

Cooperative Development in a Repressive Political System The Case of South Korea*

by *Rolf D. Baldus*

1. Introduction

It is an essential characteristic of cooperatives and other self-help-organizations (SHO) that they are run and managed by their members. Research and practical experience in developing countries has shown that member participation in all aspects of decision-making and in the financial and material contributions (self-help) is a necessary prerequisite for the success of such institutions. In many developing countries one can, however, observe a tendency towards »officialisation«: Governments take the initiative in establishing and developing SHO and dominate decision-making in such organizations. Most governments agree upon the necessity to withdraw their assistance and control gradually, as otherwise SHO remain dependent on outside assistance and cannot exert their potential developmental effects. This conflict between members' autonomy and officialisation has often been discussed and analysed.

In a number of politically repressive societies there is yet another kind of »officialisation« which has been less often described and reviewed. This is a form of state initiative which can not be justified by the attempt to substitute for lacking private efforts; it simply intends to suppress public participation in autonomous organizations and to exert complete government power and control, even if it bears the name of self-help promotion. A totalitarian system cannot allow democratic and autonomous institutions at the grassroots. Cooperative development consequently is then a mere reflection of the general political trends and repressive structures.

The case of the Republic of Korea is presented here as a concrete example to show how cooperative institutions can become such government instruments, what effects this has on the members and how the growth of independent self-help organization is made difficult. Some conclusions for international development assistance are drawn.

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2. The Country – Some Basic Data

The Republic of Korea, covering an area of 100,000 sq.km or about 45 % of the Korean peninsula, has a population of 37 mill. people, which is growing at a rate of 1,7 % per year. After the Second World War Korea was divided, and during the Korean War of 1950–53 it suffered almost complete economic destruction. Since then South Korea has become known for its tremendous industrial and economic growth. In 1962 Korea was still a predominantly agricultural country, with agriculture accounting for 44 % of the GNP, and more than 60 % of the manpower employed in the agricultural sector.¹ In the course of industrialization the share of agriculture in GNP declined dramatically to about 20 %, and nowadays not more than one third of the population is engaged in this sector. The per capita income grew in that period from about 90 US-\$ to about 1600 US-\$ in 1979. On average, economic growth was about 10 % per year. Since 1979, however, Korea has been going through a serious economic crisis and in 1980 GNP for the first time actually showed a negative growth rate during the first half of the year. Income distribution was fairly equal in the early years of development, but now inequality is rising² and bringing with it the corresponding social problems.

3. Targets and Strategies of Development

Between 1962 and 1976 the Republic of Korea completed three comprehensive development plans. These aimed at establishing a self-sustaining industrialized economy and a welfare state. At present the country is in its fourth five-year plan, in which the economic structure is to be expanded from light manufacturing industries to petro-chemical, heavy and machine industries.

In order to develop the country the Government decided upon a free market system and attracted foreign capital by offering profitable investment conditions and a hard-working, low-salaried labour force. The manufacturing sector was primarily export oriented and exports grew from 40 mill. US-\$ in 1961 to 14 bill. US-\$ in 1979.

For about two decades Government policy concentrated solely on industrial expansion; the agricultural sector was to release sufficient labour to the cities and to provide staple food at low prices in order to keep living costs low in the urban areas.³ With an agricul-

1 Statistical data taken from Korea Annual 1979, Seoul 1979, and Economic Planning Board (Ed.), Economic Survey 1979, Seoul 1979 and R. D. Baldus, Süd-Korea als Schwellenland: Wirtschaftliche und soziale Probleme des Entwicklungsweges, in: Internationales Asienforum, Vol. 11 (1981).

2 Cf. H. Choo, Economic Growth and Income Distribution in Korea, Korea Development Institute, Working Paper 7810, Seoul 1978. Between 1964 and 1975 the Gini coefficient for Korean agricultural households increased from 0.2386 to 0.3888. H. Choo, Probable Size Distribution of Income in Korea: Over Time and by Sectors, Korean Development Institute, Seoul 1978.

