

Capitalism with Socialist Characteristics

The Land Reform Training Institute, 1968–1979

On the other hand, many poor peasants are still living in poverty for shortage of the means of production, with some getting into debt and others selling or renting out their land. If this tendency goes unchecked, it is inevitable that polarization in the countryside will get worse day by day. Those peasants who lose their land and those who remain in poverty will complain that we are doing nothing to save them from ruin or to help them out of their difficulties.

—MAO ZEDONG

A great economic accomplishment of the past ten years was your program in land reform. Due to its fair and democratic conception and execution it has become a model for similar reforms in other lands. It dealt successfully with one of the fundamental problems the Chinese people have faced throughout history. Moreover, in it you achieved much more than a fair and equitable adjustment—you produced both social dynamism and economic growth. That reform, founded on Sun Yat-sen's three peoples principles and executed with due regard for law and for private property, stands in sharp contrast to the brutal regimentation of your countrymen on the mainland. There they are often herded into the soul-destroying labor brigades of the Commune System. But free China knows that a system in which the farmer owns the land he tills gives him the incentive to adopt advanced fertilization, irrigation and other farming techniques.

—DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

INTRODUCTION

US President Dwight D. Eisenhower, on a visit to Taiwan in 1960, extolled the land reform performed by the GMD in Taiwan to a rally held in Taipei. He called GMD-led land reform “a great economic accomplishment” that resolved a long-standing

historical problem of inequity. In the speech, he pointed out that Taiwanese land reform offered not only fairness and “equitable adjustment” but also “due regard for law and for private property,” in direct contrast with land reform across the strait under the PRC. Like language that was wielded by Chen Cheng (see chapter 2), Eisenhower pointed to capitalistic principles of “incentives” and “techniques” that would be fostered by respect for property rights and contracts. In doing so, he was establishing a sharp contrast between GMD-led land reform and PRC land reform that centered on the importance of capitalist technocracy: proper management of rights, law, and markets for the prosperity of all.

Together with the publication of Chen Cheng’s *Land Reform on Taiwan* in English, Eisenhower’s speech marked the beginning of a GMD turn to showcase Taiwanese land reform for a global audience. Compared to the previous two chapters that have discussed Taiwanese agricultural science and technology and social groups such as farmers’ associations in the developing world, Taiwanese land reform demonstrated a different facet of its development experience. Land reform shared the same emphasis on Taiwanese success at modernity and improving rural lives. The difference was more pronounced in ideology. Land reform especially included discussions of Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles of the People that the GMD co-opted as an anti-Communist ideology and an emphasis on capitalist strategies being more suitable for developing states.

These GMD strategies came to a head with the establishment of the Land Reform Training Institute (土地改革訓練所, Tudi Gaige Xunliansuo, hereafter LRTI), established in 1968 in Taoyuan in northern Taiwan. The ROC partnered with a private philanthropic organization, the John C. Lincoln Foundation. Endowed by an American railroad entrepreneur, the Lincoln Foundation found in the LRTI a suitable vehicle for its propagation of Georgist thought, based on the theories of popular nineteenth-century American economic thinker Henry George. The LRTI, like Operation Vanguard, targeted bureaucrats from developing world nations interested in learning how to enact land reform, either to increase financial revenues for the state or to battle Communist insurgency in their home countries. For the GMD, the LRTI represented another opportunity to “win” its ideological Cold War with the PRC, to build relationships with non-Communist developing world nations, and to showcase its development success globally and at home.

The LRTI-assisted nations that sent technocrats to Taiwan spanned Barbados, Bolivia, Brunei, Colombia, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Fiji, Guam, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran, Khmer, South Korea, Lesotho, Malaysia, Micronesia, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, Uruguay, South Vietnam, and Western Samoa.¹ Taiwanese development leadership once again co-opted its narrative of development success in land reform for its efforts at forging ties with other states. Taiwan sought to lead other decolonizing powers in the Cold War world through land reform.

Institutions like the Land Reform Training Institute have not been discussed in any English language literature, as far as I know, and have appeared only in spurts in the Chinese language literature. Utilizing archives that I have not seen used by any scholar—the Lincoln Foundation papers at the University of Hartford and the archives of the Land Reform Training Institute—as well as documents from the Land Tenure Center in the University of Wisconsin, this chapter attempts to “rescue history” from land reform. It does so by contextualizing the role of land reform in the technopolitics of development, or, put differently, disentangling the relationship between political power and the discourse of the “apolitical” and technical.² It privileges the performativity of land reform and argues that land reform should be understood as different “keys,” namely land reform as historical narrative and as technopolitics.³

Land reform as historical narrative refers to the construction of a historical narrative *ex post facto* in order to support a political goal—the ability to claim unparalleled technical expertise in the field of development attributable to unique historical experiences and success. Land reform as technopolitics refers to the wielding of that claimed technical expertise as a Cold War political strategy. Land reform as technopolitics provided not only an ideological basis for the ROC’s diplomatic alliance-building in the Global South but also a shield for its political legitimacy at home, justifying its military dictatorship with a social welfare agenda that contrasted sharply with the Communist foil across the Taiwan Strait.

This chapter also attempts to address land reform as it fit into the larger puzzle of development. For an agricultural miracle that was so heavily promoted as evincing the success of the Guomindang in breaking the power of the landlords, by the 1970s the story of Taiwan’s agricultural success had shifted almost entirely to the agricultural tenets of the Green Revolution—high-yield crop cultivars, chemical fertilizers, and irrigation. The marvels of high science and technology, in other words, had buried the anti-Communist origins of land reform. Hidden in this transformation is a discussion of what land reform meant to Taiwan, the United States, the Third World, and the shifting global understandings of modernity.

THE 1966 WORLD LAND REFORM CONFERENCE

In 1963, the United Nations Economic and Social Council’s Social Commission undertook studies on land reform, publishing a report on the state of global social development and on land reform in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. Land reform also entered into discussions in the United Nations Conference on the Application of Science and Technology for the Benefit of the Less Developed Areas and to the UN Food Agriculture Organization (FAO), where during a conference convened in its twelfth session, FAO director B. R. Sen was asked to organize another conference specifically on the issue of

land tenure and agrarian reform programs. This culminated in resolution 1078 to organize the 1966 World Land Reform Conference, cosponsored by the UN, FAO, and the International Labour Organization and held in Rome.⁴ Representatives from eighty-one countries and territories and nineteen international NGOs attended the conference, including a majority from “less developed countries.” Sen began the meeting by stating that there was a “veritable crisis in the world food and agriculture situation.”⁵

According to one account by a participant from the University of Hartford, historian and political scientist James R. Brown, the conference began with an overall theme of impending Malthusian doom, the idea that population was rapidly growing in the Third World while agricultural productivity was relatively stagnant. In moving toward solutions, speakers like Professor D. G. Kare, adviser to the Reserve Bank of India, argued that the conference should remain a technical one. This raised the ire of the representative from the Soviet Union, Professor Lebanov, as well as Belarussian and Polish representatives, who argued that land reform was fundamentally a social and political subject. The debate ballooned into a miniature Cold War of ideologies. In Brown’s words, the Soviet bloc representatives co-opted the conference to serve as a platform for their agenda, attempting to sway representatives from the Third World that land reform was a naive endeavor and “nothing could be done about land reform or changing land tenure unless the whole form of government was changed.”⁶

Despite the objections from Communist state representatives, the resolution and discussions of the conference produced a number of tangible discussions regarding best practices of land reform. For example, almost all delegates understood that there was a “complementary relationship” between land reform and community development or “peasant organization” (according to Brown, a wide-ranging definition for groups ranging from “home economic clubs of peasant women” to “highly organized peasant syndicates”), but as Brown portrays it, there was “considerable disagreement” regarding whether community development was a precondition or result of land reform.⁷ This chicken-and-egg conundrum seemed to reveal arguments about the social or technical nature of land reform itself. If community development preceded land reform, likely the emphasis was first on the social; community development, as historian Daniel Immerwahr has argued, was “an effort to shore up small-scale social solidarities, to encourage democratic deliberation and civic action on a local level, and to embed politics and economics within the life of the community.”⁸ Thus, the village and the peasant assumed primacy, and it was through their organization and power that reform could be enabled. In the latter case, if land reform preceded community development, then it appears that the peasants were the objects, formerly locked into untenable situations and now freed through breaking the shackles of tenancy.

