

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WASHINGTON, D. C. 20523 BIBLIOGRAPHIC INPUT SHEET	FOR AID USE ONLY <i>Batch 62</i>
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1. SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION	A. PRIMARY	Agriculture	AE10-0000-G662
	B. SECONDARY	Agricultural economics--Indonesia	

2. TITLE AND SUBTITLE
Land reform in Indonesia

3. AUTHOR(S)
Utrecht, E.

4. DOCUMENT DATE 1970	5. NUMBER OF PAGES 22p.	6. ARC NUMBER ARC
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7. REFERENCE ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS
AID/PPC/EMS

8. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES (*Sponsoring Organization, Publishers, Availability*)
(In AID Spring Review of Land Reform, 1970. v.2, SR/LR/C-30)

9. ABSTRACT

10. CONTROL NUMBER PN-AAD-932	11. PRICE OF DOCUMENT
12. DESCRIPTORS Evaluation Indonesia Land reform	13. PROJECT NUMBER
	14. CONTRACT NUMBER AID/PPC/EMS
	15. TYPE OF DOCUMENT

AID/PR/EMS
IN-AID-932

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SPRING REVIEW

Country Papers
Vol. 2

LAND REFORM

in

INDONESIA

by

E. Utrecht

June, 1970

Country Papers represent the views of their authors and are not generally intended as statements of policy of either A.I.D. or the author's parent institution.

Note by A. Shakow, EA/I, AID/Washington

[The following article presents a useful summary of land reform efforts in Indonesia over the past decade. As Professor Utrecht points out, land reform was an important political issue under President Sukarno in the early 1960's, but as was common at that time, actual implementation of the program fell far short of the rhetoric which extolled its importance to "the Indonesian Revolution".

Unlike many other developing countries, Indonesia is not marked by vast tracts of land held by a few wealthy families. As a result, the problem has not taken on major significance in the past several years. The Suharto Administration is strongly influenced by economic factors (unlike Sukarno) but has yet to emphasize land reform as an important element in the top priority program to increase agricultural production. This reflects the less critical nature of the issue as well as the desire to avoid contentious political subjects wherever possible, especially those championed by Sukarno and the Communist Party.

An indirect approach to improved land use worth mentioning as it has long been practiced in Indonesia is "transmigration". Since the early 1900's the transfer of population from overpopulated areas of Java and Bali to the outer islands has greatly attracted those officials seeking a panacea to correct the country's population imbalance and, more recently, to speed economic development. Although transmigration was prominently featured in government programs before 1966, little success was achieved as the cost was prohibitively high, preparations at the destination inadequate, and home area ties so strong that large numbers of migrants eventually returned to Java. (Between 1950 and 1963, for example, less than 350,000 people actually left Java under official auspices.)

Transmigration has not received as much attention since 1966, although the current government has a continuing interest in moving population to key labor shortages areas in hopes of strengthening regional development programs. The new 5-Year Plan emphasizes the need to make proper preparations, both of the migrants and the new territory, before proceeding. Transmigration schemes, however, are not now intended to solve the immediate land distribution and population problems of Java.

The current Indonesian Government has faced economic problems of immense proportions, including most importantly the absence of confidence in government and currency fostered by the wild inflation of the latter Sukarno years. President Suharto's administration has had remarkable success in controlling inflation and is now seeking to press forward with rapid economic development, a difficult task in a country of Indonesia's size and complexity. Land reform and related efforts to bring what Prof. Utrecht calls the "foundations of social justice" to the Indonesian countryside have not been forgotten but higher priorities - such as price stability - leading towards general economic growth are being given greater emphasis.]

**BULLETIN OF INDONESIAN
ECONOMIC STUDIES**

CONTENTS

Vol V, No. 3	November 1969
	Page
Survey of Recent Developments	
Summary—development indicators—	
agriculture—the fiscal system—foreign	
debts—family planning	H. W. Arndt 1
An Economic Survey of Central Java	Atje Partadiredja 29
The Textile Industry	W. Boucherie 47
Land Reform	E. Utrecht 71
 <i>Notes</i>	
Seasonal Adjustment:	
Money Supply and Exports	H. W. Arndt 89
	Nancy Viviani 99
Index to Statistical Tables	99
 <i>Publications</i>	 114
 <i>Statistics</i>	 117

**Published for the Department of Economics, Research School
of Pacific Studies, by the Australian National University Press.**

LAND REFORM IN INDONESIA

Former President Sukarno based his guided democracy upon an ideology, *Indonesian socialism*, which he formulated as *Marxism adjusted to Indonesian conditions*.¹ But Sukarno was kept busy by the problem of how to maintain an equilibrium between the army and the leftist political parties. This largely accounts for the fact that during the period of guided democracy (1959-66) only a few regulations were made that could be called 'socialistic'. Among those few were the regulations for land reform, which began to be carried out on 24 September 1960.²