3 Cf. E. P. Reed, Analysis of Farm Household Income Trends and Structure in South Korea, LTC Newsletter 58, Oct.-Dec. 1977.

tural production growth rate of 2.8 % (1970–77) Korea was well above the respective international rate of 2.3 %⁴, but growing demand exceeded the production and the level of self-sufficiency in food has been steadily declining.⁵ In the process of industrialization the ratio of farm income to urban income per household sank from 116 % in 1963 to a low of 60 % in 1967.⁶ Since then it has risen again, and is presently estimated to be around 80 %. Since the early seventies the Government has once more attached higher importance to agriculture. However, the agricultural sector has increasingly been depressed by the planners since 1975.⁷ They are convinced that Korea has comparative disadvantages in the field of agriculture. This sector will therefore continue to lose importance. The country will depend more and more on food imports, which will have to be paid for by increasing industrial exports.

4. The Agricultural Cooperative Movement

After the liberation from Japanese rule in 1945, the national Government tried to establish a modern cooperative system, designed to foster economic growth and to improve the well-being of the farmers. Article 115 of the constitution at that time stated: »The state shall encourage the development of cooperatives founded on the self-help spirit of farmers, fishermen, and the small and medium businessmen, and shall guarantee their political impartiality.« The Yushin or »Revitalization«-Constitution, which gave dictatorial powers to the late President Park, after he had dissolved Parliament in 1972, continues to promote cooperation among small producers. It does not directly mention cooperatives but states in Article 120: »Organizations founded on the spirit of self-help among farmers, fishermen and small and medium businessmen shall be encouraged.« In 1961 a cooperative law was enacted the purpose of which, as stated in Article 1, was: ». . . to assure the balanced development of the national economy by increasing agricultural productivity and improving the economic and social status of farmers through the independent cooperative organizations of farmers.«

On the basis of such declarations of policy, the Government took the lead in the development of a strong agricultural cooperative movement. The 23,000 cooperatives, existing in 1972, were amalgamated into 1,500 societies. The Government's aim was to have a three-tier system of agricultural multipurpose societies able to cater for marketing, supply credit and the social needs of farmers. Their priority targets are to

4 Moon Pal-Young, Selected Issues in the Impact of Industrialization on Agriculture in Korea, in: Journal of Rural Development No. 2, p. 159.

5 According to official data food grain self-sufficiency declined from 91,1 % in 1961 to 59,9 % in 1979. Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Statistics, Seoul 1980.

6 P. Hasan, Korea-Problems and Issues in a Rapidly Growing Economy, A World Bank Country Economic Report, Baltimore and London 1976, p. 52.

7 Parity ratio between price index received by farmers and paid by farmers becomes increasingly unfavourable to them since 1975. It was 90,2 % at the end of 1979 based on 1975 price level. For further information see Monthly Review, Vol. 25, No. 9, September 1980, p. 3 in statistics section.

- increase the efficiency of production
- reduce the marketing costs and
- enhance farm income⁸.

The government regards the cooperative movement as the best means of achieving its agricultural development programme.

As a result of the early 1950's land reform which established a land ceiling of 3 hectare per holding with the land-to-tiller principle, the average farm size is approximately one hectare, too small to allow for economies of scale. The labour intensive agricultural production shows on the one hand the highest rice yields in East Asia⁹, however, on the other hand, production costs are high, and this results in producer prices which are at present 2.5 times higher than the world price. So there is wide scope for agricultural cooperatives to overcome the restraints of the uneconomic farm sizes. The Government controls and sets the prices of the major agricultural inputs and products. It has transferred certain monopolies in these fields to the cooperatives, thereby ensuring the membership of practically all farmers.

The agricultural cooperative movement covers the whole country. At the end of 1979 1.9 mill. Farmers, or about 89 % of all farm households, were affiliated. There were 1460 primary cooperatives with an average membership of 1294 farmers per society. Besides the multi-purpose type, 140 special cooperatives with 58 000 farmer members cared for farmers working in horticulture and livestock¹⁰. The system is vertically organized at three levels:

- primary cooperatives covering several villages,
- secondary cooperatives at district level,
- the National Agricultural Cooperative Federation (NACF).

