

Software for Asia’s Green Revolution: The Agricultural Development Council, Arthur Mosher and ‘Getting Agriculture Moving’

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Introduction

In the 1950s and 1960s, when new universities and agricultural faculties in many Asian countries were struggling to establish themselves, there was a great shortage of reading materials in the fields of agricultural and rural development and the social sciences generally. Two programs of the Council on Economic and Cultural Affairs (CECA), later re-named the Agricultural Development Council (ADC)—founded, and funded, to a large extent, by philanthropist John D. Rockefeller 3rd (JDR 3rd)—had enormous influence on what was read by students, faculty, and the staff of research institutes in the field of agricultural and rural development. These were the CECA/ADC’s library book grants program from the early 1950s, and from 1963 its Research and Training Materials program, which prepared a number of specially-authored books and readers for free distribution. This was a crucial period when policy and research, influenced partly by cold war concerns, were shifting from politically difficult agrarian reform efforts to “green revolution” approaches to agricultural and small-farmer development.

The Training Materials Program’s first book, *Getting Agriculture Moving: Essentials for Agricultural Development and Modernization*, was published in 1966 and distributed freely in most South and Southeast Asian countries, as well as being translated and published

in several Asian languages. The book had an enormous influence in many Asian countries, since it was, at the time virtually the only widely available general book on agricultural and rural development. This report, based on research in the archives of ADC and various other Rockefeller organizations,¹ explores the background, context, and influence of this book.

Background: The Cold War, Rockefeller, Asia, and ADC

After the end of the Second World War, JDR 3rd (1906-1978) made several extended trips to Asia. In 1952 he was accompanied by the agricultural economist William Myers of Cornell University, and the following year by J. Norman Efferson, Professor of Agricultural Economics at Louisiana State University, and an expert on rice production. On these visits he met many notables—presidents, prime ministers, government and opposition political leaders, U.S. ambassadors and diplomatic staff, academics, business people, and journalists. Among all those he visited, however,

... none had a greater impact on his thinking than the brilliant agricultural attaché of the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, Wolf Ladejinsky, an expert on prewar Japanese farm tenancy and a key consultant in the development of the Japanese Land Reform Law of 1946. Ladejinsky viewed agriculture and its development as central to the overall economic development not only of Japan, but of all the countries of Asia.²

Out of these trips came the proposal to establish an international rice research institute in Los Banos, home of the University of the Philippines' College of Agriculture, an idea which came to fruition a decade later under the joint sponsorship of the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations. This institute was to focus primarily on physical and biological work on rice, thus laying the groundwork for a "Green Revolution" in rice production similar to that which the Rockefeller Foundation (RF) had helped to stimulate a decade earlier in maize through their support of the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT).

Besides his involvement in the work of the RF, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, (RBF) and other philanthropic organizations linked to the Rockefeller family, JDR 3rd established the Council on Economic and Cultural Affairs (CECA) in 1953, on the advice of Efferson

and Myers. He was motivated not only by his interests in Asia and problems concerning food and population, but also by “a desire to do something on his own.”³ Myers had advised JDR 3rd to focus on “agricultural economics as a field offering unique opportunities,” repeatedly voicing his concerns that physical and biological research in agriculture would have only limited effect, if attention were not also devoted to the Asian farmer’s practical problems of management and production.⁴

CECA’s first director of agricultural economics, Dr. John Lossing Buck, who served from 1953-1957, was well acquainted with the problems of Asian farmers. Buck had been a professor of farm management in the College of Agriculture and Forestry, at the University of Nanking from the early 1920s to 1946, and is known mainly for his monumental books, based on extensive survey research on Chinese farm economy and land utilization.⁵ While CECA’s name, and its official objectives—“to stimulate and support economic and cultural activities important to human welfare”—were so general that they could cover almost any activity, it was clear from the beginning that its most important objective was to promote development and training in agricultural economics, which Buck held had been severely neglected: “The millions of farmers in the Far East are in urgent need of help in their management problems; but with few exceptions no one is trained to study these problems and to advise farmers.”⁶ After touring eight Asian countries in 1954 and 1955, Buck reported: “In every country there was interest in fellowships for training abroad. Only two countries—Indonesia and Burma—had no interest in visiting Professors. All are in need of books.”⁷

In 1953 CECA had commissioned a “Survey of American Activities Relating to Asia” from Charles P. Noyes. Besides details on U.S. activities in twelve Asian countries, Noyes provided his general views on the region, which reflect the prevailing Cold War concerns of the time.

