

THE POLITICS OF LAND REFORM
IN SOUTH KOREA

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Young-cheol Zeon

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Dr. Soon Sung Cho, Dissertation Supervisor


The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate Faculty, have
examined a thesis entitled

The Politics of Land Reform in South Korea

presented by Young-cheol Zeon

a candidate for the degree of Ph.D.

and hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.


Soon Sung Cho, Dissertation Supervisor.


Louis G. Kahle, Second Reader.



Young C. Zeon
University of Missouri, Columbia
Doctor of Philosophy
May 15, 1973

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in South Korea

Young C. Zeon

Dr. Soon Sung Cho

Dissertation Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Land reform in the developing countries has been of particular concern to social scientists as well as politicians and revolutionaries because of the preponderant role of agriculture in the area. Economists have paid particular attention to land reform because it is involved in the problem of creating the economic surplus required to undertake necessary developmental investments. For the sociologist or anthropologist, land reform is an important agent of planned social change. For political scientists, the concentration of land ownership in a few hands or in a particular group of people, and the decisive leverage of those same hands in certain stages of the policy process, justifies particular interest in policies designed to reduce that concentration.

The aims of this study are, in short, to delineate the political effects of land reform in South Korea. This study confines itself to a case of South Korean politics of land reform. The first part of the study will rely heavily on an extensive documentary research on recent political history and the origins of land reform in South Korea. This is supplemented by a survey research conducted in the summer of 1969 among two hundred former landlords and two hundred tenants.

This study, after the first chapter of introduction, begins with a conceptual discussion of modernization, political development, revolution, and land reform. This chapter is intended to delineate the inter-relationships of land reform with these social and political processes. It is assumed that land reform is an integral part of the overall modernization process. In an agrarian society like the South Korea of 1940-1950, the land reform was an indispensable policy to effect modernization and political development and to avoid political instability or revolution.

Having discussed the place of land reform in terms of its role in the process of modernization, the third chapter traces the historical development of the land tenure system in various historical periods of Korean history, namely: the Yi dynasty, the Japanese colonial administration, and the period of U.S. Military Government in South Korea. The results of this chapter point out the urgent

need for land reform for the important political reason of the maintenance of political stability.

The fourth chapter deals with the discussion of political activities revolving around land reform between the President and the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry. While the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry was more sympathetically oriented toward the farmers, the National Assembly was dominated by the landlord interest and its sympathizers. Accordingly, as a result of this antipathy between the two branches of government, flurries of political activity revolving around the land reform took place. The examination of these political activities within and without the National Assembly constitute the main body of the fifth chapter.

Finally, the study examines the political effects of land reform. In examining the effects of land reform, survey research data will be analyzed in terms of the respondents' perception and evaluation of land reform. In addition, this chapter will examine the hypothesis that land reform in South Korea contributed to the maintenance of political stability by removing an important cause of rural unrest--inequality of land ownership--and that land reform led the South Korean farmers to vote consistently for the conservative incumbent government.

In short, the land reform in South Korea fulfilled short-term political and social goals, such as political

stability and the legitimation of the Liberal Party government and the elimination of the hierarchical structure of society. However, it is doubtful whether a long-term goal, such as creating a middle class thereby strengthening the foundation of democracy in South Korea, was achieved. The South Korean farmers do not, as yet, constitute a viable middle class due mainly to their still abject economic condition. Their level of political efficacy is too low to be effective in influencing the political process in South Korea.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Land reform in the developing countries has been of particular concern to social scientists as well as to politicians and revolutionaries because of the preponderant role of agriculture in the area. Economists have paid particular attention to land reform because it is involved in the problem of creating the economic surplus required to undertake necessary developmental investments. It is also important because a rapid economic development requires elaborate economic planning, and no economic planning is complete without giving serious consideration to land reform.

For the sociologist or anthropologist, land reform is an important agent of planned social change. As Warriner has stated: "Land reform is a social change affecting the lives of farm people in the countries called 'underdeveloped.'"¹ For political scientists, the concentration of land ownership in a few hands or in a particular group of people, and the decisive leverage of those same hands in certain stages of the policy process, justifies particular interest in policies designed to reduce that concentration.

¹Doreen Warriner, Land Reform in Principle and Practice (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. xiii.

The close coincidence between high tenancy rates and agrarian unrest and political instability has attracted the attention of political scientists, politicians, and revolutionaries.

IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

In view of the fact that more than 70 percent of the labor force in Korea was engaged in agriculture with over 50 percent of the national income derived from agriculture in the 1940's, Korean agricultural economists have often paid particular attention to agrarian problems. As a result, since 1945, numerous works have been produced by students of Korean agricultural economy both in the United States and Korea, and especially on the economic effects of land reform. However, there has scarcely been any systematic study of the land reform from either the viewpoint of political science or sociology. This neglect of the political aspect of land reform prompted the present writer to undertake this study of the politics of land reform in South Korea.

The significance of this study is rather self-evident. The number of tenant farmers in Korea has been steadily increasing since the beginning of the Japanese colonial administration in 1910. In the 1913-1917 period, tenant farmers occupied 39.4 percent of the total farming population, but by 1938 it had increased to 55.7 percent. With the liberation of Korea from the Japanese colonial rule, the need for land reform became most urgent.

Through land reform in South Korea, more than 56 percent of tenant farmers have been freed not only from economic bondage, but also from social discrimination and political subjugation. Thus, the political impact of land reform was enormous in terms of changes in the traditional power structure. The other reason supporting the significance of this study is that land reform, coupled with the introduction of democracy in South Korea, enhanced the farmers' political position to the point where they have the potential to make or undo a government in South Korea.

THE AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aims of this study are, in short, to delineate the political effects of land reform in South Korea. In pursuing this objective, this study will first trace the legislative history of land reform and examine the struggle between the Administration and the National Assembly revolving around the enactment of land reform in the First National Assembly, and secondly, attempt to assess the political contribution of land reform in South Korea.

This study assumes that land reform in South Korea has been carried out, along with other policies, as a means to prevent Communist penetration into the rural areas which were vulnerable to Communist agitation. It also assumes that the land reform was initiated to remove an important source of rural unrest, thereby strengthening the foundation of the government in South Korea. Without rural political

support it could never have been possible to maintain political stability in South Korea. Third, this study attempts to examine whether the land reform in South Korea was the result of the direct pressures from the peasantry or by the initiation of the landlords themselves.

SCOPE AND METHOD

Scope

This study confines itself to a case of South Korean politics of land reform. First, the study will focus on the legislative activities of the Constituent Assembly of 1948-1950, for it was in this Assembly that the land reform bill was enacted. Second, the study will examine the political effects of land reform in the period of the First Republic, 1948-1960. This is important because the Liberal Party which was the successor of the coalition that passed the land reform bill dominated the political scene during the period of the First Republic.

Method

The first part of this study will rely heavily on an extensive documentary research on recent political history and the origins of land reform in South Korea. In examining the politics of land reform, this study attempts to apply "the clientelist politics" approach. This is supplemented by a survey research conducted in the summer of 1969 among two hundred former landlords and two hundred tenants by

Professor Bong-kyu Chu of the College of Agriculture at Seoul National University on behalf of this writer.

The sample selection of this survey is based on the stratified random sampling method. Two hundred former landlords were randomly selected from the official list of former landlords kept in the Agricultural Administration Section of each Provincial Government. The distribution of samples according to province is as follows: Chon-nam, 42 of 263 former landlord households; Chon-buk, 37 of 235; Kyong-nam, 31 of 193; Kyong-buk, 28 of 170; Chung-nam, 17 of 105; Chung-buk, 13 of 83, Kyonggi, 22 of 138; and Kangwon, 10 of 65.

As to the sample of former tenants, a list of former tenants who were associated with the sample landlords was drawn up on the basis of the official record kept at the Agricultural Administration Section of the Provincial government. From this, the sample of former tenants was randomly selected. The distribution of former tenants according to province is as follows: Chon-nam 45, Chon-buk 30, Kyong-nam 30, Kyong-buk 28, Chung-nam 17, Chung-buk 15, Kyonggi 25, and Kangwon 10. Due to insufficient information supplied by three tenant respondents, this study focuses on 197 respondents instead of the full 200.

The questionnaires were designed to find out primarily the respondents' demographic information, sense of political efficacy, their perception of political parties and assessment of land reform, and their political participation,

especially that of the former landlords. The results of the survey were put to the "one tailed and two tailed" test (see Appendix A for an explanation of statistical tests used in this study). The interviews were conducted by twelve students of the Agricultural College of Seoul National University under the direct supervision of Professor Bong-kyu Chu.

Respondent Profile

Four variables were used as control factors in the study: age, education, occupation, and amount of land owned at the time of land reform. A separate analysis of these four variables gives the following profile of both groups.

There is a significant tendency for landlords as a group to be older than tenants. In the landlord sample, 55 percent were 55 years of age or younger whereas 71 percent of tenants were in that age group.

Landlords were much more educated, as a group, than tenants. Although about the same percentage of each group (12-13 percent) had completed only elementary school, this educational level marked the top for the tenants and the lowest level for landlords.

Tenants are naturally more inclined to be engaged in farming all or part of the time than are landlords, less likely to be engaged in commerce or manufacturing, and also less likely to be engaged in teaching and other white collar occupations.

Table 1
Respondent Profile

<u>AGE</u>	<u>LANDLORDS</u>		<u>TENANTS</u>	
35 and under	0	0.0%	12	6.1%
36 to 45	13	6.5%	38	19.3%
46 to 55	97	48.5%	90	45.7%
56 to 60	56	28.0%	54	27.4%
61 and over	34	17.0%	3	1.5%
	N = 200	100.0%	N = 197	100.0%

Median ages: Landlords = 55; Tenants = 51.

<u>LAND OWNED</u>	<u>LANDLORDS</u>		<u>TENANTS</u>	
0.0 to 2.4 <u>tanbo</u>	0	0.0%	27	13.7%
2.5 to 4.9 <u>tanbo</u>	0	0.0%	66	33.5%
5.0 to 7.4 <u>tanbo</u>	0	0.0%	80	40.6%
7.5 to 9.9 <u>tanbo</u>	0	0.0%	18	9.1%
1.0 <u>chongbo</u> and over	200	100.0%	6	3.0%
	N = 200	100.0%	N = 197	100.0%

0 to 24 <u>chongbo</u>	11	5.5%	197	100.0%
25 to 49 <u>chongbo</u>	75	37.5%	0	0.0%
50 to 74 <u>chongbo</u>	28	14.0%	0	0.0%
75 to 99 <u>chongbo</u>	36	18.0%	0	0.0%
100 to 124 <u>chongbo</u>	14	7.0%	0	0.0%
125 to 149 <u>chongbo</u>	15	7.5%	0	0.0%
150 to 199 <u>chongbo</u>	14	7.0%	0	0.0%
200 <u>chongbo</u> and over	7	3.5%	0	0.0%
	N = 200	100.0%	N = 197	100.0%

Median amounts of land owned: Landlords 62.5 chongbo;
Tenants 5.17 tanbo

<u>EDUCATION</u>	<u>LANDLORDS</u>		<u>TENANTS</u>	
No Education	0	0.0%	128	65.0%
Read Korean	not asked		42	21.3%
Read Korean and Chinese	not asked		3	1.5%
Elementary School	25	12.5%	24	12.2%
Middle School	46	23.0%	0	0.0%
High School	25	12.5%	0	0.0%
Junior College	21	10.5%	0	0.0%
University	81	40.5%	0	0.0%
Other	1	.5%	0	0.0%
Not Ascertained	1	.5%	0	0.0%
	N = 200	100.0%	N = 197	100.0%

Table 1 (continued)

<u>OCCUPATION</u>	<u>LANDLORDS</u>		<u>TENANTS</u>	
Farming 100%	32	16.0%	146	74.1%
Farming 50%, Other	40	20.0%	11	5.6%
Commerce	26	13.0%	24	12.2%
Education	16	8.0%	0	0.0%
Manufacturing	26	13.0%	0	0.0%
Civil Service	14	7.0%	13	6.6%
Other White Collar	45	22.5%	1	.5%
Not Ascertained	1	.5%	2	1.0%
	N = 200	100.0%	N = 197	100.0%

1 chongbo = 2.451 acres

1 tanbo = 0.245 acres

Landlords, of course, own much more land than tenants. The smallest holdings of landlords are larger than the largest holding of tenants. Of 200 landlords, 6 percent owned less than 24 chongbo, whereas only 3 percent of tenants owned more than 10 tanbo.

The "typical" landlord is 55 years old, owns 62.5 chongbo of land, has a university education and is engaged in some white collar occupation. The "typical" tenant is 51 years old, owns 5.17 tanbo of land, has no education, and is engaged wholly in farming.

ORGANIZATION

After an introductory chapter, the organization of this study begins with a conceptual discussion of modernization, political development, revolution and land reform. This chapter is intended to delineate the inter-relationships of land reform with these social and political processes. It is assumed that land reform is an integral part of the overall modernization process. In an agrarian society like the South Korea of 1940-1950, the land reform was an indispensable policy to precipitate modernization, political development and avoid political instability or revolution.

Having discussed the place of land reform in terms of its role in the process of modernization, the ensuing third chapter traces the historical development of the land tenure system in various historical periods of Korean history, namely: the Yi dynasty, the Japanese colonial

administration, and the period of U. S. Military Government in South Korea. The result of this chapter points out the urgent need for land reform for the important political reason of the maintenance of political stability. This leads to the discussion of political activities revolving around land reform within the executive branch of government which constitutes the main body of the fourth chapter.

While the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry was more sympathetically oriented toward the farmers, the National Assembly was very much dominated by the landlord interest and its sympathizers. Accordingly, as a result of this antipathy between the two branches of government, flurries of political activity revolving around the land reform took place. The examination of these political activities within and without the National Assembly constitutes the main body of the fifth chapter.

Finally, the study examines the political effects of land reform. In the sixth chapter, the causes of rural unrest in South Korea soon after the liberation will be briefly examined in order to clarify political needs and the effect of land reform. In examining the effects of land reform, survey research data will be analyzed in terms of the respondents' perception and evaluation of land reform. In addition, this chapter will examine the hypotheses that land reform in South Korea contributed to the maintenance of political stability by removing an important cause of rural unrest--inequity of land ownership--and that land reform led

the South Korean farmers to vote consistently for the conservative incumbent government. Thus, this chapter will also examine the effect of land reform on voting in the rural areas to verify the hypothesis that political stability in South Korea was, in part, the result of the rural support for the incumbent government and the South Korean political system.

Chapter 2

MODERNIZATION, POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, REVOLUTION, AND LAND REFORM

The collapse of European empires and the emergence of a plethora of newly independent countries in the developing areas since World War II seriously challenged the traditional approaches of political science which had generally been dominated by the historical, descriptive and formal-legal approaches. Modern political science has been the product of Western (North American and Western European) scholarship of the twentieth century. Although temporary deviant disruptions of political stability occurred in Germany and Italy during the 1930's, political science had advanced in the atmosphere of the political stability of Western democracies. Accordingly, modern political science has been primarily concerned with the stable Western democracies and has tended to overlook the problems of lesser developed and non-western areas.¹ David Easton aptly pointed out this trend by stating: "Over the last seventy-five years political research has confined itself largely

¹Samuel P. Huntington, "The Change to Change: Modernization, Development, and Politics," Comparative Politics, III (April, 1971), 283-85. The first part of this chapter is greatly relied on in this article.

to the study of given conditions to the neglect of political change."²

By the end of World War II the traditional approach had increasingly been considered to be inadequate, particularly for the study of political change and political processes in the developing areas. Western scholars often took for granted the social, cultural and economic background of politics in the formal studies of the political institutions of Western democracies. However, these could no longer be taken as constant variables in the study of non-Western political systems.

This inadequacy of the traditional approach and the need for new concepts, approaches, methodology and analytical tools for the study of political changes and processes of developing areas prompted political scientists to investigate closely the allied disciplines of sociology, social anthropology and psychology to gain some insights and data which might prove useful in understanding the political changes which had been taking place in the developing areas.³

²David Easton, The Political System (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), p. 42, cited by Huntington, "The Change to Change," p. 283.

³For an extensive discussion of the historical development of comparative politics, see David E. Apter and Harry Eckstein (eds.), Comparative Politics: A Reader (New York: The Free Press, 1963), pp. 3-32; see also David M. Wood, "Comparative Government and Politics," Political Science--The Discipline and Its Dimensions, ed. Stephen L. Wasby (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), pp. 468-525.

This search for new concepts and approaches ushered in a new era in political science, particularly in the field of comparative politics. Huntington has termed it a "renaissance in the study of comparative politics."⁴ This new orientation directed the researchers to study politics, especially comparative politics, in the context of modernization because modernization as aspiration, ideology and field of study became an urgent issue in the postwar world.

THE CONCEPT OF MODERNIZATION

The major concern of this section is to examine the concept of modernization and delineate its relationships with such facets of modernization as political development, revolution, and land reform.

Definition of Modernization

Although the term modernization is often used in the utterances of academicians, politicians, and revolutionaries, it is still a rather ambiguous one. There is no generally accepted definition, although there seems to be general consensus as to what is involved in the modernization process. It is appropriate here to review a few definitions of modernization to clarify the meaning of the term.

Edwin Reischauer defined it in both broad and narrow terms: "Broadly," he said, "it is the significant changes in human society that have been taking place in modern

⁴Huntington, op. cit., p. 285.

times," but narrowly defined, "modernization means the process of all social changes which have been going on especially in the developing countries today."⁵ Another historian, Cecil Black, defined it as: "the process by which historically evolved institutions are adapted to the rapidly changing functions that reflect the unprecedented increase in man's knowledge, permitting control over his environment, that accompanied the scientific revolution."⁶

Sociologist Marion Levy echoes the same trend of thinking by stating that "my definition of modernization hinges on the uses of inanimate sources of power and the use of tools to multiply the effect of effort."⁷ Another sociologist, John Stephenson, from a different point of view, suggested that "the concept of modernization had to do with a transformation of culture and of personality in so far as it is influenced by culture, rather than of some aspect of social organization or of human ecology."⁸ A leading student of modernization, Daniel Lerner, defined

⁵Edwin O. Reischauer, "Toward a Definition of Modernization," Japan-American Forum, XI (January, 1965), 4.

⁶C. E. Black, The Dynamics of Modernization: A Study in Comparative History (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 7.

⁷Marion Levy, Modernization and the Structure of Societies: A Setting for International Affairs (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 1:11.

⁸John B. Stephenson, "Is everyone going modern? A Critique and a Suggestion for Measuring Modernism," American Journal of Sociology, LXXIV (November, 1968), 265.

modernization as follows: "I would consider as modernized a society that is capable of self-sustaining growth over the long run."⁹

As noted, modernization, like any other historical process, is difficult of precise or universally acceptable definition. Views are likely to differ as to what is modern as distinguished from what is not modern. However, one common emphasis noted among the numerous definitions of modernization cited above was the idea of change or transformation. Modernization meant the transformation of all aspects of society including personality, value systems, culture and socio-economic political structures. Accordingly, modernization could be characterized as increasing industrialization, urbanization, literacy, secularization, governmental efficiency and citizen participation in the political processes.

The Traditional-Modern Dichotomy

Modernization involves changes or transformation of all aspects of society. Modernization, thus, has been treated as the process through which traditional society becomes a modern society. This assumption presupposed the concept of a traditional-modern dichotomy, and thus, the study of the two forms of society has constituted a central

⁹David Lerner, "Comparative Analysis of Process of Modernism," in Horace Miner (ed.), The City in Modern Africa (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), p. 21.

focus of the study of modernization. It has generally been assumed that modern society is an industrial society, which is functionally-structurally differentiated, secularized, achievement oriented, egalitarian and dynamic.¹⁰ However, traditional society has been characterized as residual categories of modern society.

The dichotomy of traditional and modern society has not remained without criticism. Students of modernization such as Joseph Gusfield, Reinhard Bendix, S. N. Eisenstadt and Samuel Huntington have raised serious questions in regard to the usefulness of the traditional-modern dichotomy.¹¹

The traditional-modern dichotomy is basically based on a conception of linear development of social change. Gusfield raised some objections to the proposition and presented seven major fallacies involved in the traditional-modern dichotomy.¹² He refuted the idea that tradition and modernity are mutually exclusive categories. Gusfield stated:

¹⁰F. X. Sutton, "Social Theory and Comparative Politics," in David Apter and Harry Eckstein (eds.), Comparative Politics, p. 67.

¹¹See Joseph R. Gusfield, "Tradition and Modernity: Misplaced Polarities in the Study of Social Change," American Journal of Sociology, LXXII (January, 1966), 351-63; Reinhard Bendix, "Tradition and Modernity Reconsidered," Comparative Studies in Society and History, IX (April, 1967), 293-346; S. N. Eisenstadt, "Breakdowns of Modernization," Economic Development and Cultural Change, XII (July, 1964), 345-67; Huntington, op. cit., pp. 283-322.

¹²Gusfield, op. cit., p. 351.

The relations between the traditional and the modern do not necessarily involve displacement, conflict, or exclusiveness. Modernity does not necessarily weaken tradition. Both tradition and modernity form the bases of ideologies and movements in which the polar opposites are converted into aspirations, but traditional forms may supply support for, as well as against, change.¹³

Further, the traditional-modern dichotomy has been questioned because it seems to be inadequate in dealing with a society which is neither traditional nor modern. There is perhaps not a single purely modern or traditional society in the world today. Most of the developing countries are transitional societies or "prismatic societies" where the traditional and modern characteristics exist side by side.¹⁴ One of the weaknesses of this dichotomic approach is, as Huntington stated: "But if all real societies are traditional societies, a theory is needed which will explain the form and processes of change at work in transitional societies. This is just what the dichotomic theory failed to provide."¹⁵

General Characteristics of Modernization Process

Although the traditional-modern dichotomy was challenged as to its usefulness in the study of the modernization process by the revisionists of modernization theory,

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴See for an extensive discussion of "Prismatic Society," Fred Riggs, Administration in Developing Countries (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1964), Part Two.

¹⁵Huntington, op. cit., p. 297.

Huntington conceded that "the bridge across the Great Dichotomy between modern and traditional societies is the Grand Process of Modernization."¹⁶

As to the general characteristics of modernization, Huntington outlines nine major processes of modernization which were both implicitly and explicitly agreed upon by the students of modernization. Modernization, thus, includes the following characteristics:

1. A revolutionary process involving a radical and total change in patterns of human life;
2. A complex process involving changes in virtually all areas of human thought and behavior;
3. A systematic process involving changes in one factor which are related to and affect changes in other factors;
4. A global process in the sense that it is a world wide phenomena;
5. A lengthy process for the totality of the changes which modernization involves can only be worked out through time;
6. A phased process for it is possible to distinguish different levels or phases of modernization through which all societies will move;
7. A homogenizing process involving an ultimate integration of societies;
8. An irreversible process for a society which has reached certain levels of modernization in one decade will not decline to substantially lower levels in the next decade;
9. A progressive process involving the enhancement of human well-being culturally and materially.¹⁷

THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

As noted, although the traditional-modern dichotomy has its weaknesses, the general characterization of

¹⁶Ibid., p. 288.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 288-90.

traditional and modern societies provided a starting point for political scientists in the study of political development in the developing areas. Accordingly, the early study of political development centered on the delineation of characteristics of traditional and modern polity. Obviously, a prototype of modern polity is derived from examples of Western polities. Thus, political development has often been identified with Western democracies. Thus, the scholars who embraced this view tended to assume that the goal of political development of the developing countries was to achieve political democracy.

Political Development as a Dependent
or an Independent Variable

Since it was assumed that the goal of political development was rather self-evident, the study of political development tended to concentrate on the study of necessary conditions for political development. The studies done by Lipset and Cutright found that those societies which scored high on such indices of social mobilization as urbanization, literacy and per capita income were likely to have differentiated social structures and secularized and competitive bargaining types of political organizations and are thereby apt to be politically developed.¹⁸

¹⁸ Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," American Political Science Review, LIII (March, 1959), 69-105; Phillips Cutright, "National Political Development: Measurement and Analysis," American Sociological Review, XXVIII (April, 1963), 253-64.

However, more recently it has also been argued that a high degree of social mobilization alone is not sufficient for political development. Political development requires something more than economic development. This element is political culture which has been increasingly emphasized in the field of political development. Banfield and Carstairs found that the prevalence of mutual mistrust of others and lack of cooperation produce non-developmental societies.¹⁹ A similar finding was reported in Pye's work on Burma in which the mutual distrust of Burmese politicians prevented them from cooperating in the national building process.²⁰ The implication of these findings is that the ideological integration of the members of the community is a prerequisite for the political development.

It should be also noted that it is necessary that not only ideological integration but also geographical integration be present. On this point, Shils, Binder and Eisenstadt are agreed. Binder stated that "political development and national integration are simultaneously bound phenomena."²¹ The emphasis on the necessary conditions of

¹⁹E. C. Banfield and L. F. Banfield, The Moral Basis of a Backward Society (Chicago: The Free Press, 1958); G. M. Carstairs, The Twice-Born: A Study of a Community of High-caste Hindus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958).

²⁰L. W. Pye, Politics, Personality and Nation-Building (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1962), pp. 161-63.

²¹L. Binder, "National Integration and Political Development," American Political Science Review, LVIII (September, 1964), 622.

political development considered political development primarily as a dependent variable, that is, "political development was seen as something determined by massive socio-economic and psychological forces."²² Accordingly, the study of socio-economic conditions has been considered vital in the study of political development.

However, to this "deterministic bias," serious theoretical questions were raised. Paige asked:

Are political systems to be conceived of as largely determined by the socioeconomic characteristics of the societies in which they are found? Or are they to be conceived as capable of largely autonomous variation which can result in profound economic, social, and cultural change?²³

Packenham also expresses doubt as to the validity of treating political development as a dependent variable by stating:

Among writers who have treated political development as a dependent variable, there has been a strong tendency to neglect such variables as the will and capacity of political actors and situations.²⁴

As a result of these questions from the mid-1960's, the students of political development attempted to deal with the problems of political development from a different perspective, that is, political development was to be

²²Robert A. Packenham, "Political Development Research," in Michael Haas and Henry S. Dariel, Approaches to the Study of Political Science (Scranton, Pa.: Chandler Publishing Co., 1970), p. 175.

²³Glenn D. Paige, "The Rediscovery of Politics," in John D. Montgomery and William J. Siffin, Approaches to Development: Politics, Administration and Change (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), p. 52.

²⁴Packenham, op. cit., p. 52.

considered as an independent variable instead of a dependent variable. Packenham further elaborates this new approach:

Writers employing this approach have avoided seeing political development as some fixed-end state; rather, they have seen it as a continuing process--in Halpern's terms, "a persistent capacity for coping with a permanent revolution."²⁵

In the same theoretical perspective, Diamant stated:

Political development is not a process which aims at achieving a particular political condition, but one which creates an institutional framework for solving an ever widening range of social problems.²⁶

Diamant attempted to distinguish between the processes and end product of political development. He stated: "Often what turn out to be demands, such as 'popular participation,' are either prerequisites or requisite of the development process. . . . political development is the ability to solve problems . . ." Diamant goes on to say that "I would select problem-solving and 'change-sustaining' as the most characteristic features of the political system in a modernizing society."²⁷

As noted, the earlier writers who were influenced by the deterministic bias seldom defined political development in terms of the problem-solving or change-sustaining capacity of the political system. However, some of them have now recognized certain weaknesses of the dependent variable

²⁵Ibid., p. 174.

²⁶Alfred Diamant, "Political Development: Approaches to Theory and Strategy," in Montgomery and Siffin, op. cit., p. 16.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 24-25.

approach and have shifted their emphasis to political development, viewing it as an independent variable. Almond and Powell's Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach is a case in point.

In their theoretical work--Comparative Politics--the earlier functional categories which were expounded in Almond's Politics of Developing Areas were given new names and they were fully explained in terms of developmental approaches.²⁸ Having oriented their approach, the authors took a modified view of the concept of political development. Political development is now defined as:

The increased differentiation and specialization of political structures and the increased secularization of political culture. The significance of such development is, in general, to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the performance of the political system: to increase its capabilities.²⁹

One of the noteworthy efforts along a similar line is Samuel Huntington's transitional approach presented in his volume on Political Order in Changing Societies (1968). In this book, the author viewed political change as a function of the relationship between political participation and political institutionalization. In the same vein, political development is viewed as the institutionalization of political organization and procedures. Political participation is

²⁸G. A. Almond and G. B. Powell, Jr., Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach (Boston: Little Brown, 1963), p. 14.

²⁹Ibid., p. 35.

viewed as the result of progress in the nonpolitical socioeconomic sphere which may be called modernization.³⁰

In summing up, from the 1950's to the mid-1960's, the study of political development was mainly concerned with the socioeconomic and cultural conditions of political development. This resulted from the fact that political development was considered to be a dependent variable of socioeconomic and cultural systems. Accordingly, the study of political development, as it was influenced by the modern-tradition dichotomy, was primarily focused on the direction of political development from traditional to modern polity. As noted, since the mid-1960's, the study has shifted its emphasis from treating political development as a dependent variable to an independent one.

However, more recently, Huntington has attempted to formulate general theories of political dynamics in an effort to free the study of political development from the "static assumptions which had limited it in one earlier phase and from the teleological concerns with modernization and development which had preoccupied it in a later phase."³¹

It has also been emphasized that political development does not necessarily mean "change for the better" but

³⁰For a more complete discussion of Huntington's view on political development, see Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968).

³¹Ibid., p. 322.

also may mean "change for the worse."³² The modernization process accompanies an expansion of political participation and of rising expectation. When the development of political institutions lags behind that of political participation caused by the modernization process, political instability and violence may occur. Thus a fuller understanding of the nature of modernization and political development necessitates the study of the concept of revolution.

THE CONCEPT OF REVOLUTION

As noted, modernization is "a multifaceted process involving changes in all areas of human thought and activity."³³ The consequence of this process is the rising expectations or aspirations of people in terms of a higher standard of living, an egalitarian society, and mass participation in political processes.

However, when the rising expectations of people are not satisfied by comparable political and socioeconomic development, it often turns into rising frustrations, which in turn constitute the cause of political violence, and political instability, which are likely to result in revolution, coup de'etat, riots, demonstration and strikes. Accordingly, the study of modernization would not be

³²Samuel P. Huntington, "Political Development and Political Decay," World Politics, XVII (April, 1965), 386-430.

³³Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, p. 32.

complete without the study of political instability or revolution. As Samuel Huntington has noted, "revolution is an aspect of modernization."³⁴

Definition of Revolution

Before examining the relationships of revolution with other social and political processes, it would be appropriate to delineate the meaning of revolution. As was the case with the definition of modernization, it is difficult to give a precise and universally acceptable definition. However, revolution, to some, means an illegal, violent and abrupt change in government or sovereignty, and to others it represents abrupt social change or change in the entire social order including political, religious, economic, industrial and other aspects.³⁵

The examination of a few definitions of revolution reveals one common characteristic, that is, revolution involves violence and change. Chalmers Johnson, for instance, simply defined the revolution as "the acceptance of violence in order to bring about change."³⁶ Cecil Black echoed a similar view by stating that revolution is "the wide range

³⁴Ibid., p. 264.

³⁵Dale Yoder, "Current Definitions of Revolution," The American Journal of Sociology, XXXII (November, 1926), 433.

³⁶Chalmers Johnson, Revolution and the Social System, Hoover Institution Studies, No. 3 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), p. 10.

of circumstances--from mere threats of force to major civil wars--in which legitimate violence is employed within a country to effect political change."³⁷ Samuel Huntington also expressed a similar view:

A revolution is a rapid, fundamental, and violent domestic change in the dominant values and myths of a society, in its political institutions, social structures, leadership, and government activity and policies.³⁸

However, these definitions do not clarify the problem of distinguishing revolution from other violent political behavior such as coup d'etat or counterrevolution. In an effort to solve this problem, Harry Eckstein has suggested a new terminology--"internal war"--which is defined as: "any resort to violence within a political order to change its constitution, rules, or policies."³⁹ Eckstein thought that grouping all internal disturbances such as coup d'etat, riots, political and social revolutions under the concept of "internal war" would facilitate the development of a general theory of revolution.

The Present Status of the Study of Revolution

Traditionally, the subject of revolution was treated

³⁷Cyril E. Black, "Revolution, Modernization, and Communism," in Cyril E. Black and Thomas P. Thornton (eds.), Communism and Revolution: The Strategic Uses of Political Violence (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1964), p. 4.

³⁸Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, p. 264.

³⁹Harry Eckstein, "On the Etiology of Internal Wars," History and Theory, IV, 2 (1965), 133.

from the point of view of comparative history. Brinton's The Anatomy of Revolution, Pettee's The Process of Revolution, and Arendt's On Revolution are cases in point.

Brinton's The Anatomy of Revolution has been considered a landmark among studies of revolution, which provided a basis for future empirical studies.

However, scholars like Eckstein viewed the comparative historical approach as unsatisfactory because it did not yield any convincing results in understanding the nature of violence and political and social changes. Eckstein, in assessing the contribution of comparative historical studies, stated:

These studies deal only with the so-called Great Revolutions of history--conspicuous and much studied disturbances that occurred in relatively advanced, mildly autocratic, western societies, between 1640 and 1917. Consequently, they seem to say little that is reliable about, or even relevant to, much of the political violence of our more far-flung and variegated world, or of pre-modern times, or, for that matter, of the period they cover. They draw mammoth inferences from very few cases; and they ignore not only the vast spectrum of coups, Putsches, uprisings, riots, and so forth . . .⁴⁰

Eckstein's view on these studies, in short, is that they are neither scientific nor very historical. His attack on comparative historical studies of revolution implies the need for more empirically oriented studies on revolution.

What is the present status of the study of revolution? Recently, some attempts have been made by social

⁴⁰Eckstein, op. cit., p. 134.

scientists to study the etiology of revolution and to accurately predict the possibility of, or potential for, revolution in modern times through inter-disciplinary and behavioral methods. Students of revolution have been attempting to understand more fully the revolutionary situation by examining such concepts as political instability, prevailing mood or mentality of the people, and revolutionary intensity.

One of the recent examples of theoretical study on revolution is James Davies' 1962 work entitled "Toward a Theory of Revolution." In this article, Davies attempted to synthesize two traditional views of the causes of revolution; namely, that economic poverty produces revolution and that revolutions are preceded by a significant increase in economic development. Thus, the cause of revolution, according to Davies, is that "revolutions are most likely to occur when a prolonged period of objective economic and social development is followed by a short period of sharp reversal."⁴¹ This assumption was based on the notion that when people are constantly preoccupied with the necessities of daily life, they would tend to withdraw themselves from any activities not directly related to staying alive. Accordingly, Davies argued that:

Far from making people into revolutionaries,
enduring poverty makes for concern with one's

⁴¹James C. Davies, "Toward a Theory of Revolution," The American Sociological Review, XXVII (February, 1962), 6.

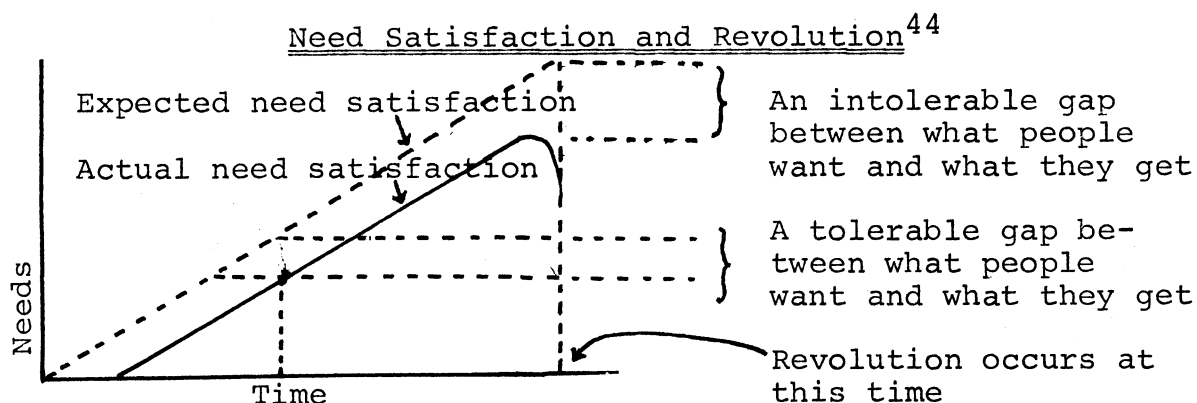
solitary self or solitary family at best and resignation or mute despair at worst.⁴²

Thus, when people are freed from constant preoccupation with the necessities of daily life, the psychological attitude of people becomes an important cause of revolution. Davies stated:

The actual state of socio-economic development is less significant than the expectation that past progress, now blocked, can and must continue in the future. . . . It is the dissatisfied state of mind rather than tangible provision of "adequate" or "inadequate" supply of food, equality, or liberty which produces the revolution.⁴³

Davies, unlike Marx, argued that the actual state of economic conditions of people does not in itself become the cause of revolution, but rather, the attitudes of people toward their conditions constitutes a major cause of revolution.

Davies graphically explained his thesis that a potential revolutionary situation exists where there is an intolerable gap between what people want and what they get.



Davies' J curve is reproduced here to explain the intolerable gap between what people want and what they get.

⁴²Ibid., p. 7.

⁴³Ibid., p. 6.

⁴⁴Ibid.

Davies did not imply that all revolutions follow his J Curve pattern but he suggested that Dorr's Rebellion, the Russian Revolution, and the Egyptian Revolution which he studied seemed to follow his J Curve pattern.

As noted, Davies' work was limited in its scope. Thus, some cross-national studies were attempted to test the validity of Davies' thesis and to see whether it could withstand a more systematic analysis of a larger universe of revolutions. One example of this attempt is Ivo and Rosalind Feierabend's study. The authors were primarily interested in determining the cause of political instability because instability is assumed as the basis of all political disturbances including revolution. This study covered the internal conflict behavior of eighty-four nations over a fifteen-year period, 1948-1962.

Political instability, according to Feierabend, resulted from "situations of unrelieved socially experienced frustration."⁴⁵ The authors presupposed, as Davies did, that the process of modernization creates new wants and aspirations among the people. When the newly-created social wants are satisfied there will be few societal problems, but conversely, when there is a lag between aspiration and achievement, social frustration will inevitably ensue. In short, the authors attempted to explain the causes of

⁴⁵Ivo K. and Rosalind L. Feierabend, "Aggressive Behaviors Within Politics, 1948-1962: A Cross National Study," The Journal of Conflict Resolution, X (September, 1966), 250.

political instability in terms of discrepancy between "social want formation" and "social want satisfaction." They have further explained the intensity of frustration by a series of equations as follows:⁴⁶

$\frac{\text{Want satisfaction low}}{\text{Want formation high}} = \text{High frustration}$

$\frac{\text{Want satisfaction low}}{\text{Want formation low}} = \text{Low frustration}$

$\frac{\text{Want satisfaction high}}{\text{Want formation high}} = \text{Low frustration}$

The authors found that the "higher the level of systemic frustration, as measured by the indices selected, the greater the political instability."⁴⁷ They have concluded that systemic frustration is likely to be higher in transitional societies than in either traditional or modern societies.⁴⁸

Another recent theoretical study on revolution based on Davies' thesis is found in Raymond Tanter and Manus Midlarsky's work entitled, "A Theory of Revolution." They examined seventeen successful cases of revolutions during the period of 1955-1960. The authors found that the possible causes of revolution are changes in economic development and level of education. One of the significant findings of their research which is relevant to the present study is that an unequal distribution of land widens the

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 257.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 261.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 268.

"revolutionary gap" and the probability of revolution is likely to increase as a result.⁴⁹

Davies, Tanter, Midlarsky and Feierabend emphasized the psychological aspect as an important cause of revolution. Another student of revolution, Ted Gurr, in his recent article entitled, "A Causal Model of Civil Strife: A Comparative Analysis Using New Indices," presented a remarkably similar view. Gurr stated his basic theoretical assumption as follows:

The basic theoretical proposition is that a psychological variable, relative deprivation, is the basic precondition for civil strife of any kind, and that the more widespread and intense deprivation is among members of a population, the greater is the magnitude of strife in one or another form.⁵⁰

Gurr defines "relative deprivation" as the "actors' perceptions of discrepancy between their value expectations (the goods and conditions of the life to which they believe they are justifiably entitled) and their value capabilities (the amounts of those goods and conditions that they think they are able to get and keep)."⁵¹

As noted, in an effort to provide a more comprehensive typology of revolution which would include all types

⁴⁹Raymond Tanter and Manus Midlarsky, "A Theory of Revolution," The Journal of Conflict Resolution, XI (September, 1967), 272.

⁵⁰Ted Gurr, "A Causal Model of Civil Strife: A Comparative Analysis Using New Indices," The American Political Science Review, LXII (December, 1968), 1104.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 1104.

of internal strife, Harry Eckstein offered the concept of internal war. Eckstein's paradigm of internal war spells out two important points:⁵²

One is that internal-war potential should be conceived formally as a ratio between positive forces making for internal war and negative forces working against it--with the possibility that internal war of some kind may be fomented existing no matter what the overall potential, and the probability of its occurrence increasing as internal war potential rises.

