Land Reform Programme in Iran

The Implementation of the first stage; Variations in practice; Khurasan:

The date of the completion of the first stage of the land reform varied in different parts of the country. The second stage, like the first, was put into operation gradually which resulted in overlapping of the two stages in the country.

If a village was bought into by the government and transferred to the peasants, the situation was fairly good. The effect of the reform in a village of which only a small part was transferred was less and the likelihood of obstruction greater. The law laid down that the land was to be transferred to the occupying peasants, and that each peasant was to have the piece of land that he was cultivating when the land reform law became operative in the area. The object was not to disturb the general field layout of the village. Occasionally by agreement among the peasants there was redistribution of the village land but it was an exceptional case.

The practice of redistribution of peasant holdings was abolished under the provisions of the law of Jan. 4, 1962. In some villages, however, the practice continued. In Fars, in some of the villages, the peasant were still collecting the land annually in 1965. In some villages in Khurasan the organization of the village land into sa'harj (سهر) was changed after its transfer to the peasants. In a number of villages particularly in Khurasan the number of ploughlands into which the village land was divided was increased after land reform.

The Land Reform Law of Jan. 4, 1962, did not deal with the thorny problem of consolidation of holdings. It laid down that the peasant should cultivate that portion of land he occupied at the time the land reform law became effective. The intention was to prevent disintegration of traditional tribal layout of the village lands which would have undermined the success of the land reform law. The land reform officials took the view that there should be no attempt to enforce the consolidation of the holdings.

1 The arrangement by which a number of ploughlands were grouped together and worked as a unit.

In the different parts of the country the amount which the peasants paid for their land and the collection of installments varied from place to place. In almost all cases it was said to be less than the amount formerly paid under the crop-sharing agreement to the landowner. However, in some areas, notably in Kirmanshah and in Kurdistan, the peasants did not know what they would have to pay for the land.

The peasants to whom land had been transferred in the districts of Azerbaijan, Kurdistan and Qazvin were of the view that despite bad crop, their conditions had improved. They spoke badly of their former landlords who extorted money from the peasants under false pretences. As the result of the land reform larger and better houses were built in villages which had been transferred to the peasants particularly in the Hurasan and Kurdistan. Prior to the land reform the land areas were scarcely allowed to peasants to build larger houses and if some one dared to build he was turned out of the village by the landowner.

1 Ibid p. 135
2 Mr. Lumbon visited this region in 1964, see the Persian Land Reform, p 126.
3 Ibid p. 177
There was an improvement in standards of cultivation leading to increased production in those villages which had been transferred to the peasants. They were generally pleased with land reform and their cooperative society. They were economically much better off and were their own masters.

To be brief the first stage of the land reform in spite of opposition and difficult physical and tenurial conditions, in the first three years, achieved in the north a considerable degree of success socially, politically and economically\(^1\). Its effect in the social and political fields was marked while in economic field it was not negligible.

The implementation of the first stage: the south and south East:

There is a great contrast physically between the north and the south part of the Iranian plateau. In the north west of the region there is the rich, fertile and richly cultivated valley of Zayanda-rud\(^3\) (زاینده رود) in

1. Ibid, p. 143.
2. Ibid p. 144.
3. Also called Zanda Rud, it is one of the most important river of Iran whose water is mostly used for irrigation of land. It most significant bridge known as Pul-e-Khajuu is associated with the Persian poet Khwaju, a contemporary of Hafiz.
Isfahan, and in the north-east, the desert or semi-desert districts of Baluchistan; the rugged mountain country of the Bakhtiyari and upland districts of Fars and hot lowlands of the Persian Gulf, the flourishing villages of Isfahan and tiny settlements in Kirman and Baluchistan.

Tenurial conditions also differed from region to region. Most of the land in Kirman was owned by large landowners. In Isfahan there was much large landownership. Many of the villages were owned by the descendants of the (افکن)، the Bakhtiari and others. However, most of the large holding were broken; but the weight of the landowning class was still heavy. In Yazd, land was mainly owned by small landowners. In Fars, large landownership was widespread. This was true of Khuzistan. However, in parts of Khuzistan the Arab Shaiks enjoyed a social position by virtue of their status as Shaiks.

Standards of cultivation differed widely. The peasants of Yazd and Isfahan compared favourably with those of Fars and Khuzistan. In Yazd peasant proprietorship had long been established. This was true of Isfahan. In some

districts of Kirman the subjugation of peasantry was more marked than in any other part of the country. Baluchistan was barely affected by the first stage of land reform. In some villages transferred to the peasants near Khash there was a marked improvement in morale, and in two other villages there had been considerable agricultural development since the transfer of land.

In Kirman the amount of land bought by government was not large. One of the reasons for the limited operation of the first stage of land reform in this province was the fact that grain crops played an unimportant role. The village had little arable land and consisted mainly of orchards and gardens which were exempt from the purchase by the government. In Isfahan the provisions of the land reform were avoided by various measures. The peasants to whom land had been transferred were satisfied with the reform because in the villages which were transferred to the peasants a marked increase in production was claimed.

The degree in which the peasants benefited from the reform in Fars varied considerably from region to region. Here the progress was more chequered than in the

1. Ibid 5. 149-50.
north because the landowners opposed the reform and peasants were not prepared for the reform. One of the reasons for the opposition of the land reform by the landowners in Fars was that many of them had not been able to benefit from the concession which allowed to landowners to transfer a village to their wives and children. The land reform was considered as the main cause for their loss of prestige.

But the peasants in general felt that their condition had greatly improved since land reform. They were free and were no longer subject to all sorts of extortion, and enjoyed security.

The peasants redistributed the land among themselves annually. Though it was contrary to the practice laid down by the land reform, they preferred to do this.

When the second stage of the land reform began, the landowners selected method (a) of Article I of the Additional Articles i.e. tenancy. The peasants preferred method (c) i.e. division of land according to the proportion in which the crop was divided under crop-sharing agreement. This resulted in dispute between the land lords and peasants.

1. Ibid p. 68.
2. Ibid p. 152.
The cooperative society was then a flourishing concern: it had given loans and sold fertilizers. The peasants who had not received land under the land reform were also said to have sunk wells.

In Khuistan the picture presented by the land reform in 1966 was a varied one. Disturbingly owing to the existence of the Khuistan Water and Electricity Authority which managed the distribution of irrigation water from the dam on the River Diz and power from the hydroelectric station completed in 1963, two villages were brought completely under the first stage and 47 partially affected. One of them was Darbar of which 1/5 was brought under the first stage. The remainder of this village was to be settled by the tenants under the second stage. The peasants agreed that the production had gone up and variety of crops was grown since land reform.

The Khairech land around Ahvaz formed something of an exception. Much of such land was given to individual on condition that it was brought under cultivation by pumps and other means. If this was done within five years,

1 Ibid., p. 153.
2 Ibid., p. 154.
3 Land under Government Management (see the glossary).
possession was given to the peasant who brought under cultivation. In some cases a title was conferred but in others no title was acquired though the land had been brought under cultivation.

