

## Land Reform and Civil War: Spain and Vietnam.



“Comrades! Work and Fight for the Revolution”

<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/social-revolution-spanish-civil-war>

### Glossary:

This piece of research features the repeated use of acronyms translated from Spanish, such as PSOE and POUM. The following glossary contains initially the Spanish translation of the acronym, and then the English version. The Spanish names for provinces have also been used, and are also featured in this glossary.

CNT - Confederación Nacional del Trabajo: National Confederation of Labor.

FAI - Federación Anarquista Ibérica: Iberian Anarchist Federation.

UGT - Unión General Trabajadores: General Workers Union.

PSOE - Partido Socialista Obrero Español: Spanish Socialist Workers Party.

POUM - Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista: Workers Party of Marxist Unification.

PCE - Partido Comunista de España: Communist Party of Spain.

CEDA - Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas: Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Rights.

Cataluña - Catalonia.



The Ho Chi Minh Trail.

<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ee/HoChiMinhTrail001.jpg>

## Introduction

Throughout the last few centuries, one of the primary concerns in any popular revolution has been land reform, as was displayed by Gabriel Jackson in his book *The Spanish Civil War*, the “peasants desired land and social equality” (Jackson, 1972, p. 280). Whether this was the redistribution of land, the creation of a more equitable system of food distribution, or allocation of greater control over the land and food grown on it, one of the core driving aspects of popular revolution has been the ever debated subject of land reform. Be it in Spain, Russia, Vietnam, or any of the other nations that suffered colonialism or internal strife, land reform played a pivotal role in defining the nature of the revolution, and provided the revolutionaries with a massive amount of support. This piece of research will attempt to convey this level of importance through the example of the Spanish Civil War, a revolution defined by the conflict that land reform caused on one side, and the great benefit that the nationalist cause reaped from the ensuing infighting and disunited front.

## Background to the Spanish Civil War

Calling the Spanish Republic, formed in 1931, a political enigma would sell the matter short. The nation had struggled through the century since the fall of Napoleon, the desolation of the country in the Napoleonic Wars, and the lack of a coherent monarchic rule over the nation. Even in the capital of Madrid, the population was seriously less well off in comparison with other cities of a similar size in Europe. Regarding the Madrileños, as the historian George Hills writes in his book *“The Battle for Madrid”*, for most workers “alimentary and lung diseases were endemic” (Hills, 1976, P. 13). This general poor quality of life, led like it did everywhere else, to a much higher level of radicalisation on all sides of the political spectrum, with the trade unions of the CNT and UGT becoming an important part of Spanish politics, even during the years of CEDA (Confederación Española de Derechas Autónomas) government, between 1933 and 1935. The CEDA was a coalition of right-wing parties, with a general position of centre-right. However, in February 1936, Spanish politics saw a massive shift. The formation of the left wing Popular Front, a coalition of left wing parties intent on winning the next set of elections, added a serious rival to the CEDA in the parliamentary elections. When the February elections eventually rolled around, the Popular Front had secured a comfortable majority, and were able to begin the process of reform and consolidation. Or so it would seem.

Only a few months later, amidst an increase in political violence and political bickering, a large-scale revolt, led by Generals Franco and Mola, began in Spanish held Africa. This revolt quickly spread to the mainland, and soon a full blown civil war had engulfed the Spanish Republic. The Nationalist rebellion, now under the direct leadership of General Franco, was at the gates of Madrid in Toledo, and were in control of vast swathes of land in both the North and South of the country. This revolution against the Republic was met, to the surprise of the nationalists, with great gusto. Both the CNT and UGT, despite their rough history together, being so violent

that they are often described as having “been ‘at war’ long before the rising” (Hills, 1976, P. 63), opposed the rebellion by the generals, and encouraged their members to rise in opposition to the movement. Throughout the entire Civil War, the two organisations were at odds with one another, over the different directions advocated for by their “political wings”. The CNT were a mostly anarchistic organisation, with strong bases of support in Aragón and Cataluña, but also, to a lesser extent, in Madrid. The UGT was the main union of the PCE in Cataluña, the reasoning of which is testament to the political and regional instability in Spain before and during the Civil War. The PSOE, a left wing member of the Popular Front, was a powerful force in Cataluña, whereas the PCE was not. This was a motivating factor in the merging of the PSOE, and the regional wing of the PCE, to form the PSUC. The alliance appealed, as it did in the rest of Spain, to the middle class, who were considerably more conservative, less in favour of land reform, and more Stalinist in their ideology. This created a party who would become a major opponent to the CNT and FAI organisations in the Civil War, and would eventually grow to become the dominant power in the Popular Front, first with the appointment of Largo Caballero as Prime Minister, and later with Juan Negrín.

