established. No one doubts that the nation suffered from serious food shortages. Recently published data show that the per capita urban and rural grain ration declined from 203 kg in 1957 to 163.5 in 1960.¹⁷ It has also been known from a variety of primary and secondary sources that deaths from starvation occurred in particular localities.¹⁸ Openly-published post-Mao sources have explicitly noted that “edema occurred in quite a few places, and people even died of hunger.”¹⁹ But that famine on the scale of those that struck China during the Qing and Republican periods could have taken place has long been doubted, if only because the PRC has an effective government able to organize the distribution and transportation of relief grain.²⁰ In 1981, however, the Chinese economist Sun Yefang referred to the “high price in blood” paid during the Leap, when statistics were inflated and reality disregarded in pursuit of breakthroughs in production:

Such blindness and the theory of the unique importance of will in guiding the national economy brought about a great disaster, which was clearly exposed in the statistical figures on population. The national death rate rose from 10.8 per 1,000 in 1957 to 25.4 per 1,000 in 1960.²¹

Sun’s datum indicates that in 1960 alone, assuming a population of 650 million, about 9 million people died in excess of the number who died in 1957. Sun’s mortality rates for 1957 and 1960 are part of a table of vital rates published in Henan province in 1981, according to which the death rates for the other GLF years were 11.98 per 1,000 in 1958, 14.50 in 1959, 14.38 in 1961, and 10.08 in 1962.²² A crude calculation, again based on a population of 650 million, yields an estimate of aggregate excess mortality of about 15 million above the number who died in 1957.

Western demographers do not accept these data as definitive. John Aird, for instance, questions the mortality rate of 1957 as unusually low for a developing country but also the rapid drop in the death rate of 1962. He finds

inconsistencies in these data with census and other survey data released at various times. In his view, the organizational disruptions of the Leap adversely affected the reliability of population registers. Aird has constructed four models using different assumptions to reconcile divergent data. In three of these models, the mortality rate leaps forward to heights far in excess of 25.4, but in 1961, not in 1960. Only one model, based on the most optimistic assumptions, shows a relatively small increase in mortality from 18 per 1,000 in 1957 to 22.2 in 1961.²³ The magnitude of the famine thus remains in question.

Famine deaths were probably concentrated geographically in certain provinces. In 1961, Mao Zedong singled out three provinces, Shandong, Henan, and Gansu, where the situation was “grave,” evidently meaning both the food crisis and political disturbances.²⁴ Much evidence exists to show that Anhui was a province in which famine was particularly serious. A western scholar was able some time ago to see an internally held table of provincial population data, which shows a mortality rate for that province of 68 per 1,000 in 1960.²⁵ John Aird’s study of provincial populations shows net losses between 1957 and 1964 in Anhui, Gansu, and Sichuan, and population growth of less than half a percent in Shandong, Henan, Hunan, Guizhou, and Qinghai. But Aird sharply questions the reliability of his data.²⁶

A famine of uncertain magnitude occurred. Procurement of grain, judging by the materials presented earlier, played a role in this famine. Just how large this role was cannot be specified, if only because other causes also played a part, such as the manmade and natural disasters that struck China with increasing severity during the Leap and which caused the devastating decline in output shown in table 1.²⁷ The size of this decline makes it conceivable to think of a sequence in which crops were lost, massive relief was required, reserves were inadequate, the authorities were overwhelmed, and famine struck. But to the extent that procurement was a factor in the famine, to that extent a distributional explanation for famine is offered, rather than one that focuses on decline in output per se.²⁸

Procurement as a factor in famine suggests a similarity to the Stalinist famine of 1932–33. In order to clarify this question, this article will first summarize the Soviet case and then discuss the Chinese side in greater detail. Two points will emerge which suggest that while in both cases excessive procurements helped precipitate famine, the two cases also differed significantly. First, with regard to regime intent, procurements in the Soviet Union were deliberately maximized regardless of their impact on peasant welfare, and famine in 1932–33 was an outgrowth of this policy. In China, excessive procurements

resulted from false reports of increased output, i.e., the “wind of exaggeration.” Excessive procurements were thus the result of regime misjudgments rather than of a deliberate policy of harshly squeezing the peasants. Second, famine in both cases was at least to some extent the product of bureaucratic mismanagement, but here too, there were differences. In the Soviet Union, the mishandling of the procurement process exacerbated peasant discontent, ultimately leading the regime to wage a punitive “war” on the peasants. In China, bureaucratic mismanagement occurred not only in the submission of false reports but in the concealment of food shortages, once officials had committed themselves to meeting unrealistic procurement targets.

Procurements and the Soviet Famine of 1932–33

Famine broke out in concentrated form in the Soviet Union in the winter and spring of 1932–33, particularly in the major grain-growing regions of the country, including the Ukraine, the North Caucasus, parts of the Middle and Lower Volga, as well as Kazakhstan. Numerous sources on the subject exist, ranging from eye-witness accounts written by participants in the procurement campaigns, accounts by western journalists who visited stricken areas shortly after the famine had passed, analyses by Soviet dissident scholars, as well as material published officially, including literary accounts.²⁹ The sources, however, disagree on the toll in lives exacted by famine and associated diseases, largely because of the inadequacies of population data. In linking the 1929 and 1939 censuses, the demographer Lorimer found a “loss of some 5 million lives during the intercensus period above the number of deaths that would normally have been expected.”³⁰ Only a portion of these excess deaths can be attributed to the 1932–33 famine, however, since large-scale loss of life occurred during collectivization as a whole – e.g., among dispossessed and deported “kulaks” or rich peasants – and during the blood purge of the later 1930s. Other estimates for the famine deaths greatly exceed the Lorimer total, however. Twenty such journalistic and scholarly estimates collected by Dalrymple yield a range of 1 to 10 million and an average of 5.5 million.³¹ A Soviet dissident scholar, who has made a careful study of Soviet statistics, concludes that at least 6 million excess deaths occurred between 1932 and 1934, while a recent western analysis concludes that excess mortality in the years 1929–36 ranged between 8.95 million and 16.4 million persons.³²

The background to the famine was a growing crisis in state-peasant relations caused by peasant discontent with the forced collectivization program begun in 1929. The indices of this crisis were declining farm output, continuing disastrous drops in the livestock population, continuing fluctuation in the rates of collectivization, including shortfalls in the planned enrollment of

remaining individual farmers and a striking decline in the efficiency with which farm operations were performed.³³ Procurement of grain was a major source of peasant grievance and peasant resistance. Since 1927, state procurements had almost doubled even while grain output declined, the state viewing maximum acquisition of grain as absolutely essential to the country's development effort.³⁴ Procurements were handled extremely arbitrarily by an inept and disorganized bureaucratic apparatus. Openended, unpredictable requisitions made peasants insecure and fearful for their subsistence. It was not simply that (as in China) regions or farms whose output had increased were asked to give more to offset shortfalls elsewhere, but that prior to the rationalization of the procurement system in 1933, there simply were no limits placed on the acquisition of whatever grain the state could get its hands on.³⁵ It was easier to levy grain from collective farms than from individual peasants, and therefore the former often bore the brunt of the state's relentless quest for additional deliveries.³⁶ The year 1931 had seen particularly sweeping procurements. Hunger occurred already then, and peasants were left in a fearful and suspicious mood. As the Soviet scholar Moshkov notes, "after the difficult winter of 1931–32 many kolkhoz peasants feared that they would again be left without bread if there were a poor harvest and poor organization of its collection and storage."³⁷

In order to boost rural morale, Soviet leaders initiated several reform measures in the spring of 1932. One of these permitted peasants to sell grain on the free market once state obligations had been met, thereby holding out the prospect of income above that derived from very low state prices. Another lowered the 1932 procurement quota from an unprecedented 29.5 MMT to 18 MMT – a goal that was still, to be sure, very high.³⁸ In order to make collective farms more attractive, the state also sought to guarantee a private sector. The response to these concessions ran counter to the regime's expectations. Grain purchases in 1932 lagged sharply behind plan. The program experienced "extreme difficulties," especially in areas such as the Ukraine and the North Caucasus.³⁹ Table 2 compares monthly collections in the Ukraine achieved in 1931 and 1932.

Why the lag? Explanations include lowered yields as well as delays in harvesting and threshing. But the main reason is that the peasants, together

TABLE 2

August 1931:	114 mill. pood	September 1931:	94	October 1931:	75
August 1932:	47 mill. pood	September 1932:	59	October 1932:	23

Source: Moshkov, *Zernovaia problema*, 210. A pood is equal to 16.4 kg.

with local leaders, took advantage of the regime's concessions to meet their needs before those of the state. As Lewin puts it, "every ounce of peasant shrewdness" went into evading hated procurements.⁴⁰ Grain was distributed to kolkhoz peasants as payment for their labor, diverted to local uses, and hidden, especially by individual farmers, all in violation of the principle that the state's share took unconditional priority. In diverting grain, kolkhoz managers and village officials often sided with the peasants. Even county (*raion*) party organizations relaxed their vigilance, permitting violation of "state interests" with regard to the collections. Moshkov asserts that prior to November 1932, party organizations failed to carry on an active struggle for grain. Local officials, he notes, were afraid of a repetition of the "leftist excesses" that had accompanied procurements the year before. They therefore closed their eyes to what the state regarded as "misappropriation" or "squandering" of grain.⁴¹

The state's response was ruthless. It interpreted peasant evasion as politically motivated anti-Soviet behavior. A series of punitive measures was promulgated from the summer of 1932 on. In August, the death penalty was imposed for theft of grain from collective farms. ("Those who encroach on socialized property should be looked upon as enemies of the people.") Peasants who sold grain without permission could be labelled speculators and imprisoned for five to ten years. In November, additional levies were imposed upon individual farmers. In December, criminal prosecution of kolkhoz leaders who distributed grain to peasants prior to completion of deliveries to the state was authorized. Villages and collective farms that had not met their delivery quotas were blacklisted and subjected to a complete trade boycott. In December, it was decided to purge the Party in order to weed out rural Communists considered too soft. In January 1933, a new institution, the political departments of the Machine-Tractor Stations (*Politotdely*) was set up, and charged with unmasking and weeding out enemies in rural institutions.⁴² In Stalin's view, the collective farms could become organizational weapons in the hands of opponents of the regime; they "at first even provide certain facilities which enable counterrevolutionaries to take advantage of them temporarily."⁴³ In a speech to the Politburo, Stalin demanded that a "crushing blow" be dealt to those kolkhoz peasants who sabotage grain collections.⁴⁴ Moshkov notes that this speech licensed repression not only of genuine enemies but of "many kolkhozniki."⁴⁵

Stalin believed that the state and the peasantry were at war. This emerges with striking clarity from an exchange of letters between Stalin and the writer Sholokhov. Sholokhov had written to Stalin in April 1933, protesting excesses, including "torture, beatings and outrages," which were "the 'method,'

legalized on a district scale, for grain procurement” (underlining in original). Stalin replied that abuses had occurred, that “sometimes our workers, in their desire to curb the enemy, inadvertently strike friends and fall into sadism.” But abuses were only one side of the problem:

The other side is that the esteemed grain growers of your region (and not of your district alone) conducted a sit-down strike (sabotage!) and were not averse to leaving the workers and Red Army without bread. The fact that the sabotage was quiet and outwardly inoffensive (bloodless) – this fact does not alter the circumstance that the esteemed grain-growers were essentially conducting a “quiet” war against Soviet rule. A war of starvation, dear Comrade Sholokhov.⁴⁶

The grain procurement campaign launched in the late fall of 1932 to make up the earlier shortfall took the form of a punitive expedition characterized by large-scale violence, mass arrests, mass deportations, and sweeping purges of local cadres. Officials from the higher levels and the urban sector, as well as from the secret police, were mobilized. Armed emissaries with special powers descended upon the villages, steeled in the conviction that theirs was a righteous cause. Lev Kopelev, a scholar and writer now in exile who took part in the expeditions as a young man, captures the feelings of the idealists among them:

The grain front! Stalin said the struggle for grain was the struggle for socialism. I was convinced that we were warriors on an invisible front, fighting against kulak sabotage for the grain that was needed by the country, by the five-year plan. Above all, for the grain, but also for the souls of these peasants, who were mired in irresponsibility, in ignorance, who succumbed to enemy agitation, not understanding the great truth of communism.⁴⁷

The confrontational premises of this campaign made large-scale excesses inevitable. Moshkov reports that collectives that had fulfilled their obligations were faced with additional levies, in which all grain “without exception” was taken, including that retained for seed, fodder, and for distribution to collective farmers for their work.⁴⁸ Kopelev quotes the chairman of a Ukrainian village soviet, whose kolkhoz had already overfulfilled the quota:

But all over the district, a breakdown. So they sent us extra plans. One after the other. Almost nothing was left for the work day. They assigned us half a kilo, but they didn't give even that. And now, every kid can see that these were excesses. But a month ago, it was like this: bring in the grain or hand in your party card.⁴⁹

According to this chairman, every third hut in the village was empty, either from deaths within the village or because peasants had fled, some also dying on the road. In the case of individual farmers, the campaign aimed at forcing them to uncover allegedly hidden grain. Households that failed to comply

with orders to deliver were subjected to “undisputed confiscation” of all property, often including whatever food that could be found, restitution to be made when hidden grain was handed in. Kopelev, having described how this was done, comments:

Some sort of rationalistic fanaticism overcame my doubts, pangs of conscience, and simple feelings of sympathy, pity, and shame, but this fanaticism was nourished [by] people [who] in my eyes embodied and personified our truth and justice, people who confirmed with their lives that it was necessary to clench your teeth, clench your heart, and carry out everything the Party and the Soviet power ordered.⁵⁰

Kopelev refers here not only to some of his fellow outsiders, but also to wholly local cadres, of whom there were a few, though some of them were ultimately alienated by the excesses of the campaign.

The impact of the “struggle for grain” was uneven. Some villages were hit harder than others. “In some places, right next to starving districts there were those where the people somehow made ends meet, and the local authorities even reported successes.”⁵¹ But famine there was and relief was evidently withheld at least until the time of spring sowing. Stalin is said to have rebuffed requests for assistance such as that submitted by the Party secretary of Kharkov Oblast’ sometime in 1932:

They have told us, Comrade Terekhov, that you are a good orator, but it seems that you are also a good storyteller – you made up this tale about famine; you thought it would frighten us but it won’t work. It might be better if you resigned as secretary of the province committee . . . and went to work in the Writers’ Union: You will write fairy tales and fools will read them.⁵²

In the end, however, the state was “compelled” to extend “a large seed and food loan” to the Ukraine and the North Caucasus.⁵³

The terroristic grain procurement campaign of 1932–33 was successful in teaching the peasants that the kolkhoz system and its “first commandment” – unconditional fulfillment of state obligations – were here to stay. Agricultural work in 1933 was done more efficiently and by the end of 1933, *Pravda* could announce that “this year’s feature of outstanding importance was that the collectivized . . . farmers discharged their obligations without recourse to any form of mass repressions.”⁵⁴ Although procurements continued to rise as a share of output, from 1933 on procedures were to a limited extent rationalized together with the kolkhoz system as a whole, making possible a degree of peasant accommodation. But the underlying reality was that the peasants, in Lewin’s words, had “yielded to superior force.”⁵⁵

The Impact of the “Wind of Exaggeration” on Chinese Procurements

Submission to superiors of false reports of vastly inflated production plans and results were a hallmark of the GLF. The “wind” owed to the intense pressures that the higher echelons put on the rural cadre force, a point Mao himself made during a moderate phase of the Leap in the spring 1959.⁵⁶ Cadres had been subjected to intense leftist pressures since 1957. The anti-rightist movement that followed the Hundred Flowers – a brief episode of free speech – spread from the cities to the villages via the large-scale transfer to the countryside of errant cadres. Within the villages, rectification and socialist education movements paved the way for the production campaigns of the GLF. In all these movements, rightist, conservative, and “capitalist” thinking were vehemently criticized, while visions of instant progress were generated, together with calls for bold innovations and breaking with established conventions.⁵⁷

The pressures under which cadres functioned translated themselves into competitive target-setting, as leaders of rural units vied with one another to be the first in entering communism, catching up with Britain, and “launching satellites” – sputniks – in emulation of the Soviet accomplishment the year before. Launching satellites meant making commitments to attain yields that soon outstripped the 1967 targets of the Twelve-Year “Program for Agricultural Development.” Sometimes these targets escalated into the thousands and ten thousands of catties per mu.⁵⁸ The following quotation from a post-Mao short story, “The Black Flag,” which shows what happens when a commune party secretary in Hebei refuses to go along with bids made by neighboring communes to attain yields between 50,000 and 100,000 catties:

Secretary Mi [the county party secretary] bellowed over the loudspeaker, “Well, Ding Jingzhong [the commune secretary], have you lost your tongue? You haven’t said anything.” Everybody turned to Ding who, flushed and tense, was fidgeting, tearing up bits of paper. . . .

Ding spoke calmly into the microphone: “Our commune has discussed our plan. We’ll try to produce 800 catties per mu this year, 1,500 the next and 2,000 the year after.” To achieve this would require a lot of hard work from everyone. But it seemed as if no one understood this. The loudspeaker went dead.

After a long while, Secretary Mi said at last, “Attention. Have you all heard him?” Angry voices screeched out from the loudspeaker, “Yes. We did.”

Secretary Mi again. “What shall we do? Are they leaping forward or going backward? Are they sabotaging us on purpose?” There was more clamour. “They are sabotaging us. We’ll have it out with them. We’ll give them hell!”

When one of Ding’s supporters backs him up, Sun, the commune secretary’s

assistant, exclaims: “That man isn’t one of the masses. He is a big rightist, an extreme rightist!” And in the end, just as debased coins drive out the good, the stalwart hero is purged and not rehabilitated till after 1976.⁵⁹

China’s leaders came to operate with vastly inflated output figures.⁶⁰ In the case of the 1958 harvest, grain production was reported in December 1958 at 375 million metric tons, i.e., just about double the 1957 output. Verification after April 1959 yielded a reduction to 250 MMT, and in 1961 a further check lowered the 1958 harvest to 200 MMT.⁶¹ In the case of 1959, output was believed to be 270 MMT; later verification reduced this to 170 MMT. Whereas in 1958 verified output showed a modest increase over 1957, output in 1959 dropped sharply. Leaders believed in 1959–60 that they had 100 MMT more grain than they actually did.⁶² In October 1960, Zhou Enlai told Edgar Snow that the harvest was larger that year than it had been in 1957 but smaller than in 1958 and 1959. This would mean that the Premier believed grain output to have ranged between 185 and 250 MMT.⁶³ Verified output was 143.5 MMT. Given that the fullfledged retreat from the GLF got underway shortly after Zhou’s interview with Snow, it seems likely that leaders must have known by early winter that the 1960 harvest was poorer than they had thought earlier. Still, procurement took place in the summer and throughout the fall, and was therefore probably influenced by the earlier exaggerated figures. Finally, in October 1961, Mao Zedong forecast to Field Marshall Montgomery that a harvest of about 160 MMT would be reaped that year, which is fairly close to the verified total of 147.5 MMT, thereby suggesting that the “wind of exaggeration” had subsided.⁶⁴

Exaggerated reports of output naturally led to the conclusion that the state ought to have its share of the increase in order to support a more ambitious industrialization program. Believing that the grain problem had been solved, i.e., that an unprecedented surplus existed, the nation’s leaders sanctioned the precipitous growth of the urban population from 99 million in 1957 to 130 million in 1961, most of the influx taking place in the second half of 1958.⁶⁵ According to Chen Yun, a top leader and economic planner, ten million additional urbanites required 2 million tons of additional grain, i.e., 6 million in all. Considering that net procurement of husked grain (i.e., grain taken out of the rural sector, resale to grainshort rural units having been deducted) fluctuated between 19 and 25 MMT from 1953 to 1956, this was a very substantial increment, all the more so if the sharp drops in output from 1959 on are taken into account.⁶⁶

Obviously when peasants go to the city, less ration grain must be left in the countryside, thereby justifying more procurement. But in speeches made in

1961 and 1962, Chen Yun stressed that the burden of feeding 30 million additional urbanites fell disproportionately on high-yield units. After all, he observed, increased purchases can't be made in the disaster areas. It is possible to make peasants in the high-yield areas subsist on 300 catties of unhusked grain. This can be done for a year or so, "but it is not possible to do so over the long term." It destroys peasant incentives and turns high-output areas into their opposites, as had already happened in Heilongjiang and elsewhere. Chen noted that a few high-output regions were disproportionately responsible for procurement, singling out twenty-three counties in Zhejiang, which bore 74 percent of the procurement burden of the province, and Suzhou prefecture in Jiangsu, which supplied the center and Nanjing. Depressing the "enthusiasm" of these areas is "very disadvantageous for China's agricultural development."⁶⁷

The solution that Chen forcefully advocated was large-scale resettlement of urbanites. This would not be a pleasant task, he observed, but the alternative was even less pleasant. As he put it in May 1961:

If we don't send urban people to the countryside, we will again draw on the peasants' rations. Now we are discussing the Twelve Articles and the Sixty Articles [major commune reform documents], but if we don't reduce the grain purchasing task, they won't have any effect. This is because the peasants ask in the final analysis how big the procurements are. If the quantity is still so great, the peasants won't be able to eat their fill and it will not be possible to arouse their enthusiasm.⁶⁸

Chen had his way and resettlement did get underway in 1961, presumably (in the main) of the 1958 migrants. According to Chen, 10 million people were sent to the villages in 1961 alone. This, plus the grain imports contracted for in that same year, made it possible to reduce procurements quotas in 1962.⁶⁹

When it came to the actual requisitioning of grain, in the villages, larger purchases were made possible by the loosening of restrictions on the requisitioning of surpluses imposed by the 1955 three-fix regulations. Under the 1955 scheme, households (later producers' cooperatives) designated as surplus producers were to sell 80 to 90 percent of the surplus. When calamities necessitated off-setting additional purchases from bumper-harvest areas, no more than 40 percent of such additional output could be acquired. But on the eve of the GLF, in October 1957, "Supplementary Regulations" waived the 40 percent limit in "special cases."⁷⁰ Chen Yun defined these as occurrence of severe imbalances in the grain supply due to natural disasters.⁷¹ During the GLF, such "special cases" occurred with great frequency, for even while it was thought that stupendous bumper harvests were being reaped in parts of the country, natural disasters inundated others with distressing frequency. It

was Mao Zedong who during the early phase of the Lushan Conference in the summer of 1959 drew attention to the crucial issue of restoring limits:

The masses are demanding the restoration of the three fixes policies: fixed production, fixed purchasing, and fixed marketing. They probably will have to be restored and not be changed for three years. If we have to fix them, what should be the amounts? Can we requisition 40 percent of the increased amount and leave 60? In case of disaster, the purchases should be reduced and there should be no requisition and tax on private plots. The present conference should discuss this.⁷²

Mao Zedong made this remark during a phase of the Leap when he and others sought to moderate its course. But moderation ended at this very same meeting. Mao had been attacked by Defense Minister Peng Dehuai for “petty-bourgeois fanaticism” in handling the Leap, prompting the Chairman to counter-attack and to launch an anti-rightist campaign, which in turn led to the revival of Great Leap leftism in 1959–60. These developments aborted Mao’s initiative on behalf of peasant interests.⁷³