This situation in Surrangird was complicated by the fact that the Arab Chaikhs or tribal head men levied\(^1\) dues in their capacity as tribal leaders. Under the land reform they had been allotted uncultivated\(^2\) land according to their status. Agreements had been signed with the Chaikhs by which the land in made productive within five years would be transferred to them in full ownership without payment\(^3\).

There had been a marked improvement in the well-being of the Bihbahian villages which had been allocated under the first stage of the land reform. About half of Khurajud new Bihbahian was transferred to the peasants under the first stage. The settlement under the second stage had not yet been completed in 1966 because the ownership of the land was disputed\(^4\).

From the account given by Prof. Ms. Lambton in her

\(^1\) It was called mimal.
\(^2\) Called Bayir.
\(^4\) Ibid., p. 151, Ms. Lambton visited this region in 1966.
n been great increase in grain production since the land reform began. The newly cultivated area had mainly been brought under mechanised cultivation by the large landowners though some peasants too shared in this activity. Earlier only one crop was grown but in recent years several sorts of crops including sugarcane and vegetables had been grown in this region. The yield on grain is high but some time due to the lack of rainfall there is failure of crop resulting in the lose of

revenue. In many parts of Kirmanshah, Kurdistan, Tikab and Ilam there had been an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in 1966 with heavy losses.

Communication in the area, though improved recently, some of the mountain villages have no roads at all. Tikab is virtually cutoff for several months annually when, due to rain and snow, the tracks across the hill become impassable.

Large land ownership was formerly widely spread in Tikab, much of Kurdistan and Kirmanshah. Landed estates in Sanandaj tended to be very large. Large landed proprietorship was also the dominant tenure in Saqqiz.

In Kurdistan and Kirmanshah the peasants were mainly the Kurds, though the landowners were not mainly the Kurds in Ilam the population was an admixture of Lurs, Arabs and Kurds. The proportion of the crop taken by the landlords under the crop-sharing agreement was not so high as in other regions of the country. But many dues were levied and bonded labour was in practice with the result that the condition of the peasants was of poverty, and they...

1. Ibid., p. 169.
suffered great insecurity of tenure. Even after the introduction of the land reform the peasants had a lack of interest in it. On the other hand cooperative societies were well received.

The first stage of land reform began fairly well in Kirman-shah but after a satisfactory start, it slowed up. In the summer of 1966 there had remained several hundred disputed cases undecided. In many of the villages of this region it was difficult to disentangle the tenure of the village. Even if the landowner had legally transferred the title of some of his properties to his heir, the peasants still regarded that the whole property belonged to the original landowner. Besides this, complicated tenures were common. Even then the cultivation of summer crops which had begun after land reform had made the peasants of economically better off. A cooperative society had been established in the village which also served another neighbouring village. The conditions of the peasants had improved since land reform.

Shir Khan and two neighbouring villages in Dinar were example of successful operation of land reform.

1. Ibid. p 176.
2. Ibid. p 174.

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The peasants seemed well pleased with land reform. They were free and had planted trees and gardens, and using fertilizers which were never done before. It was claimed that the land was being better cultivated. The manager of the cooperative society said that the price of the land sold to the peasants under the land reform law was very low and that the peasants would be able to pay the total price for the land transferred to him in one year. His income had increased from 30 Kharvar\(^1\) before the reform to 50 Kharvar\(^2\) after the reform.

In some villages of Kurdistan, as in Kirman\(\'\)hah there had appeared irregularities in the collection by the former landowners of a share of the crop from the land which had been transferred to the peasants under the first stage of land reform\(^2\). Disputed tenure held up settlement in some of the villages of Kurdistan. It was alleged in some villages that the Vaqf revenue was not being given to the village as laid down in the Vaqf name.

In general despite uncertainties and perhaps a lack of vigour on the part of officials of the land reform.

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1. An ass load: the measure of a hundred Tabjiz maunds. (Steingass), 300 kils, or 207 kilos. (Moin)
There had been a marked improvement in social and economic conditions in the villages in Kirkuk and in Kirkuk in which the first stage of land reform had been implemented. The sense of freedom was noticeable in the villages and this offered a great contrast to the mental condition of the peasants at the time in pre-reform Iraq. This sense fully exhibited itself in an increase in the area of cultivation and in building of better residential houses. The practice of forceling of crop was decreasing day by day.

Mr. Lambton had toured through almost all the region of Kirkuk in order to make a personal survey of the condition of the present villager and the benefit that derive from the land reform of 1962. Though he could not cover all districts, the villagers selected represent a cross section of the society. The number of villages directly affected by the first stage of reform was only a small portion of the total number in the country, but the impact of the reform was felt beyond the limits of those villages.

The results may be seen in the social and political sphere in the society, whether in north or west and

1. Ibid. p. 18.
2. Ibid. p. 111.
south, was greatly affected. A new confidence was evident among the peasants. They were capable of standing against those who had formerly extorted from them. They were not to submit to the excesses of the landowners. And this change in their morale was striking.

However, there had been some problems to solve. The opposition to land reform by the landowners and by those with vested interest was very much there. The majority of the peasants had not been benefitted by the land reform; resulting in discontent among the non-beneficiaries.

Broadly speaking the improvement in conditions was more striking in those areas where a considerable proportion of land was bought by the government and transferred to the peasants. The amount paid by the peasants for the land transferred to them was less than their payment to the landowners under the crop-sharing agreement. Moreover the land transferred was better cultivated. In villages where the land reform was made the house condition was better than in those without land reform. Similarly the Land Reform resulted in the improvement of the education in rural areas where there:

1. Ibid. p. 192.
2. Ibid p. 192.
had been remarkable rise in the number of schools.

The effect of the first stage on the economic sphere are not so striking. After the beginning of land reform there was a reluctance to invest in land. But in Sirjan predominantly an area of small landowners there had been considerable agricultural development through the sinking of wells by small men immediately after land reform. This improvement was temporarily halted because of the uncertainty over the future position of small landowners. On the other hand in many of the more fertile areas of the country there was an increase in mechanisation and much dry land was brought under cultivation. The better standard of cultivation resulted in the increase of production in the districts transferred to the peasants. Those tendencies can only be fully assessed over the longer period of time which will only be possible when the facilities for complete survey of the conditions are provided as have been provided to Mr. Lambton whose book: the Persian Land Reform, 1962-1966, is most authentic and useful document for the study of land reform in Iran.  