The other, and more important point is that the forces involved should be conceived in both cases as functions of four factors. The positive forces are produced by the inefficacy of elites, . . . disorienting social processes . . . subversion . . . , and the facilities available to potential insurgents. Countervailing these factors are four others: the facilities of incumbents, effective repression . . . , adjustive concessions and diversionary mechanisms--the first referring to the incumbents' perceived capacity to fight if internal war occurs, the others to preventive actions.

Eckstein suggested that by assessing the positive and negative forces within the society one can assess the overall degree of internal war potential in a society.

Eckstein's theory of internal war is not without any criticism. Lawrence Stone commented that Eckstein's conception is too broad to be meaningful, and he further suggested that Eckstein's paradigm includes different levels of explanation. Thus, it fails to maintain the fundamental distinctions between the preconditions and the precipitants of internal war.⁵³

⁵²Eckstein, op. cit., p. 159.

⁵³Lawrence Stone, "Theories of Revolution," World Politics, XVIII (January, 1966), 168.

There are numerous causes of revolution such as foreign control, adverse economic conditions, political disputes, defects in the regime, and disruption of the incumbent power structure.⁵⁴ However, the students of revolution are neither able to find a general theory of revolution nor able to predict revolution. Although it seems that there is no universally acceptable theory of revolution, it is possible to offer certain generalizations regarding the likely occurrence of revolution.

As Tanter, Midlarsky and Huntington have stated, revolutions will be likely to occur more often in these developing areas where there is a discrepancy between aspiration or expectation and actual achievement or fulfillment of aspiration. Conversely, revolutions will not occur where the people are generally satisfied with the performance of government in regard to socioeconomic development. More specifically, revolution or some type of internal strife is more likely to occur in those areas where there is inequality of land distribution or income. This point leads us to the discussion of land reform and its relations with modernization, political development and revolution.

⁵⁴Carl Leiden and Karl M. Schmitt (eds.), The Politics of Violence: Revolution in the Modern World (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968), pp. 37-54.

THE CONCEPT OF LAND REFORM

Land reform is characteristic of political development as revolution is characteristic of modernization. Land reform is closely related to modernization, political development and revolution in the sense that land reform is one of the factors which holds a key to the success or failure of all these processes, especially in the developing areas. More specifically, land reform is an important instrument through which political stability in the developing areas can be maintained but in the absence of which the security of the country's political system may not be maintained because of the lack of support of the countryside. As Huntington stated:

If the countryside supports the political system and the government, the system itself is secure against rebellion. If the countryside is in opposition, both system and government are in danger of overthrow.⁵⁵

Land reform, thus, is a necessary or highly desirable condition of political modernization or political development. Land reform is potentially a powerful tool in bringing about political stability which is a necessary condition for political and socioeconomic development, particularly if the country is predominantly agrarian.

Definition of Land Reform

What, then, is land reform? As it was with the case

⁵⁵Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, p. 292.

of modernization, political development and revolution, it is equally difficult to give a universally acceptable definition. Definitions of land reform are diverse and varied, as Lachman aptly stated:

It [land reform] is an animal that changes its colors, its appearances, its anatomy and its physiology almost as often and as much as other strange animals called democracy, freedom, and capitalism. . . . Definitions vary according to whether you favor or oppose land reform; whether you treat it as an ideological symbol, or as an achievable goal, or look at actual results. Definitions depend not only on the aims of reform, but also on the means envisaged to reach the chosen objective.⁵⁶

Despite these difficulties, Lachman defines land reform as: "redistribution of rights and hence of power."⁵⁷

A similar point of view was expressed by Warriner:

In the traditional and generally accepted sense of the term, land reform means the redistribution of property or rights in land for the benefit of small farmers and agricultural labourers.⁵⁸

As opposed to this narrow definition of the term, a more comprehensive and inclusive definition has been advanced by the name of agrarian reform which is to include two general areas of reform: land tenure reform and land operation reform. Tuma states:

. . . Actually land reform refers only to reform of the tenure sector. Therefore, we shall refer to

⁵⁶Alexis E. Lachman, "What is Land Reform?" in Analytical Papers: AID Spring Review of Land Reform (Washington, D. C.: Department of State, 1970), p. 3.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 4.

⁵⁸Doreen Warriner, Land Reform in Principle and Practice (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. xiii.

an improvement in the tenure system as land tenure reform and abandon completely the traditional concept of land reform. On the other hand, we shall identify reform of the pattern of cultivation or the terms of holding and scale of operation as land operation reform, since reform in these areas may be independent of or only indirectly related to land tenure reform.⁵⁹

This wider definition is shared by the report of the United Nations. Agrarian reform means:

. . . in the first place, land tenure, the legal or customary system under which land is owned; the distribution of ownership of farm property between large estates and peasant farms or among peasant farms of various sizes; land tenancy, the system under which land is operated and its product divided between operator and owner; the organization of credit production and marketing; the mechanism through which agriculture is financed; the burdens imposed on rural populations by governments in the form of taxation; and the services supplied by governments to rural populations, such as technical advice and educational facilities, health service, water supply and communication.⁶⁰

The wider definition of the term denotes what land reform ought to be, rather than what it generally means. In objecting to the United Nations' definition, Warriner states that "it is the conception of a policy, not a definition of the concept."⁶¹

Political Ideology and the Types of Land Reform

Since World War II, land reform has been advocated

⁵⁹Ellias H. Tuma, Twenty-six Centuries of Agrarian Reform: A Comparative Analysis (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), p. 14.

⁶⁰United Nations, Department of Economic Affairs, Land Reform: Defects in Agrarian Structure as Obstacles to Economic Development (New York, 1951), pp. 4-5.

⁶¹Warriner, op. cit., p. xv.

and implemented by regimes as various as conservative, authoritarian, liberal-democratic and socialist-revolutionary regimes. This was because land reform was a significant symbolic issue in the developing areas. In the former colonial areas, the nationalist leaders used the land reform issue to rally the majority of the peasants to the cause of national independence.

Liberal-democrats supported land reform primarily because it symbolized a piece of their vision of modernization. The liberals saw that land reform would not only erode the power base of traditional elites in agrarian society but also free the peasants from the traditional and feudalistic bondage and start them on the road toward becoming middle class. The socialist-revolutionaries, on the other hand, treated land reform as an essential part of their appeal. To them it was necessary to have mass support in order to break down completely the existing political and social structure and bring about a political system based on the socialist ideology.⁶²

Land reform, thus, identifies itself with certain ideological leanings, which determines the way through which land reform is to be carried out. As Huntington has stated, land reform can be brought about through various means such as by revolution as in Communist China and North Vietnam; by

⁶²Princeton Lyman and Jerome T. French, "Political Results of Land Reforms," in Analytical Papers: AID Spring Review of Land Reform, pp. 1-7.

foreign action as in postwar Japan and South Korea; by traditional leaders working within the traditional system as in Iran; by the leadership of a political party which has won power through democratic means as in the Philippines and India.⁶³

There are also different methods through which land reform can be implemented. Land reform can be divided into two large categories: namely, capitalistic reform and communistic reform. The major difference between the two is that the first recognizes the right of private property and the second does not. Elias Tuma compared the two types of land reform in the following manner:

Advocates of the first type of reform (capitalistic) propose reform within the framework of private property, individual holdings, small family farm operation, and a certain degree of inequality of wealth and income which makes class differentiation and conflict possible. With these objectives in mind, they propose that political democracy can be attained or maintained and stabilized by containing the class conflict . . .

In contrast to the former, advocates of the second approach (communistic) hold that land is a means of production, that means of production are used for class exploitation if owned privately, and therefore that private ownership of the means of production, including land, should be abolished to prevent exploitation⁶⁴

The Causes of Peasant Unrest and Land Reform

As has been stated, the major revolution in Western as well as non-Western societies can be considered in large

⁶³Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, p. 293.

⁶⁴Tuma, op. cit., p. 266.

part a peasant revolution.⁶⁵ Throughout history the peasants have been an important factor in revolution and political change. Consequently, the mobilization of peasants has been one of the keys to the different outcomes of modernization and revolution. The peasants are apt to be mobilized when they are led to realize that they are poverty-stricken, illiterate and politically discriminated against by a leadership group which aspires to get their support. As Huntington stated: "They [peasants] become revolutionary when their condition of land ownership, tenancy, labor, taxes, and prices become in their eyes unbearable."⁶⁶

Obviously, there are numerous causes of peasant unrest. In a study of agrarian reform, Tuma presents static and dynamic factors as the causes of land reform. The static feature includes such elements as the form of tenure, land concentration, small scale operation and sociological features. Tuma argues that the static feature alone does not constitute the major source of societal conflicts. Only when it is coupled with other disequilibrating factors such as changes in economic organization and class structure, and the development of economic and political crises will it become the major source of conflicts.⁶⁷

Tuma further argued that almost all reforms were followed by disequilibrium in the economy of a country.

⁶⁵Huntington, loc. cit.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 374.

⁶⁷Tuma, op. cit., p. 173.

From this he hypothesized that "whenever a change of economic organization takes place or is contemplated, land tenure reform becomes imperative." He also goes on to state that "A new tenure system becomes essential to promote or sustain the new form of economic organization."⁶⁸

The growth of industry and concomitant increase in numbers of the urban middle class has a significant impact upon the social structure of the rural areas. Traditionally, the rural middle class has been considered as the source of political stability, whereas the growth of the urban middle class has been interpreted as the source of political trouble. Consequently, to create political stability, both the rural middle class and the urban middle class had to be strengthened and given legitimate place and power in society.

. . . it appears that a change in the class structure may result from or lead to land tenure reform. The more instability the changing class structure tends to generate, the more imperative would land tenure reform seem to be, and the more radical it has to be to maintain or restore stability or to create a western democracy.⁶⁹

The change of economic and class structure generates an economic and political crisis in terms of a struggle between the traditional ruling elite, whose political power is based primarily on the ownership of land, and the peasants, whose political consciousness is awakened by the economic and social changes. Tuma attempted to show that the

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 175.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 176.

eight cases of land reform he studied substantiated his point that all reforms are followed by economic and political crises.

It seems evident . . . that land reform has been commonly associated with a crisis in the economy which may be instrumental in bringing about the reform . . . It may be suggested, therefore, that the more fundamental crisis and the more widespread it is, the more imperative, radical, and likely the reform appears to be.⁷⁰

Barrington Moore, Jr., in his book entitled Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy deals with some of the causes of peasant unrest. Moore surveys the general explanations of the causes of peasant revolution. The first of these is the economic interpretation. He states that when a series of economic deteriorations occurs among the peasants because of the impact of commercial and industrial development it is plausible to expect revolutionary outbreaks of peasants. However, Moore dismisses this explanation as unsatisfactory by citing an Indian case. He stated "there is no indication that the deterioration in the economic position of the Indian peasantry has been worse than that of the Chinese during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries."⁷¹

The second general explanation is a cultural one; that is, when the peasants' entire mode of life is threatened

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 178-179.

⁷¹Barrington Moore, Jr., Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), p. 454.

there will be a possibility of peasants' revolt. Once again Moore argues that his explanation is rather tenuous. In retorting to this view, Moore cites some historical examples which do not confirm this thesis. The English enclosure movement is a case in point. When the English peasants' mode of life was threatened by the enclosure movement the English peasants did not rise in mass revolt.⁷²

The third thesis is the location theory. Moore states: "where the noble aristocrat lives in the countryside among his peasants there is less likelihood of acute peasant outbreaks than where he becomes a lover of luxury, living in the capitol."⁷³ However, the historical evidence does not bear this out. Moore states that

. . . the Russian landlord of the 19th century often lived a large part of his life on his estate, a fact that did not deter peasants from burning manors and finally driving the dvorianstvo from the historical stage.⁷⁴

The fourth thesis is that "a large rural proletariat of landless labor is a potential source of insurrection and revolution."⁷⁵ It seems that this thesis is closer to the truth, but it lacks generality. A leading Russian scholar, Robinson, argues that this type of peasant was not at all important in the Russian Revolutions of either 1905 or 1917.⁷⁶

⁷²Ibid. ⁷³Ibid. ⁷⁴Ibid., p. 455. ⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶G. T. Robinson, Rural Russia Under the Old Regime: A History of the Landlord Peasant World and a Prologue to the Peasant Revolution (New York: Macmillan Co., 1932), p. 206, cited by Huntington, op. cit.

The fifth hypothesis is the religious one. The role of religion is used to explain the passivity and aggressiveness of the peasantry. This seems a very promising explanation, especially when one looks at the role of Hinduism among the peasants in India. However, Moore hastily raises an objection to this thesis because religion is basically a product of urban and priestly classes. In dismissing this hypothesis as a plausible explanation, Moore states:

Even in religion-soaked India there are numerous indications of widespread hostility to the Brahman. Possibly Indian and other peasants believe in the effectiveness of magic and ritual as such, while at the same time they resent the human agent who performs the rituals and the price that he exacts for their performance. Movements to do away with the priest, to attain direct access to the deity and the source of magic, have simmered underground in both Europe and Asia for long periods, to burst forth from time to time in heretical and rebellious movement.⁷⁷

Moore further argues that

. . . there is little indication of any religious component in the peasant disturbances that produced and accompanied the French Revolution. In the Russian Revolution it is highly unlikely that revolutionary notions from the towns, either religious or secular, were of any importance.⁷⁸

Having dismissed the general hypothesis, Moore presents a different view as to the causes of peasant revolutions. He contends that it is perhaps more important first to look at the role of landlords or ruling class rather than peasants because the former have been the important decision-makers in premodern societies, and second, to examine and

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 456.

⁷⁸Ibid.

analyze the character of society against which the peasants rebel. That is, the understanding of the structural differences of premodern societies should yield some meaningful hypothesis.

By comparing the two Asian giants, China and India, Moore suggests that:

A highly segmented society that depends on diffuse sanctions for its coherence and for extracting the surplus from the underlying peasantry is nearly immune to peasant rebellion because opposition is likely to take the form of creating another segment. On the other hand, an agrarian bureaucracy, or a society that depends on a central authority for extracting the surplus, is a type most vulnerable to such outbreaks.⁷⁹

Moore is attempting to prove why China was more vulnerable to peasant outbreaks than was India. The main cause of this situation, according to Moore, lies in structural differences in terms of the concentration of political power.

The second hypothesis Moore presents is concerned with the role of the landed upper class.

When the landed upper class has turned to production for the market in a way that enables commercial influences to permeate rural life, peasant revolutions have been weak affairs.⁸⁰

As has been indicated, the role of landed upper classes in meeting the challenge of commercial agriculture is crucial to understanding the causes of the peasant outbreaks. In addition, Moore suggests that in the process of complex societal change the following three aspects are

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 459.

⁸⁰Ibid.

important:

1. the character of the link between the peasant community and the overlord,
2. property and class divisions within the peasantry, and
3. the degree of solidarity or cohesiveness displayed by peasant communities.⁸¹

It is rather obvious that when the overlords and peasants maintain good relations the chances of peasants' rebellion is remote. In the same vein, if the landed classes and peasants do not compete for land, the political stability of society will better be preserved. The solidarity or cohesiveness of the peasant community will largely depend on the degree of contribution made by the upper classes to the community rather than on the peasants' share of maintaining community stability.

Thus, one of the important conditions of revolution or political instability is a high degree of land concentration and unfair allocation of political values on the basis of land ownership. However, it is likely to usher in a revolution only in poor and predominantly agricultural countries.⁸²

However, in certain countries land reform is not a pressing issue. These countries are, first, those countries which have reached a high stage of economic and agricultural development; second, those which have attained reasonably

⁸¹Ibid., p. 468.

⁸²Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, p. 381.

equitable patterns of land ownership for a long time; third, those countries where traditional communal ownership of land is just beginning to be replaced by individual ownership of land; and fourth, those countries where land reform has already been carried out by revolution or by other means in recent years.⁸³

Land reform would have a high saliency to politics in those countries outside of these four categories. The countries which have unequal ownership of land, high tenancy, and economic underdevelopedness generate the revolutionary situation.⁸⁴ Thus, land reform becomes a pressing issue.

The Inter-relationships of Land Reform with Modernization, Political Development and Revolution

In summation, it is appropriate here to tie the process of land reform to other social processes such as modernization, political development and revolution. As noted, modernization is a universal phenomenon especially in the developing areas today. Modernization has been broadly characterized as a process involving transformation of all aspects of society. Thus, modernization in terms of economic change may mean increasing industrialization,

⁸³Ibid., p. 381.

⁸⁴Bruce Russett, "Inequality and Instability: The Relation of Land Tenure and Politics," World Politics, XVI (April, 1964), 442-54.

productivity of workers, living standard, and urbanization; in terms of social change it may mean increasing literacy, breakdown of caste systems and class distinctions; in terms of political change it may denote increasing popular political participation in the political processes, fair competition among the competing political organizations and secularization of political culture. As Huntington has observed, the modernization process has been the major source in the contemporary era of a revolution of rising expectation among people in the developing areas.

The rising expectations of people necessitated political development because if the rising expectation was not met adequately, "political decay" inevitably ensued. Political development, therefore, is to be understood in terms of the institutional capacity to solve ever-widening political and socioeconomic problems arising from the modernization process in society.

As has been observed, revolution has been closely associated with political development because very often revolution has been the direct result of the failure of political development. The failure of public administration to deal efficiently with the rising expectations of people in modern times has usually resulted in political instability or revolution. Conversely, revolution did not take place where the people were generally satisfied with the performance of government.

Land reform is not a pressing issue in those countries that have already achieved a high economic and agricultural development; those which have attained equitable patterns of land ownership; those countries where land reform has already been carried out in recent times; and those countries which still have traditional communal ownership of land. However, land reform in those countries which did not accomplish the above conditions is still an urgent issue because land reform holds the key to political stability.

Since the end of World War II, numerous countries with differing political ideologies, such as conservative, modernizing middle class, and radical democratic or revolutionary regimes, have carried out land reform. Obviously, the motive for, and political objective of, land reforms were different. The conservative regimes were interested in land reform to prevent a political upheaval in the rural areas in order to maintain political stability and to prolong the existing power structure. Conservative land reform has usually been the direct result of left-wing threat and agitation in the rural areas. Thus, conservative reform has been directed not to the fundamental change of socioeconomic structures, but rather a partial amelioration of socioeconomic conditions of society, mainly to weaken the left-wing threat in the rural areas. This type of land reform has usually been carried out by the traditional elites whose political power was based on land ownership or ascriptive

considerations. The conservative reform has generally been carried out prior to the outbreak of political upheaval and it has been gradual and non-revolutionary.

The modernizing middle-class regimes tended to regard land reform as a means to implementing the larger policy goals of greater equity and creation of a viable large middle class. As was the case with the conservative regimes, the modernizing middle-class regimes were likely to carry out the land reform in order to prevent the disruption of the basic political and socioeconomic structures, but, unlike the conservatives, the middle class regimes attempted to replace the traditional land-based elites with that of the urban-based modernizing elites. This type of reform was to be carried out gradually but more substantial changes of political and socioeconomic structures were to be brought about than by the conservative reform.

Conversely, the radical democratic and revolutionary regimes treat land reform as a means to bring about radical changes in the political and socioeconomic structures of society. Contrary to the conservative and modernizing middle-class regimes, the radical and revolutionary regimes used land reform as a means to strengthen the revolutionary government. Under radical and revolutionary regimes, land reform can only be carried out after a successful revolution or coup. This is because as long as the traditional or non-revolutionary modernizing middle class elites dominate the seat of political power, it would not be possible to

accomplish a radical land reform. The land reform, therefore, comes after the radical change in the existing power structure and is used as a means to legitimize the new regime and gain the support of the peasants. This type of land reform is extensive in its scope and it is carried out by the new crop of revolutionary oriented political elites, such as communist oriented radical politicians or military coup leaders.

From the foregoing analysis it can be assumed that there are three major political objectives of land reform. They are the maintenance of political stability, the gaining of political legitimacy, and the establishment of an egalitarian society by creating a viable middle class of farmers. Although the emphasis placed by these regimes may be different, it nevertheless reveals that land reform is considered by all as one of the important means to achieve modernization, political development, and to avoid rural unrest which can be a source of revolution.

In short, the desire for land reform in developing countries has been generally stimulated by the modernization process. The successful solution of this problem will greatly depend on the efficiency and ability of political institutions. If the political institutions fail to cope with the problems arising from modernization and, more specifically, problems arising from desire for land reform, these problems will create a serious revolutionary situation.

Recent historical examples show that the revolutions of modern times were in fact peasant revolutions.

Six major social and political upheavals, fought with peasant support, have shaken the world of the twentieth century: the Mexican revolution of 1910, the Russian revolutions of 1906 and 1917, the Chinese revolution which metamorphosed through various phases from 1921 onwards, the Vietnamese revolution which has its roots in the Second World War, the Algerian rebellion of 1954, and the Cuban revolution of 1958. All of these were to some extent based on the participation of rural populations.⁸⁵

⁸⁵Eric R. Wolf, "On Peasant Revolutions," International Social Science Journal, XXI, 2 (1969), 268.

Chapter 3

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE LAND TENURE SYSTEM IN SOUTH KOREA

THE YI DYNASTY AND LAND TENURE SYSTEM

The Yi Society

The Yi dynasty has been characterized as a "Confucian dynasty, or oligarchical, largely despotic, absolute, and highly centralized political system which was deeply rooted in agrarian society."¹ In the Yi dynasty, the king was absolute in the sense that there were no political, social or religious forces which could effectively circumscribe his political power because he was considered as "the apex not only of the administrative but of the moral and religious system."²

The Yi king was autocratic and despotic, for he was politically responsible to no one. Theoretically, however, the king was accountable to the Chinese emperor, but since

¹Lee Young-ho, "The Political Culture of Modernizing Society: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Korea" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Yale University, 1969), p. 18.

²Gregory Henderson, Korea: The Politics of Vortex (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 25; Lee Chong-sik, The Politics of Korean Nationalism (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), p. 7.

the Chinese emperor interfered seldom with the internal affairs of the Yi dynasty, the Korean king was fairly absolute in his domain. Under the king, the next most important ruling class was the Yangban class which was the true ruling oligarchy of the Yi dynasty. (For a complete translation of all Korean terms, see the Glossary, Appendix D.) The Yi dynasty recognized four social classes; namely, the Yangban--the ruling class who monopolized political and economic power; the Chungin--the middle class of professionals; the Sangmin--the common people or farmers, merchants and artisans; the Chonmin--the degraded or vile class including slaves.³

The Yangban was the scholar-bureaucratic class who were conversant with the essentials of Confucian doctrines and who manned the national administration of the Yi dynasty. The members of the Yangban class were recruited from major strata of Yi society: the royal relatives, those who successfully passed the state civil examination, and certain men or deserving families who were appointed by the king for their meritorious service rendered to the dynasty.

The Yangban's privileges were enormous. As Henderson observed:

The privileges were succulent: eligibility to take the official examinations and to be selected on passing,

³Henderson, op. cit., pp. 36-55; see also Kim Yong-mo, "The Social Background and Mobility of State Ministers of the Yi Dynasty," Korean Affairs, III (July, 1964), 238-60.

hence access to the country's only prestigious career; exemption from taxation; exemption of one's household, including slaves, from military service; special trial privileges, including that of substituting one's slaves' punishment for one's own; the informal function of influencing or moderating the local magistrates' decisions through central connection; and, of course, all manner of social prestige and precedence.⁴

The Yangban's political monopoly was legitimized by the Confucian political ideology. Confucianism was the guiding socio-political creed of the Yi dynasty. The Yangban class was the main carrier of this ideological tradition. Confucianism buttressed the Yi political system through its comprehensive explanation of the Rule of Life, five-relationships and moral, ethical and religious teaching.⁵ Confucianism, in short, provided a ready-made political justification of absolute despotic Yangban rule in the Yi dynasty.

On the one hand, Confucianism brought about political and moral legitimacy and stability to the Yi dynasty, but on the other hand, it engendered serious political stagnation because of its static outlook on life and society. The only conceivable profession for the Yangban class, who were steeped in the tradition of Confucianism, was that of scholar-bureaucrat. They were generalists in their function because of their static outlook on life and society. This

⁴Henderson, op. cit., p. 40.

⁵Ibid., pp. 23-25. For further discussion of the influence of Confucianism on the Yi dynasty, see Park Chong-hong, "Historical Review of Korean Confucianism," Korea Journal, III (September, 1963), 12-16.

attitude of the Yangban brought extreme competition among ever-increasing numbers of the persons who passed state civil examinations for a fixed number of governmental positions.⁶

As a result, factional strife was rampant and political corruption ensued throughout the Yi dynasty. This situation has been aptly described:

Members of the Yi ruling oligarchy were generalists in their functions. Governmental roles were extremely undifferentiated and therefore role-interchangeability was great. Such a generalist culture made few persons indispensable. Accordingly, factional strifes were frequent and intensive, and engulfed the entire governmental structure, resulting in great career insecurity.⁷

In short, the Yi dynasty was an "Oriental Despotism" in the sense that it was dominated by a strong centralized bureaucratic state and administered by the Yangban class who were steeped in Confucianism and favored the status quo in their management of state affairs.⁸

Land Reform of the Yi Dynasty

An analysis of the Yi political system would be inadequate without examining the land tenure system. The Yangban class was inseparably associated with the land ownership system of the Yi dynasty. The Yi dynasty was an agrarian society and the Yangban's political power was primarily

⁶Lee Chong-sik, loc. cit.

⁷Lee Young-ho, op. cit., p. 19.

⁸Karl A. Wittfogel, Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1957), p. 372.

derived from their ownership of land which was the major source of wealth and thereby of power.

Although the causes of collapse of the Koryo dynasty were manifold, the failure of the land tenure system has been cited as one of the most important. Yi Song-gye, the founder of the Yi dynasty, took over the political leadership of the Koryo dynasty in 1392 and one of the first major domestic policies he embarked on was land reform. The objectives of Yi's land reform were two-fold: first, to destroy the power base of the Koryo aristocracy, which could have been an important threat to Yi Song-gye, and second, to establish a sounder foundation of governmental revenue since land was the major source of funds.⁹

As the first step in a series of programs related to land tenure reform, the Yi dynasty publicly burned all public and private land registers in 1390.¹⁰ During the latter part of the Koryo dynasty, the land system had become ineffective because the area of state-owned land was taken over by the higher state officials in violation of the land law of the Koryo dynasty. Therefore, the burning of the land registers was expected to wipe out the power base of large

⁹Yi Yong-hyup, Hanguk Kundae Toji Jehdo Sa Yungu (The History of Modern Korean Land System) (Seoul: Bomun Kak Press, 1968), p. 8; Warren W. Smith, Jr., and Benjamin H. Hazard (trans.), A History of Korea, by Takashi Hatata (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLO, Inc., 1969), pp. 61-62.

¹⁰Yi Yong-hyup, op. cit., p. 9.

land holders who were loyal to the ancient regime--the Koryo dynasty.

In the same year, having burned all the land registers, a land survey project was undertaken. The results of this survey found that there were 798,127 kyol¹¹ of farm land in all of Korea which was about 300,000 kyol more than had previously been registered.¹² In 1391, a new land law--Kwanjon-bop--was promulgated to regulate the distribution of farm land in the Yi dynasty.

Unlike the situation in China where both public and private ownership of land was allowed side by side, the Yi dynasty recognized no private ownership of land. All lands were legally public lands belonging to the king. However, due to the absence of monetized economy of the early Yi

¹¹For the explanation of Kyol see Pak Ki-Hyuk and others, A Study of the Land Tenure System in Korea (Seoul: Korea Land Economics Research Center, 1966), p. 17. According to Pak, Kyol is a unit of land measurement which was used as the basis of taxation in the Yi dynasty. Kyol is related to quality of land from which a given amount of tax is collected. However, opinions differ as to the exact area of one Kyol; the following figures exemplify one of such different estimates:

Class 1 <u>Kyol</u>	3.025	<u>pyong</u>
Class 2 <u>Kyol</u>	3.558	<u>pyong</u>
Class 3 <u>Kyol</u>	4.321	<u>pyong</u>
Class 4 <u>Kyol</u>	5.499	<u>pyong</u>
Class 5 <u>Kyol</u>	7.562	<u>pyong</u>
Class 6 <u>Kyol</u>	12.120	<u>pyong</u>

Whereas Hatata explains the Kyol as follows: a unit of land measure for cultivated fields. The area of the Kyol has varied over the centuries from approximately 490 square feet in 1069 to roughly 10,000 square feet in the 19th century. Hatata, op. cit., p. 26.

¹²Pak, op. cit., p. 17.

dynasty, the government officials were allotted land according to the Kwajon-bop with the right to collect rents in lieu of salary. The higher civilian officials, military court officials and royal families were allotted Kwajon in Kyonggi province exclusively. This arrangement was primarily to control the land holders closely and to prevent officials from becoming too powerful and troublesome.¹³ The primary objective of this policy was to avoid repeating the Koryo dynasty's mistake of allowing the court officials to become too powerful.

The governmental agencies were also allotted land with the right to collect rents for their upkeep. Theoretically, those persons and agencies which were allotted land were only allowed to exercise the right to collect rents but the ownership of land strictly rested with the king.

Thus, the farm land in the Yi dynasty was generally classified into two major categories: Sajon and Kongjon. The Sajon was the land allotted by the state to the civil and military court officials in Kyonggi province with the rights to collect rent and tax for the state. Under the Kwajon system the officials were divided into eighteen classes, according to their rank and family background, and the amount of land allotted was specified by law according to the respective rank.¹⁴

¹³Hatata, op. cit., p. 62.

¹⁴Cho Ki-jun (Zo Ki Zun), Hanguk Kyongje Sa (History of Korean Economy) (Seoul: Ilshinsa Press, 1962), p. 183.

The Kwajon was further divided into Kongshin-jon--meritorious ministers' land, Pyolsa-jon--specially conferred land, and Wangja Kwajon--the king's sons', brothers' and uncles' land. Kongshin-jon was granted to those persons who contributed to the establishment of the Yi dynasty and Pyolsa-jon was allotted to those persons of lesser merit who served the new dynasty in the field of diplomacy and those who showed their absolute loyalty to the new dynasty. The Kwajon-bop recognized the hereditary right in the case of Konshin-jon, but not in Pyolsa-jon. However, in practice even Pyolsa-jon was inherited with impunity.¹⁵

The Kongjon which was allotted to the governmental agencies for their up-keep was called Konghae-jon, which was further divided into various types of land such as Naesusa-jon, Kukhaeng suryk-jon, Arok-jon, Kongsu-jon, Yokchang-jon, Kupchu-jon, Chinbu-jon, Heminso chongyak-jon.¹⁶ The Kongjon was considered as public land simply because no private persons had the right to collect rent.

The Collapse of the Kwajon System

The Kwajon system soon showed its inadequacy in the face of an ever increasing number of court officials who were entitled to be allotted land. There was not enough land in Kyonggi province to go around for every Yangban who

¹⁵Pak, op. cit., p. 22.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 21.

passed the state examination. As noted, this situation was aggravated by the recognition of the hereditary right of land ownership.

In order to resolve this problem the government adopted three measures: first, the rearrangement of administrative districts; second, the expansion of Kwajon land beyond Kyonggi province; and third, confiscation of the surplus land belonging to Buddhist temples. In 1396, the government incorporated a part of Yanggwan province and Chungchon province into the Kyonggi province to expand the area of Kyonggi, but this was nothing but a temporary measure. In 1417, the government designated Chungchun, Chonla, and Kyongsang provinces as additional areas where Kwajon land would be allotted.¹⁷ However, this measure ended in defeating its original objective of stopping usurpation of public land by the state officials because the governmental supervision was weak in areas outside of Kyonggi province. Thus, the exploitation of farmers by the ruling class was carried out easily.

Thus, the need for reform of Kwajon-bop was necessitated. The Kwajon-bop was eventually replaced by the Chikjon system which granted land only to incumbent officials and the "government directly collected rents from tenant farmers and compensated the land holders from the

¹⁷Cho Ki-jun, op. cit., pp. 186-87.

financial resources of the state."¹⁸ The objective of the Chikjon system was obviously to prevent usurpation of public land by the Yangban class and their illegal exploitation of tillers.

Contrary to its original objectives, the ownership of land by the Yangban did not recede but increased and the exploitation of tillers did not disappear but intensified because there was no financial security after the retirement or death of incumbent officials. The Chikjon system met the same fate as its predecessor and it was abolished in 1598.¹⁹

The failure of Kwajon-bop, Chikjon, and the disastrous experience of Hideyoshi's invasion of Korea (1592-1598) precipitated the trend toward privatization of land ownership in the Yi dynasty. During the Hideyoshi's invasion, it has been stated that "land registers were destroyed and many farmers were conscripted into the army and others abandoned their land to seek safety."²⁰ This situation offered an opportunity for the Yangban class to take over lands vacated by the farmers. This, however, did not mean that the system of king's ownership of land was abolished, but only that the intermediary position of Yangban between the king and the actual tillers was strengthened.

Hideyoshi's invasion of Korea had great impact on many aspects of Korean society. The land owning system was

¹⁸Pak, op. cit., p. 26.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., p. 29.

also affected by the invasion. From the 17th century there began to emerge two types of land-owning classes: bureaucratic landlords and the farmer landlord class.²¹ As noted, the Yangban class took advantage of the then prevailing political situation and took over public land in violation of the land law of the country. The farmer landlord class was the product of a self-disintegrational process in the peasant class. This class was also helped by the disruption of agriculture as the result of Hideyoshi's invasion. During the invasion, the country experienced a drastic reduction of agricultural output. Faced with a shortage of crops, the state urged ordinary farmers to reclaim chin-jon--underdeveloped land.

According to Taejon Hoe Tong (a series of books containing all the legal codes of the five hundred years of the Yi dynasty, which were compiled in the second year of King Kojong's reign), those filing claims on the chin-jon were exempted from the obligation of tax payment for three years and were granted the right to cultivate the claimed land for ten years.

In addition, at this time, usury was in practice in the rural community. Poor farmers under the usury loans had either to sell their plot of land to repay their debt or to

²¹Chon Sok-tam, Chosun Kyungjeh Sa (History of Korean Economy) (Seoul: Bakmun Press, 1949), p. 72, cited by Choe Ho-jin, Hanguk Kyongje Sa Kaeron (An Outline of Korean Economic History) (Seoul: Bomun Kak Press, 1962), p. 180.

hand over the ownership of the land to the creditors and demote themselves to the status of tenant farmers.²² At the same time, some merchants and craftsmen became landlords by making use of their accumulated capital through usury. However, this class could not play an important role in the Yi society partly because of a conception of disdain for commercial activities. The merchant and craftsman class, in fact, came at the bottom of social stratification.²³

As time progressed, the control of land by the central authority became ever tenuous and both bureaucratic and farmer-landlord came to occupy unshakably powerful positions in the Yi dynasty because land was in the final analysis the only important source of power and wealth. Some of these landlords became absentee landlords. The gradual disintegration of former social status systems forced some of the members of the Yangban to become tenant farmers under the new landowning class.

The exploitation of tenants by landlords and the exorbitant taxes imposed by the government on farmers intensified as time progressed.²⁴ The abject situation of

²²Kim Yong-sop, "A Study on Farmland Register (II)," History Review, No. 8, published by Korea History Study Association, 1958, p. 70, cited by Pak and others, op. cit., p. 32.

²³For an extensive discussion of the Yi class system, see Henderson, op. cit., pp. 36-55.

²⁴Yi Pyong-do, "Tonghakran eui Yuksa Juk Eui (The Historical Significance of the Tonghak Rebellion)," The Sasangge, November, 1954, pp. 10-21.

farmers at this time was aptly described by Hulbert:

. . . that under the hideously corrupt regime of such men as Min Yon-jun, the country had been going from bad to worse until the people found it utterly impossible to endure the oppression any longer.²⁵

Under such circumstances the Korean farmers were subjected to the severest hardships. By the close of the Yi dynasty, an explosion of discontent by farmers was imminent and found its vent in the Tonghak movement. The Tonghak movement, in short, was a reformist movement to correct the Yi society which was dominated by the corrupted Yangban.²⁶ The Tonghak's major complaints against the Yi government were:

. . . severe punishment of corrupt officials and high-handed wealthy people, reprimanding and reforming of unprincipled Confucian scholars, cancellation of all debts, burning of slave records, abolition of unreasonable taxation and equal distribution of land.²⁷

Although this Tonghak movement by discontented farmers fulfilled its role as a warning to the Yi dynasty, it did not bring about any political and socioeconomic changes, let alone any land or agrarian reforms. The

²⁵Homer B. Hulbert, The History of Korea, Vol. II (Seoul: The Methodist Publishing House, 1905), p. 265.

²⁶Certain scholars viewed the Tonghak Rebellion as a revolution. For example, Harold Sunwoo commented that "the Tonghak was a most serious people's movement during the last five hundred years of the Yi dynasty . . . it was a social and economic revolution based on a democratic spirit which attempted to revolutionize the Korean government." Harold H. Sunwoo, Korea: A Political History in Modern Times (Seoul: Kunkuk University Press, 1970), p. 137.

²⁷Benjamin B. Weems, Reform, Rebellion and the Heavenly Way (Tucson, Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 1964), p. 40.

Tonghak movement was eventually quelled with the aid of China. However, this incident precipitated the demise of the Yi dynasty at the hand of Japan as a result of her victory over China in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895.

As has been indicated, the disruption of the land system of the Yi dynasty seriously affected the governmental financial system. Acknowledging the acute need for a reform of the financial system and taxation system, the Yi dynasty initiated a national land survey project in her closing years. In 1894, the government carried out the government reorganization program and the lands allotted to the government agencies were transferred to Takjibu (an equivalent of the modern day Ministry of Finance). Thus, an initial and partial land adjustment was attempted.²⁸

In 1898, a new agency--Yangji Amun (a land survey agency) was established to take charge of a land survey of the entire nation. In addition, the government employed certain American survey technicians to assist in the project. In 1901, the Yangji Amun was incorporated into a new agency--Chigye Amun--which was to continue the land survey and also to streamline the land register system. Despite the government effort, the land survey project did not succeed. The failure of this project has been attributed to many reasons but particularly to the following: first, there was a technical incompetency among the Korean survey technicians; and

²⁸Cho Ki-jun, op. cit., pp. 293-94.

second, the then prevailing political situation did not allow the Korean government to implement such substantial policy.²⁹ Thus, the last effort to bring about reform in the land system ended in vain.

In summation, through successive reigns of the Yi kings, the farmers remained at the bottom of the socio-economic order, serving as objects of severe exploitation by Yangban landlords, and by the central and local governments, who collected rents and levied the taxes. Moreover, with no alternative employment open to them, the peasants had to accept their given destiny of poverty. This state of affairs persisted until the annexation of Korea by Japan when the task of agrarian reform was handed over to the Japanese colonial authority in Korea.

THE JAPANESE COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION AND LAND TENURE SYSTEM

The Establishment of the Japanese Colonial Administration

Upon the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, Japan emerged as a dominant power in the Far East. Under the then prevailing political circumstances, no power was willing to thwart Japanese imperial designs in the Far East and especially their intention of controlling Korea. In fact, Japan was tacitly assured of the control of Korea by the Taft-Katsura Agreement of 1905. And the renewal of

²⁹Yi Yong-hyup, op. cit., pp. 35-39.

the Anglo-Japanese Alliance further strengthened Japanese influence in the region.³⁰

Japan, as a first step of implementing her imperial policy in Korea, made Korea a protectorate in 1905 and eventually annexed the country in 1910. Ostensibly, one of the objectives of annexation was to bring peace and prosperity to Korea. The preface of the treaty of annexation stated:

In order to maintain peace and stability in Korea, to promote the prosperity and welfare of Korea, it has been made abundantly clear that fundamental changes in the actual regime of government are absolutely essential.³¹

However, a more plausible reason for the Japanese annexation of Korea was to make Korea her agricultural supply base for the eventual launching of a full-scale colonial policy in China and other parts of Asia. As became apparent, from the 1930's on, Korea was used as a launching pad by the Japanese for the domination of China.

As has been noted, by the closing years of the Yi dynasty, the traditional doctrine and practice of exclusive ownership of land by the king was very much disrupted and diluted. It has been noted that by the eve of annexation, the Korean king owned only 6 percent of Korean lands and the

³⁰Hilary Conroy, The Japanese Seizure of Korea, 1868-1910 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960), pp. 327-30.

³¹For a full text of the Proclamation and Treaty of Annexation of Korea by Japan, see Donald G. Tewksbury, Source Materials on Korean Politics and Ideologies (New York: Institute of Pacific Relationships, 1950), pp. 37-39.

rest of the lands were owned either by individuals, Yangban, municipalities and Buddhist temples, or Confucian Sowon.³² Thus the traditional land system was irreparably disrupted and the lands which were the main source of government revenue were wantonly misappropriated by the Yangban class. Yi Korea experienced widespread political unrest, corruption and economic stagnation, which, in fact, was the result of the wholesale disruption of the traditional land system.