The issue received little more than a few sentences of discussion from Brown, but its treatment by Brown was undeniably technical. Instead of reconciling the

importance of discussing which preceded which, land reform or community development, Brown provided the analysis that “organized peasant movements have proven helpful in overcoming [legal] obstacles” to land reform that may be initiated by vested interests, and afterward can “also help to integrate the new land holders into their communities and cooperatives.”⁹ What had been an entire school of thought for a number of rural sociologists about communitarianism and the value of local village communities thus became merely a catalyst for ensuring that the formula for land reform could be carried out more efficiently.

Through its resolution, the conference brought land reform further under the umbrella of technical development practices. After a unanimous vote at the plenary session, the conference recommended that the UN and FAO begin to organize conferences and workshops on land reform, provide assistance to countries requesting it for land reform planning and implementation, publish additional studies and reports on land reform, increase visibility of land reform at future conferences of the FAO, the Social Commission of the UN, and similar agencies, and finally encourage “all the developed nations to extend adequate economic and technical assistance, on request, to the developing countries in land reform and related fields” and “the exchange of experts, personnel, and trainees in the field of agrarian reform” among UN members.¹⁰ The final recommendations of the conference set land reform as one of the major agendas for international development. This internationalization of land reform created new opportunities for “developed nations” to gain a foothold in the international arena, especially in the highly contested political space sensitive to both Communist and non-Communist nations, and was crucial to the struggle for influence within the Third World.

Member countries contributed working papers, usually based on their experiences with land reform, to share with other delegates at the conference. The representatives from the Republic of China submitted a paper based on the history of land reform in Taiwan. Highly technocratic in nature and resembling an abridged version of Chen’s *Land Reform in Taiwan*, it differed not in its basic narrative but in its deviation from Chen’s 1961 book through a historical revision of land reform. The report began with the obligatory nod to Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles of the People: “The policies and programs of land reform implemented in Taiwan by the Government of the Republic of China are based on the teaching of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, Founder of the Republic,” which advocated that “the State shall have the supreme power in disposing land and that all unearned increment from the land shall be enjoyed by the public.”¹¹ This claim regarding the “principle of the Equalization of Land Rights” was mildly deceptive. Sun’s elaboration of land reform was limited to the state purchasing undervalued land from landlords, thus in theory discouraging speculation and underutilization for the greater social good. It continued with obeisance to the dictator of the ROC on Taiwan, Chiang Kai-shek, to claim that these policies were enacted by Chiang in Zhejiang in 1927. Like Chen, it identified the source of land reform as the 1930 Land Law dictating the 37.5 percent

rent ceiling and went further than Chen, arguing that the 375 policy, among others of the 1930 Land Law (progressive land taxation, compulsory purchase of excess tenanted land for resale to tenants, maximum size limits of tenanted land, etc.) were implemented in Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Hubei, Fujian, Guangxi, Guizhou, and Sichuan but were “frustrated by the long and continuous wars between the Government on one hand and the warlords, Communists and Japan on the other.” It further remarked that “these reforms therefore passed unnoticed by the outside world.”¹²

The report from the ROC produced a work that would be useful on a technical basis. The historical narrative contained policy specificities, contingency planning, and thoughts on proper procedures and actions that would allow for it to be replicated in different contexts. As such, the ROC narrative of land reform was deployed not just to shine a positive light on the achievements of the Guomindang on Taiwan but to forge the basis for an international development praxis with attention paid to inequality. In describing the effects of land reform, for example, the economic payoffs were always prominently discussed, but social consequences, too, became salient. “Before land reform, rural poverty had caused social unrest and political disturbance in the rural areas.” After land reform, the report continued, “social justice was promoted and social order was stabilized. When the majority of the population are property owners, they eventually show more interest in community activities and social work.”¹³ “No matter how gradual and peaceful its implementation may be, [land reform] will inevitably involve a revision of the existing social organization and economic structure,” it continued. “Wealth, power, and status formerly monopolized by landlords will, after the reform, be shared by farmers who gradually become organized and powerful in the field of production and other activities.”¹⁴ To minimize the problem, the report called for the government to actively employ education and training to properly support these social groups as they shifted into their new roles. In other words, land reform was a technical problem that called for a technical solution, and as a consequence of the solutions outlined by the 1966 report, technical solutions also had salutary effects for traditional society as perceived from the perspective of the modernizing state.

Furthering this rationale was the introduction of all sorts of state apparatuses to rationally understand and map traditional societies—through land surveying, accurate counts of acreage and production yields and crop varieties—in a James Scott high modernist imagining.¹⁵ In the case of the 1966 report, it recounted the government agencies that had been created to help administer land reform: “The supporting programs consist of a wide range of activities . . . includ[ing] farm production, farm credit, land use improvement, water conservation and farmers’ organizations, etc.” These programs required the support of the Provincial Department of Agriculture and Forestry, the Provincial Water Conservancy Bureau, the Provincial Food Bureau, the Land Bank and the Cooperative Bank, among others,

all “features” and institutions “common to the government organization in a unitary State. They seem to be one of the factors which contribute to the more effectiveness, efficiency and economy in the administration of public programs of the Government.”¹⁶ This transformation of what land meant to the state became subsumed as the defining logic of rationality and modernity under this refashioned land reform narrative.

GEORGISM AND THE LINCOLN FOUNDATION

The 1966 World Land Reform Conference brought not just a platform for the Republic of China to showcase its land reform efforts; it also put ROC land reform in contact with a number of American land reform scholars who at the same time were also collaborating with American philanthropists interested in the issue of land reform both at home and abroad. One was the John C. Lincoln Foundation, named after its eponymous founder whose involvement was crucial in the establishment of the Land Reform Training Institute.

John C. Lincoln was an entrepreneur who founded the Lincoln Electric Company in 1895. He invented the first portable welding machine, and Lincoln Electric became one of the leading firms producing portable welders and innovating arc welding, an industry that boomed during World War II. The result was rapid growth for the company, which rose to become the largest arc welding company in the United States by 1975 and that was the subject of many *Harvard Business Review* cases.¹⁷ Lincoln Electric became well known for its labor practices; despite not having any union workers, the company offered guaranteed employment, employee stock-ownership plans, and bonuses based on company revenues, all practices that were revolutionary at its time.¹⁸

Outside of the Lincoln Electric Company, Lincoln founded the John C. Lincoln Foundation in 1946, dedicated to “teach and expound the ideas of Henry George, as they appear in his book, ‘Progress and Poverty.’”¹⁹ Lincoln was a devout Christian who had written a book on his faith (*Christ’s Object in Life*), and biographer Raymond Moley has argued that Lincoln’s Christian faith defined his belief in the necessity of a “natural law” for economics, a way to “equalize opportunities” and “eliminate involuntary poverty.”²⁰ Lincoln had read *Progress and Poverty* and subsequently believed in the possibilities of Georgist ideas on land taxation and ownership to help people in this manner. He contributed to the Henry George School of Social Science in New York and published a number of short pieces through the school on land, such as “Should Land Have Selling Value?” and “Stop Legal Stealing.”²¹ The mission statement for the foundation included a quote attributed to John C. Lincoln stating his belief that the foundation should “through the dissemination of proven truth to change the standards of economic education and of public opinion, and thus contribute to a more just and productive life for free men and women.”²² As such, the Lincoln Foundation’s guiding principles

included “a broad treatise on the science of economics,” an economics, it clarified, that expounded a “liberal” tradition that valued “economic liberty within nations” and “freedom of commerce and trade between nations.”²³

The allure of Henry George for Lincoln and other Americans lay in George’s egalitarian vision for economic growth without trampling on property rights or opening the floodgates of exploitation. In the eyes of his followers, George was a middle ground between ruthless laissez faire capitalism and the radical Communism of Marx. But Henry George never took hold in the academic or policy mainstream and instead enjoyed popularity largely among its lay readership—John C. Lincoln among them—who had little influence in Washington, DC.