PRINCIPLES OF THE BASIC AGRARIAN LAW OF 1960

On 17 August 1959 in his well known Political Manifesto (*Manipol*) address,³ Sukarno announced the termination of the proprietary rights on land which had been imported from European law into Indonesian law. Five months later, on 13 January

¹ Donald E. Weatherbee, *Ideology in Indonesia: Soekarno's Indonesian Revolution*, South East Asia Studies Monograph Series No. 8, Yale University, 1967; Ruth T. McVey, 'Indonesian Communism and the Transition to Guided Democracy' in A. Doak Barnett (editor), *Communist Strategies in Asia: A Comparative Analysis of Governments and Parties*, New York/London 1963, pp. 148-195; and Herbert Feith, 'Dynamics of Guided Democracy' in Ruth T. McVey (editor), *Indonesia*, New Haven 1963, pp. 309-409. See also two important book reviews by L. Sluimers and J. H. A. Logemann in BKI (Contributions to [the] Philology, Geography, and Ethnology of the Netherlands East Indies) No. 125, 1967, pp. 526-8 and 528-30.

² Boedi Harsono, *Undang-undang Pokok Agraria, Sedjarah Penjuluhan, Isi dan Pelaksanaannya*, Djakarta 1961; Gouw Giok Siong, *Tafsiran Undang-undang Pokok Agraria*, Djakarta 1967; A. B. Loebis, *Land reform Indonesia*, Djakarta, no date; articles in *Penjuluh Landreform*, published monthly by the Departemen Agraria (now Direktorat Agraria). A collection of regulations was published by R. Soedargo, *Perundang-undangan Agraria Indonesia*, 2 volumes with supplements, Bandung 1962.

³ *Manifesto Politik Republik Indonesia 17 Agustus 1959*, Departemen Penerangan, special issue No. 76, p. 53.

1960, at the first session of the Supreme Advisory Council (DPA) for that year convened especially for the purpose of discussing the need for land reform and of reporting on the matter to the government, Sukarno enunciated the theory that 'land reform is an indispensable part of the Indonesian Revolution'.⁴ Seen within the framework of the Indonesian social revolution, land reform aimed at the abolition of the class of landowners who have their land tilled by hired labourers and a decrease in the number of landless peasants by granting real property only to those who till the soil themselves. In Indonesia, Sukarno claimed, it had been clearly demonstrated that the peasant who owns his own land cultivates it more intensively. Many arable acres of land left unproductive by landlords could be turned into flourishing fields. Landlords who would have to give up their property but would receive proper indemnification could, provided that efficient arrangements were made, grow into prosperous manufacturers. Properly implemented land reform could also result, he said, in a more just distribution of income among citizens and create a social structure that would open the way towards higher national production.

The DPA in its report to the government saw the goal of land reform as 'the creation of the society of justice and prosperity, in particular a raising of the living standard of the whole nation'.⁵ The principles of land reform laid down in the report were a result of a compromise between two currents in the Council, one representing the interests of the landless peasants and the other the interests of the landowners. The majority of DPA members supported the compromise. The representatives of peasants and labourers advocated a system of allowing land only to those who actually till it (*sistim penggarap*). If this system were introduced, they claimed, it would simultaneously wipe out share cropping (*maro, mertelu*) which they regarded as the pre-eminent means of exploiting landless peasants in Indonesia.⁶ The opponents of *sistim penggarap*, most of them representatives of religious organisations, argued that proprietary rights in land (*milik atas tanah*) are, according to Indonesian traditional law, inalienable: divine right ordains

⁴ *Peraturan Dasar Pokok-pokok Agraria dan Landreform*, Departemen Penerangan, special issue No. 169, p. 11. See also Foreword by Agrarian Ministers on p. xvii of Boedi Harsono's *Undang-undang Pokok Agraria*.

⁵ *Minutes of the DPA session, 13-17 January 1960.*

⁶ Still very useful is A.M.P.A. Scheltema, *Deelbouw in Nederlandsch Indie*, Ph.D. thesis, Wageningen 1931.

inheritance to descendants. Thus the rights in land of religious institutions—mosques (so-called *wakap* soil), Hindu temples (*laba pura*, arable land belonging to the temple and intended to yield the rice necessary for offerings in the temple), and the churches—are also inalienable on account of the divine usage of the soil. A middle course was suggested as a provisional measure by the Agrarian Minister, Sadjarwo, who had been a member of the Barisan Tani Indonesia (BTI) before this peasants' organisation was affiliated to the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and who afterwards became a member of the Petani, the peasants' society of the Indonesian Nationalist Party (PNI). 'So we choose the radically revolutionary system', that is, 'the ending of the landlord system and a subsequent distribution of land among the landless peasants, as has been done not only in Russia and the Chinese People's Republic but also in non-communist countries, as for instance Japan, Egypt and India . . . but the plan will be carried out gradually, stage after stage . . . in the first stage we will determine a *maximum* and a *minimum* for real property. . . .'⁷ So the compromise consisted of provisional recognition of real property up to a certain maximum, even if the landowner did not till the soil himself. This meant, incidentally, that the system of sharecropping remained,⁸ although there was a provision that an end would be put to arbitrary actions by landowners.

