

PHILIPPINE LAND REFORM - A PROBLEM
IN POLICY FORMATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

by

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PREFACE

This study was inspired by an earlier project of Dr. Louis Douglas of Kansas State University in 1964. The author had the pleasure of assisting him measure the linear reaction of 50 farmers of Gapan, a land reform area, to ideological forces.

A major problem encountered was the inadequacy of materials at a single source. The author had to depend on voluminous literature sent from the Philippines. In addition, research was carried on at Kansas State University, Kansas University, University of Chicago, Wisconsin University, University of Connecticut, Yale University, and the Library of Congress.

Another problem concerned the interpretation of data. At this stage, the Philippines, like other developing nations, suffers from the imprecision of statistics and biased historical accounts. Great care was taken in determining the reliability of facts. Nevertheless, the author accepts that at certain points, he might have been persuaded to take sides in an issue, one which may be unpopular and yet strikes him as the most objective and logical interpretation.

It is hoped that the commentaries of knowledgeable friends in the Philippines on the progress of land reform will "tighten loose ends."

On the whole, the author feels confident that the important facets of land reform have been covered very well.

Wilfredo Al. Clemente II

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Credit is also due to Attorney Gregorio Feliciano, head of the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM), for sending materials and for offering his views. Lastly, the author thanks his brothers of the Alpha Phi Beta fraternity at the University of the Philippines for gathering materials, and Dr. Dominador Clemente, President of the Mindanao Institute of Technology, for sending books, documents and papers read at national and international conferences on land reform and rural development which he attended.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE.	Page i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.	ii
LIST OF TABLES	iv
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.	v
CHAPTER	
I. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY.	1
II. PRE-MAGSAYSAY LAND REFORM	21
III. THE MAGSAYSAY PERIOD.	43
IV. THE POST-MAGSAYSAY PERIOD	62
V. DYNAMICS OF AGRARIAN REFORM	68
VI. PEASANT ATTITUDE TOWARD GOVERNMENT AND LAND REFORM.	81
VII. THE FUTURE OF LAND REFORM	85
APPENDIX	93
BIBLIOGRAPHY	101

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Share Tenancy Density by Province.	11
2. Family Income and Expenditure by Income Class, 1960.	15
3. Share of Agriculture in the National Income.	16
4. Attitudes Expressed as Reasons for Position on Land Reform	83

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. Magsaysay's Land Reform and Rural Development Program.	51

CHAPTER I

METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

A major problem encountered in the study of policies in developing nations is that of ascertaining the optimum capacity of the government to achieve its stated goals. By optimum capacity, we refer to the realistic limit of the government to achieve its ends given the weaknesses and strength of the total system. Viewing the rising expectations and the increasingly turbulent "winds of change" well juxtaposed at a backdrop of a deficient economy and a conflicting polity, it becomes very important that the optimum capacity be pinpointed both for strategy purposes and for attuning the people to the harsh realities. Many politicians, journalists and even scholars who criticize the government programs with good intentions are guilty of moving away from this direction. It is not that their criticisms are unfounded. On the contrary, their appraisals of the programs are basically correct. Yet, they have not succeeded in weaving their small observations into a meaningful totality. In other words, instead of merely asserting the obvious defects of the programs, they must "fathom the obscurities" and be able to set the meaningful, realistic limit. For instance, corruption is often cited as the cause of the government's failure. A review of the literature on corruption points out that the question as to whether the cost of corruption outweighs the benefit is still an issue. J. W. Nye, in his recent article entitled "Corruption and Political Development: A Cost-Benefit Analysis," seems to suggest that more extensive studies be made to investigate the effect of corruption on a policy in relation to its specific short or long-range goal and in relation to the overall

goal of development.¹ Given the optimum capacity, then the critics have a good case when they can show a discrepancy between it and the actual performance of the government. Of course, this task is difficult. Complicating it is the "formalism" that Riggs observes in developing nations wherein there is a wide discrepancy between the prescriptive and the descriptive, between the formal and actual power, between the impression given by the constitution, laws and regulations, organization charts and statistics, and the actual practices and fact of government and society.²

The problem of pinpointing the optimum capacity is very real in studying Philippine land reform. Articulate critics of the land reform program claim that its slow implementation is due to the lack of funds, bureaucratic inefficiency brought about by corruption and lack of coordination, opposition of the elite and the incongruence of the ideology of the implementors and the peasants. These themes hardly changed since the time land reform was started by the American Commission in the early part of the century. The critics know what they do not want but they do not know how to achieve what they want under the existing Philippine conditions. They have not proposed an alternative solution and they cannot present a realistic one unless they define first the limitation of the program.

It is to this task of pinpointing the optimum capacity that this study is dedicated. Perhaps, the answer to the problem is still far from sight and may not be achieved here. Nevertheless, it is hoped that whatever findings are made in this study will contribute to the clarification of the optimum

¹J. S. Nye, "Corruption and Political Development: A Cost-Benefit Analysis," The American Political Science Review, Vol. LXI, No. 2 (June, 1967), pp. 417-427.

²Fred Riggs, Administration in Developing Nations, (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Press, 1964), pp. 15-18.

capacity. This study will trace the progress of land reform from 1900 to 1967. It will then pluck out certain events, analyze them and find if there is any uniformity at all to explain the success - or failure - of land reform. The study will also discuss the dynamics of the policy formation. Among the actors that will be highlighted are the American Government, the peasant organizations and the landed elite.

The various approaches used among the available literature on land reform in the Philippines and in other developing countries were reviewed in order to find which one or which combination presents well the scope of this study in relation to its objective of defining the optimum capacity. The decision-making approach offered a good account of the dynamics. However, it was felt that this approach was inadequate to provide a continuity to the events, notably the legislative pieces and executive decisions, which may have influenced significantly the course of the present land reform program over the long span of time. The case-study approach, which is prevalent among the studies on Philippine land reform, was also considered. Most of these studies centered on one or two localities. Many provided interesting conclusions and offered hypothetical questions which may be researched further using a larger survey universe. For instance, the study of Dr. Louis Douglas showed surprisingly that there was no significant difference between the leaders of a poblacion and the farmers of two barrios in their attitude towards government, life and science.³ Without discounting the valuable contribution of the case studies to the analysis here, the case study approach was not adopted because it was effective only on an area and scope too limited for the purpose of this study. A third possible model for analysis was the

³Louis Douglas, "Fifty Farmers of Gapan: The Propensity to Develop in One Rural Philippine Situation," Kansas State University, Spring, 1966.

objective approach wherein the performance of the land reform program is evaluated against its stated social, political and economic ends. This approach offered facility and a very systematic way for analyzing the data. Not only are the goals explicitly stated in the legislative pieces but there are also statistics available to construct the "profile" of the peasants and show the difference, if any, in their condition given a specific time series. In spite of these advantages, this approach was rejected for two reasons. Firstly, this study views land reform as a policy in two stages: formulation and implementation. The objective approach accounts only for the second stage. Secondly, even if this approach was adopted, its use will be premature considering that the Philippine land reform program has hardly "taken off from the paper." S. J. Eldersveld suggests another approach in his new book on the Indian bureaucracy.⁴ Investigating first the bureaucrat and the peasant in their respective environment, he then went on to find if there was any congruence in the perception or expectation of the bureaucrat and the peasant of each other. This approach is very appealing if we assume that the central factor in the success or failure of land reform is the bureaucracy. Unfortunately, this is not the assumption of this study. Vernon Ruttan offers a much more comprehensive model for analysis which incorporates Eldersveld's approach.⁵ He gives four factors to consider. First, there are the ends, objectives or goals which are sought under the legislation. Second, there are the means or policy instruments that are available to achieve the policy

⁴S. J. Eldersveld (et.al), The Citizen and the Administrator in a Developing Democracy, (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Co), 1967.

⁵Vernon Ruttan, "Land Reform and National Economic Development," in Gerardo Sicat, (ed.), The Philippine Economy in the 1960's (Quezon City: Univ. of the Philippines Press, 1964), p. 93.

objectives and there are the constraints that are imposed by these factors or variables which cannot be treated as policy variables or instruments. Third, there is the normative orientation or value system of the society which affects both the ordering of the alternative goals of action and the choice of policy instruments. Fourth, there are the decision makers, administrators, and technicians to whom society grants authority to make decisions with respect to program ends and means and to administer the program.

The Ruttan model was found to be the most appropriate approach for the purpose of this study. Unfortunately, geographical, time and logistical considerations made it impossible to conduct a survey research of peasants or a role analysis of administrators. Given this limitation, this study could not apply the Ruttan model effectively to its available data. Thus, it was forced to revert back to the traditional, historical, descriptive and deductive approach.

Two important points must be kept in mind. First, this study assumes that presidential leadership is the key factor in the success or failure of land reform. Thus, the progress of land reform is traced under each administration in order to focus on the strains and the style of each president. Second, since the mechanics of land reform have been expanded to include every aspect of agrarian reform, the term "land reform" is interchangeably used with the term "agrarian reform."

Definition of Land Reform

Land reform can be defined as the expropriation of large landholdings, with or without compensation, and their redistribution to farmer tenants,

serfs or laborers.⁶ In a larger sense, it may refer to measures for improving the structure or relations among men with respect to their rights in the land.

Land reform entails direct and institutional measures. Direct measures are: (1) promotion of ownership by the operator and the reduction of absentee landlordism; (2) regulations of rental rates and practices and the enactment of lease protection laws; (3) consolidation into efficient-sized units of strip parcels and scattered landholdings; (4) subdivision of large holdings; (5) control of land inheritance to prevent excessive subdivision of holdings or to discourage the accumulation of large holdings; and (6) improvements of land surveys and systems of title registration.⁷ Institutional measures consist of the (1) development of an effective agricultural extension service, research and educational programs; (2) improvement in commercial and cooperative marketing systems; (3) improvement in conditions and quality of agricultural labor; (4) improvement in agricultural credit structure; (5) improvement in arrangements under which land is bought and sold; and (6) reforms in land tax and fiscal policies.⁸

Historically, land reform pursued at least three goals: political, equity and productivity. The first two goals sprouted out of the liberal Jeffersonian tradition which regarded the family farm, owned and operated by the cultivator, as the only sound foundation of social equality and political

⁶Phillip Raup, "The Contribution of Land Reform to Agricultural Development: An Analytical Framework," Economic Development and Cultural Change, Vol. XII, No. 1 (October, 1963), p. 3.

⁷Ibid., pp. 10-21.

⁸Ibid., pp. 10-21.

stability.⁹ Productivity, on the other hand, came out of the British reform which favored more the efficiency in food production over the protection of the farm.¹⁰

The style by which these goals are pursued depends on the situation of the country. Where technical and economic factors are lacking for agricultural production, the political objective may be emphasized. Thus, in Mexico, Bolivia, Korea and Taiwan, reform was instituted mainly to obtain the farmer's loyalty to the government while development goals in the other sectors of the economy were being obtained.¹¹ In Japan, reform was imposed by external sources to capitalize on the equalitarian drive of the peasantry in order to achieve political and social stability.¹²

Land reform, as a force of change, subverts deeply ingrained values. Hence, it is expected to meet obstacles. The difficulty emanates partly from the requirements which a land reform legislation must meet. It also arises from impeding social values and the sphere of influence of the actors affected by the reform. Thus, it has been the experience of countries with a land reform program to undergo difficulties in formulating a policy and in

⁹Irving Mark, Agrarian Conflicts in Colonial New York, 1711-1775 (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1940), p. 93.

¹⁰J. Macgregor, "Principles of Tenure in England and Wales," in K. H. Parsons, et.al (eds), Land Tenure (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1956), pp. 360-374.

¹¹Phillip Raup, "The Political Economy of Land Reform," Paper prepared for the meeting of the Social Science Research Council-American Farm Economics Assn. Committee of New Orientation on Research, New York, November 30, 1962.

¹²M. Kaihara, "One the Effects of Postwar Land Reform in Japan," in Walter Feckwick (ed), Land Tenure, Industrialization and Social Stabilization (Wisconsin: Marquette Univ. Press, 1963), pp. 143-156.

implementing it. In India, for instance, the peasants of a land reform area were ignorant of their rights and privileges. The officials, for their part, were inefficient, apathetic and arrogant.¹³ Farmers in Germany did not care to ask questions about farm practices or visit the pilot farms.¹⁴ In Columbia and in Mexico, land reform suffered from the lack of financing and the opposition of the landlords.¹⁵ In Chile, the maximization of profit was found secondary only to the status of ownership. This prestige value attached to the land inhibited production.¹⁶ And in Tunisia, the program encountered more difficulties in organization and administration than in financing.¹⁷

The Philippine Case

The origin of the big estates can be classified into the following:¹⁸

1. The original big possessions of the datus and chiefs, their families and the lesser Filipino nobility;
2. The acquisition of the public domain of the Philippines by the Spanish conquistadores, allotting to themselves big tracts of land as did Salcedo in Ilocos;

¹³D. Singh, Land Reform in Rajasthan - A Study of the Socio-Economic Effects of Land Reform (New Delhi: Students Agency, 1964).

¹⁴E. Hruschka & D. Rheinwald, "The Effectiveness of German Pilot Farms," in World Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology Abstracts, Vol. VII, No. 4 (December, 1965), p. 577.

¹⁵E. Duff, Agrarian Reform in Columbia: Problems of Social Reform (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964); J. L. Mercado, "Land Reform and the U.N." Philippines Free Press, (December 28, 1963), p. 26.

¹⁶M. J. Sternberg, Chilean Land Tenure and Land Reform (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964).

¹⁷J. L. Mercado, "Land Reform and the U.N.," Philippines Free Press, December 28, 1963, p. 26.

¹⁸Anonymous, "The Peasant War in the Philippines," Philippine Social Science and Humanities Review, Vol. XXIII, No. 2-4 (June-December, 1958), p. 385.

3. The land grants - encomiendas and repartamientos made by the Spanish Government in the Philippines;
4. The introduction of the cacique system;
5. Donations made by rich Spanish citizens to religious and charitable organizations;
6. Acquisition by purchase or other means up to the coming of the Americans; and
7. Introduction of corporation ownership of agricultural lands under the American regime.

The Spaniards who arrived in 1521 realized that the archipelago's wealth was in agriculture. To provide incentives, they organized encomiendas. These were territories awarded to civil and military servants. The only qualification for full ownership was cultivation of the property accompanied by four years of residence. The barangay set-up was fitted into this pattern. The timawas (serfs) and the alipins (slaves) became the peasants while the maharlikas (noble men) were transformed into the landowning aristocracy. The latter enjoyed political, economic and social prestige in the community. The landowners soon became the gobernadorcillos and cabezas de barangay.¹⁹

This feudal arrangement later came to be known as caciquism. The landowner, called a cacique, and the tenant known as kasama, operated under a well-established crop-sharing system characterized by the full exploitation for the benefit, power and glory of the landlord. Caciquism served as the forerunner of present-day agrarian problems.

Tenancy encouraged oppression. The tenant was always at the mercy of the landlord. He was asked to render unpaid labor and domestic service. Refusal meant dismissal.²⁰ He also suffered the burden of usury. Whether he

¹⁹Domingo Salita, "Agricultural Problems: Ownership, Tenancy and Credit," in Robert Huke, Shadows of the Land: An Economic Geography of the Philippines, (Manila: Bookmark, 1963), p. 192.

²⁰Ibid.

needed the money or was forced to take it (pasunod) by the landlord, he ended up paying in cash or in kind (takalanan) twice the amount (takipan), three for two (talindua) or four for three (tersiahan). The tenant also fell prey to the abuse of the landlord in sharing. On June 29, 1946, 4,000 tenants in Batangas complained to President Roxas that they received as low as 25% of the crop.²¹ They alleged that the landlord gave the share on a piece-meal basis as a way of pressuring them to render free domestic service. The Samahang Magbubukid, another peasant group in Batangas, complained that it was robbed 100% of its crop share since 1920.²² Decrying the injustices suffered by the peasants, Luis Taruc cynically commented:

"A peasant who thinks he is going to get 70% in the Central Plains has another guess coming. The overseer comes from the landlord and tells the peasant it really would be much better to keep the 50-50 provision. While he talks, MPs and civilian guards are out shooting birds and making a lot of noise in his fields. If he does not see the light immediately, the overseer comes the next time with a soldier who asks: 'What, you have not signed yet? You must be a radical. We may have to bring you down to town for investigation as a Huk!' Naturally, he signs then on a 50-50 basis."²³

The Case for Land Reform

The case for Philippine land reform is the presence of widespread tenancy. In this era of nationalism and "development-itis," Filipino nationalists blame their Spanish and American mentors for perpetuating tenancy. Yet, 68 years

²¹Anonymous, "The Peasant War in the Philippines," Philippine Social Science and Humanities Review, Vol. XXIII, No. 2-4 (June-December, 1958), p. 389.

²²Ibid.

²³Russell H. Fifield, "The Hukbalahap Today," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XX (June 24, 1951), p. 15.

after Spain ended her 377-year reign and later, 20 years after America relinquished her 52-year rule, tenancy not only remains unabated but it has increased. In 1938, tenants numbered 573,671, constituting 35.1% of the farm operators. In 1948, the percentage remained constant but the number of tenants jumped to 611,761. By 1963, the tenants had grown to 800,000 or roughly 35% of the 2.2 million farmers. Meanwhile, the landlords numbered around 200,000.²⁴

TABLE 1

SHARE TENANCY DENSITY BY PROVINCE
(1964)

Northern Luzon - 25.4%

Isabela	43.2
Nueva Vizcaya	37.3
Cagayan	34.1
Ilocos Norte	33.3
La Union	30.9
Ilocos Sur	28.9
Abra	14.9
Mountain Province	6.8
Batanes	00.0

Central Luzon - 69.3%

Pampanga	87.0
Nueva Ecija	78.5
Bulacan	71.8
Tarlac	62.5
Bataan	61.6
Zambales	54.7
Pangasinan	54.4

²⁴Estimate is by the Program Implementation Agency. See Don Ferry, "The Constitutional and Social Aspects of Land Reform," in Gerardo Sicat, The Philippine Economy in the 1960's (Quezon City: Univ. of the Philippines Press, 1964), p. 126.