As economist Phillip J. Bryson has argued, George had been historically marginalized because of his utilization of classical economics at a time when neoclassical economics had become the new paradigm in academic and policy circles. As Bryson has phrased it, “as George presented his theory to the world, classical theory was already doing its best to slip quietly into the dustbin of history.”²⁴ Furthermore, George’s lack of formal academic training precluded his being taken seriously by other economists, and some scholars, including Bryson, have even gone so far as to argue that George’s professional marginalization was due in no small measure to the envy that his popularity incited among his more academically credentialed peers. But it was the controversial “single tax,” what Joseph Schumpeter called a “policy panacea,” the “nationalization not of land but of the rent of land by a confiscatory tax,” that likely made George such a polarizing figure.²⁵ The “single” aspect of the single tax made it particularly unappetizing for policymakers; George argued that all taxation should be abolished save that on land, a rather radical solution that became less feasible as the modern nation-state evolved in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries to depend on multiple sources of taxation for its revenue.

Yet Georgists found that this exact aspect provided an answer to a problem that George first recognized in the 1870s—and from which the title of his book is derived—that poverty increases despite overall progress in wealth. In *Progress and Poverty*, George argued that “poverty deepens as wealth increases, and wages are forced down while productive power grows, because land, which is the source of all wealth and the field of all labour, is monopolised.”²⁶ George came to this conclusion after spending significant time in California and seeing the monopolization of land in advance of railroad construction by the Central Pacific Railroad. In combination with speculation and railroad subsidies, ownership of land granted a select few private parties enormous wealth as railroads increased overall productivity, but the wage laborers saw none of this wealth. The next step, George argued, was the understanding that land should be owned by all: “The equal right of all men to the use of land is as clear as their equal right to breathe the air—it is a right proclaimed by the fact of their existence.”²⁷ Thus, private ownership of land led to what George argued to be “the enslavement of labourers,” since the “ownership of

the land on which and from which a man must live, is virtually the ownership of the man himself, and in acknowledging the right of some individuals to the exclusive use and enjoyment of the earth, we condemn other individuals to slavery.”²⁸ The idea that private ownership of land is inherently unnatural and exploitative formed the basis for his theory.

The solution that George outlined was the single tax, a method he devised to avoid the dispossession of land from any landowners yet still accomplishing his goal of ending exploitation and inequity. The single tax called for the abolishment of all taxes except for one single tax on land value, and this tax would provide economic fruit for everyone, or as George argues, through this manner in effect “land, no matter in whose name it stood, or in what parcels it was held, would be really common property, and every member of the community would participate in the advantages of its ownership.”²⁹ He believed that the single tax “in every civilized country, even the newest” would produce revenue “sufficient to bear the entire expenses of government.”³⁰ Moreover, taxing landowners would take the burden of taxation off the laboring classes. And finally, a single tax would be simple to collect administratively, reducing the size of government by freeing it from the duties “to prevent and punish evasions, to check and countercheck revenues drawn from so many distinct sources.”³¹ It appealed to those who like George, harkened to the ideals of Herbert Spencer and Jeffersonian democracy.³²

George did not make his appeal of a single tax merely for the benefit of the laborers whom he perceived to be suffering under land monopolization. He also underscored a broader social good since “the rise of wages, the opening of opportunities for all to make an easy and comfortable living, would at once lessen and would soon eliminate from society the thieves, swindlers, and other classes of criminals who spring from the unequal distribution of wealth.”³³ In other words, George argued that single taxation had the secondary benefit of improving societal welfare through its ability to provide for the basic necessities of those who would otherwise turn to crime. It was a pragmatic argument, on the basis that a rising tide would lift all boats, but also one that appealed to the development experts of the Cold War who were concerned with the betterment of societies in the Third World.

The Lincoln Foundation operated largely within the confines of the United States to implement its vision of applied Georgism. An example of its early projects in disseminating Georgist ideas through education included funding an adult school for economics, the Lincoln School of Public Finance, in Claremont, California. But it was after John C. Lincoln passed away in 1959 that his youngest son, David Lincoln, took over as the president of the Foundation and began to seriously engage university faculty interested in land reform and look outward to bring Georgism to the rest of the world.³⁴ In 1966, the same year as the first World Land Reform Conference held by the United Nations, the John C. Lincoln Foundation funded a new institute at the University of Hartford for the promotion of Georgist

land reform studies. The John C. Lincoln Institute, which initially coordinated to help fund seminars and courses of study, officially became a school in 1974, the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, before being finally merged with the John C. Lincoln Foundation in 2006 to become a single foundation and research institute.³⁵

Selected to run the Lincoln Institute as its director was land economist Archibald Woodruff. Woodruff earned his PhD in economics at Princeton, then taught at the University of Pittsburgh, and became dean of the School of Government at George Washington University. In 1965, just a year prior to the founding of the Lincoln Institute, he joined the University of Hartford as provost. In 1967, he became the chancellor (later reclassified as president) of the University of Hartford, a post he filled until his retirement in 1977.³⁶ According to land economist Ted Smith, who studied with Woodruff at Claremont Graduate University and worked as a postdoctoral fellow with him, Woodruff was a devout religious person and a true believer in the value of land reform for Asia.³⁷ An academic and university administrator, Woodruff was in a position to leverage his intellectual interests in Henry George into a position of power, and in partnership with the Lincoln Foundation, into international soft power.

Woodruff was unique for having been an advocate of Georgism as an academically trained economist. By the 1960s, Georgism had fallen to the wayside along with most other classical economic theorists. Yet Woodruff attempted to revive Georgism for the Cold War world, as an American response to Karl Marx and the influence of Communism internationally. In a paper titled "A Comparison between Henry George and Karl Marx in their Approach to Land Reform," first presented at the University of Hartford in 1966 (and in 1970 republished by the University of Hartford in a volume of essays on land reform), Woodruff established an explicit contrast between George and Marx. "Karl Marx and Henry George," he began, "alike in odd ways and totally different in others, were both utopians. Each was deeply outraged at the evil he saw in the world about him, each had a vision of a better society, each prescribed a remedy for the world's ills and each crusaded for his cause."³⁸ The parallels Woodruff established helped burnish George's credentials as a sympathetic figure whose views on social inequality were similar to Marx's.