In view of the existing economic conditions of Korea, the Japanese colonial policy-makers were impelled to create a suitable economic base for the pursuance of overall Japanese colonial policy. In 1905, there existed no appropriate laws governing property relations in Korea. Thus, the Japanese Resident-General dictated to the Korean government a series of laws to establish a modern legal basis for economic activities in Korea. The laws which were legislated in this period were the Land and Home Certification Regulations (1906), and its enforcement rules (1906), and the Land and House Mortgage Regulations (1908) which specified legal authorization of ownership of property including land owned by foreigners.³³ This legislation, in fact, assisted in the smooth flowing of Japanese capital into Korea.

³²Taniura Takao, Kangokoku no Nogyo to Tochi Seido (The Korean Agriculture and Land System) (Tokyo: Japan Research Center for International Problems, 1966), p. 7.

³³Yi Yong-hyup, op. cit., p. 93.

Certainly, these laws alone were not sufficient to establish a firm economic foundation for Japanese capital in Korea. Thus, upon the annexation of Korea and the establishment of the Japanese Government-General in 1910, the Japanese authority initiated a more far-reaching economic program, one element of which was the establishment of the Provisional Land Survey Bureau. This agency was charged with the enormous task of conducting a farm land survey of the entirety of Korea.

The Japanese Land Survey
Project and Its Consequence

The Japanese Government-General promulgated a Land Survey Decree in 1910 to accelerate and facilitate the land survey project. At the same time, the Real Estate Certificate Decree and a Real Estate Registration Decree were also promulgated to establish a legal foundation for private ownership of property in Korea. In the same year, a Korean Civil Decree was promulgated to establish the foundation for a modern capitalistic private ownership system in Korea.³⁴

The Japanese land survey project was started in March, 1910, and completed in November, 1918, after more than eight years of work and expenditures of 24,100,000 yen over the entire survey period. The project covered the entire peninsula of Korea, approximately 4,871,071 arable

³⁴Pak and others, op. cit., p. 43.

chongbo (one chongbo is equal to 2.45 acres).³⁵

The purported purpose of this project was to determine the following four points:

1. the right of ownership of lands
2. the value of the land
3. survey of land and location
4. fixing of boundaries and compilation of reports on the results of the investigation, the making of cadaster, and clarification of possession.³⁶

However, in hindsight, the most important of all objectives was the clarification of the ownership of lands. This land survey established the basis for the modern systems of land registration, mapping, and land taxation in Korea. By this survey the relation of rent to land value was determined by comparison with the standard value established for all of Korea on the basis of productivity, grade of crops, and capitalization rate.³⁷

Although credit should be given to the Japanese land survey, it is equally possible to point out certain serious ill effects of this project. For instance, in determining the ownership of land, the Japanese authority adopted a so-called "report system" under which the owner was to report to the authorities of his ownership of land. The seemingly simple "report system" for the uneducated Korean farmers was a rather strange and incomprehensible administrative

³⁵Ibid., p. 44; Thriving Chosen: A Survey of Twenty-five Years of Administration (Seoul: Government-General of Chosen, 1935), p. 22.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

procedure. The difficulties faced by the farmers were explained as follows:

. . . But many Korean farmers failed to register their titles on time, because, through lack of literacy, many farmers lost their land by failing to register or because some farmers or government workers cheated by overlapping registrations . . .³⁸

Another writer expressed a similar view by stating:

The result was that local gentry registered their claims at will, often extending them over the common property of village or claimed even over the lands of small independent farmers who had rightful claims under the old system. Uneducated farmers who had no conception of ownership in the modern sense and no knowledge of how to overcome red tape became members of an "unpropertied Proletariat" and had to continue their existence as land tenants in a truly modern meaning. If no one claimed a property, it automatically came under government ownership.³⁹

After the land survey, the Japanese Government-General could have distributed the lands to the actual tillers, but it was not done because Japan itself did not have an owner-farmer system. In addition, the Japanese needed to establish private ownership of land in Korea in order to expedite the flow of Japanese capital into Korean agriculture. Nevertheless, the Japanese land survey project had a great impact upon the Korean economy and society. Pak

³⁸Pak Mun-kyu, "Land Survey as a Factor of Decline in Rural Korean Society," in Study of the Korean Social and Economic History (Seoul: Keijo Imperial University, 1933), cited by Pak Ki-hyuk, "Economic Analysis of Land Reform in the Republic of Korea, with Special Reference to an Agricultural Economic Survey, 1945-55" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Illinois, 1957), p. 49.

³⁹Lee Chong-sik, op. cit., p. 94.

cited the major outcomes of the land survey as follows:

1. It created a modern land-owning class and tenants;
2. It increased the Japanese ownership of land in Korea;
3. It precipitated the economic subjugation of the tenants to the landlord's class.⁴⁰

In retrospect, the Japanese land survey project and the establishment of a modern private land ownership system certainly benefited a great deal the former Yangban and Ajon classes and they emerged as the new landowning class who, in fact, became the most privileged class in Korea.⁴¹ Whereas the former peasants, who had the traditional right to cultivate the farmlands as long as they complied with the demands of government officials and the Yangban class, were degraded into a modern tenant's class. Thus, as Pak pointed out, a modern landowning class and tenants were created.⁴²

As the result of the Japanese sponsored land survey project, a great number of Korean farmers lost their traditional right to till the land. And the displacement of farmers inevitably resulted in severe pressure on the land and rise in rent. The land survey project created a sub-marginal semi-serf farming system. Professor Cho Ki-jun, a leading Korean economic historian, observed that from 1913 to 1939, the number of Korean land owners decreased from

⁴⁰Pak and others, A Study of Land Tenure System in Korea, pp. 44-48.

⁴¹Henderson, op. cit., pp. 46-50.

⁴²Pak and others, op. cit., pp. 46-50.

21.8 percent to 19.0 percent, owner-tenants from 38.7 percent to 25.3 percent, and tenants increased from 39.4 percent to 55.7 percent.⁴³

As stated earlier, one of the objectives of the land survey project was to expedite the flow of Japanese capital into the Korean agriculture. In order to achieve this objective, the Japanese government established the Toyo Takushoku Kabushiki Kaisha (Oriental Development Company) in December, 1908. The company was formed as a joint stock enterprise composed exclusively of Korean and Japanese, with a total capital of ten million yen, derived from the issuance of 200,000 shares valued at fifty yen. Of the authorized capital, the old Korean government was to pay three million yen. However, the Korean government did not possess the funds; thus, she paid her share in land of about 5,700 chongbo (13,960 acres) in paddy and the same amount in upland.⁴⁴

The Korean farmers were also induced to exchange their lands for shares in the Oriental Development Company partly to facilitate migration from densely populated Japan to Korea. The alleged purpose of this company was stated in the Residency General's report as follows:

The country (Korea) will never be developed unless a well organized company initiated the exploitation of agriculture and industry with adequate capital and

⁴³Cho Ki-jun, op. cit., pp. 305-306.

⁴⁴Conroy, op. cit., p. 481.

skilled labor. This method has often proved previously the pioneer of material civilization in underdeveloped countries.⁴⁵

The company was allowed to be engaged in the farm management and also in the financial business such as lending of funds to Japanese settlers in Korea.⁴⁶ The company was not only allowed to be engaged in this type of financial business but the company was also guaranteed a government subsidy of 300,000 yen for eight years from 1908 to 1916. This was to insure payment of dividends for Japanese shareholders.⁴⁷

With this kind of power and government backing the company, by 1915, became the largest landowner in Korea, managing 46,584 chongbo of rice paddies and 16,887 chongbo of upland.⁴⁸ Of course, the Oriental Development Company was not the only agency of Japanese agricultural colonization. There were other companies such as the Funi Industrial Company and the Keiko Cooperative Society.

Another method used to increase Japanese influence in Korean agriculture was the Japanese immigration policy. The Japanese colonial government in Korea drew up a

⁴⁵Residency General, Annual Report for 1908-1909 (Seoul: Residency General of Chosen, 1909), p. 16.

⁴⁶Lee Hun-ku, Land Utilization and Rural Economy in Korea (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936), pp. 282-83.

⁴⁷Conroy, op. cit., p. 480.

⁴⁸Chosun (Korea) Economic Press, Annual Economic Review, 1934, p. 234. Cited by Pak Ki-hyuk, et al., A Study of the Land Tenure System in Korea, p. 46.

Settlement Regulation in 1910, under which Japanese immigrants were brought into Korea. Those immigrants who came to Korea under the guidance of the Oriental Development Company received from five to twenty acres of land under the most favored financial terms.⁴⁹ Between 1910 and 1918 a total of 17,141 acres were appropriated for the Japanese settlers and 7,035 Japanese families were brought into Korea.⁵⁰

However, the migration of Japanese farmers into Korea was soon terminated partly because of its unpopularity with the Koreans. Obviously, the Japanese immigration policy brought new hardships on the Korean farmers because Korea was already an over-populated country and had no room for new settlers. Japanese immigration meant that Korean farmers either had to move out or cultivate less acreage in order to make room for Japanese settlers. In regard to this problem, Lee Hun-ku observed as follows:

. . . the average size of a farm cultivated by Korean peasant tenants is about 2 acres. Accordingly, when a company invites Japanese settlers from Japan, about three farm households of Korean peasants have to move out from the rural section where they were living to make room for the new settlers.⁵¹

Although the migration of Japanese settlers was slowed down, Professor Brunner in his study of "Rural Korea" stated that

⁴⁹Lee Hun-ku, op. cit., p. 284.

⁵⁰Bank of Chosun, Economic History of Chosun (Seoul: Bank of Chosun, 1920), p. 132.

⁵¹Lee Hun-ku, op. cit., p. 284.

the activity of Japanese companies, landlords and speculators increased.⁵²

Another important result of the land survey project and Japanese agricultural policy in Korea was the increasing tenancy rate and economic subjugation of the Korean tenants to the landlord class. It is important to note that under Japanese rule, farm tenancy increased greatly. As Table 2 shows, between 1917 and 1939, the number of tenant households rose from 39 percent to 56 percent of the total farm households in Korea. Whereas the acreage cultivated by the tenant farmers in the same period increased only five percentage points, from 53 percent to 58 percent. This shows that there was a large increase in sub-marginal farming. It is usually significant to note that after the land survey project the arable land distribution per farm household decreased from 1.50 chungbo to 1.39 chungbo in 1930.⁵³

As shown in Table 2, there was a steady decrease of landowners and an increase in the number of tenants. While the percentage of owner households decreased from 21.8 percent during the period between 1913 and 1917 to 19.0 percent in 1938, the percentage of tenant households increased from 39.4 percent to 55.7 percent in the same period. The

⁵²See E. de S. Brunner, "Rural Korea," in Missions and Rural Problems (New York: International Missionary Council, 1928), p. 126.

⁵³Koh Young-kyong, "Land Reform and Agricultural Structure in Korea," Korean Affairs, I, 4 (1962), 430.

Table 2
Trend of Tenant Farmers Increase
(1913-1938)

Period	Owners		Part-Owners		Tenants	
	Households	%	Households	%	Households	%
1913-17	555,000	21.8	991,000	38.8	1,008,000	39.4
1918-22	529,000	20.4	1,015,000	39.0	1,098,000	40.6
1923-27	529,000	20.2	920,000	35.1	1,172,000	44.7
1928-32	497,000	18.4	853,000	31.4	1,360,000	50.2
1933-37	547,000	19.2	732,000	25.6	1,577,000	55.2
1939	539,000	19.0	719,000	25.3	1,583,000	55.7

Source: Takeo Suzuki, Chosen No Keizai (Korean Economy) (Tokyo: Nihon Hyron Sha, 1942), p. 246.

increase of tenants imposed severe pressure on the land, which in turn stimulated a rise in rents to exorbitant rates.

Under such circumstances, the tenants' bargaining position vis-a-vis landlords was reduced almost to nil. The living conditions of the Korean tenants were most rugged and miserable:

Rents for the use of land became most onerous, amounting to one-half or even three-quarters of the harvested crops. There were few formal agreements and the amount of this rent was generally not fixed until after the harvest and the farmer was obliged to pay what was called for by the landlord, or his agents, or by the representative of the credit association or of the agricultural development company, so that frequently he was barely able to make ends meet.⁵⁴

Another result of the Japanese land survey project and the Japanese colonial agricultural policy in Korea was the polarization of landlords and tenants. The socio-economic power of landlords steadily increased and, in direct proportion to it, that of the tenants steadily declined. Lee Hun-ku compared the relations between the landlords and tenants to that of feudal relations: "The supremacy of the landlords over the peasant-tenants is somewhat like that of the feudal lords or the rural gentry of days gone by."⁵⁵

The Japanese land survey project established the modern private land ownership system in Korea but it failed

⁵⁴United Nations Civil Assistance Command, Korea, Land Reform in Korea, 8201st Army Unit, Office of the Director, ROK Economic Affairs Division, 7 October, 1952, p. 2.

⁵⁵Lee Hun-ku, op. cit., p. 167.

to establish a more equitable economic relationship between the landlords and tenants. The continuous aggravation of the tenants' conditions eventually brought about the revolt of the tenants against the landlords. The tenancy dispute was certainly the corollary of the sub-marginal farm system created by the Japanese policy. In 1920, 15 cases of tenancy disputes involving 4,040 persons were recorded, but in 1923 it increased to 176 cases. However, from 1924 the number of tenancy disputes tapered off and in 1925 it was reduced to only 11 cases. This decline was partly due to the passage of the Public Order Maintenance Law which was applied to suppress the tenants' revolt.⁵⁶

However, the decline of the tenancy dispute in 1925 was a temporary phenomenon. Since the root cause of the tenancy dispute was intact, the tenancy dispute was bound to re-emerge. In 1929 the number of tenancy disputes increased to 423 cases and it was further increased to 667 cases involving 10,282 persons in 1931.⁵⁷ The increase of tenancy disputes in this period was attributable to the great depression, and the agitation of religious reformists, non-communist nationalists and communists who penetrated into rural areas. They conducted lectures to enlighten farmers and arouse political consciousness among the farmers. They also organized the farmers' associations and cooperatives.

⁵⁶Yi Yong-hyup, *op. cit.*, p. 187.

⁵⁷Taniura, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

From 1930, the tenancy dispute, especially between Japanese landlords and Korean tenants, became much more complicated because the tenants' strike against the landlords was no longer a simple tenancy revolt but assumed the characteristics of class struggle and national struggle against colonial rulers.⁵⁸

In the face of this threat, the Japanese authorities in Korea launched a series of new programs to ameliorate the abject conditions of the peasant-tenants. General Ugaki, who was the Governor-General from 1931 to 1936, in a speech to the governors of Korean provinces in June, 1930, stated:

The question of the security of living of the large agrarian population is a vital issue from the industrial and social point of view, especially at the present time of serious depression, and this solution is a most urgent one. Needless to say, the consistent realization of relief of this kind is not an easy task but the soundest way by which agriculturalists may attain a secure living is through their own thrift and their own hard work.⁵⁹

The new programs aimed to promote the interests of tenant-farmers were two-pronged: One through legislation and the other by establishing the owner-farmer system. The first program was the so-called "Rural Community Development Movement" which was aimed to achieve the extermination of spring poverty, the clean-up of farmers' debt and the prevention of farmers' debt. The success or failure of

⁵⁸Lee Chong-sik, op. cit., p. 248.

⁵⁹Government-General, Annual Report on Administration of Chosen, 1933-34 (Seoul: Government-General of Chosen, 1934), pp. 200-203.

this movement depended upon the willingness of the farmers, but insofar as the real cause of the tenancy problem remained the same, there was little incentive for the tenants to work to eliminate the so-called "three chronic problems of Korean farmers." In addition, the Government-General passed the Chosen Tenant Arbitration Order in 1932 and the Farmland Act of Chosen in 1934 to protect the tenancy rights of the Korean tenants. These acts failed to resolve the tenancy problems because they dealt with the protection of tenancy rights, but not with the correction of unfair relations between the landlords and tenants.⁶⁰

The parallel effort of the Government-General was related to the creation of owner-farmers. As a means to achieve this end, the Government-General launched two programs: one was to encourage the farmer-tenants to move to the reclaimed land by drainage and the other was to create owner-farmers. The first program was especially designed to attract the land-hungry farmers of southern Korea to the northern part of Korea. The second program was aimed at creating 24,000 owner-farmer households in ten years with government low interest loans.⁶¹

Despite the efforts exerted by the Japanese Government-General, the conditions of tenants scarcely

⁶⁰Nongji Kaehyuk Sa, Vol. I (History of Farmland Reform) (Seoul: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Bureau of Farmland, 1970), pp. 308-313.

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 305-307.

improved. The obvious reason for this failure was that the Japanese authority did not attempt to reform the exploitative characteristic of the tenancy system. So long as the root-cause was intact, it was not possible to improve the conditions of tenants. It was imperative for the Japanese to maintain the high rate of farm rents because there were a large number of Japanese landlords in Korea as shown in Table 3.

One economic consequence of the Japanese agricultural policy in Korea was the creation of a submarginal semi-serf farming system which was based on high-rate farm rents. It is also important to note the social consequence of the Japanese agricultural policy in Korea. The Japanese agricultural policy did not result in the destruction of the traditional social system in Korea but it assisted in strengthening the system and its elites by giving the legal ownership of land to the former Yangban class though their political power was deprived. It is obvious that the ownership of land was a crucial factor in maintaining the elite position in society because land was the major source of socioeconomic prestige. Of course, the former Yangban class could not maintain their social position just by owning their land. They were able to preserve and continue their position by giving educational opportunities to their offspring and diversifying their business interests.

The Japanese educational policy in Korea was a very limited and inadequate one. Gradjdanzev reported that

Table 3

Distribution of Landownership
by Nationalities (1921-1927)

Period	Above 100 <u>chungbo</u>		Above 150 <u>chungbo</u>		Above 200 <u>chungbo</u>	
	Japanese	Korean	Japanese	Korean	Japanese	Korean
1921	213	266	108	94	169	66
1922	299	189	105	76	176	62
1923	222	217	113	72	178	67
1924	228	237	126	71	167	48
1925	230	270	130	74	170	45
1926	245	239	121	96	177	66
1927	239	203	122	80	192	45

Source: Chon Suk-dam, Yi Ki-su and Kim Han-ju, Ilje Ha eui Chsun Sahoe Kyongje Sa (A History of Korean Socio-economic Conditions Under the Japanese) (Seoul: Nongop Unhaeng, 1947), p. 164.

students other than those in primary schools made up only 0.28 per thousand of the Korean population as of 1939.⁶² Under such conditions only those who had financial means could send their children to the higher educational institutions. Obviously, it was the landlord class who were able to send their children to the institutions of higher education. Naturally, those who had a higher education had better chances of playing an important role in society. The landlords and their posterity were the Korean elites during the Japanese colonial rule and after the end of Japanese rule the same class continued to play an important role in political and economic matters.⁶³

THE UNITED STATES MILITARY GOVERNMENT
AND LAND TENURE SYSTEM

The Establishment of the
United States Military
Government in South Korea

With the defeat of Japan in August, 1945, by the allied powers, Korea was liberated from the Japanese colonial rule of thirty-five years (1910-1945). The independence of Korea was promised by the allied powers of the U.S.A., United Kingdom and China at the Cairo conference

⁶²Grajdanzev, op. cit., pp. 264-65.

⁶³For an interesting study on the landlords under Japanese period, see Kim Yong-mo, "Social Background and Mobility of the Landlords Under Japanese Imperialism in Korea," Journal of Social Science and Humanities, No. 34 (June, 1971), pp. 87-109.

in December of 1943, by declaring that:

. . . The aforesaid three great powers, mindful of the enslavement of the people of Korea, are determined that in due course Korea shall become free and independent.⁶⁴

However, the term "in due course" caused some confusion and became a bone of contention between the U.S. occupation authority in Korea and Korean leaders at a later stage in history. Most of the Korean leaders interpreted it to mean independence within a few weeks or at most a few months.⁶⁵

Immediately after the announcement of the Japanese surrender, the various shades of resistance leaders among the domestic politicians formed the Committee for Preparation of Korean Independence which acted as an ad hoc governmental administration in the wake of the collapse of Japanese colonial administration in South Korea. This committee was eventually developed into the People's Republic by the convention of "peoples" representatives held on September 5 and 6 in Seoul, which was just two days before the arrival of the U.S. occupation forces in South Korea.⁶⁶

⁶⁴For a complete text of the Cairo Declaration, see Tewksbury, op. cit., p. 73.

⁶⁵George M. McCune, Korea Today (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950), p. 42; Soon Sung Cho, Korea in World Politics, 1940-50: An Evaluation of American Responsibility (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 17-21.

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 68-69; E. Grant Meade, American Military Government in Korea (New York: King's Crown Press, 1951), pp. 53-55.

The People's Republic, considering her ostensible political predominance in South Korea, naively assumed that the U.S. occupation authority would recognize it as a legitimate governmental authority. However, considering the fluid political situation then existing in South Korea, the U.S. authority was not prepared to treat the People's Republic as the sole legitimate Korean governmental authority.

There were, in fact, a number of other political forces to be reckoned with such as the large group of expatriates, including a provisional government which had maintained its headquarters in China, and a group of wealthy landowners, businessmen and educated Korean independence fighters who had remained in Korea during the Japanese occupation. In addition, there was a directive from General MacArthur instructing the commanding general of U.S. occupation forces, Lt. General Hodge, to superimpose the U.S. Military Government upon the framework of the Japanese colonial government of Chosen. Accordingly, on arriving in Korea, Lt. General Hodge declared the establishment of the U.S. Military Government in South Korea until such a time that it proved congenial for the Koreans to establish their own government.⁶⁷

⁶⁷George M. McCune, "Post War Government and Politics in Korea," Journal of Politics, IX (August, 1947), 611-12.

The Tenancy Reform of the
U.S. Military Government

Among many problems faced by the U.S. Military Government in Korea, one of the most urgent problems to be resolved was that of the agrarian problem and especially with regard to the tenancy issue. Clyde Mitchell, an American who was the director of the New Korea Company, described the then prevailing agrarian situation as follows:

More than two-thirds of the population lived on farms, and about three-fourths of the farm operators were tenants. The conditions of tenancy were onerous; the greater part of what the farmers produced was taken from them, leaving barely enough to sustain life . . . Tenants in Korea usually were required to pay their rent in kind. The levy was set at a certain specified proportion of the "crop," but the crop was always estimated generously by the landlord or his representative. The tenant seldom paid less than fifty per cent, and sometimes as high as eighty per cent, of actual production.⁶⁸

It was immediately evident to the U.S. Military Government officials on their arrival in South Korea in September, 1945, that Korean farmers had been subjected to such severe exploitation by both landlords and colonial government that something had to be done. Thus, the tenancy reform was one of the first promises made by the U.S. Military Government to the South Koreans.

The first action taken by the U.S. Military Government was the issuance of Ordinance No. 9 (October 5, 1945) limiting rents to one third of the crop. Ordinance No. 9

⁶⁸C. Clyde Mitchell, "Land Reform in Asia: A Case Study," in National Planning Association No. 78 (1952), pp. 4-6.

declared the urgency of the agrarian problem in Korea, and contained four major provisions:

. . . by reason of oppressive rents and interest rates payable under existing contracts by tenants of farm lands and the resulting semi-enslavement and a standard of living below the standard which is the object of the Military Government. The standard which Military Government will enforce is that standard which will provide prosperity and security for the people of Korea.

1. Fixed farm rents at a maximum of one-third of the total value of all crops produced on the farm;
2. Prescribed that where rents were less than this maximum, they were not to be increased;
3. Required the registration of all written lease contracts at local land offices, within sixty days; where lease contracts had been oral, they were required to be put into writing and similarly registered;
4. Prescribed that rental payments were no longer to be paid in kind, but rather were to be paid in cash, by commutation of the payments of kind into cash at the legal, government-set price of the agricultural commodities concerned, or at the reasonable existing market price of the product.⁶⁹

Ordinance No. 9 was a general guideline limiting the rents of tenants but it did not specifically deal with the amount of production expense which was to be borne by the landlords and tenants. Subsequently, this was supplemented by the Bureau of Agriculture and Commerce Order No. 1 which stated:

In addition to the rents which the tenant pays to the landowner for the use of the land, the tenant will pay fifty per cent of the costs of irrigation. He will also pay the same share of the costs of insecticides, fertilizers and manures, seeds, tools, equipment, repairs, packing materials, transportation, and other

⁶⁹United States Army Forces in Korea, "Military Government Ordinance No. 9, 5 October 1945," Official Gazette (Seoul: USAMGIK, Department of Justice, 1945).

relative items for which he, the tenant, has been responsible in the past under existing contractual arrangements or agreements. The payment of taxes and fees, and the disposition of straw also are not changed by this order, and will conform to the terms of existing contracts or agreements.⁷⁰

The major objective of Ordinance No. 9 was to enhance the tenants' economic position by reducing the rents. However, Ordinance No. 9 and Bureau Order No. 1 were not satisfactorily observed but on the contrary, were frequently violated. Sidney Klein observed that:

Ordinance No. 9 and Bureau Order No. 1 were implemented only on those lands administered by agencies of USAMGIK. On privately owned lands, rents in kind and in excess of one-third of the total value of all crops harvested continued to be collected, and oral contracts were put into written form and registered. No inspection or supervisory machinery of any kind was organized for the purpose of enforcing the statutes.⁷¹

E. Grant Meade also stated that Ordinance No. 9 was of no help to the tenants because the statute stipulated that all grains be subject to collection for rent. Tenants in certain cases had to pay higher rent than under the Japanese because the Japanese practice of collecting tenants' rents was solely in terms of the rice crop or any other principal crop.⁷²

⁷⁰U. S. Army in Korea, "Bureau Order No. 1, Agriculture, 10 November, 1945," Official Gazette (Seoul: USAMGIK, Department of Justice, 1945).

⁷¹Sidney Klein, The Pattern of Land Reform in East Asia After World War II (New York: Bookman Monograph Series, 1958), pp. 87-88.

⁷²Meade, op. cit., p. 66.

Despite the difficulties of implementing Ordinance No. 9 and Agriculture and Commerce Order No. 1, the U.S. Military Government initiated the policy of consolidating Japanese property in South Korea, including farm land. In December of 1945, the U.S. Military Government issued Ordinance Number 33 which specified that all former Japanese property within Korea was to be considered vested property subject to the control of the U.S. authority in South Korea.⁷³ Thus, the U.S. Military Government made itself one of the largest landowners in South Korea and, at the same time, charged itself with the enormous task of locating Japanese-owned land in South Korea.

A week after the issuance of Ordinance No. 33 the New Korea Company was designated as an agency to manage the former Japanese lands. There were certain objections to this decision because the New Korea Company was considered the incarnation of the Oriental Development Company. However, the U.S. Military Government had no other choice as Mitchell observed:

The biggest single portion of Japanese land was the former Oriental Development Company. The newly created New Korea Company, with the largest administrative organization of the Oriental Development Company, was successfully managing that slice and thus was the logical agency to take over the entire task.⁷⁴

⁷³U.S. Army in Korea, "Military Government Ordinance No. 33, December 6, 1945," Official Gazette (Seoul: USAMGIK, Department of Justice, 1945).

⁷⁴C. Clyde Mitchell, Final Report and History of the New Korea Company (Seoul: Headquarters, U.S. Army Military

Within a few months, by the spring of 1946, the New Korea Company was able to locate 569,000 acres of ex-Japanese land. By 1947 the New Korea Company came to hold 687,246 acres, which was approximately one tenth of the planted area of South Korea. This company was operated by 587,974 tenant families, representing 43.5 percent of the farm families of South Korea. These lands were inhabited by 3,318,115 persons, or 24.1 percent of the farm population.⁷⁵

The New Korea Company became the biggest landlord in South Korea and performed the important function of producing and collecting grain for the rice ration program during the trying period soon after the end of World War II. However, the New Korea Company had often been accused by the leftists as being nothing but a disguised Oriental Development Company which had been the very symbol of Japanese economic exploitation. Although the New Korea Company was a transitory organization, it nevertheless gave the impression of the continuation of the Oriental Development Company. Impatient leftists inspired by the land reform of North Korea of March 5, 1946, demanded the distribution of land in South Korea after the North Korean model.

The Land Sale Program of the
U.S. Military Government

As noted, the U.S. authority in South Korea was

Government in Korea, National Land Administration, April 30, 1948), p. 5.

⁷⁵Ibid.

interested in initiating land tenure reform to alleviate the abject economic conditions of Korean tenants and also to bring about political stability by eliminating the tension between landlords and tenants. Having implemented Ordinance No. 9 limiting rents to no more than one third of the crop and Ordinance No. 33 vesting all former Japanese owned land in the U.S. Military Government in South Korea, the U.S. Military Government could begin seriously to consider more fundamental policies of agrarian reform, affecting not only the land managed by the U.S. Military Government in South Korea but also the land owned by Korean landlords.

The issue of land reform in Korea after 1945 was highly politically charged. The rightists and leftists both agreed on the necessity of land reform in Korea but they differed on the means to achieve it. The rightists, who were mostly the former landlord class, insisted on adequate compensation to the landlords and sale of land to the actual tillers at a reasonable price. On the other hand, the leftists advocated confiscation of all lands which were not cultivated by the owners and free distribution to the farmers who actually worked the land.

In the end, the idea that landlord class should be duly compensated prevailed. This was to make it possible for the former landlords to change their role after the reform from an absentee landlord's role to a more active entrepreneurial one. It was rather a foregone conclusion,

because the U.S. authority could not possibly violate the sanctity of a private property system. The most influential person in promoting this idea was Dr. Arthur C. Bunce, an American economic advisor to the Commanding General of the U.S. Army in Korea.

Bunce had first expressed the idea during World War II as follows:

(1) All land held by the Oriental Development Company and other Japanese landlords should be taken over by the state . . . (2) where the amortization period for irrigation developments is too short, it should be extended and the water rates reduced. This would apply to Korean-owned developments as well as those previously owned by the Japanese. (3) A compulsory reduction in land rents should be introduced immediately and heavy penalties applied to landlords if they receive more than the stipulated amounts.

These immediate measures to alleviate rural poverty will have to be followed up by a national land use plan which will remove the stranglehold on the farmers of a parasitic landowning class . . . The advantage of some form of compensation would lie in the stimulus this would give to the development of new private enterprise requiring capital outlays, if, of course, the Koreans wish to encourage private enterprise . . .⁷⁶

In January, 1946, the U.S. State Department sent an economic mission headed by Dr. Bunce to assist the U.S. occupation authority in South Korea. Upon arrival of the Bunce Mission the U.S. Military Governor named Bunce as the chairman of a committee composed of American and Korean representatives of various agricultural and economic policy agencies in Military Government, and charged with the

⁷⁶Arthur C. Bunce, "The Future of Korea," Far Eastern Survey, XVII (May 17, 1944), 86.

drafting of a land sale ordinance.⁷⁷

In February of 1946, the draft was completed, which was to be called "Homestead Act." The proposed ordinance would have included the following important provision:

Upon fulfilling the terms of the homestead, including the payment of a sum 3.75 times the value of the annual production, that, twenty-five per cent of the crop for fifteen years, the tenants would be given title to the land in fee simple.⁷⁸

However, this reasonable proposal was not implemented until March, 1948. The reason for this undue delay was the opposition of Korean politicians. As Clyde Mitchell observed:

All work of land distribution was stopped, however, a few weeks later by the Military Governor after he received a flood of protest from various Korean sources whose advice he (Military Governor) trusted. The Korean director of the Department of Public Information had organized and conducted a public opinion survey whose results showed that "the Korean people" preferred that disposition of the Japanese assets be delayed until after the creation of a Korean government.⁷⁹

After the announcement of the land sale proposal, the U.S. authority assumed it would receive overwhelming support from the Korean political parties of both right and left. However, both groups opposed it under the pretext

⁷⁷C. Clyde Mitchell, "The New Korea Company, Ltd.: Land Management and Tenancy Reform in Korea Against a Background of U.S. Army Occupation, 1945-48" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Harvard University, 1949), p. 98.

⁷⁸U.S. Department of State Economic Mission, Land Reform in Korea, Seoul, September 13, 1947 (Mimeographed), Enclosure C, "Proposed Ordinance for Sale of Japanese Agricultural Property South of 38th degree North Latitude"; see also McCune, op. cit., pp. 129-30.

⁷⁹Mitchell, "The New Korea Company," p. 99.

that such a significant problem should be settled by a genuine Korean government. The rightists opposed it because the sale of former Japanese-owned land would inevitably undermine the landlords' political-social and economic position. The leftists opposed the Homestead Act not only because it did not provide confiscation of land and distribution of land without charge to the tillers, but because they did not wish to accord such a significant achievement to the U.S. authority.

The Bunce Committee was not only charged with drafting the land sale ordinance but also with the development of a comprehensive land tenure reform program for South Korea. This plan contemplated the purchase of all--both former Japanese owned land and Korean owned land--tenanted land for eventual distribution by sale to South Korean farmers.⁸⁰

In the meantime, the U.S. authority in South Korea created the South Korean Interim Legislative Assembly in December of 1946 to give Koreans opportunity to participate more in the policy-making process of the government. The American authority hoped that the SKILA would enact the land reform bill which would include both the sale of vested lands and the land owned by the Korean absentee landlords. Considering the distribution of seats in the SKILA, it was rather obvious that the rightist dominated Assembly would be reluctant to pass a bill which might jeopardize the position

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 100.

of Korean landlords.⁸¹ McCune observed that "it was evident that the conservative majority in the Assembly would not submit to a liberal law and that much needed reform was likely to be blocked by the landlord classes."⁸²

Since the "Homestead Act" was first proposed, almost two years passed without the enactment of a meaningful land reform law. By the end of 1947 the Military Government was becoming impatient with the SKILA and since the SKILA showed no signs of willingness to pass a land reform law embodying the proposals of the Land Reform Committee, the Military Governor, General William P. Dean, signed an ordinance authorizing sale of the Japanese lands.⁸³ This decision was in part precipitated by the drastic North Korean land reform which had been carried out in March, 1946, under the auspices of the Soviet military authority.

In order to carry out the sale of vested land, the U.S. Military Government signed Ordinances 173 and 174 which provided for the creation of the National Land Administration and the dissolution of the New Korea Company, and prepared the way for distribution of former Japanese owned land to the tillers.⁸⁴ It is appropriate at this point to examine

⁸¹The seats within the SKILA were distributed as follows: Rightist, 55; Moderate, 16; Leftist, 14.

⁸²McCune, op. cit., p. 84.

⁸³Ibid., pp. 132-133.

⁸⁴For a full text of Ordinances Nos. 173 and 174, see U.S. Army Forces in Korea, "Military Ordinances Nos. 173 and 174," March 22, 1945, Official Gazette (Seoul: USAMGIK, Department of Justice, 1945).

the provisions of Ordinance 173 because it subsequently provided the basic framework of land reform for the Republic of Korea. Mitchell said: "In planning for the land-sale program, the U.S. Authorities hoped that it would serve as pattern for similar undertakings in other areas of the Orient."⁸⁵

The purpose of the National Land Administration was described as follows:

The purpose of this ordinance is to assist landless tenant farmers to become independent farm owners so as to strengthen the agriculture of Korea by fostering wider ownership of the land, through sale of farm land which was formerly Japanese owned.

The National Land Administration (hereinafter referred to as the "Administration") is hereby created. It shall have the authority to dispose of land transferred to it, to issue rules and regulations and to perform other functions to accomplish the purposes of this ordinance. Expenses shall be paid from the proceeds of sales and operations. It shall operate on a budget to be approved by the Military Governor.⁸⁶

Considering the shortage of farm land in South Korea and to assure fair distribution of the farm land, section VI stipulated:

. . . No land, shall be sold to a farmer which, when added to the area of land that, on 1 March 1948 or at the time land is bought from the Administration, he owned or rented from other landlords, would increase his total of dry fields and paddy land to more than two chungbo.⁸⁷

⁸⁵C. Clyde Mitchell, "South Korean Tenants Become Landowners," Foreign Agriculture, XII (October, 1948), 217-220.

⁸⁶U.S. Army Forces in Korea, "Military Government Ordinance No. 173, March 22, 1948," Official Gazette, USAMGIK, Department of Justice, Seoul, 1945.

⁸⁷Ibid., Section VI.

As to the preference for purchase of land, Section VI, b, specified in the following manner:

1. Present tenants of the land to be sold, who have satisfactorily cultivated their farms and complied with the terms of tenancy shall have the highest priority to buy their farms.
2. Other farmers, farm laborers, including refugee farmers from north of the 38 degree parallel and repatriated farmers, living in the neighborhood and having experience in farm operation, shall have second priority.⁸⁸

The price of land was to be "an amount equal to three times the annual production of the principal crop on the land he purchases."⁸⁹ Section IX further stated that "the annual production is to be determined on the basis of the land's production classification and previous production records."⁹⁰ The conditions of payment were specified in Section X as follows:

The purchaser of dry fields and paddyland shall deliver in kind twenty per cent of the annual production of the principal crop, as agreed upon by the purchaser and the Administration, for a period of fifteen years . . .⁹¹

To protect the tenant from the seizure of land for debt, Ordinance No. 173, Section XV, specified that ". . . farm land purchased from the Administration shall be exempt from seizure by creditors . . ."⁹² However, Section XVI stipulated that land could be lost when:

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid., Section IX.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Ibid., Section X.

⁹²Ibid., Section XV.

. . . in the event that any purchaser of land from the Administration or in payment of taxes or irrigation fees, the Administration shall have power to institute action of mortgage foreclosure or any other action warranted by the agreement of the parties.⁹³

It further pointed out the benefits given to the purchaser by the National Land Administration:

During the time that the purchaser is a client of the National Land Administration, he is provided with fertilizer and loaned money at low interest for water fees and other expenses . . . The National Land Administration also furnished agricultural teachers and tenant supervisors who are to assist the farmer in various ways.⁹⁴

Of the total vested land to be distributed, amounting to 268,619 chongbo, 245,554 chongbo or 91.4 percent of the total was actually sold.⁹⁵ The number of tenants affected by the land sale program of 1948 made up 24.1 percent of the South Korean farm population.⁹⁶

The land sale program initiated by the U.S. authority in Korea was the first significant step of land tenure reform in Korea toward making the tillers the owners of farm land. Although numerous political groups recognized that the vested land sale program was a reasonable one, which was, in fact, long overdue, the leftists, including Communists, objected to the reform because it did not confiscate land without

⁹³Ibid., Section XVI.

⁹⁴Mitchell, "South Korean Tenants Become Landowners," p. 220.

⁹⁵Pak and others, op. cit., p. 75.

⁹⁶McCune, op. cit., p. 133.

compensation and distribute it without charge to the tenants. In addition, the leftists objected to the timing of the land sale; that is, the land sale was going to be carried out on the eve of a general election in South Korea which was to be held in May, 1948. This policy was inevitably to help the non-leftist political forces in South Korea at the first general election in South Korea. In view of the fact that the leftists were opposed to sale of vested farm lands in South Korea, McCune observed that:

The Communists and certain other left-wing groups sought to persuade tenants to boycott the land sales, but judging by the enthusiastic response to the land reform even in rural areas that were considered radical, these efforts had no effect.⁹⁷

The rightists, however, also objected to the proposed land distribution. One of the leading rightist groups, the National Society for Acceleration of Korean Independence, made the following statement regarding the proposed land sale program:

The property under the custody of the New Korea Company is that which Japan had confiscated without compensation from the Korean people. Therefore, it is not enemy property. Accordingly, the disposal of the property must be conducted by the Korean government. As for the land policy, the failure of the Japanese in the so-called small holding system must not be repeated.⁹⁸

Despite the opposition voiced by both leftists and rightists, the U.S. Military Government proceeded with the

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸South Korean Interim Government Activities (U.S. Army Military Government in Korea, No. 31), p. 165.

sale of former Japanese-owned land. By this action, 91 percent of the farm land formerly held by Japanese was sold to Korean farmers, principally to tenants. In carrying out this policy, the U.S. authority hoped that this example would be followed by the new government of Korea, which was soon to be established in August, 1948. Thus the remaining task of completion of land reform was handed over to the new Korean government which was established in August of 1948.

In summing up, it can be said that throughout the Yi dynasty, the Korean peasants were the object of severe social humiliation, economic exploitation and political deprivation. As noted, although there were attempts to reform the land tenure system in the Yi dynasty, the attempts were primarily to strengthen the political and economic foundations of the Yi dynasty and to consolidate the power structure of the ruling class; they were not to enhance the socioeconomic and political conditions of the Korean peasants.

As has been stated, during the Yi dynasty the peasants' conditions grew worse as time progressed because they were caught between the exploitative landlords of the Yangban class and a government insensitive to the miserable conditions of the peasants. There were peasant rebellions such as the Tonghak rebellion, but they were of no great avail due largely to the lack of able leadership within the Tonghak movement. The alienation of peasants and the disruption and usurpation of the land system of the Yi dynasty by the

Yangban class brought about the demise of the Yi dynasty.