1. Ibid p. 13
The Second Stage: The Regulations of The Additional Articles

The Additional Articles of 17 Jan. 1963 unlike the first stage of the land reform were not put into operation immediately. There had been much delay in putting the regulation into execution. Despite the provision of the Land Reform Law of 9 Jan. 1962 the peasants had little security of tenure. Some of the large landowners had not given up hope to overthrow the reform and were busy with intrigues against it. The small landowners were also becoming apprehensive. Some of whom who were members of the professional class, were perturbed lest a later stage of land reform should deprive them of their land. There were thus many reasons for the government to press on with the next stage. Nevertheless the draft regulations for the execution of the Additional Articles were not submitted to the National Consultative Assembly until 18th May 1964. They were passed in a considerably amended form on 25th July 1964. They consisted of forty seven articles and were in some respects a new law. Landowners were given a choice of five possible courses instead of three as laid down in Article 1 of the Additional Articles. These were

tenancy sale to the peasants, division of land between the landowner and peasant, the formation of an agricultural unit by the landowner and the peasant, and the purchase by the landowner of the peasants' rights.

After going through the regulations for the Additional Articles, one could arrive at the conclusion that contrary to the Land Reform Law of January 9, 1962, objectives of which were clear, whereby its provisions could be effectively implemented, the second stage was ambiguous in its aims. The first stage was favourable to the peasants as against the landowner. This was not the case with the second stage. In drafting the Additional Articles, the idea was to regulate the relation between peasants and landowners and especially to improve the conditions of those peasants who cultivated the land in villages which were not subject to purchase by the government under the first stage. Another object was to protect the interest of the small landowners whose condition deteriorated under the land reform because the peasants were verse to pay them their share of the crop and the latter had not enough influence to obtain redress.

1 It is called 'Nasaq'.
The Additional Articles were not drafted carefully and the peasants failed to realise their implication. The land reform might have aimed at the creation of an independent peasantry but those who held the reins of power had begun to realise that an independent and self-reliant peasantry might constitute a new factor in the political situation and threaten their own power. This induced more caution in government circles regarding the objectives of land reform and it is fully reflected in the regulations for the Additional Articles.

The Execution of The Second Stage Tenancies

The second stage of the land reform started in Feb. 1965 in Western Azerbaycan and by the end of the autumn it was extended to the whole of the country. The procedure was more complicated than under the first. The land reform officials were correspondingly heavy burdened. The number of documents to be drawn up was enormous. As a result the officials had to sit in the office rather than to get out in the country as was done in the first stage.

In one respect the task of the land reform

1 Ibid p. 215.
2. Ibid, p 216.
officials was more difficult than in the first stage. During the latter stage the land reform was pro-peasants and hence the officials of the reform were looked up as their "friends". Under the second stage the peasants did not receive land; there was a change in their attitudes towards the land reform officials and the tendency was to regard them as their "foes". Thus the relations between them became sour.

The following table issued by the land reform organisation shows the number of villages settled under the second stage in different parts of that country.

According to these figures the second stage had been completed by Feb 1966 in Gilan and Mazandaran. The largest number of villages were still unsettled in the Kirman province (21%), Luristan (46%), Western Azerbaijan (18%) and Fars (30%).

1. Ibid. p. 218.
SECOND STAGE (UP TO 17 FEBRUARY 1966). NUMBER OF VILLAGES SETTLED

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<td>1,874</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>52,553</td>
<td>15,166</td>
<td>43,513</td>
<td>13,013</td>
<td>8,732</td>
<td>1,499</td>
<td>189,670</td>
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Source: Report issued by the land reform organization for its operations in the year 1965-6 (with adjustments).
In addition to the villages set out in the above, 4669 villagers were listed as having wholly fallen out of cultivation. The number of landowners who worked on their land was put at (582, 804), Khurram (179, 587) I Sahin (129, 245); lehman (46, 307) and Sitan and Baluchistan (14929) Hamadan (161).

The following table also issued by the land reform organisation, show how estates were settled under the second stage in different parts of the country.

For the country financial accounted for 129,648 cases excluding charitable Qaaf and private family Qaaf. Article 17 the agricultural unit, rated second with 21,959 cases followed by Article 45, the purchase of the peasant rights by the landowners, with 15024. Division of land with 2441 case ranked fourth.

The second stage did not contribute much to lessen the gap between the peasant-to whom land was transferred under the first stage and those who had not received the land. 1


2 Ibid. p 224.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Charitable</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Tenancies</th>
<th>Sale by agreement</th>
<th>Article 17</th>
<th>Division according to the crop division</th>
<th>Article 45</th>
<th>Villages</th>
<th>Area 6</th>
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1 These figures do not include those landowners who worked part of their land by mechanized means.
2 Presumably the sale of the remainder of the peasants had not been completed.
3 When I was in Kirmanshah in the summer of 1966 several villages were claimed by their owners as mechanized, some of the cases were being disputed, but some villages, I think, had been peasants working mechanized land reform office.
4 These appear to have been peasants working mechanized land which was outside the land reform.

Source: Report issued by the land reform organization for its operations in 1965-6 (with adjustments).

received the land. As it became clear to the peasants that they are not to get any land under the second stage envy and discontent grew. The difference in reckoning the price to be paid by the peasant for the land under the first stage and the rent for a tenancy agreement under the second, generated envy discontent and even conflict between the two classes of the peasants. If a village was partially transferred under the first stage and the remainder settled by tenancy under the second, it sometimes happened that the price of the land transferred was less than the amount paid as rent of the remainder land.

A few cases are cited below which would give a clear idea of the tenancy agreement as it worked in different parts of the country.

In Khojistan great efforts were made to get the second stage finished by summer 1966. Statistics were collected in some cases rapidly. For example, between May 5 and July 16, 539 villages in Boir Ahmad had been settled and 16,350 persons given tenancies. But the title to the land was in many cases still disputed in 1966 and the land had not yet been registered.

1 Ibid. p. 223
On the whole the reform officials had tried to ensure that the rent fixed was equitable. In Khurasan the peasants were, in a general way, satisfied with the rents fixed. At Abrud, a village near Turbat-i-Haidar, three out of 21 shares were transferred under the first stage; tenancies were concluded for most of the remainder under the second. And those who got tenancies said that their condition had generally improved. In Jhurum tenancy agreements were for the most part chosen under the second stage. Satisfaction was on the whole expressed in 1966 in those villages for which tenancies had been concluded in Kirmanshah. Similarly, the tenancy agreement concluded in Lilvar in the province of Kirmanshah were said in some cases to be favourable to the peasants.

Iransahr, a village near Saqqiz was settled by tenancy. It consisted of 45 ploughlands of various size. Some were consolidated but the majority consisted of strips. The peasants said the condition had much improved, since land reform. The area under cultivation had improved, the land was cultivated by tractors hired from outside the village.

1. Ibid. p. 224
2. Ibid. p. 218
Vaqf properties accounted for a large number of villages settled by tenancies. Besides, the large and valuable Vaqf properties belonging to the shrine of Imam Riza in Mashhad there was a great number of Vaqf properties scattered all over the country. However, tenancy agreements had been concluded for properties belonging to the shrine of Imam Riza in Mashhad.

Mansuriyya, close to Rihbahan, was also Vaqf, one being charitable and five dangs private Vaqfs. Tenancy had been concluded for the former for 09 years and for the latter 40 years. The peasants of this area were very pleased with the land reform. They said that their condition under the tenancy agreement had immensely improved.