Not only was the limit on the proportion of surpluses that could be taken loosened, but so was the very definition of surplus. Under the three-fix system, surplus was determined according to the normal harvest. Under a new scheme that was widely introduced in the spring of 1958, the “comprehensive guarantee system” (*baogan zhi*), planned increases in production were incorporated into the definition. Contracts for planned purchases were to be signed between APCs (agricultural producers’ cooperatives) and the purchasing agencies, which would take into consideration both changes in productivity that had occurred since 1955 and “the production-increase plan for the current year.”⁷⁴ These contracts were presented as insuring peasant security, for they stipulated that, after signing, the state could not then demand additional grain.⁷⁵ In Zhejiang, for instance, peasants and cadres had worried that “the state might raise its unified purchase quota this year according to the big-leap forward targets.” For this reason, one APC in Zhejiang limited its planned output to only 730 catties per mu. But having signed the contract, the cooperative then felt free to raise its output target to 1,291 catties per mu.⁷⁶ The contracts were apparently often quite moderate in calling for sale to the state of only a small portion of the vast increases that were about to be secured. But their effect was to increase procurements. In the case of 1958 summer harvest, the output of eight wheat-growing provinces was said to have risen by 21 billion catties or 64 percent. Purchases went up 7 billion catties or 20 percent above the original target “by dint of the arrangement on contracted fulfillment.”⁷⁷

Press discussion of the new contract system falls off after the summer of 1958

and it is not clear what role, if any, they played in later procurements. But their underlying concept of how peasant security would be insured remained: given huge increases in production, the state would purchase only a small portion of the increase. As a joint State Council-Central Committee directive on 1959 summer purchases indicated, quotas had been increased, but in view of the “rapidly expanding output,” the amount purchased would actually be a smaller percentage of the crop than previously.⁷⁸ As long as leaders believed in the inflated output figures, they must have been confident that the peasants had lots of grain and that a limited increase in procurement could not possibly be causing any harm. Indeed, in 1958 the problem was what to do with all that grain the peasants would have even after state purchases. The solution was for rural collectives to enlarge reserves in order to provide for lean years, expand investments, and, after all other needs had been met, increase consumption.⁷⁹ But as the following “preliminary planning figures” for the distribution of grain in Lushan *xian*, Henan, indicate, the underlying “reality” was often fantasy. These data were first published in September 1958 in *Jingji yanjiu* (Economic Research), but then republished, giving them wider publicity.

TABLE 3

	1957	1958
Gross output of grain (million catties)	217	2,217
Rations, aggregate (million catties)	140	160
Rations, catties per capita	327	372
Seed and fodder (million catties)	32	111
State procurement (million catties)	33	66
Reserve grain (million catties)	6	271
Surplus grain (million catties)	–	1,609

Source: Yue Guang, “Nongye da fengshou hou de yuliang wenti” (The problem of surplus grain after the great agricultural bumper harvest) *Xinhua banyuekan*, no. 19 (1958) 117–18.

Output in this county was said to have increased tenfold, but procurements “only” doubled. The author’s discussion focused on the remaining surplus, which turned out to be mostly sweet potatoes converted into grain equivalents. Selling it to the state would bring in money, but the state’s demand for this perishable commodity was limited, however, and the problem was how to store and process it.

When grain was being purchased the circumstances of the Leap made increases likely. First, collections took place within the charged leftist atmosphere of the Leap, which made it difficult to defend the parochial interests of the peasants against those of the larger collective and of the state. Indeed, the

“Supplementary Regulations” and later statements as well insisted bluntly that in allocating grain, the state’s collection targets took priority over other needs. This was a distinct change from the 1955 rules and from post-Leap practice of first providing for rations, seed, and fodder. It is a change that was indeed “Stalinist” in tone.⁸⁰ Second, organizational centralization, which made the large communes of 1958 and 1959 the unit of collections, made it less likely that output would be carefully verified. Third, the hectic pace of rural campaigns meant that there was less time for procurements. In the fall of 1958, for instance, procurements lagged behind schedule because cadres had their hands full with organizational problems of the communes, the mass movement of smelting iron and steel, and normal agricultural tasks. Already in October, the center complained about lags and called for “shock” collection methods.⁸¹ By early January, procurement had become a matter of “burning urgency,” since only 76 percent of the task had been fulfilled.⁸² Reports on collections are replete with references to “high tides” and “shock collection” in only a few days. “Shui *xian*, Henan, having prepared itself well, completed the collection and delivery in a few hours.”⁸³ Speed of collection was a central characteristic of the procurement drives of 1959, together with strong emphasis on overfulfillment of quotas. 1959, it will be recalled, was the year of peak excess. As an assessment published in January 1960 put it:

The speed of the purchase work last year was never experienced before the general establishment of communes. *Based on the estimates of the year’s production*, the State completed its purchase of food grains ahead of schedule and at least two months ahead of the time required last year (my emphasis).⁸⁴

In contrast to 1958–59, when procurements had dragged out into February and even March, the 1959–60 program was completed in record time, in the main in November. Provinces such as Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Guangdong managed to complete their collection tasks in fifteen to twenty days.⁸⁵ Newspapers took satisfaction in the record speeds attained, yet insisted that the grain policy had been implemented satisfactorily, i.e., that adequate rations, seed, and fodder had been set aside. This sense of satisfaction extended into spring, at a time when some villages had run out of food.⁸⁶

As the fervor of the second radical phase of the GLF subsided in 1960, so did the intensity of the “wind of exaggeration.” With regard to procurements, policy statements for both the 1960 and 1961 purchasing campaigns stressed careful management, verification of actual output, and the leaving of a “margin of safety.”⁸⁷ *Henan ribao* pointed out in June 1960 that “full attention” must be paid to the fact that “bumper harvests are not reaped everywhere.”⁸⁸ Still, as noted earlier, there was a substantial gap between actual and reported output in 1960, and reports of improbable successes

continued to appear. Honan's Xinan xian, for instance, suffered from two hundred days of drought in 1960, yet claimed to have reaped a bumper harvest that permitted slight overfulfillment of the procurement quota. At the same time, the article that reported this case described extremely careful checks on output to make sure that procurements were reasonable.⁸⁹ But as late as the fall of 1961, the "wind" reportedly still blew in at least one place, as shown by the following exchange between ex-Minister of Defense Peng Dehuai and a local official in Peng's home district in Hunan:

Peng: "In that time [1958], did the wind of exaggeration blow?"

Local: "It blew; it still blows severely. It harms the masses and it harms the Party, causing great difficulties in feeding and clothing the masses. Some people are still suffering from edema."

Peng: "Yes. When those above exaggerate, those below come down with edema."⁹⁰

Most remarkably, in 1959–60, the achievements of the procurement program extended to disaster zones. Newspapers reported on counties afflicted by severe disasters that nonetheless reaped bumper harvests, enabling them to fulfill or even to overfulfill their procurement quotas.⁹¹ That such examples were not isolated was confirmed by the journal of the Ministry of Food, *Liangshi bao*. In December 1959 it published an article noting that many areas had suffered from prolonged and unprecedented natural calamities. It went on to say the following:

Under the Party's leadership the broad masses brought into play the incomparable superiority of the people's communes, battled against disasters, everywhere reaping a big autumn bumper harvest. This laid a rich material foundation for fulfilling the grain purchasing task.⁹²

Undoubtedly, however, the main impact of natural and manmade disasters was to increase demand for additional procurements in non-disaster areas in order to aid the stricken zones. Policy statements as well as mobilizational articles sought to secure support for this: "In distributing agricultural produce, the rural areas should think of the cities; the areas of bumper harvest should think of the areas affected by disaster. . . ."⁹³ Provincial papers publicized examples of brigades selling above-quota grain in order to assist the disaster areas. Debates over the propriety of so doing were staged in some villages, a frequent argument in favor of selling more being that the village in question had in the past received state aid when afflicted by flood or drought.⁹⁴ The PLA's *Bulletin of Activities* quotes a soldier from a prosperous village who had listened to reports on relief operations, as follows:

In the past I was dissatisfied with eating 30 catties of grain in my district which usually has an abundant harvest. After hearing the report I was able to understand that all people in the country belong to one family and the surplus of one place can supply the shortage of another.⁹⁵

Relief for rural disaster zones thus led to increased procurement in non-disaster zones. The extent of this is not ascertainable. At the same time, however, the state strongly emphasized the principle of self-reliance and self-help in order to minimize the need for outside relief. As an editorial in Shandong's *Dazhong ribao* put it:

The fundamental way of beating the famine and overcoming difficulties, whether in the case of a commune, a brigade, a team or a household, lies in arousing mass enthusiasm, in exerting efforts for self-reliance and in devising all possible ways and means of production and self-relief. Any idea of purely relying on outside aid is wrong.⁹⁶

Articles in the Shandong press, as well as elsewhere, publicized measures such as collecting "all edible and usable things that could be found locally." Much attention was lavished on "food substitutes" as well as on the maintenance of strict controls over the available food supply.⁹⁷ The data on famine presented earlier, however, suggest that self-reliance could not always have been an adequate solution and that outside relief also was either not adequate in quantity or failed to arrive in time.

In assessing the impact of the "wind of exaggeration" on procurement, local variation must be taken into account. On a national scale, if one assumes a peasant population of 550 million, the 92.5 MMT reported by Yang and Li as available to the peasants in 1961 yields a per capita ration of 168 kg or 336 catties, i.e., more than the 300 catties that peasants in high-yield areas were receiving, according to Chen Yun (see above). Varying one's assumptions about the size of the peasant population and including seed and fodder requirements yields higher or lower ration estimates, but none that would amount to full-fledged starvation.⁹⁸ The Yang and Li data must therefore conceal sharp local variations in grain consumption, some of which were due to disproportionately high grain procurement. Scattered examples suggest that increases in procurements must have burdened some localities far more than others. An extreme example is Shanxi's Zuoyun *xian*, for which the following data were published in October 1959:

1952, 1955:	No sales to state; state supplied 40 million catties;
1953, 1954, 1957:	5 million catties sold each year to state;
1956:	Bumper harvest; 11 million catties sold;

- 1958: Output rose 50 percent over 1957; 25 million catties sold;
- 1959: Output “can” increase by 20 percent to 160 million catties; 42 million catties sold (28 million regular quota; 14 million additional.)⁹⁹

This county, then, reportedly sold almost four times as much grain to the state in 1959 as it had sold in the peak pre-GLF year of 1956, a rate of increase far ahead of the claimed increase in output. An accompanying editorial praised this feat. The possibility that the “wind of exaggeration” blew on procurements, leading to fictitious reports of sales to state in this county, cannot be excluded. But neither can the possibility that this is an example in which the link between procurement and peasant hunger would seem to be close, even if we don’t know whether offsetting relief supplies were sent in the spring of 1960.

Another example of local imbalances in procurement comes from Anhui. As the following table shows, on the provincial level, the value of increased agricultural procurement lagged behind the value of the claimed increase in agricultural output. But two counties, one a cotton producer and the other a tea producer, registered disproportionate increases not only in the procurement of technical crops, but also of grain.

TABLE 4

Percentage Increases in Anhui Procurements

	1958	1959
Value of agricultural output in Anhui	21.6	16.5
Value of procurement in Anhui	17.0	14.2
Xiao <i>xian</i> procurement:		
Cotton	120.5	29.5
Grain	21.6	61.0
Jimen <i>xian</i> procurement:		
Tea	41.6	12.5
Grain	12.5	20.8

Source: Anhui ribao, 11 September 1960, in *SCMP Supplement*, no. 137 (19 October 1960): 6.