The principle of a maximum and a minimum was further developed in the draft of the Basic Agrarian Law which was submitted to the Gotong-Rojong Parliament (DPR-GR) in the course of 1960. The new Basic Agrarian Law (Law No. 5 of 1960), which replaced the old Netherlands Indies agrarian legislation of 1870, was proclaimed on 24 September 1960.⁹

The new law put an end to the dualistic propriety rights which had attempted to accommodate the interests of Western

⁷ *Peraturan Dasar Pokok-pokok Agraria dan Landreform*, pp. 18-19.

⁸ Sharecropping is a traditional (*adat*) institution in many areas of Indonesia. Normally the landowner does not concern himself with cultivation, though he may agree to provide seed and cattle for ploughing. Two-thirds or three-quarters of the sharecroppers harvest were normally paid to landowners but in extreme cases, a landowner might receive as much as four-fifths of the harvest. The Law on Sharecropping Agreements (No. 2 of 1960) required the harvest to be divided equally between the sharecropper and the landowner.

⁹ Like many laws of the period, it left some important details of implementation and interpretation to be dealt with later by regulation or, as often happened, by emergency law.

capital and those of the indigenous people who could not be alienated from their land. Formerly a mixture of European law and indigenous law, the latter hemmed in by the former, controlled land rule. The new legislation substituted a single code based on Indonesian traditional (*adat*) law 'purified' from 'feudal' and 'capitalistic' elements. The new legislation qualified indigenous law in various ways, although in vague terms, such as that it must not be 'contrary to national interests', 'contrary to Indonesian socialism', 'contrary to other agrarian legal precepts' or 'contrary to religious law' and that it would be 'founded on national unity' (Article 3). These limitations gave the new law more of a western than eastern tenor. The compromise with the religious groups, first in the DPA and later in the Parliament, was evident in the limitation, 'not contrary to religious law'. It was this limitation that proved to be a serious impediment to the implementation of land reform.

Another kind of dualism that disappeared with the introduction of the new agrarian legislation was the differentiation, made since 1950, between 'autochthonous' Indonesian citizens and citizens 'of foreign descent'. Since 1875 a 'prohibition on alienation of land' (*vervreemdingsverbod*) had made it unlawful for an autochthonous Indonesian to alienate, i.e., sell or donate, his land to a non-autochthonous Indonesian. The new law acknowledges only one category of citizens. 'Now every Indonesian citizen, whether autochthonous or not, is free to alienate his soil to any other person, except to a foreigner'.¹⁰ The fixing of a maximum for the extent of real property and the exclusion of foreigners from land ownership averted the possible danger to autochthonous Indonesians from 'economically stronger' groups, a danger that might have arisen from the revocation of the prohibition on alienation of 1875. Registration of property was made obligatory in order to ensure efficient control over the amount of land held by any one owner.

At the end of 1960 the government started preparations for land reform. Articles 7, 10, and 17 of the Basic Agrarian Law of 1960 were to be put into effect immediately. These three articles forbade ownership of more than the permitted maximum of land and absentee ownership and gave the government authority to take surplus land for redistribution. The government hoped to complete this plan of reform by the end of 1964.

On 29 December 1960 the important Emergency Law 1960

¹⁰ Gouw Giok Siong, *Tafsiran*, p. 12.

No. 56 was proclaimed. This law determined among other things the minimum and maximum for disposal of arable land. Article 8 said that 'the government will make efforts to provide every peasant family with a minimum of 2 hectares of arable land'. The maximum was made dependent on the population density of the region (*daerah*) in question. Differential maxima were fixed for irrigated rice land (*sawah*) and non-irrigated or dry land (*tanah kering, tegalan* or *ladang*). Table 1 gives the maximum hectareage permissible for the two types of land.¹¹ The maxima related not only to land in actual ownership but also to land at one's disposal through land pledging according to *adat* law (*gadai*) or land lease (*sewa*) from others. It was necessary to include this rule because it had been found that while in Java, Madura, South Sulawesi, Bali and Lombok there were only 5,400 persons who owned *sawah* of more than 10 ha (Table 2) a much larger number held more than 10 ha of irrigated land owned by others, mostly by poor peasants who did not have the means to till the soil themselves or whose land was so small that it did not pay to work it, so that of necessity they had surrendered it in *gadai* and *sewa* to richer fellow-villagers or town inhabitants. For dry fields the respective numbers were 11,000 persons owning more than 10 ha each and a much larger number of people having at their disposal on conditions of *gadai* or *sewa* more than 10 ha of land belonging to others.

TABLE 1 *Maximum Permitted Hectarage*

Population Density	<i>sawah</i> (hectares)	or	<i>tanah kering</i> (hectares)
1. 1-50 inhabitants per sq. km	15		20
2. 51-250 inhabitants per sq. km	10		12
3. 251-400 inhabitants per sq. km	7.5		9
4. over 400 inhabitants per sq. km	5		6

Source: Law 56 of 1960, Article 1 and Supplement.