... two events have set the stage in Asia for many years to come. The first and most fundamental is that most of the countries have recently shaken loose from colonial

rule [...] The other major event is, of course, the loss of mainland China to the Communists [...] If, as seems probable in the absence of further aggression, more normal economic and social relations develop in the next decades, the pressures on the countries of Asia, particularly the smaller countries of Southeast Asia, may become very great. The risk of the loss of additional countries to communists by subversion, particularly in Southeast Asia, is considerable. [...] It will be of the greatest importance to the Asian countries and to ourselves to develop, in the next decades, stronger bonds of understanding and mutual confidence, and of economic and political interest [...] and over the long term, we may be able to make a contribution towards the development of a community of free nations in the Pacific with sufficient unity, clarity of purpose, and strength to maintain a stable frontier with communism for this generation.⁸

JDR 3rd's travel diaries from his Asian trips document his overwhelming personal concern with three issues: population growth, food production, and communism. Visiting Indonesia in 1954, for example, he discussed progress in food production with Professor Iso Reksohadiprodjo (who also took him to visit a rice farmer near Yogyakarta). He also discussed his concerns about the absence of efforts toward population control with the Rector of Gadjah Mada University, and the possible threat of communism with Sultan Paku Alam VIII: "Communism not a problem here but Sultan working hard to build up economy realizing that if economy OK no problem with communists." In the Philippines in 1955, he discussed the problems of land reform with President Ramon Magsaysay who had "not given up on the land reform bill. Strong political pressures against it, because so many land owners in the Congress. As a final weapon has government the right to expropriate if government has funds to pay, which he thinks can be obtained."⁹

In November 1953, J. Norman Jefferson sent JDR 3rd his "Suggested Program for Stimulating the Development and Expansion of Agricultural Economics Research, teaching and Extension in Asia." Jefferson had strong views about the importance of basic, down-to-earth farm management studies. He proposed a program of assistance to four types of activity: a Fellowship program "sending selected students to good United States institutions for advanced studies," direct grants which "for the first few years at least ... should be for non-controversial items such as basic farm management research, teaching, or general

agricultural economics education projects;” pilot demonstration projects, and conferences.¹⁰

Between its inception in 1953 and its amalgamation with the Larger Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development in 1985, (CECA) ADC gave postgraduate fellowship awards to almost six hundred men and women from Asian countries and produced more than three hundred fifty books, research reports and other publications, most of them designed to be used as teaching materials. Although the foundation and its budgets were extremely modest in scale, its clear focus and its hands-on procedures of selecting individuals rather than institutions for support meant that it had a considerable impact. As Harry Cleaver observed in the 1970s, “ADC is small in terms of the absolute number of personnel and students it supports, but ... it has helped coordinate much thinking on agricultural development strategy and on foreign-student training for Southeast Asia.”¹¹

After a visit to Southeast Asia in 1993, Clifton R. Wharton Jr. observed

Today they [the ADC former fellows] are university presidents, deans, department chairpersons, professors, national planners, business leaders, bankers, extension experts, research scholars, ministers, cabinet officials – an incredibly rich trove of individuals making major contributions to their countries.¹²

This highly focused contribution in the field of agricultural economics (and in later years, the broader “rural social sciences”) can be seen in the broader context of the unprecedented levels of U.S. overseas cultural investment in Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America from the early 1950s onwards. At the height of the Cold War, U.S. foreign cultural programs (excluding covert subsidies and private foundations) employed 13,000 people worldwide.¹³

By the early 1950s more than 30,000 foreign students were arriving every year for training in U.S. colleges and universities, funded by both government and private foundations. As John W. Gardner observed in Foreign Affairs in 1952

... the process of student exchange could provide [the developing countries] with a steady flow of individuals whose experiences in the United States have not only led them to like and respect us but have fitted them to play a constructive role in the development of their own nations. [...]

The question is whether we can help the vigorous elements in those societies to

discover how they can bring about needed social changes without resorting to Communism.¹⁴

JDR 3rd maintained an intense personal interest and involvement in CECA/ADC from its beginning until his death in a car accident in 1978. He was its President from 1953-1966, Chairman of the Board of Trustees 1967-1973, and a Trustee from 1953-1978. He attended almost all the Trustee meetings. Since the very first years, there had been regular discussions in these meetings about the need to change CECA's rather vague name and focus. After considering many options—some with, and some without JDR 3rd's name in the title—in 1963 the Trustees decided to change the name to “The Agricultural Development Council,” with the sub-title on its letterhead to read: “Supporting teaching and research related to the economic and human problems of agricultural development, primarily in Asia” and in smaller print “Established by John D. Rockefeller 3rd.”¹⁵

The appointment of Buck as director of agricultural economics had confirmed the farm management, small-farmer focused direction which the CECA/ADC was to take for the rest of its existence, particularly under the leadership of Arthur T. Mosher, who replaced Buck and served as executive director from 1957-1967 and as president from 1967-1973.