Part of Woodruff's paper reads as an exegesis of classical economics. He began with the common theoretical foundation for both Marx and George, which is Ricardo's posited relationship between labor and wages, capital and interest, land and rent, and finally, entrepreneurship and profits. Woodruff explained that George adopted Ricardo's interpretation of the "Iron Law of Wages," that real wages tended in the long run to decrease to a minimum necessary for sustenance, as the primary assumption of the aforementioned relationships. At the same time, Woodruff also crafted a social history of both Marx and George. He argued that "each was inflamed with moral indignation over the fact that the rich grew ever richer while the poor grew no less poor," with Marx witnessing this event in Germany,

Paris, and London and George encountering it in California.³⁹ This indignation over growing wealth inequality drove both thinkers to consider the underlying economic causes for inequality.

Woodruff portrayed George's heterodox approach to economics as more utilitarian than neoclassical. "The main trouble with economics, George specified, lay in the fact that theory fell short of the natural usefulness of the subject. Worst of all, economics had arrayed its *laissez faire* [*sic*] ideas against improvement and reforms on behalf of the working classes."⁴⁰ George, so Woodruff argued, offered a practical solution that would help lower-class people.

Woodruff depicted the contrast between Marx and George as one of prescribed solutions. According to Woodruff, George "opposed revolution just as much as he opposed entrenched landlords."⁴¹ Marx, on the other hand, "left no blueprint for actions," or as Woodruff put it more aptly, "Marx's thinking stopped on the day of revolution."⁴² Revolution would lead to utopia in Marx's world, and utopia was in reality left to the hands of improvised revolutionaries like Lenin who were willing "to use almost any tactics to keep control of the revolution."⁴³ With Woodruff citing fifty years of Communist control in Russia, he concluded that Marxism may have been the "basic scripture of Communism," but actual rule stemmed from the pragmatism of Marxists in power. These resulted in situations where the peasantry who were "hungry" for revolution, instead suffered under autocratic rulers.⁴⁴ In other words, Marx may have been concerned about the laboring classes, but his solution left power to those whom history had proven to betray the farmers and laborers who were supposed to benefit.

Woodruff then addressed the critiques of Henry George's single tax. Critics challenged the basic premise of his interpretation of the Iron Law, that progress necessarily entailed poverty and that rent on land did not in fact absorb the benefits of progress, while also arguing that a single tax on land was foolhardy in that it was inelastic and unresponsive for public fiscal needs.⁴⁵ Woodruff claimed that though the single tax was not practical in contemporary times, it did effect a number of positive outcomes, including more complicated means of assessing property taxes (based on carefully calculated depth tables and corner influence tables), as well as spawning the social reform movement led by idealists such as Carry Nation, Frances Willard, Eugene Debs, and the Garrisons. And while Woodruff admitted other tax sources were necessary, Georgism was still applicable because it (1) was efficient, (2) discouraged letting land go unused or underused, and (3) encouraged urban land use, thus reducing urban sprawl and speculation.⁴⁶ He cited the benefits of a "heavy progressive land tax" as having been responsible for "the breakup of huge estates" in Australia and New Zealand and the "Island of Formosa" (Taiwan).⁴⁷

In short, Woodruff argued that Georgism provided a rational and moderate alternative to the uncontrolled revolutionary radicalism of Marxism for the world. Woodruff believed that Georgism would appeal to elites in power because

“experience would indicate that most elite power groups are also intelligent and as such aware that while fiscal reform may indeed curtail some of their privilege, it lacks the total completeness of the guillotine.” In other words, where Marx was entering the hearts and minds of agrarian populations, Georgism offered an alternative, allowing developing world elites to keep their heads.

Under Woodruff’s guidance, the first seminar funded by the new Lincoln Institute was the Hartford Seminar on Land Taxation, Land Tenure and Land Reform in Developing Countries in 1966.⁴⁸ The seminar brought together academics and bureaucrats from a number of institutions and countries—Australia, the Vatican, Denmark, Jamaica, University of Bombay, the United Kingdom, the University of Oregon, FAO, the University of Ghana, Venezuela, the London School of Economics, and government representatives of the ROC—to discuss issues of land taxation, tenure, and reform. And it was at this seminar where an opportunity emerged for Woodruff and the Lincoln Foundation to put their Georgist ideas into actual implementation for their development world ideals.

The ROC representative was Shen Shike (沈時可, Shih-ko Shen), the director of the Taiwan Provincial Government Land Bureau (台灣省地政局, Taiwan Sheng Dizheng Ju). Shen had been a county magistrate (縣長, *xian zhang*) on the mainland with the GMD before moving to Taiwan as director of the Land Bureau there in 1946.⁴⁹ From the perspective of Ted Smith, who met with Shen regularly at the Land Reform Training Institute, Shen was a classic GMD bureaucrat, “party line all the way.”⁵⁰ Yet according to Shen’s grandson, Shen’s experiences with land reform were deeply shaped by his experiences during the February 28 Incident of 1947, when he hid in the basement of the Land Bureau offices to escape the deadly violence. After the harrowing experience, he advocated for land reform with his boss, Chen Cheng, as an important social policy.⁵¹

Having overseen the actual administration of the various land reform laws, Shen became an ambassador for land reform abroad by the late 1960s, representing the ROC at conferences like the one held at the University of Hartford by the Lincoln Foundation, as well as land reform missions to countries like Iran in 1967.⁵² At the University of Hartford 1966 seminar, Shen presented a paper titled “Land Taxation as Related to the Land Reform Program in Taiwan” detailing the recent history of Taiwan’s land reform to a University of Hartford audience. Beyond the value of its content to historical representation of land reform, the presentation was also the beginning of a political and intellectual relationship between the Republic of China and the Lincoln Foundation.

Shen began his presentation paper with an array of remarkable statistics stemming from land reform in Taiwan: an increase in owner-cultivators (as opposed to tenant farmers) from 58 to 87 percent, increase in land ownership by owner-cultivators from 57 to 90.6 percent, a 259.6 percent increase in the average income of farmers, and an astounding rise in standard of living of 346.8 percent (though no methodological footnote provided as to how this was calculated). But farmers

were not the only ones to benefit. Landlords saw an equally impressive gain of 307 percent increased income, while overall agricultural productivity grew 110.2 percent. Most importantly, industrial productivity increased 322.4 percent, a result Shen attributed to the increase in number of landlords engaged in commerce and industry of 128.9 percent.⁵³ The heights of land reform made clear the stakes of Shen's paper—Taiwan was a success story of land reform, and land reform that contributed directly to the industrialization success of a developing nation upon which other success stories could be patterned.

Having already established the bona fides of Taiwan's land reform, the burden on Shen was explaining how land reform was accomplished successfully. To this end, the mythologizing of land reform history was once again deployed to explain the origins of land reform. Shen pointed to "Dr. Sun Yat-Sen's theory of equalization of land rights and his 'land-to-the-tiller' doctrine."⁵⁴ The specific phrasing of "land-to-the-tiller" was a neologism anachronistically applied to Sun Yat-sen. While Sun advocated for a more progressive land tax that would allow for income equalization (the theory of equalization of land rights), the Three Principles of the People did not include land-to-the-tiller (耕者有其田, *gengzhe you qitian*) that eventually became the lynchpin policy of Taiwan's 1950s land reforms. Aside from this, Shen's exposition was largely historically accurate. Shen provided the standard narrative of rural land reform in the 1950s, beginning with rent reduction, sale of public lands, and finally the land-to-the-tiller redistribution. In greater depth, he delved into Sun's idea of a land increment tax providing for local reconstruction and the public good, an idea borrowed from Henry George. As such, Shen's paper focused on aspects of land reform dealing specifically with taxation in rural and urban contexts.