Under the second stage of the land reform tenancies were concluded with the peasants in vaqf land at a lower rent than that which they had formerly paid.

Under the land reform there was no place for the middle men. Before the land reform there was a type of

1. Ibid, p. 234.
3. M. Lambton had visited this region and had collected first hand information from the villagers.
tenant who was really a working peasant. To deprive such tennante of the possibility of taking part in agricultural development was to involve them in hardship. But it was next to impossible to frame the land reform law in such a way that all cases would be covered and injustice avoided. The conclusion drawn by Sir Lambton after examining a considerable number of cases is as follows:

"Settlement by tenantry accounted for the greatest number of villages affected by the second stage. In many areas, although this form of settlement had been chosen no rent had been collected by the summer of 1966, or, in some cases, even found. In many of these villages in which tenantry agreements had been made, an improvement in conditions of the peasants was to be seen; not economically it was too soon for the economic effect of the changed relationship to be felt, but in the new sense of freedom which the peasants felt with regard to the management of their own affairs. Just as a similar feeling had led those peasants who had received land under the first stage to cultivate it better, so too in villages in which tenancy or other methods of settlement had been concluded under the second stage, there was often
an improvement in standards of cultivation. Further, by
the conclusion of tenancy agreements for Waqf property, one
of the most difficult problems facing the land reform
settled without open dispute."

This is very fair judgment which is based on
personal examinations of hundred of cases throughout the
country.

The execution of the second stage

(Sale, division, the agricultural unit and purchase
of the peasants' right.)

It may be noted that there were five methods of
settlement permitted under the Additional Articles and their
regulations. They were:

1. Settlement by tenancy.
2. Settlement by sale.
3. Settlement by division.
4. Settlement by formation of agricultural unit.
5. Settlement by purchase of the peasants' rights.

The method of settlement by tenancy has been

7. Ibid. p. 240.
discussed in the previous chapter, the examination after remaining four will be taken up in this chapter.

The second method of settlement under the Additional Articles and their regulations, namely sale by the landowners to the peasants was most favourable to the peasants. This form of settlement was most common in the country. The main task of the land reform organisation was to ensure that the land was to be transferred to the occupying peasants and unlike under the first stage the initiative was with the landowner and peasants and not with the officials of the land reform organisation. The land owner would come to the local land reform officials with an agreement of the peasants and after an investigation by the official the document were to be drawn up.

The third method of settlement, division of the land between the two parties in the same proportion as under the prevailing crop-sharing agreement though popular in Far was not favourable to peasants for under the crop-sharing agreement the peasants would in some cases receive 1/4 or 1/5 of the crop. The amount of land he received was often

1 Ibid. p. 291.
insufficient to provide him with a living so he was compelled to work under a tenancy agreement on the land retained by the landowner. If the relations between the two parties were good, such agreements were concluded. But if the relations were bad the landowners had brought in outsiders to cultivate the land remaining in their possession. If on the other hand the amount of land available for cultivation was large, the peasants even if his share under the cropsharing agreement had been very small were able to improve his lot by bringing new land under cultivation.

The fourth method of settlement, the formation of an agricultural unit, as laid down in Article 17 of the regulations for the Additional Articles, accounted for a large number of cases only in the provinces of Khurasan and Kirman and to a lesser degree in Luristan. It was limited mainly to a region bordering the central desert. The reason was that the peasants were poor and could not provide the capital required to exploit the land. Moreover the expenses on the qanat were high. Good relations between the landowners and the peasants contributed much towards

1 Ibid, p 254
adopting this method of settlement because there was no demand for change. A transfer of ownership was not to benefit the village where the holdings were mainly small. In such cases the agricultural unit was the best method of settlement, pending the development of other sources of employment.

A detailed examination of the cases in which settlement under the Article had been adopted is likely to show that poverty of the peasants was the most important factor influencing this choice. The choice of settlement by Article 17 in some villages of Nishapur was due to the poverty of the peasants of the villages.

The fifth method of settlement permitted by the regulations for the Additional Article, the purchase of the peasants' rights by the landowner, is the most controversial of all the methods. This method in some cases encouraged the unscrupulous landowner to try to force the peasants on his land to sell their rights. In some districts notably Turbat-i-Haidari the sale of their rights by the peasants in 1965 was fairly widespread. The main reason was poverty. The harvest was bad. The

1. Ibid. p. 253. 195
peasants were in dire need of seed and means of livelihood. Some of the landowners had promised to the peasants to secure employment after they had sold their rights, others withholding seed and water thus forcing them to sell their rights. In general the land reform officials discouraged and even prevented such sales under pressure. But there were cases of collusion between the officials and the landowners to apply pressure on the peasants to sell their right.

To be brief, in many villages, before settlement under the second stage, changes in social conditions had already begun to take place; the abolition of dues became effective from the beginning of the land reform, and decline in the extortion practiced by some landowners had a favourable effect on the condition of peasants. And inspite of the fact that the second stage of the land reform represented a weakening of the real spirit of the reform, and inspite of the abuses which were made possible by the provisions for the sale of peasants' right, the second stage was not wholly retrogressive.

Although under the second stage the peasants had not received the ownership of the land with a few
exception and the terms under which they had received were not favourable to them, they had had the security of tenure and their conditions generally improved but not as should be. Because of this there was discontent among the peasants but there were numerous cases in which their satisfaction at the settlement under the second stage was genuine and real. Thus it can be claimed that the land reform slowed under the second stage but it did not come to a stand still. The work of cooperative societies continued and a standard of understanding amongst their members rose and it was achievement worth recognition.

J. Ibid. p. 756
Irrigation

Irrigation was carried out in Iran by the following method: By river water led off by canals, raised by pumps, wells operated by cattle, power operated wells, and on plateau by underground irrigation channels known as qanat or kariz.

The government owned large rivers so the conservation of their water and its distribution was the main responsibility of the government. In cases of most rivers, customary rights to the water belonged to the land through which the water flowed. This rule was modified on construction of dam or major irrigation work. The construction of temporary dams for irrigation purpose was in some cases, carried out by the landowners. The wells operated by cattle or other traditional means and power-operated wells usually belonged to the owner of the land in which they were situated. In some parts of the country, the qanat and the water which it watered were in different ownership.