The division caused by the opposition within both parties towards collaboration and compromise was a significant contributing factor in the weakness of the Republican forces, especially in contrast with the nationalists. One of the clearest examples of this is the diversion of forces that should have been fighting the enemy at the front to the region of Cataluña, under communist leadership, such as when the right-wing socialist minister of war, Indalecio Prieto, “ordered Enrique Lister to crush [the Anarchist Communes]” (James Maxwell Anderson, 2003, P. 72). This diversion of troops remained a continuous trend within the Republican camp throughout the war, and can be considered one of the main contributing factors in the Republican defeat in the Spanish Civil War. However, the aim of this piece of research is not to explain how the Republic lost the Civil War, but is instead to analyse the effect that land reform had on the outcome of the conflict, and how effective the efforts of the CNT were in creating an environment rich of both revolutionary advancement and land reform. Of course, upon the defeat of the Republic in the Civil War, the Nationalist cause (now the victor on the Iberian peninsula), all efforts of land reform, as well as anarchism, were removed in both Aragón and Cataluña, or at least any that had survived the Republican crack downs and repressions. The following arguments should help to place into perspective the conflict between the CNT and its allies, such as the POUM, and the UGT and its political wing, the PCE, and should provide the reasons for the importance of land reform and popular agrarian support in both the mobilisation and expansion of the revolutionary masses.

## Spain

Following the outbreak of military disobedience in Spanish North Africa, the Republican government in Madrid had been on edge. The insurrection had attempted, unsuccessfully, to seize the capital by infiltrating and seeking to persuade

the army units stationed in the capital to join their cause, an act which ended in almost total failure, as it did in Barcelona. The attempted revolt did, however, ignite the capital in support of the Popular Front, and soon the entire city was engaged in acts of revolution, bordering on chaos. Churches, widely perceived as gathering places of enemies of the people, were burned. Priests, nuns, monks and clergy were lynched, vehicles and buildings were requisitioned by the different trade unions, and for a while, the city was engulfed in total, abject chaos.

While the city spent most of the war unoccupied by the Nationalists, and the fall of the city heralded the end of both the Republic and the Civil War, it played a relatively minor role in the strategy of the Nationalist faction, whereas the "Republicans were obsessed with the defence of Madrid" (Hills, 1976, P. 51). This Republican dependency on Madrid led to a much greater influence of both the UGT and, subsequently, the PCE. The Communists were, at the formation of the Popular Front, a minority group. While other left wing groups, such as the PSOE and POUM, played a more major role in the Popular Front at its formation, the chaos in Madrid and other cities following the outbreak of Civil War led to the assumption of the role, by the PCE, as "the defenders of the Petits Bourgeois" (Hills, 1976, P. 63), an act which served to increase the numbers of the PCE with middle class citizens. This increase of middle class, conservative and moderate individuals, like lawyers, doctors, and other important figures in the community greatly helped to bolster the Stalinist line in the PCE. This was directly opposed to the land reforms that were desired by the agrarian population, who, especially in the agricultural heartlands of Aragon and Cataluña, were in greater favour of land reform. This is easy to explain: the middle class, urban citizens, who were now the overwhelming majority in the PCE, lived in the city, and had little to gain from reforming the land in the countryside. This is not to say that PCE members, on an individual basis, were opposed to the process of land reform, just that the party as a whole toed the Stalinist line, and were more opposed to the anarchists and CNT, and focused on winning the war against the Nationalists than in partaking in the revolution.