Southern Luzon - 50.8%

Cavite	74.9
Laguna	71.1
Rizal	57.2
Batangas	56.8
Mindoro Oriental	53.5
Romblon	53.3
Quezon	49.5
Mindoro Occidental	48.9
Marinduque	34.7
Palawan	8.2

Bicol Region - 45.7%

Albay	65.8
Camarines Sur	56.9
Sorsogon	51.2
Camarines Norte	50.1
Masbate	38.7
Catanduanes	16.5

Western Visayas - 50.6%

Capiz	69.9
Negros Occidental	63.9
Iloilo	58.9
Aklan	33.1
Antique	27.2

Eastern Visayas - 41.9%

Leyte del Norte	57.3
Cebu	53.3
Negros Oriental	48.3
Leyte del Sur	42.3
Bohol	28.1

Northern Mindanao - 31.1%

Misamis Occidental	55.3
Zamboanga del Norte	33.6
Agusan	32.5
Zamboanga del Sur	30.7
Surigao del Sur	27.4
Misamis Oriental	21.9
Surigao del Norte	17.7

Southern Mindanao - 27.4%

Sulu	42.7
Davao	41.2
Cotabato	27.1
Bukidnon	21.4
Lanao	5.6

Source: Information provided by the National Land Reform Council appearing in the Manila Times, August 2, 1965, p. 18.

It may be noted that Central Luzon leads all the other regions in tenant density. Instead of diminishing, its density increased. In contrast to 67.1% in 1948, it was 69.3% in 1964.

Socio-Economic-Political Implications of Land Reform

The widespread tenancy, as history shows, has led to violent peasant unrest. The Tamblot Rebellion of Bohol in 1622, the Banca Rebellion in Limasawa, the Sumoroy Rebellion in Samar in 1649-1650, the Ilocano revolts in 1645 and in 1660, the Juan de la Cruz Palariz revolt in 1762, the Diego Silang fight in the Ilocos in the same year, the uprisings in Cagayan, Batangas, Tayabas, Laguna, Camarines, Samar, Panay and Cebu, the Dagohoy revolt in Bohol in 1827-1828, the Apolinario de la Cruz rebellion in Laguna and Tayabas, the Katipunan revolution of 1896 against the Spaniards, the Sakdalista uprising in 1935, the Huk rebellion from 1945 to 1955, and the present-day periodic violence in Central Luzon involving tenants, tenants and landlords, tenants and town officials, and tenants and the army - all these express the negativism of the peasants toward the excesses of Philippine feudalism. Land reform, in modifying and in ultimately eliminating the traditional tenant-landlord arrangement, may remove the century-old social inequities accompanying feudalism thereby lessening the class tension. In

destroying the barrier between the first class and second class Filipinos, it may also pull the more than 800,000 tenants into the mainstream of political life. At the moment, the channels for interest articulation and aggregation, in spite of the occasional and eloquent peroration of politicians about blank democratic cliches, remain a monopoly of the traditional elite and the nouveaux riches.²⁵ Most significantly, land reform may contribute to the overall economic development of the country. Since the transfer of title, either through the transitional leasehold system or through a direct sale assures the farmer that whatever additional increments will accrue to him, he will have more incentives to produce.

On a broader scale, the economy to which land reform directs itself faces four problems. First, the rise in the national income has done little to relieve extreme poverty of the vast majority. In spite of the rapid growth by all criteria²⁶ of the Philippine postwar economy, two-thirds of the national income in 1960 was still in the hands of only 10 per cent of the people.²⁷ Meanwhile, 96.33% of the total households suffered deficit spending. Second, the balance of payment remained in a precarious disequilibrium. After the shift to a decontrol policy in 1962, the balance of payment

²⁵Jean Grossholtz, The Philippines (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1964), pp. 217-227. For more on the political culture, see Carl Lande, Leaders, Factions and Parties - The Structure of Philippine Politics, Prepared by the Southeast Asia Studies Program of Yale University (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966); and Onofre Corpuz, The Philippines (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1965).

²⁶Goodstein reports that the 1956 real product increased by 90 per cent over that of 1938. Marvin Goodstein, Pace and Pattern of Philippine Economic Growth: 1938, 1948 and 1956, Prepared by the Southeast Asian Program of Cornell University (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1962), p. 31.

²⁷Joint Legislative-Executive Tax Commission, Study of Tax Burden by Income Class in the Philippines in 1960 (Manila: JLETC, 1964), Table 2, p. 47.

dropped to a negative 25.34 per cent in the first six months of 1964.²⁸

Third, the rise in national income has not checked the increasing unemployment. A conservative estimate places the unemployment rate in 1963 between

TABLE 2
FAMILY INCOME AND EXPENDITURE BY INCOME CLASS (1960)

Income Classes	H-holds (000)	Per Cent	Average Income	Average Expend.	Excess AI/AE
All classes	4,751	100.00	P1,474	P1,709	P (235)
Less P500	1,206	25.38	350	665	(315)
P500 - P999	1,471	30.96	746	1,107	(371)
1000 - 1499	770	16.21	1,220	1,512	(292)
1500 - 1900	502	10.57	1,705	2,091	(386)
2000 - 2999	372	7.83	2,361	2,936	(575)
3000 - 3999	153	3.22	3,373	3,922	(549)
4000 - 4999	98	2.06	4,424	4,935	(511)
5000 - 5999	47	.99	5,429	5,304	125
6000 - 6999	34	.71	6,366	5,535	831
7000 - 7999	20	.42	7,006	5,907	1,099
8000 - 8999	15	.32	8,532	7,408	1,124
9000 - 9999	10	.21	9,242	9,114	128
10,000 & over	53	1.12	19,607	10,226	9,471

Source: JLETC. A Study of Tax Burden by Income Class (1964), Table 2, p. 47.

8 - 10 per cent.²⁹ If the 2,700,000 underemployed workers were to be added to the 724,000 unemployed laborers, the unemployment rate will jump to 30.4 percent of a labor force estimated at 11.1 million. This figure does not yet include whoever will not find a job among the 390,000 new labor force every year.³⁰ All in all, about 10 million or one third of the population will be

²⁸Central Bank, Statistical Bulletin, Vol. XV, No. 2 (June, 1964)

²⁹The estimate covers the range of different figures supplied by authors, journalists, politicians and government agencies.

³⁰"Monte Bats Anew for Capital Entry," Daily Mirror, June 14, 1965.

affected by this degree of unemployment. Fourth, in the face of an exploding population estimated between 3.2 per cent and 3.8 per cent, the economy finds it a task to maintain if not surpass the past rates of growth. From 1945 to 1955, the economy averaged a growth rate of 6.6 per cent. Then it dropped to 5.9 per cent in 1958. In the 1960's, the economy suffered dampening factors of the decontrol, rising prices and wages, tight credit, higher interest rates, smuggling, oppressive competition, slackening of industrial production and decadent government administration. Together, they brought down the average growth rate to 4.2 per cent for this period.

On a limited scale, land reform may increase the contribution of agriculture to the economy. In a matter of 10 years, agriculture's share dropped from 33.99 per cent to 28.72 per cent. This may be read as a sign of industrialization. Yet, far from the optimism that accompanies industrialization,

TABLE 3

SHARE OF AGRICULTURE IN THE NATIONAL INCOME

Year	Agriculture (%)	Non-Agriculture (%)
1953	33.99	66.01
1954	33.43	66.57
1955	32.63	69.37
1956	30.52	69.48
1957	29.31	70.69
1958	29.79	70.21
1959	28.92	71.08
1960	28.78	71.22
1961	28.43	71.57
1962	27.92	72.08
1963	28.72	71.28

Data taken from PIA, Survey of the Philippine Economy (Manila: PIA, 1965), p. 10.

this shift elicits concern more than joy if it does not transfer an appropriate number of the agricultural labor to the industrial sector. This is the case in the Philippines wherein the farmers who constitute about two-thirds of the population account only for one third of the output. The effect is far from encouraging. First, the decline in agriculture lessens the buying power of those in its sector. Second, it affects the income level of rural families. While an urban family earns P2,475 annually, a rural family averages 5.7 persons gets only P989.³¹ Third, this subsistence living in turn hampers savings. In 1960, only 3.67 per cent of the total households did not suffer deficit spending. Lastly, a national income make-up of this nature delays the emergence of a middle class - a phenomenon viewed as an important factor by many scholars for the development of political stability in emerging nations.³² If income were to be the sole determinant of social hierarchy, only 2.5% of the total households fall within the middle-class range of P5000 - P9000.

On a much more limited scale, land reform may help solve the perennial rice crisis. Many of the tenancy problems occur in Central Luzon, which is the "rice-bowl" of the country.

At present, rice importation is not only an established fixture of the government but also has deteriorated to acute proportions. From 1963 to 1965, President Macapagal imported 1,151,400 metric tons costing more than P780 million. It exceeds the total rice importation in the previous 14 years which amounted to 1,092,755 metric tons.³³ President Marcos, like all his

³¹Onofre Corpuz, The Philippines (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1965), p. 58

³²Dankworth Rostow, "New Horizons for Comparative Politics," in Ekstein and Apter (eds.), Comparative Politics (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), pp. 57-66.

³³Manila Chronicle, February 19, 1965, p. 1.

predecessors, promised rice sufficiency. Yet, he had to order the importation of 20,000 metric tons worth P2.3 million from Hongkong in November, 1966. And in February, 1967, he again had to import 100,000 metric tons worth \$20 million from the United States.³⁴ It is unlikely that rice-shortage will disappear in the immediate future. Per capita consumption is increasing slowly. By mid-1962, it stood roughly at 1.80 cavans of clean rice per year as contrasted to 1.75 cavans 5 years earlier.³⁵ This indicates a national demand increasing at 5 per cent annually for the next decade. Given the national production average of 28 cavans per hectare, the 3.1 million hectares of rice land will produce only 99 million cavans of palay annually. This will be short by 3.5 million sacks of milled rice from the annual consumption of 106 million cavans. Given the same level of production, a population growth of 3.2 per cent and a rice-production increase of 1.7 per cent (average of the last twelve years), the National Economic Council estimated a shortage of 357,000 metric tons for 1967.³⁶

The rice-crisis is not a simple problem of food production. It has penetrated deeply into the political-economy of the country. It is not improbable that researches may eventually try to prove or disprove the hypothesis that the Philippine President is made or unmade by rice prices. The P18 million annually spent for the average annual import of 69,000 metric tons from 1946 to 1962 is a big dent on the country's balance of payment. Moreover, the low production lowers what already is a subsistence income of rice farmers.

³⁴Manila Chronicle, February 28, 1967, p. 1.

³⁵Robert Huke, Shadows of the Land: An Economic Geography of the Philippines (Manila: Bookmark, 1963), p. 218.

³⁶Jose Lacaba, "Another Crisis Coming Up," Philippines Free Press, Vol. LX, No. 5 February 4, 1967, p. 67.

Ironically, the rice crisis has reshaped antiquated Philippine thinking towards a more pragmatic orientation. For instance, since rice shortage occurs only in the second part of the year, it has been proposed that the election be moved to the first part of the year in order to avoid the extravagant importation for election purposes. The rice insufficiency also evoked hope on the part of the economists that the government would pursue a more permanent development blue-print. This way, rice production and other economic programs might be tailored according to a plan that is more attuned to reality, one that is not vulnerable to the whims of politicians or the changes in administration. Lately, the acute rice problem has driven the government to open cultural and trade ties with communist countries. As the government reasoned, "All the people want is rice. They don't care where it comes from."³⁷ Rice insufficiency also influenced the government to center its attention on agriculture. A review of the speeches of Presidents for the past decade reveals that the concern for this sector has been propelled mainly by the rice problem. To quote President Macapagal, "Agriculture shall take precedence over all aspects of economic development mainly because of low rice production."³⁸ It was also the rice crisis that pressed the government for the formulation of a land reform program.

The concern to solve the rice problem is indeed great. Recently, a directive was issued requiring school children to learn how to produce rice. Meanwhile, Executive Secretary Rafael Salas has "withdrawn" from his Malacanang chores to devote his main attention to the national rice production program.

³⁷Manila Chronicle, March 7, 1967, p. 1.

³⁸Pres. Diosdado Macapagal, "Agricultural Development," Address at the Commencement of Central Luzon Agric. College, April 9, 1962.

Land reform, in helping solve the rice crisis, may contribute to a positive change in the "texture" of the Philippine political economy. If the administration is spared the "rice-price test" as a barometer of its efficiency by the voters, then it may be able to pursue other economic objectives with more vigor.

CHAPTER II

PRE-MAGSAYSAY PERIOD

The nature of the internal strain and the external pressure impinging upon the different administrations in pursuing a program of land reform may not fundamentally change. The bureaucratic inefficiency or the pressure and counter-pressure of interest groups may be carried over from one administration to the other. However, the impact of these stresses does vary from one period to the other. Such oscillation affects the style by which administration tackles the problem. To focus on the style, land reform under each administration will be discussed separately. For the purpose of presentation, all the administrations from 1900 to 1966 will be ordered chronologically under three different periods: pre-Magsaysay, Magsaysay and post-Magsaysay. The pre-Magsaysay period extends from 1900 to 1953. It covers the American Commission, the Commonwealth Government under President Manuel Quezon from 1935 until his death in 1943, the Puppet Government headed by President Jose Laurel, the brief interlude of Vice-President Osmena at the death of President Quezon, and the first two administrations under President Manuel Roxas in 1946 and President Elpidio Quirino in 1949 respectively. The Magsaysay period takes off from his first day in office on January 1, 1954 to his death on March 17, 1957. The period from then on constitutes the post-Magsaysay era. The administrations represented here are those of President Carlos Garcia in 1957, President Diosdado Macapagal in 1961 and President Ferdinand Marcos in 1965.

The progress of land reform seems to favor these arbitrary cut-off points. The pre-Magsaysay period is characterized by the laying down of the foundation

of land reform by legislative fiat. The meaningful implementation of the program did not come until the Magsaysay period. Backed by a strong executive support, the reorganized agencies were able to reach the people. In the same period, the administration pushed for the replacement of impractical laws and for the reduction of the area of lands exempted from expropriation. While it succeeded in the former, its performance in the latter failed to reach its expectation. If we assume a continuum of only two stages representing the formation and implementation of a policy, the Magsaysay period constitutes the marginal break-off point. For the first time, the administration manifested a sincere commitment to implement the program of land reform. On the other hand, it failed to bring about a meaningful policy for land expropriation and distribution. The post-Magsaysay period marks the end of the long legislative struggle to set a meaningful ceiling for land expropriation. It also introduces us to the early part of the final stage of land reform: implementation.

The American Commission

The American Commission was confronted by three problems: the method to be used in segregating public lands, the manner of disposing unoccupied public lands and the size of lots to be offered, and whether the public lands should be reserved only for Filipinos or for Americans as well. In 1902, the Commission adopted the Torrens system which provided for the confirmation of "imperfect titles." Occupants of public lands who had no titles of any kind which could be confirmed by the court could obtain titles from the government in the form of homestead patents, sale, free patent and lease. The Commission liberalized this policy to the point of making it ineffectual.¹ Those who

¹Richard Pringle, "Some Thoughts on the Relationship of Agricultural Economics and Over-all Economic Development," Economic Research Journal, Vol. VI, No. 1, (June, 1959), p. 5.

based their claim on possession alone were able to enlarge their real property by claiming adjacent public lands due to the widespread destruction of Spanish records. In 1920, the Land Registration Law of 1902 was revised. Settlement areas were declared and restrictions were placed on the nationality of the applicants for agricultural lands. The Commission had a negative attitude toward land grants but it ended up giving them. Individuals could lease agricultural lands up to 17 hectares while corporations were allowed up to 1024 hectares.

Acting on the instruction of President McKinley of April, 1900, the Taft Commission took a crack at the friar lands. The Commission Act 271 in 1903 reduced the church right to hold properties for religious purposes only. Friar lands, if found illegally claimed by third parties, were to be reverted to the government of the United States in accordance with the spirit of the Treaty of Paris. Religious properties constituted 42,807 hectares affecting 60,000 tenants. The Taft Commission failed to include the friar lands among the 155,198 hectares it purchased for redistribution.² This failure set the tone for future administrations wherein the landed elite were able to pose enough power to block land reform. What can be ascribed to the American Commission as a significant land reform step is the crop distribution law of February 27, 1933 better known as the "Rice-Share Tenancy Act" (Act No. 4054).³ It specified that situations wherein the tenant received less than 50 per cent of the net crop were contrary to public policy.

²University of Chicago, The Philippines, Vol. III (New Haven: Human Relations Area File Inc., 1958), p. 1382; also Anon., "The Peasant War in the Philippines," Philippine Social Science and Humanities Review, Vol. XXIII, No. 2-4 (June-Dec. 1958), p. 387.

³Frank Golay, The Philippines: Public Policy and National Economic Development (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1961), p. 278.

The Commonwealth

By the time President Manuel Quezon assumed the presidency of the Commonwealth in 1935, the relationship between landlords and tenants had deteriorated. The Governor General reported that "farmers are complaining because landlords have insisted upon advance payments of cash rent when customarily they have been contented to receive rents on installments."⁴ On October 5, 1936, the Sakdalistas, a peasant band in the Tagalog region, carried out a brief uprising in Manila.⁵

A dedication to agrarian reform became the hallmark of President Quezon's "Social Justic Program." In his acceptance speech of the Philippine Independence Law and in every annual address before the National Assembly, he called the people's attention to the inequities brought about by feudalism and underscored the need of aiding the peasants by protecting their rights through law and by expropriating lands and establishing experimental stations.

President Quezon's era saw the proliferation of land reform legislation. Commonwealth Act No. 178 amended the "Rice-Share Tenancy Act" so as to make it applicable "by proclamation to be issued by the President of the Philippines upon the recommendation of the Secretary of Labor when public interests so require."⁶ Other legislation designed to improve the tenant-landlord relationship included Commonwealth Act 53 which provides for the acceptance of testimony of lessor and tenand of the land as prima-facie evidence relating to

⁴Second Annual Report of the U.S. High Commissioner to the Philippine Islands (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1937), p. 19.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Frank Golay, The Philippines: Public Policy and National Economic Development, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1961), p. 278.

terms of tenancy and lease contract not reduced to writing,⁷ Commonwealth Act 461 which forbids dispossession of tenants except under causes allowed in Act 4054 known as the Philippine Rice Share Tenancy Act,⁸ Commonwealth Act 538 which suspends ejectment action commenced against tenants or holders of property of landed estates which the government contemplates acquiring,⁹ Commonwealth Act 89 which limits the power of courts and sheriffs to destroy improvements in ejectment proceedings,¹⁰ and Commonwealth Act 608 which set certain necessary conditions under which the landowner can dismiss the tenant.¹¹ Under the area of expropriation and compensation, the National Assembly passed Commonwealth Act 21 authorizing the President to acquire large estates and resell them to bona-fide occupants,¹² Commonwealth Act 32 which ordered the Director of Land to subdivide friar lands remaining undisposed and sell them to bona-fide occupants under a ten-year payment period,¹³ and Commonwealth Act 539 which authorized the President to acquire private lands for residence in small lots.¹⁴

⁷Second Annual Report of the U.S. High Commissioner to the Philippine Islands, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1937), p. 49.

⁸Third Annual Report of the U.S. High Commissioner to the Philippine Islands Covering 1938 and the First Six Months of 1939 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), p. 43.