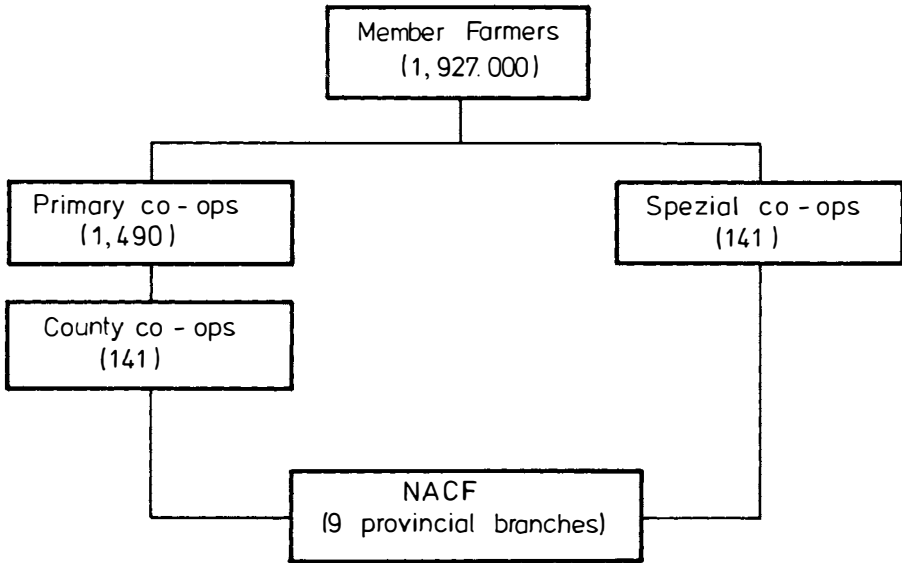
8 NACF (Ed.), *Agricultural Cooperatives in Korea*, Seoul 1978, p. 10.

9 Moon Pal-Young, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

10 Unpublished statistics of NACF, Seoul 1980.

Diagram:

Organizational Structure of Agricultural Cooperatives



Source:

NACF (Ed.), *Agricultural Cooperatives in Korea*, op.cit., p. 53 (amended by the author)

There is no formal organization at village level, although cooperative groups may be active. The NACF has 9 branches at provincial level.

The Cooperative Law¹¹ provides for a movement which is independent of the Government and for elections at all levels: The members of a primary society elect their President and four directors; representatives at the higher levels are elected correspondingly. In 1961, however, an interim emergency legislation was enacted which is still valid today. According to the regulation the President of the NACF appoints the presidents at secondary and primary levels as well as the directors of NACF with the approval of the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries. The President of NACF himself is nominated by the Minister. The same applies for the auditor of the NACF. Thus, in practice, the NACF is under the Ministry and there is no internal democracy within the organization. General members' meetings at primary and secondary levels are totally manipulated and serve only as window dressing. If individual members dared to speak out against these practices, the police and the all-powerful »Korean Central Intelligence Agency« (now

11 Agricultural Cooperative Law, published by the NACF, Seoul 1979.

»Office for National Security and Planning«, NSP) would take care of them. In numerous interviews the author collected evidence of people who had criticized the cooperatives and had consequently been harassed, kidnapped, imprisoned and tortured. The emergency legislation gives the authorities the power to interpret such opposition as communist subversion.

With a total working staff of 45,000, the NACF is the second biggest employer in the country after the public sector. The main functions of the organization are

- marketing
- purchasing
- credit and banking¹².