### Aragon and Cataluña

In a stark contrast to the situation in Madrid, in Barcelona, the CNT-FAI enjoyed much greater control over the political affairs of the city, with a reduced UGT presence to combat the influence of both the anarchists and POUM. The make up of the CNT-FAI alliance was built around a relationship not dissimilar to that of the IRA and Sinn Fein, with the FAI playing the role of the political wing of the CNT, who were the main union of the anarchists in Spain, but in the context of the current discussion, were playing the role of a militia. Because of this, both the external, Soviet run GPU (the predecessor to the infamous NKVD), and Spanish government repressed and fought against the CNT-FAI and POUM, with the general rhetoric being that the "Communists were determined to eliminate the POUM and Anarchist leaders" (James Maxwell Anderson, 2003, P. 73). The GPU, and Stalin, claimed that the POUM was a pro-Trotsky organisation, despite the fact that "the POUM... hotly

denied being Trotskyist” (Broué, 1967). This did not stop the GPU and Stalinist elements in Spain from eliminating the POUM, at the same time that the local collectives in Aragon and Cataluña were also destroyed. Without much doubt, the actions taken against the anarchists, and left wing members of the Popular Front, such as the POUM and the PSOE, seriously weakened the integrity of the Popular Front as a whole, and removed fighters from the battle against the Nationalists. However, even after the collectives in the Aragon and Cataluña were destroyed, CNT and FAI members continued to fight the Nationalists alongside the UGT and Popular Army, which provides a good argument in favour of the greater willingness of the anarchists and left-wing Popular Front members to cooperate with the communists and right-wing democrats in the front to beat the Nationalists.

This willingness to cooperate was not something that the Republicans were willing to reciprocate. By 1937, the POUM had been eliminated, and the party functionally liquidated by the GPU. This only served to reinforce the control that Moscow now had over the PCE, but also laid the groundwork for the groups like the PSOE and GPU to increase their support within the base of the industrial workers, which further separated them from the cause of the more agrarian minded CNT and FAI. While, as previously mentioned, the members of the PCE and other right wing members of the Popular Front were not ideologically opposed to land reform, they decided to prioritise victory in the civil war, and the creation of a “Proletarian revolution” (Hills, 1976, P. 56), insisting that the revolution had to wait until after the war was won, in keeping with Comintern policy at the time.

Communist and mainstream Republican hostility to anarchist collectivisation can be explained by looking through the lens of the previously mentioned methods, but can also be attributed to the lack of efficient agricultural industries in the areas of Spain viewed by the aforementioned parties as the most important. As Michael Seidman acknowledges in his work “Agrarian Collectives during the Spanish Revolution and Civil War”, the region of Aragon “was... an area of relatively backward agriculture, with low soil and labour productivity” (Seidman, 2000, P. 209). The agricultural inefficiencies in Aragon in particular were overcome in some examples, so much so that when the first collectives were created, some “...poorer peasants thought that collectivisation might produce the perks that urban workers had gained” (Seidman, 2000, P. 213). Keeping this in mind, the already pronounced differences in ideology that the CNT and UGT had encouraged through their clashes before and during the outbreak of the Civil War, were surely exasperated by the desire of some of the less well off peasants to receive the same, or even a token level, of the newly found and enjoyed rights of the urban workers. Again according to Seidman, the number of individuals involved in collective farming between February 1937 and June of the same year took a massive leap of 100,000 members, from 80,000 to 180,000, and 175 collective farms, from 275 to 450 (Seidman, 2000, P. 211), which, while he acknowledges that some of the collective farms were forced into existence, sometimes unwillingly, but also spontaneously, helps to demonstrate the level of

appeal that the ideal of collectivised farming had. This suggests that, in a nation with as unstable a political scene as Spain had had in the 20th century, the appeal of a return to a more cooperative form of farming, as had been common in Spain during the times of the monarchy, was a positive factor in motivating the farmers.

Collectivised farms also offered protection against economic turbulence, with the losses of the farm being shared across all members, and not onto an individual. This helped to create an air of cooperation and mutual reliance that was very appealing, given the instability and violence in Spain during the Civil War.

Land reform in other regions of Spain, such as in the area around Madrid, took place on a much less radical scale than that in Cataluña and Aragon. However, the reforms that did take place, and the communally run farms, have been cited by some historians, such as Michael Seidman, as having played an important role in the defence of Madrid. This is best displayed in his analysis of the defence of Madrid in 1936 and 1937, where he acknowledges that “the extent of land reform in the centre helps to explain why... the region withstood repeated assaults by the Nationalist forces” (Seidman, 2000, P. 210). However, the effect of land reform, and the extent to which land was reformed in the regions of Madrid, is not elaborated on in his work, outside of the claim that half of the 300,000 Spanish peasants who acquired land in the Civil War lived in the central regions of Spain, including Madrid (Seidman, 2000, P. 210). Neither is it mentioned by George Hills in his book specifically focused on the defence of Madrid throughout the Civil War. From this, a conclusion can be drawn that the methods of land reform used in the centre of Spain were much less successful than those that were used in the Mediterranean regions of Aragona and Cataluña, and perhaps even in Valencia and Southern Spain. The reasoning for this is visible in the fact that the CNT and other anarchist organisations had a much stronger hold over the political situation in Cataluña and Aragon, but a much weaker grasp of local politics in Madrid and Valencia. This is not to say that they had no presence in either provinces, but simply that the much more opposed to land reform PCE and right wing Popular Front members held greater control over the political situation in the regions.