As noted, the Japanese agricultural policy in Korea was a classical example of imperial policy. For instance, the Japanese land survey project was undertaken in order to facilitate the flow of Japanese capital into the Korean agriculture and thereby making Korea Japan's agricultural supply base. The Japanese colonialists, like the Yangban class of the Yi dynasty, were totally insensitive to the plight of the Korean peasants. One of the unmistakable economic results of the Japanese agricultural policy in Korea was the creation of a submarginal, semi-serf farming system which was based on high-rate farm rents.

Socially, the Japanese agricultural policy resulted in perpetuating the unjust traditional social system instead of destroying it. The Japanese land survey project, in fact, strengthened the social positions of the former Yangban class by elevating them as the modern landowners. Politically, the Korean farmers were deprived of their right to participate in the policy-making process. The Japanese authority never allowed the Korean farmers to organize their own political organization to advance their interests and articulate their demands. Consequently, the Korean farmers became ever more alienated from the main stream of Korean society.

Thus, when Korea was liberated in 1945, the need for land reform was socially, economically and politically imperative. No one disagreed as to the desirability of land

reform, although the means to achieve it were widely divergent among the different political groups. It is ironic that the first meaningful land tenure reform was carried out by a foreign power--the United States Military Government in South Korea.

The United States' objectives in carrying out the land reform were mainly three-fold: first, to destroy the traditional social system which had been the stumbling block of social development in South Korea; second, to alleviate the abject economic conditions of Korean farmers; and third, to counteract the communist propaganda which was seemingly gaining support in the rural areas of South Korea soon after the liberation.

Although the reform carried out by the United States occupation authority was a meaningful and ambitious one, it was nevertheless a partial reform affecting only those lands which were formerly owned by the Japanese corporations and individuals. However, the U.S. reform policy was a firm beginning which could not possibly be reversed in the light of the prevailing mood of the country. Thus, the unfinished job of land reform was to be fulfilled by the newly established government in South Korea and will be the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 4

LAND REFORM UNDER THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA: THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION

Before entering into a discussion of the Administration's position on land reform, it is appropriate to trace briefly the steps which led to the establishment of the Republic of Korea and examine its constitutional provisions, especially related to land reform, to help determine the characteristics of South Korean land reform.

The Establishment of the Republic of Korea

Immediately following the defeat of Japan, Korea was occupied by two foreign powers. The division of Korea along the 38th Parallel was originally designed to facilitate the task of disarming the Japanese armed forces then stationed in Korea. Despite the original intention, this temporary surrender-boundary line became eventually the Korean iron curtain and it gradually hardened all phases of Korean life into two rather distinctive patterns. However, there was not a lack of effort to resolve the problems.

In December, 1945, at the Moscow Foreign Ministers Conference, the U.S. and USSR agreed to convene a Joint Commission representing the two occupying powers in Korea to implement trusteeship proposals for a period of up to

five years. Subsequently, the Joint Commission met twice, once in March, 1946, and again in May, 1947. These meetings, however, ended in dismal failure because mutually unacceptable proposals were advanced by both parties.¹

Understandably, political events after the liberation of Korea were not at all conducive to the achievement of a unified independent nation. After the breakdown of the Joint Commission meetings, U.S. Secretary of State Marshall decided to refer the Korean question to the United Nations. However, the United Nations was equally unsuccessful in persuading the Soviet authority to allow the United Nations Temporary Commission on Korea to supervise general elections throughout North and South Korea.²

Consequently, the general election was held only in the southern half of Korea on May 10, 1948, under the supervision of UNTCOK. The establishment of the Republic of Korea was formally proclaimed on August 15, 1948.

The Constitution and Its Provision on Farm Land

The first important task assigned to the 1948 National Assembly was the drafting of the Constitution of

¹For an excellent discussion on the U.S.-USSR Joint Commission, see Soon Sung Cho, Korea in World Politics, 1940-50: An Evaluation of American Responsibility (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 114-127; 143-158.

²Leland M. Goodrich, A Study of U.S. Policy in the U.N. (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1956), p. 29.

the Republic and its promulgation. In fulfilling this task, the National Assembly established the Constitution Drafting Committee in June, 1948, and thirty assemblymen were appointed to the Committee. In addition, ten non-member constitutional experts were appointed to assist in the deliberations of the Committee. After only a little more than a month of deliberation the first constitution, containing ten chapters and 102 articles, was adopted by the National Assembly on July 12, 1948, and officially promulgated on July 17, 1948.

The National Assembly had less than two months to draft the constitution. Under such circumstances deliberation and debate were somewhat perfunctory. As an American student of Korean politics quipped:

The constitution was adopted and promulgated on July 17, 1948. Where the Yi dynasty had given decades, even centuries, to adapting the Ming System, modern Korean legislators gave scarcely as many weeks to hoisting "Western" constitutional democracy on board.³

The constitution encountered numerous problems due to the subsequent events and was replaced after only a decade of existence by a new constitution in 1960. The constitution of 1948 unequivocally declared all the essential principles of democracy but it has been characterized as "an uneasy mixture of democracy and autocracy."⁴ Another observer stated that "it adopted the forms of democracy but

³Henderson, op. cit., p. 158.

⁴Ibid.

reflects, without doubt, some of the philosophy of the Japanese government under which Korea was ruled for thirty-five years."⁵

As has been indicated, the constitution was not only an uneasy mixture of democracy and autocracy but also was an odd mixture of capitalism and socialism. The constitution guaranteed the right of private property and state ownership of the important economic resources of the country. Article Fifteen stated:

The right of property shall be guaranteed. Its nature and restrictions shall be defined by law. The exercise of property rights shall conform to the welfare of the republic. The expropriation, use or the imposition of restrictions on private property for public purposes shall be accompanied by payment of just compensation in accordance with the provision of law.⁶

Thus, the property right of the individual was constitutionally guaranteed. However, Chapter Six enunciated some socialistic economic principles. Article Eighty-five stated that:

License to exploit, develop or utilize mines and other important underground resources, water powers and all other economically available natural powers may be guaranteed for limited periods in accordance with the provision of law.⁷

⁵Paul S. Dull, "South Korean Constitution," Far Eastern Survey, XVII (September 18, 1948), 205.

⁶Republic of Korea, National Assembly, Selected Laws and Regulations Pertaining to the National Assembly (Seoul: Secretariat, National Assembly, 1957), pp. 1-20.

⁷Ibid.

In regard to the ownership of land, there were two articles which were pertinent. They were articles Fifteen and Eighty-six. Article Eighty-six read as follows:

Farmland shall be distributed to farmers. The method of distribution, the extent of possession, and the nature of restrictions of ownership shall be determined by law.⁸

Articles Fifteen and Eighty-six appear to have assured distribution of farmland with due compensation to landowners. The responsibility of translating this general principle of land distribution into actual policy fell on the National Assembly.

The Postwar Political Situation in
South Korea and Clientelist Politics

At this juncture, it is appropriate to review briefly the post-liberation political situation in South Korea to gain an insight into the politics of land reform in South Korea. Understandably, the political conditions in South Korea after the liberation were chaotic and fluid. The end of Japanese colonial rule in South Korea left a political and governmental vacuum which the U.S. Military occupation authority was not well equipped to fill. This situation was further aggravated by the arbitrary division of the country by two ideologically opposed powers. Thus the liberation ushered in a period of frenzied political activity among the South Koreans. Political parties mushroomed soon after the

⁸Ibid.

liberation and numbered more than 340 in South Korea alone. Many of the political organizations were ephemeral ones, and others frequently changed their names, political platforms and political allegiance.⁹

However, these parties can be classified into two major groups according to the base of the resistance movement waged against Japanese rule; the first group is the indigenous group whose activities were based inside Korea and the other is the foreign based group, which can be further divided into the U.S., China (including Manchuria) and Russia groups. According to their ideological orientations, these parties can be divided into four major groups ranging from the extreme and moderate rightist group to the moderate leftists and communists.

In South Korea, the extreme rightist group came to occupy a powerful position because they had the organization and support of the bureaucracy, indigenous nationalist leaders and local notables, namely landlords and local officials. They were also supported by the U.S. Military government in South Korea. In this regard David C. Cole and Princeton N. Lyman observed:

Furthermore, American vacillation in this period regarding U.S. responsibilities for Korea and over its policy on reunification, plus fear of communists and by implication leftists generally, led American authorities into occupation policies that had the effect of weakening the moderates and promoting predominantly

⁹U.S. Military Government in Korea, Monthly Summation of Non-Military Activities, No. 9 (May, 1947), p. 16.

conservative forces. The latter were backed strongly by Korean bureaucrats from the Japanese colonial period and by a growing and often ruthless police force. Belated American efforts, just prior to independence to help structure a moderate political force failed.¹⁰

This extreme rightist group actively advocated and participated in establishing a separate government in South Korea, especially after the failure of the second meeting of the U.S.-USSR Joint Commission, whereas the moderate leftists, including some moderate rightists, opposed the formation of a separate government in South Korea. Their major contentions were that first, a separate election might perpetuate the division of Korea, and second, they maintained that there was a lack of the requisite free atmosphere in which to carry out a democratic election.¹¹

However, the rightist nationalist parties such as Syngman Rhee's The Society for the Rapid Realization of Korean Independence and Kim Sung-soo's Hanguk Democratic Party retorted that a separate election was necessitated by the intransigence of the Russians and the North Korean Communists. Furthermore, they argued that the government to be formed by the United Nations supervision would constitute the only lawful government in Korea, which would eventually incorporate North Korea. Thus the division would not be

¹⁰David C. Cole and Princeton N. Lyman, Korean Development: The Interplay of Politics and Economics (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 19.

¹¹Benjamin Weems, "Behind the Korean Election," Far Eastern Survey, XVII (June 23, 1948), 142.

perpetuated. As to free atmosphere for the election, they contended that there was, in fact, too much freedom rather than a lack of it.¹² Consequently, the only major political groups which participated in the May 10, 1948, general election were the rightist political parties. The moderates among the rightists and leftists boycotted the first general election of 1948.

Thus it was not unusual that the first National Assembly was dominated by the extreme rightists and some independents who were equally rightist-oriented in their political orientation. An American student of Korean politics observed that "the election which was held . . . on May 10, 1948, resulted in the election of an overwhelming number of rightists--mostly extreme rightists."¹³

The breakdown of political affiliation of their successful candidates for the 1948 election unmistakably attests to the rightist character of the first National Assembly. Of the 200 members, there were 85 Independents, 55 candidates of the Rapid Realization of Korean Independence Party, 29 from the Hankook Democratic Party, 14 from the Dae Dong Youth Corps, 6 from the National Youth Corps and 6 candidates of miscellaneous affiliation representing 11 different small splinter parties and social organizations.¹⁴

¹²McCune, op. cit., p. 227.

¹³Weems, op. cit., p. 147.

¹⁴Republic of Korea, Central Election Management Commission, Yokde Kukhoe Uiwon Sonko Sanghang (The Patterns

The 1948 National Assembly was mainly composed of landlords and their sympathizers. As Table 4 shows, the breakdown of the occupational backgrounds lists 86 farmers. It has been asserted that these 86 farmers were likely to be landlords. As Hahn stated: "It is plain to see that most of these so-called farmers were actually landlords by background and possibly descendants of Yangban families."¹⁵

In order to test the thesis that most of these 86 farmer members of the 1948 National Assembly were landlords, it is proposed to analyze their occupational, educational background, and political affiliation. As Table 5 indicates, a majority of 86 had occupations requiring considerable educational training which necessitate money and time. Thirty of 86 listed their occupation as civil servants. Of the 30 civil servants 21 were either Myonjang (village administrative chief) or Kunsu (county administrative chief). These local officials were mostly from the small landlord or owner-farmer class. However, the 17 who listed their occupation as political entrepreneur and the 9 civil servants mostly represented the larger landlord class.

The analysis of the 86 farmer members of the National Assembly reveals that 36 had either junior college

of Successive National Assembly Election) (Seoul: Chungang Sonko Kwanri Wiwonhoe, 1967), p. 69.

¹⁵Bae Ho Hahn, "Nature of Social-Political Change in Contemporary Korea," Korean Affairs, II (April/May, 1962), 153.

Table 4
Occupational Backgrounds of
the Assemblymen, 1948

Occupation	Number	Percent
Farmers	86	43.0
Merchants	23	11.5
Journalists and publishers	15	7.5
Politicians	12	6.0
Doctors	10	5.0
Clergy	5	2.5
Educators	5	2.5
Lawyers and Judges	4	2.0
No declared occupation	22	11.0
Miscellaneous	28	14.0
Total	200	100.0

Source: Republic of Korea, House of Representatives, Yokde Kukhoe Uiwon Sonko Sanghang (The Pattern of Successive National Assembly Elections) (Seoul: Boumjae Insoesa, 1964), pp. 71-72.

Table 5
Occupational Background of Farmer
Members of National Assembly, 1948

Occupation	Number	Percent
Private Enterprise	5	5.8
Journalists	4	4.7
Political Entrepreneurs	17	19.8
Educators	9	10.4
Civil Servants (including local officials)	30	34.9
Farm Management	12	14.0
No declared occupation	9	10.4
Total	86	100.0

Source: Adapted from Republic of Korea, Taihan Minguk Songo Sa (History of Republic of Korea Election) (Seoul: Boumjae Insoesa, 1964), pp. 727-736.

or university education, 29 had high school education and 21 had elementary education. As noted, considering the fact that during the Japanese Colonial period only those Korean families that had financial means could send their children to the higher institutions let alone the secondary school, it can be assumed that the majority of these 86 farmer members of the National Assembly came from the landlord class.

This point is further corroborated when their political affiliation is analyzed. As Table 7 indicates, more than 37 percent (32 persons) of the farmer members of the National Assembly belonged to Sygman Rhee's extreme rightist political group--Society for the Rapid Realization of Korean Independence. In addition 6 belonged to the equally rightist oriented group, Hanguk Democratic Party, and 10 were affiliated with the rightist oriented Youth Corps. Many of the independents were also ideologically aligned with the conservative political groups. In short, more than 60 percent of this group of National Assemblymen were rightist oriented. Thus it can be assumed that the majority of 86 who indicated their occupation to be farmer came from the landlord class.

Under the prevailing circumstances, this was a rather natural outcome for they were the class which historically had exercised leadership in the Korean villages.¹⁶

¹⁶Henderson, op. cit., pp. 274-285.

Table 6

Educational Background of 86 Farmer
Members of National Assembly, 1948

Educational Background	Number	Percent
University	25	29.0
Junior College	11	12.8
High School	29	33.7
Elementary School	17	19.8
Other	<u>4</u>	<u>4.7</u>
Total	86	100.0

Source: Adapted from Republic of Korea, Taihan Minguk Songo Sa (History of Republic of Korea Election) (Seoul: Boumjae Insoesa, 1964), pp. 727-736.

Table 7

Political Affiliation of 86 Farmer
Members of National Assembly, 1948

Political Party	Number	Percent
Society for the Rapid Realization of Korean Independence	32	37.2
Hanguk Democratic Party	6	7.0
Dae Dong Youth Corps	7	8.1
Chosun Minjok Youth Corps	3	3.5
Independent	35	40.7
Other	<u>3</u>	<u>3.5</u>
Total	86	100.0

Source: Adapted from Republic of Korea, Taihan Minguk Songo Sa (History of Republic of Korea Election) (Seoul: Boumjae Insoesa, 1964), pp. 727-736.

The landlord class not only occupied high social status roles but also had the financial means to send their offspring to the higher educational institutions. A recent study on the Korean political leaders found that:

These leaders have generally come from families that rank high in Korea's social hierarchy. An analysis of their fathers' occupation and education supports the thesis that wealth and prestige are two of the most important factors in Korean leadership recruitment. Large land-owners and owners of large business firms were the main sources of wealth . . .¹⁷

It can be safely inferred that the 1948 National Assembly was sympathetic toward the traditional ruling class and interested in maintaining the status quo. Although the majority of the members of the 1948 Assembly were invariably rightists, nevertheless there were some leftist-leaning members among the independents. It has been estimated that there were approximately fifty out of eighty-five independents who were either Communist sympathizers or moderate leftists.¹⁸ This minority of the non-rightists subsequently played an important role in enacting the land reform law which was generally more favorable to the tenants than to the landlords.

It was not only the National Assembly which was dominated by extreme rightists but also the cabinet and Korean bureaucracy which were staffed with people whose

¹⁷Bae-ho Hahn and Kyu-taik Kim, "Korean Political Leaders, 1952-1962: Their Social Origins and Skills," Asian Survey, III (July, 1962), 322.

¹⁸Cho, op. cit., p. 209.

socioeconomic background was congruent with that of the landlords. Most of the bureaucrats of the new government were left over from the previous Japanese colonial government and the United States Military government.¹⁹

At this point, a word of warning is in order in regard to the meaning of "political party." LaPalombara and Weiner define the political party as follows:

(1) continuity in organization--that is, an organization whose expected life span is not dependent on the life span of current leaders; (2) manifest and presumably permanent organization at the local level, with regularized communications and other relationships between local and national units; (3) self-conscious determination of leaders at both national and local levels to capture and to hold decision-making power alone or in coalition with others, not simply to influence the exercise of power; and (4) a concern on the part of the organization for seeking followers at the polls or in some manner striving for popular support.²⁰

The postwar South Korean political parties certainly did not fit the above definition. The political parties of South Korea, in fact, could be better described as factional groups to pursue their factional-parochial interests rather than general public interests. Their differences were not differences of public policies or political ideals but rather personal differences and feuds. As noted, a large number of South Korean political parties were ephemeral

¹⁹Lee Won-sul, "The Embryo of Korean Bureaucracy in 1945," Korean Quarterly, VII (Autumn, 1965), 32-49.

²⁰J. LaPalombara and M. Weiner, "The Origin and Development of Political Parties," in J. LaPalombara and M. Weiner (eds.), Political Parties and Political Development (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 6.

ones and extemporaneously changed their political allegiance and platforms.

If this observation is to be accepted, then it may be a futile effort to examine the role of political parties in the politics of land reform in South Korea from the political party system point of view. Since the South Korean political parties were not true political parties, it may perhaps be more appropriate to examine the role of political parties in the politics of land reform from a different approach such as the "clientelist politics" perspective. This approach might better be able to provide understanding of the interest articulation and aggregation processes in South Korea. The "clientelist politics" approach has especially been profitably applied in studying the politics of agrarian societies where there is a large discrepancy in the ownership of land, status, power and influence.²¹

In 1945, when Korea was liberated from the Japanese colonial rule, more than 70 percent of the Korean population was engaged in farming and the majority of farmers were landless tenants. Thus, South Korea had the necessary conditions for the development of clientelist politics. Certainly, in

²¹See John D. Powell, "The Politics of Agrarian Reform in Venezuela: History, System and Process" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1966); and John D. Powell, "Peasant Society and Clientelist Politics," American Political Science Review, LXIV (June, 1970), 411-425.

1948, when South Korea gained her full sovereignty, all South Korean citizens were legally equal before the law and the introduction of universal suffrage made all Koreans politically equal, but in rural areas there remained a great gap between those who owned land and those who did not in terms of economic and social status and influence. This difference in command of resources, in fact, served to develop clientelist politics in South Korea.

"Clientelist politics" has been defined as follows:

Political clientelism, in short, may be viewed as a more or less personalized, affective, and reciprocal relationship between actors, or sets of actors, commanding unequal resources and involving mutually beneficial transactions that have political ramifications beyond the immediate sphere of dyadic relationships.²²

In South Korea the existence of clientelist politics was amply manifested in general elections, especially in the earlier general elections. As noted, following the general election of 1948, more than 40 percent of the elected assemblymen were landlords and more than 45 percent of the elected assemblymen were Independents. This simply means that the election of 1948 was primarily contested and won on the basis of individual appeals and ability in terms of professional, academic, financial and political background and achievement. The rural voters did not vote for the political party but rather voted for the individual

²²Rene Lamarchand and Keith Legg, "Political Clientelism and Development: A Preliminary Analysis," Comparative Politics (January, 1972), pp. 151-152.

candidate regardless of their party affiliation. In short, in clientelist politics, clients provide the votes for politicians, and the politicians in turn are expected to provide for the clients' material needs.

The politicians are members of political parties and they have access to the centers of power whereas the farmers are seldom affiliated with political parties and even if they are, they scarcely have any influence on the decision-making process. Under such circumstance, clientelism provides, in the rural areas, the basis for a network of reciprocities between patron-client and also between the center and peripheral regions. Powell calls this network the "rural problem-solving system" through which policy outputs may be mediated and implemented on a regional or nationwide scale.²³ The concept of reciprocities sheds a great deal of light on the understanding of political behavior of landlords and tenants in South Korea.

Difference Between the Administration and National Assembly in Regard to Land Reform

As noted, there was a grave imbalance of ownership of farm land in Korea during the thirty-five years of Japanese colonial rule. According to Grajdanzev, 2.7 percent of the farm families owned 63.0 percent of the farm land while the tenants and farm laborers who constituted

²³Powell, "Peasant Society and Clientelist Politics," p. 419.

57.4 percent of the total farming population before the end of World War II owned none.²⁴ Realizing the prevailing abject conditions of South Korean farmers, the U.S. Military Government in South Korea soon after its arrival passed a series of legislative acts in order to lessen the financial burden of Korean farmers. However, the agrarian reforms carried out by the U.S. Military Government in South Korea were only partial. Thus, the task of implementing a comprehensive full scale land reform was left to the newly established government in South Korea. Acknowledging the urgent need for reform and the popularity of land reform, all political parties and aspiring politicians advocated such policy. As McCune observed:

The obvious popularity of land reform made it politic for office-seekers participating in the May 10, 1948, National Assembly elections to go on record as favoring the distribution of privately-owned lands as well.²⁵

The urgency for land reform in South Korea was stimulated internally by an "ideology of equal opportunity" which was prevalent in South Korea after the liberation of Korea from Japanese domination. Lee Hahn-bin observed that "Among the manifold manifestations of the ideology of equal opportunity none was more widespread and far-reaching than education and agrarian reform."²⁶ The equal opportunity

²⁴Grajdanzev, op. cit., pp. 111-112.

²⁵McCune, op. cit., pp. 133-134.

²⁶Lee Hahn-bin, Korea: Time, Change and Administration (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1968), pp. 47-51.

which it was felt would accrue from the equal ownership of land was so deeply entrenched in the thinking of Koreans that it was imperative that land reform be implemented as soon as possible.

Despite the constitutional assurance and promise made by the politicians, the enactment of land reform law in South Korea was inexcusably delayed. It was not until June 21, 1949, that the Land Reform Law was passed by the National Assembly, and it took another year to commence its actual implementation. Although it is difficult to determine exactly what factors were responsible for this unwarranted delay, it could perhaps be attributed to three major reasons.

First, the National Assembly of 1948 was overwhelmed with much legislation more urgent than that of land reform. In fact, the first National Assembly was charged with legislating such monumental laws as the Constitution, the Government Organization Law, the Court Organization Law, the National Assembly Law, the National Traitor's Law (to punish those who collaborated with the Japanese colonial authority), the Local Autonomy Law and a host of others. Although land reform was an urgent issue, the other matters demanded more immediate attention.

Second, it has been argued that the delay was caused not only by the shortage of time but by the intentional delaying tactics utilized by the landlords and their sympathizers in the National Assembly as well as in other

branches of government. More specifically, the Industrial Committee of the National Assembly which was charged with the deliberation of the land reform bill was dominated by the Hanguk Democratic Party, landlords and their sympathizers. Thus the Committee willfully sabotaged the deliberation of the bill to prevent it from being reported out of the Committee.

Third, the reason for delay has been attributed to the lack of cooperation and coordination between the Executive, especially the Office of the President, and the National Assembly. It has been suggested that the disagreement and mutual distrust of the two branches of government helped cause undue delay.

Although all these reasons seem credible, the second and third reasons seem to be the most plausible ones. At this juncture, it is appropriate to review the respective positions taken by the parties involved in the enactment and implementation of land reform. In this chapter the relationship between the President and the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry will be examined in order to understand the politics of land reform in South Korea.

President Syngman Rhee and
the Ministry of Agriculture
and Forestry on Land Reform

As early as February, 1946, Syngman Rhee, as the chairman of the Representative Democratic Council, in a nation-wide broadcast announced his twenty-seven point

national program for a new Korea. This program encompassed a wide range of policies. Syngman Rhee touched on the issue of agrarian problems as follows:

To redistribute all confiscated agricultural lands to small farmers according to their capacity and ability to work them.

To break up and redistribute large private estates to small farmers . . . , with equitable payments to the owners of said large estates.

To permit small farmers to repay the state for the redistributed lands on a long term basis.²⁷

Although Syngman Rhee generally seemed to be favorably oriented to land reform, he did not actively pursue the program. The ambiguous attitude of President Rhee regarding the land reform issue was perhaps because he was searching for a formula which could hopefully satisfy both landlords and tenants. This search for a compromise formula was implied in a speech before the First National Assembly as its first Speaker. He unequivocally stated the need for land reform but also emphasized that land reform should be fair to all parties concerned.²⁸

The subsequent political performance of Syngman Rhee suggested that he was capable of carrying out almost any policy, legally or otherwise, once he made a final decision. It became evident that either he had not come to a final decision about land reform or he was attempting to gain some

²⁷Robert T. Oliver, Syngman Rhee: The Man Behind the Myth (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1954), pp. 365-67.

²⁸Chosun Ilbo, October 1, 1948.

time to size up the situation and map out a future course of action. In 1948, Rhee was heavily dependent politically upon the support of the assemblymen who controlled the First National Assembly and who were mostly landlords and their sympathizers. Under such conditions, perhaps Rhee could not act decisively but was forced to act rather weakly. An American apologist for Rhee has suggested the difficulties Rhee faced with the problem of land reform. He wrote:

Since the Korean landlords had traditionally been the most influential segment of the population, it was wholly natural that many of them had won election to the assembly. These men had a very important vested interest in maintaining their land ownership.²⁹

According to this view, Rhee was not sabotaging the land reform but was merely proceeding cautiously to find a formula which could be acceptable for both parties concerned.

However, quite contrary to Rhee's cautious approach to the problem, his first Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Cho, Bong-am, was actively pushing for a liberal land reform program which was definitely more favorable to the tenants than to the landlords. Cho's view on the impending land reform was expressed in one of his statements as follows:

The constitution of Republic of Korea unequivocally guarantees the equitable distribution of farm lands to the actual tillers of land. Thus, it is imperative to enact the land reform law in order to achieve self-sufficiency, to raise economic conditions, to increase productivity and to enrich cultural life of farmers of Korea.³⁰

²⁹Oliver, op. cit., p. 283.

³⁰Nongji Kaehyuk Sa, op. cit., p. 369.

Unlike Syngman Rhee, the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Cho Bong-am, was not really concerned with the compromise plan which could satisfy both the landlords and tenants but he was better disposed to making a law which is more favorable to the tenants. Cho's steadfast advocacy of a land reform bill which was more favorable to the tenants irritated the landlords' interest both within and without the government and incurred a host of criticism on his position. The Tong-A Ilbo, a leading daily newspaper in South Korea which was more sympathetic towards the landlords, expressed opposition to the Ministry bill for its one-sidedness.³¹

Cho Bong-am had been a staunch communist throughout his adult life. Cho was one of the seventeen original founders of the Korean Communist Party which was established in April, 1925, in Seoul. He was graduated from the Communist University of Toilers of the East in Moscow in 1923 and he also represented the Korean Communist Party and movement at numerous international gatherings.³² However, he split with the Communist Party in 1946 and joined with the non-communist nationalist forces in South Korea. However, it has often been suspected that his intention in pushing a

³¹Editorial, Tong-A Ilbo, March 4, 1949.

³²For an excellent discussion of the founding of the Korean Communist Party, see Suh, Dae-sook, The Korean Communist Movement, 1918-1948 (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1967).

land reform bill which was more favorable to the tenants was a manifestation of his socialist tendencies. McCune commented that "he (Cho) had not forsaken his socialistic ideas and favored a strong program of agrarian reform aimed at breaking up all landlord holdings."³³

Having become an apostate of the Communist party, Cho cooperated with Syngman Rhee during the early phase of the Republic of Korea, but he soon split with autocratic Syngman Rhee in the second phase of the Republic of Korea which might be called a period of adjustment and consolidation. Cho headed a socialistic Progressive Party and he emerged as the only active opponent of Syngman Rhee in the 1956 Presidential election. Cho, however, was eventually eliminated by the Rhee regime because of his alleged violation of the notorious and controversial National Security Law and illegal possession of arms. He was executed on July 31, 1959, in Seoul.³⁴

Under Cho's leadership and urging, a Drafting Committee of Land Reform Law was created within the Ministry and Cho personally headed the Committee. The Committee was not only charged with drafting the Land Reform Act but was also directly to study the feasibility of drafting an

³³McCune, op. cit., p. 240.

³⁴For details of Cho, Bong-am's trial, see Yun, Ki-jong, Hanguk Kongsan Chu-i undong Pipan (Critique of the Korean Communist Movement) (Seoul: Tong-il Chunchu-sa, 1959).

Agricultural Cooperatives Law as a companion bill to the Land Reform Law. However, the person who was actually charged with drafting the bill was the Chief of the Bureau of Farmland of the Ministry, Kang Jin-kuk.

Kang, Jin-kuk, from South Kyongsang province, was educated at the Japan University in Tokyo where he majored in agricultural economics. Up until the end of World War II he worked as a journalist specializing in agricultural economics. After liberation, he served as an agricultural economics specialist for the Industrial Committee of the Korean Interim Legislative Assembly of the United States Military Government in South Korea. When the Republic of Korea was established he was appointed by Cho, Bong-am as the first chief of the Bureau of Farmland of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.³⁵

The Drafting Committee was faced with numerous problems such as shortage of time, lack of personnel, dearth of reference materials and unavailability of reliable statistical data. Therefore, the necessary data had to be collected directly by contacting the tenants and landlords. Accordingly, Kang made numerous weekend trips to Kyonggi and Kangwon provinces disguised as a newspaper reporter in

³⁵Choe, Jung-min, "In teri hyung ui Kang, Jin-kuk" (Kang, Jun-kuk, an Intellectual), Nong to (Farmland), IV (March, 1949), 79-80.

order to gather materials necessary to drafting the Land Reform Law.³⁶

In undertaking the trips, Kang was primarily interested in gathering information concerned with such questions as: What would be the extent of tenants' financial capacity to pay for land? What would be the most realistic term of payment for land? What would be the ideal and realistic size of farm per farm household? What policies should be adopted to assist small farmers during the transitional period? Through his informal contact with the tenants and landlords Kang tentatively arrived at certain conclusions. His findings were: first, under the given situation, two chongbo would be an acceptable size of farm per farm household; second, the most acceptable term of payment would be five to six years; third, the price of land should be set at 150 percent of annual yield; fourth, the tenants were under severe pressure from the landlords either to purchase the farm land which they had been cultivating or relinquish their tenant rights.³⁷

After less than four months of study the Ministry completed the draft bill, which was then made public with the announcement of public hearings on the bill. The hearings were mainly attended by the chiefs of the

³⁶Kang, Jun-kuk, "Hultutkin Choan (The Tattered Draft of Land Reform Bill)," Sin Dong-A, October 1, 1965, pp. 188-97.

³⁷Ibid.

Agricultural Economics sections of the provincial governments throughout South Korea. There were numerous reasons for holding public hearings on the draft bill of land reform: first, to afford the examination of the draft bill by the provincial officials who were directly concerned with the agricultural problems; second, to prevent the forced land sale which was going on in the countryside by publicizing the impending land reform; and third; to pressure the rather recalcitrant National Assembly to take appropriate action on the land reform bill.

The public hearings in Seoul were further followed by public hearings in each of the provinces during the month of January, 1949. The provincial public hearings were mainly concerned with the following issues: (1) the type of land which is to be excluded from the land reform; (2) the price of land; (3) the optimum farm size per farm household in South Korea; (4) the term of payment; (5) the questions pertaining to the formation of the Agricultural Committee.³⁸

As noted, the Ministry drafted bill was completed as early as in November, 1948. The salient features of this draft bill were as follows:

1. Freezing of all land transactions until redistribution was completed.
2. Confiscation of all former Japanese lands and of all land for which no clear title existed. Former Japanese lands transferred to Korean owners under Military Government's land sale program were not

³⁸Nongji Kaehyuk Sa, op. cit., p. 374.

included in this plan. That program was to run concurrently.

3. Government purchase of all privately owned land in excess of three Chongbo (7.35 acres).

4. Government to pay land-owners 150 per cent of average annual yield of main crop, while farmers purchased land for 120 per cent of annual yield to be paid in six years.

5. Suspension of government payments to land-owners for a three-year period, then the purchase price to be paid in ten annual installments.

6. The land to be purchased from landowners by means of a proportionate and progressive reduction in price as amount of land increased.³⁹

Of these, two provisions were singled out as most objectionable by the landlord class: the measure to freeze land transactions and the suspension of government payments to landowners for a three-year period. The landlords argued that land was private property and therefore the owners should be able to freely dispose of it without any interference by outside forces including the government. However, the drafters of the bill were convinced that this was a necessary measure to prevent the forced sale of land which was widely practiced in the provinces. Some landlords, envisaging an impending land reform, forced their tenants either to purchase their lands or relinquish their tenants' right.⁴⁰

The going price of the land was so exorbitant that the tenants were forced to sell their cows and farming tools to raise the necessary funds to purchase the land. As a

³⁹New York Times, December 22, 1948.

⁴⁰Statement by Kang, Jin-kuk, personal interview, January 3, 1971.

result, huge debts were incurred among the farmers who were forced to purchase land in this manner and many of them were driven into perpetual indebtedness. As indicated, in order to prevent the deterioration of the tenants' economic condition during the fluid period, the drafters of the bill had included this provision.

The next controversial provision was that of "suspension of government payments to landowners for a three year period, then the purchase price to be paid in ten annual installments." The Chairman of the All-Korea Committee of Alliance for Protection of Korean Landowners' Interests opposed the provision on the ground that this provision would inevitably result in the economic emaciation of landowners and the spread and strengthening of communism in South Korea.⁴¹

The Rhee administration as a whole was cool to the Ministry's draft. As noted, Rhee was interested in a moderate bill which would please both landlords and tenants. This feeling was again expressed in Rhee's broadcast to the nation in which he stated:

. . . land will be distributed among farmers at a proper price, but not free of charge. However, an important question related to land reform is how to deal with big farm. In considering the prevailing public opinion, I believe that the farm land should not be confiscated but should be protected by a democratic national law.⁴²

⁴¹Voice of Korea, May 16, 1949.

⁴²Chosun Ilbo, December 7, 1948.

After the Ministry bill was made public and subjected to public debate, the bill was officially submitted to the State Affairs Council (cabinet) for deliberation and adoption. The draft bill which had been considered to be more favorable to the tenants than the landlords was not likely to be passed by the State Affairs Council. The draft bill was rejected and it was sent to the Government Planning Board for further deliberation and revision. After the Board made revisions the bill was sent back to the State Affairs Council, which then passed the bill as amended by the Government Planning Board on February 4, 1949.

In the meantime, Minister Cho's vigorous advocacy of strong measures for agrarian reform had incurred the enmity of President Rhee and other government officials and he was eventually dismissed on February 22, 1949. The ostensible reason for dismissal of Cho was that he had failed to enforce the government's rice collection program.⁴³ However, a more realistic reason would be a political one. As noted, Cho had many political enemies within and without the government because of his past association with the Communist movement and his persistent advocacy of land reform policy which was more favorable to the tenants.

⁴³McCune, op. cit., p. 135; New York Times, February 24, 1949; it is interesting to note the reason for Cho's appointment as the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry. Henderson argues that Cho was considered to be a potential rival to Rhee. Therefore, Rhee wanted Cho to be discredited by appointing him to the very difficult post (Henderson, p. 215). Cho was executed in 1959 for allegedly engaging in espionage activity.

The major revisions made by the Planning Board were first, the elimination of "suspension of payments to the landlords for a three year period." As noted, according to the Ministry draft, the government was to pay landowners 150 percent of the average annual yield of the main crop, while farmers were to purchase land at 120 percent of annual yield to be paid in six years. The difference of 30 percent was to be borne by the government. However, realizing the financial difficulties of the newly established government, the drafters of the Ministry bill inserted a provision entailing the suspension of payment for a three-year period in order to resolve the financial problem which was to occur from the difference of the price of land and amount of money paid by the purchase of land. Furthermore, the drafters of the bill expected that the suspension provision would yield three major economic advantages: first, the prevention of inflationary tendency; second, the maintenance of financial stability; and third, successful collection of grain. All these are intertwined in that if the government did not need to release government funds to purchase grain it would partially eliminate an important source of inflation, which in turn could assist the maintenance of financial stability. Despite the seeming economic advantages of the suspension clause, it was eliminated from the draft bill mainly because of the strong opposition of the landowners and their sympathizers within the administration.⁴⁴

⁴⁴Kang, Jin-kuk, op. cit., p. 196.

The second important revision was a change in the price of land from 150 percent to 200 percent of the average annual yield. This meant that the price of land for the farmers was increased from 120 percent of the annual yield to be paid in six annual payments to 200 percent in ten annual payments.⁴⁵

After these revisions, the government land reform bill was sent on February 4, 1949, to the National Assembly for consideration. Thus, phase one of the government's action on land reform was completed. Phase two of the battle for the land reform bill was to be waged in the National Assembly.

In summing up, it can be stated that although land reform was almost unanimously advocated and supported by the politicians and political parties, it was not so easily enacted because different interests revolving around land reform inevitably clashed. In regard to land reform, the Administration was divided into two main groups, namely: liberal and conservative. They advocated and pushed different types of land reform. Thus, the initial struggle over land reform was waged within the Administration between these two groups. The liberal group was headed by Minister Cho Pong-am who was supported by the staff of the Ministry and local officials of the Agricultural and Economic Section

⁴⁵Industrial Bank, "Nongji Kaehyuk ui whoego wa Pyongka (Reflection and Evaluation of Land Reform)," Industrial Bank Monthly Report, No. 8 (September, 1955), p. 9.

of the provincial government. As stated, the liberal group was interested in enacting land reform law which was more favorable to the tenants than to the landlords.

In this period the role of interest groups was very minimal because there was no significant farmers' political organization. This situation was partly because during the Japanese colonial period there was a total void of farmers' political organization; thus it was too early to develop any significant farmers' political organization to emerge in 1948. However, the All-Korean Farmers Union was fairly powerful, but it had gone underground by 1948. Thus the function of interest articulation was then performed by Cho and bureaucrats in the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry sympathetic toward the farmers. Likewise the interest of landlords was represented and articulated by the conservative wing of bureaucracy.

The conservative group was headed by President Syngman Rhee and supported by the other members of cabinet and bureaucracy which were under their control. This group was also supported by the landlords' interest within the National Assembly. In view of the prevailing mood of the country for land reform, the conservative group could not dare to oppose the land reform; thus they advocated land reform which would be beneficial for both landlords and tenants which meant not a substantial kind of land reform. The conservative force within the administration was a

formidable one and the likely outcome of the struggle between these two groups was foregone conclusion.

As stated, in the end, the liberal position was diluted a great deal because of the advocacy of a moderate bill by the conservative group. However, this was not the end of the liberal effort. Although the liberal group within the Administration was defeated, they were soon to be revived briefly in the second phase of the struggle which was waged in the National Assembly.

The next chapter will examine the position of the National Assembly in regard to land reform, the antipathy between the Administration and the National Assembly revolving around land reform, the content of the Land Reform Law, and its implementation.

Chapter 5

LAND REFORM UNDER THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA: THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY'S POSITION

Phase one of the Administration's action on land reform was completed in February, 1949, when the Administration's land reform bill was sent to the National Assembly for its consideration. Thus, phase two of the action over land reform took place in the National Assembly between the supporters of the Administration and opponents.

National Assembly and Land Reform

According to the National Assembly Law of 1948, there were eight standing committees--Legislation and Justice, Foreign Affairs and National Defense, Home Affairs and Public Security, Finance and Economic, Industrial, Education and Social Affairs, Communication and Transportation, and Discipline and Qualification--in the National Assembly. The standing committees were charged with "the drafting and review of bills pertaining to their committees and examining applications, petitions and other related matters . . ." ¹

The standing committees were merely to act as a preparatory agency for the plenary session.

¹Selected Laws and Regulations Pertaining to the National Assembly, op. cit., pp. 21-46.

The land reform bill came under the jurisdiction of the Industrial Committee which was further divided into four subcommittees--Agricultural and Forestry, Commerce, Mining, and Fishery. Accordingly, the land reform bill was referred to the Agricultural and Forestry subcommittee for consideration. It was in this subcommittee that the various draft bills submitted to the National Assembly, including the government bill, were deliberated and reviewed. The primary function of the subcommittee was to deliberate and review the bills referred to it. The subcommittee did not possess any authority to say one way or the other on the bill referred to it. It was the Industrial Committee as a whole which had the authority to decide either to report the bill out to the floor or kill it.

Before discussing the debate which took place in the National Assembly regarding land reform, it would be appropriate to examine party alignment in the First National Assembly and the socioeconomic background of the members of both the Agricultural and Forestry subcommittee and the Industrial Committee in order to clarify the position which these assemblymen took with regard to the land reform bill.