The maxima given in the table determined the amount of land each family would be allowed to have at its disposal. A family was assumed to consist of 7 persons; for each family member

¹¹ Instruction No. Sk. 978/Ka/1960, which was issued by the Agrarian Minister two days after the Emergency Law 1960 No. 56 had been proclaimed, fixed for each regency its definite category of population density and the maximum amount of land which a family would be permitted to hold.

exceeding this number, an additional 10 per cent of land was allowed, up to a limit of 50 per cent. In cases of ownership of mixed *sawah* and *tanahkering* the maximum area of land allowed was 20 ha for sparsely as well as densely populated areas.

TABLE 2 *Number of Landholders by Size of Holding*

Province	Less than 0.5 ha	0.6 to 1.0 ha	1.1 to 2.0 ha	2.1 to 5.0 ha	5.1 to 10 ha	10.1 to 20 ha	Over 20 ha
West Java	1,395,307	359,424	156,216	56,283	8,153	1,449	363
Central Java	1,388,352	405,067	115,304	25,787	3,265	905	111
East Java	933,615	464,532	167,565	40,954	4,369	577	93
Sulawesi and the Lesser Sunda Islands	468,151	197,286	105,704	42,277	5,770	1,468	433
Total	4,185,425	1,426,309	544,789	165,301	21,557	4,399	1,000

Article 3 of Emergency Law No. 56 of 1960 stipulated that anyone holding land in excess of the legally permitted maximum was to report this to the Head of the Agrarian Department of the regency concerned within 3 months after proclamation of the Emergency Law. Article 4 forbade the transfer of land surplus to others without the permission of the Head of the Agrarian Department of the region. All land surplus was intended to be distributed in 'the best possible way' among landless peasants; how this was to be done was not specified but left to the discretion of the committee. Subsequent experience with the implementation of land reform showed that it was precisely in this matter of distribution of land surplus that the chief difficulty lay. People tried, contrary to legal regulations, to keep their land surplus within the family circle or to transfer it to relations 'well disposed to the former owner'.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LAND REFORM FROM THE BEGINNING OF 1961 UNTIL THE END OF 1965

Three activities marked the execution of the land reform regulations from the beginning of 1961 to the end of 1965: registration of the land, determination of surplus and its distribution to as many landless peasants as possible, and implementation of the 1960 Law on Sharecropping Agreements.

Land registration was provided for in Government Regulation No. 10 of 1961 under Article 19 of the Basic Agrarian Law. Although registration is an indispensable factor in any efficient

execution of land reform, it also often introduces an obstructive element of bureaucracy and may easily become a means for falsification and fraud.

The task of local execution of the land reform, the assessment and distribution of land surplus, was placed in the hands of land reform committees formed according to Presidential Decree No. 131 of 1961. The committees were arranged in a hierarchical order: the central committee under the supreme guidance of the President, the provincial committees under the chairmanship of the respective Governors, the regency committees under the respective Regents (*bupati*), the committees in the *ketjamatans* under the *tjamats* and, finally, the committees in the village under the guidance of the village administration. Of all these committees, those of the Regencies were the most important since they had to do the actual work, such as survey and measuring of the land, the assessment of land surplus, determination of the compensation to be paid to landowners, composition of lists of persons eligible for allotments, and settlement of disputes. The decree prescribed that representatives of peasants' organisations were to be included in the committees. The procedures to be followed in redistributing the land and in assessing and paying the indemnifications were laid down in Government Regulation No. 4 of 1961.

The land reform committees started their work on 1 September 1961. It took one year of preparatory work before the actual activities of the reform could be started on 24 September 1962, the second anniversary of the Basic Agrarian Law. The redistribution of land was to be carried out in two stages. Java, Madura, Bali and Nusa Tenggara Barat (Lombok and Sumbawa) were made the region for stage I, in which the redistribution of land surplus and of the so-called *tanah absentee* (land of persons who have their domicile elsewhere), together with the distribution of land of former native kingdoms (*tanah swa-pradja*) and state domains were to be concluded by the end of 1963 or early in 1964 at the latest. This was to be followed by stage II, covering the region of Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and the rest of Indonesian territory. According to the first National Plan for General Development, which was approved of by the MPRS (Provincial People's Congress) in December 1960, the whole process of redistribution should be finished in 3 to 5 years.

Since in 1961 no exact figures were as yet available—the registration of land had only just got under way—the central

committee *estimated* the total surface of the land to be assigned for allotment at 966,150 ha.¹² In the course of 1963 the regency committees were able to give the correct figures for all the land that should be distributed or redistributed in the region of stage I as a total amount of 337,445 ha.¹³ No official report has yet been issued for 1965 giving the figures of distributable land in the regions of stage II; at least the author has not been able to find such a report.

