

## LAND REFORM IN THE FAR EAST

By Rev. Archer Torrey

We should be aware of the great amount of land reform that took place after World War II, especially in the wake of General Douglas MacArthur. The land reforms in Japan, Korea and Taiwan had to do with MacArthur.

I know that the President of South Korea, Dr. Syngman Rhee, probably would never have implemented land reform had not MacArthur kept the pressure on him. As it turned out, the land reform was proclaimed in April 1950 and the Korean War broke out just two months later. The South Koreans had something – their own land – to fight for. There had been a rush to register for land in the two months before the war broke out and those who had not yet registered intended to do so as soon as the war ended.

Vietnam is the contrast, though very few of the veterans today understand the fundamental difference between the two wars. The Vietnamese government steadfastly refused to promulgate land reform and, as a result, the U.S.A. was

fighting to support landlords, not the people, and was doomed to failure.

In the case of Taiwan, the Chinese Nationalists had been committed to a policy of land reform from the beginning, as Sun Yat Sen was a disciple of Henry George. They had not been able to carry it out on the mainland because of the power of the great "warlords". I am sure that a careful examination of the facts would show that the warlords and the landlords were, if not the same persons, at least hand-in-hand.

The sad thing to see is the total failure to implement any sort of land reform in the Philippines. The contrast between countries with land reform and those without, even with excellent climates and highly productive soil, is startling. For instance, Bangladesh, which has nine times the productive potential of South Korea or Japan, and the Philippines, which has six times the productive potential of Korea or Japan.

The population of the Philippines is 575 per square mile compared to Japan's 850 per square mile and still with its greater natural potential it has extreme poverty, as has Bangladesh.

It is sad that, outside of a handful of Georgists, there is no pressure to keep up and strengthen land reform in countries that have it. The press and academics ignore it, the politicians and landlords quietly work away to undermine it. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, and hard work the price of progress!

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