Increased state grain procurement must be appraised in the context of other exactions from the peasantry during the GLF. It was not only that procurement of subsidiary foodstuffs also rose.¹⁰⁰ The GLF, after all, was an immense effort to promote local development using local resources. Local

investment, therefore, rose sharply in 1958–59 and 1959–60. A vivid example of this is given by Chen Yonggui, the pugnacious, longtime leader of the model Dazhai Brigade, who had a history of conflict with his superiors. In an interview with William Hinton, he reports that in 1958 his commune planned to build a pigsty for 10,000 hogs, demanding pigs as well as grain for pig feed from the brigades. In contrast to other brigades, Chen refused both requests. “We’re not going to give one catty of grain. Once we have sold grain to the state, the commune level cannot ask for more grain on their own.” Chen added, “But in this struggle, if we had failed to be firm we would have gone under.”¹⁰¹

It was Mao Zedong who in early 1959 drew attention to the impact on peasant welfare of high local investments. He severely criticized counties and communes for expropriating peasant assets in order to boost accumulation: “. . . [H]ow can we take over the fruits of the labor of the peasants without compensation,” he asked? Communes were so eager to accumulate funds that they reduced the proportion of income to be distributed to the peasants. Henan communes, he reported, allocated 50 percent of their income to capital accumulation, state taxes, and administrative costs. Production costs take up 20 percent, leaving peasants with 30 percent. “Peasants have to live, and therefore they have to conceal 15 percent [of production].” And he also pointed out: “If we grasp only production but not livelihood, there will certainly be X times ten thousand cases of edema.”¹⁰²

When the Leap was revived after the Lushan Plenum conflict, large-scale enterprises, mass water-conservation campaigns, and other activities requiring local investments were again undertaken. In the second half of 1959, for instance, two million centralized hog farms were set up. The collective hog-raising campaign was initiated in the belief that brigade grain stocks were large enough to permit this activity to be pursued.¹⁰³ It was Chairman Mao who in October 1959 called for “driving ambition” in this regard, thereby giving collective hog raising a major impetus.¹⁰⁴ And it was Mao Zedong who now praised the example of Chang’an *xian*, Hebei where the accumulation rate had been raised to 45 percent – in sharp contrast to his stinging criticism of the same practice a year before.¹⁰⁵

Local investments taxed the rural grain supply, but so did waste, particularly in the hectic autumn of 1958. The “wind of communism” blew through the countryside in those days, leading to a form of free supply, colloquially called “eating without paying” by the peasants. Overconsumption in the autumn months, together with excessive procurements, produce famine in the spring of 1959, according to Xue Muqiao.¹⁰⁶ In Guangdong, peasants reportedly

consumed 10 catties of grain per capita in excess of monthly requirements during the autumn of 1958. In one brigade, members ate 61 catties each per month. Moreover, in Guangdong one to two million peasants, and sometimes as many as seven million, were making iron and steel, and they needed to be fed.

At that time [1958] we made too optimistic an estimate of the grain situation, and this, plus our lack of experience in collective life which made us oblivious of the necessity of conserving grain against “rainy days” caused a great waste of grain: wherever the large armies of laborers went loads of grain followed, and whatever the amount of grain thought to be necessary to feed them . . . was prepared and cooked so that the several tens of hundreds of millions of catties of grain quickly vanished.¹⁰⁷

In addition, the promotion of close planting required more seed, while reserves were depleted further by a cold wave in early 1959, which required replacement of seedlings. And on top of all this state procurements rose: In 1958, Guangdong sold 7 billion catties, a record that far exceeded the previous high of 2.96 billion catties sold in 1954.¹⁰⁸ Guangdong experienced publicly acknowledged, severe food shortages in the spring of 1959.¹⁰⁹ The Guangdong pattern was widely replicated.

Local Responses

When procurements and other exactions were excessive, cutting into peasants’ rations, how did peasants and their basic-level cadres respond? How did they respond when grain supplies actually ran out? And above all, why did officials conceal famine from their superiors? Accessible material on these questions is not abundant, but some images of what the situation must have been like can be pieced together from a variety of sources, including some post-Mao short stories.

The press of the time hints at deep disquiet among peasants over the size of procurements. This emerges from articles that convey peasant worries in the form of debates, in which upper middle peasants are depicted as questioning whether state purchases have left enough to eat. Invariably, such articles demonstrate that the grain retention standard is adequate, even when the duty of selling as much surplus grain as possible has been done.¹¹⁰ Sometimes, hints of more overt opposition appear. In Anhui, for example, “a very small number of people” failed to understand

the great need of energetically developing commercialized production and delivering and selling agricultural produce and byproducts to the state. They advocated that the communes should keep all the things that they produced for their own consumption and that the State

should supply the communes with the things which they did not own or were short of. . . . They simply called upon the state to supply all kinds of means of production and means of livelihood.¹¹¹

In a Shandong production team, cadres had claimed that the task of purchasing 43 catties of peanut oil could not be fulfilled. According to the *People's Daily* editorial that publicized the case, the county party committee provided “direct guidance to the commune party committee,” which in turn stepped up organizational and ideological leadership of its subordinates. “By virtue of several days’ hard work, a total of 52 catties of peanut oil was finally purchased, overfulfilling the original procurement task.” The editorial commented that this was “a very impressive example.”¹¹² It is worth adding that the peasants’ unease was compounded by the fact that during the Leap private plots were taken away while other private sector activities were at least intermittently suppressed. Peasants had to rely on the collective mess-halls to eat, unless they had managed to hide food. Mao Zedong’s remarks at the second Zhengzhou Conference in February and March 1959 convey his perceptions of rural reactions. Mao noted that state procurement goals for grain, cotton, and edible oil had not been fulfilled in 1958:

I believe that there is indeed this kind of localism, the failure to sell when there are in fact surplus products and [people] should be selling to the state. Party members and cadres who have been guilty of localism should be criticized. But there are a good many situations which cannot be called localism.¹¹³

Mao went on to explain that “the production teams and production sub-teams almost universally [practiced] concealment of production.” Why? In some cases, procurement was the reason, as when quotas had been raised for some brigades as output had risen. In response, cadres had concealed produce, fearing that spring shortages would lead to further requisitions. But the main reason was the one already mentioned in the previous section, namely appropriation by communes of the assets of their subordinate units. This is what the peasants had “desperately” resisted in 1958. “This resistance was good. It made us think about this question.”¹¹⁴

Peasants, according to Mao, employed ingenious methods to conceal produce. They hid things in “secret cellars, . . . posted sentries, ate turnips during the day and concealed rice at night.”¹¹⁵ Peasants also let their products rot on the ground or destroyed them rather than turning them over to higher levels.¹¹⁶ At the same time, according to Mao, peasants complained of food shortages. The scale of peasant unrest surpassed that of 1953 and 1955. In 1956, when attempts were made to equalize distribution of grain in large higher-stage cooperatives, “old women blocked the way and wouldn’t let the

food be taken, and this problem is reappearing in the first year of the communes.” And Mao made a major point concerning leadership: In the past, food riots had been led by well-off middle peasants. “This year food riots were primarily led by basic-level cadres.”¹¹⁷

Mao thus describes a peasantry that was far from passive, one that acted to protect its “legitimate and legal” interests. Whether peasants were successful in doing so, however, is another question. The belief that peasants were concealing substantial amounts of food probably influenced the extent to which state relief supplies were made available.¹¹⁸ On the other hand, the fact that Mao took the peasants’ side, defending them against the charge of “localism” – levied, he noted, by six levels of party committees from the center on down – gave a big boost to the policy of moderating the Leap, which prevailed until Mao’s collision with Peng Dehuai.¹¹⁹ But after the Peng affair, when the radicalism of the Leap was revived, Mao was far less concerned with peasant interests. His approval of high local investment has already been mentioned. Another of his comments on the Soviet textbook on political economy hints at Mao’s attitude on procurements. Mao approvingly adopted Stalin’s term “tribute.” “The vast majority of China’s peasants,” he noted, were sending tribute “with a positive attitude.” Only 15 percent, i.e. the upper middle peasants, opposed it.¹²⁰ Not until 1962 did Mao speak of excessive procurements.

A short story published in 1979 offers a glimpse of what responses to the procurement process might have been like. “Misedited Story” by Ru Zhijuan starts with the launching of “high-yield sputniks.”¹²¹ Party secretary Gan of Ganmu Commune outbids neighboring units by promising to attain yields of 16,000 catties per mu. At first, cadres and peasants of the brigade in which the story takes place think these promises are funny, but they begin to worry when state procurements are set in accordance with the high yields. The hero of the story, Lao Shou, deputy head of a production team and a veteran Party member who had fought in the guerrilla war, comes upon a scene in which (amidst much hoopla) four carts loaded with grain are about to be sent off to the state purchasing station. A sign reads “it is glorious to hand over high-yield grain.” Lao Shou argues with Lao Han, the brigade Party secretary:

Lao Han, everybody says that these four carriages of grain should not be taken away. If they are sent away, each of us will only have eight ounces of ration grain to eat per day.” Lao Han sighed and wiped his face and head, streaming with sweat, with his jacket. Then he said, “It can’t be helped. The higher level has set procurements according to yield. Secretary Gan says the grain must be sent.”¹²²

Lao Shou then pleads with Lao Han to talk to commune secretary Gan, since he must know that the promised yields were imaginary. “We bear responsibility for several hundred people. How can they live on a mere eight ounces a day?” Lao Han is unwilling to challenge higher authority. Lao Shou himself takes the grain carts to the commune center, hoping to talk with Gan in order to secure a reversal of the delivery order. But Gan, whose zeal has earned him promotion to deputy Party secretary of the county committee, is at the county seat receiving provincial cadres. Lao Shou goes to the county and waits around until Gan finally brushes him off:

You are far too shortsighted in looking only at a few food grains. In the present situation, one day equals twenty years. When we are marching on the double towards communism, one missed step means falling behind. You old comrades should be the first to obey the Party. Just think of the time of war in the past. Did we fuss over seven or eight ounces in those days?¹²³

Lao Shou, having unsuccessfully opposed the delivery of the grain, also opposes a mindless order given by secretary Gan to cut down a pear orchard in order to plant grain. For this he is dismissed from his post and reduced to probationary Party membership. Cutting down the pear trees even before the pears have ripened further threatens the food supply. But because the brigade had obeyed, thereby bringing credit upon secretary Gan, it also gets more relief grain than neighboring units. Lao Shou’s worry about famine turns out to be unfounded.

The second question, that of the local response when a community did run out of food, is illuminated by Zhang Yigong’s “The Story of the Criminal Li Tongzhong.”¹²⁴ In Shilipu Commune, cadres have also been pressured into making fantastic production commitments and become entangled in a web of deception. Both the summer and autumn harvests of 1959, however, have declined because of drought and because manpower was diverted. Yet the zealous commune Party secretary Yang Wenxiu proclaims the three “unchangings”: output, rations, and sales to the state shall not change. But in truth, only the latter has not declined in consequence of a drive to uncover “concealed” grain. This happens after the fall harvest of 1959, when Zhang Shuangxi, the head of Lijiazhai brigade, attends a commune meeting on verification of output in which brigades are labelled “rockets,” “airplanes,” “motor cars,” “ox carts,” and finally “tortoises,” depending on their results. Zhang doesn’t want his brigade to be labelled a tortoise, and gets it called an airplane by overstating output by 100,000 catties. Upon hearing this, the brigade Party secretary Li Tongzhong, a one-legged Korean War veteran and the hero of the story, rushes to commune headquarters to get the report corrected. He is detained for ten days and criticized as a rightist. When he

gets back to Lijiazhai, he finds that the brigade, under orders from the commune's work team "to oppose concealment of output" has overfulfilled its autumn procurement quota by 100,000 catties.

By February 1960, peasants in Lijiazhai are down to two ounces of grain per day. Li Tongzhong goes to the commune to secure aid. Commune secretary Yang rebuffs him, saying that it is the upper middle peasants who are doing the complaining. Li goes back a second time when peasants have almost run out of grain. Yang now admits that the situation is tight but fears that asking help from the county might earn him a rightist "hat." Li then sends a letter to county Party secretary Tian Zhenshan but receives no answer.

Soon the grain is gone, and for three days peasants eat boiled radishes. Within another few days, virtually all 490 inhabitants of Lijiazhai are sick with edema. One hundred ten are too ill to get out of bed, and the local medic warns of impending mass deaths. Li again visits the commune center. Yang now reassures him that the problem of livelihood is being addressed. A chemical process of making substitute foods out of wheatstraw and corn husks has been invented. It is a hoax.