About 40 % of the total agricultural marketing turnover (monetary sector) is accounted for by the cooperatives. For some products, such as sweet potatoes, the cooperatives have a marketing monopoly. In the case of rice, the price of which is controlled by the Government, the cooperatives act partly as a Government agent for the rice and barley procurement programme on a commission basis. The NACF operates 18 farm product marketing centers for auctioning, collection points and a livestock marketing center with slaughtering facilities. The NACF is practically the only institution which provides credit to farmers, as the commercial banks do not show any interest in small scale farmers.¹³ In 1979 the total financial resources (deposits, borrowings and others) of the NACF stood at 2.7 bill. US-\$. Its sources of credit are the Government, foreign agencies, the Bank of Korea, deposits from both members' and non-members' or the cooperatives' own funds. The deposits accounted for 58 % of the total financial resources of the NACF in 1979¹⁴. The member cooperatives handle about 40 types of loan as well as a savings programme for members. The terms of credit, including that from its own sources, are subject to approval by the Government. The NACF is an authorized banking institution with international business connections. Processing, cooperative insurance, foreign trade and education are further activities of the NACF and its member-cooperatives.

In the field of purchasing the cooperatives provide farmers with agricultural inputs and consumer goods. Fertilizer is by far the most important input supplied. It is distributed exclusively through the cooperatives. In farm chemicals and machinery the cooperative market share is around 75 %. About 1139 rural chain stores and 191 branch stores for consumer articles are run by cooperatives. The marketing and supply are, to some extent, under the Government, which controls or sets the prices of the major products. It assigns quotas – such as crop varieties to be produced or fertilizers to be consumed – to the NACF, which has to allocate these quotas to the farmers through the primary coo-

12 See NACF (Ed.), Annual Report 1978, Seoul, pp. 10 and NACF (Ed.), Agricultural Cooperatives in Korea, op. cit.

13 For agricultural credit in Korea see Young-Chul Kim, A Survey of Credit – use and Resource Allocation on small Farms – A Korean Case, Andhra University Waltair (India), 1979.

14 NACF (Ed.), Annual Report 1979, Seoul.

peratives. The cooperative system can therefore be regarded as an instrument for the implementation of the Government agricultural policy.

This means, however, that the cooperatives – although in theory the farmers' own organizations – have to enforce a policy, which is, in many cases, unfavourable for the members. The introduction of new rice varieties by force is just one example. These new varieties offered higher yields but, due to the relatively higher costs of production, the returns for the farmers were even smaller. So the farmers refused to plant the new seeds, which were then enforced upon them through the cooperatives. This resulted in substantial crop failures in 1978 and 1979, as the new varieties had not been fully tested and were prone to diseases. Corruption is an additional burden for the members. Due to the complete lack of members' control and the integration of NACF into the machinery of a police state, there is no way for the farmers to defend themselves against such malpractices. Corruption and cheating the farmers are rampant in the NACF branches and every farmer interviewed was able to contribute his own experiences. During the short period of partial liberalization, after the death of the former President Park, some extreme cases became known and were even published. So it became known that since 1978 the farmers had been overcharged in fertilizers alone by about 3.5 mill US-\$. »The makers usually priced their products two or three times higher than the production cost . . . with the connivance of the officials . . . As farmers refused to purchase the high-priced farm chemicals of certain makers, the ministry officials even forced the farmers through local agriculture cooperatives to buy the unpopular products«¹⁵. The assistant minister consequently had to resign, but what had been visible for a moment was only the tip of the iceberg. The Korean small farmer suffers under all this, and it would not be exaggerating to say that he hates the cooperatives, but is not able to do much about them.

Government bodies have been discussing possible reforms of the agricultural cooperative movement for quite some time. Meanwhile it has been decided that the special cooperatives which deal with livestock will become members of a new »Central Federation of Livestock Cooperatives«. Additionally the three-tier cooperative system will be restructured to a two tier system, so that the primary cooperatives are directly connected with the NACF. Necessary as these reforms might be, they do not solve the basic dilemma of the Korean cooperative movement. A fundamental reform of the movement would presuppose a fundamental political change towards a democratic government.