### Collectivisation

Whether an increase in the amount of collectivised land in Aragon, Cataluña, Valencia and Madrid would have changed the trajectory of the war is hard to assert, but from the effort made by the Popular Front, Popular Army and other forces loyal to both the Spanish government, the GPU and the international organisations, such as the Comintern, it can be assumed that had the anarchist and CNT organisations in the regions been allowed to continue unimpeded, the outcome of the war would have been different. However, the fanatical Republican defence of Madrid throughout the war bled resources from the rest of the country, and the establishment of the collectives and communally run farms was, as in Russia, mostly for the production of food for the soldiers and urban workers, as was displayed, again by Seidman in his work, that “collectives were the best way to feed the troops” (Seidman, 2000, P. 211).

This reliance on collective farms to feed the troops fighting on the frontline is not a dissimilar cooperative movement as the relationship that the Red Army had in Russia (the Soviet Union as a whole) and the collectivised agriculture throughout the Union. The collectivisation of agriculture, sometimes carried out at gunpoint, during the Russian Revolution and the ensuing Civil War, was a forced experiment in communal farming and collectivised agriculture. While not a perfect system, and deeply flawed in many ways, such as the unwillingness of a lot of farmers to cooperate, the system did provide the troops of the Red Army with the food they needed, allowing for the Soviet victory in the Civil War. In Spain, however, at the insistence of the PCE and their allies, the process of collectivisation was stalled and in some cases crushed, as a perceived slight against the middle class, and thus unappealing to the Western liberal democracies. Since the PCE had taken up the mantle of the “defenders of the petits bourgeois” (Hills, 1976, P. 63), they had more of a reason to oppose the idea of land reform, with the subject carrying connotations of seizure of land, and the redistribution of wealth, an idea that was wholly unappealing to the capitalist nations of France and the United Kingdom. This attempt at the placation of the capitalist democracies failed, however, and the crushing of the collectivised farms not only seriously harmed the agricultural output of the regions of Cataluña and Aragon, but also impacted the outcome of the war.

Collective farms were not, however, the only methods used by the Spanish Republic in regards to land reform. One of the more common forms of land redistribution, and one that was used more often than collectivisation in the Republic, was the breakup of large estates and farms. As noted by Seidman, this was often a joyous affair, with the bonfires built of deeds and documents being seen as a symbol of “the end of the old economic order” (Seidman, 2000, P. 210). This was an end that was celebrated by the peasantry of the nation, in line with the desire of the “peasants [desire for] land and social equality” (Jackson, 1972, P. 280). Most of the agrarian population, who both lived in the zones under the control of the Republicans, and in areas with a strong CNT presence, benefitted from a more personalised method of land reform, with the breakup of the estates, small plots of land were handed out to the peasantry, for personal farming and the growth of the subsistence agriculture. This trend of a higher degree of redistributed land being farmed as small plots of privately owned land was common throughout the Republic, with large amounts of land in Aragon, one of the heartlands of both Spanish agriculture and the CNT, being farmed by individual farmers. While Aragon had the largest amount of collective farms, there is no dismissing the fact that the independently farmed, smaller to medium sized, plots of land formed the basis of the agrarian economy. This was, in effect, the main way in which justice and equality was redistributed in the Republic during the Civil War, and provided a form of economic independence and removed the reliance on the state or a landlord that had created an atmosphere of restraint in the economy of Spain before the revolution.