Desperate, Li orders some cattle to be slaughtered. But as no help arrives and the situation worsens, Li approaches the manager of the commune grain station, a friend of his from Korean War days. Li conspires with him to "borrow" 50,000 catties of grain from this state granary, which he distributes among the starving peasants. Li and the manager of the granary leave a confession of what they have done. Both are arrested. Soon thereafter, Li dies of hunger, exhaustion, and hepatitis at age thirty-one.

Enter Tian Zhenshan, the county secretary. He has received Li's letter and the county committee has in fact ordered that "circulating grain" be used to aid communes in difficulty. But commune secretary Yang has reassured him that the substitute food program is working and that therefore Shilipu Commune does not require help. Tian now learns of Li's deed and discovers the true state of affairs. He opens up all twenty-nine county granaries. For this act he is dismissed and called to the prefectural Party committee for investigation and criticism. An "urgent notice" is circulated charging him with violation of Party discipline and state law for having unilaterally raised the county's grain supply target, thereby sabotaging the system of unified purchasing and marketing. But the Party center now also becomes aware of the severity of the famine and sanctions relief measures. The prefectural committee drops the charges against Tian and transfers him to manage a state farm. The zealot Yang goes mad, and Li Tongzhong is posthumously

rehabilitated in 1979. Although mass deaths from starvation are thus averted in this story, it is not difficult to imagine only a slight variation in the plot that would yield a much more tragic outcome.¹²⁵

The characters in this story require further comment. Li Tongzhong's defiance of higher authority is portrayed as an exception. Other basic-level cadres are less daring. The brigade secretary of a neighboring village, for instance, is involved with Yang's substitute food project, knows that it is a hoax, yet does not dare challenge Yang. Instead, he takes evasive action in the form of the classic response of the famine-stricken: he leads peasants to flee the area. It is worth adding that Lao Shou's courage in "Misedited Story" in challenging higher authority is also viewed as exceptional. It contrasts with the deference of Lao Han, who knows that taking the grain will harm the peasants, but who nonetheless acquiesces. As for the peasants, in both stories they are portrayed as essentially passive actors. In the Li Tongzhong story, they are depicted as anxiously reluctant to do anything illegal, whether it be slaughtering cattle or taking grain from the state granary. When they do so, they ask Chairman Mao for forgiveness.

The commune secretary Yang Wenxiu is the villain of the story. He is depicted as a careerist, a former teacher and longtime head of the county committee's propaganda department. He volunteers to step down to the commune level in order to earn credit with his superiors. It is his blind pressure, his deceptions, and his coverups that almost result in mass tragedy. Tian Zhenshan, the county secretary, is portrayed more sympathetically. He is a good cadre, but one who has lost touch with the people. The reader is informed that during the GLF Tian is so busy with meetings – he attends 294 of them in 1959 – that he completely loses touch with anyone below the commune level. It is his "bureaucratism" that is at fault.

The short stories also convey some hints on the impact of these events on local attitudes. The central impression is that of disappointment and puzzlement. To Lao Shou, it seems inconceivable that relations between officials such as Secretary Gan, a guerrilla veteran, and the peasants could so deteriorate, and he muses about the change that has taken place in Gan's attitude and behavior. In the Li story, one senses that a conscious effort of will is required if Li is not to lose faith in the Party as manmade catastrophe looms. The system in which he had placed his trust seems to have changed; yet he cannot understand why. The *PLA Bulletin* confirms this questioning attitude, when it quotes a soldier as asking: "Where did the food go? Is it true that the state has held back food from the people?" And it quotes commune members as asking: "Is Chairman Mao going to allow us to starve to death?"¹²⁶

The passivity of the peasants and the relatively restrained responses of even the courageous village cadres in the stories contrasts with the much more vigorous resistance reported by Mao Zedong in the Zhengzhou speeches, in which he had spoken of food riots led by basic-level cadres. Two years later, at the Ninth Plenum, Mao remarked on political breakdowns that had occurred in part because of food problems. He mentioned Xinyang, Henan, as a place where political power had had to be seized, and noted that about 20 percent of other “places” had broken down (*landiao le*).¹²⁷ The PLA’s *Bulletin of Activities* also contains reports on uprisings and counterrevolutionaries activities in rural China. In Henan, the militia became a force in the struggle for food, appropriating relief grain intended for famine sufferers.¹²⁸ These reports of political conflict and upheaval are not linked specifically to procurements, but the tie is not improbable. They indicate the deep crisis in state-peasant relations that the GLF provoked.

The existence of fictional officials who blocked the flow of upward communication in order to conceal famine is confirmed by reports from visitors to the PRC, by interviews with Chinese, and by the Chinese press. Lower-level officials evidently went to remarkable lengths to conceal conditions in their jurisdictions, ranging from showing visitors fake mounds of grain to assembling peasants least affected by hunger to greet outside dignitaries.¹²⁹ Attempts to block the outward flow of information are reported by a former medical worker from Henan. She took part in an investigation of conditions in a county, in which her team found hunger because of sale of grain rations to the state. The county cadres responded by harassing the investigation team. They sought to prevent it from leaving the county, and even after it had succeeded in departing, the county cadres told the health authorities in the capital, Zhengzhou, that the team had been misinformed by class enemies. Ultimately a report reached the Ministry of Public Health, which sent another investigating team to the county, whereupon the entire leadership of the county was arrested. The two main Party secretaries were executed for having caused the death of a great many people.¹³⁰

An interview with a Chinese scholar who spent some years in rural Henan in the wake of the Cultural Revolution sheds light on Xinyang prefecture, where, as Mao put it, a “breakdown” had occurred. Village leaders had reported the truth about output but had been pressured intensely by county and prefectural officials to compete with one another in exaggerating production and increasing procurements. When their villages began to run out of food, the local leaders petitioned the higher levels for assistance, but the prefecture labelled them rightists. The Party secretary of the prefecture then imposed a blockade of the road and the railroad. People could come in but

no one could leave. It was only when a PLA soldier on home leave walked back through the fields in order to rejoin his unit that the Center in Beijing learned of conditions in Xinyang and dispatched a high-level leader, reportedly Deng Xiaoping, with a trainload of food. The prefectural secretary was arrested and given a suspended death sentence.¹³¹ In Henan's case, it is worth adding that its first Party secretary, Wu Zhipu, an extremely fervent proponent of Great Leap leftism, "simply lied" to Chen Yun already in the spring of 1959 about the adequacy of food supplies when the latter came on an inspection visit.¹³² Wu no doubt served as a source of inspiration to his subordinates when the situation got worse in 1960.

As for newspaper sources, Shandong's *Dazhong Ribao* complained in December 1960 that some leading cadres

think that attention to livelihood is not so important as attention to production. . . . They are indifferent to the living conditions of the masses and ignore the matter even when the livelihood problem causes great ideological confusion among the masses.¹³³

Quite specifically the Shandong newspaper referred to coverups of famine. According to some lower-level cadres, "life was good and others reported that there would certainly be no problem with the famine." Direct investigation revealed another picture:

But the situation he [a higher-level cadre] found was different when he carried out a penetrating check-up at the brigade, team, and household levels. It was found that in the production brigades which were reported to be in a satisfactory position there were some teams which still faced many difficulties and that in the production teams which were reported to be able to manage . . . there were some households which faced serious problems of grain, fire-wood, and vegetables, and had not established confidence in production and self-relief.¹³⁴

Once the retreat from the Leap got underway, the question of punishment of officials arose, as did that of generally rectifying the conduct of rural cadres. At the Ninth Plenum in January 1961, Mao Zedong seemed to call for a harsh approach, when he identified a category of "rigid bureaucrats" among rural cadres: "When rigid bureaucrats pay no attention to whether people live or die, then no matter how they are subjectively, they are in fact the allies of the counterrevolution."¹³⁵ But Mao balanced this harsh indictment with the observation that most rural cadres fell into a more or less "good" category. No systematic data are available on how officials who concealed famine were dealt with, but in at least some cases, dismissal or transfer were evidently deemed adequate. Henan's Wu Zhipu, for instance, was demoted to second secretary and later transferred to another province.¹³⁶ Judging by a criticism published during the Cultural Revolution, dismissal in cases of responsibility for famine was thought by some to have been an inadequate sanction:

In 1960 about 20,000 people starved to death in Deqing *xian* (no statistics showing the actual number was compiled), and how many people had died in the work teams was also not disclosed. At that time, Tao Zhu was First Secretary of the Guangdong provincial Committee, and the grain problem of Guangdong Province was not so difficult as to justify starvation, because there was still a large stock of soya beans and rice in the province. However, when Tao Zhu dealt with these two cases which involved the death of so many people, he merely dismissed the *xian* committee secretary of Deqing *xian* from office.¹³⁷

The finding that it was quite possible for peasants to die because local officials prevented reports of famine from reaching Beijing sharply contradicts the stereotypical image of the Maoist cadre oriented to the well-being of the masses. These officials behaved much more like their pre-Communist counterparts, such as those who concealed knowledge of the Henan famine of 1943 from Chiang Kai-shek, as graphically described by Theodore H. White.¹³⁸ A full explanation of their behavior is not possible, but several points can be made. Officials feared loss of face if they had to admit having lied about output and making unrealistic commitments to sell grain to the state. Anti-rightist pressures, which were particularly intense during the revival of the Leap in the fall of 1959, undoubtedly made officials fearful to ask for reduction of quotas or for help, lest they be accused of favoring the particular interest at the expense of the whole. Fear of punishment was also nurtured by the very fact that the Communist state claimed to be decisively better than its predecessors, meaning that famine either could not happen or that responsible officials would be swiftly punished if negligence were involved. An instance of the latter had in fact occurred in 1956–57 in three counties in Guangxi. Famine, evidently also at least in part induced by procurement, led to deaths and mass flight. In this case, the Central Committee and the State Council reacted publicly and decisively, dismissing the first secretary and variously penalizing eight other officials. They were accused of failure to investigate, failure to supply relief grain in time, and in the case of county cadres, of criticizing basic-level cadres “in such a way that [they] dared not report on the true situation of the famine.” As a result of their indifference to the life of the people, estrangement from the masses had occurred, and the “prestige” of the Party and government among the people had been “seriously damaged.”¹³⁹ Given this precedent, officials may indeed have felt that concealment was the better course of action.

Concealment also resulted from a calculus of lower-level officials that truthful reports would not be believed. After all, top leaders themselves appeared to believe reports of exaggerated output and had sanctioned increased procurement quotas. Moreover, in early 1959, Mao Zedong had asserted that peasants were hiding grain and had in fact harshly criticized provincial officials who had launched campaigns to uncover concealed grain.¹⁴⁰ Mao

had thus taken the side of the peasants, but the logical outcome must have been to strengthen the belief that there was in fact grain in the countryside, whether hidden or in locally controlled granaries. This, as MacFarquhar notes, was the “remorseless logic of the leap: if there had been a 100 percent increase in grain output there had to be a massive grain surplus somewhere.”¹⁴¹

A major explanation for lower-level concealment of famine must therefore lie in the readiness of the top leaders to believe in the results of the “wind of exaggeration.” It seems extraordinary that leaders who had spent twenty years in the countryside making revolution could have accepted as true the miracles of 1958. But what is even more extraordinary is the absence of learning. In the spring of 1959, the 1958 output figures had been scaled downwards in recognition of false reporting. But this did not prevent leaders from believing the 1959 production figure of 270 MMT or of making a serious effort at verification. It was in 1959–60 that procurements reached their highest levels, even as actual output had dropped to 170 MMT. The failure to learn from 1958 has to be attributed to leadership conflict, i.e., to Mao’s reaction to Peng Dehuai’s critique of his handling of the Leap. Mao pressured his colleagues to align with him and the subsequent anti-rightist campaign silenced all critical voices. But in addition, Chinese leaders were preoccupied with the developing Sino-Soviet dispute from the fall of 1959 on, a point that Mao later acknowledged as having been a factor in the delayed response to the crisis of the GLF in 1960.¹⁴² Absence of learning from 1958 plus diversion of attention to international issues account for the failure of the top leaders to meet their responsibility.