The Changes of Political Party Alignment in the First National Assembly

As noted, the first general election of May 10, 1948, elected 200 members of the National Assembly. The salient features of this election were, first, that the majority of

assemblymen represented rightist oriented political organizations and second, that nearly half the members of the National Assembly were independents. It was a rather foregone conclusion that the majority of the assemblymen would be rightists because many of the prominent moderates and leftists boycotted the first general election. The preponderance of independents in the National Assembly could perhaps be attributed to the insignificance of political parties in the early stages of independence. It was too early for the Korean electorate to take political parties seriously because, as Henderson put it, "political parties are mostly fluid, rootless association among opportunistic individuals."² In explaining the preponderance of independents, Henderson further stated:

Candidacy in the beginning was decided not by parties but by individual application. There were no primaries. Parties could not, in early elections, repudiate those individually registering as their candidates or conversely even force their own candidates to declare party affiliation.³

However, soon after the opening of the first regular session of the National Assembly on May 31, 1948, the new party alignments took shape according to Article 14 of the National Assembly Law which stated:

A negotiation group shall be established in the National Assembly for the purpose of negotiating important matters relating to proceedings.

²Henderson, op. cit., p. 274.

³Ibid., p. 287.

The negotiation group shall consist of the representatives of Parties with not less than 20 Members in the National Assembly.

The representative of each party shall, at the beginning of his term of office, file with the National Assembly a list of the members of his party signed and sealed by the members.⁴

There emerged four negotiation groups which lasted until the establishment of the government on August 15, 1948. These four negotiation groups were the Independent Club, Sam-il Club, Tae-baek Club and Korea Democratic Party.⁵ However, after the establishment of the government in August, 1948, and when the National Assembly was able to function fully as the legislative branch of government, a change in party alignments in the National Assembly was again necessitated. In the second realignment, the negotiation groups diversified into seven different groups and took their position either to support the government or to become opposition parties. An important outcome of this realignment was the emergence of three radical groups which were together called the So-jang-pa (young radical progressive group). The So-jang-pa took an opposition's position in the National Assembly and they played an important role in waging a legislative battle against the conservative

⁴Selected Laws and Regulations Pertaining to the National Assembly, loc. cit.

⁵For an extensive discussion of the development of KDP, see Han, Tae-su, Hanguk Chongdang Sa (History of Korean Political Parties) (Seoul: Sin Taeyang Sa, 1961), pp. 60-110; Yi Ki-ha, Hanguk Chongdang Baltal Sa (History of the Development of Korean Political Parties) (Seoul: Chongchi Sa, 1961), pp. 54-64.

force in the National Assembly in regard to land reform.⁶

Only two months after the establishment of government in South Korea, a serious political incident occurred. On October 19, 1948, the 14th Regiment of the South Korean Army revolted at the port city of Yosu and the revolt quickly spread to Suncheon. The rebels captured five towns and massacred hundreds of citizens as enemies of the people. It has been alleged that the revolt was led by the communists among the junior level officers.⁷

The Yosu-Suncheon incident inevitably drove the newly established government into turmoil and the parties which were critical of the government openly attacked the government and even passed a resolution demanding the resignation of the government in the National Assembly. This situation once again caused the realignment of parties in the National Assembly. The Korea Democratic Party, which was a staunch supporter of Syngman Rhee, had become disenchanted with the Rhee administration because Rhee did not properly reward the Korea Democratic Party for its support. As Henderson observed:

The Democrats had supported Rhee into the Presidency. They expected to be rewarded; indeed,

⁶Republic of Korea, National Assembly, Kukhoe Simnyonji (The Ten-Year Record of the National Assembly) (Seoul: Minuiwon, Samucho, 1958), pp. 85-86; Yi Ki-ha, op. cit., pp. 202-203.

⁷Robert K. Sawyer, Military Advisors in Korea: K MAG in Peace and War (Washington, D. C.: Department of the Army, 1962), pp. 39-40; New York Times, October 20, 21, 22, 1948.

they expected to rule in a cabinet-council system with him playing the role of Yi monarch. They lost when Rhee insisted on the Presidential system. They then expected association in rule through important appointments to the government. In this he also disappointed them. When Rhee formed his first cabinet, Kim Song-su was given no post, and only members on the KDP tangent, like Foreign Minister Chang Taik-sang, were rewarded.⁸

Thus, the Korea Democratic Party, with the cooperation of the so-called So-jang-Pa, launched a series of attacks on the Rhee government. Following this, the third party realignment resulted in the National Assembly. The third alignment, like the other attempts, did not last long. In December, 1948, when the second regular session began, a further change of political alignment occurred. One of the noteworthy results of the third alignment was the consolidation of the So-jang-pa.

The emergence of So-jang-pa as a formidable political force and the estrangement between the KDP and President Rhee forced the ever-weakening and unpopular Korea Democratic Party to readjust itself in the National Assembly. The challenge of the new political situation and So-jang-pa compelled the Korea Democratic Party to merge with the conservative forces of NARRIK's Shin, Ik-hui and the Dae Dong Youth Corps' Chi, Chung-chon. The result of this merger of February 12, 1949, was the formation of a grand anti-Rhee party called the Democratic Nationalist Party.⁹

⁸Henderson, op. cit., p. 291.

⁹Yi Ki-ha, op. cit., pp. 204-205.

While the reorganization of the political parties in the National Assembly was in process, an important political incident occurred which abruptly brought about the downfall of the So-jang-pa. From May to July, 1949, thirteen of the So-jang-pa assemblymen including the Vice Speaker Kim, Yak-su were arrested because of an alleged violation of the National Security Act. These thirteen were alleged to have been members of a Communist party cell in the National Assembly.¹⁰ This incident of uncovering the Communist cell in the Nationalist Assembly ended the existence of the So-jang-pa as well as the domestic left.

It is important to note that the So-jang-pa was instrumental in enacting the land reform law which was much more favorable to the farmers than to the landlords. After the incident of uncovering the Communist cell in the National Assembly, another party realignment took place. Thus, by the end of the second regular session of the first National Assembly (April 30, 1949) the distribution of party strength in the National Assembly stood as follows: of 200 members, 29 belonged to the Independent Club; Shin-jung Association, 23; the Laborer and Farmers' Party, 23; Il-min Association, 55; the Democratic Nationalist Party, 70.¹¹

¹⁰Ma, Han, Hanguk Chongchi Ui Chong Pipan (The Whole Criticism of Korean Politics) (Seoul: Hanguk Chongchi Yongu Won, 1959), pp. 52-53.

¹¹Kukhoe Simnyonji, op. cit., pp. 86-87.

As was anticipated, the relationship between President Rhee and the legislature became estranged within less than two years. The causes of this friction between the two branches of government were manifold; namely, a lack of democratic tradition, parliamentary experiences and tradition, insufficient understanding of the working of constitutional government on the part of the President and the legislators, and the autocratic personality of President Rhee. More specifically, the differences between the two branches of government occurred on the handling of such issues as the National Traitors Law, Local Autonomy Law and Land Reform Law. Certain assemblymen were also dissatisfied with the President's handling of the opposition assemblymen and felt that the President was prone to usurp the prerogatives of legislature.

After the emergence of the Democratic Nationalist party as the major anti-Rhee party, it was only a matter of time until the anti-Rhee forces would seriously attempt to curtail Rhee's power. As a means to this end, 79 members of the Democratic Nationalist party and some independents submitted on January 27, 1950, an amendment to the constitution just three months prior to the end of the first National Assembly. Their proposal was designed to change the form of government from Presidential to parliamentary, thereby making the President merely a ceremonial head of state.¹²

¹²Han, Tae-su, op. cit., pp. 117-118.

The Democratic Nationalist party presumed that they could eventually control the cabinet, by that means acquiring political hegemony in South Korea.

This move of the Democratic Nationalist party in the National Assembly touched off another round of political re-alignment. In the face of such a threat, the pro-Rhee forces in the National Assembly formed the Taehan Nationalist party in order to counteract the Democratic Nationalist party's drive to oust President Rhee from the seat of power. The Taehan Nationalist party was formed on November 12, 1949.¹³

As a result of this party alignment, finally, two major parties emerged in the National Assembly--the Democratic Nationalist party and the Taehan (Korea) Nationalist party. However, they were distinguished, not so much by political ideology and policy differences, but by division, because one group supported Rhee and the other opposed him.

The legislative struggle over the land reform bill in the National Assembly was primarily waged between the former Korea Democratic party wing of the Democratic Nationalist party and the So-jang-pa. It is appropriate to briefly review at this point the socioeconomic background of both the Industrial Committee and the Agricultural and Forestry subcommittee to attempt to delineate why the Committee members drafted the bill which was considered as more favorable to the landlords.

¹³Yi Ki-ha, op. cit., pp. 209-211.

The Socioeconomic Background of
the Members of the Industrial
Committee and the Agricultural
and Forestry Subcommittee

There were 34 members in the Industrial Committee and 12 members in the Agricultural and Forestry subcommittee during the second regular session of the first National Assembly. As Tables 8, 9, and 10 indicate, of the 34 members of the Industrial Committee, 19 listed their occupation as "farmers"; 7 as political entrepreneurs; 7 as private enterprise; 1 as a medical doctor. Their educational background was as follows: 13 graduated from the university; 5 from junior college; 12 from middle school (up to ninth grade); 2 from primary school (up to sixth grade); 2 from Chinese classical study. As concerns their political affiliation, 13 affiliated with the Democratic Nationalist party; 5, Laborers and Farmers party; 8, Yee-jung Association; 3, Chung-ku Association; 3, Dong-in Association; 1, Sung-in Association; 1, Korean Federation of Trade Unions.¹⁴

As shown in Tables 8, 9, and 10, of the 12 members of the Agricultural and Forestry subcommittee, 7 listed their occupation as "farmers"; 3 as political entrepreneurs; 1 as private enterprise; 1 as a medical doctor. As far as their educational background was concerned, there were 4 who

¹⁴For the complete roster of the Standing Committee and Subcommittee assignments in the first National Assembly, see Kukhoe Simnyonji, pp. 42-74; for the professional and educational background and party affiliation of the members of the first National Assembly, see Yokde kukhoe Uiwon Sonko Sanghang, pp. 17-65.

Table 8

Occupational Background of the Members of the Industrial Committee and the Agricultural and Forestry Subcommittee, National Assembly, 1948

Occupation	Industrial Committee	Agricultural and Forestry Subcommittee
Farmers	19	7
Political entrepreneurs	7	3
Private enterprise	7	1
Medical doctors	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	34	12

Source: Adapted from Republic of Korea, Yokde Kukhoe Uiwon Sonko Sanghang (The Patterns of Successive National Assembly Elections) (Seoul: Boumjae Insoesa, 1964), pp. 17-65.

Table 9

Educational Background of the Members of the Industrial Committee and the Agricultural and Forestry Subcommittee, National Assembly, 1948

School	Industrial Committee	Agricultural and Forestry Subcommittee
University	13	4
Junior college	5	2
Middle school	12	5
Primary school	2	-
Chinese classical studies	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	34	12

Source: Adapted from Republic of Korea, Yokde Kukhoe Uiwon Sonko Sanghang (The Patterns of Successive National Assembly Elections) (Seoul: Boumjae Insoesa, 1964), pp. 17-65.

Table 10

Political Affiliation of the Members of the
Industrial Committee and the Agricultural and
Forestry Subcommittee, National Assembly, 1948

Party	Industrial Committee	Agricultural and Forestry Subcommittee
Democratic Nationalist party	13	4
Laborers and Farmers party	5	3
Yee-jung Association	8	2
Chung-ku Association	3	1
Dong-in Association	3	1
Sung-in Association	1	-
Korean Federation of Trade Unions	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Total	34	12

Source: Adapted from Republic of Korea, Yokde Kukhoe Uiwon Sonko Sanghang (The Patterns of Successive National Assembly Elections) (Seoul: Boumjae Insoesa, 1964), pp. 17-65.

graduated from the university; 2 from junior college; 5 from middle school; 1 from Chinese classical study. As to their political affiliation, there were 4 who belonged to the Democratic Nationalist party; 3, Laborers and Farmers party; 2, Yee-jung Association; 1, Chung-ku Association; 1, Dong-in Association; 1, Korean Federation of Trade Unions.¹⁵

As has been indicated, considering the preponderance of independents in the first National Assembly, party politics had not come into being in Korea in the period 1948-50. Party affiliation, therefore, indicated little of one's political orientation or policy position. Thus, socioeconomic and occupational backgrounds could be considered as the more important indicator of the assemblymen's political orientation. Considering that the Industrial Committee was dominated by the members of the Democratic Nationalist party and by the "farmers" who were, in fact, landlords, it was almost a foregone conclusion that the Committee would recommend the land reform bill which was more favorable to the landlords than to the tenants.

The Industrial Committee and Agricultural and Forestry Subcommittee versus the National Assembly

As noted, land reform was regarded as an urgent issue by all politicians without exception and they advocated prompt action on it. There were numerous draft bills submitted to the National Assembly for its consideration.

¹⁵Ibid.

The draft bills were presented by such organizations as the Korean Independent Federation of Farmers, Su-won Agricultural College, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Government bill, the SKILA bill, and Dr. Lee Hun-ku's private bill.¹⁶ The first bill was submitted to the National Assembly as early as December of 1948.

As was indicated, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry bill was made public in November, 1948, and the revised version of the bill, known as the government bill, was sent to the National Assembly in February, 1949. The Agriculture and Forestry subcommittee of the National Assembly was primarily interested in drafting their own version of the bill, instead of deliberating and reviewing the Government bill. Thus, the subcommittee drafted its own bill which was supposed to have been a synthesis of the draft bill submitted to the National Assembly. The subcommittee finalized its work in January, 1949, and referred it to the Industrial Committee for final approval.

However, the bill was kept pending before the Industrial Committee more than two months. By March, 1949, some assemblymen became impatient with the seeming delay tactics used by the Industrial Committee. During the years of 1947 and 1949, the forced transfer of lands and

¹⁶ Republic of Korea, National Assembly, Sokkirok (Verbatim Record of National Assembly Debate), Second Regular Session (December 20, 1948-April 30, 1949), 30th Plenary Session, p. 546. (Hereinafter referred to as Sokkirok.)

agricultural unrest was occurring widely. Thus, certain assemblymen came to suspect that the undue delay of the deliberation of the bill by the Industrial Committee was willful action on the part of the landowner members of the Industrial Committee.

Chung, June criticized the Chairman of the Industrial Committee, Suh, Sang-il, on the floor of the National Assembly as insincere in handling the land reform bill. Chung stated: "many of the members of the Industrial Committee confided to me privately that the Committee was insincere in handling the bill."¹⁷ To this accusation, Chairman Suh retorted that it was not because of the insincerity of the members but the shortage of time. Suh further stated that the Committee was faced with many more pressing legislative requirements which had caused delays in deliberating the land reform bill. However, Suh admitted that at times a quorum was not present, necessitating the cancellation of the meetings.¹⁸

In fact, this was the very tactic used by the landlords' interest in the SKILA to kill the land reform bill during the period of the U.S. Military Government. Thus, it was rather natural for some assemblymen to suspect the Industrial Committee of using the same tactic with the intention of either killing the bill or unduly delaying action on the bill.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 547.

In view of the urgency of land reform and the seeming delay tactic used by the Industrial Committee, assemblyman Lee, Mun-won and a group of National Assemblymen moved that the draft bill be reported out of the Industrial Committee to the plenary session of the National Assembly by February 20, 1949.¹⁹ The initiators of this motion thought that the second session of the National Assembly, which was convened on December 20, 1948, might not be able to act upon land reform unless the draft bill was reported out of the Industrial Committee within two weeks. By the National Assembly Law, the second session was to adjourn within three months of its beginning. After a heated debate on the floor, this motion failed to pass by a fifty to forty vote.

However, the persistent popular demand for land reform made it possible for the Industrial Committee to rather hurriedly act upon the bill and it was finally reported out to the floor on March 10, 1949, with the first reading of the bill to take place on March 12, 1949.

Nevertheless, on the day the first reading of the land reform bill was to take place, assemblyman Kim, Byong-hoi, on March 12, moved a change in the order of the day in order to debate his bill--"the Law of Temporary Measure on Land Reform"--which was designed to prevent temporarily

¹⁹Sokkirok, Second Regular Session, 31st Plenary Session, p. 562.

all land transactions until the land reform act was promulgated.²⁰

Assemblyman Kim, Byong-hoi stated that since the Ministry draft was made public in November, 1948, some landlords had been threatening their tenants either to buy their lands or relinquish tenant rights. The landlords had further intimidated their tenants by telling them that if the tenants did not purchase the land which they cultivated now, they would never be able to purchase land after the land reform bill was enacted. Kim and his supporters were also cognizant of the fact that it would take a considerable length of time until the law would be implemented. Thus, unless a temporary measure to freeze forced land sale was introduced, the land reform could not accomplish what it purported to achieve.²¹

The administration was equally concerned with the forced sale of farmland. President Rhee sent a message to the Speaker of the National Assembly on March 12, 1949, urging the National Assembly to pass a law to freeze temporarily the transaction of farmland until the land reform law was enacted.²²

The effort to prevent the forced sale of farmland persisted. During the second reading of the bill, it was

²⁰ Sokkirok, Second Regular Session, 52nd Plenary Session, pp. 24-25.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., p. 23.

again attempted by Assemblyman Hwang, Ho-hyun and eleven others to insert a clause prohibiting the forced transaction of land in the bill but their motion failed. They again attempted at the 86th plenary session of the second regular session to insert the clause, and it was finally adopted as a part of the addenda. The clause read as follows:

The following acts shall be prohibited after promulgation of this law:

1. Sale, purchase, or donation of farmlands not cultivated by himself. Provided donation to educational, charity, and other public organizations is exempted.

2. Changing or forcing to change tenants.

However, such acts as necessary for the enforcement of this law shall not be determined by the above clause.²³

The First Reading

The major provisions of the draft reported out of the Industrial Committee were as follows:

1. Government purchase of all privately owned land in excess of three chongbo.

2. The price of land is to be three hundred per cent of the average production of the main crop of the farmland and it is to be paid by the tillers in ten year period.

3. For the landowners whose farm lands are purchased pursuant to this law, the government may give them priority for participation in enterprises contributive to the development of national economy according to their wishes or abilities.

²³Article 27, Land Reform Law. For a full Korean text of Land Reform Law, see Hanguk Nongjong Yisimnyon Sa (Twenty Year History of Korean Agricultural Administration) (Seoul: Central Office of Korean Agricultural Cooperatives, 1965), pp. 686-688; for an English translation, see U.N. Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea, Report, New York, General Assembly, Official Records, Sixth Session, Supplement No. 12 (A/1881), 1951, pp. 49-51.

Among numerous differences, the major discrepancy between the original Ministry bill, the revised government bill and that of the Industrial Committee was the amount of compensation and mode of payment. The Committee draft raised the amount of compensation for landlords from the 150 percent of the Ministry bill and 200 percent of the revised Government bill to 300 percent. This sharp increase in compensation to landlords aroused intense objections among the assemblymen and especially among the So-jang-pa assemblymen who vehemently attacked the Committee as being a mere tool of the landlord interest. Many assemblymen expressed their grave concern and an alliance of a sort between some moderate rightists and leftists was formed to revise the bill, especially as to the amount of compensation to be paid to the landlords.

At the beginning of the first reading of the bill on March 10, 1949, the Chairman of the Industrial Committee, Suh, Sang-il,²⁴ took the podium and outlined the land reform

²⁴The chairman, Suh, Sang-il, was a member of the Hanguk Democratic Party which was considered as the landlords party. Born in Taegu and educated in law at Posong College in Seoul, he was a lawyer by profession and practiced law until 1945. After the liberation, he entered into politics. He was first elected as a member of the Interim Legislative Assembly during the United States Military Government in South Korea. With the establishment of the Republic of Korea, he ran for the National Assembly and was elected from the second district of Taegu. He was appointed as the chairman of the thirty-member Constitution Drafting Committee and thus played a vital role in drafting the first constitution of the Republic. He was an influential member of the National Assembly because of his appointment as the chairman

bill of the Industrial Committee. In explaining the basic philosophy of land reform, Chairman Suh stated that the historic task of land reform was to wipe out the remnants of the feudalistic tenancy system in Korea which was left by the stagnant autocracy of the Yi dynasty and Japanese colonialism. In order to eradicate the remaining vestiges of feudalism, he stated that the Industrial Committee had carefully deliberated in drawing up the land reform bill.

Chairman Suh further stated that the Committee was mindful of the constitutional guarantees regarding the private property system and those constitutional provisions dealing with the distribution of farm lands to farmers. As a result of this consideration, the Industrial Committee adopted a capitalistic method of land reform, that is, the purchase of farm lands by the government with compensation and distribution of it with a charge to the farmers. In addition, the Chairman added that the adoption of this capitalistic principle was also due to the consensus of the Committee that capitalism was the best means to achieve socioeconomic development in South Korea and the Committee believed that their draft bill was bound to encourage and

of the powerful Industrial Committee. However, from the beginning of 1950, his political influence gradually waned because he was not successful in returning to the National Assembly even though he ran for the National Assembly in 1950, 1954, and 1956. In the meantime, he split with the Hanguk Democratic party and launched a new party called the Democratic Reform party in 1954, but it was one of those splinter parties whose political role was insignificant and it eventually receded into oblivion.

assist the development of capitalism in Korea.²⁵

As noted, the most controversial feature of the Committee bill was the amount of compensation to be paid to the landlords. Thus, Chairman Suh was eager to explain the reasons why the amount of compensation was set at 300 percent of the annual crop, and the term of payment at ten years. In explaining the reasons for recommending this amount, the Chairman cited two major reasons. First, the then going rate of farm rent in South Korea was 30.0 percent of the annual crop. Therefore, the Committee decided that it would not be unfair to require the tenants to pay 30 percent of their annual crop for ten years in order to purchase the land. The second reason was an historical one, that is, during the U.S. Military Government's distribution of Japanese-owned land in South Korea, the National Land Administration of the U.S. Military Government had set the amount of compensation at 200 percent of the annual crop to be paid in fifteen years. Accordingly, the Committee had taken this precedent into consideration in determining the amount of compensation in the Committee bill.²⁶

However, a more general reason advanced by Chairman Suh was that the Committee draft was intended and designed to help both the landlords and tenants to realize their

²⁵Sokkirok, Second Regular Session, 50th Plenary Session, pp. 887-890.

²⁶Ibid.

Constitutional protections. In order to embody the Constitutional provisions, Suh stated that the Committee bill provided opportunity for landlords to participate in industries with the compensation they received in the form of government bonds, and the bill equally provided opportunity for the tenants to actually own land and thereby realize their age-long desire of becoming owner-farmers.²⁷

The major adversaries of the Committee bill were the So-jang-Pa assemblymen who were all strongly opposed to the Committee bill. The So-jang-Pa assemblymen were suspicious of the complicity between certain members of the assembly, especially of that between former members of the Korean Democratic Party and the landlord interest within and without the government. It was the opinion of the So-jang-Pa that the Committee bill reflected only the interests of the landlord class and not the majority of the farmers of Korea who had been suffering under abject tenancy conditions for centuries.

After the general explanation of the bill was given by Chairman Suh, Sang-il, the 50th, 52nd and 53rd meetings of the plenary session were devoted to dealing with general questions and answers regarding the bill. During these three sessions, a total of seventeen assemblymen took the podium and posed questions to the Chairman of the Industrial Committee. The major questions raised were with regard to

²⁷Ibid.

the size of the individual units of farmland to be distributed; government policy in the event of farm unemployment due to the land reform; the treatment of farmland owned by such non-profit organizations as educational and religious foundations; the amount of compensation for landlords and payment to be paid by the former tenants; the likely financial consequence on the general economy of the issuance of government bonds.

These questions were mainly answered by Chairman Suh and supplemented from time to time by assemblyman Cho, Hun-young, who was the second most important member of the Industrial Committee. Both of these men were former members of the Korea Democratic Party which was composed primarily of landlords and their sympathizers. These two men were the force behind the drawing up of the land reform bill which was reported out of the Industrial Committee to the plenary session. Throughout the question and answer period, both Suh and Cho attempted to defend the Committee bill.

As to the size of farmland to be distributed, there were varied opinions about it but the Committee bill set the upper limit at three chongbo. Certain assemblymen were concerned about the result of this three chongbo provision. According to the then available data, there was approximately two million two hundred twenty thousand chongbo of paddy and upland field in South Korea and there were about two million and sixty-five thousand farm households. If one farm household was to receive farmland up to three chongbo,

then two out of three farm households might have to be eliminated from the ranks of farmer.²⁸ Chairman Suh answered that some of the farmers who would have to leave on account of the land reform would hopefully be absorbed by the new industries which were to be stimulated by the investment of the former landlords. However, the real reason was, Chairman Suh claimed, that at least three chongbo is needed per farm household to maintain economic self-sufficiency.²⁹

The next important question was the treatment of farmland owned by educational and religious organizations. Some So-jang-Pa assemblymen felt that the special treatment of these organizations violated the basic spirit of land reform. However, Suh defended these organizations on the grounds that they must be given special treatment because they were sorely dependent on the income accrued from the farmlands they owned. Thus, the Chairman was of the opinion that the farmlands owned by these non-profit organizations must be treated differently.³⁰

According to the Committee bill, compensation was to be made by freely negotiable government guaranteed instruments. Some questions were raised regarding the possibility of inviting an inflationary tendency on account of the issuance of this type of government guaranteed instruments. Suh

²⁸Ibid., pp. 890-891.

²⁹Ibid., p. 891.

³⁰Ibid., p. 892.

and Cho were confident that they would not become the cause of inflation because the government would draw up the necessary regulations to avoid such an outcome.³¹ These questions were more fully treated during the second reading of the bill.

Of the seventeen interpellants, four belonged to the Independent Club; Laborers and Farmers party, two; Democratic Nationalist party, two; So-jang-Pa, which includes the members of Sung-in, Chung-koo and some Yee-jung associations, nine. It was interesting to note that the majority of critical interpellants were the So-jang-Pa members who were determined to undo the Committee bill from the outset. This point will become more salient during the discussion of the period of general debate on the Committee bill.

The 55th and 57th plenary sessions were assigned for general debate on the bill. There were a total of twenty-seven assemblymen who spoke on the merits and demerits of the Committee bill. Of twenty-seven speakers only two speakers explicitly supported the Committee bill, a few took rather ambiguous positions and the majority took an unequivocally critical view of the Committee bill.

At the outset of the general debate Kim, Byong-hoe, a member of So-jang-Pa who was subsequently arrested as a member of the Communist party cell in the National Assembly,

³¹Sokkirok, Second Regular Session, 52nd Plenary Session, pp. 30-32.

castigated the Committee bill as unfair to the tenants and unduly favorable to the landlords. He stated that the present bill should be called the "Land Disposal Bill" because it was designed to help landlords dispose of their lands on favorable terms. In substantiating his view, Kim stated that the amount of compensation to the landlords, which was set at 300 percent of the annual crop, was outrageous and that this fact alone unmistakably attested to the reality that the Committee drew up the bill to assist landlords to dispose of their farmland, rather than to reform the land system in South Korea.³²

Similar critical views were expressed by such assemblymen as Yi, Sung-hak, Cho, Kuk-hyon, Choe, Tae-kyu, Pak, Yun-won, Choe, Hun-kil, Kim, Tong-jun, Suh, Sun-yon, Noh, Il-whan and Cho, Bong-am, just to name a few. They unanimously denounced the Committee bill, especially with regard to the amount of compensation to be paid to the landlords. They were of the opinion that under the proposed provisions the farmers would never be able to improve their economic conditions, let alone their perpetual indebtedness.

Cho-Bong-am, the former Minister of Agricultural and Forestry Ministry and the author of the Ministry bill, stated that if the farmland was to be distributed at the price proposed by the Committee bill the farmers would prefer to

³²Sokkirok, Second Regular Session, 55th Plenary Session, pp. 78-79.

remain as tenants because they would be better off financially under the existing arrangement. If this was the case, he continued, then the proposed land reform, in fact, would become land reform in name only.³³ Certain So-jang-Pa assemblymen even proposed a scheme of purchasing farmlands with compensation and distributing the farmlands without charge to the actual tillers of land.

The Second Reading

The second reading of the bill commenced on April 1, 1949, at the 69th plenary session of the Second Regular Session of the National Assembly. As noted, during the first reading, the Committee bill was severely criticized especially by the So-jang-Pa and independent members of the National Assembly. During the second reading the bill confronted even more difficulties, because it was in the second reading that the bill was examined, clause by clause.

The Committee bill had six chapters and twenty-eight articles. Chapter one had four articles and dealt with general regulations. The first chapter was non-controversial and was passed with no revision. The second chapter was concerned with acquisition and compensation, and was the most controversial one, because it included Article 7, clause 1, which dealt with the amount of compensation and mode of payment. The original Article 7, clause 1, read as follows:

³³Sokkirok, Second Regular Session, 57th Plenary Session, pp. 124-25.

Each town (eup) and township (myon) shall select a middle class farmland of every description in the respective district and shall fix the common rate of compensation on the basis of 300 per cent of the average production of the main crop of the farmland. The amount of compensation for every individual farmland in the district shall be determined in accordance with the foregoing rate.³⁴

This clause was the most controversial one in the bill, because it was in this area that the interests of the landlords and the tenants were most sharply focused. As has been indicated, the assessment of compensation set at 300 percent of the annual crop had been considered by the majority of the National Assemblymen as too favorable to the landlords. Consequently, there were five proposals of revision submitted during the second reading of the bill. Briefly, these were, in addition to the Committee's proposal of 300 percent of annual crop, 100 percent, 120 percent, 125 percent, 150 percent and 200 percent.

The debate on Article 7, clause 1, took place at the 84th plenary session on April 25, 1949. Considering the seriousness of the issue and to avoid the possibility of parliamentary confusion, the National Assembly decided to take up the matter of method of voting, prior to voting on the amount of compensation. There were four proposals as to the method of voting:

1. a secret ballot with written choice of percentage.
2. an open ballot with written choice of percentage.
3. a standing vote.

³⁴Article 7, clause 1, Land Reform Law.

4. a standing vote from the smallest percentage proposed.

Of these four proposals the last one was adopted as the method of voting on Article 7, clause 1.³⁵

Having decided on the method of voting, the plenary session proceeded to vote from the smallest percentage proposed to the largest, and the result of the voting was as follows:

1. 100 percent--45 yeas and 11 nays out of 152 members present.
2. 120 percent--48 yeas and 3 nays out of 152 members present.
3. 125 percent--47 yeas and 3 nays out of 152 members present.
4. 150 percent--86 yeas and 3 nays out of 152 members present.³⁶

The passage of this revision from 300 percent to 150 percent of the annual crop as the amount of compensation was a great victory for the moderates in the National Assembly. Most of the So-jang-pa assemblymen supported the proposal of 100 percent of the annual crop as the amount of compensation, whereas most of the Democratic Nationalist party members preferred the Committee proposal of 300 percent.

One day after the decision on the amount of compensation was reached, Chung, Jun, an independent, at the beginning of the 85th plenary session suddenly introduced a motion proposing proceeding with the rest of the second reading of the bill with the omission of debate either pro or con on

³⁵Sokkirok, Second Regular Session, 82nd Plenary Session, pp. 667-673.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 673-74.

the original and revised bill. Chung's reason for the introduction of this motion was that unless the plenary session took extraordinary measures to pass the land reform bill, the National Assembly could not possibly pass the land reform bill within the second regular session which was coming close to the time of adjournment. He further reasoned that the National Assembly was yet to act on the next year's budget.³⁷

However, his motion was opposed by the So-jang-pa on the ground that the motion necessarily restricted the freedom of debate which, they felt, was imperative in deliberating an important bill such as the land reform bill. Despite the strenuous opposition of the So-jang-pa the motion carried by the vote of 58 yea, none nay, and 51 abstention out of 109 members present.³⁸

The proceedings in the plenary session were greatly simplified due to the passage of this motion. The plenary session proceeded in the following manner: the Speaker called upon the Chairman of the Industrial Committee to simply read the original article and the various revised proposals, and then the Speaker called on the assemblymen to vote starting with the proposed revisions. Under this kind of proceeding the revised proposals could not have a fair chance of being treated equally because the proposer

³⁷Sokkirok, Second Regular Session, 85th Plenary Session, p. 691.

³⁸Ibid., p. 695.

was neither able to explain his proposals nor answer questions.

The original bill, by contrast, had had the advantage of being considered already by the Committee. Accordingly, starting from Article 8, clause 2, only five revised proposals were passed, twenty-one revised proposals were defeated and twenty-seven original articles were passed. Due to the shortage of time the third reading was omitted and the land reform bill was haphazardly passed by the National Assembly on May 1, 1949.

The Disagreement Between the Executive and National Assembly

The second regular session of the National Assembly adjourned one day after the passage of the controversial land reform bill, which was then transmitted to the government for Presidential signature on May 2, 1949. At the adjournment ceremony of the National Assembly on May 2, 1949, President Rhee delivered a speech in which he complimented the National Assembly, among other things, on the passage of the land reform bill. President Rhee stated:

I know that all the people of Korea will welcome the passage of the land reform law. I also know that some people have been pessimistic about the bill but all their misgivings have been allayed now by your courageous action. The Communists have lost their cause for agitation among the farmers. I would like to compliment the National Assembly for its ceaseless effort in passing this bill. I have been of the opinion that the landlords should not be treated harshly. I am happy that the bill passed by the National Assembly is not at all one-sided but a well balanced one. Again, I would like to congratulate

the National Assembly on the passage of the land reform bill.³⁹

Despite the laudatory remarks made by President Rhee, the government found the bill unacceptable. Thus, on May 16, the executive returned the bill without veto but with suggestions for its amendment. The executive claimed that its action did not constitute a veto but the bill was in reality vetoed since the National Assembly was not in session to consider the government proposals for amendment.

As noted, the antagonism between the executive and legislative branches had been brewing for some time. The differences between the two branches had already surfaced over the National Traitors Law and Local Autonomy Law long before the Land Reform Law became an issue. Many reasons perhaps could be seen as contributing to this discord: a lack of democratic tradition, parliamentary experience, and jealousy between the two branches of government. However, one important reason may be the inherent confusion of the Korean political tradition. "The confusion of these three political traditions, the Chinese, the Korean, and the American, converging in the Assembly, intensified inefficiency and strife."⁴⁰

The executive's abrogation of the land reform bill aroused a great furor in the National Assembly and intense

³⁹Ibid., p. 832.

⁴⁰Henderson, op. cit., p. 256.

debate took place regarding the constitutionality of the action. The executive position was explained before the National Assembly by the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Lee, Chong-hyun, who stated that the executive did not have any intention of either repealing or delaying the promulgation of the land reform law. Since the National Assembly was not in session when the bill was returned to the National Assembly on May 16, the government regarded it necessarily abrogated. However, the Minister added that, in his view, the executive decision was within the purview of the constitution because the bill was returned within fifteen days as was stipulated in Article 40.⁴¹ Article 40 read as follows:

Bills passed by the National Assembly shall be sent to the government and the President, shall, within 15 days, promulgate the law. In case of objection, the President shall return the bill to the National Assembly for reconsideration with a statement of the reasons of his objections. If, in the presence of two thirds of the members duly elected and seated, the bill is confirmed on reconsideration by two thirds of the members present, such bill shall be determined to be a law. If a bill is not returned within 15 days after it has been presented to the government, the same shall become law. The President shall have the duty to proclaim without delay a law which has been determined under the foregoing paragraph. A law shall be effective twenty days after the date of proclamation unless otherwise stipulated.⁴²

⁴¹Sokkirok, Third Special Session (May 13, 1949-June 19, 1949), 13th Plenary Session, pp. 258-259.

⁴²Article 40, The Constitution of the Republic of Korea. For a full text of the Constitution, see Selected Laws and Regulations, pp. 1-20.

Two days after Minister Lee's explanation of the government's decision, Prime Minister Yi, Bom-suk, on May 18, issued an official statement to explain the reasons why the executive necessarily abrogated the land reform bill which was passed by the National Assembly after such arduous deliberation. The executive statement pointed out that the government had no wish to repeal the law, but merely to request the National Assembly to revise some obvious contradictions contained in the law which, the statement indicated, were the unintentional result of the hasty passage of the law due to the shortage of time. The executive statement further added that the executive had no intention of delaying the execution of the law. The executive was fully prepared to implement the bill as soon as it was revised by the National Assembly. Accordingly, the statement urged the National Assembly to act on the bill as soon as possible.⁴³

The executive's reasons for returning the land reform bill to the National Assembly were primarily because of objections to two features of the law: one was government subsidization of land distribution and the second was compensation to be given to the former landholders in the form of freely negotiable government bonds. Minister Lee, Chong-hyun explained that the government was not in a financial position to implement these features of the bill. In substantiating the general financial status of the government,

⁴³Dong-A Ilbo, May 19, 1949.

Minister Lee at the time of interpellation related a conversation he had had with the Minister of Finance, Kim, Do-yon, who expressed the view that the government was not in a position to assume the financial burden which would accrue from implementation of the land reform passed by the National Assembly.⁴⁴ According to Article 13, clause 1, the government was to purchase the land for 150 percent of the value of the average annual crop and distribute it to farmers for 125 percent of the same base. The bill also provided that 25 percent of the purchase price to poor farmers who received land allocation would be subsidized by the government. Article 7 further provided that small landlords, who sold land to the government, were to receive 30 percent additional compensation.

The other objectionable feature of the bill was the provision for compensation to be issued to the landowners in the form of freely negotiable government bonds. The government desired rather that the bonds not be freely negotiable but negotiable only for securing industrial investment. This position was taken supposedly in order to neutralize a source of inflation. However, this argument of the government was not convincing, considering the overall governmental economic policy as McCune commented:

It was true that the subsidy provisions of the Land Reform Act would impose an added inflationary

⁴⁴Sokkirok, Third Special Session, 13th Plenary Session, pp. 261-62.

burden upon public finances; yet at the same time the government showed singularly little inclination to abate the tide of deficit spending elsewhere.⁴⁵

In addition to these two points, some changes in wording were requested because there was much sloppy phrasing due to the unusual number of amendments proposed during the second reading of the bill.

However, the National Assembly received the government's decision differently. Although the National Assembly was in recess, Article 35 of the Constitution clearly provided a means for the President to request a special session. Since the President did not make use of this provision, his action could not be considered other than an exercise of veto power. Article 35 read as follows:

In case of an extraordinary necessity, the Speaker of the National Assembly shall summon a special session of the National Assembly upon the request of not less than one-fourth of the members of the National Assembly. The National Assembly shall convene immediately if there should arise a cause requiring the election of the President or Vice President during a recess of the National Assembly.⁴⁶

As might be expected, many of the So-jang-pa assemblymen took the lead in attacking the executive's decision to abrogate the land reform bill. The majority of the assemblymen felt that the government could have promulgated the law first if the government had really been interested in enacting the law, and then could have subsequently requested

⁴⁵McCune, op. cit., p. 139.

⁴⁶Article 35, The Constitution of the Republic of Korea. (First Republic)

the National Assembly to make the necessary revisions. The executive decision was seen, especially by the So-jang-pa assemblymen, as an action to delay the promulgation and implementation of the land reform law. Thus the So-jang-pa assemblymen found cause to criticize the action as disregarding the fervent and urgent demands of public opinion.

The executive's abrogation of the Land Reform Act was considered a direct affront to the National Assembly and, as has been indicated, the legality of the President's action was seriously questioned by the assemblymen. The National Assembly had been at odds with the President over many issues, such as the National Traitor's Law and the Local Autonomy Law. The controversy over the Land Reform Act added one more cause of friction between the executive and legislative branches of the government. Both branches blamed the other branch of government for delaying enactment of the land reform law.

The National Assembly generally held the view that the administration was using the delaying tactic because it was overwhelmingly influenced by the landlords and their sympathizers. Conversely, the administration believed that the National Assembly was using a delaying tactic. There seemed to be no collusion between the executive and sympathizers with the landlords in the National Assembly, but there appeared to be a common desire to make the land reform more beneficial to the landlords on the part of landlords and their sympathizers, both in the executive and in the

legislative branches of government. This was evidenced in the National Assembly debate. For instance, when assemblyman Shin, Sun-kyun, a member of the Dong-in Association who was subsequently arrested as a member of the Communist party cell in the National Assembly, proposed the extension of the second regular session for ninety more days, until July 29, 1949, the majority voted it down.⁴⁷ The ostensible reason for the extension of the session was that the National Assembly had yet to act upon many important matters such as the next year's budget, the Civil Service Act and a tax bill. But the real reason was to counterattack immediately in case the government vetoed the land reform bill. Shin was suspicious of the government's position on the land reform bill. The defeat of this motion can be interpreted as a mild form of delaying tactic used by the landlords and their sympathizers.

After a heated debate on the legality and propriety of the President's action, the National Assembly finally voted on a motion on June 15, 1949, which read as follows:

It is so moved that the government's abrogation of land reform law is illegal. The land reform law so passed by the National Assembly constitutes a law according to Article 40 of the Constitution. Thus, the National Assembly decides that the law be re-transmitted to the government.⁴⁸

⁴⁷Sokkirok, Second Regular Session, 88th Plenary Session, pp. 737-738; 743.