2 A subterranean canal
3 Kariz and qanat are synonymous except that the first is Arabic and the second is Persian
4 Ibid p 274
It was laid down in the Land Reform Law of January 6, 1962 that irrigated land subject to it purchase by the government and subsequent transfer to the peasants, was to be transferred with its water-rights. In case of jointly owned qanats and irrigation channels leading off from them, the water rights which belonged to land transferred to the peasant were to be handed over with it. In order to prevent disputes between the former owners and the peasants over water, the Land Reform Council laid down in its proceedings on April 9, 1962, that in documents for transfers were to state that the water right of qanat defined by time or by any other way must be assured according to custom. The Land Reform Law of Jan 9, 1962 made it incumbent on the landowners to pay for the repair and upkeep of qanats and other irrigation work according to local custom. The additional Article 1 of Jan 17, 1963 laid down that the water right or the land transferred to the peasant must be transferred to him if the settlement under the second stage of division of the land between the two parties in the same

In these Articles the landowner was given three choices, the third being to divide the irrigated and unirrigated land between himself and the peasant in the same proportion as the crop-sharing agreement (The Persian Land Reform, 1962 ed., p. 104).
portion as crop was shared under crop-sharing agreement.  

The government continued to control the distribution of water from big rivers and to collect the dues. In case the land watered by a river was transferred, water dues were collected from them. In the case of a river such as Zayandarud, with a traditional division of the water among the villages through which it flowed, no major problem was involved. As for the big rivers in the south, before the land reform water dues were mostly paid by the landowners, but the land which had been watered by the great rivers and was transferred under the land reform law to the peasants, water dues were collected from them. Since the establishment of the ministry of water and power, there had been a tendency to extend state control over the small rivers as well. In some areas a development organization was set up which affected land reform sometimes disadvantageously.

The officials of the Khuzistan Water and

1. Ibid. p. 275.
2. It flows in Isfahan and it is a well known river which has been quoted in literature. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal has symbolised it in his masnavi but calls it Zindarud and not Zayandarud.
Electricity Authority based their idea of land reform entirely on economic criteria. They appeared to have little care for the well being of the peasants whom they seemed to regard simply as instruments in the experiment.

In summer of 1966 in Dieful there were no real understanding between the peasants and the official authority. Qazvin is another region where had been a developed plan for irrigation. The area allocated to the plan had 300 villages with 150,000 persons. Water shortage was the main problem of the area. But the development authorities failed to obtain the cooperation of the peasants who were not informed of the details of the plan.

Water resources were not subject to purchase by the government and transfer to the peasants in the same way as the land. The reason was that in the case of power operated wells, the capital investment and running costs were considerable and the peasants and cooperative societies were unable to provide the necessary funds required. In the case of irrigation by water raised from l. For the detail, see. Engineer Mossanr, 'A pilot study and evaluation in Qazvin plain villages', University of Tehran, Institute for Social Studies and Research, Tehran, 1967. This plan was to be executed by Israeli Consultants in 1963.
well, by motor pumps as practised in Fars there had prevailed a different situation. The pump owners generally were not the owner of land. In some cases they were middlemen who, under tenancy agreement with the land-owners, ran up pumps in unirrigated land and had entered into a crop-sharing agreement with the peasants who worked the land. A variety of practice arose under the land reform. In some cases the pump owners received land under the first stage and participated in the settlement under the second stage. In others they only continued to provide those who cultivated the land with water under the existing arrangements.

After the land reform the interest of landowners to invest in qanats declined and in spite of the provision of law they did nothing to maintain the flow of water. This generated a feeling of discontent among the peasants whose conditions had deteriorated because of signs of decay in qanats.

In Kirmans garden and orchard produce, notably pistachio nuts, being the main source of revenue, the larger

2 Ibid, p. 284
that was given to them which were retained by the landlord. But strictly speaking it was against the provisions of the land reform law. In general where the village land had been transferred wholly to peasants and the intervention of the landlord removed, not only had there been no breakdown in irrigation but the maintenance of existing resources had improved. There was, however, a matter connected with irrigation which required urgent consideration. It was the question of deep wells and their effect upon the water table and thus upon qanats. As a result of deep wells a serious diminution had taken place in the flow of qanats in the proceeding years. Hence legislation governing the harim 1 of qanat was drafted which prohibited sinking of deep wells in the area surrounding a qanat. It was obvious that much physical damage was caused by the lowering of the water level in the harim of qanat; hence there was need for new regulation with regard to the harim. This included such matters as how many wells might advantageously be sunk in ...
whether irrigation by q-snit might not be at least temporarily more profitable in some areas than by power operated well.

The cooperative societies and the organisation for rural cooperation

The Land Reform Law of Jan. 9, 1069 provided for the setting up of cooperative societies in rural areas. They were to take the place of landlords in villages which were transferred to the peasants. They were to provide credit and also general supervision and direction of agricultural affairs. A note to Article 16 made the membership of the Cooperative Society of the village compulsory for a peasant who had received the land. Article 19 empowered cooperative societies to recall from membership any peasants to whom land had been transferred but who failed to take part in the programme for the development of agriculture.

The functions of rural cooperative societies were

all or some of the following:

1. Operation concerned with the production, exchange, storage, transport and sale of the produce of the members.
2. The provision of agricultural implements, and machinery, pesticides and fertilizers.
3. The provision of foodstuffs etc.
4. The purchase of agricultural produce of the members, its storage and sale.
5. Giving loans to members on easy terms to tide them over the period until they sold their crops and to provide what they needed for the cultivation of the crop.
6. To accept deposits from the members.
7. To obtain credit.

The membership of rural society was open to peasants and persons engaged in agriculture and living in that area. Day to day administration was in the hands of an executive committee consisting of three members and two reserve members who were appointed by the general assembly. The executive committee appointed from its members.

1. Ibid p. 294.
2. They were called Kashitarzan and even Uihzan were included in them (See Ibid p. 294)
Pari (Chairman) and a Munsfi or Deputy (Secretary). It was also designated a manager \(^1\) from the members of the cooperative society other than the members of the Executive Committee. The offices of the manager and the Executive Committee were honorary.

The Executive Committee would meet once in a fortinight. The manager had the right to be present in the meeting. If the Committee could not meet for 45 days it was deemed to have been dismissed, and the Agricultural Credit and Rural Development Bank or the Central Organisation for Rural Cooperative \(^3\) was to invite the two elective members to run the affairs of the society for the remainder of the two years period. The executive committee was the legal representative of the cooperative society and had right to draft regulations: the manager represented the society in courts, government offices etc. Ordinary meetings of the general assembly at which a Chairman and a secretary were to be elected, were held at least once a year. Their main function was to receive

1 He was mudir i-Amil (مدير عام) and though honorary he might be given a Commission (مهمة) , Ibid. p. 294.
2 Ibid. pp. 295-96.
3 Set up in 1963 to take over the running of the cooperative societies from the bank, Ibid p. 297.
reports from the executive committee, the manager and the inspectors; to pass the balance sheet, the budget and the programme for the ensuing year. Two inspectors were appointed by the general assembly to hold office for one year. Their office was honorary and their duty was to see that the affairs of the society were conducted in accordance with the regulations of the society.

In 1963 a central organisation for rural cooperation was established which took over from the land reform organization and Agricultural Credit and Rural Development Bank the setting up and supervision of rural cooperative societies. Its functions were multifarious, such as:

To give guidance to societies and their federations.

To audit their accounts and balance sheets.

To train staff for this purpose.