5. The New Village Movement

In around 1971, and in accordance with the transition to totalitarian rule, the Government created a new nationwide movement of a self-help type for the farmers, called »Saemaul Undong« of »New Village Movement«. Its primary aim was to reduce the gap

15 Korea Times, Seoul April 29th, 1980.

16 Seoul Shinmun, Seoul September 20th, 1980.

in income and living standards between the rural and urban population and to break down »old fashioned, unproductive habits and ways of thinking.«¹⁷ Thus it aimed at economic and social modernization, but it was to stimulate the »spiritual awakening«¹⁸ of the rural people at the same time. The late President, who was personally responsible for the formulation of the framework and the concept, stressed, on many occasions, the direct link between his »Yushin«-political system and the movement. »The Saemaul Undong and the October Revitalization Reforms are directly interrelated and work together in the direction of the development and modernization of the country.«¹⁹ People from all sectors and strata of society were urged to work together, in order to build an »harmonious« society by striving for a common interest. »Diligence, self-help and cooperation« became the slogan of the campaign, a slogan which was also applied to the urban areas and factories.

The ideology of the movement is spread by means of huge and constant propaganda campaigns. People of all strata and sectors of society are forced to undergo education courses in which they are actually brain-washed. If they do not participate in such military-like organized courses they run the risk of losing their jobs or other harassments. In many respects the ideology of the movement and its application resembles the European Fascist movements of the thirties. A Saemaul Leaders' Training Institute has been operating since 1972, and 78 other central and provincial level training institutions offer courses. Many other public institutions, such as schools or even the military, are involved in spreading the Saemaul philosophy and practice.

Saemaul Undong is under the Ministry of Home Affairs. It is heavily financed out of Government funds and had received a total of 131 mill. US-\$ in assistance by 1979²⁰. It has an organized vertical structure from village to national level. According to the theoretical concept – window dressing again –, concrete plans and action programmes are formulated at village level and then aggregated and adjusted at the higher levels. Members of the higher councils represent primarily the Government sector. The Ministry of Home Affairs has meanwhile announced, however, that in the future »Saemaul Undong . . . will be carried on . . . with greater civil initiatives rather than through Government management as before.«²¹ The New Village Movement, although it does not have a formally registered membership, embraces or touches, in one way or the other, a large part of the population. The country has a total of 35 000 villages. According to Government statistics a total of 53 % of these villages was underdeveloped in 1973 and only 7 % was developed. By 1978 it was claimed that – mainly due to Saemaul Undong – there were no underdeveloped villages any longer, 33 % was developing and 67 % was regarded as developed. The Government classifies those villages as developed, ». . . in which the

17 NACF (Ed.), *Agricultural Cooperatives in Korea*, op. cit. p. 145.

18 Ministry of Home Affairs, *Saemaul Undong Korea*, Seoul 1978, p. 10.

19 *ibid.*; p. II.

20 Ministry of Home Affairs, *Saemaul Undong 1980*, Seoul 1980, P. 55.

21 *Civil Initiatives Stressed in Saemaul Undong*, in: *Korea Times*, Seoul, 29/12/1979.

villagers develop their community by their own effort, enjoying high income in convenient and beautiful environment.«²²

The movement started in 1971 when, during a surplus of cement production, all existing villages received 353 bags of cement each, free of charge from the Government. They were supposed to use the cement for village infrastructure and community projects. 16,000 villages were regarded as successful and, in the following year, they received 500 bags of cement and one metric ton of iron each²³. The construction of bridges and community halls, the improvement of feeder roads and similar projects followed. Farmers, especially those along the highways, were then urged to exchange their straw thatched roofs for cement tiles or to build – partly with Government credits – new standardized houses. Between 1971 and 1979 the Government's statistics recorded about 1.75 mill. people participating in this action. The total number of projects completed during that period is given as 6.5 mill.²⁴ Savings and credit institutions, independent of the existing credit unions, are run in the villages by Saemaul Undong. The generation of off-farm income, one of the major necessities in the rural areas, is aimed at through the construction of Saemaul factories. Private companies are encouraged to open such factories in the suburban and rural areas. They can be established by public investment, too. Then the capital is temporarily held by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The aim is to transfer the shares to the respective Saemaul group. At the end of 1979 506 such factories were actually operating²⁵. They each offer employment to 50–60 members of farm families. According to other sources a total of 760 Saemaul factories were established between 1973 and 1977, of which 243 units were closed down again²⁶. The remaining factories are said to hold 90 mill. US-\$ in investments and to employ 150,000 people. The factories are normal private enterprises and are not connected with cooperative investment or organization. Apart from often deficient management, the factories are not directly integrated into the rural economy, e.g. by processing farm products, but offer wage employment only.