## Vietnam

The situation in Spain before the revolution and the Civil War was similar, in many ways, to that of Vietnam under French colonial rule. Vietnam suffered, in the immediate period of its independence from France (1945, according to Nguyen Quang Tuyens work on Land Reform in Vietnam), from “an extremely weak financial base, illiteracy and food shortages” (Tuyen, 2010, P. 1). Over the decades following initial independence, the legal shortcomings of the new state, the issues with the agrarian economy and “internal hostility” (Tuyen, 2010, P. 1) made any attempt at large scale land reform impractical. Despite this, under the 1946 and 1959 constitutions, the state recognised the existence and legality of both “state ownership, collective ownership and private ownership” (Tuyen, 2010, P. 1). This mix of Soviet style collectivised agriculture, that is top down, state owned farms, and private and collective farming is something that did not exist, at least not to the large extent that it did in Vietnam, in the Spanish Republic. However, the mix of privately owned and farmed, small plots of land and collectively owned farmsteads was very much in line with the agrarian policies of at least the CNT in the Republic. Over the next few decades, the amount of private ownership of land decreased, which helped to “[pave] the way for development of State and collective ownership” (Tuyen, 2010, P. 1). While the circumstances of the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent land reform that took place under the Republic, and the foundation of a modern socialist agrarian economy in Vietnam are extremely different, the approach by the state to modernise the output of agrarian goods and food to stabilise the internal situation is very much comparable.

In Northern Vietnam, the region that was under direct control by the Communist forces, land reform took off in an unsurprisingly quicker fashion. Farmers were encouraged to “contribute their land, cows, buffaloes and other resources” (Tuyen, 2010, P. 1) to speed up the process of collectivisation, and to minimise the amount of privately owned and farmed land. The state wished to bolster its agrarian economy, as can be seen through the encouragement given to the farmers to collectivise, and overcome the issues of internal opposition and food shortages. Due to the terrain and geography of Vietnam, the production of food and agrarian goods is much higher than in other regions of SouthEast Asia. This is due, in part, to the Mekong river delta in the South, which has created one of the most biodiverse environments on the planet, and is perfect for growing food, such as rice. To this end, the World Bank claims that it is vital to “[Vietnams] agriculture and aquaculture” (World Bank, 2021), which helps to demonstrate the importance of the region both to the full economy of Vietnam and the agricultural sector in particular. The Civil War in Vietnam, along with American intervention and the eventual defeat and withdrawal of US troops, left most of the nation devastated, and large swathes of the agricultural land either totally destroyed, or unfarmable due to the use of chemical weapons, like Agent Orange or its other variants. This effort on defoliation and reducing the agricultural output of the North Vietnamese forces, in an attempt to starve them out, had both the effect of destroying much of the forested areas in Southern Vietnam,

and in making large amounts of the ground unfarmable. While the official stance on the use of Agent Orange in targeting the food production of the North Vietnamese was that “defoliation operations are not normally undertaken... unless the military advantage is clear” (Institute of Medicine, 1994), given the brevity with which operations such as the defoliation missions were carried out, it is possible that it may have been ignored. The level of destruction that the herbicides brought onto Vietnam makes it much easier to understand the willingness of the Vietnamese people to collaborate and collectivise their agriculture, especially in the areas worst hit by the US and Southern Vietnamese forces’ use of chemical weapons.

The comparison between Spain and Vietnam, and their Civil Wars, is unfair on the Spanish side due to the infighting in the Republican camps over the methods that should have been used in winning the support of the people and the Civil War as a whole, and that the land being fought over was not permanently or seriously damaged by chemical weapons, that halted the growth and development of a rural agrarian economy. However, the two nations and their struggles with a weak agrarian base before their respective Civil Wars, and their attempts to reform the agricultural economies, share some similarities. The CNT in Spain advocated for a mix of collectivised and privately owned, smaller, farms. This tactic was used in Vietnam to great effect, allowing for a massive reformation of the economy and a recovery after the Civil War. While the longer term effects of the use of chemical weapons by the US in Vietnam is still damaging to the health of the local population and veterans of the war, the ecological damage has, seemingly, subsided. However, the methods of collectivisation, state ownership of farmlands, and the creation of strong, clear land reform legislation have created an environment in Vietnam greatly geared towards further economic agricultural growth. Land reform in both instances helped to create an environment for recovery from Civil War, which, despite being crushed in Spain and being hindered by the chemical and ecological damage of weapons in Vietnam, allowed for limited economic growth and higher rates of food production in Spain, and recovery for Vietnam and Vietnamese farmers in the wake of the Civil War.