Closer examination of the agrarian legislation of 1960 reveals the extent to which both the legislation and the procedure for its execution rested on compromise. Much weight was given to the interests of the landowners. The maximum for permitted holdings were relatively high, and there were many loopholes for eluding the prohibitions on absenteeism and for keeping land surplus outside the range of the land reforms. Admittedly, in Java, Madura, and Bali there had for a long time been few large holdings. But it would have been possible to create a land surplus twice as large by lowering the maxima for land allowed as a holding and by treating the nearly 56,000 absentees less leniently.¹⁴ This would have yielded somewhat more land for allotment than the 337,445 ha actually obtained for the more than three million landless peasant families at the start of the land reform.¹⁵

From the outset it was to be expected that serious obstruction would be raised by the landowners with the support of conservative groups, and that they would avail themselves of the weak spots in the law. A report by the Agrarian Minister issued on

¹² Menteri Agraria, *Laporan: Pelaksanaan Landreform dan Problem-problema (tahun 1964)*, 14 January 1965, p. 7.

¹³ See Menteri Agraria, *Laporan*, pp. 10-11.

¹⁴ According to Menteri Agraria, *Laporan* (Appendix B), the number of absentee landowners in the area covered by stage I was reported to be 55,910. A Departemen Agraria in 1959 revealed that there were 6,010 absentees among the 20,488 landowners in the *ketjamatan* of Indramaju in West Java. Nearly all *sawah* in the villages of Karang Malang, Kali Beluk and Klidang Wetan in the *ketjamatan* of Batang (10 km east of Pekalongan) in Central Java were owned by people who had their domicile in towns. Real property of 10 ha up to 120 ha was very common among these landowners (*Peraturan Dasar Pokok-pokok Agraria dan Landreform*, p. 15).

¹⁵ Taking the 1961 Census as the basis, it is possible to put the number of people living from agriculture in Java and Bali at 42 million. This means that, according to the Basic Agrarian Law, about 6 million peasant families draw an income from agricultural activities. In his address to the DPA, the Agrarian Minister reported that 60 per cent of these families were landless.

14 January 1965 gave the following resumé of the difficulties met by the the executors of the land reform regulations up to the end of 1964:

- a. Deficiencies in the registration of land hampered investigations of the land surplus, and opened the way to abuses.
- b. Lack of understanding of the necessity and significance of land reform as an instrument of social change among wide sections of the people made it easier for landlords to obstruct the reforms.
- c. There was insufficient cooperation among the members of the committees, partly because other duties kept some of them from devoting their full attention to the tasks of the committees, and partly because many of the committee members themselves were interested in the failure of land reform; in many cases land surpluses were even officially kept outside the land reform regulations.
- d. The peasants' organisations, which would have lent the strongest support, were prevented from playing a significant part on the committees.
- e. The peasants were still subject to strong psychological and economic pressure from the landowners which kept them from pushing for an efficient execution of land reform.
- f. It proved difficult to establish an order of priority in redistributing land either because many fields had no regular labourers or because, through changes in registration, the workers concerned had been listed as absentees. Such cases resulted in severe disputes between landowners and labourers or among the labourers themselves, which, in turn, often gave rise to quarrels among the various political organisations.¹⁶

Even this list of complaints by the Agrarian Minister was not complete. Not only was there insufficient awareness of the value and necessity of land reform on the part of certain groups, but the government itself aroused suspicions among landowners that redistribution of land would, in fact, amount to no more than plain confiscation, land theft committed by the government. The government had promised that it would buy the land surplus at a fair price¹⁷ and sell it again at the same price—with provision

¹⁶ Menteri Agraria, *Laporan*, pp. 11-12.

¹⁷ See Sukarno's 17 August 1964 speech ('our government will never confiscate proprietary rights in land').

of credit—to new owners. But this promise was not kept, at least not in time. Understandably, many landowners came to resist the attempt of the government to have them cede their land surplus, and this resistance was often encouraged by interested political organisations. After some hesitation and after pressure was brought to bear upon it, the government finally proclaimed Emergency Law No. 3 of 1963 (later replaced by Law No. 6 of 1964) which now regulates the compensation to be paid to landowners. However, until February 1968, no compensation had been received by any of the former landowners, with the exception of a small payment made in the regency of Badung, Bali. Thus it is understandable, if not excuseable, that after the abortive coup of 1 October 1965, a number of landowners tried—some of them successfully—to regain the fields that had been ceded by them earlier. On 19 February 1968, for the second time in the history of Indonesian land reform, indemnifications were paid when, in the *pendopo* of the Regent's house at Krawang, West Java, 85 former landowners were recompensed to a total amount of 5 million rupiahs.¹⁸ Shortly after that payments were made in the regencies of Banjumas and Kediri and in Bali.