Conclusions

What do the two cases have in common and what sets them apart? Both have in common a high degree of administrative incompetence and mismanagement. The preceding analysis shows this clearly in the Chinese case. In the Soviet case, the issue of incompetence can be formulated as follows: Given the decision to extract rural resources for the sake of industrialization, how could the damage to agriculture and peasant morale be minimized? Stalinist planners could have learned lessons from some of their predecessors, who had similar problems, such as the Bolsheviks of 1918–1920 or Count Witte of the Russia of the 1890s, who also harshly squeezed the peasantry on behalf of industrialization. Stalinist officials, however, plunged into the tasks of collectivization and grain procurement without giving much thought to procedures that might secure minimal peasant subsistence and hence keep alienation within bounds. The result was to set in motion a cycle of repression and concessions that culminated in the 1932–33 famine.

Administrative incompetence in the Soviet Union was linked to the fundamental stance of the state toward the peasants, which was one of war. The state viewed its relations with the peasants as a zero-sum conflict – “it’s them or us,” as one Central Committee member reportedly put it.¹⁴³ The state adopted a scarcely disguised view of peasants as enemies.¹⁴⁴ This conflictual posture was the basis for Stalin’s determination to force the peasants unconditionally to subordinate their interests to those of the state. Even if top leaders did not make an explicit decision to inflict famine upon peasants, they were prepared to pay this price. The catastrophe of 1932–33 was thus an extreme manifestation of the conflictual state-peasant relationship that characterized the entire Stalin era: “For a good quarter of a century, extracting grain from the peasants amounted to a permanent state of warfare against them and was understood as such by both sides.”¹⁴⁵

In the Chinese case there is simply no evidence that the state regarded peasants in this light, Mao’s acknowledgment of interest conflicts notwithstanding. There is no evidence that GLF procurements were viewed as a weapon of war or of punishment, designed to force peasants into submission to state goals. What then was the state’s stance toward the peasants during the GLF? It was to harness the peasantry to unprecedentedly ambitious developmental goals, goals shaped by Mao’s new ideological conceptions. In the process of implementing them, the state’s domination of the peasantry reached new heights, thereby bringing China closer to Stalinist reality. As in Stalin’s case, GLF policy called for increased extraction of resources from the peasants, not just for national but also for local purposes. But this was based on the assumption that a breakthrough had occurred in agricultural production, a belief, in other words, that increased extraction was compatible with peasant welfare. This assumption turned out to be erroneous; it was part and parcel of the extraordinary mismanagement of the GLF. Famine was an unanticipated outcome of this mismanagement, an outcome for which Mao Zedong and his associates are responsible.

When Chinese leaders finally realized what was going on in late 1960 they retreated from the policies of the Great Leap Forward. In the years that followed, procurement continued to be an important issue of conflict between the state and the peasants, but both the extent of extraction and the conflict fell significantly short of the Stalinist case.¹⁴⁶ To the extent that in relation to the peasants Stalinism amounted to the *intentionally* extreme exploitation of the peasants, to that extent the Stalinist label is not fully appropriate even for the Great Leap Forward, nor for the rest of the Maoist era.

NOTES

1. Alvin W. Gouldner, "Stalinism: A Study of Internal Colonialism," *Telos*, no. 34, (Winter 1977-78): 5-57.
2. Naum Jasny, *The Socialized Agriculture of the USSR* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1949), 363.
3. See next section for discussion of the 1932-33 famine. For 1947, see *Khrushchev Remembers*, trans. and ed. Strobe Talbott (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), 112.
4. See James R. Millar and Alec Nove, "A Debate on Collectivization: Was Stalin Really Necessary," *Problems of Communism* 25 (July-August 1976): 49-62. Millar has been a major contributor to the "revisionist" view on the role of agriculture. See in particular his "Mass Collectivization and the Contribution of Soviet Agriculture to the First Five-Year Plan," *Slavic Review* 33 (December 1974): 750-766. The debate is not conclusive, however. For a recent reevaluation of the Soviet data on which the Millar view is based, see David Morrison, "A Critical Examination of A. A. Barsov's Empirical Work on the Balance of Value Exchange between the Town and Country," *Soviet Studies* 34 (October 1982): 570-584.
5. At least one major study, it is worth noting, has argued that a viable alternative to Stalinism existed. See Stephen F. Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975).
6. The major statement in the general literature is Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), esp. Part II.
7. For a comparison of rural capabilities, see the author's "Leadership and Mass Mobilisation in the Soviet and Chinese Collectivisation Campaigns of 1929-30 and 1955-56: A Comparison," *China Quarterly*, no. 31 (July-September 1967): 1-47.
8. K. C. Yeh, "Soviet and Chinese Industrialization Strategies," in *Soviet and Chinese Communism: Similarities and Differences*, ed. D. W. Treadgold (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967), 327-366.
9. "On Ten Great Relationships," in *Chairman Mao Talks to the People*, ed. Stuart Schram (New York: Pantheon 1974), 70. For a study of the 1955 crisis, see the author's chapter in *Chinese Communist Politics in Action*, ed. A. Doak Barnett (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1969), 365-99.
10. The most thorough study is David L. Denny, "Rural Policies and the Distribution of Agricultural Products in China, 1950-1959" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1972).
11. See "In Camera Statements of Mao Tse-tung," *Chinese Law and Government* 1, (Winter 1968-69): 19.
12. "Mao Tse-tung: Speeches at the Chengchow Conference" (February and March 1959), *Chinese Law and Government* 9, (Winter 1976-77): 18.
13. "In Camera Statements of Mao Tse-tung," *Chinese Law and Government* 1, (Winter 1968-69): 87-88. Translation slightly modified in light of original. See *Mao Zedong sixiang wansui* (1969) (Long live Mao Zedong Thought), henceforth abbreviated as *Wansui* 69; (Taipei: Institute of International Relations, 1974), 431-2.
14. Yang Jianbai and Li Xuezheng, "Lun woguo nongqingzhong guanxi di lishi jingyan" (On the historical experience of the relationship between agriculture, light and heavy industry in China), *Zhongguo shehui kexue* no. 3, (May 1980): 36. The version published in the English-language journal omits the word grain in referring to procurement, making it seem that the percentages in the second sentence refer to total output. It also omits the word net (*jing*) in the second sentence, meaning that purchases were net of resale to the rural sector, e.g., to peasants growing cotton or other technical crops. See *Social Sciences in China*, no. 2, (June 1980): 193.
15. Xue Muqiao, *Dangqian woguo jingji ruogan wenti* (Certain problems of our country's contemporary economy) (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1980), 15. Stuart Schram quotes from a paper by Xue that "in some villages quite a few people starved to death." The published version deletes this. See Schram, "To Utopia and Back: A Cycle in the History of the Chinese Communist Party," *China Quarterly* no. 87, (September 1981): 430.
16. "Comment on Liu Shaoqi's 1961 Visit to Hunan," *Liu Shaoqi zuixing lu* (record of Liu's crimes), translated in *Survey of China Mainland Magazines - Supplement* (henceforth, SCMM-S), (U.S. Consulate General: Hongkong) no. 26 (27 June, 1968): 13. One catty equals 1/2 kg. and one mow or mu equals 1/6 acre.
17. Yang and Li, "The Relations Between Agriculture, Light Industry, and Heavy Industry," 193.
18. See for example the data presented in Jurgen Domes, *Socialism in the Chinese Country-side* (London: Hurst, 1980), 46-47. For summaries of refugee data, see M. and I. D. London, "The Other China - Hunger: Part I, the Three Flags of Death," *Worldview* 19: 5 (1976): 4-11. Liu Shaoqi is quoted by a Cultural Revolution source as having said that during the Leap more people had died than were killed during the building of the Great

- Wall and the Grand Canal. See the Criticize Liu-Deng-Tao Liaison Station, Beijing Railway Institute, "Liu Shaoqi's Reactionary Speeches." (April 1967), in SCMM-S, no. 25, (13 May, 1968): 23. For a Cultural Revolution reference to deaths from starvation in Guangdong, see below. The PLA's secret *Gongzuo tongxun*, of which issues for 1961 fell into western hands, contains references to starvation. See the English translation edited by J. Chester Cheng, *The Politics of the Chinese Red Army* (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1966), 13–14, 210, 284, 287, 296–8. William Hinton, in his new book *Shenfan*, a follow-up study of *Fanshen*, his famous book on the land revolution in "Long Bow" village, Shanxi, writes that in "nearby villages scores of people starved to death" during the Leap. (New York: Random House, 1983), 252.
19. Li Xuechang, "Ping nongcon gongzuo di zuoqing cuowu," (Leftist errors in village work), *Shehui Kexue*, Shanghai, no. 1 (1981): 27. Publications closed to foreigners, of which there are many, contain far more detail. For one example, see below, note 25.
 20. Dwight Perkins, *Agricultural Development in China, 1368–1968* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1969), 166. Perkins argues that rationing and railroad construction "averted a major disaster."
 21. Sun Yefang, "Consolidate Statistical Work, Reform the Statistics System," *Jingji guanli*, no. 2, (15 February 1981), in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service, People's Republic of China* (henceforth abbreviated as *FBS*), no. 58, (26 March 1981): L-5.
 22. Zhang Huaiyu, et al., *Renkou Lilun Gaishuo* (Introduction to population theory) (Zhengzhou: Henan Renmin Chubanshe, 1981): 83.
 23. John S. Aird, "Reconstruction of an Official Data Model of the Population of China" (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 15 May, 1980), tables 6–8, and "Recent Demographic Data from China: Problems and Prospects," in Joint Economic Committee, 97th U.S. Congress, *China Under the Four Modernizations* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982), 171–223. Judith Banister has also constructed a model of vital rates, according to which mortality rates were 15.5 per 1,000 in 1957, 19.44 in 1958, 23.99 in 1959, 29.07 in 1960, 21.82 in 1961, and 17.42 in 1962. Personal communication and see her forthcoming book, *China's Pattern of Population Growth* (Stanford: Stanford University Press).
 24. *Mao Zedong sixiang wansui* (1967), (Long live Mao Zedong Thought), henceforth abbreviated as *Wansui '67*. (Taipei: Institute of International Relations), 1974, 261. With regard to Henan, see K. R. Walker, "Grain Self-Sufficiency in North China, 1953–1975," *China Quarterly*, no. 71 (September 1977): 559.
 25. For obvious reasons, the identity of the scholar must be kept confidential. Another western scholar was able to obtain a copy of an internally held journal, *Nongye Jingji Congkan* (Collected Materials on Agricultural Economics), no. 6, (25 November 1980), in which it is reported that the population of one commune in Fengyang county was cut in half during the Leap, both by death from starvation and by flight. This article is translated in *New York Review of Books*, 30 (16 June 1983): 36–38, under the title "Starving to Death in China," with an introduction by this author and, anonymously, the scholar who obtained the article. A Sino-American professor, T. K. Tong, was able in 1981 to visit his home province of Anhui, learning that relatives had died of starvation and that mass famine had occurred. See his "The PRC Judged by its Own People," paper presented to the faculty Seminar on Modern China, Columbia University, 14 January 1982. And finally, the dissident Wei Jingshen returned to his home village during the Cultural Revolution, and learned of widespread starvation that depopulated entire villages. See *Tansuo*, Beijing, 9 September 1979: 34–42.
 26. Aird, "Recent Demographic Data from China," 196–203.
 27. Manmade sources of disasters included irrationally-applied innovations such as deep plowing or close planting, unplanned construction of dams and reservoirs, leading to alkalization of the soil, diversion of manpower away from agriculture, and lowered incentives to work due to egalitarian practices. Natural disasters inundated China from 1958 on, reaching a peak in 1960, when half the country's acreage reportedly was affected. For a survey of disaster data, see Michael Freeberne, "Natural Calamities in China, 1949–1961," *Pacific Viewpoint* 3 (September 1962): 33–72.
 28. For an important recent statement that argues that famines do not result from a decline in the availability of food as such but rather from lack of access to food, see Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).
 29. A convenient assembly of these sources is in Dana G. Dalrymple, "The Soviet Famine of 1932–34," *Soviet Studies* 15 (1964): 250–84, and also a follow-up note, "The Soviet Famine of 1932–34: Some Further References," *Soviet Studies* 15 (1965): 471–74.
 30. Frank Lorimer, *The Population of the Soviet Union: History and Prospects* (Geneva: League of Nations, 1946), 136. Lorimer qualifies his findings, noting the possibility of a large margin of error.
 31. Dalrymple, "Soviet Famine," 259.