In the urban context, Shen laid forth the foundations of taxation policy. True to Sun's design a half-century earlier, the ROC had implemented a policy of self-valuation that allowed landowners to determine the value of their land themselves, with the caveat being that the state was allowed to legally purchase the property at the self-reported taxable value (and indeed, the state performed its own valuations for this purpose). The policy streamlined administration of taxes. This complemented other land taxation policies, including progressive tax rates and varying special case taxes on vacant land, land for public use, and land transferred or sold, that all encouraged land development and maximized revenues.⁵⁵

Shen's paper sparked a rigorous discussion from observers interested in the specifics of Taiwan's success. Woodruff raised the comparison of India to Taiwan, and specifically how Taiwan succeeded where India failed despite the underlying ideas of land reform being largely similar. (This topic would continue to interest him intellectually well into his retirement, as he had been working on a manuscript titled "Comparison of Socio-Economic Structures in Taiwan and India, Effects of Land Reform" that was then compiled and published posthumously in 1984.)⁵⁶ Shen replied that it was due to careful planning combined with a cautious and long-term approach. M. L. Dantwala, a professor of economics at the University of

Bombay, then pointed out the difference in size between the two nations, where the “sheer magnitude of the scale of operations makes the task formidable,” and noted that the Indian state’s need to focus on other urgent governance needs limited their ability to tackle land reform with the determination and focus the ROC government was able to bring to bear on the problem.⁵⁷ He also pointed out the disparity in the starting points of farmers.⁵⁸ Another participant of the seminar, Yitzchak Abt, an Israeli agricultural counselor stationed in the Israeli embassy in Venezuela, added that “it is proximity to existing urban concentration which counts,” emphasizing the importance of urban development to overall national growth.⁵⁹ Indeed, additional doubts arose with regard to Taiwan’s urban land reform, specifically the policy of self-assessing land valuation. Daniel Holland at the Sloan School of Management at MIT added that in the Latin American contexts, few nations would be able to adopt the self-assessment method because of the lack of “a ‘credible threat’ of enforcement” that would discourage landowners from underpaying taxes by undervaluing their land.⁶⁰

Despite the issues raised regarding the portability of Taiwan’s solutions to other contexts, Shen ended the discussion with a suggestion. “In view of the importance of the seminar and the contributions made by such outstanding participants,” he urged the participants, “it would be well to consider the prospects of a permanent organization set-up to follow up these problems and for further research.”⁶¹ Though Shen continued to provide suggestions in discussing other papers drawing on Taiwan’s experience, the official record did not contain a prolonged discussion of this idea, which would eventually come to fruition as a joint project between the ROC and the Lincoln Foundation—the Land Reform Training Institute.

THE LAND REFORM TRAINING INSTITUTE

A mere two years after the 1966 seminar held in Hartford, the Land Reform Training Institute (LRTI) was established in Taoyuan, Taiwan. Shen Shike, the Provincial Government Land Bureau director who had represented the ROC at the Hartford seminar two years earlier, had been corresponding with Woodruff in April 1968 to establish a “Land Reform Research Institute” (土地改革研究中心, Tudi Gaige Yanjiu Zhongxin) that would “allow other countries planning to undertake land reform or in the process of implementing land reform and experiencing difficulties to send representatives and undertake research.”⁶² This was realized as a training institute, emphasizing the role the institution would serve in helping other developing nations.

For the Lincoln Foundation, an institute hosted in a developing country that had successfully implemented land reform, one of the few at the time, was a compelling platform for enacting land reform internationally. Woodruff reiterated this, eight years after the founding of LRTI, when he proclaimed that land reform demonstrations held in the United States “would mean little” to those from developing countries. Instead, in Taiwan, they could “point out that twenty five years ago

[the] island was primitive,” and thus “if the Republic of China could do [land reform] with the resources it had, [other developing countries] could also do it in their own countries.”⁶³ Taiwan was moreover appealing as the intellectual successor to Henry George. Through Chiang Kai-shek and the GMD regime’s continued obeisance to the Three Principles of the People of Sun Yat-sen, the Lincoln Foundation believed that Taiwan carried the torch of Henry George into the modern era. For the ROC state, land reform provided another opportunity to showcase the abilities of the GMD regime in economic development and social improvement. The Lincoln Foundation recognized the political agenda of the ROC as well, and as a consequence influenced the selection of an executive secretary, the *de facto* director of the institute, whom they perceived to be young, bright, and most importantly, not beholden to the political motivations of the GMD regime—none other than Shen Shike.⁶⁴

Located in Taoyuan, approximately an hour outside of the capital of Taipei, LRTI consisted of several buildings: housing offices, dormitories, classrooms, and a library dedicated to providing formal instruction and training for Third World bureaucrats in land reform. The ROC and the Lincoln Foundation agreed to co-fund LRTI (the ratio ranged from 70/30, respectively, to 50/50 during the first decade, depending on the fiscal year), for a trial period of three years, after which the agreement would be contingent upon votes to renew its status by its board of directors.⁶⁵

The board of directors reflected the importance of LRTI. Its list of associated directors drew from Taiwan’s development elites, from land economists in academia and well-known figures associated with land reform of the 1950s. It was co-chaired by Shen Zonghan, then the chairman of the Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction, and David C Lincoln, son of John C. Lincoln and head of the Lincoln Foundation. Also on the board were Li Guoding (李國鼎, K. T. Li), the famous minister of economic affairs who was the public face of Taiwan’s industrial development policy; Xiao Zheng, the aforementioned land economist (*dizheng*) who headed his own institute, the Chinese Research Institute for Land Economics, and who served as chairman of the board of directors for the Land Bank of Taiwan that underwrote the land bonds crucial in land-to-the-tiller reform; and Pan Lianfang (潘廉方, L. F. Pan), former legislator in the Legislative Yuan and also an ROC representative of land reform who had served on the ROC land reform mission to Iran with Shen Shike in 1967. Its executive committee, in charge of administration, was cochaired by Shen Shike, whose official title was executive secretary, and Archibald Woodruff. Also sitting on the committee were representatives from the Lincoln Foundation, the JCRR, the Taiwan Land Bank, and the Council for International Economic Cooperation and Development (CIECD, the economic development agency headed by Li Guoding).⁶⁶

These threads converged at the LRTI. The land economics of Xiao Zheng was rooted in the idea that land reform was the legacy of Sun Yat-sen and the Guomindang revolution. A younger generation of land bureaucrats following Xiao, such as Shen Shike and Pan Lianfang, sought to modernize the world in



FIGURE 33. The Land Reform Training Institute building in Taoyuan, Taiwan, which was renamed the International Center for Land Policy Studies and Training in 2000. Photo taken by author in 2013.

Taiwan's image. Finally, Archibald Woodruff and David Lincoln hoped the legacies of Henry George and John Lincoln could be fulfilled through the Taiwan. The LRTI became the institution that would showcase Taiwan's land reform successes to the world and provide them with the firsthand knowledge necessary to battle radical Communism in their own backyards.

In September 1972, the third year the LRTI ran training classes for international participants, Archibald Woodruff sent Alan S. Wilson, a retired vice chancellor of administration at the University of Hartford (and former director of the Hillyer Institute, one of University of Hartford's predecessor schools), as an outsider with no knowledge of land reform to observe a regular session of the LRTI in process.⁶⁷ Wilson had been deeply impressed by the operation and execution of the LRTI. In a report written for the directors of LRTI and the Lincoln Foundation, Wilson wrote "since 1968, several emerging countries in Africa and South America have encountered renewed attacks by Socialists and Communists aimed at taking over their governments. Farmers face a hopeless future without land reform. These countries cannot wait nor can they help themselves."⁶⁸ Wilson argued, like his colleague Woodruff, that the developing world was under assault from Communism, and land reform was the solution to this global turmoil.