The material results of the Saemaul Undong movement are difficult to assess, as all respective official publications are propaganda only. Numbers of projects and other results have been falsified and are pure trickery. For instance, farmers showed a so-called project to the author. This consisted of a small concrete square in a village which was counted five or six times in the statistics, as a children's playing ground, a place for the aged, a meeting point for the villagers etc. In any case, most of the projects do not reflect the real needs of the population. The most visible result of the movement is the many new

22 Ministry of Home Affairs, Saemaul Undong 1980, op. cit., p. 29.

23 Interview with Young-Ky Jo, Deputy of Saemaul Leaders Training Institute, Suwon May 1st, 1980. Cf. Park Jin Hwan, Saemaul Movement in Korea, A Paper presented at AARRO Seminar, Seoul August 21st, 1978, p. 4.

24 Ministry of Home Affairs, Saemaul Undong 1980, op. cit., p. 55.

25 Korea Rural Industry Development Center, The Guidance of Korea Rural Industry Development Center, Seoul 1980, mimeo., p. 13.

26 Whang In-Joung, Economic Implication of Saemaul Undong and its future course of Action, Korea Rural Economics Institute, Seoul 1979, pp. 48, 49.

houses which have been constructed during the campaign. The farmers were, in fact, forced to build them, partly with Government credit. The houses were built according to prescribed patterns, which made no provisions for the specific needs of a farming household. As a result the farmers had to go into debt, and now many are not able to pay the money back. In nearly all villages along the highways people had to tear down their traditional houses and build »modern« and colourful ones in order to prove the alleged progress of the rural areas to the travellers passing by. A farmer said to the author: »We used to build our houses according to the position of the sun, but nowadays we have to build them so that they can be seen from the highway.«

Despite all the Government propaganda, Saemaul Undong did not prevent the deterioration of the economic situation of the farmers and did not stop the migration to the cities. In one of the few sound studies on the movement, not written by propagandists or dependent researchers, it is concluded: ». . . it is not even clear if the New Village Movement inspite of intensive Government propaganda has had any tangible results as far as the amelioration of living conditions of the rural masses in South-Korea is concerned. On the contrary, it could be argued that Saemaul Undong has only »modernized« and »beautified« rural poverty but has by no means eliminated it successfully.«²⁷

6. Self-Help Organizations of the Private Sector

In the private sector, the credit unions should be mentioned as the largest and most important self-help movement. The first credit union was organized in 1960, and with mere private sector cooperation the movement quickly grew in numbers and capital. In 1966 a credit union law was submitted to the Ministry of Finance, and in 1972 it was passed. At the end of 1979 there were 1,500 credit unions, with a membership of nearly 800,000 and assets of about 500 mill. US-\$²⁸. The average savings of members add up to 600 US-\$. With an average size of 500 members most societies are communitybased (45 %); churches (33 %) and enterprises or occupational groups (16 %) follow as common bonds for membership²⁹. There are more credit unions in the rural areas than in the cities. The urban ones are, however, stronger in capital and management. The movement is presently intensifying its efforts to promote the rural unions and channel urban funds to the farmers via the existing interlending system. The training of members and functionaries, as well as social activities for the weaker segments of the respective communities, rank high in all credit unions and a part of the surplus is earmarked for such use. The Korean movement is widely regarded as the strongest and most developed one in all Asia. It is organized according to the democratic structure and principles of the international Credit

27 H. U. Luther, Saemaul Undong: The »Modernisation« of Rural Poverty in South-Korea, in: Internationales Asien-Forum, Vol. 10 (1979), No. 3/4, p. 330.

