

FROM AGRARIAN REORGANIZATION TO LAND REFORM

V. M. DANDEKAR

THE First, the Second and the Third Five Year Plans published by the Planning Commission in 1951, 1956 and 1961 respectively, each contains a chapter bearing on the subject of the reorganization of the production structure of agriculture. These chapters do not however bear the same title. In the First Five Year Plan, the chapter was entitled Reorganization of Agriculture.¹ In the Second Plan, it was called Land Reform and Agrarian Reorganization.² In the Third Plan, its title is simply Land Reform.³ The change in the title of course corresponds to a change in their contents. In the First Plan, when the chapter was called Reorganization of Agriculture, there was only one small section devoted to a discussion of Land Reform. In the Second Plan, where the chapter had the composite title, Land Reform and Agrarian Reorganization, it was divided into two sub-chapters; the first one, forming about two-thirds of the whole chapter, was devoted to a discussion of Land Reform and the second, being about one-third of the whole chapter, was devoted to a discussion of Agrarian Reorganization. In the Third Plan, the chapter is plainly called Land Reform and it contains only a brief and indirect reference to the subject of agrarian reorganization in a short section called Land Management Legislation. This shift in emphasis, from reorganization of agriculture or of agrarian society to land reform, appears to be the net progress made in this field during the first two plan periods. The purpose of this article is to trace this shift in policy and to examine the reasoning and the devices by which it was brought about.

Let us begin with the statement of policy in this field as it was formulated in the First Plan. It began, appropriately, with a diagnosis of the existing situation. The agrarian situation was characterized as follows: "The problems of Indian agriculture are far more fundamental than is commonly appreciated. This is apparent, for instance, from the fact that, in recent years, in spite of high prices, public

¹ *The First Five Year Plan, — A Draft Outline*, Government of India, Planning Commission, July 1951, Chapter IV.

² *Second Five Year Plan*, Government of India, Planning Commission, 1956, Chapter IX.

³ *Third Five Year Plan*, Government of India, Planning Commission, Chapter XIV.