The LRTI curriculum was structured around sessions of two types: regular, lasting eight weeks (initially eleven) and recurring on a regular basis, and short, one-off sessions that were tailored to special missions, usually of single national origin and similar social/professional background, for example for a group of Vietnamese farm leaders. The regular session served the core mission of the institute in

providing training in best practices of land reform for participants from developing nations in Asia, and beginning in 1972, in Latin America. Each session hosted approximately thirty participants, nominated by their home countries.⁶⁹

To take an example, the fifth regular session, held from March 15 to May 15, 1971, consisted of twenty seven foreign participants from Khmer (Cambodia), Brunei, Thailand, Vietnam, (South) Korea, the Philippines, and the US Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Participants were a mix of government bureaucrats, farm leaders (usually from farmers' associations), and landlords. Titles and professions varied, but generally were related to land policy, administration, and economics. These included an assistant agricultural officer and land officer from Brunei; assistant chief of the National Tax Administration and a cadastral engineer from the Kyongki provincial government in Korea; a land reform project team leader from the Land Authority in Quezon City and a provincial president of a chapter of the Federation of Free Farmers in the Philippines; a dikes and ditches project member of the Royal Irrigation Department and a second-grade economist from the Ministry of National Development in Thailand.⁷⁰

Shen Shike's annual reports offer a window into what LRTI officials believed they had accomplished. Shen's Third Annual Meeting report claims that "the farmer leaders and priests from the Philippines reacted very favorably and suggested that the Institute invite more farmers to attend the course."⁷¹ Though Shen undoubtedly desired to cast the feedback of participants in a positive light, the manner by which he chose to frame the positivity is telling. Shen's tactic was to emphasize the efficacy of land reform in changing the opinions of farm leaders, priests, mayors, and landlords. These were representatives from crucial social classes whom policymakers sought to win over in order to carry out land reform through cooperation and not by force. These were the same classes that were the ostensible beneficiaries of Taiwan's land reform. The revelations from these attendees, as Shen proclaimed in his annual report, were precisely what the LRTI sought to showcase to the John C. Lincoln Foundation and the rest of the world.

The curriculum of the regular session focused on theories and best practices of land-related topics with a significant number of courses based on Taiwan's own history of land reform. The third session, for example, featured courses on the general purpose and theory of land reform, including "The Importance of Land Reform to Developing Countries" and others discussing general problems in implementation as well as land reform specifically in the context of Southeast Asian countries. The technical aspects of land administration were also taught—cadastral survey, land value assessment, land taxation, and Aboriginal (Indigenous) land, to name a few.

Taiwan's success was featured heavily, especially those aspects that curriculum designers perceived to be unique about the Taiwan case. Five courses were offered specifically on the history of land reform in Taiwan, ranging from a general course on land reform to details on its political background, effects on farm economy, economic development strategy, and changes in the social aspect of Taiwan's land

reform. The latter topic, which constituted a discrete course of study, reinforced the point that the primary function of Taiwan land reform was to effect social change, though the terms in which the curriculum was presented invariably made it clear that the practice was technical in nature. The course on political background elucidated the “political principles underlying land reform in China,” specifically modeled on the “3-phase implementation of land reform” that Taiwan had used in the 1950s to successfully implement reform.⁷² This represented a familiar narrative that all success could be traced back to the ROC’s founding father, Sun Yat-sen, and his political ideals.

To complement land reform, a series of courses were also presented on agricultural extension, farmers’ organizations, the Land Bank of Taiwan, the Cooperative Bank of Taiwan (responsible for allowing low interest purchasing of fertilizer on credit), and Irrigation Associations. Agricultural extension and the ability of the Taiwanese government to disseminate/extract knowledge and correctly administer the distribution of water, credit, and fertilizer depended heavily on these local social organizations. Agricultural extension was the other interlocking piece with land reform to form the basis of the Taiwan agricultural miracle (see chapters 2 and 3), and important for the ROC planners to convey for foreign participants. These were complemented by observation visits into the field to see land reform in action.⁷³

Foreign scholars were invited to teach at the regular sessions. The first few regular sessions featured three scholars associated with the Lincoln Foundation or the University of Hartford, including Archibald Woodruff and Sein Lin, the associate director of the Lincoln Institute. Starting with the third session, in pursuit of further internationalization, LRTI sought to diversify the visiting lecturers, including scholars and officials from the FAO Rural Institutions Office, the Iran Central Organization for Rural Cooperation, the Philippines Federation of Free Farmers, an agricultural economist from Thailand, and Japan’s Asian Institute of Economics Affairs.⁷⁴ Internationalizing its faculty meant that the LRTI was able to claim greater authority over its land reform methods. Though it was based primarily on the Taiwan success narrative, it was also important to bring in alternative perspectives to demonstrate solidarity and wide applicability throughout the developing world.

Aside from the emphasis on social cooperation and effects of land reform, the curriculum also highlighted and drew on other aspects of Taiwan’s 1950s history that put it in contrast with Communist land reform. One course sought to advise how “landlords [could] invest their capital derived from Land-to-the-Tiller Program,” an aspect of Taiwan’s 1950s land reform discussed in chapter 2 that was publicized as having provided the capital for Taiwan’s nascent industries at the time, as well as creating a new social class of industrial capitalists who were rewarded for their “cooperation” in land reform with ostensible wealth.

Complementary to the training sessions, LRTI faculty were also sent abroad to evaluate and advise developing nations in land reform. These were conducted for a

number of reasons. One was political, as these missions constituted a form of ROC development diplomacy with developing world nations. Another was to follow up on training that was initiated at LRTI. One example was received by the Republic of Vietnam's (RVN) director general of land reform Bui Huu Tien in July 1970. After the visit, Cao Văn Thân, minister of land reform, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries development, wrote in a letter to RVN prime minister Trần Thiện Khiêm of Taiwanese land reform. Cao described the Taiwanese model in terms laid out by LRTI curriculum. He cited Sun Yat-sen's *Minsheng zhuyi* (People's Livelihood), the 1950s narrative of three-stage land reform culminating in land-to-the-tiller, and the complementary vehicles to land reform in agricultural credit, farmers' associations, agricultural extension, and so on. In the report, he also attributes the success of Taiwanese land reform to several factors: (1) the state and its ability to mobilize "colossal human and material resources," (2) supplementing with "information, promotion, education at the correct level," (3) peace, and (4) complementary programs (the aforementioned agricultural credit, farmers' associations, etc.).⁷⁵ These factors helped spread a particular Taiwanese approach to land reform across developing states.

Just months earlier, in February, the LRTI had hosted a group of fourteen landlords from Vietnam. Shen wrote in the second annual report that the landlords were deeply affected by what they saw:

After the landlords came back to Vietnam, the Land to the Tiller Act was passed. They told their people how their attitude toward land reform changed from objection to support after their visit to Taiwan. The mayors and the farmer leaders said that they would persuade the government to carry out land reform and arouse the farmers' attention to it.⁷⁶

Shen portrayed the visit as a success in changing not only the minds of the farmers who would nominally be the beneficiaries of land reform but the minds of landlords as well. Though Shen did not clarify the reasons for their change of heart, he implied that landlords saw something in Taiwan that they hoped to replicate in Vietnam (though it seems unlikely that a mere fourteen landlords would have shifted public opinion toward redistributive land reform).