⁴⁸Sokkirok, Third Special Session, 17th Plenary Session, p. 376.

This motion was passed by a vote of 97 yeas and 19 nays out of 153 members present.⁴⁹ Having decided to send back the land reform bill to the government for promulgation, the National Assembly on the same day also charged the Industrial Committee to study the points which were raised by the government as unfeasible and inconsistent in the land reform bill. Thus, when the bill was retransmitted to the government, it was finally promulgated as law No. 31 on June 21, 1949.

The Revision of the Land Reform Bill

As noted, after many twists and turns the land reform law was finally promulgated as law No. 31 on June 21, 1949. However, the law needed considerable changes in the wording of the text. The law contained certain obvious flaws; that is, there were a few self-contradictory clauses and some sloppy phrasing. This was due to its hasty passage. In addition, the omission of a third reading and submission of an unusual number of amendments during the second reading of the bill all contributed to producing certain deficiencies in the text of the bill. Even before the promulgation of the land reform law, the executive expressed its opposition to certain features of the law; thus revision of the law was necessary as soon as it was promulgated. Almost simultaneously with the promulgation of the law, four

⁴⁹Ibid.

amending bills were submitted to the National Assembly. These bills were submitted by the government, assemblyman Yi, In and ten others, assemblyman Whang, Ho-hyun and thirty others and assemblyman Yi, Won-hong and ten others.⁵⁰

The Industrial Committee was once again charged with the task of deliberating and drawing up the revised bill to be submitted to the plenary session of the National Assembly. The Industrial Committee's revised bill was drawn up in December, 1949, and it was introduced in the 17th plenary session of the sixth regular session of the National Assembly on January 28, 1950.

The first reading of the bill was prefaced by a general explanation of the Committee's revised bill by the proxy of the Chairman of the Industrial Committee, Yi, Byong-kwan, a member of the Democratic Nationalist party. However, the first reading was quickly by-passed because the majority of the assemblymen felt that they had spent sufficient time debating the land reform law in April. Thus, the National Assembly decided to proceed immediately to the second reading of the bill, omitting the first reading stage.

The revised bill submitted by the Industrial Committee was a rather extensive one containing fifteen articles. The most important amendments were: first, a proposal to increase the amount of compensation to landlords from 150

⁵⁰Sokkirok, Sixth Regular Session, 17th Plenary Session, p. 336.

percent of the annual crop to 240 percent, and to extend the term of payment from five to eight years; second, a proposal to abolish the subsidy clause which provided a government subsidy of 25 percent to tenants and 30 percent to small landlords, thereby making the amount of payment the same as the amount of compensation for the farmland; and third, a proposal to change the form of compensation from freely negotiable government instruments to Government Land Certificates which could be loaned under government guarantee.

As noted, even prior to the promulgation of the land reform law, the government was opposed to the subsidy clause in the law. According to the land reform law, the government was to purchase the land for 150 percent of the value of the annual crop and distribute it to farmers for 125 percent of the same base. The difference was to be assumed by the government. However, the government expressed the unfeasibility of this clause and stated that this subsidy clause imposed too severe a financial burden on the newly established government. The Prime Minister, Yi Bum-suk, the Finance Minister, Kim Do-yon, and the Agricultural and Forestry Minister, Yi, Chong-hyun all expressed the opinion that it would be very difficult for the government to bear this kind of financial burden.⁵¹

⁵¹Sokkirok, Sixth Regular Session, 21st Plenary Session, pp. 432-434.

Finance Minister Kim, during the interpellation, stated that the total revenue from the sale of farmlands to the tenants was expected to be around 63,200,000,000 Won and the total amount of compensation to be paid to the landlords would be around 75,800,000,000 Won. The difference between these two figures came to 12,648,000,000 Won, which under the law had to be borne by the government. Finance Minister Kim emphatically stressed that this figure was a staggering financial responsibility to be assumed by a new government.⁵² The National Assembly, after hearing the views of these three government officials, passed a motion to rescind the subsidy clause and make the amount of payment the same as the amount of compensation.

The executive request to revise certain features of the law did not include any change in the amount of compensation to the landlords. However, the landlord interests in the Industrial Committee seized the opportunity and once again succeeded in passing an increase in the amount of compensation in the revised bill. It was generally expected that the revised bill would mainly include the elimination of the subsidy clause and when the assemblymen learned that the revised bill included an increase in the amount of compensation it came as a great surprise. This amendment, in fact, shocked many assemblymen because the point had been thoroughly debated in April and the figure of 150 percent

⁵²Ibid., pp. 434-435.

was decided after lengthy and sufficient deliberation. Here again, it was evidenced that the Industrial Committee was persistent in attempting to promote the interest of landlords. It was originally proposed by Yi, In, who was one of the leading members of the Democratic Nationalist party and a former member of the Korea Democratic party which was known as the party of landlords. Yi, In was elected to the National Assembly through the by-election of March 30, 1949.

Once again the problem of compensation became a bone of contention. In the meantime, an amendment was introduced by assemblyman Park, Hae-kuk of the Democratic Nationalist party to increase the amount of compensation from 150 percent of the annual crop to 200 percent. According to Park, this was a compromise figure between the two proposals of 240 percent and 150 percent. In explaining his proposal, Park stated that the land reform law should be fair to both landlords and tenants and 200 percent would be a fair amount for both parties concerned.⁵³

After a heated debate this amendment was put to a vote at the 19th plenary session on January 31, 1950. The proposal for 200 percent was defeated by a vote of 45 yeas and 79 nays out of 146 members present. The proposal of the Industrial Committee setting the amount of compensation at 240 percent of the annual crop was also defeated by a vote

⁵³Sokkirok, Sixth Regular Session, 19th Plenary Session, pp. 395-96.

of 10 yeas and 81 nays.⁵⁴ Thus the amount of compensation was set at 150 percent of the annual crop and survived the last ditch attempt by some of the members of the Democratic Nationalist party to increase the amount of compensation to the landlords. It has been reported that the survival of the figure of 150 percent was possible because a conference of leaders of the Korea Nationalist party, which was the largest party in this period of the first National Assembly, decided to side with the forces which supported the 150 percent compensation.⁵⁵

Having decided the most controversial proposal, the rest of the debate proceeded rather smoothly and at the 20th plenary session on February 2, 1950, the National Assembly decided to omit the third reading. Thus the revised bill was passed and it was transmitted to the government. The revised land reform law was promulgated as law No. 108 on March 10, 1950, and thus concluded the legislative drama of the land reform law.

Basic Contents of the Land Reform Law

At last, ten months after the establishment of the Republic of Korea, the Land Reform Law was enacted on June 21, 1949, and amended on March 10, 1950. The Land Reform Law consisted of six chapters and twenty-nine articles.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 399.

⁵⁵Seoul Shinmun, January 31, 1950.

The Purpose. The basic purpose of the Land Reform Law was stated in Article 1 as follows:

The basic purpose of this law is, on the basis of the Constitution, to secure the independence of farmers' economy by appropriate distribution of farmlands among the farmers, and thus to improve the farmers' living conditions, keep the balance of, and develop, the national economy by increasing agricultural productivity.⁵⁶

This was the basic economic objective of the law. Although the political and social purposes of the law were not actually spelled out in the text of the law, it was expected to achieve both political and social objectives. A close examination of the debate undertaken in the National Assembly over land reform indicates that the primary political purpose was the establishment of a sound democratic foundation in South Korea by elevating the majority of farmers to the position of a viable middle class through substantial land reform. It was also expected to strengthen political legitimacy, to maintain political stability and to eliminate the major source of rural political unrest. The social objectives were closely intertwined with the political aims. The law was to help destroy the semifeudalistic social system and aid in the construction of a new egalitarian and open social system where master-servant relations would be replaced by representative-citizen relations.

The Land Committee. In addition to specifying the purpose of land reform, the first chapter also stipulated

⁵⁶Land Reform Law (see Appendix B), Article 1.

the organization of Land Committees as the major instruments of the implementation of the law as follows:

In order to facilitate the operation of this law, land committees, hereinafter referred to as "the committees," shall be organized in the capital, and in each province (do), county (gun) and city (shi), ward (ku), town (eup) and township (myun), dong and li.⁵⁷

The organization and duties of the Land Committees were subsequently spelled out in the Regulations on Land Committees (Presidential Decree No. 275) which was promulgated on February 10, 1950. According to Article 1 of the Regulations on Land Committees, the land committees were to be organized on five administrative levels. Article 3 of the Regulations stipulated:

The chairmanship of eup or myun and upper land committees shall be assumed by the heads of the respective administrative organs and the chairmanship of dong and li land committees by competent precinct-chiefs. The members of the committees shall be appointed from among impartial, and unselfish officials and private citizens who are members of land committees in each ku, shi, gun, eup and myun, shall be former landholders whose land was purchased, and one-half shall be persons receiving land under the law.⁵⁸

The primary duties of the Land Committees were to assist the government in appraising the purchased farmlands and in arbitrating the disagreements arising in the course of enforcing the law. The duties of respective land committees were spelled out in Articles 8, 9 and 10 of the Regulations on Land Committees.⁵⁹

⁵⁷Ibid., Article 4.

⁵⁸For a full text of Regulations on Land Committees, see U.N. Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea, Report, New York, General Assembly, Official Records, Sixth Session, Supplement No. 12 (A/1881), 1951, pp. 52-56.

⁵⁹Ibid.

Acquisition of Land. In regard to the acquisition of land, the Land Reform Law stipulated first that the following types of farmland were to be possessed by the government:

- a. Farmlands confiscated or owned by the government pursuant to law or treaty;
- b. Farmlands the ownership of which is in doubt.⁶⁰

Second, the same article defined also the type of farmland to be purchased by the government. They were:

- a. Farmlands owned by those who are not farming families;
- b. Farmlands which are not personally tilled; provided that, in case of land owner is obliged to abstain from farming temporarily on account of illness, public duties, studying, or other unavoidable circumstances, the head of shi or gun may permit him to retain the farmland for a specified period of time with the concurrence of the competent land committee;
- c. The area of farmland which exceeds the limit provided in this law;
- d. Farmlands for non-perennial plantation owned by a person who also personally operates more than three chongbo of lands for perennial plantation such as orchards, sapling gardens and mulberry fields.⁶¹

Third, the Law specified those farmlands which were not subjected to government purchase. There were a total of nine categories of land which were excluded from government possession and purchase. To name just a few, they were such farmland as owner operated farmland; farmland of officially approved schools, religious organizations or welfare institutions; tidal land or reclaimed farmland after the enforcement of the Land Reform Law.⁶²

⁶⁰Land Reform Law, Article 5, Clause 1, a and b.

⁶¹Ibid., Article 5, Clause 2, b, c and d.

⁶²Ibid., Article 6, Clauses 1 through 9.

Compensation to Landowners. The government purchase price of the farmland was to be appraised by the local land committees as 150 percent of average annual yield of the main crop of the farmland. Compensation was to be made in government land certificate to the landowner or to his agent. If the owner wished to invest the certificate in industry, the government was to give him priority for participation in enterprises contributing to the development of the national economy. The face value of the government land certificate was to indicate the amount of the main crop of the land for the current year. The certificates were to be redeemed by yearly installments spread over five years at one fifth of the face value each year in cash calculated at the legal price of the agricultural product.⁶³

Distribution of Farmlands to Tenants. Farmlands were to be distributed to actual farming families according to the priority set as follows:

- a. Farming families who are cultivating the farmlands at present;
- b. Farmers who cultivate farmlands small in area compared with their farming potentiality;
- c. The families of those who have died for this country; if they have experience in the management of a farm;
- d. Employed farmers' families (farm labourers) who are capable of farming;
- e. Farming families repatriated from foreign countries.⁶⁴

⁶³Ibid., Articles 7, 8, 9 and 10.

⁶⁴Ibid., Article 11, Clause 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

As to the methods of payment, the farmland purchasers were to pay to the government an amount equal to the amount of compensation for the landowners by yearly installments spread over five years.⁶⁵

Term of Purchase. In order to safeguard the objectives of land reform, certain prohibitive clauses were inserted in the law. Until payment was completed, sale of the farmland, transfer of ownership and creation of a mortgage on the land was not allowed. In addition, acts of tenancy, lease or cultivation of farmlands by proxy were prohibited. Finally, in case of failure of payment without due reason, the government was to institute a lawsuit in the court in order to repossess the farmland.⁶⁶

Implementation of Land Reform Law

While the dispute between the executive and the legislature was raging over the land reform law, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, in anticipation of the impending promulgation of the law, undertook a nation-wide farm household survey as a preparatory measure to obtain the basic information necessary for its implementation. The survey was begun in June, 1949, and was completed in December of the same year. The survey was designed to glean such information as the acreage of farmland cultivated by tenants,

⁶⁵Ibid., Article 13, Clause 1, 2 and 3.

⁶⁶Ibid., Article 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21.

the number of tenant farmers who also owned farmland, and the number of independent farmers; the amount of agricultural yield per acre; the number of people in each farm household and the number of people in each farm household who were able to work; the extent of possession of farm tools, etc.

The findings of the survey which were made public on December 21, 1949, showed that the total farmland subject to purchase by the government amounted to 601,048 chongbo or 29.5 percent of the nation's total farmland. However, if vested land was included, the total land subject to distribution came to 833,881 chongbo, or 40.2 percent of the total farmland in South Korea.⁶⁷ The tenant farm households which were to receive farmland numbered 526,195 farm households, or 21 percent of the nation's total farm households.⁶⁸

As was pointed out, the Land Reform Law was promulgated on June 21, 1949, but it took almost one year to implement it, quite contrary to what Minister Lee stated at the time of the promulgation of the law. He optimistically proclaimed that land distribution would be completed by the end of 1949.⁶⁹ This delay could be attributed to the disputes between the executive and the legislature. Henderson observed that when the National Assembly did override the

⁶⁷Hanguk Nongjong Yisimnyon Sa, op. cit., p. 97.

⁶⁸Nongji Kaehyuk Sa, op. cit., p. 494.

⁶⁹Tong-a Ilbo, June 22, 1949.

Presidential veto, the President delayed land reform until May, 1950, a year later.⁷⁰ Sidney Klein, however, has suggested that the reason for the delay was the sabotage of the representatives of the landlords within the executive branch of government.⁷¹

However, a close examination of Sokkirok suggests that the legislature was more responsible for this delay. As was seen in the previous section, the landlord interest, especially in the Industrial Committee of the National Assembly, attempted to delay the proceeding of the revision of the law by recommending an increase in the price of land from 150 percent to 240 percent of the annual crop.

Although President Rhee was angered by the National Assembly's overriding of his veto, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry submitted the land reform budget in December, 1949. It was not passed by the National Assembly until March 10, 1950. While the revision of land reform law was being debated in the National Assembly the government took the necessary steps in making itself ready by promulgating the Regulations on Land Committees on February 10, 1950, which was an important ordinance in implementing the law as noted above. Soon after the revised land reform law was finally promulgated as law No. 108 on March 10, 1950, the government promulgated an ordinance on the enforcement of

⁷⁰Henderson, op. cit., p. 258.

⁷¹Klein, op. cit., p. 104.

the land reform--Application of the Land Reform Law (Presidential Decree No. 294). Thus by June, despite repeated attempts to delay the implementation of the law, the government was ready to carry out the historic land reform in South Korea.

When land reform was about to be carried out, the Korean war broke out in June, 1950, and consequently the implementation of the land reform law had to be postponed until the end of the war, except in Kyongsang Namdo which was not occupied by the enemy. The impact of the Korean war was detrimental to the land distribution project because valuable documents and records necessary for the implementation of land reform were destroyed. Despite almost insurmountable difficulties, the South Korean government reinstated the land reform project after the recapture of Seoul and other territory of South Korea in September, 1950.

Although the war was still going on, as of February of 1952, 331,766 chongbo of farmland was distributed to 918,548 farm households and their payment amounted to 11,587,795 sok in terms of unhulled rice.⁷² Despite various shortcomings and obstacles, land reform was formally completed by 1951.

Up to this point, this chapter dealt first with the legislative struggle between the conservative and liberal forces in the National Assembly; second, it dealt with the

⁷²Pak and others, op. cit., p. 83.

causes of friction between the administration and legislature revolving around the land reform; and third, it treated the content of land reform law and its implementation. It is appropriate at this juncture to examine the interrelationship or lack of it between the parliamentary parties and the political organizations outside the National Assembly. There was virtually a total lack of meaningful interaction or linkage between the parliamentary parties and political groups outside of the National Assembly. There were several reasons which could be attributed to this.

Upon the liberation of Korea in August, 1945, there emerged more than three hundred political parties and interest groups in South Korea. Most of these political organizations were in name only. They came and went easily and none was able to attract more than a small knot of followers. Because most of the political organizations were ephemeral in their existence there was very little opportunity for the parliamentary parties to establish an organic relationship with the parties outside the National Assembly.

Under such circumstances it was very difficult for these political parties and interest groups to perform a vital function, such as interest articulation, interest aggregation or support aggregation. The South Korean society of 1948 was not conducive to the development of linking organizations such as political parties and interest groups to channel political activities and build political consensus. Under such a situation, the interest articulation

and interest aggregation functions were performed instead by the bureaucracy and individual National Assemblymen respectively.

There was another factor which contributed to the non-cooperation between the parliamentary parties and non-parliamentary parties. As was shown by the result of the first general election of 1948, the majority of successful candidates owed very little to any party or interest groups but to their own effort and ability. Thus, there was no impending reason for the parliamentary parties to establish any kind of link with the political organizations outside of the National Assembly. In the same vein, the political organizations outside the National Assembly were not able to exercise their influence upon the parliamentary parties. As noted, the numerous organizational metamorphosis which took place within the National Assembly was a case in point that the parliamentary parties were insulated from the parties outside of the National Assembly. If the parliamentary parties had been an extension of the parties outside of the National Assembly they could not have dispersed and regrouped so readily.

It is important to note that unlike certain countries in Latin America, the land reform in South Korea was not a controversial issue and it did not agitate the entire society in implementing land reform. Although some differences existed between the parties of right and left as to the means of achieving it, there was a general consensus as

to the desirability of land reform. Of course, the absence of bitter opposition to land reform was not because of the political parties and interest groups who were able to channel the political activities and build political consensus, but it was because of the general mood of South Korea which opposed the continuation of the anachronistic land tenure system in South Korea. It is significant to note that the general consensus and an absence of bitter opposition to land reform affected negatively the interrelationship between the parliamentary parties and political groups outside of the National Assembly. In view of the absence of opposition to land reform the parliamentary parties did not see the need for an extensive coalition building. Thus the struggle between the conservative and liberal was fought out within the National Assembly without any support or opposition of the political organizations outside of the National Assembly.

Although there were no clear-cut coalitions either for or against land reform, there was a semblance of coalition: the Democratic Nationalist party which was aligned with the propertied class and the liberal forces in the National Assembly which coalesced with the liberal urban intellectuals. However, there was no serious attempt on either side to mobilize landowners or tenant farmers to mount pressure on the lawmakers.

This lack of linkage once again attests to the nature of clientelist politics which prevailed in the

postwar period of South Korean politics. As noted, although all the South Koreans were fully franchised and became equal before the law by 1948, nevertheless, in rural areas the great discrepancy between the "haves" and "have nots" in terms of economic and social and political status and influence tenaciously persisted, which in fact provided necessary conditions for the emergence of clientelist politics. Under such a situation, the clientelism provided the basis, in the rural areas, for a network of reciprocities between patron-client, which in turn contributed in weakening and atrophying an organic interaction between the parliamentary parties and political organizations outside of the National Assembly.

Chapter 6

THE POLITICAL EFFECTS OF LAND REFORM

It has been stated that land reform is a multi-faceted policy aiming at the achievement of social, economic and political objectives. Although it may not be easy to separate the political effects of land reform from that of social and economic results this chapter will attempt to focus mainly on the political effects of land reform in South Korea by using both survey and aggregate data. It would be appropriate to review the objectives of land reform before assessing the political effects of land reform.

THE OBJECTIVES OF LAND REFORM

There are three major objectives of land reform, namely: social, economic and political objectives. This section will review what these objectives were in the South Korean context.

Social Objectives

Korea has generally been considered a homogeneous society in terms of language, religion and ethnic make-up. The Koreans have one common language and a common national history. Religion has had no divisive effect upon the Korean society. Henderson observed that "deep religious

differences, such as have divided so many nations and influenced their political development, have had no effect on Korea."¹ Despite such homogeneity, there have developed certain social differences especially between the urban and rural areas. This difference has been primarily based on education and wealth which in turn basically stemmed from the inequity of land ownership and control. Accordingly, there appeared a distinction between the lower status landless farmers and higher status landlords which generally corresponded with the Yangban-Sangmin distinction of the Yi society.²

The primary social objective of land reform was to break down the social differences by removing the unjust land ownership system. Land reform in South Korea was initiated to wipe out the inequity of land ownership and thereby enhance the social status of landless farmers; open up the channels of social mobility; and increase personal independence and individualism among the landless farmers who were hitherto considered inferior and subordinate to the landlords.

Economic Objectives

Economically speaking, there were numerous objectives.

¹Henderson, op. cit., p. 19.

²For a study of Yangban system in the Yi dynasty, see Yi Sang-baek, Hanguk Sa Kunse Chongi Pyon (Korean History: Early Modern Times) (Seoul: Ulyu Munwha Sa, 1962), pp. 303-310; see also Henderson, op. cit., pp. 36-55.

Briefly, it was first supposed to improve the economic conditions of landless farmers by eliminating the unjust and irrational tenancy system; second, to increase agricultural productivity by providing them with the incentive of ownership of their very own land; third, to facilitate the formation of industrial capital and development of industry by providing opportunities for the landowners to invest in industry with the compensation they received from the government for their lands; fourth, to facilitate the movement of workers from the rural to urban industrial centers.

Political Objectives

The political objectives were numerous. Perhaps one of the most important political objectives was the establishment of a firmer democratic foundation in South Korea by creating a viable middle class out of the former landless farmers. The second objective was to strengthen the legitimacy of the newly established government in the eyes of the farmers by initiating programs which could substantially alter favorably the socioeconomic conditions of farmers.

The third political objective was to eliminate the sources of political unrest in rural areas of South Korea by distributing land to the actual tillers. To put it differently, the land reform was expected to serve as a means to bring about political stability in South Korea. As noted, the U.S. Military Government in South Korea initiated a series of agricultural policies to alleviate the abject

economic conditions of South Korean farmers but the discontent and dissatisfaction of South Korean farmers were too deep to be satisfied by anything less than a substantial land reform.

From 1945 to 1948, South Korea experienced acute rural unrest. For instance, Cholla province, where the tenancy rate was the highest, witnessed serious rural disturbances both spontaneous and communist-instigated. Such chaotic conditions could easily undo any government and eventually develop into anti-system protest. Thus, it was an urgent political necessity for the South Korean government to initiate a substantial land reform for the very survival of the new government.

Certainly, these three political aims of land reform are interdependent, as Tuma observed: "A stable democracy is by definition legitimate, as also legitimacy of any political system implies its stability."³ This interdependence poses a problem in the analysis of the political effects of land reform. However, a more difficult problem would be agreement on the meaning of these terms. In this chapter, these three terms are used in the following limited sense.

Briefly, "democracy" means a system in which a viable middle class exists and can exercise a significant influence upon the decision-making process of the country. It is also implicitly assumed that when the tenant farmers

³Tuma, op. cit., p. 211.

were converted into owner-farmers, they would eventually develop into a main part of the middle class in South Korea. "Political legitimacy" is used here as the citizens' acceptance that the leaders are legitimately chosen and are governing legitimately. "Political stability" is used here to mean the absence of revolution, the lack of continual constitutional revision, the absence of organized anti-system protest, the absence of extra-constitutional changes of government and lack of institutional and governmental ineffectiveness.⁴

THE CAUSES OF RURAL UNREST

As has been suggested, during the U.S. Military Government in South Korea there were numerous internal violence factors, as Cole and Lyman observed:

. . . there was a general decline in economic, political, and social order, especially in the period 1946-1948, leading to increases in crime, gang warfare, political assassinations, violent strikes, and ultimately a communist-inspired military uprising in 1948
 . . .⁵

However, one of the most acute problems was the discontent of the landless farmers stemming from prolonged injustice imposed on them throughout the Yi dynasty and the Japanese colonial administration.

⁴Robert J. Jackson and Michael B. Stein, Issues in Comparative Politics (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971), p. 196.

⁵David C. Cole and Princeton N. Lyman, Korean Development: The Interplay of Politics and Economics (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 18.

As noted, despite the efforts of the U.S. Military Government in South Korea, rural unrest was rampant in the period 1945-1948 and the newspapers of this period were replete with accounts of riots in the rural areas.⁶ The peasant disturbances were reported to be very acute and serious. There were three primary causes of rural unrest in postwar South Korea. These were inequity of land ownership, Communist agitation in the rural areas and the revolution of "rising expectations."

Inequity of Land Ownership

The landless farmers had long been subjected to severe economic exploitation. There were extreme disparities in socioeconomic status, standard of living and political power between the landlords and the landless farmers primarily due to the inequities in ownership and control of land. This inequity constituted the most important reason for rural unrest. As this point has been dealt with in previous chapters, the elaboration of it is omitted in this section.

Absence of Formal Farmers' Political Organization

The rural unrest was aggravated by Communist agitation in the rural areas. It is appropriate here to explain

⁶See, Tong-A Ilbo, August 21, 1946, which reported the tenants revolt in Wha-sun and Kimje and other areas of both North and South Cholla provinces; see also Tong-A Ilbo, September 12, 1946.

why the Communists were more successful in mobilizing peasants than were the non-communist politicians. The major reason for this was that there was a total absence of formal peasant political organization, which provided a golden opportunity for the Communists to maneuver among the disgruntled farmers in South Korea.

As will be discussed in the following section, the Japanese colonial administration suppressed all political organization of the peasantry in Korea and the policy was successfully enforced. The success of the Japanese policy of suppression resulted in the complete emaciation of the non-communist oriented peasant organizations and, in addition, the forcing of the Communists underground, where they kept alive, though weakened, until the collapse of Japanese colonial rule in Korea. This absence of peasant political organization provided a splendid opportunity for the Communists to penetrate into the rural areas after liberation. It was possible because as Sloan observed:

The Left in South Korea was far ahead of the other political camps in organizational and propaganda abilities. On the foundations of the Communist underground, created in the decades preceding the Liberation, a People's Republic was established, even before the arrival of the American forces.⁷

The reasons for the Communist advantage over the non-Communist forces can perhaps best be clarified by examining

⁷Justin Sloan, "The Communist Effort in South Korea, 1945-1948" (unpublished Master's thesis, Northwestern University, 1949), p. 159.

the historical background of farmers' organizations in Korea and their demise at the hands of Japanese colonial administration. Throughout the Yi dynasty and the Japanese colonial period there were no formal political organizations representing the political interests of the landless farmers of Korea. Although the farmers took part in such historical revolts as the Tonghak, the Korean farmers were neither mobilized nor organized politically.

However, during the 1920's and early 1930's there were sporadic attempts made by the Communist party to penetrate into the rural areas and organize the Korean peasantry. The Communists attempted to cause serious tenancy disputes in order to disrupt the Japanese colonial administration. However, the Communists' efforts were not successful; as Suh observed: "It was not until . . . after the world economic crisis of the late twenties--that Korean laborers and peasants responded to the Communists. Even then they were not led by the Communists."⁸

During the same period, as opposing to the Communist underground movement, there appeared a moderate Nationalist Reformist group calling itself Minjok Kaeryang Chu-i-ja (Nationalist Reformist) led mainly by the Posong group. They were primarily concerned with the awakening of the Korean people to their national consciousness by promoting and encouraging various reforms from the old ways, within

⁸Suh, Dae-suk, op. cit., p. 139.

the limits of Japanese control.⁹ More specifically, after March 1, 1919, nation-wide demonstration against the Japanese colonial rule, there appeared numerous private groups which were primarily interested in promoting improvement in the economic and social conditions of Korean farmers. There were three major groups which sponsored the cooperative movement, namely: the Korean student group in Japan, the Chondo (Heavenly Way) religious group and a Christian group.

The Korean Student Group. Those Korean students who were studying in Japan, realizing that the Korean farmers were being subjected to severe economic exploitation by the Japanese colonial regime, decided to launch a cooperative movement as one means to rescue the Korean farmers from economic subjugation. In order to accomplish this objective they established the Hyopdong Chohap Undong Sa (Cooperative Movement Incorporated) in Tokyo in 1926. They also published an organ entitled "Chosen Keizai" (Korean Economy) to propagate their aims and views and also to enlighten and awaken the social and political consciousness of the Korean farmers.¹⁰

⁹ Ibid., pp. 57-58; the Posong group was started and led by Kim, Sung-su and whose members were mainly of the landlords from Cholla province. The Posong group became the nucleus of the Korean Democratic Party (Hanguk Miju Dang).

¹⁰ Hanguk Nongjong Yisimnyon Sa (The Twenty Year Administrative History of Korean Agriculture), op. cit., p. 392.

In 1927, several of the members of this organization came to North Kyongsang province to conduct a series of enlightening lectures and to size up the situation in order to plan their future projects inside Korea. The lecture tour was fairly successful and they were convinced that they could contribute a great deal toward enhancing the farmers' economic conditions. Accordingly, in 1928, the Cooperative Movement Incorporated moved its head office from Tokyo to Seoul and expanded their activities into South Chungchong, North and South Kyongsang provinces. By 1928, they had established twenty-two cooperatives comprising about five thousand members. Although this movement was enthusiastically received by certain farmers, the movement suffered a serious setback by 1930 because most of the key officers of head office had been accused of being socialists and were jailed by the Japanese authorities. Thus, the organization was forced to cease operations in 1933.¹¹

The Chondo Group. The Chondo religious group started a cooperative movement in 1925 primarily for the welfare of its members. The Chondo cooperatives were mostly active in South Hamkyong and North Pyongan provinces of North Korea. However, the Chondo cooperative movement met the same fate as the student cooperative movement because the movement was naturally considered a nationalistic one by the Japanese authority. In addition to Japanese pressure, the

¹¹Ibid.

cooperatives were faced with a perennial shortage of capital, and continued business failure due to the lack of management know-how, which eventually brought the end of the Chondo cooperative movement in the early 1930's.¹²

The Christian Group. The Christian churches launched a cooperative movement about the same time as the other groups. The Christians organized their cooperatives through the Seoul YMCA in 1925. They were very successful and by the early 1930's they were able to organize one hundred cooperatives. However, in 1933 when Japanese Governor General Ugaki started the so-called Noson Shinko Undo (Rural Community Development Movement) the cooperatives were forcefully absorbed into it and by 1937 all cooperatives had been dissolved in Korea.¹³

All these private efforts to organize the Korean farmers were very small in scale, and never succeeded in organizing the entire population of farmers in Korea. They were basically non-political moderate reformist movements. However, the Japanese colonial administration succeeded in organizing the Korean farmers into a nation-wide organization for different reasons. The Japanese Government-General created the Chosen Nokai (Korean Agricultural Association) in March, 1926, which was accomplished by the amalgamation of various agricultural extension services then in existence

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

in Korea. The primary function of this association was to promote agricultural productivity through the improvement of farm tools, improvement of cultivation methods, proper use of fertilizer and encouragement of stock-farms.¹⁴

Another organization created by the Japanese authority was the Chosen Kinyu Kumiai Kyokai (Federation of Financial Association) which was established in 1928.¹⁵ Its basic function was, as its name implies, to provide agricultural credit to the members for the purpose of improvement of farm tools, change of seeds, and purchase of fertilizer. Virtually all Korean farmers belonged to one or both of the associations. These associations were not at all "voluntary organizations," aimed at the promotion of members' interest, but were rather there to fulfill the objectives of colonial government. They were nothing but "transmission belts."

Communist Agitation in the Rural Areas

The liberation of Korea ushered in a period of frenzied political activity among the Koreans and the farmers were no exception. The most powerful political organization in South Korea was the "People's Republic" which was controlled by the forces of the leftists and communists and held unquestioned hegemony, especially in rural areas. In December, 1945, under the aegis of the "People's Republic,"

¹⁴Ibid., p. 432.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 345.

the first leftist controlled nation-wide farmers' organization called Chonkuk Nongmin Chong Yonmeng (All-Korea Union of Farmers Association) was created claiming about three million members (including membership in North and South Korea) which advocated:

Confiscation and free distribution of former Japanese land and land of national traitors; land distribution conducted by local farmers unions in conjunction with the Military government and local People's Committee.¹⁶

The All-Korea Union of Farmers Association not only made lavish promises to the farmers but also incited riots against the U.S. Military Government in South Korea. The Union advocated a sweeping land reform which was analogous to that advocated by the North Korean Communists. Thus, the Union instigated the South Korean farmers to oppose and obstruct the agricultural policies of the U.S. authority including the rice collection program and the land sale program. This union was eventually suppressed by the U.S. authority like other leftist and communist organizations. By early 1947 the Union went underground with other communist organizations in South Korea.¹⁷ However, its influence in the rural areas lingered on until the outbreak of the Korean war in June, 1950. The danger of joining the peasant rebellion with the urban uprising was a real possibility in

¹⁶Sloan, op. cit., p. 90; see also Tong-A Ilbo, February 25, 1947.

¹⁷For an account of Communist suppression by the U.S. authority in South Korea during the period of 1945-1948, see McCune, op. cit., pp. 84-88.

the period of transition from the U.S. Military Government in South Korea to the Republic of Korea.

As late as April, 1948, just one month before the historic first general election was to be held in South Korea, a major communist rebellion broke out on Cheju Island. It was a communist inspired and manipulated rebellion. An American observer stated, however, that "there were elements of a peasant rebellion in the revolt."¹⁸ Even after the establishment of the Republic of Korea, there occurred two communist inspired rebellions, one in October, 1948, in Yosu-Sunchon and the other in November, 1948, in Taegu.¹⁹ Before and immediately after the establishment of the Republic of Korea, it has been alleged that North Korea sent a large number of guerrillas into South Korea. It has been reported that there were ten to twenty thousand armed guerrillas in South Korea at that time.²⁰

The Political Need for Land Reform in South Korea

During the grave political situation soon after the establishment of the Republic, the supreme task of the newly

¹⁸David Steinberg, Nexus of East Asia (New York: American-Asian Educational Exchange, Inc., 1968), p. 19.

¹⁹So, Pyong-jo, Chukwonja Ui Chungon: Hanguk Daeui Chongchi Sa (Contension of the Ruler: History of Korean Representative Government) (Seoul: Moum Chulpansa, 1963), p. 55.

²⁰Matsumoto, Hirokazu, Gekido Suru Kankoku (The Shaking Korea) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1963), p. 23.

created government was the removal of the sources of rural unrest since that was where the majority of South Koreans lived. One way of achieving this was the implementation of a substantial land reform. However, the South Korean government of 1948 was neither a socialist-revolutionary government nor a liberal-democratic-reformist oriented government. The South Korean government of this period was a conservative government run by the extreme rightists.

What then, in fact, prompted this conservative government to initiate a substantial land reform? Of course, one obvious reason was, as noted, the serious communist threat in rural areas which led the conservative leaders to initiate the land reform. There were other reasons as Lyman and French observed: first, there was substantial outside influence on the land reform. As noted, the U.S. Military Government in South Korea initiated a land sale program. This reform process which was started by the U.S. authority was irreversible in the prevailing climate of postwar South Korean politics. Second, there was a strong centralized authority with which to overcome any local or national resistance to reform.²¹

It was apparent that in South Korea, land reform was carried out due to the conservative leaders' awareness of

²¹Princeton N. Lyman and Jerome T. French, "Political Results of Land Reform," in Analysis Papers (Washington, D.C.: Department of State, Agency for International Development, Second edition, Vol. XI, June, 1970), pp. 11-13.

the urgent need for land reform in order to maintain their power status rather than as a result of peasant power or pressure. As Tuma indicated in his study, in the developing nations, land reform is usually carried out either to prevent a political revolution or to support one. When the reform is carried out prior to a major political upheaval it is chiefly to maintain the existing political and power structure. This type of reform is usually carried out by the traditional ruling elite including the landlords and their main interest, among others, is the maintenance of political stability.²² The South Korean land reform was carried out by the traditional elite to prevent revolution, maintain stability and strengthen legitimacy of the new government and to meet the rising expectation of the farmers.

THE POLITICAL RESULTS OF LAND REFORM

An Overview

As has been stated, the interdependence of democracy, political legitimacy, and political stability poses difficulties in analyzing the political effects of land reform. Another complicating problem in the analysis of South Korean land reform is that channels other than land reform were utilized in pursuing the same political objectives, such as local autonomy laws which tended to result in the break-up of the old political system and decentralization of the

²²Tuma, op. cit., p. 184.

power structure of South Korea.

However, it has been generally accepted that the South Korean land reform had positive effects politically, that is, land reform reduced potential sources of rural unrest thereby depriving the Communists of their last opportunity to capitalize on rural discontent. Following the land reform, rural unrest no longer constituted a serious problem to the government. As Cole and Lyman aptly stated: ". . . the reform eliminated the fundamental divisive issue in the countryside. Thereafter the locus of serious political conflict shifted largely if not entirely to the urban centers."²³

Lyman and French, in a rather sweeping generalization, stated that the political effects of land reform in three Far Eastern countries, namely: Japan, Taiwan and South Korea were as follows:

Serious support in the countryside for the left-wing has subsided; the peasantry in Japan and Korea have voted fairly consistently and substantially in support of largely conservative parties and generally for the incumbent government; . . . In short, the reform has contributed to the type of general political stability in the countryside . . .²⁴

In South Korea, the real test of the political impact of land reform came during the Korean War of 1950-53. One of the important reasons that the South Korean government could withstand the North Korean invasion was due to the allegiance

²³Cole and Lyman, op. cit., p. 21.

²⁴Lyman and French, op. cit., p. 13.

of South Korean farmers resulting from the government action on land reform. Morrow and Sherper stated: ". . . land reform was not an issue during the war and the early action taken appears to have helped secure the allegiance of farmers."²⁵ Had there been no land reform in South Korea, the government could perhaps never have been able to secure the loyalty of South Korean farmers. It should be pointed out that although the major cause of rural unrest was removed by land reform, the problems of low productivity, low income, a poor farm credit system, and shortage of fertilizer have persisted as some of the perennial problems of South Korean agriculture.

The land reform in South Korea, as observed by Lyman and French, certainly "provided a grace period without which South Korean politics might have taken a turn toward much more divisiveness and sharper confrontations between right and left . . ."²⁶ The land reform in South Korea had stopped further alienation of the majority of South Korean farmers and made it possible for them to feel that they had a stake in the new government which enacted the land reform thereby allowing them to realize the age-old desire of becoming owner-farmers. In this regard it is appropriate to cite Dahl's view that the responsiveness of government has a great deal to do with the citizens' allegiance and

²⁵Morrow and Sherper, op. cit., p. 62.

²⁶Lyman and French, op. cit., p. 14.

alienation toward their government. Dahl stated:

The extent to which citizens of a country are allegiant or alienated depends in some measure on the way the government has responded to grievances in the past and is expected by citizens or subjects to respond in the future.²⁷

From these general observations of the political effects of land reform in South Korea, it can be generalized that land reform in South Korea contributed to the maintenance of political stability by removing an important irritant of rural unrest. Thus, the general political stability in the countryside resulting from land reform provided an opportunity for the new government to sort itself out of the chaotic political situations in the 1950's.

Attitude of Former
Landlords and Tenants

It has been hypothesized that land reform in South Korea contributed to maintaining political stability by removing an important cause of rural unrest--inequity of land ownership. As noted, the removal of this irritant in rural areas, in turn deprived the Communists of their cause for agitation and mobilization of discontented farmers to oppose the South Korean government. In attempting to verify this hypothesis, investigation was first directed to find out the perception and evaluation of former landlords and tenants of the National Assembly and of the South Korean

²⁷Robert Dahl (ed.), Political Opposition in Western Democracies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 359.

land reform in terms of its contribution to the prevention of communist agitation, the maintenance of political stability, the strengthening of South Korean government, and the breakdown of socioeconomic discrepancy between the landlords and tenants.

On the National Assembly. As noted, although the first National Assembly was dominated by the landed class, it was this Assembly which successfully passed the long awaited land reform. Thus, the question was asked whether the respondent thought that the National Assembly was aware of the abject conditions of farmers (see Table 11). It was expected that tenants would be more inclined to have a positive attitude towards the First National Assembly than landlords. Landlords were very nearly evenly split in their attitude while nearly 59 percent of the tenant respondents reported "positive" feelings ($p < .03$).

Landlords who were 55 years of age or less were more apt to have "positive" feelings than were those who were older. The younger landlord group responded very much like the tenant group (which is, as a whole, younger than the landlord group). It could very well be that attitudes on the question are largely a function of age. Although both younger and older tenants were more apt to evince positive feelings, they were stronger in the younger group.