Undaunted by the landowners' attitude, the peasants continued their struggle for land backed up by left-wing political organisations. The land reforms were a major element in the vehement political controversies that were a feature of the Indonesian scene between the years 1962 and 1965. The peasants were supported and in many cases even guided by the PKI, behind the back of the land reform committees. Although, as Basuki Gunawan rightly says, Indonesian land reform 'has a nationalistic rather than a communist signature',¹⁹ the PKI supported land reform as an obvious manifestation of class struggle. The ideological propaganda of the PKI was able to exploit politically the manipulations of the landlords on the land reform committees. If, so the PKI argued, so much opposition is met from the counter-revolutionaries when an agrarian legislation is being carried out, which is only the product of a provisional and enforced compromise with the bourgeoisie, how much opposition would have been encountered had the DPA

¹⁸ K, 21 February 1968, p. 11. For more details see B. S. Andangdjaja, 'Pembayaran ganti rugi di Kabupaten Krawang' *Penjuluhl Landreform*, VII, 7-8 (January-February 1968), pp. 8-9 and 12-13.

¹⁹ Basuki Gunawan, *Kudeta: Staatsgreep in Djakarta*, Meppel 1968, p. 96.

bill for the *sistim perkebunan* been accepted? This was the gist of the propaganda spread by the PKI and the BTI to encourage the peasants, who were thus indoctrinated into the 'dialectical way of thinking'. Since its successes in the elections of provincial and regency representative councils, it had been the PKI's policy to win as large a *mass following* as possible. Apart from intensive ideological propaganda and vehement criticism of the slow pace and doubtful actions of the land reform committees, the communists made emphatic efforts to increase their influence on those committees. They demanded immediate '*nasakomising*' of the committees, which meant that the committees were to be 'purified from counter-revolutionary elements'.

For the Nationalist Party (PNI) land reform carried difficulties, particularly in Central and East Java. When land reform was started, its leaders came mostly from the rising national, non-religious bourgeoisie and from the ranks of higher civil servants, among whom the influence of the landowners and rich farmers was strong. This brought the PNI into conflict with those of its followers who were more interested in the success of land reform. By far the greater part of the peasants not belonging to religious organisations were Petani members, most of them landless. The antagonism between the two wings of the party sharpened when, in the first half of 1964, a number of landless peasants and a number of landowners in Central and East Java and in Bali resorted to direct or 'one-sided' action (*aksi sefihak*), sometimes leading to violence. Direct action took some of the following forms:

- a. A landowner learns that one of his labourers has on his own initiative or at the instigation of the BTI, requested the local land reform committee to assign to him the property rights over the stretch of land that he tills. Without waiting for the decision of the committee, the landowner tries to oust his dangerous labourer. The latter seeks help from the BTI if it was not behind him already. Then the landowner reports what is going on to the Petani. The Petani advises him to issue an ultimatum as to the date on which the labourer has to leave his field. But one morning, some days before the ultimatum is due, the landlord discovers on his field a crowd of 100 or more BTI members armed with sticks, hoes and sickles and working together. Off he hurries to the local board of Petani and after some time he returns accompanied by a

band of Petani members as big as or bigger than the BTI crowd on his field and provided with all sorts of weapons as well. A battle is fought and victims fall under the knives and the hoes or by the bullets of army or police units who have meanwhile intervened.

- b. A labourer, thinking that as a sharecropper he has a right to the field that he has already applied for to the local land reform committee, without awaiting the decision of the committee, refuses to hand in a part of the harvest to the landowner. (Not infrequently this happened on the advice of the BTI). The landowner, supported by Petani, then tries to get rid of his labourer by intimidating him. A mass of BTI members comes to the labourer's assistance and a fight develops.
- c. A landowner does await the decision of the land reform committee concerning a dispute on a stretch of his land, either because he is convinced that he will win the affair on objective, factual and legal grounds or because he feels assured of the support of some influential committee members who may have a party or a family relationship with him. Here again, the labourers, encouraged and supported by the BTI, frequently take matters into their own hands by mass occupation of the disputed field.

If one takes failure to await the decision of the committee as the criterion, direct action was liable to be resorted to by either side, and not, as was often said, only by the landless peasant. The organisation that sided with the party who had taken the initiative without awaiting the decision of the committee accused the opponent of having acted provocatively.²⁰ This was often true, which clouded the issue still more.

The leaders of the PNI were caught between the antagonistic wings of the party. Formally the party supported land reform. The more progressive among the PNI leaders, in an effort to maintain the unity of the party, did their utmost to achieve, within the circle of the party, a compromise between the interests of the landowners and the interests of the landless peasants. Another serious concern was to see to it that the peasants who had not yet joined any political organisation would not become members of the BTI and that Petani members would not go over

²⁰ An excellent example is Asmu's speech in the DPA session at Bogor on 11-12 July 1964 (*Minutes of the DPA session, 11-12 July 1964, Part two, pp. 6-18*).

to the BTI. They endeavoured to bring landowner and landless peasant together under one nationalistic roof, employing for this purpose the slogans which were founded on Sukarno's charismatic authority, such as 'loyalty to Pantjasila' (particularly to its first pillar, belief in God) or 'loyalty to Sukarno, the father of Marhaenism and the creator of Pantjasila' under whose supreme guidance land reform was being carried out.