32. M. Maksudov, "Pertes subies par la population de l'URSS, 1918–1958," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* (1977): 235. I am indebted to Susan M. Matula for making a careful translation of the relevant section of this article. See also Steven Rosefielde, "Excess Mortality in the Soviet Union: A Reconsideration of the Demographic Consequences of Forced Industrialization 1929–1949," *Soviet Studies* 35 (1983): 396.
33. The following sources shed light on these developments: Otto Schiller, *Die Krise der sozialistischen Landwirtschaft in der Sowjetunion* (Berlin: Paul Parey, 1933); I. V. Zelenin, "Kolkhoznoe stroitel'stvo v SSSR v 1931–1932 gg" (Kolkhoz construction in the USSR, 1931–1932), *Istoriia SSSR*, no. 6 (November-December 1960): 19–39.
34. The size of marketings before collectivization is in dispute, as is, therefore, the extent to which procurement rose. See Alec Nove, *An Economic History of the USSR* (New York: Penguin Books, rev. ed. 1982), 111, and Jerzy F. Karcz, "From Stalin to Brezhnev: Soviet Agricultural Policy in Historical Perspective," in *Soviet Rural Community*, ed. J. R. Millar (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 43ff.
35. Two major sources on procurement during this period are Iu. A. Moshkov, *Zernovaia problema v gody sploshnoi kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva SSSR 1929–1932 gg* (The grain problem during the years of solid collectivization in the USSR, 1929–1932) (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo Universiteta, 1966), esp. chap. 3, and Moshe Lewin, "Taking Grain: Soviet Policies of Agricultural Procurements before the War," in *Essays in Honour of E. H. Carr*, ed. C. Abramsky (London: Macmillan, 1974), 281–323.
36. Moshkov, *Zernovaia problema*, 191. The individual peasants, *edinolichniki*, were pressured, e.g., via crushing taxes.
37. *Ibid.*, 214. 38. Lewin, "Taking Grain," 293.
39. Moshkov, *Zernovaia problema*. 40. *Ibid.*, 210. 41. *Ibid.*, 213.
42. A list of some of these measures is in Lev Kopelev, *Education of a True Believer* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 252 and 257–58. A convenient collection of these and other regulations is P. N. Sharova, ed., *Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva-vashneishie postanovleniia Kommunisticheskoi Partii i Sovetskogo pravitel'stva, 1927–1935* (Most important decisions of the Communist Party and the Soviet government on collectivization of agriculture, 1927–1935) (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1957), esp. 423 ff.
43. J. V. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 13 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1955), 232.
44. Quoted in L. M. Kaganovich, "Tsely i zadachi politicheskikh otdelov MTS i sovkhozov" (Goals and tasks of the political departments of the MTS and the sovkhozy), *Bolshevik*, no. 1–2, 31 (January 1933): 19. This speech was not reprinted in Stalin's collected works.
45. Moshkov, *Zernovaia problema*, 217.
46. Quoted by N. S. Khrushchev in *Pravda*, 10 March 1963, in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 15, 3 April 1963: 12.
47. Kopelev, *Education of a True Believer*, 226. This translation is flawed and has been corrected using the original, entitled *I sotvoril sebe kumira* (And I created an idol for myself) (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Ardis, 1978), 249.
48. Moshkov, *Zernovaia problema*, 117.
49. Kopelev, *Education of a True Believer*, 282 (original, 302).
50. *Ibid.*, 235 (original, 258). 51. *Ibid.*, 264 (original, 286).
52. Quoted in *Pravda*, 26 May, 1964, in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* 16, 17 June, 1964: 10. Kopelev, however, reports that this same Terekhov had ordered the confiscation of seed grain, and was dismissed as one guilty of excesses (*a peregibshchik*) after the campaign, in an attempt by Stalin to put the blame for excesses on lower-level officials. Cf. Kopelev, *Education*, 265 (original, 286).
53. Moshkov, *Zernovaia problema*, 218.
54. *Pravda*, 16 December 1933, cited in Wolf Ladejinsky, "Collectivization of Agriculture in the Soviet Union," *Political Science Quarterly* 49 (1934): 246. The Smolensk Archive contains a secret Molotov-Stalin order dated 8 May 1933, calling for a stop to mass deportations and indiscriminate arrests. Reproduced and quoted in Merle Fainsod, *Smolensk Under Soviet Rule* (New York: Vintage, 1963), 187 and 263.
55. Lewin, "Taking Grain," 315.
56. See *Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung Thought* (1949–1968), part 1, *Joint Publications Research Service*, 20, February, 1974, 171 (henceforth abbreviated as *Miscellany in JPRS*).
57. An excellent source on the various rectification campaigns is Frederick C. Teiwes, *Politics and Purges in China* (White Plains, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1979), esp. chaps. 7 and 8.
58. The Twelve-Year Program stipulated that by 1967, grain yields of 400, 500, 800 cattles per mu were to be attained in the northern, central, and southern agricultural regions, respectively. For one description of how a village planned to attain a yield of 120,000 cattles of wheat per mu, see Kang Yao, "Eulogy to the People's Communes in Xushui," *People's Daily*, 1 September 1958, in *Current Background*, (henceforth abbreviated as *CB*) no. 520 (30 September 1958): 17.
59. Liu Zhen, "The Black Flag," *Chinese Literature*, May 1980, 53–72. The English translation understates the extent of the inflation of targets. The original speaks of bids for 50,000,

- 80,000, 100,000 catties per mu; the translation reduces these by a factor of ten (54). The English version uses the word “rightist,” but omits “big” and “extreme” (59). The original, “Hei Qi,” is in *Shanghai wenxue*, no. 3 (1979): 237–63.
60. Choh-ming Li, *The Statistical System of Communist China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), chap. 8. Sun Yefang, in *FBIS*, no. 58 (1981): L-5.
 61. Li, *Statistical System*, 90, table 2. Sun Yefang, “Consolidate Statistical Work,” reports that 1958 grain output actually aggregated to 500 MMT. Mao, in one of his remarks at the Plenum, said that 430 MMT had been produced but that to be on the safe side, “we say it is 760 billion catties,” i.e., 365 MMT. See *Miscellany in JPRS*, 147. The source for the 1961 correction is Xue Muqiao, *Dangqian woguo jingji ruogan wenti*, 14.
 62. Li, *Statistical Systems*, 90.
 63. Edgar Snow, *The Other Side of the River: Red China Today* (New York: Random House, 1961), 623.
 64. Quoted *ibid.*, 624.
 65. *Chen Yun Tongzhi wengao xuanbian, 1956–1962* (Selections from Comrade Chen Yun’s manuscripts) (Beijing: Renmin Chubanshe, 1981), 123. Yang and Li speak of “human sea” tactics with which the industrial labor force was increased. See “The Relations between Agriculture, Light Industry and Heavy Industry,” 194.
 66. *Chen Yun*, 167. Sha Qianli, the Minister of Food, wrote in *People’s Daily*, 25 October 1959, that during the First Five-Year Plan years, an average of 21 MMT had to be sent to the urban areas, but in 1958–59, 27.7 MMT had had to be sent, i.e., a bit more than Chen Yun’s 6 million increase.
 67. *Chen Yun*, 123. 68. *Ibid.*, 121. 69. *Ibid.*, 167.
 70. NCNA (Beijing), “Supplementary State Council Regulations on Planned Purchase and Planned Sale of Food Grains,” 12 October 1957, in *Survey of the China Mainland Press* (Hong Kong: U.S. Consulate General) (henceforth abbreviated as *SCMP*), no. 1, 636, (23 October 1957): 25.
 71. *Chen Yun*, 54.
 72. *Wansui* (1967), 64–65, remarks dated 29 June or 2 July, 1959. *Miscellany in JPRS*, 183, omits mention of the three-year point. The Minister of Food, Sha Qianli, wrote in *People’s Daily* on 25 October 1959 that the 40 percent limit was in effect, but there is no confirming evidence for this.
 73. For an outstanding analysis of GLF politics, see Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 2, *The Great Leap Forward 1958–1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).
 74. Fang Qimeng, “A Necessary Understanding of the Comprehensive Guarantee System of State Grain Purchase and Supply,” *Lilun xuexi*, no. 11 (1 June 1958), in *Extracts from China Mainland Magazines* (henceforth abbreviated as *ECMM*), no. 147 (3 November 1958): 26–29.
 75. In Zhejiang and Fujian, the contracts were to last from three to five years. See editorial in *Fujian ribao*, 23 May 1958, and *Da Gongbao* (Beijing), (30 April 1958, both in *Union Research Service* (henceforth abbreviated *URS*) 11: (6 June 1968): 290–96.
 76. *Da Gongbao* (Beijing), 30 April 1958.
 77. NCNA, Zhengzhou, 1 July 1958, *SCMP*, no. 1, 813 (11 July 1958): 20. For Hunan province plans showing a substantial divergence between planned increases in output and in procurement, see *Da Gongbao* (Beijing), 5 March 1958.
 78. *Documents of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee*, vol. 1, (Kowloon, HK: Union Research Institute, 1971), 638. The “Directive” is dated 9 May 1959.
 79. See, e.g., *Da Gongbao* (Beijing), 28 June 1958, in *SCMP*, no. 1, 813 (17 July 1958): 19.
 80. “Supplementary State Council Regulations,” and *Fujian ribao*. Compare the priorities set forth in Article 2 of NCNA (Beijing) “Provincial Measures for Unified Purchase and Unified Supply of Grain in Rural Districts,” 25 August 1955, in *CB*, no. 354 (7 September 1955): 7. For some articles that emphasize that the state comes first, see *Huilibao* (Sichuan), November 1959; and *Da Gongbao* (Beijing), 5 June 1959 and 9 August 1959. The June article, however, notes that the state comes first under the precondition that commune members have enough food to feed themselves.
 81. *Documents of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee*, 613–15, “Emergency Directive” dated 22 October 1958.
 82. NCNA (Beijing), 11 January 1959, in *SCMP*, no. 1, 936 (19 January 1959): 15–16.
 83. NCNA (Beijing), 12 November 1958, in *SCMP*, no. 1, 914 (15 December 1958): 23–24.
 84. NCNA (Beijing), 26 January 1960, in *SCMP*, no. 2, 189 (4 February 1960): 18–20. For one example of numerous statements calling for overfulfillment of procurements, see NCNA (Beijing) 16 October 1959, in *SCMP*, no. 2, 124 (27 October 1959): 5–9.
 85. *Ibid.* For other reports on rapid collections, see NCNA (Beijing) 13 October 1959, in *SCMP*, no. 2, 120 (21 October 1959): 11–13; *People’s Daily*, 7, November 1959, in *SCMP*, no. 2, 140 (20 November 1959): 1–4; editorial, *People’s Daily*, 28 December 1959, in *SCMP*, no. 2, 169 (5 January 1960): 1–4.