Landlords with smaller amounts of land were more apt to have a favorable attitude on this question than landlords

Table 11

Summary of Opinions Regarding
Awareness of the First National
Assembly on Farming Conditions*

	Landlords		Tenants	
	N	%	N	%
1. Strongly Agree	2	1.0	11	5.6
2. Agree	92	46.0	105	53.3
3. Disagree	86	43.0	65	33.0
4. Strongly Disagree	9	4.5	10	5.1
5. Other	10	5.0	5	2.5
6. NA, DK	<u>1</u>	<u>0.5</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0.5</u>
Total	200	100.0	197	100.0

*Actual text of the question: "Do you think the First National Assembly (Constituent Assembly, 1948-1950) was aware of the abject conditions of farmers and attempted to ameliorate the situation?"

with larger amounts of land. This was also true with tenants, though to a lesser degree (regardless of the amount of land, tenants agreed with the questionnaire statements). There was a slight tendency for landlords with a higher education to have a more positive feeling for the First National Assembly than landlords with a lower educational level. The same was noted with tenants. It could very well be that attitudes on this question are also a function of education.

Landlords who were engaged in teaching or civil service were more apt to agree with the questionnaire statement (i.e., to show a positive attitude) than were landlords engaged in commerce or manufacturing. Although the great majority of tenants were engaged in farming wholly or partially, the same tendency was noted.

Having asked a general cognitive question, the next question was an evaluative one--whether or not the land reform was passed as a temporary, half-hearted measure (see Table 12). Interestingly, tenants had a much more "cynical" view of the passage of land reform than did landlords ($p < .001$). A very nearly equal number, however, disagreed with the cynical view. It is perhaps because their conditions did not improve as greatly as they had originally anticipated and also because basically the farmers had a low estimate of their representatives, which will be further examined in the ensuing section. Landlords were much more apt to express another opinion on the matter than were

Table 12
 Summary of Opinions Regarding
 the Reasons for Enacting
 the Land Reform Law*

	Landlords		Tenants	
	N	%	N	%
1. Strongly agree	0	0.0	9	4.6
2. Agree	39	19.5	73	37.1
3. Disagree	62	31.0	91	46.2
4. Strongly disagree	38	19.0	8	4.0
5. Other	60	30.0	15	7.6
6. NA, DK	<u>1</u>	<u>0.5</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0.5</u>
Total	200	100.0	197	100.0

*Actual text of the question: "The land reform was passed as a temporary half-hearted measure. It was simply to placate the prevailing public mood. It was also a result of intra-elite struggle to vie for the electoral support of tenants rather than to bring about lasting social, economic, and political change."

tenants ($p < .001$). Age made little difference in the landlords' responses but there was a slight tendency for older tenants to be more cynical about land reform than younger tenants. Of 73 tenants who agreed with the statement, 10 percent belonged to age group 36-45, 49 percent belonged to age group 46-55, and 32 percent belonged to age group 56-60.

For landlords, the less land owned (in general), the more inclined he was to think of land reform as a "half-hearted" measure. In other words, the more apt he was to give the same opinion as the typical tenant would. The same relationship was noted with tenants, though to a lesser extent (probably because the amount of land held is small in any case). There was little difference among landlords in attitude towards land reform as far as education goes, although the number of "other" opinions increased for those with a higher level of education.

The landlords who answered "other" were divided into two major groups: one group which said that the motivation for land reform was the need for a substantial change in the political and socioeconomic structure of South Korea and the other group which said that the land reform was implemented mainly by the influence of the United States upon the new government of South Korea.

As with attitudes towards the First National Assembly, landlords engaged wholly or partially in farming and landlords engaged in teaching or civil service held differing opinions than landlords who were engaged in commerce

and manufacturing--the former groups tended to take a more non-cynical position (this time in opposition to the tenant tendency) than the latter, though all landlord occupational groups tended to take the non-cynical position.

It can be generally stated that for landlords, the younger, the smaller the acreage of land owned, the higher the educational level, and the more professional (teaching and civil service) they were, the more they held positive views toward the National Assembly. A similar trend was also noted for the tenants. As to the motives of the National Assembly in passing the land reform law, age and education made little difference, but the landlords who owned a smaller acreage of land and who were engaged in commerce and manufacturing were more cynical toward the National Assembly than the others. A similar tendency existed with tenants, though to less degree.

On Communism and Political Stability. In attempting to assess the effect of land reform on Communism and political stability, a question was asked as to its accomplishment in these areas (see Table 13). As can be expected, while more than half (52%) of the landlords had negative views as to the accomplishment of land reform, only 15 percent of the tenants held the same view. Tenants were more positive than landlords in saying that it had prevented Communist penetration into rural areas (24% vs. 8%, $p < .001$) and that it had maintained political stability (43%

Table 13

Summary of Opinions Regarding the
Accomplishments Made by Land Reform*

	Landlords		Tenants	
	N	%	N	%
1. Prevented Communist penetration into rural areas of South Korea	17	8.5	48	24.4
2. Maintained political stability	45	22.5	85	43.1
3. Prevented the tenants' uprising	3	1.5	-	0.0
4. Accomplished little of anything (in terms of economic accomplishment)	104	52.0	29	14.7
5. It brought about more confusion and political instability	30	15.0	34	17.3
6. Other	-	0.0	-	0.0
0. NA, DK	<u>1</u>	<u>0.5</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0.5</u>
Total	200	100.0	197	100.0

*Actual text of the question: "The period from 1945 to the establishment of the Republic of Korea in 1948 and up to 1953 can be characterized as one of transition. In your opinion, which of the following was accomplished by the land reform?"

vs. 22%, $p < .001$), whereas the percentages of landlords were 8 percent and 22 percent respectively.

There was no significant difference between tenants and landlords who answered that it had brought more confusion and political instability. However, it is interesting to note that only three landlords and no tenants thought that land reform may have prevented a tenants' uprising. It was perhaps because the respondents thought that a tenants' uprising would be mainly a function of communist agitation and consequent political instability. Since 31 percent of the landlords and 68 percent of the tenants thought that land reform accomplished the prevention of Communist penetration into rural areas and maintenance of political stability it was perhaps not conceivable to believe that land reform prevented the tenants' uprising.

Although only 8.5 percent of the landlords thought it prevented Communist penetration, the majority of landlords who answered that way were 55 or under. Older landlords were more likely to say that it had maintained political stability than younger landlords. Younger landlords were more likely to say that it had accomplished little than were older landlords. Both were equally likely to say that it had brought about more confusion and instability. Younger tenants were less likely to say it had prevented Communist penetration into rural areas, slightly more inclined to say it had accomplished little, more likely to say it had brought about more confusion and instability, and about

equally likely to say it had maintained stability as were tenants 56 years of age or older.

Landlords owning under 50 chongbo (about 122 acres) were less inclined to say that land reform had maintained political stability and more likely to say that it had accomplished little than landlords owning more land. There was little difference in the other choices. Tenants owning less than 5 tanbo (about 1.22 acres) were less inclined to say that it had maintained political stability and more likely to say that it had brought more confusion and instability than were tenants owning more land. There was little difference in the other possible choices.

Landlords with lower educational levels were less inclined to say that land reform had maintained political stability and more likely to say it had accomplished little than were landlords with higher educational level. There were no significant differences in the other choices regarding educational level.

For tenants, the lower the educational level, the more likely the respondent was to answer that land reform had prevented Communist penetration into the rural areas and the less likely he was to have answered that it had produced more confusion and political instability. Tenants having higher educational levels (i.e., elementary school) were more likely to say that it had maintained political stability than those with no education or only basic education--this was only a slight tendency and may not be

significant due to the small sample size (24) of tenants with an elementary education. Tenants in this latter group were also more inclined to say that land reform had accomplished little than those in lower educational categories.

There was a slight tendency for landlords engaged wholly or partially in farming to say land reform had prevented Communist penetration than other occupational groups. They were less inclined to say that land reform had maintained political stability than those in white collar occupations and much less likely to say it than those engaged in commerce and manufacturing. They were more likely to say it had accomplished little than those in other occupational groups. There was little difference among landlords in those saying it had brought more confusion and political instability. Sample sizes for non-farming occupations were small; however, there was a tendency for tenants in non-farming occupations to be less likely than those who farmed to answer that land reform had prevented Communist penetration or had maintained political stability and to be more likely to say that it had brought about more confusion and political instability. There was little difference in the other areas.

On the South Korean Government. In the previous question, 52 percent of landlords said that land reform accomplished little of anything. It should be noted that this meant primarily in terms of economic accomplishment.

When the question of whether land reform helped to strengthen the foundations of South Korean government was asked (see Table 14), 89 percent of landlords and more than 90 percent of tenants expressed the opinion that the land reform helped to strengthen the foundation of South Korean government. As noted, the previous questions were concerned with the effect of land reform on a specific item, but this question was designed to ask about the overall effect of land reform on the politics of South Korea.

There was slight tendency for tenants to agree that it had strengthened the government to a greater extent than landlords ($p < .10$); however, the vast majority of both landlords and tenants (89% and 94% respectively) thought that land reform had strengthened the foundation of South Korean government. There was a slight tendency for the older landlords to be more apt to think it was strengthened than the younger landlords. The opposite was the case for tenants.

No significant differences existed between landlords owning different amounts of land. The same was true with tenants. There was slight tendency for landlords with higher levels of education to think democracy was strengthened more than those with lower levels of education. The same was true for tenants. Landlords engaged in farming wholly or partially were more likely to disagree with the statement than those engaged in other occupational groupings. The same was true for tenants.

Table 14

Summary of Opinions Regarding the
Degree to Which Land Reform Has
Strengthened the Foundation of
Democracy in South Korea*

	Landlords		Tenants	
	N	%	N	%
1. Strongly agree	3	1.5	20	10.1
2. Agree	175	87.5	165	83.7
3. Disagree	7	3.5	6	3.0
4. Strongly disagree	14	7.0	6	3.0
0. NA, DK	<u>1</u>	<u>0.5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>
Total	200	100.0	197	100.0

*Actual text of the question: "Regardless of the then existing situation or the intention of the National Assembly, the land reform has helped to strengthen the foundation of democracy in South Korea."

On the Change of Social Structure. One of the important objectives of land reform was to change the traditional social structure under which the landed class in South Korea enjoyed an undue share of national as well as local power. To find out how both landlords and tenants perceived the effect of land reform in this regard, a question was asked as to how the land reform affected the power structure at the national and local level (see Table 15).

The overwhelming majority of both landlords and tenants thought that land reform brought about a change in the power structure. However, landlords were more apt than tenants to say that, at the national level, landlords still enjoy power but less than before ($p < .04$). No other significant differences existed on this question. Too few respondents in both cases answered that landlords still enjoy power but less than before to provide a test for the control variables. In both cases, both groups were of the opinion that the former landlords' power base was almost or completely wiped out (by a better than 10 to 1 ratio in the case of the national level and by about 3 to 1 at the local level). Tenants were more apt to say that the power base was almost or completely wiped out at the national level than at the local level ($p < .001$). The same was true of landlords ($p < .001$). As to the effect on the social structure (see Table 16), both landlords and tenants thought that land reform had succeeded in breaking down the Yangban-Sangmin barrier by better than 30 to 1 (97% or better).

Table 15

Summary of Opinions Regarding the Estimated Degree of Impact Land Reform Has Had on the Power Structure at the National and Local Levels*

	National				Local			
	Landlord		Tenant		Landlord		Tenant	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Former landlords enjoy more power than before	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.5
2. Former landlords enjoy, but less than before	17	8.5	7	3.5	53	26.5	50	25.4
3. Former landlords' power base was completely wiped out	137	68.5	142	72.1	123	61.5	122	61.9
4. Former landlords' power almost wiped out	45	22.5	47	23.9	22	11.0	21	10.7
5. There is no difference	0	0.0	1	0.5	1	0.5	3	1.5
0. NA, DK	<u>1</u>	<u>0.5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0.5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>
Total	200	100.0	197	100.0	200	100.0	197	100.0

*Actual text of the question: "In your view, how did the land reform affect the power structure at the national [local] level?"

Table 16

Summary of Opinions Regarding the
Estimated Degree to Which Land
Reform has Brought about Social
and Economic Progress*

	Landlords		Tenants	
	N	%	N	%
1. Very much succeeded	23	11.5	93	47.2
2. Moderately succeeded	170	85.0	100	50.8
3. Very much failed	5	2.5	1	0.5
4. Failed	1	0.5	1	0.5
5. Other	0	0.0	0	0.0
0. NA, DK	<u>1</u>	<u>0.5</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1.0</u>
Total	200	100.0	197	100.0

*Actual text of the question: "In your view, to what extent has the land reform helped bring about social and economic progress. First how about social progress? Did it succeed in breaking down the Yangban-Sangmin barrier?"

There was no significant difference between those six landlords and two tenants who thought it had failed. The number (193) who thought it had succeeded was equal in both cases. A study conducted by Yang, Hoe-su on the changes in the power structure at the local level after the land reform found that the traditional criteria of leadership qualification such as the ownership of land and Yangban background was definitely replaced by such qualifications as administrative experience, competence and achievement.²⁸

A follow-up question asked the respondent what his social status would have been had there been no land reform (see Table 17). Over 91 percent of landlords (but only 1 percent of tenants) said that they would have had more prestige ($p < .001$). Tenants were significantly more likely than landlords to say that it had made no difference ($p < .001$), and overwhelmingly more inclined to say that their condition would have been worse ($p < .001$).

Again, there were too few landlord respondents in one of the categories (no difference or worse) to provide meaningful analysis. There was little difference in the responses of tenants having no or basic education. However, tenants having higher educational levels (i.e., elementary school) were most likely to say that land reform had made no difference rather than that their condition would have

²⁸Yang, Hoe-su, Hanguk Nongchon Ui Chonrak Kujo (A Study on the Structure of the Korean Farming Village) (Seoul: Korean University Press, 1967), p. 489.

Table 17

Summary of Opinions Regarding the
Degree of Change in Social
Status after Land Reform*

	Landlords		Tenants	
	N	%	N	%
1. Enjoyed more prestige than now	178	89.0	2	1.0
2. Worse than now	4	2.0	106	53.8
3. No difference	13	6.5	87	44.2
0. NA, DK	5	2.5	2	1.0
Total	200	100.0	197	100.0

*Actual text of the question: "If there had been no land reform what would have been your social status?"

been worse--just the opposite tendency of that noted in the other two groups of tenants.

Those tenants holding 5 or more tanbo were more likely to say that their conditions (social status) would have been worse than those holding less land. There was a very slight tendency (most probably not significant) for those holding less land to report that there would have been no difference than to report that their social status would have been worse.

However, it should be noted that the powerful position enjoyed by the former landlords was not as completely ruined as seems to be indicated in the answers to the above questions. It is true that land reform deprived the landlords of a source of power and influence. Following the land reform, no persons could derive political and socio-economic influence from merely owning and controlling the land. A recent study on "Social Background and Mobility of Landlords Under Japanese Imperialism in Korea" conducted by Kim, Yong-mo concluded that "the descendants of the ruling class (landlord class) of yesterday rose again to be power elite of today."²⁹ According to Kim the descendants of landlords were able to maintain their elite positions through the "trisection of landlord institutions," that is,

²⁹Kim, Yong-mo, "Social Background and Mobility of the Landlords Under Japanese Imperialism in Korea," Bulletin of Korean Research Center, Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, No. 34 (June, 1971), p. 109.

the descendants of landlords, especially after the land reform, made inroads firstly into business and industry through their superior economic position, secondly, into the civil service and thirdly into the academic and political fields primarily by using their superior educational background. Thus, the descendants of the former landlords were able to enter into important and strategic positions in the South Korean society. This point was well corroborated in the survey, which will be elaborated in the following section.

Political Participation of Landlords. In order to find out the extent of political participation of respondents the question was asked whether both categories of respondents had ever directly participated in politics during a Liberal party period (see Table 18). Over 37 percent of the landlord respondents had participated whereas less than 1 percent of the tenant respondents participated.

Older landlords were more apt to have taken part than younger landlords. Of 74 who had participated in politics 35 respondents belonged to the age group of 46-55 and 24 respondents belonged to the age group of 56-60 years of age. Of 55 who belonged to the age group 56-60, 44 percent participated whereas of 96 who belonged to the age group 46-55, 36 percent directly participated in politics (ran for national office).

Those owning 150 Chongbo (about 367 acres) or more were more apt to take part than those with less land and,

unlike the others, were more apt to take part than not. Those with higher educational levels were more apt to take part than those with lower educational levels. Of 81 who received university education 36 (44%) ran for office and 41 (51%) did not. Of 25 high school graduates, 7 ran for national office.

Those engaged in commerce and manufacturing were more likely to have taken part than those in other occupational groupings and, unlike the other groupings, were more apt to have participated than not participated. Those who engaged in commerce and manufacturing were generally those who were bigger landlords, absentee landlords or those who left the countryside well before the land reform.

As to what capacity the respondent served in if he participated, of the 37 percent who participated, a third served as members of the National Assembly, 5 percent as ministers (of central government), and the remainder as party officers (see Table 19). Members of the National Assembly were more likely to be older, and party officers were more likely to be younger landlords. Of 25 who served as members of the National Assembly, seven were under 55 years of age, 12 fell in the age group of 56-60 and six were 61 years of age or older.

Members of the National Assembly were more likely to own more than 50 chongbo while party officers were more apt to own less than 50 chongbo. Ministers and members of the National Assembly were more apt to have higher

Table 18

Summary of Responses Regarding
Direct Participation in Politics
During the First Republic*

	Landlords		Tenants	
	N	%	N	%
1. Yes	75	37.5	1	0.5
2. No	115	57.5	196	99.5
3. NA, DK	<u>10</u>	<u>5.0</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>0.0</u>
Total	200	100.0	197	100.0

*Actual text of the question: "Have you ever directly participated in politics during a Liberal party period?"

Table 19

Summary of Responses Regarding
Capacity in Service*

	Landlords		Tenants	
	N	%	N	%
1. As a member of National Assembly	26	13.0	-	-
2. As a Minister of government	4	2.0	-	-
3. As a party officer	45	22.5	-	-
0. NA, DK	<u>125</u>	<u>62.5</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total	200	100.0		

*Actual text of the question: "If yes, what was your capacity?"

educational levels. Party officers tended to have lower educational levels than other types of participants. Of 25 National Assembly members 17 graduated from universities, two from elementary school, three from middle school and three from higher school.

Members of the National Assembly were more likely to be engaged in commerce or manufacturing than in other occupations. Party officers were more apt to be engaged wholly or partially in farming than in other occupations. Ministers were most likely to be engaged in white collar occupations.

In an attempt to ascertain the respondents' party identity, each respondent was asked which party he was affiliated with during the Liberal party period (see Table 20). Of all the respondents, 60 percent were not affiliated with any party. Of those who were affiliated, 60 percent (25% of the total) were affiliated with the Liberal party, 26 percent (11% of the total) were affiliated with the Democratic party, 4 percent (1.5% of the total) were affiliated with the Progressive party, 9 percent (3.5% of the total) were Independents. Younger landlords tended to have been affiliated with the Democratic party while older landlords tended to affiliate with the Liberal party. No differences were noted with respect to the other parties.

No relationships were noted with regard to the amount of land owned by the landlords, except that Independents overwhelmingly tended to own under 100 chongbo.

No relations were noted with regard to the education control variable. Members or affiliates of the Liberal party tended to be engaged in commerce or manufacturing. Independents tended to be engaged wholly or partially in farming. No other significant relationships were noted with respect to occupation.

In order to determine the landlords' interest in provincial politics they were asked if they had ever been a candidate for the Provincial Assembly during a Liberal party period (see Table 21). Only 11.5 percent had run for the local assembly; 83 percent had not. Landlords were generally more interested in national politics. Age made no difference as to likelihood of running for the Provincial Assembly. There was a slight tendency for those landlords owning more land to be more likely to run than those with less land. Unlike the candidates for the National Assembly, of 23 who ran for the Provincial Assembly, 11 (24% of those who ran) owned less than 24 chongbo of land. The landlords engaged in white collar occupations such as teaching or civil service were less likely to run than those from other occupational groupings. There was no real difference among others.

The landlords who were older, owned more land, had received the higher education and were engaged in commerce and manufacturing were more likely to be involved in the national politics and more successful in being elected. However, the poorer landlords were more inclined to be either involved in the local politics or act as local party

Table 20

Summary of Responses Regarding
Party Affiliation during
the First Republic*

	Landlords	
	N	%
1. Liberal party	49	24.5
2. Democratic party	21	10.5
3. Progressive party	3	1.5
4. Independent	7	3.5
5. Did not affiliate, NA, DK	<u>120</u>	<u>60.0</u>
Total	200	100.0

*Actual text of the question: "With which of the following parties were you affiliated during the Liberal party period?"

Table 21

Summary of Responses Regarding Candidacy
for the Provincial Assembly during
the Liberal Party Period*

	Landlords	
	N	%
1. Yes	23	11.5
2. No	166	83.0
0. NA, DK	<u>11</u>	<u>5.5</u>
Total	200	100.0

*Actual text of the question: "Have you ever been a candidate for the Provincial Assembly during the Liberal party period?"

officials. It cannot be denied that even after the land reform the former landlords and their descendants were able to hold on to their elite positions because of their superior economic and educational background, and also because of the elite nexus to which they belonged.

THE EFFECT OF LAND REFORM ON VOTING

An Overview

In the previous section the perception and evaluation of land reform by landlords and tenants were examined. In this section the effect of land reform on voting will be examined in order to verify a hypothesis that land reform caused the South Korean farmers to vote consistently for the conservative incumbent government. The overwhelming electoral support of the rural population for the South Korean government has been one of the most important political results of land reform.

It is appropriate to examine briefly some recent trends in voting behavior studies before discussing the voting behavior of the South Korean rural population. A citizen's political behavior such as voting, campaigning, lobbying, civil disobedience and political violence which can be labelled activity variables have been the subject of a profusion of studies in America. These are the variables which political science generally seeks to explain. In the early studies of voter behavior, the researchers thought that the socioeconomic status of individuals was an important

influence on activity variables. Lazarsfeld, et al., identified some of them.

It was discovered . . . that . . . socio-economic status and religion, along with rural urban residence, played a very heavy role in determining which candidate the respondents would prefer.³⁰

Lipset has observed that "the relationship of socioeconomic position to political behavior in America as elsewhere is reinforced by religious and ethnic factors."³¹

However, recently, researchers have found that there is another set of variables, which might be labelled attitudinal variables or psychological variables, which have been shown to have a measurable functional relationship with at least one activity variable--voting--by Campbell, et al. Considering such attitudinal variables as partisan identification, perception of government and leaders, class consciousness, and domestic and foreign issue attitudes, they found that "the number of . . . respondents whose votes we were able to foretell from what we know of their partisan attitude is greater than the number who were able to foretell their own votes."³²

³⁰Peter H. Rossi, "Four Landmarks in Voting Research," in Eugene Burdick and Arthur J. Brodbeck, American Voting Behavior (New York: The Free Press, 1957), pp. 17-18.

³¹Seymour M. Lipset, Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics (New York: Doubleday, 1963), p. 307.

³²Angus Campbell, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donal E. Stokes, The American Voter (Abridgement; New York: John Wiley, 1964), p. 38.

This general consideration of forces which influence voters to act as they do prompts a specific question--how and under what conditions do farmers participate in voting? It has been postulated in the Western literature of voter behavior that a sense of political efficacy, among other attitudes, is a necessary prerequisite to political participation. Political efficacy has been defined as "the feeling that an individual political action does have, or can have, an impact upon the political process . . ." ³³ It is important to ascertain the level of political efficacy to determine extent of political interest and participation of citizens.

Due to the lack of a democratic tradition in South Korea it is probable that the general level of political efficacy of farmers is fairly low. Lee, Man-kap, a leading Korean sociologist, confirms this view in his study on the Social Structure of the Korean Village in which he reported "the poor and illiterate commonly responded to our questions by asking 'what does an earth-and-onion-eating ground beetle know?'" ³⁴ This observation suggests the likelihood of a low level of political efficacy in the South Korean rural population.

³³Angus Campbell, Gerald Gurin and Warren Miller, The Voter Decides (Evanston, Illinois: Row Peterson, 1954), p. 187.

³⁴Glenn D. Paige (trans.), "Korean Village Politics and Leadership," by Lee Man-gap, Korean Affairs, I, 4 (1962), 401.

Political Efficacy

In order to elicit the sense of political efficacy of the respondents a question was asked as to whether or not he thought he had any say about what the government does (see Table 22). Of the 200 former landlords and 197 former tenants, 65 percent of the former landlords and 98 percent of the former tenants thought that people like themselves did not have any say in what the government does ($p < .001$). Only two tenants thought that people like themselves had a say in what the government does versus 66 of the landlords. Due to the extremely small number of tenants giving a "disagree" response, no patterns can be derived from control variables as far as they are concerned.

However, in the case of the landlords, older landlords were much more apt to feel that people like themselves had a say about what the government does than were younger landlords. Those having more land felt they had a say to a greater degree than those having less land. In fact, a majority of those owning 100 chongbo or more felt that they had a say in what the government does, reversing the pattern for the group as a whole. Landlords having higher educational levels felt they had a say more than landlords with lower educational levels. Of the 102 landlords who received higher education 40 percent felt they had a say while among the 96 lower educated respondents only 26 percent answered that they had any say about what government does.

There was slight tendency for landlords engaged in teaching or civil service to feel they had a say to a greater degree than those engaged wholly or partially in farming. Landlords engaged in commerce or manufacturing, however, were much more apt to think they had a say than either of the other two groups. In fact, like landlords who owned 100 chongbo or more a majority of those engaged in commerce and manufacturing thought they had a say--unlike the other group of the landlords as a whole.

The next question was concerned with whether the respondent thought that public officials really care what he thinks (Table 23). For both landlords and tenants, the large majority of respondents feel that public officials do not care what they think. There is a tendency for landlords to think that public officials care what they think more than tenants. Of 200 landlords, 47 replied positively, while only 5 of 197 tenants so answered.

Since only five of the tenant respondents thought that public officials cared what they thought, no patterns can be derived from the control variables as far as the tenants are concerned.

However, in the case of landlords, older landlords were more apt to feel that public officials care what they think than are younger landlords. Of 47 landlords who replied positively, 33 belonged to the age group of 56 years of age or older. The more land a landlord owns, the more inclined he is to think that public officials care what he

Table 22
 Respondents' Attitudes Toward
 Political Competence*

	Landlords		Tenants	
	N	%	N	%
1. Agree	130	65.0	194	94.5
2. Disagree	66	33.0	2	1.0
3. NA, DK	4	2.0	1	0.5
Total	200	100.0	197	100.0

*Actual text of the statement: "People like myself do not have any say about what the government does."

Table 23
 Respondents' Attitudes Toward
 Public Officials*

	Landlords		Tenants	
	N	%	N	%
1. Agree	47	23.5	5	2.5
2. Disagree	148	74.0	191	97.0
3. NA, DK	5	2.5	1	0.5
Total	200	100.0	197	100.0

*Actual text of the statement: "Public officials really do care what people like myself think."

thinks. Landlords owning 150 chongbo or more are more apt to think that than not. There is a slightly higher tendency for landlords with higher educational levels to think public officials care what they think than those with lower educational levels.

Landlords engaged in commerce, manufacturing, or teaching are more likely to say public officials care what they think than other occupational groups. Of 32 (16%) landlords who were wholly engaged in farming, eight (25%) replied positively and 24 (75%) negatively. However, of 26 who were engaged in commerce, 42 percent replied positively and 54 percent negatively. Interestingly, those engaged exclusively in civil service were the least likely to say that public officials care what they think. Since there is a very small sample here (14), and since it is not very much different from other occupational groups, it is most probably not significant.

Voting Habits

In order to understand the respondents' voting habits it was asked how often they vote (see Table 24). It was expected that landlords were more likely to say they always vote. Conversely, tenants were more likely to say that they vote intermittently or seldom than were landlords. However, it should be noted that both tenants and landlords reported that they always vote by a large majority of 87 percent and 76 percent respectively. There was a very

slightly higher tendency for younger landlords to vote always than older landlords. The same tendency was also noted for tenants.

Landlords owning 50 or more chongbo are more apt to vote always than those owning less than 50 chongbo by a small margin. There was also a slightly higher tendency for tenants owning over 5 tanbo to say they always vote than those who own less land. Landlords with higher educational levels are much more apt to vote always than those with lower educational levels, though both groups vote always more than they vote intermittently or very seldom. This tendency holds true for tenants also. Landlords engaged wholly or partially in farming were less likely to vote always than those engaged in commerce or manufacturing and in teaching or civil service. The same tendency is true for tenants.

In regard to voting, the next question asked was whether or not the respondent thought it mattered whether he voted or not (see Table 25). A majority of both groups thought that it did matter; however, landlords were more apt to think so than were tenants ($p < .001$). No significant differences exist between landlords when controlling for the age of the respondent. For tenants, however, those over 55 were much more likely to say that their vote did not matter (in fact, a majority of them said this) than were those 55 years of age or younger.

Table 24
Responses Regarding
Voting Habits*

	Landlords		Tenants	
	N	%	N	%
1. Always vote	174	87.0	149	75.6
2. Vote only when I feel like it (intermittently)	18	9.0	42	21.3
3. Very seldom vote	7	3.5	5	2.6
4. Never vote	-	-	-	-
5. Other	1	0.5	1	0.5
Total	200	100.0	197	100.0

*Actual text of the question: "How would you characterize yourself in regards to voting?"

Table 25
Attitudinal Degree of Voting*

	Landlords		Tenants	
	N	%	N	%
1. Agree	19	9.5	70	35.5
2. Disagree	180	90.0	127	64.5
0. NA, DK	1	0.5	0	0.0
Total	200	100.0	197	100.0

*Actual text of the statement: "So many people vote that it does not matter much whether I vote or not."

For landlords, no pattern could be established by controlling for the amount of land owned. No significant relationships were discovered for tenants, either. There was a slight tendency for landlords with higher levels of education to think that their vote mattered more than those with lower educational levels. The same pattern was true for tenants. Landlords engaged wholly or partially in farming were less likely to feel their vote mattered than those engaged in other occupations. The same was true to an even greater degree for tenants.

The results of these four questions reveal that, in the case of the South Korean rural population, there seems to be no direct relationship between the sense of political efficacy and voting participation as far as the former tenants are concerned. Accordingly it can be hypothesized that the voting participation in rural South Korea is a function of other factors than that of political efficacy.

ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

Voter Turnout

In regard to the contribution of land reform to the maintenance of political stability, it can be hypothesized that political stability was, in part, the result of the rural support for the incumbent government and the South Korean political system. This section attempts to examine how this was reflected in the National Assembly elections

of 1948, 1950, 1954 and 1958 which took place during the First Republic (1948-1960).

The salient and distinctive characteristic of South Korean rural electoral behavior is a higher voting turnout in the rural areas than in the cities in South Korea. In Western democracies the opposite is true.³⁵ As Table 26 demonstrates, the average voter turnout rate was 95.5 percent in 1948, 91.1 percent in 1954 and 90.6 percent in 1958 respectively. The presidential elections show a similar tendency of 88.0 percent in 1952 and 93.1 percent in 1956.

Furthermore, Table 27 indicates that the more rural the area, the higher the voter turnout in the National Assembly election. For example, Kangwon province, which is a mountainous province in South Korea, recorded a voter turnout rate of 98.2 percent in 1948, 92.2 percent in 1954 and 93.0 percent in 1958 whereas the most urbanized city in South Korea, Seoul, recorded 93.3 percent, 88.3 percent and 80.1 percent respectively. Another interesting trend in voter turnout is, as Table 27 indicates, that the more remote the areas are from the cities, the higher the rate of voter turnout. In other words, the voter turnout is the highest in Myon (a village), Eup (a township), Shi (a city) and Seoul in descending order.

Widely accepted in the literature of voting behavior of Western democracies is that urban dwellers, who are

³⁵Campbell, Gurin and Miller, op. cit., pp. 70-73.

Table 26

Percentage Participation of Voters
in Presidential Election and
National Assembly Election
by Province (1948-1958)^a

Province	National Assembly Election			Presidential Election	
	1948	1954	1958	1952	1956
Seoul	93.3	88.3	80.1	91.6	86.5
Kyunggi	96.5	90.5	91.6	85.0	94.6
N. Chung-chong	96.2	92.2	92.7	90.0	95.9
S. Chung-chong	95.8	90.6	91.9	87.3	93.6
N. Cholla	96.9	92.8	92.5	87.0	96.1
S. Cholla	94.4	92.5	91.6	91.1	96.7
N. Kyungsang	93.4	92.2	91.4	89.6	93.7
S. Kyungsang	96.6	89.9	89.8	84.7	93.4
Kangwon	98.2	92.2	94.9	92.6	98.2
Cheju	86.6	77.5	93.0	85.0	95.2
Average	95.5	91.1	90.6	88.0	94.4

Source: Adapted from Republic of Korea, Central Election Management Committee, Daehan Minguk Sonkosa (History of Elections in Korea) (Seoul: Chungang Sonko Kwanri Wiwonhoe, 1967), pp. 386, 406, 419, 473.

^aThe voter turnout data of the 1950 National Assembly election are not available.

Table 27
 Percentage of Voting Rate, Local Elections
 of 1952, 1956 and 1960

Type of Elections	Eligible Voters			Votes Cast		Voting Rates	
	1952	1956	1960	1952	1956	1952	1960
City Legislative Assembly	1,111,849	1,578,678	1,995,994	891,728	1,256,048	80.0	62.6
<u>Eup</u> Legislative Assembly	734,538		989,574	649,544	766,696	88.0	77.5
<u>Myon</u> Legislative Assembly	5,689,917		7,128,216	5,295,462	5,968,737	93.0	83.7

Source: Adapted from Republic of Korea, Central Election Management Committee, Daehan Minguk Sonkosa (History of Elections in Korea) (Seoul: Chungang Sonko Kwanri Wiwonhoe, 1967), pp. 495-499, 504-519.

generally better educated and better informed, tend to turn out at a higher rate at election time than do the rural voters. However, the South Korean case does not conform to this premise. What, then, are some of the reasons which can account for the high voter turnout? Is it a temporary phenomenon due to the effect of land reform that rural voter turnout is higher than that of their urban counterparts? Is it because the rural voters have higher political efficacy than the urban voters? Is it because the rural voters are easier to coerce into voting? Is it the socio-cultural constraint of the rural atmosphere that causes them to turn out to vote more than the urban voters?

In answering these questions, the 1960 figures in Table 27 suggest that it does not seem to be a temporary phenomenon due to the land reform. Even ten years after the land reform the same trend persisted. As to political efficacy, it was found that the rural voters do not have a higher sense of political efficacy than the urban voters. This suggests that the threats of authorities and socio-cultural constraints seem to explain the higher voter turnout of rural voters. Kim Kyu-taik stated that family considerations, their perception of public authority and lack of opportunity to participate in political processes prompt the rural voters to turn out in great numbers at elections. Kim stated:

1. Voters in rural communities are related with candidates, directly or indirectly, in one way or other, so they are obliged to go to the polls . . .

2. Public and government authorities have been regarded as the symbol of coercion, pressure and repression in the rural areas . . . it can be imagined from this that the people in remote areas can easily fall a victim to fear of retaliation for their failure to vote.

3. In a community where there are no organized interest groups, elections are the only mode of political participation for the people. Election is far more important for the rural population than for urban population.³⁶

Lee, Young-ho, however, in explaining the South Korean pattern of voter turnout, stated that this pattern can be explained adequately "only when the motivational dimension is included in the consideration--whether a voter votes out of submissiveness to authorities or out of autonomous desire to make his preferences felt in public policy."³⁷ It is certainly reasonable to assume that some rural voters voted not out of autonomous desire but by submissiveness to authorities, obligation to family, friends, and patrons. But on the other hand it can also be assumed that the land reform was the result of governmental responsiveness, which in turn motivated the rural voters to vote more than the urban voters for the incumbent government. Whichever may be the right reason for the rural voter turnout, the continuous rural support for the incumbent government seemed to have contributed to the maintenance of political stability in South Korea.

³⁶Kim, Kyu-taik, "A Statistical Analysis of the Election in Korea," Koreana Quarterly, IX (Summer, 1967), 66-67.

³⁷Yi, Young-ho, op. cit., p. 205.

Lack of Party Identification

It has been asserted in the previous chapter that South Korean politics perhaps could be best approached from the "clientelist politics" point of view. Thus, it is significant to examine the impact of clientelist politics in the Korean national electoral process. The introduction of a representative system of government, universal suffrage and the implementation of land reform drastically altered the political status of South Korean farmers. Their votes came to be seen as the determining factor in the outcome of general elections. As of 1947, 27.5 percent of Koreans lived in small towns and villages of less than 20,000 inhabitants; 66.1 percent in 1955; 59.1 percent in 1960 respectively.³⁸

Although the South Korean farmers turned out in great numbers at the time of election, they were very little influenced by the political parties or issues. They tended to vote on the basis of personality, including consanguinity and regionalism, rather than on the basis of political ideas and party planks. Professor Yun's survey supports this view. His survey revealed that those who chose personality of the candidate as the criterion of their choice accounted for 71.5 percent of his interviewees for the 1954 National Assembly election and 38.9 percent for the 1958 National

³⁸Lee, Han-bin, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

Assembly election respectively.³⁹ The importance of the personality of the candidate was partly due to the lack of party consciousness among the voters and the rural voters' strong tie to the patrons or brokers in the sense of clientelist politics.

The lack of party consciousness and identification among the South Korean voters can be demonstrated by examining the election results as shown in Table 28. In the first National Assembly election of 1948, 42.5 percent of the elected members of the National Assembly were independents. This, in fact, means that the victorious candidates in the 1948 election relied more on their own efforts and ability than on the political parties. In the 1950 National Assembly election the percentage of independents elected jumped to 60 percent which no doubt signifies the voters' mistrust of the political parties represented in the first National Assembly.

In 1954 the percentage of independents elected to the National Assembly declined to 33.4 percent. This could be attributed to two reasons: first, President Syngman Rhee actively headed the Liberal Party, and, second, it was in 1954 that the two major political parties--the Liberal Party and the National Democratic Party--adopted the policy that the official nominee of the party alone can run as an

³⁹Yun, Chong-ju, Hanguk Chongchi Chegye (The Korean Political System) (Seoul: Korea University Press, 1961), p. 225.

Table 28
Percentage of Independent Candidates Elected

Election Year	1948	1950	1954	1958	1960
Total Seats	200	210	203	233	233
Independents Elected	85	126	67	27	49
Percentage of Independents Elected	42.5	60.0	33.4	11.6	21.1
Total Votes	7,216,942	6,987,040	7,492,308	8,576,757	9,077,835
Votes Received by Independents	2,745,483	4,397,287	3,591,617	1,839,884	4,249,180
Percentage of Votes Received by Independents	38.1	62.9	47.9	21.5	46.8

Source: Adapted from Republic of Korea, Central Election Management Committee, Daehan Minguk Sonkosa (History of Elections in Korea) (Seoul: Chungang Sonko Kwanri Wiwonhoe, 1967), pp. 377-451.

official candidate of the party. Formerly any number of candidates could run as party candidates. By the 1958 National Assembly election, there emerged two major parties in South Korea and as a result the percentage of independents elected declined to an all-time low of 11.6 percent. It can be safely stated that up to the third National Assembly election of 1954 the crucial factors for the electorate in choosing their representatives were personality, personal reputation, personal achievement and the patron-client relationship rather than the candidates' party affiliation.

In the fashion of clientelist politics, the rural voters of South Korea, as a rule, voted for the patron or broker who was generally either the former landlord or his descendant and in turn the patrons or brokers responded in terms of delivery of goods and services. It should also be noted that the landlords as a whole have been the object of hatred yet at the same time were respected for their education and professional accomplishments.

It is appropriate at this juncture to ask what personal attributes of the candidates played the most deciding role in winning the elections. This section will mainly deal with occupational attributes because of their saliency to this section. Considered from the clientelist politics point of view it is not surprising that most of the successful candidates pursued agricultural occupations. As Table 29 indicates, in the 1948 National Assembly election 43 percent of the members of the National Assembly fell in the

Table 29

Number and Percentage of Total National Assembly Candidates
and Elected Candidates by Occupation^a

Occupation	Candidates															
	1948 Election			1950 Election			1954 Election			1958 Election						
	N	% Elected	% N	Number Elected	% Elected	% N	Number Elected	% Elected	% N	Number Elected	% Elected	% N				
Agriculture	377	40	43	86	36	43	63	30	402	33	53	26	152	18	32	14
Business	180	19	12	24	16	12	28	13	207	17	28	14	127	15	25	11
Professional	62	7	7	14	8	7	24	12	61	5	12	6	58	7	7	3
Managerial	98	10	7	14	11	7	29	14	129	11	26	13	98	12	27	11
Member of National Assembly	36 ^b	4	6	12	5	6	31	15	126	11	43	21	183	22	97	42
Philanthropic Work	22	2	5	10	3	5	7	3	26	2	4	2	10	1	3	1
Others (including no occupation)	173	18	20	40	21	20	28	13	256	21	37	18	213	25	42	18
Total	948	100	100	200	100	100	210	100	1207	100	203	100	841	100	233	100

^aSource: The Republic of Korea, Office of the Central Election Administration Committee, The Election Results for the National Assemblymen (Seoul, 1963), cited in Lim, Sang-un, "An Analysis of Electoral Behavior in South Korea" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Syracuse University, 1968), p. 222.