⁹Fourth Annual Report of the U.S. High Commissioner to the Philippine Islands (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944), p. 34.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Second Annual Report of the U.S. High Commissioner to the Philippine Islands (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1937), p. 49.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Fourth Annual Report of the U.S. High Commissioner to the Philippine Islands (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944), p. 41

Commonwealth Act 271 amended Commonwealth Act 4113 to include contract labor in sugar plantations under the tenancy law.¹⁵ The right of corporations, associations and partnerships in lands was restricted by Commonwealth Act 615.¹⁶ In the area of credit, the National Assembly passed Commonwealth Act 66 providing for the free registration of deeds of agricultural or crop loans by the Justice of the Peace Court as long as the amount did not exceed P200 from the Philippine National Bank,¹⁷ Commonwealth Act 116 authorizing the National Loan Board to loan rice and corn funds not only to agricultural crops but also to market crops,¹⁸ and Commonwealth Act 334 which enables the Director of Rural Credit Board to obtain loans for himself and his relatives with the expressed approval of the Director of Commerce.¹⁹

Finally, in the area of government services, the National Assembly passed Commonwealth Act 12 appropriating P100,000 for the control of locusts,²⁰ Commonwealth 18 appropriating P1,000,000 for the construction of roads in the settlement projects,²¹ Commonwealth Act 151 appropriating P17,000 for the

¹⁵Third Annual Report of the U.S. High Commissioner to the Philippine Islands Covering 1938 and First Six Months of 1939 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), p. 39.

¹⁶Fifth Annual Report of the U.S. High Commissioner to the Philippine Islands (Washington, D. C: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 39.

¹⁷Second Annual Report of the U.S. High Commissioner to the Philippine Islands (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1937), p. 39.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Third Annual Report of the U.S. High Commissioner to the Philippine Islands Covering 1938 and First Six Months of 1939 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943) p. 39.

²⁰First Annual Report of the U.S. High Commissioner to the Philippine Islands, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1936), p. 39.

²¹Second Annual Report of the U.S. High Commissioner to the Philippine Islands, op. cit., p. 39.

repair of dams in the friar lands,²² Commonwealth Act 176 allocating an amount from the funds advanced to the Director of Land for the repair, construction and improvement of irrigation works,²³ Commonwealth Act 193 appropriating P100,000 to transport animals and agricultural tools of homesteaders,²⁴ Commonwealth Act 360 appropriating P250,000 for the construction of laborers' dwelling houses,²⁵ Commonwealth Act 141 providing for free patent of homestead,²⁶ and Commonwealth Act 167 calling for uniform weight and volume in trading palay.²⁷

By the end of President Quezon's term on August 1, 1943, the government succeeded in expropriating five haciendas. These were the Bahay, Pari, Marikina, Dinalupihan, Lean, and San Pedro Tunasan. Land for the landless however still remained acute. Below is an excerpt from the Fifth Annual Report of the Commissioner General for 1941-1943:

"The number of landless families in rural areas are increasing. Homesteading has deteriorated. Koronadal Valley and other resettlement projects absorb only a fraction. Development in urban and mineral industries absorb only a minor part of the growing labor population.

Redistribution has been placed under the Rural Progress Administration. Objections have been raised in several instances by the tenants who claimed that the land should be granted freely to them as they and their ancestors had worked upon it for generations."²⁸

²²Ibid., p. 49.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Fifth Annual Report of the H.S. High Commissioner to the Philippine Islands (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 39.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

Agrarian unrest likewise remained unchecked. In 1940, newspapers carried headlines about peasant strikes in Central Luzon and about skirmishes between the Socialist Party and the Constabulary.²⁹ By June, 1941, eleven provinces were placed under Philippine Constabulary control. The provinces were Pangasinan, Pampanga, Tarlac, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Zambales, Bataan, Cavite, Rizal, Batangas and Laguna.³⁰ It may be noted that these provinces, until today, are still known for their high rate of tenancy and the periodic peasant unrest.

For all his failures in land reform, President Quezon may be credited for two trends. First, it was during his term that the extensive foundation of land reform was established. Second, he set the style of seeking reform by legislative fiat. Subsequent reform attempts reflected the two features.

The Jose Laurel-Sergio Osmena Era

A discussion of the Puppet Administration of Jose Laurel is necessary for lending continuity to the discussion of the peasant problem. When the Japanese forces occupied the Philippines during the war, President Quezon sought refuge in Washington, D.C. From there, he tried to maintain a government in exile. A series of amendments to the Constitution made it possible for him to extend his term for the duration of the war. Meanwhile, the Japanese forces installed Jose Laurel as President on September 4, 1943. Laurel's contribution to land reform is minimal. At most, it is negative. In the eyes of the peasants who joined the guerrilla forces, he emerged after the war as a collaborator and as an ally of the landed gentry.

²⁹Fourth Annual Report of the U.S. High Commissioner to the Philippine Islands (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1944), p. 42.

³⁰Fifth Annual Report of the U.S. High Commissioner to the Philippine Islands (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), p. 35.

Philippine politics saw a complete reversal of the World War II incidents in Laurel's life from 1949 to 1953. Running as a candidate of the Nacionalista Party for the presidency, he championed the cause of the peasants. The peasants came out openly for his candidacy. Unlike others who viewed the unrest in Central Luzon as part of an ideological struggle, Laurel interpreted it as a social revolt. He traced this "social sickness" to the corruption of the government and the unjust treatment of the lower class.

Laurel, for all his efforts, lost his bid for the presidency in an election marked by fraudulence.

Sergio Osmena rose to the Presidency of the government in exile on the death of President Quezon in August, 1943. In 1945, he returned with General MacArthur's liberation force and held on to the office until the first election of the Philippine Republic in 1946.

The peasants emerged from the mountains as a strong, organized group. Rallying under the banner of "Democratic Alliance," 20,000 peasants trooped to Manila on September 23, 1945 from the neighboring Central Luzon provinces. Another rally drawing 65,000 peasants, laborers, guerrillas and intellectuals occurred three months later. The petition included the clamping down of prices and the selling of commodities to the people at cost, minimum living wage of a dollar and a half, payment of three years back-pay salary to non-collaborators, extension of easy credit facilities to the peasants, and removal of crooks, racketeers and political lameducks in the government.³¹ These demands were directed mainly against the landed gentry. Once more, the election of 1946 wherein Roxas opposed Osmena for the presidency once more posed

³¹Hernando Abaya, Betrayal in the Philippines (New York: A. A. Wynn Inc., 1946), p. 127.

to the latter the crucial choice of either taking a side with the peasants or with the traditional power elite.

Osmena was receptive to the peasants. James Dalton reports:

"Osmena was determined to establish a government based on broad, popular support. He encouraged the increasing of political activity of economic interest groups such as the tenants of Central Luzon and endorsed some of their objectives, including an extensive program of land reform, more equitable contractual arrangements for division of rice crops between landlords and tenants, and immediate disarming of the large private armies maintained by landlords and local politicians. Supporters favored a stern attitude toward collaborators."³²

In return, the Democratic Alliance supported Osmena's bid for the presidency. This generated a countervailing force rallying behind Roxas composed of small landholders, sugar planters, banking and commercial interests who feared the rising tide of peasant and labor discontent. Osmena lost the election. The defeat signalled once more the victory of the landed gentry over the peasants.

Osmena had the misfortune of returning to a country suffering from the disabling effect of war - a country with a crippled economy, a disoriented society and an animated outcry for independence. Under this situation, Osmena could not do much for agrarian reform.

Manuel Roxas and the Peasants

Manuel Roxas' address to the nation made it clear that the government alone cannot create the wealth needed for the sustenance of the nation and that land reform shall take top priority. Basically, agrarian reform posed two problems. One concerned the relationship between the tenants and the

³²James Dalton, "Ins and Outs in the Philippines," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XXI, No. 12 (July 30, 1952), p. 18.

landlords. The other involved the task of dealing with the Huks, a politically vocal peasant group with military capabilities.

It was in his administration that the "70-30 Crop Sharing Law" was placed in the statute books. This act stipulates that only 30% of the rice crop shall be given the landlord while 70% shall be kept by the tenant provided the latter furnished the farm implements and work animals and finances the planting and harvesting.³³

Another piece of agrarian legislation was Republic Act No. 44. It revised Commonwealth Act No. 461 which provided for compulsory arbitration of any controversy arising between the landlord and the tenant.³⁴

In the area of administration, Roxas took off where the war stopped Quezon's program. Since 1917, the government pursued a policy of land colonization. Quezon adopted this when he organized the National Land Settlement Administration (NSLA) in 1939. At the outbreak of war, NSLA was operating two settlement projects in southwestern Mindanao and one in northeastern Luzon. A total of 6,170 settler families resided in these projects. In 1946, Roxas revived NSLA. Congress appropriated P5 million to rehabilitate the projects and resume settlement operations.³⁵

In 1946, Roxas made Commonwealth Act. No. 178 (Rice Share Tenancy Act) applicable (only 10 provinces in 1941) to all the provinces.

³³P.I. Congress, An Act Amending Certain Sections of Act No. 4054, as amended, otherwise known as the Philippine Rice Share Tenancy Act, Republic Act. No. 34, 1st Congress, 1st session, September 30, 1946, sec. 8.

³⁴P.I., Congress, An Act to Revise Com. Act No. 461 entitled An Act to Regulate the Relations Between Land Owner and Tenant, as amended by Com. Act 608, Republic Act No. 44, 1st Congress, 1st session, October 3, 1946, sec. 1.

³⁵Frank Golay, The Philippines: Public Policy and National Economic Development, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1961), p. 283.

The bureaucracy was also reorganized to cope effectively with the increasing tenant-landlord disputes. Until 1947, the Tenancy Law Enforcement Division of the Department of Justice followed up the cases. Due to the increasing number of cases, it was ineffectual in protecting the rights of the peasants. Thus, in January, 1948, its function was transferred to the Court of Industrial Relations.³⁶

The more disturbing problem of agrarian reform was posed by the Huks. After the war, the Huks zealously sought agrarian reform. Notable among their demands were more equitable crop division between landlord and tenant, purchase of large landed estates and their sale to bona-fide tenants, effective agricultural loan agencies to aid small farmers, a fairer system of taxation based on the ability to pay, the use of modern agricultural implements provided by the government, tractor stations, organization of cooperatives, creation of homesites where the peasants could erect homes, construction of agricultural experimental stations in suitable locations, and adoption of the collective system of farming.³⁷ Unlike innocuous peasant groups, the Huks had arms to back up their demands.

The first sign of open conflict occurred right after Roxas' election. He did not allow 7 Democratic Alliance Congressmen to be seated.³⁸ Among this group was Luis Taruc. There was evidence that he was bent on pursuing a

³⁶Deogracias Lerma, "The Evolution of Agrarian Laws in the Philippines," (unpublished Master's thesis submitted to the University of Manila Graduate School, March, 1958), p. 73.

³⁷Anon., "The Peasant War in the Philippines," Philippine Social Science and Humanities Review, Vol. XXIII, No. 2-4 (June-Dec. 1958), p. 384.

³⁸James Dalton, "Ins and Outs in the Philippines," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XXI, No. 12 (July 29, 1952), p. 18.

mailed-fist policy towards the Huks. As early as the eve of the proclamation of independence, Roxas received from the U.S. \$50 million as gift to suppress the Huks.³⁹

Although stern, Roxas was open to compromise. . The government made overtures to the Huks to lay down their arms. On July 6, 1946, Jose de Leon, head of the Huks in Northeastern Luzon, offered cooperation provided the Democratic Alliance congressmen were allowed to take their seats and the veterans' benefits of Huk guerillas recognized.⁴⁰ Agreement was reached on July 28. The peaceful peasants were to retain their arms. The atrocities of the military police were to be stopped. In addition, a new rice-crop sharing agreement based on the 70-30 arrangement was arrived at. The government also promised to acknowledge the "ultimate right of the peasant to own his own land."⁴¹

The negotiation, however, broke down into a mere maneuvering for advantage. The government was coasting along because it was finding its mailed fist policy too costly. The loss of troops in clashes also generated an unfavorable opinion "at home and abroad." On the part of the Huks, their demand was getting entangled with Communist propaganda. By August, Roxas and Taruc were exchanging bitter words. "You don't believe in democracy; you believe in military force," Roxas accused Taruc.⁴² The latter expressed the same sentiment concerning Roxas. In the end, the negotiation gave way to a protracted war that never ended until 1954.

³⁹Barbara Entengberg, "Agrarian Reform and the Hukbalahap," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XV, No. 16 (August 14, 1946), p. 246.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., p. 248.

Since Roxas was saddled in fighting the Huks, his agrarian program suffered. The NSLA made very little progress. In 1948, the number of settlers began to decline. From July, 1945 to July, 1949, its budget ran extravagantly at P10,000 per family settled. Yet, its reports tended to become "short summaries of the overwhelming difficulties which paralyzed activity by that time." When it was dissolved in 1950, it was estimated to have incurred debts of over P2 million.⁴³

The Roxas years bring out the following points. Firstly, the success of the Huks in getting the government to negotiate reflected the strength of the peasants in Central Luzon and their refusal to be intimidated by the mailed-fist policy of the administration. Secondly, despite the improvement of the tenant's legal position through postwar legislation, many legitimate complaints have not been satisfied. Thirdly, the Huks had legitimate fears that once disarmed, they would be helpless against the reprisal of elements in the Philippine government who had announced the most extreme measure against them. Fourthly, for the most part, the Huk objectives included social reforms of a mild, unrevolutionary character long needed for the improvement of the peasant tenant farmer. Fifthly, Roxas' pocket war cleansing of Central Luzon did not solve any fundamental social issue. In response to the peasant's request for reform, his administration made no serious effort to solve the problem by legislation or initiation of improvements in the working conditions of the peasants. On the contrary, political maneuvering gave way to full military operation of the government. This failure to end the strife suggests to succeeding administrations that the problem of agrarian unrest cannot be dispelled by force alone.

⁴³Frank Golay, The Philippines: Public Policy and National Economic Development, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1961), p. 283.

Quirino's Land Reform

Quirino faced basically the same problems in agrarian reform as those of the Roxas administration. The peace and order in Central Luzon was still deteriorating. In addition, positive agrarian programs, although not necessarily in the same line of emphasis, were badly needed. Like his predecessor, these problems were to be solved against a background of a government drowning in financial difficulties.⁴⁴

Pres. Quirino's style reverberates the "Social Justice Program" of Quezon. In the tradition of Philippine political slogan-making, he chose "social amelioration" as the guideline of his administration.

The legislative and administrative actions in the category of "services" to the farmers were impressive. On June 16, 1961, Congress passed Republic Act No. 663. Its aim was to "develop and improve the rice and corn industries and to promote social and economic conditions of the people engaged in the production of these staple foods." The National Rice and Corn Corporation (NARIC) was assigned to this task. By virtue of Executive Order No. 350, it took over the functions of the defunct Philippine Rice and Corn Corporation (PRISCO). Aside from its educational and advisory function, NARIC had the duty of stabilizing the price. Measures designed to attain this were: maintenance of a stable price consistent with production and the purchasing power of the people; prevention of speculation in trading and of exploitation

⁴⁴"Cutting down expenses was not the answer for although there had been wasteful outlays, government expenditure on education, agricultural health and public welfare was very inadequate." James Storer, "Philippine Economic Progress," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XXII, No. 8 (July, 1953), p. 89; "One problem was government finance. In 1950, revenue fell 30 million pesos from the previous year." Bell Mission Report, Report to the President of the United States by the Economic Survey Mission to the Philippines, Washington, 1950, Technical Memoranda, Section IX, Table 2.

of the consumer; financing of producers of the raw products as well as other activities of the industries needing such assistance, study, promotion and execution of such measures to improve quality and unit yield; promotion of industries that make most of the by-products, improvement of the nutritive value of rice; and solving any problem that may arise from over-production of rice and corn.⁴⁵

Another piece of legislation passed was Republic Act No. 602. It extended the minimum wage legislation to agricultural labor.⁴⁶ On June 17, 1953, a new minimum wage law was passed (Republic Act No. 875). This was followed three days later by Republic Act 496 known as the Blue Sunday Law.⁴⁷

The administrative machinery likewise was at work. Quirino launched a food production program and organized the Food Committee to study the improvement of the Filipino diet. He also set up fertilizer plants in Lanao, put up the Ambuklao and Maria Cristina hydroelectric networks and directed the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources to work on irrigation and fertilizer projects. In addition, he distributed radios to all towns. Agencies likewise were given additional burden. The Civil Affairs Offices of the Armed Forces took charge of peasant resettlement. For a faster implementation of his program, Quirino created the Presidential Action for Social Amelioration.⁴⁸

⁴⁵P.I., Congress, An Act to Develop and Improve the Rice and Corn Industries, to Stabilize the Price of Rice and to Promote the Social and Economic Conditions of the People Engaged in the Production of these Staple Foods, Republic Act No. 663, 2nd Congress, 1st session, June 16, 1951.

⁴⁶Frank Golay, The Philippines: Public Policy and National Economic Development, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1961), p. 280.

⁴⁷Jorge Coquia, The Philippine Presidential Election of 1953, (Manila: University Publishing House, 1955), p. 170.

⁴⁸Ibid.

Quirino's biggest contribution is in the area of credit. Rural credit started with the establishment of the Philippine National Bank in 1917. Its major contribution then was its short term agricultural loans. The Rehabilitation Finance Corporation created in 1946 took care of long term loans. These two credit institutions however expended most of their funds in industrial development. Thus, Roxas worked for a specific rural credit system but this did not materialize until Quirino's time.

Republic Act No. 583, passed on September 18, 1950, provided for the formulation of a small farmers cooperative loan fund to provide credit facilities to small farmers and farm tenants.⁴⁹ A revolving fund of P2 million was appropriated by the act for this purpose. The Rural Bank Act of June 6, 1952 followed this.⁵⁰ Quirino conceived the rural banks to extend credit facilities to farmers "without much red tape in the form of character loans."⁵¹ The rural bank was to be established with local initiative but aided by the government with a minor capital contribution through the Central Bank. In addition, a rural bank enjoyed special discount privileges. A third piece of legislation was Republic Act 821 of August 14, 1952.⁵² It called for the establishment of the Agricultural and Cooperative Farmer's Administration (ACCFA). ACCFA in turn was to organize farmers into Farmers' Cooperative Marketing Associations (FACOMAS). Credit was to be furnished through these associations. The FACOMA could grant loans either on a pledge of the farmer

⁴⁹P.I., Congress, An Act to Constitute a Small Farmers Cooperative Loan Fund for the Purpose of Providing Credit Facilities to Small Farmers and Farm Tenants, Republic Act No. 583, 2nd Congress, 1st session, September 18, 1950.

⁵⁰Philippines Free Press, January 10, 1947.