28 NCUFK (Ed.), Credit Union Movement, Seoul 1980, P. 14-15 (Korean).

29 Song Vo Kung, A Study of the Development of the Credit Union Movement in Korea, Seoul 1976 p. 49.

Union Movement, with all officers, from the bottom up, being elected. The credit unions are strongly determined to defend their organizational independence. As they insist on political neutrality and do not interfere in politics they were quite successful in avoiding direct Government interventions.

Shortly before Park was assassinated in October 1979 it was announced on the radio that the Government would forcefully integrate the credit unions into the Saemaul Village Banks. This was, however, later formally denied and explained as an error. Obviously the authorities feared the opposition from such a relatively strong and united private movement.

In the case of weaker and more politically oriented movements the Government can proceed in a much more ruthless manner. The biggest of a number of other existing independent farmers' self-help organizations is the Korean Catholic Farmers Movement. It has spread to a national scale and has members and activities in all provinces but one. Basic groups, with a membership of at least 5 farmers, operate at village level. They unite in associations at provincial level and in a central representative body at national level. Representative functions are allocated through elections and are performed on an honorary basis. Although it started on a denominational basis, membership is not restricted and now covers farmers from all religious groups. There is some economic cooperation within the local groups, such as pig-raising or joint buying and selling, and they offer legal services to members. On the whole, the movement has a social and political orientation. In the absence of any participation and democracy in the existing cooperatives the Korean Catholic Farmers Movement aims to defend the interests and rights of small farmers. The movement does not intend to establish alternative cooperative societies, but to democratize the existing ones. Field studies undertaken by representatives and members of the movement reveal data on the social and economic situation of the farmers normally suppressed by the authorities³⁰. The movement is consequently persecuted by the authorities: members are intimidated, kidnapped, tortured and put into prison. The author, for instance, interviewed a member, who had been sentenced to almost two years imprisonment and who had served a part of this sentence. He had criticized the elections in a particular cooperative society. The Korean Catholic Church supports and backs the movement and this is probably the reason why the Korean Catholic Farmers Movement has been able to survive until now.

7. Outlook

The Korean cooperative movement, as well as Saemaul Undong, are closely connected with the country's agricultural policy. At present this policy is being discussed again by the different Government ministries and research bodies. The country is faced with a se-

30 Cf. Korean Catholic Farmers Movement Publication No. 9, Report on Research into Rice Production 1979, p. 38 (Korean).

vere economic crisis, and there is some argument that agriculture should be given a new priority position in the development strategy of the country. If that were the case, the self-help movements would have to undergo a number of reforms in order to make them economically more efficient. The NACF has become overburdened with functions and it has developed into a top-heavy superstructure. There is some thought of leaving only central functions, such as export-import business, the handling of credit and the political relations with the Government, to the National Federation and of transferring more functions to the provincial federations, which would no longer be simply branches of the NACF, but would be able to carry out more independent economic operations. Another necessity is to avoid a duplication of functions between Saemaul Undong and the cooperatives.

Such necessary economic reforms are, however, secondary to the political ones. As long as both movements remain instruments of the Government and are used to dominate, brain-wash and exploit the farmers, small internal reforms cannot solve the dilemma of the peasants. A democratization of these movements would presuppose a general political democratization in the country. However this is hardly likely, as a new dictator has just installed himself firmly.

Although the Republic of Korea is not a low-income-country any more, a considerable amount of foreign development assistance is continuing to flow in, mainly for political reasons. If such assistance is to be oriented towards the development of the people and the improvement of their material and social situation, neither the cooperative movement nor Saemaul Undong should be recipients of such assistance. Development assistance, which aims at self-help promotion, should, at present, be geared towards small independent self-help groups by which the peasants try to defend their interests against an all-powerful and repressive state.