To train the members of society in the principles of cooperation and management.

1. Ibid, p. 297.
to expand the cooperative network in rural areas

1. provide the rural cooperative societies with
   credit for the execution of their projects

2. to expand the rice under the cultivation

3. to encourage mechanization and better marketing

4. to provide farming implements

5. to establish factories for agricultural requisites

6. to carry out commercial transactions essential to
   the execution of the projects

In the steps for the establishment of the
companies to grant credit to them for the
provision of agricultural requisites

7. to extend credit to rural areas and the like

The organization was run by a general assembly,
council board of directors, and an inspector.

The general assembly was composed of
stockholders, the minister of agriculture, and the manager.
of the Agricultural Credit and Rural Development Bank. Its functions were:

- To approve the balance sheet
- To take decisions regarding operations for the ensuing year proposed by the board of directors.
- To appoint the members of the board of directors, the council and the inspector.

The council was composed of five members appointed by the general assembly for a period of three years. The functions of the council were:

- To take decisions on the recommendations of the board of directors
- To consider proposals for obtaining credits from banks and other organizations.

The board of directors was composed of three persons, a chairman and two members elected by the general assembly for a term of three years. The main functions of the board were:

- To arrange programmes for the guidance of

1. Ibid, p. 295.
2. Ibid, p. 300.
existing cooperative societies

1 To draw up regulations for recruitment for submission to the council

To submit projects for cooperative establishments, the General Assembly elected annually a competent inspector or accountant whose main function was to in part and audit the organisation's accounts.

The cooperative officials were a keen and dedicated body of men. Although in some cases they were inexperienced officials who took hasty actions, they in general did commendable job, they were in many areas under great pressure because of local intrigues; most of them were overworked and means of transport were often inadequate. Still, a sense of urgency was noticeable in them.

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Under the Land Reform it was intended that rural cooperative societies in each area would form a federation and each federation was to be formed by community societies, but in practice there was a variation in the number of federations.
in the six of the federation. The first of the federation was the M. negh federation formed by fifteen societies in 1963 with a capital of 1,013,000 Rials (4500). By 1961 ninety-one societies with 1675 members joined it and its capital had increased to 30,000,000 Rials. It appointed its own employee, 80 percent of the profits were put to assets and 20 percent divided among the member societies. By the summer 1964 there had been considerable progress in the cooperative movement. Many of the rural societies had made a good start and federation generated among the landowners and middlemen was a measure of success of their activity.

The success of land reform essentially depended on the cooperative movement. By 1964 when the first stage was nearing completion the situation was encouraging. Understanding of purpose and function of the cooperative societies was still somewhat preliminary, but this was not surprising. In view of the poverty and subjection of many of the peasants, the purpose of the movement was not quite clear to the peasants. Despite this a large number of the societies worked and in many of the villages m. 1. ibid. pp. 318-19.
forward to take an effective part in running the society.  

When the land reform visited cooperative societies were intended to become the centre for the conduct of the village affairs. This followed naturally from the intention to create a self-supporting peasantry. However there were certain objections to letting societies conduct all village affairs. First all the villagers were not members of the society, and secondly since the government agencies had some interest in village affairs, it provided an opportunity to interfere with the activities of the society. The ministry of the interior set up in each village council charged with the administration of its affairs. The council sometimes cut across the activities of the society. In some areas a local tribunal called khwaja Insaaf was set up to settle minor disputes.

The federation, although like the cooperative societies still in an early stage of development, showed marked progress. There were great possibilities of expansion if trained personnel could be made available.

1 Ibid p. 322
2 Ibid p. 323
3 Ibid p. 324
of the main field of activities was the sale on easy term of agricultural implements, irrigation pumps, fertilizers and pesticides at necessary with government subsidies. The marketing of produce of the members of the cooperative societies and of consumer goods was another area in which the federation could operate. But an attempt to extend their activities was likely to meet with opposition of vested interests which would aim at breaking the federations and the cooperative movement. Unless they received full support from the government they could not succeed and this was true of the cooperative movement as a whole.

The number of villages settled under the second stage of the land reform was far larger than those under the first stage. Article 22 of the regulations for the Additional Articles required the Central Organization for Rural Cooperation to initiate cooperative societies in the villages to supervise them and extend to them financial and technical help; and to arrange for practical training of personnel to establish and manage such societies.


2 Ibid, p. 325.
Article 25 laid down that all public places within the limits of villages would be transferred gratis to the ownership of the cooperatives for the benefit of the people of the village concerned 1.

Article 17 of the regulations for the Additional Articles introduced another method, not foreseen in the Land Reform Law of Jan. 9, 1962 or the Additional Articles of Jan. 17, 1963, namely the formation of an additional unit \( (\text{ vieleinstand}) \). The article laid down that if the majority of peasants and landowners of a village agreed, the village was to be run for agricultural purposes as an agricultural unit by a managing committee composed of three persons, one representing the peasants, the other the landowners and third chosen by mutual agreement. The Agricultural Credit and Rural Development Bank was to provide them with necessary facilities and sufficient credit, and the Central Organisation for Rural Cooperation was to give necessary guidance for the formation and administration of such unit. The establishment of management committee of three might have been a convenient method of overcoming some of the difficulties of providing

1 The decision was to be taken by the land reform organisation. See: Ibid. p. 325.

2 Note 2 of Article 17.
management and credit, but it nevertheless suggests that it was no longer the general intention to hand over control of local affairs to the peasants through the cooperative societies and to foster the development of a self-supporting peasantry.

When the cooperative societies were first set up, the members had hoped that they would provide them with credit and water. In 1966 their had been a growing demand for multipurpose cooperative societies and it was the intention of the members of the societies in Kirkuk, Kurdistan and Khuzistan for their ority to all consumer goods and agricultural machinery and even to market crops of the members.

Although the members of the societies were developing a sense of loyalty and pride in their society and there had been a great increase in the cooperative societies in the country, a large number of villages still had no society in 1966. Even in those villages in which there were societies the peasants did not join them immediately subsequent to the operation of the second stage. Under the

1. Ibid. p 326
2. Ibid. p 324
3. Ibid. p 321
Considerable priority was given to setting up of cooperative societies in Voqj villages for which tranquility had been concluded in Khurram Khan, general tendency, in 1965 for that new societies would be started in Voqj villages. There were some 150 societies in Mashhad by 1965 while in Nischapu there were still very few.

An oft the objectives for the smooth running of the societies was the scarcity of suitable men to become managers of societies. Very few were appointed managers were incapable of running the business side of the society's activities.

After giving a personal survey of the working of the cooperative societies in almost all the parts of Iran which he had visited in 1965, 1966, Mr. Lambton arrived at some interesting conclusion which are being summarized as follows:

An unfortunate rivalry was developing between Central Organisation for Rural Cooperation and Agricultural Credit and Rural Development Bank which resulted in the conflict in policy between the two in 1966. There was an

1 Ibid pp 345 46
indication of the tendency of diminishing government support for the land reform in which the societies were to foster the growth of an independent peasants' attempt of the Central Organisation for Rural Cooperation to extend its activities met with jealousy and mistrust both from the Bank as well as the government departments.