⁵¹Elpidio Quirino, The Quirino Way, (Manila: 1955), p. 315.

⁵²Jorge Coquia, op. cit., p. 170.

to deliver his next crop to the FACOMA warehouse or on actual deposit of palay as collateral. Individually, the farmer gets the advantage of low interest and a higher price for his crop. Collectively, farmers in areas distant from banking centers could be served by ACCFA and FACOMA.

In the category of land distribution, Quirino pursued a policy of land colonization and expropriation. Executive Order No. 335 of October 1950 created the Land Settlement and Development Corporation (LASEDECO).⁵³ This agency took over the assets and liabilities of the defunct National Land and Settlement Administration. LASEDECO was financed by the sale of surplus war materials. Another agency was the Economic Development Corporation (EDCOR). Its main function was to resettle ex-Huks. As for expropriation, Quirino finally purchased the Tambongbong Buenavista estate, a friar land that has caused landlord-tenant tension way back in the years of Quezon.

At the end of the Quirino term in 1953, the Liberal Party claimed immense success in distributing land to the landless. Senator Pecson asserted that through Quirino's tutelage, 11,728 farmers received land of 12 hectares each.⁵⁴ Magsaysay, in his role as the Nacionalista Party's presidential candidate, thought otherwise. He charged that the government acquired "only 44,000 hectares including the 30,000 hectares in the Buenavista estate."⁵⁵ He added that it would take Quirino "100 years to finish this particular job (of resettling tenants either by colonization or expropriation)." Frank Golay strengthens Magsaysay's appraisal. "His administration was dormant," Golay

⁵³Frank Golay, op. cit., p. 283.

⁵⁴Geronima Pecson, "Why We Should Reelect Quirino," Women Weekly Magazine, September 4, 1953, p. 5.

⁵⁵Frances Starnes, Magsaysay and the Philippine Peasantry, (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1961), p. 53.

reports, "since Congress did not give any appropriation for this purpose."⁵⁶ David Wurfel confirms Golay's assertion. Of the 44,000 hectares claimed to have been expropriated, Wurfel points out that 38,068 hectares were acquired from 1947 to 1950. In the last three years of Quirino, practically no land was acquired due to lack of funds.⁵⁷

Magsaysay's remark has the glossing of histrionics. Yet, it unearthed in effect the other side of Quirino's agrarian reform - graft and corruption.

A classic case is the expropriation proceeding of the Buenavista-Tambong Estate. During the war, Jose Laurel tendered payment in the amount of P3 million (Japanese occupation currency). In September, 1947, the government purchased the same estate from the Philippine Trust Company for P750,000. A senate investigating committee discovered that P440,000 was delivered to somebody for negotiating the sale. The person suspected was Quirino's brother.⁵⁸

The agencies also suffered from extravagant expenditure and lack of coordination. EDCOR was considered successful, both as resettlement project and as a propaganda tool. But it had to pay a high price of P10,000 per family.⁵⁹

LASEDECO in contrast was not equally successful. By 1953, it had accommodated only 400 new settlers. Inefficiency, mismanagement, red tape, and

⁵⁶Frank Golay, The Philippines: Public Policy and National Economic Development, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1961), p. 274.

⁵⁷David Wurfel, "Magsaysay Agrarian Reform," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XXVII (January, 1958), p. 24.

⁵⁸Jorge Coquia, The Philippine Presidential Election of 1953, (Manila: University Publishing House, 1955), p. 104.

⁵⁹Margaret Pfanner, "Postwar Land Colonization in the Philippines," (unpublished master's thesis submitted at Cornell University, 1958), p. 22.

venality of government officials hindered its effectiveness.⁶⁰ An investigation committee set up by Magsaysay confirmed the widespread corruption at LASEDECO. Contrary to what the Liberal Party claimed, the agency suffered a loss of P25 million.⁶¹

The success of EDCOR in contrast to the failure of LASEDECO led settlers of the latter to conclude that the government was favoring former enemies.⁶²

NARIC likewise was losing money. As Quirino justified it later, he ordered a reduction in the price of rice to ease the situation caused by rice black market. In doing so, it ate up NARIC's profit.⁶³

AOCFA similarly suffered financial irregularities. Its FACOMAs also were beset by politics. In many cases, landlords grabbed the lion's share of FACOMA loans and then illegally relent the money to their tenants at a much higher rate.⁶⁴

Land distribution also was slow. The administration was carrying a backlog of 12 years in distributing patents. Landgrabbing and absentee landlordism were still prevalent.

Tenant-landlord relationship hardly improved. Landlords, as the Bell Mission Report pointed out, tended to respect the 70-30 sharing law in the breach. In many cases, tenants still paid rents amounting to 50% of the crop.

⁶⁰Manila Chronicle, March 31, 1953, p. 1.

⁶¹Philippines Free Press, May 29, 1954, p. 5.

⁶²James Storer, "Philippine Economic Progress," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XXII, No. 8 (July, 1953), p. 90.

⁶³"Electioneering Season and Propaganda," Radio Chat with President Quirino, March 15, 1949.

⁶⁴David Wurfel, "Magsaysay Agrarian Reform," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XXVII (January, 1958), p. 24; Dorothy Bacon, "20 Years of Progress for Institutionalized Credit in the Philippines," Manila Chronicle, September 13, 1966, p. 10.

President Quirino recognized the serious need for land reform. While he promised land to the landless, no action was taken.

Conclusion

By the time the Philippine leaders inherited the helm of the government from their American mentors, the Philippines was already a nation. However, it was a nation undergoing the process of state-building. The issue of religion which was the source of division in many European countries was already settled in the Philippines. Yet, the issues of citizenship and the distribution of wealth still remained. To the farmers who constituted about two-thirds of the population, land reform loomed as the answer to the issues. In a country with a very slight diffraction of the socio-economic-political structures, much of the pace of development depends upon the government. Given its limited resources, the capacity of the government to survive and achieve legitimacy and integration may depend upon its ability to lower the demands of the people or to manipulate symbols that suggest prosperity.

Undoubtedly, the government recognized the need for ameliorating the state of existence of the peasants. All administrations had land reform as a top priority in their programs. The fact that attempts to meet the demands of the peasants ultimately ended in a bitter civil war that extends through the next administration proves, more than anything else, that the government failed miserably in its land reform program and that its own legitimacy was put in question.

One factor that explains this failure to respond well to the needs of the peasants is the lack of funds. In 1938, President Quezon was forced to veto two major land reform bills appropriating P2 $\frac{1}{2}$ million for classification, survey, and subdivision of public agricultural lands (Bill 2156) and P4.8 million

for the construction of irrigation systems (Bill 2777) respectively.⁶⁵ The succeeding administrations were in the same predicament. In the case of President Roxas and President Quirino, a great part of the U.S. aid that was originally designed for the reconstruction of the economy was eventually funnelled into the costly campaign against the Huks.

A second factor which hampered the land reform program is the widespread corruption in the government. This is specially true of the Quirino administration which is characterized by graft and inefficiency in the administration of land reform agencies and by huge kickbacks in the purchase of lands.

A third factor is the lack of will to push forward the land reform program. It appears that the inertia of a differential government run by an aristocratic elite overwhelmed whatever fresh ideas that suggested a more vigorous direction towards immediate implementation of land reform. Leaders were content in repeating democratic cliches with no intention at all of closing the gap between exhortation and action. At most, they tried to solve by legislative fiat a social problem. While recognizing the importance of land reform, they approached it more as a dispensation from above rather than as a necessary function of the government.

Outside of the government, factors which inhibited the immediate implementation of land reform include the revolt of the Huks, the opposition of the landed elite, and the weakness of farm pressure groups. Their roles will be discussed later.

⁶⁵Third Annual Report of the U.S. High Commissioner to the Philippine Islands Covering 1938 and First Six Months of 1939 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1943), p. 171.

CHAPTER III

THE MAGSAYSAY PERIOD

There are at least two ways of viewing the Huks. One is to see them as brigands and terrorists to be pacified by force. The other is to recognize them as a social force seeking change in the agrarian and political order. President Quirino did not seem to comprehend the role of the peasants in relation to his government. As in the case of President Quezon, agrarian reform to him was not an obligation of the government but something of a concession dispensed from above by the aristocracy. He criticized the peasants for a shaken loyalty during a temporary disadvantage. At one point, he repudiated the right of the peasant rebels to criticize the government. In the end, he inherited the military outlook of Roxas of dealing with the Huks. President Quirino, however, did try to seek peace through amnesty. On May 5, 1948, his brother Antonio met Luis Taruc and both reached an agreement for a technical arrest of the latter. In return, the government would declare general amnesty, replace the constabulary in Central Luzon with Huks and guarantee freedom to them.¹ On June 21, 1948, Pres. Quirino signed the proclamation granting absolute amnesty both to the Huks and to the Philippine Peasants Union.² Four days later, Congress restored to Luis Taruc his seat in the House of Representatives which was denied him in the election of April 23, 1946.

¹"News Chronology," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XVII (June 2, 1948), p. 136.

²"News Chronology," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XVII (July 28, 1948), p. 171.

Unfortunately, amnesty did not bring encouraging results. Very few Huks cared to register or surrender their arms. This forced Pres. Quirino to extend the deadline from July 15 to July 31, 1948.³ Finding no favorable reaction, the government finally announced on August 31, 1948 that no negotiation on amnesty would be resumed.⁴ By this time, the three-week resumption of open hostility between the Huks and government troops had caused 101 casualties.

On September 5, 1948, Luis Taruc, after collecting his backpay, fled to the mountains.⁵ On October 16, 1948, the Supreme Court completed the government policy by ruling the Filipino Communist Party (with which the Huk leaders were aligned) illegal.⁶

Magsaysay's Entry in the Peasant War

Magsaysay entered the scene on August 31, 1950. This was the day Pres. Quirino appointed him as Defense Secretary. Prior to this, he was serving his second term as a Congressman of Zambales. In Congress, he headed the lower house's committee on national defense.

When he took over the Defense Department, he recognized the social aspect of the Huk rebellion. Yet, he was stern in balancing this outlook with military operations. He undertook his duties on the basis of a four-fold policy: (1) reform of the army with particular regard to officer's assignments; (2) activation of a corps of civil affairs officers detailed to live in towns in the dissident area, participate in community affairs, acquaint the citizens

³"News Chronology," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XVII (July 28, 1948), p. 171.

⁴"News Chronology," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XVII (September 2, 1948), p. 220.

⁵"News Chronology," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XVII (October 6, 1948), p. 231.

⁶"News Chronology," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XVII (Nov. 17, 1948), p. 267.

with army procedures, and report incidents of questionable behavior of army personnel; (3) all-out commando and guerilla type warfare by battalion combat teams directed against Huk encampments rather than artillery shelling of barrios and sitios thought to harbor Huks (the previous practice alienated local support); and (4) establishment within the army command of an Economic Development Corps (EDCOR) directed to develop homestead settlements in Mindanao for rehabilitation of surrendered and captured Huks. Each settlement contained a few families of retired soldiers and non-Huk settlers.⁷

Magsaysay's first break came in October, 1950. His patience and intelligence work ended with the capture of the Manila politburo. Raids and seizure of files and records followed later.

The demoralized army, through reorganizations, also regained its spirit. Military operations began to give results. Through the EDCOR, many were drawn to surrender without bloodshed.

When Magsaysay assumed the presidency in 1954, the Huk insurgency was almost broken. There was evidence that the inner circle of the Communist Party was split. The mass support of the Huks not only deserted but in many instances went to help the government round up the rebels.⁸ In January, 1954, an overture for amnesty was made. This time, it came from the Huks. The negotiations broke into fruitless discussion and went beyond the deadline for surrender set by the government. From then on, government troops pursued the Huks from mountains to swamps.⁹ Finally, on May 17, 1954, Luis Taruc surrendered.

⁷University of Chicago, The Philippines, Vol. III, (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Inc., 1958), p. 1212; Uldarico Bacalagon, The Huk Campaign in the Philippines, (Manila: Colcol and Co., 1960), pp. 6-8.

⁸Alvin Scaff, op. cit., p. 259.

⁹Ibid., p. 131.

By this time, his forces were reduced to a handful of weary, battered and disorganized men.¹⁰

On August 30, 1954, the Manila Court of First Instance found Taruc guilty of rebellion. He was sentenced to twelve years imprisonment and a fine of P20,000.¹¹

Taruc's surrender brought three significant consequences. First, popular support dissolved rapidly. Second, remnants of political leadership went underground. Third, the military elements withdrew to mountain hideouts on the far perimeter of Central Luzon.

In his 1955 message to Congress, Pres. Magsaysay finally could speak of a more pacified situation. Nevertheless, he exhorted vigilance against the danger of subversion.

Magsaysay's Land Reform Program

Magsaysay ascended to the presidency at a moment of crisis. The Huk rebellion shook into further disenchantment a nation still struggling from the disillusionment of war. The preceding administration, failing in many respects, was publicly conceded as corrupt. The political elite for its part remained unmoved by the changing events of time. Not only did it continue its excesses in its landholdings. In the sphere of public policy, it also was apathetic in coming to grips with the problem of agrarian reform and economy. As a result, the peasants remained where they were centuries back - outside actors who were expendable in the task of shaping the nation's destiny.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 131.

¹¹University of Chicago, The Philippines, Vol. III, (New Haven: Human Relations Area Files Inc., 1958), p. 1214.

What Magsaysay inherited was a government afflicted by a serious gap between what it said and what it did for the peasants. The task to close this gap was almost impossible. Not only was Magsaysay going against the tide but also was defying the strong forces of society if he instituted reforms. Yet, he stood to the challenge claiming that "for the young and vigorous nation.....nothing is really impossible."¹²

Magsaysay envisioned two types of rural improvement. The first one is the extension and intensification of governmental services in the rural areas.¹³ This consists mainly of drilling artesian wells, building irrigation systems and expanding rural health services designed to raise agricultural production and rural living standards. The second one involves the transformation of existing patterns of agricultural credit, land tenure and landlord-tenant relations. This two-pronged design of rural amelioration was directed mainly at creating owner-cultivators having equal opportunity for self-improvement. It also was an attempt to break the system with varying extremes of wealth and power.

Magsaysay's first year was characterized mainly by the reorganization of existing agrarian-reform agencies. Finding the Land Settlement and Development Corporation (LASEDECO) in a "state of disorganization and disorder," he recommended its replacement by the National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Administration (NARRA). He also called for the establishment of more rural banks and the increase of the working capital of the Agricultural Credit and Cooperative Financing Administration (ACCFA).

¹²David Wurfel, "Philippine Agrarian Reform Under Magsaysay," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XVIII, January, 1958, p. 7.

¹³Ibid.

On August 16, 1954, Magsaysay issued Executive Order No. 57 creating the Community Development Planning Council. Its function was to draft a national plan for community development. In addition, it was to coordinate existing agencies to implement its program.¹⁴ A series of organizational problems led to its eventual replacement on January 6, 1956 by the Presidential Assistant on Community Development (PACD).

Being non-controversial, his proposals for reorganization gained full support in Congress. The legislature immediately enacted measures replacing LASEDECO, creating a new Land Registration Commission, expanding the revolving capital of ACCRA and liberalizing the Rural Banks Act. Congress also passed House Bill 2190 which authorized the President to issue bonds up to P1 million to finance public works and economic development projects.¹⁵

In the area of tenancy legislation, Magsaysay's main concern was to "replace too many laws on too many books" with a single, concise and easily understood farm tenancy code. His first step was to organize a committee composed of various administrative department representatives. This committee was charged with the formulation of the administration's agrarian program. Among its recommendations were to increase tax levy on landholdings, consolidation of laws governing tenancy relationship, creation of a Court of Agrarian Reform and definition of an equitable basis for land distribution.¹⁶ These recommendations became the foundation of land reform bills introduced in Congress from 1954 to 1956.

¹⁴Presidential Assistant on Community Development, The Philippine Community Development Program, (Manila: PACD, 1961), p. 1.

¹⁵Frances Starnes, Magsaysay and the Philippine Peasantry, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), p. 134.

¹⁶Recommendation of the Tavanlar Committee, May 10, 1954 in Frances Starnes, Magsaysay and the Philippine Peasantry, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), p. 136.

On August 30, 1954, Congress passed Republic Act. No. 1199. This law was an improvement of the "70-30 Sharing Law" which defined the relationship between the landholder and the tenant. First, it made the law applicable to all cases by eliminating the escape clause "in the absence of any written agreement to the contrary." Second, it transferred the managerial rights from the landholder to the lessor. Third, it extended the exemption of debt from the landlord's lien to cover products aside from rice. Fourth, it prohibited the ejection of the tenant without "just and reasonable cause." In the previous tenancy law (Rep. Act. 4054), the tenant was subject to ejection for "gross misconduct or willful disobedience to the orders of the landlord or of his representative in connection with work entrusted to him." Being vague, this phrase was open to the abuse of the landlord. Section 50 of Republic Act 1199 eliminated this by enumerating grounds of ejection which were incapable of unjust interpretation. Furthermore, Section 51 puts the burden of proof on the landlord.¹⁷ Ejection also could not take place without the authorization of the Court of Agrarian Relations.

Republic Act No. 1627 followed on July 14, 1955. This measure created the Court of Agrarian Relations.¹⁸ On September 9, 1955, Congress passed Republic Act No. 1400. It defined the land tenure policy of the government and provided for the instrumentality to carry out the policy - the Land Tenure

¹⁷ P.I., Congress, An Act to Govern the Relation Between Landholders and Tenants of Agricultural Lands, Rep. Act. 1199, 3rd Congress, 1st session, August 30, 1954, sec. 51.

¹⁸ P.I., Congress, An Act Creating the Court of Agrarian Relations Prescribing its Jurisdiction and Establishing its Rules and Procedures, Rep. Act. 1627, 3rd Congress, 2nd session, June 14, 1955.

Administration.¹⁹ It also authorized the President to issue negotiable land certificates amounting to P6 million a year for the first two years and P30 million thereafter for each year.²⁰

It is in the area of tenancy legislation that Pres. Magsaysay encountered problems. The passage of Republic Act 1400 is a feat in itself. As it turned out, it was far from its desired goal. The final area of 300 hectares to be expropriated was still large.²¹ Moreover, the law provided loopholes. Since it specified that the 300 hectares must be contiguous, landowners affected by the law circumvented it by assigning small parcels that cut the area to other entities. Furthermore, the condition for expropriation was burdensome to government finances. The government could only expropriate when "the landowner continues to refuse to sell after all efforts have been exhausted by the Administration to negotiate or when the landowner is willing to sell but cannot agree with the Administration as to the price and method of payment."²² In the end, the power to expropriate, which was unrestricted in the earlier act, was so circumscribed as to be practically non-existent.²³

¹⁹P.I., Congress, An Act Defining a Land Tenure Policy, Providing for an Instrumentality to Carry out the Policy, and Appropriating Funds for its Implementation, Rep. Act. 1400, 3rd Congress, 2nd session, September 9, 1955, sec. 3.