However, the wave of direct action and violence in the first half of 1964 made it hardly possible to continue this internal policy of compromise. True, the PKI, too, was protecting a few landlords 'for strategic reasons' because they financed certain political activities or other activities from which the communists expected favourable political effects. But the number of 'PKI landlords' was much smaller than that of PNI-protected landlords. An increasing number of younger members and sympathisers of the PNI and its mass organisations began more and more openly to stand up for the landless peasants, and here and there voiced cautious support for the 'one-sided' actions. The leaders of the party, however, strongly condemned these actions and described them as 'events impeding the Revolution'. Most of the richer farmers, who still exerted traditional and economic influence on their labourers, were naturally anti-communist. But so were many of the landless peasants who, however desperate their position might become, would never join the BTI. They remained 'loyal to the landowner', or rather, 'loyal to the party', the party they shared with their landlord, and 'loyal to Pantjasila', which meant 'loyal to God'! PNI indoctrination, which appealed to traditional and religious feelings, had been effective, and party discipline stood strong. The attempt to introduce socialist principles and reforms came up against strong traditional and religious ties.

The BTI also lost much sympathy because of its rude behaviour and sly pettifoggery. Even Sukarno's state message on 17 August 1964, in which between the lines he approved of the 'one-sided' actions, could not help the BTI very much. The communists who had stimulated them got the blame when the 'one-sided' actions got out of hand.

The usual excuse of one-sided actions was the need 'to correct the corrupt decisions of the land reform committees'. Such a correction was, indeed, badly needed, and was a major motive for the actions. But there were other motives. One of them was the sharecroppers' protest against the slow pace of the execution of the Law on Sharecropping Contracts. Another

motive was the aim of the PKI to gain the largest possible mass following; land reform suited them nicely as a way of making themselves useful to the people. They frequently employed short sighted tactics, purposely creating controversies to provide themselves with reasons to emerge in consequent fights as 'the saviour of the small man'. They failed to exercise restraint, and in the end they got the reputation of being trouble makers.

There was, finally, a third and decisive motive for the one-sided actions. The Nasakom-front, the imposed coalition of religious organisations, nationalists and communists, had become too great a constraint on the PKI. In order to satisfy the demands of its followers it found itself having to burst now and then from the narrow trammels of Nasakom. This led the PKI to act illegally in some places. In a rural district, for instance, it might happen that a landless peasant claimed a piece of land which he tilled for a landlord but to which he had no right as it could not qualify as land surplus. In such a case the communists often encouraged the peasant to stick to his claim in spite of the fact that he had no legal grounds for doing so. In this manner they hoped to create a class struggle and to win a reputation of being the only true fighters for the proletariat. They were not concerned whether their provocative policy would strain further the precarious harmony of Nasakom. They felt sufficiently assured of the fact that they were well on their way to winning over Sukarno as a powerful ally—his State Address on 17 August 1964 could easily be interpreted in that direction—and they also relied upon the fact that the PNI had its own internal struggles to keep it busy.

It was not only the PKI that encouraged its members and sympathisers to act against the legal land reform regulations, sometimes with the intention of obstructing land reform, sometimes meaning to help land reform, depending on its own political interest. The PNI worked in a similar fashion. But the most formidable obstruction to land reform came from the religious organisations in Java, Lombok and Sumbawa. In the course of an investigation into the redistribution of land in Java it was found, for instance, that in the regencies of Demak and Pati, the law was evaded by arranging for the land surplus of *hadjis* (persons who have fulfilled a pilgrimage to Mecca) and *kijajis* (religious teachers) to be donated to religious institutions, the *wakap*, through antedated acts of transfer. Thus the land in question was put under the management of a *nadir*, a manager acting in the name of a *wakap*, but in practice more often than not a

puppet of the donor of the land, the *hadji* or *kijaji*. The labourers on such land were relatively amenable to religious pressure.

By mid-1964 the government could no longer ignore the 'one-sided' actions, particularly inopportune at the time of the confrontation against Malaysia. On 12 July 1964 the DPA members were summoned to a session at Bogor to make the first serious attempt to deal with the problem.²¹ The outcome was Sukarno's speech of 17 August 1964 in which he indirectly approved of the 'one-sided' actions, thus morally backing the PKI and BTI. Sukarno explained that it was only logical to side with the peasants, as everywhere in the world they formed, together with other labourers, the 'pillars of the revolution' (*sokoguru revolusi*). He ordered the Agrarian Minister to finish immediately and successfully—before the end of 1964 or mid-1965 at the latest—the redistribution of surplus land in Java, Madura and Bali, and within another year or two stage II in the other regions of Indonesia. The Minister of Justice was ordered to establish as soon as possible the land reform courts which had already been promised. Sukarno warned the land reform committees to put an end to their 'incorrect practices', lest the peasants take their own measures to assert their rights. Similarly the manipulations over sharecropping contracts should be stopped without delay.²²

Action followed promptly. On 31 October 1964, Law No. 21 of 1964 concerning the Land Reform Courts was put into operation and by the end of December 1964, the redistribution of surplus land in Java, Madura, Bali, Lombok, and Sumbawa had been carried out, so that in the area of Stage I, redistribution could be said to have been substantially completed.²³

On 14 January 1965 the Agrarian Minister reported the following results up to the end of 1964:

<i>Stage I:</i>	surplus land	337,445 ha
	redistributed land	296,566 ha
<i>Stage II:</i>	redistributed land	152,502 ha

It appears that from the beginning of the land reform program

²¹ Minutes of the DPA session, 11–12 July 1964.