In August 1970, a month after Bui's visit, both Archibald Woodruff and Shen Shike traveled to South Vietnam. As part of their visit, they were present at a land title issuing ceremony in Ba Tri in Kiến Hòa Province as part of the implementation of the new Land to the Tiller Act of 1970. Ba Tri, however, was notable as a model "pacified" district. As part of the US and RVN pacification campaign, Ba Tri received special attention through development support.⁷⁷ It was likely that the ceremony in Ba Tri served a performative function, to demonstrate the benevolence of the regime in an attempt to win the hearts and minds of villagers. Though both the US and RVN governments pushed for a nationwide implementation of the 1970 act, it came arguably too late for the RVN.⁷⁸ Nonetheless, the report by

Minister Cao still stated that Shen would do his best to make sure “the work that Vietnam had and was carrying out will be popularized/disseminated more effectively in Taiwan by him and his organization to obtain active material and spiritual support of the friendly countries of the free world.”⁷⁹

DISSEMINATING THE TAIWAN MODEL

By 1977, LRTI became an important component of Taiwan’s overall international development apparatus, and land reform became an integrated part of the Taiwan development model. JCRR commissioner Jiang Yanshi (蔣彥士, Y. S. Tsiang) symbolized this in a 1977 symposium honoring the centenary of the publication of *Progress and Poverty*. Speaking before an audience of the major development bodies of Taiwan, the JCRR and the LRTI, the Lincoln Institute, and Academia Sinica, the prestigious government-funded academic research institute, Jiang reminded attendees that “since its founding, the Republic of China has considered land reform policy to be a major national goal.” In a narrative that had become *de rigueur*, Jiang went on to discuss how land-to-the-tiller and equalization of land rights were two of the key programs of Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles of the People. He highlighted the 15 billion NTD “collected from the incremental tax of land value for social welfare collection” as a sign of the ROC’s dedication, and he praised Sun for putting “two different progressive ideas from the Chinese and the West into a concrete workable political principle.”⁸⁰

Jiang’s comments, in addition to those from David Lincoln, Archibald Woodruff, Xiao Zheng, Lee Teng-hui and other scholars and development experts associated with land economics and the Lincoln Institute were regularly published in Lincoln Institute publications destined for international audiences.⁸¹ As with most of these publications, they portrayed land reform as an essential aspect of developing “economic efficiency and democratic political institutions.”⁸² One of the papers, by Chen Sun, produced a diagram to demonstrate how Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles integrated the best parts of socialism and capitalism and created a middle path (figure 34).

The same diagram utilized by Chen Sun in the centenary publication later appeared in Li Guoding’s 1988 book, *Economic Transformation of Taiwan, ROC*.⁸³ Li’s book reached a greater audience. As the minister of economic affairs (1965–69) and later minister of finance (1969–76), Li presided over the formative period of rapid economic growth in Taiwan and thus became one of the most public figures of Taiwan’s economic transformation in the 1960s and 70s. His writings on economics have been well publicized. In his words, the importance of the Three Principles of the People and land reform was important for ensuring an “improvement in the distribution of wealth, increased access to education, and a greater social mobility,” an ideal he attributed to Confucius.⁸⁴ This diagram illustrated the new ideological norm for the LRTI. Sun Yat-sen and Henry George had effectively

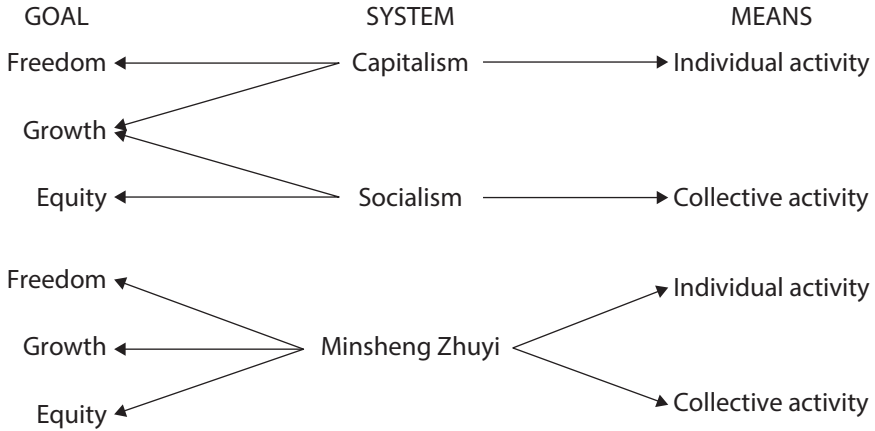


FIGURE 34. According to Chen Sun and later Li Guoding, under capitalist and socialist systems, only two goals could be accomplished: either freedom and growth or equity and growth. Under Sun Yat-sen's Minsheng zhuyi, all three goals—freedom, equity, and growth—could be reached, combining the ideal parts of both capitalism and socialism. Sun, “Land Reform and San Min Chu I,” 42–43.

provided a third way for the developing world, one located squarely between the extremes of socialism and capitalism.

The LRTI also functioned as a host to visiting scholars funded by the Lincoln Foundation to perform research on land reform while being associated with LRTI. Theodore (Ted) Reynolds Smith was one of these fellows. Smith had completed a PhD in economics from Claremont Graduate University with funding from the Lincoln Institute. At Claremont, he met Archibald Woodruff, who taught classes there every other week. Upon graduation, Smith was offered a postdoctoral fellowship by the Lincoln Foundation to travel throughout Asia researching land economics, which included time at LRTI in Taiwan in 1969. His time in Taiwan also meant experiencing firsthand the GMD gaze and its disciplining of society. He noted that a visit from GMD police authorities followed a day after a private, politically sensitive conversation between him and his wife in their home in Taiwan. His research assistant was detained by the police as well, and after being released then provided Smith with an official narrative about landowners that was at odds with Smith's own observations.⁸⁵ His research was eventually published with the Lincoln Institute at the University of Hartford titled *East Asian Agrarian Reform: Japan, Republic of Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines*.⁸⁶ The book was a primer in land reform in Asia. It covered the basics: why bother with land reform, different ways to accomplish it, and an analysis of results from the cases mentioned in the title. Smith's study was representative of a type of literature that sought to publicize the Taiwanese case in the English language scholarship, while also inserting a Georgist-influenced theoretical lens to contextualize its success in the Cold War.

East Asian Agrarian Reform begins, predictably, with Sun Yat-sen and the Three Principles of the People which led to the Land Law of 1930 and its amendment in 1946. It included quotes from Xiao Zheng, referenced as “one of the leading authorities on Chinese land tenure,” in a discussion of how the Guomindang had attempted land-to-the-tiller reform in the face of the Communist Civil War. Yet it diverges from more official narratives by offering the reader a realistic assessment of why the GMD turned to land reform, namely, its failure in China when compared to the fervor of the Chinese Communists. For Smith, land reform on Taiwan became a way to reconcile that failure, as well as a means through which the GMD “could remove the landowners from their role of political prominence in village life.”⁸⁷

Smith was critical of some aspects of Taiwanese land reform. He expressed skepticism of the official Taiwanese narrative in his analysis of Taiwanese claims that landlords successfully transitioned from landowners to industrial capitalists, citing a study performed by National Taiwan University in 1965 arguing that 98 percent of small and mid-sized landowners and 90 percent of large landowners sold the stock holdings they had received in compensation for seized lands.⁸⁸ Smith concluded that “the initial corporation ownership experience of the majority of Taiwanese landowners was much less rewarding than had been the holding of land. To some extent this experience served to alienate many former landlords from an industrial system which actually offered a tremendous potential for economic gain.”⁸⁹ This observation calls into question Lee Teng-hui’s own thesis about intersectoral capital flows (see chapter 2). However, Smith nonetheless indicated as a whole the Taiwan case was a success and suggested its ability to “serve as a model for all those concerned.”⁹⁰ The example of Smith’s writing demonstrates how the LRTI, the Lincoln Foundation, the Lincoln Institute, and their network of Georgist-influenced land economists helped propel Taiwan into academic discussions on land reform.