²⁰Ibid., sec. 9.

²¹Ibid., sec. 5.

²²David Wurfel, "Philippine Agrarian Reform Under Magsaysay," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XVIII (January, 1958), p. 27.

²³Ibid., p. 30.

The final make-up of Pres. Magsaysay's land reform and rural development program is illustrated in the chart below.

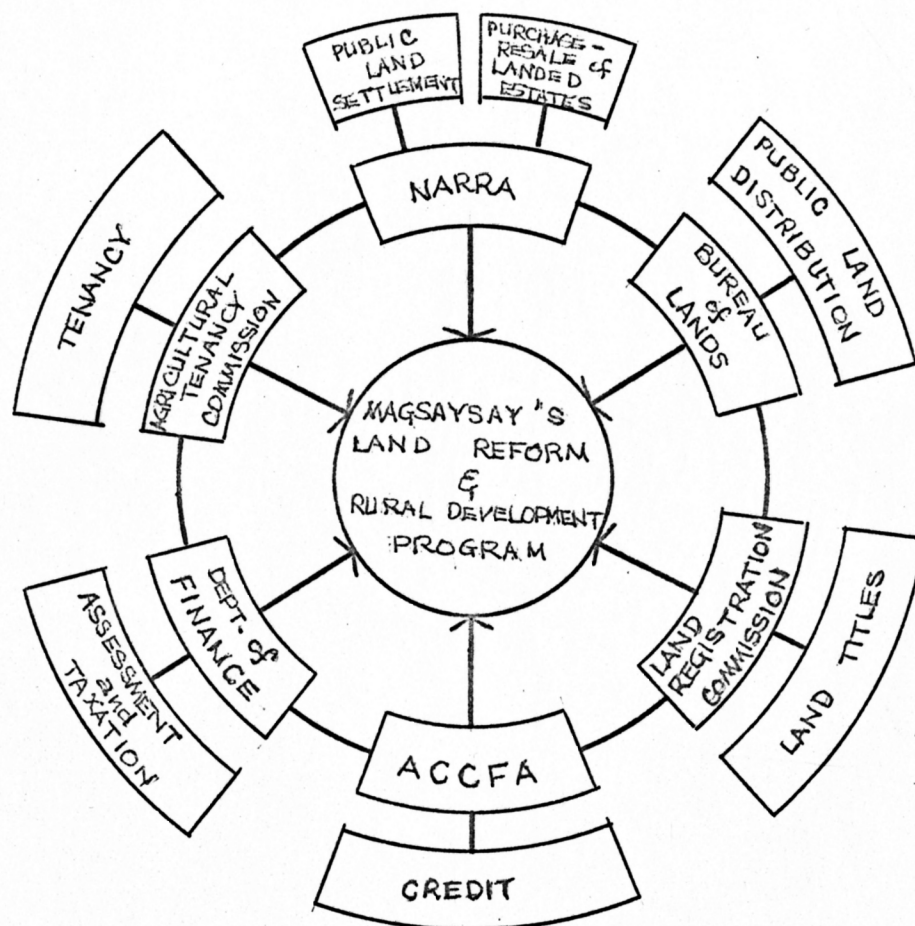


Chart 1. Magsaysay's land reform and rural development program. Prepared by President's Interdepartmental Committee on Land Tenure, 1955. Taken from Frances Starnes, Magsaysay and the Philippine Peasantry, (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1961), p. 135.

The agrarian agencies, armed with the full backing of Pres. Magsaysay, had a tremendous output. From 1954 to 1955, 120 new FACOMAS were organized. Membership increased by 109,115 farmers. More than P32,637,531 in loans were

released. The next year, 96 more FACOMAS were organized extending the coverage of ACCFA to over 2,986 additional barrios. Credit for this year totalled P51,424,050.²⁴

ACCFA expanded its operation to include the formation not only of rice and tobacco but also of coconut cooperatives. 1955 was a big economic gain for ACCFA members. The sum of twelve million pesos was saved in usurious interest, P8 million was earned in increased rice prices and P4.5 million was gained for higher tobacco prices.²⁵

While ACCFA suffered from lack of financing at Quirino's time, Magsaysay solved this by getting the Philippine National Bank to make P2 million available to the agency.

Rural Banks also expanded both in number and in operation. In 1954, they increased from twenty to twenty-eight. The loan extended in this period increased by 66% over that of the previous year. In 1955, ten more rural banks were established and loans extended went 45% beyond that of the previous year. Sixty-eight per cent of this loan was channeled into agricultural production purposes.²⁶

In community development, the PACD made unprecedented inroads into the barrios. In its first year of operation, it covered 600 barrios in 22 provinces. Not unlike the American Peace Corps, the PACD worked through the barrio council inculcating the spirit of self help. Artesian wells, latrines,

²⁴ACCFA Annual Reports of 1954-55 and 1955-56 in Enrique Virata, Agrarian Reform: A Bibliography, (Quezon City: Univ. of the Philippines Press, 1965), p. 3.

²⁵David Wurfel, "Philippine Agrarian Reform Under Magsaysay," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XVIII (Jan. 1958), p. 11.

²⁶Rural Banks Administrators, Third Annual Report, 1955, p. 41.

irrigation projects, roads - all these became symbols of hope from within and attention from above. The PACD also trained women and youth for community participation. In addition, it launched four-day leadership institutes for barrio council members.²⁷ To give barrio projects a push, the PACD doled out from its funds grants-in-aid. By the end of Pres. Magsaysay's administration, the PACD, together with its privately-financed sister, the Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement, obtained permanency in the nation's program for community development. In 1961, PACD workers were in 7,485 barrios spread all over the 55 provinces.

The success of the PACD is due mainly to the unqualified support given by the President and the International Cooperation Administration. Pres. Magsaysay gave PACD Chief Attorney Binamira the authority to make demands in the name of the President.

The Armed Forces was also utilized for land reform. In San Luis, Pampanga, soldiers cleared 2,000 hectares for settlers.²⁸ The Army's Judge Advocate's Office created a tenancy division that cooperated with the Court of Agrarian Relations and the Presidential Complaints and Action Committee. In 1956, six of its lawyers helped man the Agricultural Tenancy Commission.²⁹

The Army's EDCOR projects continued to absorb settlers.³⁰ By 1956, the 4 projects had 935 settlers.

²⁷Presidential Assistant on Community Development, The Philippine Community Development Program, (Manila: PACD, 1961), p. 21.

²⁸Official Gazette, XII (1954), p. 50.

²⁹Manila Chronicle, July 2, 1954, p. 1.

³⁰David Wurfel, "Philippine Agrarian Reform Under Magsaysay," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XXVII (Jan. 1958), p. 9.

The transplanting of 1,000 settlers from Luzon to Palawan and Mindanao marked NARRA's first year of operation. In 1955, another 6,000 families were transported. Of the 8,044 families in NARRA settlements in 1954, 37.5% were pioneers.³¹ A good number of these pioneers were former residents of the defunct LASEDECO.³²

Prior to Magsaysay, the Bureau of Lands averaged only 7,504 patents annually. Machines worth P735,000 were donated by the United States in 1956 and solved part of the problem. At the end of that year, its output had increased six times and had reduced the backlog from 12 to 3 years.³³ This helped reduce the frustrations that accompany the expectation of potential landowners. The Bureau of Lands also tightened its grip on land-grabbers. Jaime Ferrer, then Undersecretary of Agriculture, issued a memorandum in April, 1956, requiring the sale of over 50 hectares to be accompanied by a 5-year program, a proof of financial resources to carry on development and a promise that the land not be worked by tenants.³⁴

Other agencies joined the full swing at ameliorating the rural problem. The Agricultural Tenancy Commission (ATC) started on a meager budget of P150,000 eked out of the President's contingency fund. Yet, it did a respectable job of acquainting tenants and landlords with their rights and responsibilities. In 9 months of operation, it distributed 120,000 educational pamphlets. It showed one movie and conducted 214 public forums on tenancy

³¹NARRA Annual Report of Operations and Activities, 1954-55, Appendix D.

³²David Wurfel, op.cit., p. 9.

³³Ibid., p. 8.

³⁴Ibid., p. 8.

in 20 provinces.³⁵ In 1956, it increased its activity five-fold. It conducted research in 74 villages in 12 provinces. It also helped bring 1,030 tenancy controversies to settlement by mediation. The sum of \$631,000 donated by the International Cooperation Agency (ICA) made possible ATC's extensive operation.³⁶

In 1955, the newly-created Court of Agrarian Relations took over the tenancy cases from the Court of Industrial Relations. At the end of that year, it received 2,589 cases. Of these, 300 cases were disposed.³⁷

The creation of the Land Tenure Administration (LTA), although proposed in 1954, did not materialize until 1955. In January, 1956, it received 82 petitions for expropriation. Eight were due for investigation, seven were under negotiation and five were denied for lack of funds. Six months later, the petitions poured in at a rate of one per day. Of the 251 petitions received, sixty were investigated. In 1957, the Cabinet approved 3,400 petitions for LTA consideration.

From the vantage point of expropriation and resettlement, these agencies were far from successful. The EDCOR projects supposedly were to resettle ex-Huks. Yet, of the 935 settlers, only 26.4% were ex-Huks.³⁸ NARRA did help ease the farm population congestion. Its contribution however was minimal. Granted that it resettled 6,000 families per year (Approximately 30,000 people), it took care only of one tenth of the annual increase in the rural

³⁵ATC Annual Report, 1955, pp. 67-68.

³⁶ATC Annual Report, 1956, p. 15.

³⁷David Wurfel, "Philippine Agrarian Reform Under Magsaysay," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XXVII (January, 1958), p. 15.

³⁸Ibid., p. 9.

population.³⁹ Expropriation, which could be the other alternative, was likewise slow. As of June 30, 1956, the Land Tenancy Administration succeeded in purchasing only 1 estate of 507 hectares with 187 tenants. The lands presented for expropriation also did not strike at the root of the tenancy unrest - which was in Central Luzon. Only two out of 20 estates in the process of acquisition in 1956 were in this region.⁴⁰

Various factors account for the delay in expropriation. The Land Tenure Administration was suffering the pangs normal to new-born agencies. Moreover, it was not only the agency being formed or revitalized by the administration for the rural program. Republic Act 1400 which the LTA was to implement offered many loopholes. There was also a lack of coordination between the government agencies. The case of Hacienda Cacho illustrates this point. The LTA, in negotiation with Hacienda Cacho, set the price at P1,000 per hectare. Later, the Court of First Instance declared that irrigated land in expropriation haciendas would cost P4000 per hectare. Hearing this, Hacienda Cacho jumped out of the negotiated price and preferred expropriation instead. This forced the LTA to appeal a decision which it earlier had won.⁴¹ Another factor is politics. Republic Act No. 1400 gave LTA the legal sanction to encroach on the jurisdiction of other agencies. For example, it was given the "responsibility...to prepare a plan for the systematic opening of virgin lands of the public domain" - which was a NARRA function. LTA took no time to sponsor moves abolishing the latter and transferring the functions to it.⁴²

³⁹Frank Golay, The Philippines: Public Policy and National Economic Development, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1961), p. 285.

⁴⁰Manila Times, July 10, 1956, p. 1.

⁴¹Manila Times, June 17, 1957, p. 1.

⁴²David Wurfel, op. cit., p. 26.

The same administrative problems besieged the other agencies. EDCOR was over-staffed. For every 2.8 settler families, there was 1 officer or enlisted man. For its size, it was over-subsidized in comparison to NARRA. In 1953, EDCOR received \$260,000 in U.S. aid in contrast to \$194,000 given to NARRA in 1955.⁴³ For its part, NARRA encountered high operating cost, averaging at least between P600-P1500 for transporting a family. To worsen matters, it received a meager appropriation. Of the P5 million for its first year and the P8 million for each of the succeeding years specified under Republic Act No. 1160, NARRA received only P3,750,000 in 1955. One fourth of this was used to pay old debts of LASEDECO.⁴⁴ Of the P13 million it spent in its first two years, a great portion was underwritten by U.S. aid.⁴⁵

The Court of Agrarian Relation was likewise hampered by lack of funds. It could not hear the case of tenants who could not afford to go to Manila because it did not have any travelling funds for its members.

The FACOMAS and ACCRA were graft-ridden and mismanaged during the time of Quirino. The situation hardly changed during Magsaysay's administration. A survey in 1959 by Arthur D. Little confirmed the public's apprehension. Of P86 million of outstanding ACCRA loans at the end of 1958, two-thirds (P57 million) was delinquent. Of the 422 FACOMAS, one hundred sixty-two reported savings while two hundred sixty had losses - an average loss of P6,300 per FACOMA.⁴⁶

⁴³Ibid., p. 9.

⁴⁴David Wurfel, "Philippine Agrarian Reform Under Magsaysay," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XXVII (January, 1958), p. 9.

⁴⁵Frank Golay, The Philippines: Public Policy and National Economic Development, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1961), p. 284.

⁴⁶Enrique Virata, Agrarian Reform: A Bibliography, (Quezon City; Univ. of the Philippines Press, 1965), p. 4.

A report by the Committee on Good Government of the Philippines of the House of Representatives in December, 1959 confirmed the Little findings.⁴⁷ It traced ACCFA's failure to incompetence and gross negligence born out of complacency. An inadequate accounting system further invited graft and deliberate acts of mismanagement.

Prior to Magsaysay, landed estates purchase was never a successful policy. In his time, this still was the case. In summary, Magsaysay's failure to bring about a rapid change in the pattern of land ownership arises from the lack of finances, the mismanagement and corruption of agencies, the physical and ideological gap between those administering land reform and the tenants, and the obstacles presented by the landed elite in the formulation of a meaningful land reform law. Although not statistically proven yet, it may be said in Magsaysay's favor that his administration might have halted the greater concentration of land ownership. Stricter enforcement of the Public Land Act and expanded land settlement programs increased the number of owner cultivators on new lands; cheap agricultural credit prevented small owners from losing their land due to debt; and increased shares for tenants through the enforcement of the Agricultural Tenancy Act discouraged large investors from buying more agricultural land as income property.

In the light of this, it may be worthwhile to discuss the attitude of peasants toward Magsaysay's land reform. However, it is important that we investigate first the level of information in the barrios.

It is truism that an effective voter is one who is informed. What kind of political information, where it is available, how much and in what form it is presented - all these are relevant in shaping the attitude of the peasants.

⁴⁷Frank Golay, op.cit., p. 289.

In the case of the Philippines, three factors severely limit information in the barrios: the low educational level, the multiple language barrier and inadequacy of modern facilities of communication.

In a survey of 13 barrios scattered all over the country in 1952, the median grade of all individuals over 20 years of age was 3.2 (3.9 for males and 2.5 for females).⁴⁸ Seventy-eight per cent of the heads of agrarian families had completed 4 grades or less while 40.6% of the total farm families had no formal education at all.⁴⁹

Three of these barrios with a population of approximately 1000 each had no subscription to a daily newspaper, no reading center, no regular mail service, no electricity, no telephone and no radios. One barrio in Huklandia had 6 radios but none of the other services. Five barrios had no regular mail service, seven had no subscription to a daily newspaper, eight had no reading center and four had no radios. Only 2 barrios had telephones and these served the haciendas.⁵⁰ In contrast to 1 radio per family and 1 newspaper for every third person in the United States, there was only 1 radio for every eleven families and 1 newspaper for every 50 persons in the Philippines in 1954.⁵¹

The inadequacy of communication facilities gave rise to an arrangement whereby the most effective way of bringing the issues to the peasants is for

⁴⁸Rivera and Macmillan, The Rural Philippines, Report Prepared for the Philippine Council for U.S. Aid and U.S. Mutual Security Agency, Table 45, p. 203.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 47-100 on the data on services by each barrio.

⁵¹Harold Gosnell, "Filipinos Hold Free Elections," National Municipal Record, Vol. XLII, (March, 1954), p. 120.

government officials and candidates to visit the barrios. These political rallies competed for entertainment with the fiesta. In view of the traditional dispensation of political favor, interest centered more around the politician with no corresponding interest in abstract political issues.

The 1952 survey reported that the peasants expressed little faith in the government. This was due to the limited degree of participation in it and the small benefit derived from it. Another survey in 1955 covering 15 barrios in Central Luzon reinforces the underlying reasons. Seven barrios indicated that their Congressman never visited them and that they knew nothing about him. Two barrios had no contact with the mayor; in one of the two, inspite of the draught, no single government official visited it. Only in 1 barrio was a mayor elected against the wishes of the hacenderos. Several barrios had little faith in the mayor who was considered in alliance with the absentee landlord.⁵²

With this background, we ask the question: In the light of Magsaysay's failure in land reform, how do the peasants perceive him and the government?

Frances Starner directed a survey towards the same question in 1955. Her study points out that there was a positive perception of Magsaysay and the government. However, land reform did not carry a significant weight in the moulding of the peasants' attitude. Those interviewed expressed feelings and beliefs rather than judgment over Magsaysay's land reform. "He was a good man; he was kind; he was a man of the masses; he could protect us from certain elements; Magsaysay brought the government to the people; Magsaysay stopped abuses of the Army; Jago prevented the eviction of tenants," - these

⁵²Frances Starner, Magsaysay and the Philippine Peasantry, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), p. 84.

comprised the majority of responses.⁵³ In Tarlac, the "land for the landless program" was rarely discussed although it was to become a crucial issue in Congress a few months later. In Pampanga, peasants could only mention artesian wells and rural health teams. Only in Nueva Ecija, where ejection was prevalent, were peasants aware of the Land Tenure Act.⁵⁴

In conclusion, Magsaysay failed to alter significantly the land tenure pattern. However, he succeeded in bringing the government to the people. He also brought the peasants finally to the mainstream of Philippine political life. Platforms from 1953 thereon were to retain an agrarian orientation. Succeeding elections also were to partake of Magsaysay's style of stomping the grassroot level.⁵⁵

His untimely death on March 17, 1957 was a double blow: it removed the only leader who could communicate with the aggrieved kasama and the spark of dedicated service in the agencies designed to remove the cause of grievance.

⁵³Ibid., p. 77.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 79.

⁵⁵Jose Abueva, "Bridging the Gap Between the Elite and the People in the Philippines," Philippine Journal of Public Administration, Vol. VIII, No. 4 (October, 1964), pp. 343-344.

CHAPTER IV

THE POST-MAGSAYSAY PERIOD

The momentum for land reform generated by Magsaysay halted temporarily with his death. It was not until the 1961 presidential election that the nation revived land reform. Yet, it took two more years and a new administration before a meaningful land reform law was passed.