²² 17 August 1964 state address.

²³ For the results see Menteri Agraria, *Laporan and Panitia 3 Menteri, Laporan (lengkap) Tentang Pelaksanaan Landreform (Daerah-daerah: Djawa Barat, Djawa Tengah, Djawa Timur, Bali dan Nusa Tenggara Barat)*, 10–31 December 1964.

up to the end of 1964, about 450,000 ha of land were actually distributed or redistributed.²⁴

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE ABORTIVE COUP OF 1 OCTOBER 1965

An immediate consequence of the abortive coup of 1 October 1965 was a severe setback for land reform. Large numbers of members of communist organisations and suspect sympathisers were murdered, among them probably thousands of BTI members. Land reform, from the start stigmatised by its opponents as a product of the PKI, was stopped. A considerable number of former landowners tried to get their former property back. The next-of-kin of the murdered or arrested new landowners were prevented by their fellow-villagers from tilling the soil, often with the support of military and civilian authorities. New landowners who were accused of having sympathised with the communists simply dared not appear on their piece of land, and many of them fled to the city. All this provided opportunities to bring redistributed land back into the hands of the former owners and so to nullify some of the hard-won results of the land reform activities.

In an effort to save what positive results land reform had achieved, the then Agrarian Minister issued an instruction on 10 December 1965 (No. 42-PLP-1965) which contained orders 'to take measures against former landowners and other people who abuse the actions against the G-30-S (the abortive coup of 1 October 1965) by taking back illegally redistributed land or by obstructing redistribution through intimidations, insinuations, etc.'²⁵ This instruction does not appear to have been very effective. Although it probably stopped *unconcealed* taking back of redistributed land (in West Java legal action was taken in Banten, Krawang and Tasikmalaja, in Central Java in Tegal, Pekalongan and Demak, in East Java in the former residency of Besuki),²⁶ reversal of land redistribution probably continued surreptitiously and further redistribution virtually stopped during the years 1966 and 1967. No figures are available for 1966. Of the 200,000 ha that should have been redistributed in 1967 only 33,460 ha, that is less than 17 per cent was

²⁴ Menteri Agraria, *Laporan*, p. 13. See also the author's article 'Kleine boer niet in Tel' in *De Nieuwe Linie*, 24 February 1968, p. 3.

²⁵ *Penjuluh Landreform*, V. 1 (July 1966) pp. 18-19.

²⁶ Information from Inspeksi Agraria Djawa Barat, Inspeksi Agraria Djawa Tengah, and Inspeksi Agraria Djawa Timur.

actually redistributed. During 1966 and 1967 about 150,000 ha are thought to have either illegally reverted into the hands of the former owners or fallen into the hands of third persons, in many cases military people. In some cases land remained untilled, lying abandoned after the new owners had been murdered.²⁷

In 1968 land reform proceeded much more smoothly and efficiently than in the two previous years. In the five years from 24 September 1962, when the land reform program was started, to the end of 1967 some 800,000 ha of land was redistributed to nearly 850,000 families, as follows:²⁸

1. surplus land	116,559 ha	to 135,859 families
2. absentee owners' lands	17,477	40,037
3. land from regional governments	111,407	131,335
4. land from central government	555,874	539,912
	<u>801,317 ha</u>	<u>to 847,143 families</u>

The author has not yet been able to obtain the figures for 1968, but they are believed to have added at least another 200,000 acres, bringing the total to about 1 million ha of land redistributed to 1 million families. But this of course means that there are at least another 2 million families still without land and awaiting their turn.

Land reform is no longer hampered by party political struggle, for since 1966 there has been hardly any party political activity in Indonesia. Obstruction to land reform is still reported, now largely from the local military authorities. These functionaries are authorised to decide who were 'involved' in the abortive coup of 1 October 1965 and who were not. This enables them indirectly to influence the redistribution, although officially they have nothing to do with it. In many places they act as land brokers. Another difficulty for the Agrarian Department is the steady demand from military authorities to make land available for their civic mission activities (*operasi karja*).

The present Indonesian government does not have the political and ideological interest in land reform of its predecessors. But it is arguable that its efforts to raise food production,

²⁷ See author's article 'Kleine boer niet in Tel'.

²⁸ Quoted from *Penjuluh Landreform*, VIII, 4 (October 1968), p. 11. These figures are not reliable since they do not take into account the unconcealed and concealed taking back of redistributed land.

especially the production of rice, will fail unless the foundations for social justice are laid in the Indonesian countryside through further land reforms. As long as this foundation, a just distribution of land, is not laid, all other efforts to gain economic stability and progress will remain ineffective.

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