The growing coolness towards societies was accompanied by an interest in the development of private investment in agriculture. In the meantime the younger western educated economist and banker's view was that in the peasants were incapable of increasing production to turn away from the peasants and support and encourage men with capital to embark on mechanised farming. There had been growing tendency to oppose anything which would strengthen the independence of the cooperative movement. At the same time, on the pretext of 'direction' and leadership, it was consoled to make the cooperative movement into a full government organisation which would be in step. The officials of the Central Organisation for Rural Cooperation were able to win the trust of the peasants simply because they were not regarded government officials. And one of the reasons
for the success of the cooperative societies that the members regarded them as their own and had developed a sense of loyalty and pride in them. In short, if the cooperative societies are transformed into organizations entirely run by the government, they will cease to command the loyalty of their members and to be effective instruments in the creation of an independent, self-supporting peasantry, and the land reform as originally conceived will fail.¹

¹ Ibid pp. 345-46.
The third stage of the Land Reform

Before the end of the second stage of the reform it became apparent that there was some dissatisfaction with the progress in agriculture productivity. It was felt in some quarters that an opportunity for the modernization of agriculture had been missed from the beginning of the reform the process of fragmentation of firm land was started and at time pieces and plots were inherited there was a new danger of each of the separate parcel of land being divided among heirs into small fragments. Some 1/3 of the villages had been bought from the landowners by the year 1965 representing some 30 percent of the eligible villages. It was thus felt that more upheaval was necessary, this time to consolidate the ownership and the management of the land into larger units that would result in the need mechanization and an increased rate of growth.

In January 1969 the “third stage” of land reform was announced. The main aims of the new stage were:

1) The expansion of the agricultural output required for the industrial development of the country.

2) A rise in the per capita output and standard of living of the peasant class.

3) The stabilization of food prices by improved marketing.

The other objectives were:

To utilize the latest scientific and technological advances;

To train qualified men;

To introduce new method of cultivation and harvesting;

To provide proper irrigation system;

To promote mechanised agriculture;

To provide protection of agricultural land against pests and diseases;

To stabilize the prices of agricultural goods;
To strengthen agricultural and farm cooperative societies.

To introduce cattle raising.

To encourage private capital investment.

To coordinate agricultural plans with the industrial ones.

To protect the rights of the farmers.

To arrange for their insurance.

With the partial completion of the scheme of redistribution of land, attention was drawn to the utilization of the nation's agricultural potential. As a result, water resources were nationalized in Oct. 1961 and three new ministries were established for the accomplishment of the goals of the third stage of land reform. These were:

Ministry of Natural Resources

Ministry of Agricultural Products and Consumer Good

J. J.M. Davidian, Iran in the Service of World Peace, Tehran, 1971, p. 70
Ministry of Land Reform and Rural Cooperation.

In order to overcome some of the problems arising out of the fragmentation of land holdings, an ambitious programme of agrarian reform was approved. Under this plan several large agricultural joint-stock companies were organized in collaboration with foreign investors and some agricultural cooperatives were formed.

The first political step in this direction was made in June 1961 when a twenty-point manifesto was proposed laying the basis of the third stage of land reform which aimed at ending the fragmentation of land, speeding up mechanization and increasing of rural productivity and income. In 1968 articles for the distribution and sale of rented farms were enacted which made provision that all ploughlands under tenancy or joint farming ventures were to be converted into full ownership either by sale of lands to tenants or division of land between landlord and tenant. And it was claimed that some eight hundred thousand tenants received ownership under this stage.

A law for the formation of farm corporations was passed on 17 Jan, 1959, which gave the government the legal basis to inaugurate its land consolidation operation under the third stage reform. In early 1963 the Land Reform Organization was consolidated so as to facilitate the setting up of farm cooperatives.

The first farm cooperation was officially inaugurated on 17 May, 1963, in Fars. The Ministry set up three main committees: each committee consisted of three members, one representative of the ministry, and two representative from each village brought into the programme. The committee was to assess the value of shareholders' land. In 1963 it was envisaged that as many as 100 corporations would be established before 1970, the end of the 1968/9 five year plan period. A sum of 530 million Rials was allocated to the bank for this purpose. A ten-year tenancy holiday was offered to those beginning new farm enterprises in either the livestock or cash cultures.

The initial response by the farming population to the proposals in phase three of the reform was negative.

There was apprehension among the peasants as well as the landlords about the government’s intentions on the matter of farm cooperation. They were afraid that their land would be taken away and that their rights to their land would be curtailed. Thus the Shah and the government lost credit with the peasantry resulting in the damaging consequences of rural alienation. The social effects of the third stage were totally unappreciated in Tehran. Most small landlords, cultivators and landless cultivators and landless labourers were destined to suffer by the reform.

"The third phase effectively dismantled, according to Keith Mc Lachlan, 'the social structure of the villages involved.' Mr. Keith continues his criticism of the farm corporation structure further. According to him process of centralization developing rapidly during 1960s and articulated through the Shahs' reform programme, the spreading security system and the growing strength of the bureaucracy were accelerated by adopting farm corporation system. This system halted the progress of the cooperative movement in rural Iran. The official interest in improving the welfare of peasant farmers and stimulating self help in villages declined to a very low ebb. Allocation of credits

1. Ibid. p. 120.
through the societies declined as available funds were placed at the disposal of larger commercial funds. The most damaging aspect was the blighting effect it had on the adjacent areas. Rural families lost faith in their future on land and directed their children away from agriculture. During the period 1968-72, the impact of rural insecurity was apparent but not to cause alarm. But the insecurity combined with a booming urban economy from 1973 generated negative trends.

Cyrus Salamanzadeh² too is critical of the reform. According to him it was the logical outcome of a reform in the interest of a true peasantry, and was directed against those landlords who either still maintained a foothold through the agricultural unit or were party to tenancy contract. The third phase was to complete the programme of land distribution by 22 Sep., 1971; but the deadline was extended to 2 Jan., 1977 because of the various problems involving Mocha and land right inheritance system among peasants.³

¹ Ibid, p. 160.
³ Kayhan Hawai, 2nd July 1976.
The programme as a whole has been criticised for discriminating between the various classes of peasant-sharecroppers and the agricultural labourers. The former received land but latter did not, though their need was far greater. Similarly, it discriminated between various types of tenants, for example cultivators of small areas received less than the others. Land evaluation formulae also created unfair price differentials since they were based on land tax previously paid. Corrupt landowners ensured that their sharecroppers could buy land at a much lower price than the sharecroppers of those landlords who had paid their tax in full. Similarly, the third stage reform did not increase the general level of agricultural output, although it did increase income and income distribution. The level of agricultural output remained unchanged because the farmers continued to employ the same techniques as were used prior to the reform.