The New Constitutional Developments in the Republic of Liberia

By *Gerold Schmidt*

The 133-year old constitution of July 26, 1847 of the Republic of Liberia which was closely modelled on the US constitution has been suspended through a military coup of April 12, 1980, declared a revolution against the 133-year old Americo-Liberian rule. The new »constitution« is contained in two Military Decrees of April 24, 1981, the first on »Establishing a System of Orderly Government«, the other »Establishing Special Tribunals for the Administration of Justice«.

According to the first, the »People's Redemption Council of the Armed Forces of Liberia« – PRC – is vested with all legislative and executive powers when being presided over by its Chairman. The previous, all-powerful Liberian presidency and chief executive is thereby replaced by an executive council the chairman of which is additionally called »Head of State«.

While the previous laws in principle remain in force, amendments and new laws are promulgated by the PRC as the new legislative power in the form of Military Decrees. The PRC has formed committees which like the PRC and individual PRC members show a preference for sometimes independent executive action and less towards concerted legislative work. This affects Ministries, the Cabinet as well as Executive Agencies which have been retained but have partly been filled with military personnel; no Minister is a member of the PRC.

The judicial power has been vested in a »People's Supreme Tribunal« under a »Chairman« which has replaced the previous, smaller »Supreme Court« under its »Chief Justice«. The other courts have remained, however, with the addition of »People's« to their respective names. A »Military Tribunal« responsible for the trying of the numerous political prisoners, 13 of whom have been shot, functions outside of the formal judiciary system.

In March, 1981 a 25-men National Constitutional Commission was established and has begun to deliberate on a new Liberian constitution. Popular demands and the aims of the Liberian revolution permit the prediction of an Africanization of the Liberian constitution and legal system.

Cooperative Development in a Repressive Political System

By *Rolf Baldus*

The Republic of Korea shows quite developed cooperative structures and a very high degree of cooperative organization, especially in agriculture. The repressive political system of the country is, however, reflected in the way the cooperatives and other self-help-organizations work and the analysis offers thus a case study of the specific problems of self-help-organizations in such systems.

The agricultural cooperative movement of Korea has become a mere instrument for the implementation of the Government's agricultural policy. As this policy favours industrialisation at the expense of the rural areas, the movement has become more an instrument for the exploitation of farmers than for their promotion. In fact there is forced membership and members' democratic control is lacking. The same applies to the second parastatal »self-help«-movement, called Saemaul-Undong or New Village Movement. It serves to a great extent political purposes by trying to exert control upon urban and rural communities and by brainwashing the public with a kind of fascist ideology.

The only indigenous and autonomous private sector self-help movements which have been able to survive until now are the credit unions and a number of smaller organizations on a denominational basis.

In a repressive political environment like in South-Korea any foreign development assistance which aims at the development of self-help activities should neither be given on a government to government basis, nor should it go to the officialized parastatal structures.

Homicide in Southern Nigeria:

A survey of some aspects of the law and criminological data

By *Dieter Ertmann*

Even after the end of the colonial era Nigeria is still battling with the heritage of colonialism. The criminal law of Nigeria is based for most parts on the English law of the turn of the century. Very little attempt has been made to accommodate traditional beliefs and values. At first sight the crime structure seems to be patterns elsewhere in the world. There is, however, evidence to suggest that some forms of crime are filtered out by an informal method of social control. Crimes which the traditional African society does not approve of, come up for prosecution in the state courts – an adapted form of the age – old sanction of ostracism that was used for heinous crimes. Acts done in contravention of the state law, yet innocent in the eye of the immediate environment of the offender are conspicuously absent from any statistics. The harsh reaction of the state law towards unpremeditated killing – unacceptable as it may be to a modern European lawyer – seems not to violate in principle the feelings of the traditional society. The marked preference of Nigerian courts for – sometimes obsolete – English common law over the Nigerian Criminal Code remains unnoticed by the average Nigerian, although the Criminal Code offers in many respects better and more flexible solutions to the problems than the old common law. The informal filter of social control only comes into operation when the state law insists on standards that are more geared towards the man in the Chapman omnibus than to the man in a mammy lorry between Lagos and Enugu. Where the traditional value systems is not in accordance with the law the traditional society will do its best to settle the matter outside the court room.