Disseminating Taiwan’s land reform success was also taken on by another Lincoln-affiliated individual: John C. Lincoln’s daughter, Lillian Lincoln Howell. Lillian Howell founded the KTSF TV station in the San Francisco Bay Area, one of the first stations to focus on Asian language programming directed at the Asian American community. Following in her father’s footsteps, she established the Lillian Lincoln Foundation in 1985, funding video media projects on topics of philanthropic interest, such as micro-lending for women in the developing world, primary education in Japan, and land reform in Taiwan.⁹¹ One documentary funded by the foundation and produced in 1987 by Dateline was *Taiwan’s Transformation: Winds of Change*. The twenty-seven-minute documentary sought to explain how Taiwan changed from an “economic basket case” to an “economic success” in a mere forty years. It featured interviews with farmers who had benefitted from land reform discussing the social changes it had enacted. In its narrative for the establishment of the Republic of China on Taiwan, land reform naturally followed the principles of Sun Yat-sen calling for democracy, livelihood, and nationalism.

The documentary featured the commentary of Arlo Woolery, executive director of the Lincoln Institute from 1974 to 1986 and a member of the board of directors of LRTI.⁹² Woolery pointed out the economic benefits of land reform—farmers have a greater incentive to develop land if they owned it, or in his words, “There is an old saying that the most valuable fertilizer you can have on land is the footprint of the owner.” L. Y. Chuang, a former tenant farmer in Taoyuan interviewed in the documentary, stated, “I was overjoyed with land reform. And then I had a right to the land I cultivated. I no longer worried at the end of the year that the landlord might take the land back. I made a more secure life for me and my family.”⁹³ In a scene minutes later, Y. C. Chuang, younger brother of L. Y. Chuang, is shown driving a new Mercedes Benz sedan, with the narrator stating that Chuang had “traded his tractor for this Mercedes” using savings from his family farm that allowed them to start a plastics manufacturing company.

In addition to the social benefit for those below, Woolery made sure to emphasize that landowners were incentivized to sell land because of the potential for “great profit” in the stock in state-owned enterprises they received. The documentary interviewed a former landlord as well, Chenlu Chow, who said that “most of the landlords were opposed to the idea” of land reform and that landlords thought that land reform was “unfair” to the landlords, but “looking back,” he thought “land reform was wise” to allow investment for development. Chow is shown in his three-story house playing with his grandchildren, described as “semi-retired” because of the investments he made in a bus company using the capital from his sold land.⁹⁴ In the following scene, UC Berkeley sociologist Thomas Gold was interviewed, stating that not all landlords successfully transitioned from landowner to capitalist as Chow and the others did.

The LRTI was extended beyond its initial three-year trial period due to its early successes, and its rapid growth in the 1970s expanded its country participant list to represent a great part of the developing world. It hosted visiting scholars and consultants throughout the 1970s and 1980s from prominent development agencies and universities interested in land reform. But by the late 1980s, land reform began to experience a global decline. Owing in part to the collapse of Communist regimes internationally and also to the decreased emphasis on rural development in favor of urban and industrial growth, land reform became a relic of the earlier Cold War era. Organizations like FAO and the University of Wisconsin shuttered their land tenure centers and rural organization units in the 1990s, as development moved into the domain of the World Bank, and structural adjustment became the new paradigm.

By 2000, the Land Reform Training Institute had changed its name to the International Center for Land Policy Studies and Training (ICLPST). Today, its facilities are in need of repair. There is evidence of water leaks from the ceiling, empty offices, and decaying books in a library that had suffered through a roof collapse. Its curriculum changed as well. Though it still hosts government bureaucrats from

the Global South, the ICLPST instead focuses on aspects of land policy with contemporary relevance: land administration and policy in urban settings. Other institutes, like the Land Reform Museum (財團法人土地改革紀念館, Caituan Faren Tudi Gaige Jinianguan) in Taipei that also host short-term courses for international scholars, have likewise undergone the same adjustment. During the mid-2010s, when I conducted fieldwork, they had even attracted a new group of government officials interested instead in rural-to-urban transformation in Taiwan as a model: party cadres from the People's Republic of China.

CONCLUSION

Land reform became the soft-power complement to military interventions, for as long as Communists continued to be a threat in the farming villages of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, the hearts and minds of the Third World mattered more than all the weapons that could be mustered internationally. For the Lincoln Foundation-associated land economists who espoused Georgism, land reform was the shield and sword against radical Communism. Land reform represented the benevolence of capitalism for both farmers and landowners, and philanthropists like David C. Lincoln believed in its power to help complete his father's mission of social deliverance without subjugation to Communism.

This narrative is deeply relevant to understanding development and its relationship with the Cold War. By the 1960s, the global political discourse centered on Communism. The revival of Henry George and the convictions of Georgist economists in proposing Georgism as the solution for oppressed agrarian societies of the world represented a softer Cold War stance. The agricultural miracle of Taiwan in the 1950s and 60s provided thinkers like Lincoln Foundation economists with the ability to tenuously link Georgism, which they retroactively associated with Sun Yat-sen, with land reform under the Guomindang. In contrast to military interventions, development provided an opportunity to stop the halt of Communism with the carrot as opposed to the stick. And by appealing to both protecting land rights and private property as well as providing for the social good of the entire population, Taiwanese land reform sought to find a third way among the extremes of other economic systems to appeal to developing nations.

For Taiwan, land reform provided an opportunity for its political and technocratic elite to reimagine its own history and national identity. The construction of a historical narrative of land reform provided the ROC with the bona fides it needed to demonstrate that it had arrived as a modern nation. According to its land reform pedagogy, the post-1949 Nationalist state was an enlightened, benevolent, patriarchal state. It followed the principles of the founding father, Sun Yat-sen, in supporting the livelihood of the people. Land reform was the proof that all could benefit—farmers, landowners, and the state—in the quest for modernity. It recovered from its mistakes in the fight against the Communists on the mainland and

demonstrated that social equality could be accomplished without class conflict, violence, or violation of the sanctity of private property and capitalism. And most importantly, it proved that social equality was compatible with the foremost goal of the developmental state: economic growth, the search for wealth and power that had seemingly eluded the Communists.

Land reform granted the GMD the moral high ground it had formerly ceded to the Communists by demonstrating its commitment to the downtrodden masses and that it was not just the party of the capitalists, the industrialists, and the landlords (though, it was that too). Furthermore, through attempting to internationalize its (constructed) development experience, Taiwan elevated land reform from the realm of historical narrative to reality, through development practices in LRTI's classrooms. From LRTI course materials to economic history research written by US-based economists, Taiwan infused its 1950s agricultural miracle with land reform, constructing a façade for an authoritarian island under martial law with a paradigm of enlightened benevolence for the Third World.

The international arena became the crucial audience through which the ROC could justify its newfound enterprise. Its success with land reform meant that it carried a burden to save other developing nations from the grasp of Communism, a technopolitical version of a *mission civilisatrice*. In this vision, Taiwan, as one of the few successful cases of land reform, understood the unique difficulties of balancing growth with social equality while fighting the rapacious laissez faire capitalists and the radical Communists. Taiwan could lead a crucial coalition of embattled Third World nations on the brink of falling to Communist insurgents back toward a middle path of social betterment and economic growth. In a world where Taiwan had been marginalized as a state dependent on the good graces of the United States and in constant ideological, military, and existential threat from the Communists on the mainland, Taiwan carved out a unique international niche.