The author of Capitalism and Revolution in Iran has given a more balanced view of the Land Reform in Iran which may be summarised as follows:

2. Royal Maurice Jones: The Short-Run Economic Impact of Land Reform, an unpublished work utilised by Salmanzadeh.
With the end of feudalism, the peasants lost their class entity to a great extent. Before the land reform, 30 percent of all arable land were cultivated by smallholders. Afterwards, a much larger number of peasants joined the ranks of smallholders who are counted to be more than two million rural families. Of them the rich did not work on the land themselves but managed their farms. The middle smallholders employed khooshchnin (خوش‌نین) the landless peasants along the system of family production. The third category is of those whose land was not sufficient to support them and their families and who had to work for others.

Feudalist exploitation had been brought to an end but large sections of the peasants were exposed to exploitation by the comprador bourgeoisie which was mainly affected in the form of taxes and dues. While the small shareholders had their own land and the landlords were not there to exploit them, they remained poor and hungry. As a result of the end of feudalism, followed by the penetration of capital and urban culture in rural Iran, the peasants' needs increased and hence there was a wide gap between their income and requirement.
The end of feudalism paved the way for the rapid growth of capitalism. After the land reform the agricultural bourgeoisie achieved growth qualitatively and quantitatively. Rural markets were opened to capital and a cheap and plentiful supply of labour became available. Foreign exploitation increased with the extraordinary increase in production and export of raw material and foreign investment.

With the end of the old system the economic crisis also ended. The level of production particularly in the industrial sector increased and this increase improved the lot of the masses. Those previously unemployed got jobs, the living standards of the petty bourgeoisie went up and all this created in them, and even among the workers, a feeling of optimism. But such conditions created a wide gap between the vanguard of society that toed the regime's line and dictatorship and masses who were in a state of confusion. At a time when the regime had increased all around price rise, the popular movement stepped out on a new road which finally succeeded in bringing the regime, rule of the Shah to an end.

Agriculture during the revolution and after

There were various factors for the overthrow of the Shah's regime. But whichever combination of elements is chosen or having been involved in bringing about the overthrow of the Shah, the position of agriculture and rural community will inevitably form an integral part of the argument to find out the causes of the overthrow of the former regime. The land reform and other parts of the Shah's "White Revolution" remained as continuing sources of friction between the government and many of those within the establishment.

In fact most of those groups who participated in the revolution had in their manifestos some mention of plural agriculture once the Shah had been removed. They all laid great stress on agriculture and condemned the maladministration of the present and failure of the Shah's government to have policies to bring about a positive development of agriculture. Shah's reforms were badly criticised. But when the Shah was removed and the power transferred to the revolutionaries, they failed to have

Agricultural programme for improving productivity and standards of living at the present time are only lacking in consideration the problem which the agricultural community had to face. Although Ayatollah Khomeini claimed that he was aware of the conditions even in the most remote village, the centre of revolutionary forces in 1979. However, cities and towns though the villages were not entirely possible they were not the active components of the revolutionary forces. The result was that the anticipation of urban and forming interest in the post-revolution situation was very weak and there was no improvement in the position of the rural community

In most cases, one or two officials were appointed to take the situation in hand though the importance of agriculture was recognized. The minister of agriculture, Ali Muhammad I-adl suggested that the success of future of agricultural policy would make or break the revolution. By the middle of 1980 the ministry was changed in the composition of land reform was conducted with surcharges of land by the peasants and other opportunists.}

Thrd., 191
causing it serious problems. Peasants took land from landlord holding expecting connivance from the authorities. Corrupt officials too exploited the chaotic situation prevailing in the country. The ministry of agriculture attempted to solve the problem of land reform but due to the lack of political strength needed to carry out the reform it failed in its attempt. The ministry had to spend much time in confronting the religious establishment over land reform despite the supremacy of the Council of Guardians of Revolution in judging issues of this nature.

Only the revolutionary guerrilla group, the mujahedin-e-Khalq, put into practice its idea on agriculture in the cotton growing region of Korgan. Local committees controlled by the guerrillas attempted to oust landlords who were not Turkmen with the result that the Central authorities crushed the committee and with them the Turkmen Ministry.

The pace of agricultural development after the revolution was slow due to the institutional framework which foreclosed its management. There was a division of responsibility between the Ministry of Agriculture and two

1 Ibid. p. 192
2 Ibid. p. 103
organisations which in practice operated quite separately: the Jihadi-Sa'indgi (جهادى-سائندج) and the Buniyad-e-Mustazafin (بنياد المستعفون). The former was founded immediately after the overthrow of the Shah and it carried the revolution into the countryside. It attempted to take a major initiative in the land reform and was the agency through which collective farming was brought to the villages under the terms of Esfahan reform of March 1980. The Buniyad-e-Mustazafin became the heir to the properties taken from those associated with the regime of the Shah. It took into its ownership considerable areas of land including agro-industrial units. The proceeds of its activities were dedicated to the interest of the poor and the deprived.

The first coordinated land reform was published on 1st March, 1980. Rural lands were divided into three categories:

a) comprising public lands under the direct management of the government,

b) land confiscated from members of the former regime

1. Ibid. p. 202
2. Ibid. p. 202
3. Ibid. p. 206.
c) Large farms under private ownership.

Under the last category, known as Band-e-Jim (باند جی می), the lands unutilized by the large land owners were liable for distribution to farmers. However, on 12 Nov, 1980 the provision of Band-e-Jim was revoked.

In order to put the law into effect seven-member teams were set up. They comprised two persons appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture, a representative of the Ministry of the Interior, a member of the lihad e-Sarvij, a representative of the Ministry of Justice and two members from the local village council. But these teams grew unpopular amongst the villagers because they were perpetuating uncertainty in rural areas in respect of ownership of land and other resources.

The lack of decision making on the issue left the seven-member teams in a great deal of difficulty since the legal basis of their land allocation was defective. The revolution did little positive for the farmers in the country. The revolution was urban oriented because:

1. Ibid pp. 106.
2. Ibid p. 207.
those with real power had neither sufficient enthusiasm for, nor understanding of agriculture so as to effect a major change in the policy and programme related with uplift of the peasantry.\(^1\) The aim of the radical proposals of 1979 was to regularize the land seizures by peasants under the stress of the revolutionary conditions. The submersion of these reform in the radical proposals of March 1980 was almost a disaster.\(^2\) Events in the mid 1980s led to the conclusion that the government had no constructive policies towards agriculture that would secure a significant future role for the sector. The constraints on farming specially in the sphere of water provision for irrigation were to be as severe five or ten years after the revolution as they had been before. Disintegration of the traditional water use and farming system proceeded faster in 1980 than any time before. Accumulated expertise in managing land and water diminished as experienced farmers moved away from the countryside. New farming systems were not to replace the traditional system with the obvious result that output fell behind population growth.\(^3\)

1. Ibid. p. 221
2. Ibid. p. 271
3. Ibid. p. 274.