86. *Liangshi bao*, 17 March 1960, in *1960 Renmin Shouce* (Beijing: *Da Gongbao She*, 1960), 383–85, reporting on a national grain conference.
87. See *People's Daily* editorials, 13 May 1960, in *SCMP*, no. 2, 263 (23 May 1960): 2; the central directives for procurements in 1960 and 1961, in *Documents of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee*, 681–88; and the *Da Gongbao*, (Beijing) article, “Procurement Contracts Must be Based on Thorough Investigation and Study,” 7 July 1961, in *JPRS*, no. 10566 (18 October 1961): 1–4.
88. *Henan ribao*, 22 June 1960, in *SCMP Supplement*, no. 27 (13 September 1960): 7.
89. *Henan ribao*, 11 December 1960. The county overfulfilled by 0.8 percent, but one brigade managed 23.8 percent overfulfillment.
90. Zhai Yuzhong et al., “Peng da jiangjun hui guxiang” (General Peng returns to his native village), reprinted from *Zhongguo qingnian* no. 3 (1979), in *Xinhua yuebao wenzhai ban*, no. 4 (1979): 146.
91. See for instance, *Da Gongbao* (Beijing), 29 November 1959, reporting on Jinxiang xian, Shandong, which had suffered from unprecedented drought and pests, yet secured an output increase of 11.8 percent in 1959 and overfulfilled procurements by 100,000 catties.
92. *Liangshi Bao*, 7 December 1959, in *1960 Renmin Shouce*, 375–76.
93. *People's Daily* editorial, 21 September 1960, in *SCMP*, no. 2, 351 (4 October 1960): 3–6.
94. See, e.g., *Dazhong Ribao*, 18 November 1960, report on a brigade that met its quota of 410,000 catties and sold 20,000 extra for disaster aid. See also *Henan ribao*, 11 December 1960.
95. Cheng, ed., *Politics of the Chinese Red Army*, 211.
96. *Dazhong ribao* editorial, 2 December 1960, in *SCMP Supplement*, no. 68 (7 February 1961): 12.
97. *Ibid.*, 6–10; also *Dazhong ribao*, 17 December 1960, in *SCMP Supplement* no. 81 (28 March 1961): 17–21.
98. But the Yang and Li ration data are still far below the traditional “no hunger no gorging” standard of 400 catties of husked grain per year or about 480 of unhusked grain. Cf. K. C. Yeh, “Soviet and Chinese Industrialization Strategies,” 345–346. Ninety percent of peasants’ calories came from food grains in the 1950s; cf. Denny, *Rural Policies and Distribution of Agricultural Products*, 18.
99. *Shanxi ribao*, 16 October 1979.
100. For some data, see NCNA (Beijing), 26 January 1960, in *SCMP*, no. 2, 189 (4 February 1960): 18–20.
101. William Hinton, “Standing Up for the Truth; Part 4 of an Interview with Dazhai’s Chen Yong-gui,” *New China*, (Summer 1978): 36–37.
102. “Mao Tse-tung: Speeches at the Chengchow Conference,” 24, 12–13. The reference to edema is in *Wansui* (1969), 278.
103. See P. P. Jones and T. T. Poleman, *Communes and the Agricultural Crisis in Communist China* (Stanford, Food Research Institute, 1962), 12–14.
104. See Mao’s letter to “Comrade XXX,” dated 11 October 1959, in *Miscellany in JPRS*, 173.
105. See Mao Tse-tung, *A Critique of Soviet Political Economy*, trans. Moss Roberts, with annotations by Richard Levy and an introduction by James Peck (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977), 68. Note Levy’s comment on the contrast with the Zhengzhou speeches, 153–54. Judging by the content, Mao must have written these comments in the winter of 1959–60.
106. Xue Muqiao, *Dangqian woguo jingji ruogan wenti*, 14.
107. *Nanfang ribao*, 18 September 1959, in *SCMP*, no. 2, 120 (21 October 1959): 43. Manpower diversion was one of the reasons why in Xue Muqiao’s words there was “a bumper harvest but no bumper crop” in 1958 (see note 80).
108. *Ibid.* For the other data, see Ezra Vogel, *Canton under Communism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), 141 and 277. Output in 1954 was 21 billion catties. For 1958, the initial figure was 62 billion, which was lowered to 32 in 1959, but undoubtedly this figure was too high.
109. *Nanfang ribao*, 18 September 1959, 44, gives a breakdown of shortages for Kaiping xian, showing that for one month 99 brigades had one half catty of grain per capita. For more data on Guangdong peasants during the Leap, see Vogel, *Canton under Communism*, chap. 5.
110. A good example is in *Hebei ribao*, 16 November 1959, story from Zhenghai xian.
111. *Anhui ribao*, 11 September 1960, in *SCMP Supplement*, no. 37 (19 October 1960): 11.
112. *People's Daily* editorial, 28 December 1959, in *SCMP*, no. 2, 169 (5 January 1960): 1–4. An earlier editorial had noted a tendency among cadres to “flinch from difficulties” in pressing for procurements. See *People's Daily* editorial, 17 October 1959, in *SCMP*, no. 2124 (28 October 1959): 1–4.
113. “Mao Tse-tung’s Speeches at the Chengchow Conference,” 37. This version translates *benwei zhuyi* as particularism. It is normally translated as “departmentalism,” but (under the circumstances) “localism” seems even more appropriate. As noted earlier, fulfillment

- of 1958 procurements was delayed. If a datum published in November 1958 is correct, the national grain procurement quota of 63,325 MMT was not in fact fulfilled. See *People's Daily*, 19 November 1958.
114. "Mao Tse-tung's Speeches at the Chengchow Conference," 66–67 and 26.
 115. *Ibid.*, 37 and 83. 116. *Ibid.*, 26. 117. *Ibid.*, 66, and *Miscellany in JPRS*, 160.
 118. See below. Mao was not the only leader to notice concealment. See, for instance, Li Xiannian's remarks at a procurement conference, NCNA (Beijing), 19 December 1958, in *SCMP*, no. 1, 923 (30 December 1958): 17. For an analysis of a conflict over this issue between Mao and the provincial leader Tao Zhu, see MacFarquhar, *Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 2, 115–119.
 119. "Mao Tse-tung's Speeches at the Chengchow Conference," 50–51.
 120. Mao's *Critique of Soviet Political Economy*, 88–89.
 121. Ru Zhijuan, "Jianji cuo le de gushi" (Misedited story), *Renmin wenxue* no. 2 (1979): 214–36. I am indebted to Mr. Peng Chien-yi for making a thorough translation of the relevant parts of the story.
 122. *Ibid.*, 217. 123. *Ibid.*, 219.
 124. Zhang Yigong, "Fanren Li Tongzhong de gushi" (The story of the criminal Li Tongzhong), *Shou huo*, no. 1 (1980): 237–260. I am indebted to Ms. Madelyn Ross for making a summary translation of this story.
 125. Even during the most liberal phase of liberalization after the Third Plenum, the GLF famine was not a subject that could be discussed completely freely. There are contrived elements in this story that hint at political input. For instance the reader is told (259) that the Party center had not learned of the famine because a storm had cut telegraph lines.
 126. Cheng, ed., *Politics of the Chinese Red Army*, 284 and 13. Such sentiments were said to be not uncommon.
 127. *Wansui* (1967), 261 in *Miscellany in JPRS*, part 2, 240. MacFarquhar, *Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 2, refers to a "serious incident" taking place in Xinyang district in 1960 as a result of excessive grain purchases, 303.
 128. Cheng, ed., *Politics of the Chinese Red Army*, 117–23, 566–72. References to risings in Sichuan, Gansu, Qinghai, and elsewhere occur on 190. If more data were available on the behavior of the militia during the GLF crisis, comparison with pre-Communist "predatory strategies" of survival identified by Elizabeth Perry would be feasible. See her *Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China, 1845–1945* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1980), 62 ff.
 129. T. K. Tong, "The PRC Judged by its own People."
 130. I am indebted to Professor Martin K. Whyte for a copy of this interview transcript.
 131. According to this informant, one fourth of the inhabitants in the village in which he lived died during the GLF.
 132. MacFarquhar, *Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 2, 172.
 133. *Dazhong ribao*, 17 December 1960, in *SCMP Supplement*, no. 81 (28 March 1961): 18.
 134. *Dazhong ribao* editorial, 2 December 1960, in *SCMP Supplement*, no. 68 (7 February 1961): 11.
 135. *Miscellany in JPRS*, part 2, 243.
 136. "Tao Zhu's Six Major Crimes Against the Thought of Mao Zedong," the Party and Socialism," *Tiananmen*, Beijing, no. 2 (March 1967), in *SCMM*, no. 578 (5 June 1967), 28. The other case was not explained.
 137. Cheng, ed., *Politics of the Chinese Red Army*, 17. See also Teiwes, *Politics and Purges in China*, chap. 10, for discussion of post-GLF rectification as well as purges of higher-level officials, including Wu Zhipu of Henan, Zeng Xisheng of Anhui, and Shu Tong of Shandong – all provinces where the GLF had been mishandled with particularly disastrous effect. For discussion of cadre rectification in the villages, see Vogel, *Canton under Communism*, 255 ff.
 138. Theodore H. White, *In Search of History* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 144–156. In this case, the Chinese army had taken peasants' grain without regard for their subsistence. "Layer upon layer of officials in Honan covered their tracks," and several million died.
 139. "The CCP Central Committee Takes Disciplinary Measures Against Party Cadres Involved in the Starvation Case in Kwangsi," *Renmin ribao*, 18 June 1957, in *Documents of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee*, vol. 1, 265–270. A State Council document is appended.
 140. MacFarquhar, *Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, vol. 2, 155–159.
 141. *Ibid.*, 157. During the Leap, and as indicated in table 3, part of the allegedly huge increases in output were supposed to go into local grain reserves. Whereas in later years, no more than 1 percent of the harvest was to be so allocated, 15–20 percent of the harvest was to be put into local reserve granaries, thereby probably strengthening higher-level skepticism with regard to the existence of famine. See Jean Chung Oi, "State and Peasant in Contemporary China: The Politics of Grain Procurement," (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1983) chap. II.

142. *Wansui* (1967), 238. For full documentation of the Lushan Plenum and Sino-Soviet Relations see MacFarquhar, *Origins*, vol. 2, parts three and four.
143. Viktor Kravchenko, *I Chose Freedom* (New York: Scribners, 1946), 91. The author was an official sent to the rural areas during this period.
144. See, for example, the Kaganovich speech cited in note 44, with its emphasis on “kulak psychology” among the collective farm peasants, (20).
145. Lewin “Taking Grain,” 282.
146. See Oi, “State and Peasant in Contemporary China.” Yang and Li report that since 1962, the purchases have remained stable or “became a little lower” but that because of population increase, rations remained low, leading to “semi-starvation” in some areas. See “Agriculture, Light Industry and Heavy Industry”: 207.

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Postscript. A Chinese book has recently come to my attention, which sheds further light on local excesses in grain procurements and also on resale of grain to the peasantry, Yang Liaonian et al., *Liushi niandai guomin jingji tiaozheng di huigu* (recalling the readjustment of the economy in the 1960s), (Beijing: Zhongguo caizheng jingji chubanshe, 1981). A contributor, Wang Ping, (168–169) cites an investigation of 24 production brigades in 12 Heilongjiang counties in early 1962, which showed extraordinarily high levels of procurement in the preceding three years. In one brigade in Bayen county, procurements rose from 57.8 percent of output in 1958 to 77.4 in 1959 and 80 percent in 1961, data for 1960 not being given. Production in a team in Baiqian county dropped by one fourth in 1959. Purchases claimed 83 percent of the reduced output and in 1961, 63.7 percent “leaving an average per capita ration of 68 catties,” or 34 kilograms. Cattle died, men got sick, and “unnatural deaths” occurred. Because of the excessive procurements, the “state could not but resell a portion of the grain to the countryside.” Wang asserts that during the 2nd Five-Year-Plan (1958–62), 35.1 percent of purchased grain was resold, in contrast to an average of 30 percent in the preceding five years. But data reported in the same book indicate that in 1959, resales amounted to about 30 percent, and in 1960, gross and net procurement are given as 51.05 and 42.8 MMT, yielding a resale percentage of 16 (12 and 60). And besides, Wang notes, high resales led to chaos in the commodity circulation system, to transport difficulties, and to a great deal of waste. Resales could not have reached many villages in time.