Garcia's Period

Carlos Garcia ascended to the vacancy created by Magsaysay's death. He then went on to win the presidential election in 1953.

As a running mate in 1953 and as a vice-president of Magsaysay for four years, it might be expected that Garcia shared the same political and administrative zeal for agrarian reform. This, sadly, was not the case. Garcia did give lip support to the agencies including the moribund ACCFA but at a reduced budget. He also worked for the availability of fertilizer at a reasonable cost to farmers.¹ Beyond these, he did not push vigorously for any major land reform legislation. In fact, his total land reform legislation consists of only two minor amendments. One amended Commonwealth Act No. 141 (Public Land Act) to strengthen the legality of land occupancy through stricter title requirements. The second one was an amendment to Section 33 of Republic Act 1199 (Agricultural Tenancy Act) to the effect that harvesting, which was previously assigned solely to the tenant, should also be shared by the landlord.

¹P.I., Congress, An Act Encouraging Agricultural Production by Making Fertilizers Available to Farmers at Reasonable Prices, Republic Act No. 2076, 4th Congress, 2nd session, June 13, 1958.

There is the strong temptation to attribute Garcia's minimal agrarian reform to a personal disinterest. However, it escapes practical reasoning for any politician to run counter to the desires of the peasants. By his time, it was already an accepted fact that the grassroot level commanded the direction of any presidential victory. Perhaps his failure to execute more vigorous agrarian programs springs from a new epoch that demanded a different style of administrative leadership. War reparations were pouring in. Population growth was becoming more acute. The nationalism that flourished in this period brought about an inward and outward orientation that demanded a better deal in comparison with those in the other parts of the world. Garcia therefore had to set his administration toward the establishment of economic infrastructures and industry. Bureaucracy was likewise re-organized and expanded. In the process, it was accompanied by corruption.

Macapagal's Period

Macapagal came from a peasant family. He owed his education to the benevolence of a landholder. Coming from Pampanga, poverty and revolutionary impulses were real with him. His background brought a passion for the peasant's interest in his latter years. In fact, as a Congressman, he was one of only a few who were well known by the peasant constituency. In his successful bid for the presidency in 1961, he harped on the need for a meaningful land reform. In 1963, he finally succeeded in pushing through a major land reform legislation.

By 1961, the Philippine economy had expanded and grown more complex. Arguments for a change in the structure of agriculture were dictated mainly by production and other economic considerations. Yet, Macapagal retained the social aspect as the major thrust of his campaign for land reform. The

underprivileged class was constituted by tenants close to one million families, settlers who moved from tenanted areas to newly opened undeveloped public lands, agricultural wage earners, and owner-cultivators or less than family-size farms. Each group corresponded to a certain problem. The sharecropper was exposed to insecure tenure, usurious practices and perpetual indebtedness. Owing to the ineffectiveness of the resettlement system, many settlers could not have productive lives in public agricultural lands. The agricultural wage-earners did not have access to the protection of the Magna Charta of Labor. Meanwhile, the lack of organization, credit, irrigation and marketing facilities hampered small owner-cultivators.

Macapagal was up against the same strong forces which Magsaysay faced in 1954. Landlord opposition still remained strong. It took 8 extended special sessions in Congress before the Agricultural Land Reform Code went into the statute books as Republic Act. No. 3844 on August 8, 1963.² Ironically, the Nacionalista Party, which championed land reform in 1954, opposed the bill's passage this time.

The Land Reform Code pursued three goals: political, equity and productivity. Specifically, it sought (sec. 2):

1. "To establish owner-cultivatorship and the economic family-size farm as the basis of Philippine agriculture, and as a consequence, divert landlord capital in agriculture to industrial development;
2. To achieve a dignified existence for the small farmers free from pernicious institutional restraints and practices;
3. To create a truly viable social and economic structure in agriculture conducive to greater productivity and higher farm incomes;
4. To apply all labor laws equally and without discrimination to both industrial and agricultural wage earners;

²Manila Chronicle, August 9, 1963, p. 1.

5. To provide a more vigorous and systematic land resettlement program and public land distribution; and

6. To make the small farmers more independent, self-reliant, and responsible citizens and a source of genuine strength in our democratic society."³

The major aspects of the land reform code will be elaborated further. They are the leasehold provisions, expropriation, landlord compensation, exemption, credit, and public service to agriculture.

Leasehold Provisions

All existing share-tenancy contracts are to be abolished and replaced by leasehold contracts (sec. 4). Rental rates under these contracts are limited to 25% of the average normal harvest during the three agricultural years preceding the date the leasehold was established after deducting the amount used for seeds and the cost of harvesting, threshing, loading, hauling and processing (sec. 34).

The arrangement is designed to meet the objectives. Greater security of tenure and reduced rental rates serve the equity and political objectives. The fixed rental, on the other hand, induces production. Since additional increments will accrue to the farmer, there will be more incentive to maximize his family labor utilization.

Expropriation

Upon declaration of an area as a Land Reform District, expropriation shall proceed on privately-owned agricultural lands in excess of 75 hectares worked by leasees (sec. 53). In subdivision estates, priority will be given in the following order: (1) to members of the immediate family of the farm

³Republic Act No. 3844. All section references from hereon are taken from it.

owner; (2) to actual occupants personally cultivating the land; (3) to actual cultivators who are cultivating uneconomic size farms; and (4) to owner-operators of uneconomic size farms (sec. 128).

Landlord Compensation

Landlords whose properties are expropriated shall be compensated ten per cent in cash and the balance in six per cent tax-free, redeemable bonds (sec. 80). The bonds can be used to purchase government undeveloped lands in the public domain or shares of stock in government-owned or controlled corporations (sec. 85).

The opening of undeveloped public lands to landlords is a shift in the resettlement policy. Instead of continuing the resettlement of peasants and carrying the burden of cost, the government gives way to plantation-type undertakings.

Exemptions

Lands planted to permanent crops (plantation type) are exempted from expropriation (sec. 51). Included in this category are lands planted to citrus, sugar cane, coconuts, cocoa, coffee, durian and other permanent trees at the time the Code is implemented (sec. 35).

Credit

The ACCFA is reorganized into the Agriculture Credit Administration. Its functions shall be directed at servicing the land reform program (sec. 101). The production of the borrower can serve as collateral for production loans for the purchase of work animals, tillage, equipments, seeds, fertilizer, poultry and other items (sec. 106). Total charges shall not be more than 8% per year (sec. 110).

Public Service to Agriculture

The Bureau of Agricultural Extension will be renamed as the Agricultural Productivity Commission (APC). It shall be transferred to the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Its chairman is designated as a member of the National Land Reform Council (secs. 119, 126). Emphasis of the APC's work will be placed on farm management in the Land Reform Districts (sec. 124).

The Land Reform Code has a few weaknesses. For instance, the low interest rate for loans appears very low. Small loans generate higher administrative cost. There is the danger that the low interest rate may not compensate for this and thus result in the erosion of ACA funds. Centering extension services on the land reform districts also offers dangers. Other areas may suffer. Moreover, the entry of ACAP into the land reform program may bring duplication of researches. Furthermore, it may diffuse its resources in rice to the detriment of other crops.

The Land Reform Code however is so far the most significant step taken in the evolution of agrarian reform legislation. The rapid population growth, foreign exchange needs, and rising per capita income will maintain a pressure to increase growth rate of farm output. This, in turn, puts a premium on the achievement of a tenure system that is consistent with the rapid adoption of new technology and the rapid growth of agricultural output.

The Land Reform Code still faces one crucial test. Like most land reform legislation in other countries, its implementation remains to be seen.

CHAPTER V

DYNAMICS OF AGRARIAN REFORM

The isolation of the dynamics into this single chapter is to emphasize certain facets that accompanied the formation of the land reform policy. Basically, these are the: (1) direct participation of the American government in pushing through land reform legislation; (2) presence of a political contest in the legislation; and (3) relative weakness of the peasants' organization in contrast to the pressure groups of the landed interest.

Involvement of the American Government

Amidst the resurging tide of anti-Americanism, it is intriguing to examine the nature and extent of American participation in pushing through - or blocking - a land reform legislation. History bears proof of extensive American involvement.

American participation came basically in two forms: U.S. financial support of agrarian programs, and U.S. studies of the tenancy situation.

After the war, the United States specified P11 million for tractors and agricultural machinery out of the P200 million worth of surplus goods due to the Philippines under the War Damage Act. The bulk of American aid until 1950 however came in the form of arms to suppress the Huk rebellion.

It was not until 1952 that American aid diversified. The 1947 Agricultural Mission, and later, the Bell Mission of 1950 pointed out the urgency of the agricultural problem. In 15 months ending in July, 1952, the U.S. government gave \$14 million for fertilizer. At the same time, the PHILCUSA and MSA

devoted \$2.5 million to improve the extension service. Another \$3 million was allocated for irrigation pumps.¹

Meanwhile, the American Embassy conducted studies. The MSA availed itself of the services of Robert Hardie, a specialist on land tenure. Hardie reported that unrest was caused by the "inadequate size of farms, high rate of tenancy, exorbitant land rental, low net family income, usury, inadequacy of marketing facilities, and the absence of democratic institutions in the rural areas."² He also charged that legislation designed to remedy the rural situation has been rendered ineffective by lax enforcement and by the failure of Congress to provide funds necessary for the accomplishment of stated aims. His recommendation had two aims: to replace the institution of tenancy with a rural economy based on ownership-operated family sized farms, and to replace the kasama system with a household system on lands where tenancy remained.

Congruent to Hardie's findings were those of Rivera and McMillan. Their survey of 15 barrios traced the rural problem to the same roots mentioned by Hardie. They recommended the transfer of land ownership from large landowners to tenants, extension of credit, fertilizer and pest control.³

Since 1952, many studies by the American Embassy followed those of Hardie and Rivera-McMillan. Hardie's blueprint had one basic weakness: it assumed a favorable situation similar to that in Japan which was non-existent in the Philippines. While MacArthur had extensive power and the people were receptive

¹James Storer, "Philippine Economic Progress," Far Eastern Survey, Vol. XXII, No. 8 (July, 1953), p. 90.

²Robert Hardie, "Philippine Land Tenure Reform," Manila MSA, 1952, pp. 30-32.

³Generoso Rivera and Robert McMillan, "An Economic and Social Survey of Rural Households in Central Luzon," Manila, Philcusa/MSA, June, 1954, p. 179.

to the reform, neither the Philippine elite nor the people were primed to complete the transfer of land ownership by July, 1955 - as Hardie envisioned it.

The effectiveness of American pressure emanated from its power of the purse. At the height of the Huk rebellion, America told Quirino to effect agrarian reforms as a pre-condition for the continuation of aid. This resulted in the Quirino-Foster agreement of 1950. The Philippines agreed to initiate and implement social, economic and technical programs. For its part, the U.S. agreed to furnish technical and economic assistance. This tremendous power of the purse is expressed in Laurel's classic statement: "And if I win, could I get as much aid from the U.S. as Magsaysay could?"⁴

Whatever were the intentions of the United States, altruistic or otherwise, its participation fell prey to the negativism of nationalism. The late House Speaker Perez charged that the Hardie and McMillan reports were "communist-inspired."⁵ Quirino's attitude left no doubt that he regarded these studies as an affront to his agrarian program as well as an attempt to undermine his administration. His vehemence led to his request to replace Ronald Rene as MSA Chief and to recall Ambassador Spruance. Furthermore, he pressured the Embassy to repudiate the Hardie report.

Unfortunately, anti-Americanism did not end with Quirino. The debate over the 1955 land reform bill added a new dimension extraneous to the merits of the proposition - the anti and pro-American stereotyping. Sen. Recto attacked the bill as an "idea hatched to make our economy subserve theirs."

⁴Philippines Free Press, November 7, 1953, p. 4.

⁵Teodoro Locsin, "Land Reform: The Problem, The Recommendations, the Objection," Philippines Free Press, January 10, 1953, p. 55.

Sen. Cea repeated Recto's charge that the U.S. was blocking industrialization of the Philippines.⁶ He also insisted that the assistance through FCA was simply another instance of a cleverly laid plan which the U.S. had consistently followed in order to "chain the Philippines to an agricultural economy."

The Manila Chronicle, while pro-land reform, labelled the bill as the "American Embassy Land Tenure Bill," a ruse to maintain the agrarian status of the Philippines. I.P. Soliongco summed up the attitude of Congress:

"The major reason was not because many Congressmen and Senators were against it but because the nationalistically minded among them felt insulted that a land tenure bill prepared by Americans and for the purpose of perpetuating the colonial status of the Philippines should be rammed down their throats."⁷

The resuscitation of anti-Americanism in the 1960's condemns American participation as a neo-colonial devise to imprison the Philippines in its agricultural state thereby making her dependent on U.S. finished goods. Almost forgotten is that critical moment in the past when America bulldozed the way for the eventual legislation of the 1963 land reform. When Filipinos can rise beyond the daily passion of nationalism, then both sides perhaps can assess the extent of American participation not only in land reform but in all levels of the Philippine socio-political-economic development.

Politics of Land Reform

Instituting land reform in a country imprisoned in years of feudalism is revolutionary. When the society is accompanied by a political system ruled by parties, such as those in the Philippines, which reflect manily the interest and ideology of a single socio-economic class, that of the elite, it is harder

⁶Manila Chronicle, May 26, 1955.

⁷I. P. Soliongco, "Seriously Speaking," Manila Chronicle, May 25, 1955.

for a land reform policy to take shape.

The history of Philippine land reform is one of hard-fought protracted legislative battles. It shall be our purpose here to focus on the actors and on the struggle. For our case, we shall take the 1955 land reform law.

In 1955, the Nacionalista Party had control of Congress. Exclusive of 8 who were Democrats and 2 who joined a coalition, there were 58 Nacionalistas out of 102 representatives. In the Senate, NP had 13 out of 24 members.⁸

This advantage on the other hand was diffused by intra-party bickering between Magsaysay and NP leaders. Sen. Laurel spearheaded an attempt to strip the President of power by amending the Constitution.⁹ Recto followed suit at the end of the 1954 session. He asserted that Magsaysay's position in the party was only nominal. This, of course, was hardly in keeping with the extra-ordinary powers ascribed to the Philippine President. Being a freshman, both in the Presidency and in the Party, Magsaysay encountered the problem of asserting himself over the old guardsmen. Macapagal (LP), then a Congressman, described the NP schism. "There's a bloc within the NP basking in Magsaysay's popularity to maintain the public esteem while stealthily maneuvering to undermine the faith of the people in the President to bring about his downfall."¹⁰ Sen. Cabili assessed the situation in the same vein. "He has been blocked, harassed and practically blackmailed at every turn to accept political proteges. He had to compromise with principle and efficiency repeatedly to secure every minor or routine legislation."¹¹ It is with this

⁸Frances Stanner, Magsaysay and the Philippine Peasantry, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), p. 128.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Manila Times, May 11, 1954.

¹¹Manila Times, June 3, 1954.

background that we shall examine Magsaysay's land reform legislation of 1955.

On May 12, 1955, H.B. 2557 was presented on the floor. The congressmen's attitude indicated a shift from apathy to open antipathy. Only Rep. Emilio Cortez from the Huk-ridden province of Pampanga sponsored the bill. Many then held the view that had Magsaysay not certified its urgency, the bill would not have reached the 1955 calendar.

On May 16, it was apparent that the bill would not be accepted in its original form. Rep. Roy (Democratic Party) of Tarlac drafted a new bill. Rep. Cortez accepted the amendment by substitution the next day. Rep. Enriquez Cortex (NP), a Magsaysay man in Zambales, also threw in his support.

On May 17, the majority leaders expressed confidence that the bill might pass. On May 19, Rep. Lamberto Macias (NP) of Negros Occidental attempted to destroy Roy's version by substituting a bill that would have converted the proposed Land Tenure Authority from an action agency into a mere study group. It did not pass but it blocked the much needed debate over Roy's version.¹² When the lower House finally passed Roy's bill on May 19, it was "mutilated." "I was sabotaged," charged Rep. Cortez, sponsor of the first bill.

In the Senate, Senators Justiniano Montano (NP), Fernando Lopez and Tomas Cabili introduced Senate Bill 332. Like the substitute bill of Rep. Roy, S.B. 332 was submitted to the floor only with two days to go before adjournment. On May 19, 1955, it was adopted.

The delay in presenting the bill gave both Houses a valid excuse for not being able to pass it into a law. Remarked House Speaker Laurel: "It was regrettable that the administration was unable to submit its bills until the

¹²Proposed Amendment to H.B. 2557 introduced by Congressman Lamberto Macias, 3rd Congress, 2nd Session, 1955.

last few days of the session and that neither House was therefore responsible for the failure to act on the President's entire program."¹³ House Majority Leader Tolentino fired the same complaint. "The original bill was so defective that in the middle of the debate, it had to be substituted with another one drafted by other congressmen and the debate had to start all over again."¹⁴

The failure of the conference committee to consider the differences in the bills before Congress adjourned sine die forced Magsaysay to call a special session. Not only did House Speaker Laurel question its need but he also absented himself and refused to return for conference with the President concerning the special session.

Those who conferred for the Senate were Ruperto Kangleon (DP) and Justiniano Montano. Joining them were Representatives Cortez, Roces and Benito. The conferees were immediately subjected to pressure from colleagues and interest groups. Montano, carrying the fight for Magsaysay, was worried that the latter might yield to amendments in a crisis in the same manner he did in 1954. For all his spirit, Montano eventually succumbed to increasing the expropriation area from 150 hectares (S.B. 332 version) to 300 hectares. He further agreed to the demand of Sen. Tanada and Sen. Sumulong to exempt corporate lands.¹⁵

When the compromise version was brought back to the two chambers, it met stiff opposition. Rep. Benito charged that the conference ignored provisions of the House Bill. He also questioned the constitutionality claiming that the

¹³Manila Times, June 20, 1955.

¹⁴Manila Times, June 29, 1955.

¹⁵Frances Starnes, Magsaysay and the Philippine Peasantry, (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1961), p. 183.

measure was essentially an appropriation question and therefore must originate from the lower House.¹⁶ Rep. Manuel Cases branded it as an "Act Defining a Landlord Tenure Policy." Rep. Eugenio Perez, the minority leader, called it one step toward communism. House Floor Leader Tolentino later remarked: "We were made to swallow that Committee report."¹⁷

The Senate was likewise unhappy. Senators Tanada and Sumolong opposed the lower House version. Their colleagues had to prevail upon them not to argue on the merit of constitutionality. Finally, the Senate used the House Bill as a basis. In effect, it substituted the entire text of the conference version with that of H.B. 2557. In August, both houses passed the bill. That culminated the legislative battle to pass the 1955 Land Reform Act.