The area in which Vietnam exceeds the Spanish Republic is in land reform legislation. Since independence, the Vietnamese governments had been focused on the reformation of the land, which is something that the Spanish Republic was hesitant to do, since the period of conservative (CEDA) and moderate left-wing rule alienated the members of the Popular Front, such as the CNT. In Vietnam, however, there was a creation of strong legislation in support of the desire for the creation of a much stronger agrarian base, which was not something carried out in Spain. Both early constitutions of Vietnam created a system of land management, and “recognized the existence of different types of land ownership: State ownership, collective ownership and private ownership” (Tuyen, 2010, P. 1). However, land seizure from “colonial and feudal owners, landlords and capitalists” (Tuyen, 2010, P. 1) and the redistribution of the seized land helped to raise the support of the

population in regards to land reform, in line with the common desire of the peasantry for greater equality and land ownership. This appeal to the peasantry for greater control over the land they farmed can be exemplified through the slogan used by the Vietnamese government: 'Farms to the Cultivators', which is very much in the same vein as the slogans used by other nations and governments partaking in land reform.

### Conclusion

While the issues of land reform in Vietnam and Spain had different roots, causes and resolutions, the overall result was the same: the reformation of the agrarian economy, the foundation of a strong agricultural base, and the granting to the peasantry of their wishes for "land and social equality" (Jackson, 1972, P. 280). The longer term results of this can be seen in Vietnam, with the overcoming of issues such as land pollution and the damage to the ecological base through collectivised farming or state run farming, whereas, in the shorter term the securing of personal freedoms and support of the movement to crush the revolt of the Nationalists, in Spain. To conclude this piece of research, contrasts will be drawn between the two examples provided and detailed, and to provide a methodology for approaching land reform, using the two examples as a case study and as a lens through which to view the process of land management and reform.

Neither of the examples discussed displays a failure in the process of land reform. In Spain, internal division threatened to rip the already fractured nation, mired in Civil War, apart again. But despite this, the rivalry between the PCE and CNT-FAI, the crushing of the Cataluña and Aragon collectives, and the overall negative direction of the Spanish Civil War, land reform in Spain could by and large be attributed as a success. The peasantry gained momentum and freedoms that had previously been denied to them, the large estates with an interest in keeping the peasantry and working classes in a much less beneficial rank in the economic pecking order were destroyed, at least in the Republican zones, greatly increasing the economic freedom and prosperity of the average peasant. However, the sometimes coercive nature of collectivisation and shared ownership of land in Spain has been viewed by some historians as being a contributing factor in the crushing of the cooperatives, and is suggested by Michael Seidman, in a more implied manner, that the destruction of the collectives was warranted. In contrast to this, the presence of foreign intelligence agencies, most notably the GPU, disproves this. Since the Communists had gained the massive amounts of influence that they desired over the Popular Front, their aim to abstain from land reform until the Civil War was won almost guaranteed their crushing of the collectives, in line with Stalinist and Comintern directives at the time.

In Vietnam, however, there was no such infighting. The situation was dire enough that any "self-destructive deadly rivalries" (2003, P. 74), as coined by James Anderson on the CNT and UGT, would have ended in defeat at the hands of the Americans and South Vietnamese. As it stood, the American use of chemical

weapons and herbicides was destructive enough that it rendered large swathes of the Vietnamese countryside useless for the production of crops, and damaged the overall ecosystem on a near unsustainable basis. However, the emphasis on state run and collectively farmed regions of the nation, as well as privately owned and farmed strips of land, guaranteed that a recovery from the ravages of the Vietnam War would be possible, with the production of the food needed for consumption and export being focused in the areas not poisoned by Agent Orange. To this end, in the time since, the Southern region of Vietnam, around the mighty Mekong River, has become one of the most biodiverse regions on the planet, and a major site of food production for Vietnam, so much so that it is referred to by the World Bank as being “Vietnam’s agriculture and aquaculture hub” (World Bank, 2021), a source of investment for the organisation and one of the “most abundant biodiversity systems on Earth” (World Bank, 2021).

These examples should demonstrate the importance that an involved government and legislative system have on the process of land reform, making or breaking the attempts at committing to recovery from a conflict. In Vietnam, the government was focused on providing a platform for recovery and reconstruction. In Spain, the government was more focused on victory in the Civil War. In one instance, land reform provided success, in another it was crushed by internal division. This should serve as an example on how to, and how not to, complete land reform.

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