^bMember of the Interim Legislative Assembly under the United States Military Government in South Korea.

agricultural occupation category. These 86 persons who were elected can be classified as patrons or brokers who were considered to be the linkage agents between the rural areas and the center of power.

It is important to note that, as time progressed, farm candidates declined to 30 percent in 1950, 26 percent in 1954, and only 14 percent in 1958. The reasons for this decline can be attributed to the passage of the land reform law, the increasing effectiveness of political parties and the incumbent campaigns as shown in Table 29. In the second National Assembly election of 1950 only 15 percent of the incumbent members of the National Assembly were re-elected but in 1954 it rose to 43 percent and then to 42 percent in 1958.

Urban and Rural Difference in Voting

It has been asserted that there is a definite variation in voting behavior between urban and rural areas in South Korea. Generally the cities or urban areas voted fairly consistently for the opposition parties while the rural areas tended to support the incumbent government (Liberal party). According to Lim, Sang-un's study on "Analysis of Electoral Behavior" Lim found:

. . . about one-half of the rural districts gave more than 40 per cent of their votes to the Liberal party, whereas about one-fourth of the urban election districts gave the same degree of support to the same party in the 1954 election. The difference of voting behavior between the rural including the smaller cities

and the urban cities became more apparent in the 1958 National Assembly election . . . the majority of rural and semi-urban election districts gave strong support to the ruling party while the Democratic Party carried the majority of the urban electoral districts.⁴⁰ [See Tables 30 and 31.]

Kim's study also confirms this point. He stated:

In the 1958 election, the Democratic Party, then in opposition, gathered more votes in 33, while the ruling Liberal Party led in 31 townships (Eup). But the Democratic Party defeated in constituencies, which included township areas by a ratio of 43 to 20. In other constituencies which do not include either city or township areas, the Democratic Party was beaten by a ratio of 70 to 16.⁴¹

On the basis of these studies it can be hypothesized that the more rural a district is, the more government votes it manifests. This point can be further supported by knowing the farmers' perception of political parties.

Attitudes Towards the Political Parties

The respondents' perception and evaluation of political parties would shed some light as to the reason for rural support of incumbent government. In this regard, the first question asked the respondents was which political party most closely approximated the party of the landlords during the First Republic (see Table 32).

It should be emphasized that a large majority of both tenants and landlords thought the Democratic party was

⁴⁰Lim, Sang-un, "An Analysis of Electoral Behavior in South Korea" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Syracuse University, 1968), p. 268.

⁴¹Kim, Kyu-taik, op. cit., p. 79.

Table 30

Distribution of Election Districts by Type of
Area According to Liberal Percentage of
Total Vote for National Assemblyman
(1954 and 1958 Elections)

Liberal Percentage of Vote	1954 Election			1958 Election		
	Rural	Semi- urban	Urban	Rural	Semi- urban	Urban
0 - 9	3	1	3	1	1	8
10 - 19	3	10	10	5	1	9
20 - 29	27	13	10	9	9	13
30 - 39	20	15	9	21	10	15
40 - 49	20	5	5	23	16	12
50 & over	<u>30</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>5</u>
Total	103	58	42	110	61	62

Source: Lim, Sang-un, "An Analysis of Electoral Behavior in South Korea" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Syracuse University, 1968), p. 269.

Table 31

Distribution of Election Districts by Type of Area According to Democratic Percentage of Total Vote for National Assemblyman (1954 and 1958 Elections)

Democratic Percentage of Vote	1954 Election			1958 Election		
	Rural	Semi-urban	Urban	Rural	Semi-urban	Urban
0 - 9	77	43	26	29	9	3
10 - 19	9	5	5	13	4	3
20 - 29	8	6	2	18	9	4
30 - 39	4	2	4	27	17	6
40 - 49	3	2	3	13	14	14
50 & over	<u>2</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>32</u>
Total	103	58	42	110	62	62

Source: Lim, Sang-un, "An Analysis of Electoral Behavior in South Korea" (unpublished Doctor's dissertation, Syracuse University, 1968), p. 270.

Table 32

Respondents' Opinions on the Political Party
Most Closely Associated with the Landlords
During the First Republic*

	Landlord		Tenant	
	N	%	N	%
1. Liberal party	57	28.5	26	13.2
2. Democratic party	137	68.5	170	86.3
3. Progressive party	4	2.0	0	-
4. Independents	0	-	0	-
5. Other	0	-	0	-
6. NA, DK	2	1.0	1	0.5
Total	200	100.0	197	100.0

*Actual text of the question: "In your opinion, which political party approximates most closely the party of the landlords during the First Republic?"

the landlords' party (86% and 69% respectively). Older landlords showed a greater tendency to state the Liberal party than younger landlords though both groups were in the majority in stating that the Democratic party was the landlords' party. The same tendency was noted with tenants although in their case it is so slight that it probably is not significant.

Landlords who owned under 100 chongbo were less likely to say that the Liberal party was the landlords' party than those owning 100 or more chongbo and also more likely to say that the Democratic party was the landlords' party. For tenants, no significant differences exist with regard to this question and the amount of land owned.

In general, the lower the educational level of landlords, the more inclined they were to say that the Liberal party was the landlords' party; conversely, the higher the educational level, the more apt they were to say that the Democratic party was the landlords' party. No differences were significant for tenants.

Landlords engaged in teaching, civil service, or other white collar occupations were more apt to say that the Democratic party was the landlords' party than those engaged in farming, commerce, or manufacturing. This tendency was repeated among the tenants with the exception that those engaged in commerce and manufacturing exhibited the characteristics of the teaching and civil service occupational groups instead of the farming group.

The next question asked was, which was the tenants' party during the First Republic (see Table 33). There was no significant difference between tenants and landlords who said that the Liberal party was the tenants' party (35% and 34%, respectively). Landlords were more apt to say that the Democratic party was the tenants' party than were tenants (15% and 0.5% respectively). Fifty percent of the landlords and 64 percent of the tenants responded that the Progressive party was the tenants' party ($p < .01$).

The Progressive party was founded in 1955 and was outlawed as a subversive political party in January of 1958. The Progressive party did not have a chance to contest seats for the National Assembly except in the 1956 Presidential election in which the Progressive candidate, Cho, Bong-am, received a little more than two million votes. Although 50 percent of the landlords and 64 percent of the tenants answered that the Progressive party was the tenants' party, the Progressive party could not become a significant factor in the South Korean politics because of its short life.⁴² Had the Progressive party not been included in the question the respondents, both landlords and especially tenants, could very well have chosen the Liberal party as the tenants' party considering that only one tenant respondent stated that the Democratic party was the tenants' party.

⁴²For a discussion of the Progressive party, see Han, Tae-su, *op. cit.*, pp. 245-247.

Table 33

Respondents' Opinions on the Political Party
Most Closely Associated with the Tenants
During the First Republic*

	Landlord		Tenant	
	N	%	N	%
1. Liberal party	68	34.0	69	35.0
2. Democratic party	30	15.0	1	0.5
3. Progressive party	100	50.0	126	64.0
4. Independents	0	-	0	-
5. Other	0	-	0	-
0. NA, DK	2	1.0	1	0.5
Total	200	100.0	197	100.0

*Actual text of the question: "In your opinion, which political party approximates most closely the party of the tenants during the First Republic?"

There was a slight tendency for landlords over 55 years of age to be more apt to specify the Liberal party and to be less apt to specify the Progressive party as the tenants' party. There was no real difference between the age groups in specifying the Democratic party. The same tendency was noted among the tenants.

Very few significant relationships were noted by controlling for the amount of land the landlords owned. The exceptions are (1) a slight tendency for those owning under 50 chongbo to say that the Democratic party was the tenants' party to a lesser degree than others, and (2) a tendency for those landlords with 150 or more chongbo to specify the Liberal party more and the Progressive party less than did the other groups. For tenants there were no significant differences with the amount of land owned.

For landlords, no differences were noted with regard to level of education. For tenants, the higher the respondent's educational level, the less likely he was to specify the Liberal party and the more likely he was to specify the Progressive party as the tenants' party. Only one tenant picked the Democratic party--he had an elementary school education.

Landlords engaged in commerce and manufacturing were more likely to say that the Liberal or Democratic party was the tenants' party and less likely to say that the Progressive party was than landlords engaged in farming or teaching and civil service. There were no significant differences

noted between tenants engaged wholly or partially in farming and those who were engaged in commerce or manufacturing. Those in white collar occupations were more apt than the other two groups to say that the Progressive party was the tenants' party and less likely to say that the Liberal party was.

It should be noted that the tenants perceived the Democratic party as the party which represented the interests of the landlords whereas the Liberal party was viewed as the party which represented more the interests of ordinary farmers. This was perhaps one of the reasons why the Liberal party was continuously successful in the rural areas during the First Republic. However, it should also be pointed out that it was easier for the party in power to coerce the less educated, less politically informed, and poor farmers to vote for the incumbent government.

In summing up, this chapter attempted to verify the hypothesis that land reform in South Korea contributed in maintaining political stability by removing an important cause of rural unrest--inequity of land ownership. First, the investigation was directed to find out the attitudes of former landlords and tenants in relating to the National Assembly and to land reform in terms of its contribution to preventing communist agitation in the rural areas, maintaining political stability, strengthening the South Korean government, and breaking down the socioeconomic discrepancy between the landlords and tenants.

The study revealed that the attitudes of former landlords and tenants in regard to the political social effects of land reform were generally favorable. Especially, regarding the effect of land reform strengthening the foundations of South Korea, the overwhelming majority of respondents answered positively. It was also found that the land reform was instrumental in breaking down the social barrier in the rural areas. However, it should be noted that although the power base of the former landlords and their descendants was greatly weakened, they still held on to their elite position because of their basically superior economic and educational background.

Second, this chapter examined the effect of land reform on voting to verify a hypothesis that land reform caused the South Korean farmers to vote consistently for the conservative incumbent government. Thus, in order to understand the voting patterns of rural voters, the aggregate data on the three National Assembly elections were studied. It was found that, although the rural voters had a low sense of political efficacy and a lack of party identification, the voter turnout in the rural areas was higher than that of the urban counterparts. The voter turnout in rural Korea was a function, not of the sense of political efficacy or party identification, but of other factors, such as obligation to family, friends and patrons. However, it should be also noted that the high voter turnout in the

rural areas might have been a function of coercion from the party in power.

One of the plausible reasons which could be attributed to the consistent support of rural voters for the Liberal party government and higher rural voter turnout was that the rural voters believed that the forerunner of the Liberal party was responsible for enacting the land reform law. It can be assumed that the land reform was the result of government responsiveness to the demands of farmers which in turn motivated the rural voters to vote more than the urban voters for the incumbent government. In addition, it can be further assumed that the former tenants considered the Liberal party as the party which represented the interest of farmers whereas the Democratic party was perceived as the party which represented interests of the landlords.

Chapter 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on the foregoing study, the following summary and conclusions may be made in regard to the land reform in South Korea.

As has been suggested in this study, the South Korean farmers were continuously exploited economically and humiliated socially throughout the Yi dynasty and Japanese colonial administration. Conversely, a small group of landlords enjoyed not only the bulk of the fruits of the farmers' labor but also decisively controlled all aspects of Korean society, simply because they owned and controlled land.

However, the end of Japanese colonial administration and the beginning of the United States occupation in South Korea ushered in a new era of liberalism and democracy for the first time in the long history of Korea. In such an atmosphere, the injustices of the traditional land tenure system and farm tenancy system could no longer be tolerated. Accordingly, land reform became the top priority of the new government.

Thus, one of the most significant objectives of land reform in South Korea was to eliminate political, economic and social injustices stemming from the unjust land tenure system. Land reform was considered one of the most important

policies needed to strengthen the basis of government, to maintain political stability and to legitimize the new leadership and government. The land reform was also expected to elevate the hitherto humiliated farmers to the social and political levels of other members of society.

Unlike in North Korea or on the mainland of China, the land reform in South Korea was carried out within the framework of private property ownership. This was partly a result of the United States' influence in South Korea and partly due to the beliefs of the political leaders of South Korea who were convinced that capitalistic reform would bring the best results. In addition, the South Korean constitution unequivocally stipulated the sanctity of the private property system. Thus, the land reform in South Korea was not considered as a war against the landlords or as a class struggle.

This does not necessarily mean that there was no conflict revolving around the problem of land reform. The Communists attempted to agitate the former tenants to thwart the capitalistic land reform initiated by the non-communist political elites of South Korea. However, the communist-instigated farmers' riots were soon quelled by both the promise of impending land reform and stringent suppression by the South Korean government.

The South Korean land reform was certainly not the result of direct pressure exerted by the farmers since there was no formal political organization of farmers. In fact,

the land reform was carried out by the awareness of landlords and their descendants who constituted the new political elites in South Korea. The Korean Democratic party attempted to enact a land reform which was more advantageous to the landlords, but the persistent efforts of the more progressive coalition in the National Assembly denied success to the Korean Democratic party.

The land reform in South Korea abolished the centuries-old unjust land tenure and farm tenancy system. It reduced the concentration of land ownership drastically. The lands were finally distributed to the actual tillers and the parasitic absentee landlords were totally eliminated. As a result, the farmers' economic conditions were slightly improved, but not sufficiently to call it an economic success, partly because the problem of "too many people and too little land" was left intact by the land reform.

In 1950, the total cultivated land area in South Korea was 1,970,339.8 chongbo (4,827,302.8 acres). The farm population was 12,864,188, and the average size of cultivated land area per farm household was 8.71 tanbo (2.134 acres). Ten years later, in 1960, the total cultivated land area in South Korea was increased to 2,041,668.1 chongbo (5,004,128.5 acres); the farm population increased to 14,559,271 and the average size of cultivated area per farm household was decreased to 8.69 tanbo (2.129 acres). As noted, while there was 13.17 percent increase of farm population, there was only 3.62 percent increase of cultivated land area.

Accordingly, the average size of cultivated land area per farm household was decreased, which posed serious economic problems for the South Korean farmers.¹

However, the socio-political impact was much greater than the economic accomplishment. The land reform caused a substantial change in the power structure and social system. Although the economic discrepancy still remained, socially and legally the former tenants became the equals of their former landlords. The participation of farm people, especially in community affairs, became much greater. The hierarchical society was changed into an egalitarian society, which also inevitably changed the power structure of South Korea. The land reform promoted the freedom and independence of the farmers. However, it should be noted that, at the national level, the former landlords and their descendants still occupy strategic positions in society because of their superior economic and educational background.

It has been suggested that land reform contributed to the maintenance of political stability in South Korea because the farmers consistently gave their support to the incumbent government which was dominated by the Liberal Party during the First Republic. The land reform in South

¹Republic of Korea, Nongop Hyopdong Chohap Hoe (The Central Office of the Agricultural Cooperatives), Hanguk Nonji Yisimnyon Sa (The Twenty-Year History of Korean Agricultural Administration), (Seoul: KwangMyong Insoe Kongsas, 1965), p. 845.

Korea fulfilled short-term political and social goals, such as political stability and the legitimation of the Liberal Party government and the elimination of the hierarchical structure of society. However, it should be pointed out that its dysfunctional aspect, that is, the continuous and blind-like support of farmers for the incumbent government, made it possible for the Liberal government to develop itself into an autocratic regime and may have deterred the development of democracy. Lyman and French aptly observed:

. . . general rural apathy in Korea has probably made increasing democratization in Korea more difficult: there is now little solid, mass-based support for undoing the archaic restrictions on political thought or action that linger from the Rhee period, . . ., and occasional flagrant corruptions of democratic procedures.²

Although the short-term political goals of land reform were fairly successful, did the land reform contribute in the long run to the development of democracy? It is doubtful whether a long-term goal, such as creating a middle class, thereby strengthening the foundation of democracy in South Korea, was achieved. The South Korean farmers do not constitute, as yet, a viable middle class, mainly due to their still abject economic condition. As noted, their level of political efficacy is too low to be effective in influencing the political process in South Korea.

²Princeton N. Lyman and Jerome T. French, "Political Results of Land Reform" in Analysis Papers (Washington, D. C.: Department of State, Agency for International Development, Second edition, Vol. XI, June, 1970), pp. 11-13.

The land reform in South Korea has been instrumental in bringing about orderly social changes in South Korea. It has been suggested in the foregoing study that the modernization process, which was triggered by the end of Japanese colonial rule and with the beginning of the United States Military Government in South Korea, ushered in the rising expectations of people in terms of increasing industrialization, living standards and the breakdown of social distinctions. The reform in turn stimulated the development of political modernization which involved increasing popular political participation in the political process and fair competition among the competing political interest groups.

Modernization necessitated the political development because if the rising expectations of the people were not met adequately, political instability or revolution was inevitable. The institutional capacity to solve political and socioeconomic problems arising from the modernization process in society was urgently needed. The land reform was a useful policy which helped to bring about an orderly political development by resolving important political and socioeconomic problems which resulted from modernization.

As noted, one of the most urgent popular demands in South Korea after the liberation was none other than land reform. Had there been no land reform in South Korea, it might have been very difficult for the First Republic to prevent serious political upheavals instigated by the leftist or communist forces. It might have been that the

South Korean government would have collapsed during the trying period of the Korean war. In short, the important political contribution of land reform in South Korea has been that of maintaining political stability and strengthening the political legitimacy of the First Republic of Korea.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Explanation of Statistical Tests

Explanation of Statistical Tests

All references made in the text to the statistical significance of the differences between landlord and tenant responses were inferred from computations of the standard error of the difference between two percents when the percents are uncorrelated. This test was chosen since it gives greater flexibility and precision than would the chi square test. The following formulas were used to determine how reliable the difference between two given percentages was:

$$\sigma_D = \sqrt{PQ \left(\frac{1}{N_1} + \frac{1}{N_2} \right)}$$

$$P = \frac{N_1 P_1 + N_2 P_2}{N_1 + N_2}$$

$$Q = 100\% - P$$

$$CR = \frac{P_1 - P_2}{\sigma_D}$$

where: σ_D = standard error of the difference between the two percentages
 N_1 = size of first sample
 N_2 = size of second sample
 P_1 = first percentage
 P_2 = second percentage
 CR = critical ratio (used in conjunction with a table of areas of the normal curve to ascertain level of statistical significance)

All levels of statistical significance cited are appropriate for a two-tailed test. While it would be possible to argue convincingly that a one-tailed test

would be appropriate, the two-tailed test was chosen in order to maintain a conservative approach.

APPENDIX B

Land Reform Law

LAW NO. 31: LAND REFORM LAW

Chapter I. General provisions

Article 1. The purpose of this law is, on the basis of the Constitution, to secure the independence of farmers' economy by appropriate distribution of farmlands among the farmers, and thus to improve the farmers' living conditions, keep the balance of, and develop, the national economy by increasing agricultural productivity.

Article 2. Farmland in the meaning of this law shall include dry fields, paddy fields, orchards, fire-field lands, and all other lands actually used for farming irrespective of the legal land classification. Reservoirs, farm roads and irrigation canals necessary for farming shall belong to the area served by them.

Article 3. The expression "farming family" in this law refers to a legal social unit the head and/or members of which make an independent livelihood through farming as the principal means of living.

Article 4. In order to facilitate the operation of this law, land committees, hereinafter referred to as "the committees," shall be organized in the capital, and in each province (do), county (gun) and city (shi), ward (ku), town (eup) and township (myun), dong and li.

Chapter II. Acquisition and compensation

Article 5. The Government shall acquire farmlands in the following manner:

(1) The following farmlands shall come into the possession of the Government:

(a) Farmlands confiscated or owned by the Government pursuant to law or treaty;

(b) Farmlands the ownership of which is in doubt.

(2) Farmlands of the following categories shall be purchased by the Government:

(a) Farmlands owned by those who are not farming families;

(b) Farmlands which are not personally tilled; provided that, in case a land owner is obliged to abstain from farming temporarily on account of illness, public duties, studying,

or other unavoidable circumstances, the head of city (shi) or county (gun) may permit him to retain the farmland for a specified period of time with the concurrence of the competent land committee;

(c) The area of farmlands which exceeds the limit provided in this law;

(d) Farmlands for non-perennial plantation owned by a person who also personally operates more than three chungbo of lands for perennial plantation such as orchards, sapling gardens and mulberry fields.

Article 6. The following farmlands shall not be purchased pursuant to this law:

(1) Farmlands not exceeding three chungbo in total owned by one farming family and personally tilled or operated by it, provided that this limitation shall not be applicable to such special areas as plateau or mountainous regions which shall be specified by the Government;

(2) Such farmlands used for perennial plantation as orchards, sapling gardens, mulberry fields which are personally operated;

(3) Farmlands not exceeding five hundred pyung used as a small scale vegetable garden by one non-farming family;

(4) Farmlands which the Government may approve for different use by the Government, public organizations, educational institutions, etc.;

(5) Farmlands owned and cultivated directly by officially approved schools, religious organizations, or organizations of public welfare, etc.; provided that farmlands owned by educational foundations shall be purchased in accordance with provisions to be adopted for this purpose;

(6) Such area of farmlands as the Government may approve for scientific research or other particular purposes;

(7) Farmlands which are provided for the protection and maintenance of graves and on which no rent has been collected traditionally, but not exceeding two tanbo for each grave;

(8) Partially reclaimed lands or tidal flats; provided that completely reclaimed parts may be purchased with special remuneration;

(9) Farmlands reclaimed after the enforcement of this law; provided that lands and tidal flats reclaimed with

subsidies from the Government shall be governed by the proviso of (8) above.

In case a farming family described in (1) above concurrently owns not more than three chungbo of farmlands under (2) and/or (7), (8) and (9) above, such areas shall not be added to his holdings under (1) above, nor to that of Article 12.

Article 7. Appraisal of the amount of compensation for purchased farmlands shall be conducted by the Government in the following manner upon the recommendations of each local land committee:

(1) Each city (shi), town (eup) and township (myun) shall select a standard middle grade farmland of every item of land classification in the respective district and shall determine the common base rate of compensation on the basis of the rate of rent and of 150 per cent of the average annual yield of the main crop of the farmland. The amount of compensation for every individual farmland in the district shall be determined in accordance with the foregoing rate;

(2) In case there are difficulties in determining the average annual yield or rent because of a change in the condition of farmlands or for other reasons, the amount of compensation shall be determined in accordance with the yield of farmland of similar quality in the vicinity or by some other appropriate method.

(3) Compensation for farmlands for perennial plantation such as orchards, sapling gardens and mulberry fields which are not operated personally and for the attached facilities described in article 2, paragraph 2, shall be determined separately on the basis of current market values;

(4) For reclaimed or other special lands, special compensations shall be established after consideration of the actual circumstances;

(5) The principle of progressive diminution shall be applied to the compensation rates provided in the foregoing paragraphs on the basis of the total area of farmland owned, as well as of the total sum to be received by one person. Provided, however, that the principle of progressive diminution shall not be applicable to compensations to be paid to foundations engaged in educational, cultural, scientific research and public welfare, and approved by the Government. Capital tax shall not be levied on the amount of compensation to be paid according to the rate of progressive diminution.

Article 8. Compensation shall be made by the Government by issuing land bonds in the following manner to the land owner or to his agent. Credit against the land bond shall be guaranteed by the Government when used as business funds:

(1) The face value of the bond shall indicate the amount of compensation provided in the previous article representing the amount of the main crop of the land for the current year;

(2) The bonds shall be redeemed by yearly installments spread over five years; paying one-fifth of the face value each year in cash (won) calculated at the legal price of the agricultural product; provided that compensation in smaller amounts and that to be made to foundations engaged in educational, cultural or scientific research and approved by the Government may be made in a lump sum or in shorter periods than above.

Article 9. Mortgages and other liabilities on purchased farmland shall be assumed by the Government simultaneously with the purchase but they shall be paid to the creditors, within the limit of compensation to be made pursuant to the stipulations of article 8.

Article 10. For landowners whose farmlands are purchased pursuant to this law, the Government may give them priority for participation in enterprises contributing to the development of the national economy according to their wishes, or abilities.

Chapter III. Distribution and compensation

Article 11. Farmlands purchased by the Government pursuant to this law, and farmlands state-owned pursuant to the provisions of separate laws shall be redistributed for ownership to actual farming families in the following order:

(1) Farming families who are cultivating the farmlands at present;

(2) Farmers who cultivate farmlands small in area compared with their farming potentiality;

(3) The families of those who have died for this country; if they have experience in the management of a farm;

(4) Employed farmers' families (farm labourers) who are capable of farming;

(5) Farming families repatriated from foreign countries.

Article 12. Distribution of farmlands shall be made in accordance with a "grading system" based on the kind and grade of farmlands, the farming potentiality of the farming families, etc., but one farming family shall not receive more than a total of three chungbo. The last paragraph of article 6 shall not be applicable to areas referred to in this article. Farmlands stipulated in article 6 (1) and article 11 (1) shall not be governed by the grading system.

Article 13. The amount and methods of payments for distributed farmlands shall be as follows:

(1) The amount of payment shall be equal to the amount of compensation stipulated in article 7. Provided, however, that the amount of special compensation as provided for in article 7 (4) shall not be charged;

(2) The payments shall be made to the Government in annual instalments spread over five years, and will be made either in kind, such as will be specified by the Government, or in cash;

(3) Upon the request of a farmer, and for reasons approved by the Government, the payment may be made in a lump sum or the period of payment may be either prolonged or shortened.

Article 14. No registration taxes for the transfer of ownership, no real estate acquisition taxes, and no profit taxes, etc., shall be levied in enforcing this law.

Chapter IV. Preservation and management

Article 15. Distributed farmlands shall be registered in the name of the representative of the farming family which has received the distribution. Ownership shall be inherited.

Article 16. The following actions on distributed farmlands shall not be allowed prior to the completion of payments:

(1) Purchase and sale, donation or transfer of ownership;

(2) Creation of mortgages, superficies, priority rights or security rights.

Article 17. Distributed farmlands shall not be made the object of tenancy, lease, or cultivation by proxy. This rule, however, shall not be applicable to such circumstances as are prescribed in article 5 (2) (b), or as may be permitted by the Government pursuant to this law or other laws.

Article 18. If a farmer who has received distribution of farmlands fails to pay the annual instalment without any due reason, the Government may institute a law suit in the competent court for the return of the farmland. Cases referred to in this paragraph shall have not more than two trials and the decision of the second court shall be final. If the farmland is returned, pursuant to this article, the Government shall pay to the farmer whose farmland is returned to the Government more than 75 per cent of the amount of payments already made, and in case there should have been added any facilities and improvements on the land or farmland, the Government shall pay the total cost of them.

Article 19. If a person who has not completed the purchase payments ceases farming because of death, change of business, or removal to another place, or desires to return the whole or part of the farmland, the Government shall refund the total or partial amount of payments made as well as redeem any crops, facilities, and improvements standing on the land. Farmland which is not distributed under this law, and distributed farmland the payment of which has been completed, may be sold or purchased after obtaining certification thereof from the competent authority.

Article 20. Farmlands acquired by the Government pursuant to the provisions of the two previous articles shall be distributed in accordance with this law.

Article 21. For the purpose of facilitating and rationalizing the management of farmland, the Government may take appropriate action for the improvement, exchange, partition or addition, readjustment, change of use, etc., of farmlands. A farmer may apply for the foregoing actions to the Government through the land committee of his district.

Chapter V. Arbitration and miscellaneous provisions

Article 22. When there is objection to any matter in connexion with the enforcement of this law, the parties interested may apply for a review of the problem to the local land committee. Appeal may be made to the next higher competent land committee up to a provincial (do) or city (shi) committee, for review of a decision rendered in accordance with the preceding provisions of this article. Applications and appeals as provided for in this article shall be made within twenty days following the receipt of the decision.

Article 23. When a land committee receives a petition of protest or appeal, it shall call in the parties concerned and begin the review within one week in the case of lower committees and within two weeks in the case of city (shi) or

provincial (do) committees. Each committee shall deliver the decision within one week of the completion of the examination. In case a committee does not take any action on a petition or protest before the expiration of the period stipulated in this article, and there is no opposite party, the committee shall be obliged to admit the claim of the petitioner or appellant.

Article 24. The parties interested may institute a suit in the competent court in the following cases, the final court for these cases being the same as provided in article 18:

(1) When there is a difference of opinion in the interpretation and application of laws;

(2) When there is an alleged injustice on the part of a member or members of the committee concerned;

(3) When there is any circumstance which has prejudiced the rendering of a just decision.

Article 25. If anyone refuses to comply with this law or commits an act of deceit or violates this law, his farmland shall be confiscated without compensation, or his right of cultivation on the farmland shall be forfeited and a fine of not more than one million won (w 1,000,000) may be concurrently imposed on him. If an agent, a representative, or an employee commits an act described in this article, the offender shall be sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour not exceeding one year or fined not more than five hundred thousand won (w 500,000). This law shall not apply to those lands the reclamation of which has not been completed at the date of promulgation, or to those which will be reclaimed after the date of promulgation.

Chapter VI. Addenda

Article 26. Matters necessary for the application of this law shall be determined by presidential decree.

Article 27. The following actions shall be prohibited after the promulgation of this law, except such actions as are necessary for the operation of this law:

(1) Disposition and donation of non-self-cultivated lands, except the donation to educational, charitable or other public organizations;

(2) Transfer or deprivation of the right of tenancy.

Farmlands which have been distributed in accordance with Ordinance No. 173 of the South Korean Interim Government shall not be affected by this law except those parts which exceed three chungbo in area adding to those farmlands described in article 6 (1).

Article 28. Any laws and regulations in conflict with this law are hereby abrogated.

Article 29. This law shall be effective from the date of its promulgation.

APPENDIX C

Partial Questionnaire

THE POLITICAL ATTITUDES OF THE FORMER
LANDLORDS AND TENANTS OF SOUTH KOREA

PARTIAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Partial Coding Sheet for Survey of the Political
Attitudes of Former Landlords and Tenants
of South Korea (Summer, 1969)

Columns:

<u>Ll</u>	<u>Tn</u>	<u>Description</u>
6	6	Age 1. 25-35 2. 36-45 3. 46-55 4. 56-60 5. 61 and over
10	10	Occupation 1. Farming (entirely) 2. Farming (50%) and other (50%) 3. Commerce 4. Teaching or administration of educational institute 5. Manufacturing 6. Civil service 7. Other
12	12	Education (Landlords) (Tenants) 1. Elementary school 1. Read Korean 2. Middle school 2. Read Korean & Chinese 3. High school 3. Elementary school 4. Junior college 4. Middle school 5. University 5. High school 6. Other 7. No education
21	21	Amount of land owned at the time of land reform (Landlords) (Tenants) 1. 0-24 <u>chongbo</u> 1. 0-2.4 <u>tanbo</u> 2. 25-49 <u>chongbo</u> 2. 2.5-4.9 <u>tanbo</u> 3. 50-74 <u>chongbo</u> 3. 5.0-7.4 <u>tanbo</u> 4. 75-99 <u>chongbo</u> 4. 7.5-9.9 <u>tanbo</u> 5. 100-124 <u>chongbo</u> 5. 10+ <u>tanbo</u> 6. 125-149 <u>chongbo</u> 7. 150-199 <u>chongbo</u> 8. 200+ <u>chongbo</u>

- 33 33 Do you think the First National Assembly (Constituent Assembly, 1948-1950) was aware of the abject conditions of farmers and attempted to ameliorate the situation?
1. Yes (strongly agree)
 2. Yes (agree)
 3. No (disagree)
 4. No (strongly disagree)
 5. Other
- 34 34 The land reform was passed as a temporary half-hearted measure. It was simply to placate the prevailing public mood. It was also a result of intra-elite struggle to vie for the electoral support of tenants rather than to bring about lasting social, economic, and political change in Korea.
1. Strongly agree
 2. Agree
 3. Disagree
 4. Strongly disagree
 5. Other
- 35 35 Regardless of the then existing situation or the intention of the National Assembly, the land reform has helped to strengthen the foundation of democracy in Korea.
1. Strongly agree
 2. Agree
 3. Disagree
 4. Strongly disagree
- 36 36 In your view, how did the land reform affect the power structure at the national level?
1. Former landlords enjoy more power than before
 2. Former landlords enjoy power, but less than before
 5. There is no difference
 4. Former landlords' power base was almost wiped out
 3. Former landlords' power base was completely wiped out
- 37 37 In your view, how did the land reform affect the power structure at the local level?
(coding is the same as for column 36)

- 38 38 In your view, to what extent has the land reform helped bring about social and economic progress? First, how about social progress? Did it succeed in breaking down the Yangban-Sangmin barrier?
1. Very much succeeded
 2. Moderately succeeded
 4. Failed
 3. Very much failed
 5. Other
- 39 39 To what extent did the land reform affect economic progress?
(coding is the same as for column 38)
- 40 40 Compared to before, how did land reform affect your household economically?
1. Much better than before
 2. Moderately better than before
 5. No difference
 4. Moderately worse than before
 3. Much worse than before
- 42 Are you still cultivating the land you acquired by the land reform?
1. Yes
 2. No
- 43 43 If there had been no land reform what would have been your social status?
1. Enjoyed more prestige than now
 3. No difference
 2. Worse than now
- 44 44 The period from 1945 to the establishment of the Republic of Korea in 1948 and up to 1953 can be characterized as one of transition. In your opinion, which of the following was accomplished by the land reform?
1. Prevented Communist penetration into rural areas
 2. Maintained political stability
 3. Prevented the tenants' uprising
 4. Accomplished little of anything
 5. Brought about more confusion and instability
 6. Other
- 52 53 In your opinion, which political party approximates most closely the party of the landlords during the First Republic (1948-1960)?
1. Liberal party
 2. Democratic party
 3. Progressive party
 4. Independents
 5. Other

- 53 54 In your opinion, which political party approximates most closely the party of the tenants during the First Republic?
(coding is the same as for landlord column 52 and tenant column 53)
- 55 56 How would you characterize yourself in regards to voting?
1. Always vote
2. Vote only when I feel like it (intermittently)
3. Very seldom vote
4. Never vote
5. Other
- 56 57 People like myself don't have any say about what the government does.
1. Agree
2. Disagree
- 57 58 So many people vote that it doesn't matter much whether I vote or not.
1. Agree
2. Disagree
- 58 59 Public officials really do care what people like myself think.
1. Agree
2. Disagree
3. Other
- 59 60 What is your source of information?
1. Radio
2. Television
3. Newspaper
4. Conversation with friends
5. Other
- 60 61 Which of the following daily newspapers do you read and favor most?
1. Seoul
2. Tong-a
3. Chosun
4. Kyung-hyang
5. Hanguk
6. Daehan
7. Chungang
8. Shin-a
9. Other (including local papers)
0. Do not read, no answer, etc.

- 61 Have you ever directly participated in politics during a Liberal party (Democratic party and Democratic-Republican party) period?
1. Yes
 2. No
 0. Other
- 62 If yes, what was your capacity?
1. Member of the National Assembly
 2. Minister (executive branch of government)
 3. Party officer
 4. Other
 0. Didn't participate, no answer, etc.
- 63 To which of the following parties were you affiliated with during the Liberal party period?
1. Liberal party
 2. Democratic party
 3. Progressive party
 4. Independent
 5. Other
 0. Didn't affiliate, no answer, etc.
- 64 Have you ever been a candidate for the National Assembly during the Liberal party period?
1. Yes
 2. No
 0. No answer, etc.
- 65 If yes, how successful were you?
1. Elected once
 2. Elected twice
 3. Elected three or more times
 4. Defeated
 0. Didn't run, no answer, etc.
- 70 Have you ever been a candidate for the Provincial Assembly during the Liberal party period?
1. Yes
 2. No
 0. No answer
- 71 If yes, were you elected?
1. Yes
 2. No
 0. Didn't run, no answer, etc.

- 72 If you were elected, to which of the following political parties were you a member?
1. Liberal
 2. Democratic
 3. Progressive
 4. Independent
 5. Other
 0. Not applicable, no answer, etc.
- 73 Have you ever directly participated in politics during the Second Republic?
1. Yes
 2. No
- 74 If yes, what was your capacity?
1. Member of the National Assembly
 2. Minister
 3. Party official
 4. Other
 0. Didn't participate, no answer, etc.
- 75 To which of the following parties were you affiliated during the Second Republic?
1. Liberal party
 2. Democratic party
 3. Progressive party
 4. Independent
 5. Shin-Han party
 6. Other
 0. Didn't affiliate, no answer, etc.

APPENDIX D

Glossary

GLOSSARY

Note: The McCune-Reischauer system of romanization for Korean terms has been used throughout this study. However, due to the unavailability of symbols used in the McCune-Reischauer system the romanization was done without the symbols.

- Ajon: Local clerk.
- Arok-jon: The land given to finance the personal expenses required by the local administrative agencies.
- Chigye Amun: Governmental land survey agency.
- Chik-jon: The land which is given only to the incumbent officials. The Government directly collected rents from tenant farmers and compensated the land holders from the financial resources of the state.
- Chinbu-jon: The land given to ferry men and seamen.
- Chin-jon: The land which was registered as undeveloped land in the Yi dynasty.
- Chondo: Heavenly way. An indigenous religion of Korea.
- Chonmin: Despised people who occupied the lowest social status in the Yi dynasty.
- Chungin: Middle men.
- Hak-jon: The land granted to the educational institution for financing its operation expenses.
- Heminso
chongyak-jon: The land allotted to the Office of Medical Care for its personal and administrative expenses.
- Konghae-jon: The land given to governmental agencies for their up-keep.
- Kong-jon: State owned land, on which the central government directly imposed taxes.
- Kongshin-jon: The land given to the meritorious ministers of the Yi dynasty.

- Kongsu-jon: The land awarded to finance the building repairs and maintenance of the local offices.
- Kukhaeng suryk-jon: The temple land, from which the expenses of the buddhist ceremony for blessing souls of patriots who died for the Yi dynasty.
- Kupchu-jon: The land given to the couriers and horse masters respectively.
- Kyol: A unit of land measurement which was used as the basis of taxation in the Yi dynasty.
- Kwa-jon: Classified land: Kwajon meant a specific area of land granted to state officials according to their ranks and class. The officials had the right to collect rents from tenant farmers in lieu of salary.
- Kwa-jon bop: Classified land law.
- Naesusa-jon: The public land allotted to the management office of royal properties.
- Pyolsa-jon: The land allotted by the king to those who had successfully served in diplomatic service and who showed outstanding loyalty to the king.
- Sajon: The land which is granted to individual officials with the right of collecting taxes.
- Sangmin: Commoners.
- Sokkirok: The verbatim record of the proceedings and debate of the National Assembly.
- So-jang-pa: Young radical progressive group in the first National Assembly, 1948-50.
- Taejon Hoe Tong: A series of books containing all the legal codes of the five hundred years of the Yi dynasty, which were compiled in the second year of King Kojong's reign.
- Takjibu: The Ministry of Finance.
- Tonghak: Eastern learning. A native religion of Korea.

- Tun-jon: The land which is given to the local army garrison for their up-keep.
- Wangja Kwajon: The land given to the King's sons.
- Yangban: Civil and military officials.
- Yangji Amun: A governmental land survey agency.
- Yokchang-jon: The land given to the horse station master.
- Yong: An army garrison.

APPENDIX E

Conversion Table

CONVERSION TABLE

1 <u>chongbo</u>	= 2.451 acres
	= 0.992 hectare
	= 3.000 <u>pyong</u>
	= 10 <u>tanbo</u>
1 <u>tanbo</u>	= 300 <u>pyong</u>
1 <u>pyong</u>	= an area of 6 feet square
	= an area of 3.3 square meters
	= 0.00816 acres
1 <u>sok</u>	= 4.96 bushels

VITA

A native of Seoul, Korea, Young C. Zeon was educated partly in Korea, United States of America and Europe. He was matriculated in the College of Political Science and Law of Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea, in August, 1951. Then in January, 1953, he came to Lewis and Clark College where he majored in political science and graduated with a B.A. degree in June, 1956. From October, 1956, until June, 1958, he attended the London School of Economics and Political Science, University of London.

On returning to Korea in April, 1959, he obtained a teaching position at the College of Political Science and Law of Yonsei University. In August, 1960, following the establishment of the Second Republic of Korea, he was asked to take a position in the Office of the Prime Minister. Realizing that it offered an excellent opportunity for practical experience, he accepted, and worked in that office as a political secretary until mid-May, 1961.

For two academic years from September, 1962, to June, 1963, and September, 1964, to June, 1965, he attended the University of Stockholm where he earned the M.A. degree in June, 1965. Since September, 1965, he has attended the University of Missouri, Columbia, and earned a Ph.D. in political science in May, 1973. For three academic years

from September, 1966, to June, 1969, he was appointed as a teaching assistant by the Department of Political Science of the University of Missouri. Beginning September, 1969, he has been appointed Assistant Professor to serve on the faculty of The University of South Dakota.

He is a member of Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honor Society; and American Political Science Association; Association for Asian Studies.

He is married and has three children.

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