Part of the difficulty in passing the bill arose from the differences of position of the House and Senate versions. Both versions originally exempted an aggregate area of 144 hectares or less. The Senate Bill went further to state that an excessive area was sufficient proof for expropriation. The House Bill in contrast required proof of frequent violation of the landowner. Rep. Cortez' bill required that "a landowner be found guilty by competent authority of having violated the Agricultural Tenancy Act for more than 5 times within a period of 3 months."¹⁸ Rep. Roy's substitute bill changed the number to three over unspecified time.¹⁹ Sen. Montano's bill left it to the Land Tenure Administration to decide on expropriation if its study found the

¹⁶Manila Chronicle, July 23, 1955.

¹⁷House Congress Record, Philippines, 3rd Congress, 2nd Session, August 10, 1955.

¹⁸House Bill 2557 introduced by Rep. Cortez, Philippine 3rd Congress, 2nd Session, sec. 21.

¹⁹Ibid.

land suitable for subdivision and if public interest is served by its immediate acquisition.²⁰

Another point of controversy was exemption. The Cortez bill exempted a contiguous area of 144 hectares. Roy's substitute bill increased it to 800 hectares if the crops are coconut, sugar or abaca and to 500 hectares if owned by a corporation or a partnership.²¹ A proposed amendment sponsored by Rep. Marcos and Rep. Veloso sought to increase the area to 2,000 hectares. The House finally settled on exempting a contiguous area of 1,204 hectares planted to permanent crops if owned by a corporation or a partnership and 500 hectares if owned by individuals.

The Senate bill started with 144 hectares. As amended, it ended with 150 hectares. The Conference version compromised at 300 hectares. As passed, the law retained the 300 hectares for individuals but reduced that owned by corporations to 600 hectares.

Other controversies arose over the mode of payment, the source and amount of funds to be provided and the size of farm units to be distributed.

The nation's press was divided on the bill. The Manila Bulletin, the Manila Chronicle and the Philippines Free Press supported the bill. In contrast, the Manila Times, the largest national daily, questioned the rationale of having a land reform law. Its posture started from a call for reexamination of the bill to an outward disavowal of land reform itself. Its May 26 editorial read: "Has our land resettlement program become so ineffective that we are now forced to turn to the expropriation of big landed estates?"²²

²⁰Senate Bill 332 introduced by Sen. Montano, Philippine 3rd Congress, 2nd Session, sec. 16.

²¹See Appendix A.

²²Manila Times, May 26, 1955.

On June 30, 1955, it forwarded its solution: "The chief need of Philippine agriculture is not redistribution of land...but commercialization of farming to put the farmer on a profit-basis."²³

Peasant Pressure Groups

As expected, the landed elite opposed vigorously the passage of the 1955 land reform act. The National Rice Producers Association openly attacked the bill in hearings before the House Committee on Agrarian and Social Welfare. It carried campaigns in public meetings, in the press and even in the galleries of Congress. It even drafted its own version of the bill. The rice planters of Pampanga joined the lobby against the bill. Manuel Gallego, a former ambassador to the United States, systematically attacked the bill. He argued on the fundamental right to hold property, the undemocratic and unconstitutional nature of the bill, its communistic inclination, and the need to maintain a sophisticated landed gentry to show to others that even in a land of peasants, Filipinos have the taste and capacity "for modern and progressive living."²⁴ In short, the landed elite was poised to prevent the passage of any measure. If this was inevitable, then it still had the alternative of watering down the bill and rendering the law innocuous.

In contrast, not a single peasant group appeared at the committee hearing for the 1955 land reform law.²⁵

This single incident illustrates the relative weakness of peasant pressure groups. What accounts for their passivity? Basically, they suffer from legal

²³Joaquin Roces, "Farming for Profit," Manila Times, June 30, 1955.

²⁴Manila Times, June 3, 1955.

²⁵Frances Starnes, Magsaysay and the Philippine Peasantry, (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1961), p. 270.

and organizational problems.

Section 4 of Commonwealth Act 213 permitted the Secretary of Labor to revoke union permits. It was not until 1950 that the Supreme Court denied the right of the Department of Labor to exercise the discretion whether unions should be recognized or not.²⁶

In 1943, there were only 23 unions registered with the Agricultural Tenancy Commission. In 1955, the number increased to over a hundred with membership ranging from 100 to 100,000. With the road to becoming a group paved clear, organizational matters soon posed the larger problems.

Peasant groups suffer from lack of peasant leadership. Most of their leaders are lawyers. While these lawyers are able to explain the law or represent the tenants in court, they lack a peasant background to tie them closely to the group.

Another problem is financing. The lack of resources has made it impossible for peasants to organize at a level of strength capable of balancing landlord pressure groups. The Federation of Free Farmers with a membership of 40,000 in 1956 estimates that it will take them another 6 years to collect the annual assessment from its members.

The direction of peasant organizations is therefore limited. Many organizations do not graduate beyond the immediate concern of just securing equitable division of harvest and security of tenure. Some are even aimed at perpetuating the harmony between landlords and peasants. Others cannot take off from rigid ideological grounds. Often times, these groups compromise their principles to swing with politicians.

²⁶Umali vs. Lovina. Official Gazette, 1951, p. 47.

The National Federation of Free Farmers and Tenants Association provides a classic example of the travails impinging peasant interest expression. It has a membership of over a million farmers. Among its objectives are a 4-year program seeking land distribution and representation with the government to acquire lands for resale to cultivators. In principle, it disavows political aims. In actuality, its unions seek conflicting alliances with politicians to offset political power of the landlords. In 1953 for instance, it pledged its support for Quirino. Yet, many of its members admitted voting for Mag-saysay.²⁷

The Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) seems to offer a brighter future for effective peasant interest articulation. Created in 1953, its aim is to give the farmers Christian leadership. Although non-political, it seeks to bring farmers and government together. At one time or another, it has opposed landlords, brought agrarian peace through negotiation, and helped create a closer bond between farmers and the government by aiding agencies.

From a mere 20,000 in 1953, it has grown to 50,000 in 1959. Its rationale for organization was to fill the vacuum of leadership created by the death, capture or retreat of Huk leaders. Thus, its main strength today is in Central Luzon. Lately, it expanded to Southern Tagalog provinces, Western Visayas and Zamboanga.

Its committees cover organization, education, political action, legal, land settlement, economic, production, social, student participation and religion.

For all its ambitious and extensive goals, this organization unfortunately suffers from the same organizational problems that beset other peasant

²⁷Frances Starnes, Op. cit., p. 102.

groups. It is controlled by a "small group of highly vulnerable lawyer leaders," removed from the agrarian situation. Its over-centralization militates against the development of capable barrio leadership. As of 1959, it still was not able to offer any real counterbalance to the preponderance of landed interests in the government who occupy, in terms of economic strength and political prestige, a vastly superior bargaining position. Impotent so far in most fields of endeavor, its potentiality may come in what is hoped to be its ability to "provide an impetus for change."²⁸

The passage of the land reform act in 1963 eliminates what could have been a confrontation between peasant and landed interest groups over the formulation of a policy. Nonetheless, there are yet problems ahead to put the peasant groups on trial. They must be able to seek a faster implementation of land reform. In doing so, they must be able to balance the remnants of landed pressure groups, pressure the government effectively, and be able to enmesh themselves in politics without succumbing to the manipulation of politicians. Unless they can operate from a position of strength, this task will be difficult.

²⁸Sonya Diane Cater, The Federation of Free Farmers: A Case Study in Mass Agrarian Organization, Data Paper No. 35 Southeast Asia Program, (Ithaca, Cornell Univ. Press, May, 1959), p. 147.

CHAPTER VI

PEASANT ATTITUDE TOWARD GOVERNMENT AND LAND REFORM

Until 1955, the government was still carrying on an open war against the Huks in Central Luzon. After a decade, how do the peasants react to the government and to the land reform?

A survey done in Gapan, Neuva Ecija in 1964 helps answer the question.¹ Gapan, it may be noted, is significant for two reasons. Firstly, it was a center of Huk activity. Secondly, it is today one of the areas designated for a land reform project.

A traditional image of the government imprinted since the abusive years of the Spaniards is one of being a burden. Government was "incapable of promoting his (the farmer's) welfare, it deprived him of his liberty, and was an ever-present threat to his security...government became an institution to be avoided for its interest was contradictory."² The Gapan study presents evidences indicating that the peasants' negativism toward the government has faded. Not only do the peasants accept the government. They now also pin their hopes upon it.

¹The author had the benefit of working on the same project with Dr. Louis Douglas as a research assistant. Being a micro-level approach, the Gapan Survey does not in any way suggest that its conclusions reflect the over-all perspective of peasants in the Philippines. It is a good start though at finding unifying concepts to explain the general contour of the peasants' attitudes. Dr. Louis Douglas's work is "Fifty Farmers of Gapan: The Propensity to Develop in One Rural Philippine Situation," Kansas State University, Spring, 1966.

²Onofre Corpuz, The Philippines, (New York: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1965), p. 82.

In terms of meaningfulness, the peasants rate the national, municipal and barrio governments in that order. This may be due to the power differentials in a highly centralized system.

The peasants affirm their faith in the democratic processes. They zealously guard their right to vote. They also see the necessity of maintaining parties. However, there is a "twist" here. The majority of the peasants don't have any established link with any of the parties. Moreover, they showed a lukewarm attitude toward participating in the barrio council. It appears that the necessity for parties is dictated more by their expectation of tangible aid at election time (roads, medicine, chapel, schools). As for their participation in the barrio council, a majority of them expressed interest in knowing what is happening. Even those who professed ignorance manifested the same interest. However, most of them appear so saddled in their labor-consuming work that they don't have time for meetings.

The peasants also showed a strong desire to overhaul the land tenancy system. Yet, there were varying degrees among them as to the manner by which change shall be instituted. There were those who favored retaining the system in toto, those wishing to change completely, and those wishing to make adjustments within the system.³ Each one corresponds to "apathetic," "revolutionary," and "moderate" respectively.

³This shows variance of perception on the rate, extent, direction, stimuli, and mechanism of change. The criteria were set by Howard Becker for explaining innovation. Roscoe Hinkle, "Howard Becker's Approach to Social Change," The Sociological Quarterly, Vol. II, No. 3, (July, 1961), pp. 155-180.

TABLE 4
ATTITUDES EXPRESSED AS REASONS
FOR POSITION ON LAND REFORM

		Letter indicates Categorical response			
		<u>C*</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>T</u>
I.	Retain old system of land tenure in toto (Apathy)				
	a. Harmonious relations with landlord	1	4	2	7
	b. No difference (fatalism)	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{0}{4}$	$\frac{1}{3}$	$\frac{2}{9}$
	<u>Total</u>	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{0}{4}$	$\frac{1}{3}$	$\frac{2}{9}$ (10.8%)
II.	Completely overhaul the system (revolution)	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C*</u>	<u>T</u>
	<u>Total</u>	$\frac{3}{3}$	$\frac{3}{3}$	$\frac{2}{2}$	$\frac{8}{8}$ (10.6%)
III.	Adjust within the system	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>T</u>
	Better crop sharing ratio (75-25)	3	7	1	11
	Better sharing of expenses	4	4	2	10
	Curb usury	2	3	0	5
	Make any changes that are good	2	1	4	7
	<u>Total</u>	11	15	7	33 (68.6%)

* The C group illustrates its ambivalence by appearing in all categories.

A is highly favorable, B is favorable, C is undecided, D is against and E is highly against.

There appears an irony in the position of peasants. Land reform was their battle cry during their militant years. When it was finally instituted, the peasants did not manifest a total and immediate implementation of it. Of the 53 respondents, 33 favored adjustments within the system.

The government found this posture discouraging. Of the 1,934 farmers in Gapan, only 148 applied for leasehold. Most of them were relectant to break away from landowners. Many preferred to wait for the government to hand their leasehold contracts. A few others would like to see first how the

land reform program works out in the next two or three years.⁴

On the other hand, Dr. Douglas interprets this irony more positively. Referring to the middle-roaders, "They are the ones who are most practical and fruitful in their suggestions for improvement; they are more properly designated moderates or progressives. Their proposal for change tends in the direction of major socio-economic change but instead of a 'great leap forward' technique, they seek incremental or marginal improvements. This pattern resembles the unending change pattern of a modernized society."⁵

The survey in Gapan is valuable for a strategy of decision and policy evaluation. It is suggested however that more studies of the same nature be done. One aim of such studies will be to follow-up the attitude of peasants after several years of implementing the land reform. But more importantly, similar studies may finally define the area of consensus for a more stable takeoff in decision-making.

⁴Of the 7 land reform projects surveyed by the Land Reform Council, Gapan is the only one reported as a problem. Ramiro Alvarez, "Progress Report: Land Reform in Seven Towns," Philippines Free Press, September 13, 1965, p. 38.

⁵Louis Douglas, "Fifty Farmers of Gapan: The Propensity to Develop in One Rural Philippine Situation," Kansas State University, Spring, 1966, p. 31.

CHAPTER VII

THE FUTURE OF LAND REFORM

As envisioned, the land reform program consists of two operations. The first one includes: 1. leasehold phases for the conversion of all share-crop tenants into leases; and 2. cooperative development for the revitalization of existing farmers' cooperatives and the organization of new ones. The second one encompasses land classification, cadastral survey, land capability survey and land acquisition and distribution. Programmed for conversion into leaseholders are 311,000 share tenants. They represent 74.5% of the total share tenants. For the next 4 years, Pres. Marcos' administration hopes to acquire 62,594,957 hectares of private agricultural lands.

As of 1966, the program was still a paper plan. Upgrading still remained the biggest problem for the 18 settlements and 91 landed estates under the Land Tenancy Authority.¹ After six months of office, Pres. Marcos was criticized for "virtually sidelining the land reform program."

What ails the land reform program? One major problem is financing. The law calls for an initial outlay of P676,500,000 itemized as follows:

- P200,000,000.... For initial capitalization of the Land Bank (sec. 81)
- P200,000,000.... For additional capitalization of the Land Bank within 2 years at P1 million a year after payment of the initial P200 million (sec. 81)
- P150,000,000.... To finance the additional credit functions of the Agricultural Credit Administration (sec. 102)

¹Upgrading consists of increasing productivity, expediting issuance of titles, raising standard of living of settlers, and improving administration of settlements and landed estates.

- P100,000,000.... To finance and support the expanded cadastral land survey and registration program (sec. 140)
- P 10,000,000.... To carry out the land capability survey and classification (sec. 73)
- P 5,000,000.... To finance the activities of the Agricultural Productivity Commission (sec. 125)
- P 3,500,000.... For expenses of courtrooms and offices of the Court of Agrarian Relations (sec. 159)
- P 3,000,000.... For the expenses of the Office of Agrarian Council (sec. 165)
- P 5,000,000.... General Appropriation to carry out the provisions of the Code for the Land Authority (sec. 73)

Under Pres. Marcos' 4-year program, his administration will need P936,069,545 to implement the land reform.² It is broken down as follows:

Agency	Amount
Land Authority	P234,650,000
Agricultural Prod. Commission	386,921,000
Agricultural Credit Adm.	225,500,000
Land Bank	152,224,745
Office of Agrarian Courts	<u>16,773,800</u>
T O T A L	P936,069,545

Of the agencies involved, the Land Bank is very pivotal at this stage. Failure to appropriate funds for it will set back the purchase of land. As of 1966, the Land Bank still did not have the required funds. For the same year, only P38 million was appropriated for the rest of the agencies itemized as follows:³

² Manila Times, June 26, 1966, p. 16.

³ Angel Macapagal, "Implementing Land Reform," Manila Times, May 13, 1966, p. 11.

P17,267,448.... For expenses of the Land Authority

P15,000,000.... From the bond fund under Rep. Act 1400 creating the Land Tenure Administration for the purchase of estates

P 4,032,140.... For expenses of the Court of Agrarian Relations

P 1,731,260.... For the expenses of the Agrarian Council

The insufficiency of funds has badly affected operation at the upper and grassroot levels. When the program was started, Pres. Macapagal had to re-channel funds from other agencies to form the skeletal machinery of the land reform. In Manila, cars and office equipments were borrowed from the National Economic Council and the A.I.D. The Angat Land Reform project rolled on a few thousand pesos released on installment. Meanwhile, the Central Luzon Land Reform Information Service complained of the lack of funds for gasoline. Suffice it to say, it did not have enough vehicles. Not even its head had one at his disposal.

The Agricultural Credit Administration was supposed to lend P150 million, but as of January, 1964, it still had not received a single cent of the fund. The evaluation of surveys of expropriated estates was also due in 1964 but no action could be taken because the government did not have funds to pay for the use of I.B.M. machines.⁴

In Concepcion, Tarlac (a land reform project), it became a rule that the farmers will be allowed between P150 to P200 for a 10-month period. While loans in kind are granted, i.e., seeds, fertilizer, insecticide, pesticide, equipment, etc., Tarlac Gov. Aquino charged that "not even a dog can live on P15 a month."⁵ The financial problem led Julian de Vera, former head of the

⁴Ramiro Alvarez, "How Goes the Land Reform Program," Philippines Free Press February 1, 1964, p. 10.

⁵Benigno Aquino Jr., A Critique of the Implementation of Land Reform Program, Paper presented at the Agrarian Reform Seminar sponsored by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, Ateneo de Manila University, October, 1965.

Land Tenancy Commission to call for a review of the program. He felt it was "too big and too ambitious" that it was rendered impractical.⁶

A factor contributing to the poor start of the program is poor timing. It was launched in mid-1963 when the budget for fiscal year 1963-64 was already approved.⁷

A second major problem is administration. Minimum input for maximum output seems to escape the agencies implementing the program. The success of land reform implementation requires the coordination of rural-oriented agencies, e.g. how to make the Provincial Community Development Council, Municipal Community Development Council, Municipal Community Team, Association of Barrio Councils, etc. functional. The Carpio-Laus study of community development in six provinces confirms the lack of coordination of agencies.⁸ The lack of coordination has brought about duplication of functions. The Agricultural Productivity Commission, in creating a new research division for its new role in the land reform program, has duplicated the work of other authorized agencies such as the Bureau of Plant Industry, Bureau of Animal Industry, Bureau of Soils, International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the U.P. College of Agriculture.⁹

Another organizational weakness is over-specialization which tends to be too restricted. It was found for instance that a soils specialist confines

⁶Julian de Vera, "Something Wrong with Land Reform," The Examiner, June, 26, 1966, p. 2.

⁷Ramiro Alvarez, op. cit., p. 10.

⁸Remigia-Carpio-Laue, Coordination of Agencies in the Community Development Program, CDRC Study, Series No. 9, CDRC, U.P. Diliman, Rizal, 1960, pp. 5-7.

⁹Ramiro Alvarez, "Why Macapagal's Farm Program Failed," Philippines Free Press, January 1, 1966, p. 60.

his extension activities to matters of soil and fertilizer while the entomologist works only on insect control. What the program needs, Gelia Castillo suggested, is an extension rice production specialist, not separately an extension entomologist, a plant pathologist or a soils man.¹⁰

Another organizational defect is over-staffing. While the tenant had to deal only with the landowner and the overseer, this time he is aided by an elaborate Land Reform Project Team consisting of 2 Farm Technicians, 1 Home Management Team and 1 Rural Youth Officer assigned to 150 farmers.¹¹ In a study of 8 barrios with 8 workers, Gelia Castillo found that only half of the households received or had extension contact after two years. She traced it to the saturation of supervisors and administrators who were busy directing somebody else down the line.¹² Both cases show the heavy concentration not only in the top but also in the grassroot level which leads to the detriment of the program.

The lack of ideological congruence between agency workers and the peasants also poses a problem to administration. The Carpio-Laus study cited the need for "orientation and lay leadership training at all levels in order to bring about a deeper understanding of the community development program in the

¹⁰Gelia Tagumpay Castillo, Coordination - Anyone? Paper presented at the Conference Workshop on the Improvement of Research, Instruction, Extension and Home Ec. Programs of ACAP member institutions held at the Community Dev. Center, College, Laguna, Nov. 22-26, 1965.

¹¹Benigno Aquino, Jr., A Critique of the Implementation of the Land Reform Program, Paper presented at the Agrarian Reform Seminar sponsored by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, Ateneo de Manila University, October, 1965.

¹²Gelia Castillo, op. cit.

Philippines.¹³ A survey of top officials in the Marcos administration who have something to do with rice distribution, importation and production reveals a credential that may be harmful to the program - that of being landlords.¹⁴

A third obstacle to the effective implementation of the program is politics. Napoleon Rama, a crusading newspaperman, charged that the program is being sabotaged right in Malacanang Palace. As an example, he cited the opposition put forth by government legal advisers on technical grounds to the transferring of unused or idle public lands in Manila and suburban areas to the assets of the Land Bank. This prevented the President from releasing an executive order proclaiming the transfer. Ironically, the lawyers of the Department of Justice were ready to defend it if the President issued it.¹⁵

The administration also faces landlord opposition. In 1964, one landlord questioned the legality of the law before the Supreme Court.¹⁶ It appears that the landlords' power has not diminished. Not only are they well represented in Congress. They also have infiltrated Malacanang. "They are now demanding their pound of flesh," Napoleon Rama writes, "from the new President whom they helped in the last elections...to punish Macapagal who

¹³Remigia, Carpio, Laus, op.cit. While this study asserts it as a cause for lack of coordination, another study indicates that an understanding of community development philosophy has no relation to the over-all index of coordination. See Ari Wongse Araya, Some Factors Associated with Coordination in the Provincial Community Development Council, MSCD Thesis, U.P. College of Agriculture, 1963.

¹⁴Napoleon Rama, "Who are Sabotaging the Land Reform Program," Philippines Free Press, July 9, 1966, p. 3.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁶Ramiro Alvarez, "How Goes the Land Reform," Philippines Free Press, February 1, 1964, p. 10.

had become in their eyes Public Enemy No. 1 for having launched the land reform program."¹⁷

In summary, lack of financing, poor administration and politics are the main problems confronting the implementation of land reform.

Land Reform and the Peasantry: The Road Ahead

"Macapagal passed the law, Marcos will implement it," ran the slogan of the Marcos' camp in the 1964 election. At the rate the Marcos administration is implementing it, his opponent in 1969 may aptly say: "Marcos promised implementation, I will do it." After one year, the only major actions of the government were the declaration of one land reform project in Pampanga and the initial capitalization of P2 million for the Land Bank.¹⁸ Whether the peasants or the people in general can reconcile themselves with what Lindblom calls "disjointed incrementalism," as the rate for development is a matter of conjecture.¹⁹ At this moment, we are in no position to measure the attitude of the peasants toward land reform in the light of the delays. Yet, if we were to accept their response to the idea of changing the status from tenancy to a leasehold system as a fair indicator, then their attitude toward land reform is favorable.²⁰

¹⁷ Napoleon Rama, "Who are Sabotaging the Land Reform Program?" Philippines Free Press, July 9, 1966, p. 3.

¹⁸ Estanislao Fernandez, "The First Year of President Marcos," Philippines Free Press, February 4, 1967, p. 15.

¹⁹ Albert Hirschman and Charles Lindblom, "Economic Development, Research and Development, Policy Making: Some Converging Views," Behavioral Science, Vol. VII, No. 2 (April, 1962), p. 211.

²⁰ Ramiro Alvarez, "Progress Report: Land Reform in Seven Towns," Philippines Free Press, September 18, 1965, p. 39.

There is no doubt that land reform was an issue in the 1964 elections. In view of the Philippine situation wherein "personalities" tend to obscure issues during election, we are thrown into the task of determining how relevant this issue was. In the absence of a study measuring the effect of this single issue upon the peasants' attitude, the voting in Central Luzon may serve as a gauge. This measure, however, can be deceiving. One reason is that peasants have voted always with the winning presidential candidate. Another reason is that no President has ever been re-elected. Macapagal's loss of peasant support in the 1964 election may be read as the stamp of disapproval for his agrarian program. Yet, the same conclusion can be said of former President Garcia in 1961 and of the late President Quirino in 1953. A better interpretation perhaps for the peasants' vote for a change of administration is that it expresses the frustration over the inability of the President to solve the impossible - that is, to liberate the people from an economic morass anchored in century-old problems in a matter of four years.

What stands out in the election is that rural development is now a permanent feature of campaign slogans.²¹ As an issue, it occupies a position "something like economic growth in the western world." The issue has graduated beyond the level of a choice between "for" or "against." It is reduced to a question of degree by which it shall be carried as an operative element of the government.

²¹Martin Meadows, "The New Philippine Politics," Pacific Affairs, Vol. XXXV, No. 3 (Fall, 1962), pp. 261-274; R. S. Milne, "From Magsaysay to Macapagal," Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. XV, No. 4 (Autumn, 1962), pp. 511-518; Robert Stauffer, "Philippine Legislators and their Changing Universe," Journal of Politics, Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (August, 1966), p. 589; For more on interest aggregation and interest articulation in the Philippine political system, see Jean Groosholtz, The Philippines, (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1964), pp. 235-265.

This is a critical point. There are still politicians who think that the translation of land reform into reality is not to be hurried. While they exalt land reform in their speeches, they deal with it at the level of the ceremonial and the expressive.

The delay in land reform can lead to peasant frustration. History proves that this situation can find a way to violence. The Huks of yesteryears may have been defeated but the fact remains that there is a resurging unrest. The Central Plains, in the face of a turmoil in Southeast Asia, face the danger of an ideological sweep. The contemporary, periodic violence in this region poses an unflattering picture that does not speak of tranquility.²² It appears that the government brought to the peasants by Magsaysay seems to be fleeting away a decade later.

The government, indeed, faces its stern test in the land reform. It is no longer a simple case involving the interest of the landlord or the peasant. Neither is it solely tied to rice production. Land reform today has significant economic, social, and political considerations. Undoubtedly, problems are not solved overnight. Perhaps the instant panacea is still not within sight. Yet, it is not for the sake of theatrics that the call for land reform be made. Somehow, land reform must be pushed with more dedication. The government has yet to bridge the wide gap between program and implementation.

²²Rodulfo Tupas, "The Lingering Unrest of Central Luzon," Manila Sunday Times Magazine, June 26, 1966, p. 11.

APPENDIX A

APPEN

SOME KEY PROVISIONS OF 1954-1955

Bill Identification	Lands subject to expropriation	Area to which applicable
A) Senate Bill 90 1954		Estates having more than 5 tenant cultivators, averaging 5 hectares each.
B) House Bill 2468 1954	Land suitable for subdivision where there was "necessity for immediate acquisition."	None specified, although landowner could refuse to sell without being subject to expropriation proceedings for just cause
C) House Bill 2468 Revised June 28, 1954	Lands suitable for subdivision where "public interest" would be served by immediate acquisition.	Just cause (above) defined as "when the landowner does own more than 144 hectares of land."
D) House Bill 2557 May 1955 Sponsor: Cong. Cortez	Same as above, but landowner must have been found guilty of violation of Agricultural Tenancy Act 5 times in 3 months (unless he consented to negotiations).	
E) House Bill 2557 Amendment by substitution May 1955. Sponsors: Cortez, Laurel, Roy, Corpus, Tolentino, Fornier, Juan Macias, Apacible, Cruz, Benito, Abeleda, Macapagal, Castaneda, Bengzon	Priorities to: (1) lands owned by non-residents, where subleased or administered by third party; and (2) those owned by residents but subleased or administered by third party. Where landowner found guilt 3 times of violation of tenancy law, expropriation to proceed on Court recommendations.	Lands in excess of 800 hectares if crop was coconut, sugar, abaca or other fibers; those in excess of 500 hectares if owned by corporations or partnerships.
F) House Bill 2557 Amendment by substitution (proposed only), May 1955. Sponsors: Marcos, Veloso, etc.	Private agricultural lands owned by a single person... when the public welfare so requires.	Lands with aggregate contiguous area of not less than 2,000 hectares (not applicable to corporate lands of any size apparently).

DIX

LAND TENURE BILLS COMPARED

Mode of Payment	Funds provided	Size of farm units
Production certificates, non-negotiable; could be cashed for investment purposes only.	Certificates in amount of P600,000,000 to 800,000,000	Transfer to bona fide tenants.
Combination of amortized, fixed-maturity, and (or) negotiable land certificates in negotiated sale, not more than 10 per cent in negotiable certificates, otherwise, option.	P500,000 for administration, P1,000,000 annually for sinking fund. No more than P600,000,000 in certificates.	Authority to determine family size units. Resettlement preference for displaced tenants.
Same as above except that in expropriation cases, payment in cash, except at option of owner.	Same as above.	Same as above.
Same as above, except further proviso that compensation may be in government real property, withdrawn from government use with agreement of both parties.	Same as above.	Referred to family-size units, but made no provision for displaced families.
Negotiable land certificates payable on demand usable for tax and other governmental obligations. In negotiated purchase, payment 50% cash, 50% certificates; also may include barter of government properties. Payment all in cash for expropriation.	P500,000 for administration, P50,000,000 out of bond issue authorized by Republic Act 1000, Certificates not to exceed P50,000,000.	Family-size farms, based on number in family, equipment soil, etc. Displaced tenants to be given resettlement preference. However, no tenant to be dispossessed without his consent.
Refers to "certificates issued under authority of this law" but no provision for manner of issuance or mode of payment	P500,000 for administration, P1,000,000 for sinking fund.	Family size farms, variable, no provision for displaced families.

(Continued)

Bill Identification	Lands subject to expropriation	Area to which applicable	Mode of Payment	Funds Provided	Size of Farm Units
G) House Bill 2557 Proposed Amendment, May 1955. Sponsor: Macias		Would have created commission empowered only to survey farm lands or haciendas with at least 50 tenants.			
H) House Bill 2557 Amendment by substitution (E) above, as amended to May 19, 1955	Same as (E) above.	Lands in excess of 1,024 hectares of contiguous area if crop was tobacco, coconut, sugar, abaca, or other fibers, or if owned by corporations or partnerships, otherwise those in excess of 500 hectares of contiguous area.	Negotiable land certificates to be issued, but payment to be entirely in cash for either negotiated purchase or expropriation except at option of owner. Also option to accept government holdings in lieu of cash.	Same as (E) above	Same as (E) above.
I) Senate Bill 332 May 1955. Sponsors: Montano, Lopez, Cabili.	Same as (C) above.	Same as (C) above; however, amended in committee to allow 144 hectares for each of landowner's forced heirs.	Same as (C) above.	Same as (B) above.	Family-size units, 6-12 hectares; resettlement preference for displaced families.
J) Senate Bill 332 As adopted on 3rd reading, May 19, 1955.	Same as above.	Holdings with area of at least 150 hectares.	Same as above	Sinking fund flexible to be based on number of bonds outstanding. Certificates not to exceed P60,000,000 in first year, P30,000,000 in succeeding years.	Same as above.
K) House Bill 2557 (E) above, as amended and passed in special session, July, 1955. Marcos, Veloso, Manguera, Teves, Abordo, Babao, Durano, Aldeguez, Rodriguez, Raquiza, Castano, Nuguid and Mitra added to sponsors.	Authority to first proceed with expropriation of uncultivated and abandoned lands, those owned by persons not resident in the Philippines, and those in which there was marked social unrest. In addition, priorities listed under (E) above applicable	Agricultural lands as to the area in excess of 1,204 hectares of contiguous lands where crop was coffee, cassava, tobacco, coconut, rami, sugar, abaca, or other fibers or if owned by corporations or partnerships; otherwise, lands as to the area in excess of 500 hectares of contiguous lands. Owner to have privilege of selecting contiguous portion he would retain. On holdings exceeding 1,500 hectares, any area affected by social unrest subject to expropriation.	Same as (H) above.	P100,000 plus unexpended balance of appropriation for Division of Landed Estates for administration; P50,000,000 from bond issue (R.A. 1000). Negotiable certificates not to exceed P100,000,000.	Same as (E) above; provided further that no tenant should hold more than 10 hectares.

(continued)

Bill Identification	Lands subject to expropriation	Area to which applicable	Mode of payment	Funds provided	Size of farm units
L) House Bill 2557 Senate Bill 332 Conference Report, special session, July, 1955	Same as (C) above.	Lands of not less than 300 hectares of contiguous area, unless there was marked agrarian unrest therein, in which case no area limitations to apply (No area limitations in case of negotiated purchase.	Negotiable land certificates, payable on demand, usable for tax and other governmental obligations. In negotiated sale, no more than 50% to be paid in cash. Barter for government properties could be included on agreement of parties. In expropriation cases, payment to be wholly in cash except at option of owner.	P100,000 plus unexpended balance of appropriation for Division of Landed Estates for administration not exceeding P20,000,000 for sinking fund, plus P100,000,000 from bond issue (R.A. 1000). negotiable land certificates not exceed P60,000,000 in first year or P30,000,000 in any succeeding year.	Referred to "family-size farm units not exceeding 6 hectares each" no provision for displacement of excess tenants.
M) House Bill 2557 Conference Report, special session; passed by both houses, August 1955. Report by Cong. Cortez, Roces, and Benito; and Sen. Montano, Kangleon and Peralta.	Same as above.	Lands as to the area in excess of 300 hectares of contiguous area if owned by natural persons and those as to the area in excess of 600 hectares if owned by corporations; provided that lands where "justified agrarian unrest" existed could be expropriated regardless of area (No area limitation in case of negotiated purchase.)	Same as above	Same as above, except outright appropriation for administration increasing of P300,000.	Same as above.

Source: Frances Starner, Magsaysay and the Philippine Peasantry,
(Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), Appendix

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B

VOTES CAST FOR PRESIDENT IN CENTRAL LUZON

1949

	Quirino (LP)	Laurel (NP)
Bataan	36,379	56,016
Bulacan	10,749	15,664
Nueva Ecija	50,603	23,980
Pampanga	45,895	24,482
Pangasinan	113,544	73,349
Tarlac	45,399	15,700
Zambales	16,105	10,027
Percentage of CL Vote	60%	40%
Percentage of Nat. Vote	58%	42%

1953

	Quirino (LP)	Magsaysay (NP)
Bataan	3,906	97,816
Bulacan	42,857	97,816
Nueva Ecija	41,283	58,945
Pampanga	19,682	86,623
Pangasinan	98,395	121,948
Tarlac	27,428	55,966
Zambales	1,924	39,015
Percentage of CL Vote	33%	66%
Percentage of Nat. Vote	32%	68%

1961

	Macapagal (LP)	Garcia (NP)
Bataan	27,282	20,694
Bulacan	110,914	84,721
Nueva Ecija	93,423	56,730
Pampanga	111,575	45,254
Pangasinan	181,823	122,398
Tarlac	80,004	27,009
Zambales	16,458	19,098
Percentage of CL Vote	63%	37%
Percentage of Nat. Vote	56%	44%

1965

	Macapagal (LP)	Marcos (NP)
Bataan	24,005	29,755
Bulacan	82,453	112,170
Nueva Ecija	78,258	106,391
Pampanga	145,105	29,641
Pangasinan	140,319	208,579
Tarlac	59,099	47,230
Zambales	13,542	52,693
Percentage of CL Vote	47%	51%
Percentage of Nat. Vote	43%	57%

Data are taken from the tabulation of the Commission on Election reported in the Manila Times every first week after the election.

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PHILIPPINE LAND REFORM - A PROBLEM
IN POLICY FORMATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

by

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ABSTRACT

With the prevalence of tenancy and its accompanying social inequities in developing countries, land reform is being studied with the view that it is one of the key variables to development. Land reform, in a restricted sense, may be defined as the expropriation of large landholdings, with or without compensation, and their redistribution to farmers, tenants, serfs or laborers. In a larger sense, it refers to measures for improving the structure or relations among men with respect to their rights in the land. It entails direct measures such as the promotion of ownership by the operator and the reduction of absentee landlordism, regulation of rental rates, consolidation of lands, and subdivision of large holdings; and institutional measures such as extension service, research and educational programs, marketing system, improved agricultural labor, and reforms in fiscal taxation.

This study focuses on the Philippine land reform program from 1900 to 1966 as a problem in policy formation and implementation. The case for land reform is the presence of widespread tenancy. As of 1963, 800,000 or 35% of the 2.2 million farmers were tenants. Philippine history is full of accounts of landlord abuses and of peasant revolts. It is thus imperative to ameliorate the life of the peasants not only to gain legitimacy in the government but also for advancing the development of the country. Land reform could be the answer to the economic problem of distributing the wealth of the nation to a wider sector of the population, to the social problem of removing social barriers and of inculcating "modernizing values," and to the political problem of bringing the peasants into the mainstream of political life and of acculturating them to the norms of consensualism.

The study is divided into three periods: pre-Magsaysay period from 1900 to 1953, Magsaysay period from 1953-1957, and post-Magsaysay period from 1957 to 1966. The arbitrary division roughly represents stages in policy formation and implementation. The pre-Magsaysay period may be considered as the era of policy formation. Different administrations in this period pursued the style of solving social problems by legislative fiat. The Magsaysay period represents the transition from policy formation to implementation. It retained the characteristic of the previous period of protracted legislative battles on one hand and ushered a vigorous spirit of implementing the program on the other. In spite of the massive governmental participation, program was far from realization. The old feudal land system was not shaken. For all its failures, this period may be credited for bringing the government to the peasantry. The post-Magsaysay period marks the end of the long struggle in passing a meaningful land reform law. It also opens the second stage: that of implementing the program.

This study assumes that land reform is not the complete panacea but rather only a contribution to the amelioration of the peasants' plight. It sees the implementation of land reform as a gradual, incremental and disjointed process.