Arthur T. Mosher

Arthur T. Mosher (1910-1992) was born in Ames, Iowa. His father (himself the son of a farmer) was Iowa's first practicing agricultural extension agent. As a teenager, Mosher worked each summer (and for a year after leaving school) on various farms in Iowa and later in Illinois. At the University of Illinois' College of Agriculture he became involved in Christian and Missionary Associations, decided to become an “agricultural missionary” with the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, and at age twenty-three sailed to India where he was assigned to the Allahabad Agricultural Institute. He remained there for almost twenty years, becoming its principal in 1948.¹⁶

Soon after arriving in Allahabad, Mosher became “increasingly aware of how different Indian farming was from farming in Illinois [...] I felt that I needed to get away from the Institute for at least a year, live in a village, participate in farming activities, and find out something of how it actually felt to be an Indian farmer.” In 1937 he took a two-year study leave without pay and spent the first year traveling with his family to various parts of northern India (with a borrowed car and home-made trailer home) collecting materials which would later be used in his Ph.D. dissertation. During the second year he rented eight acres of land from a prominent local landlord in the village of Bhadan (about fifty miles east of Agra) and tried to be a farmer himself, using only the same resources available to local smallholders. His equipment consisted of “a pair of bullocks, a native wooden plow, an ‘improved’ steel plow, a sickle for cutting grass or grain, a sort of cleaver for chopping fodder, a short-handled spade called a parva, and a hand-weeder, known as a kurpi.” Working with his “farmer-teacher” Ram Charan, he learned how to use the various tools, how to irrigate using a shallow well, how to sow several different crops in each of his ten fields “as a protective device, not knowing what the weather would be or which diseases might strike.”¹⁷

In 1940 the Moshers left for two more years of study leave at the University of Illinois, but by 1942 the United States’ entry into World War II had made a return to India impossible and Mosher remained in the U.S. until 1946, engaging in various missionary and money-raising projects. He also completed his Ph.D. dissertation on “The Effect of Hindu Religious and Social Traditions on Agricultural Production by Christians in North India,” under the supervision of Professor Theodore W. Schultz (later to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences, mainly for his work on agricultural economics and “human capital” theory). After two years working on a study of U.S. technical assistance in Latin America led by Schultz, and another two years conducting a special seminar on comparative agricultural

extension at Cornell University, Mosher was appointed director of CECA in 1957.

Should we or Should we not Convert? Farm Management and Agrarian Reform in Tension

For some decades after World War II the United States had backed redistributive “land to the tiller” models of agrarian reform in many countries, involving confiscation of excess holdings and their redistribution to smallholders and revisions in tenancy laws enabling tenants and sharecroppers to become owners of their plots. The best known successful examples are those of Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. Many other countries tried to replicate these models, often with support from the West, but these attempts were generally only partially successful and in many cases outright failures.¹⁸ CECA/ADC, like the Ford Foundation, had given some support to policy work on Asian agrarian reform. Both had sponsored consultancies by Wolf Ladejinsky to advise on land reform implementation in various Asian countries.¹⁹ From the 1960s onwards however, the U.S. and private donors shifted their interest, downplaying strategies based on politically-difficult land reform—with the exception of some countries in which land-to-the-tiller reforms were thought essential to forestall communist revolution—in favor of “Green Revolution,” small-farm modernization through adoption of the new high-yielding varieties of maize and rice and purchased inputs.

The focus on the individual small farmer, to the neglect of policies for broader structural reform, did not always sit well with young academics in Asian universities and research institutes. In 1959 and 1960 a young CECA associate in Malaysia, Clifton J. Wharton Jr. (later to become ADC vice-president) sounded some warning notes about the extent to which broad political, social, and economic currents in Southeast Asia were affecting the Council’s program, in particular its focus on the mainstream U.S. version of agricultural (neo-classical) economics with its focus on individual farmers and their farm management decision-making. The new nations of Southeast Asia, he observed, were

unlikely “to adopt a mixed economy along U.S. lines. Whether along the path of a militaristic rule or one man dictatorship or guided democracy or a socialism controlled by an intellectual elite, the general pattern of economic organization will be closer to the socialist-communist type than the free-enterprise-capitalist type.”²⁰

... the majority of the students are strongly socialist in their political and economic thinking. Moreover, they are looking for leadership to Russia and especially China, not to the United States. [...] Among these students (and many of their current leaders) words such as “capitalist” or “liberal” or “democracy” or “freedom” do not have at all the same content as is to be found in our tradition [...] These two influences again create problems for agricultural economics and the work of the Council. For example, the students do not really accept the validity of a family farm either as a suitable or a desirable social and economic institution; they believe that collective farms or communes or cooperative farms are the ideal. Therefore, they do not want farm management oriented toward individual decision-making by a single farmer.²¹

The dilemma, as Wharton expressed it, was “do we try or do we not try to convert?” That is, “do we take the existing values and goals as given, working within them to try to minimize technical errors or flaws—or—do we try to convert, even if it means alienating the local Asians with whom we must work?”²² In this context the ADC’s Training Materials Program, with its emphasis largely on agricultural development through improved “farm management oriented towards individual decision-making by a single farmer,” represents the adoption largely of the “conversion” option.

The Training Materials Program and Getting Agriculture Moving

From its inception, CECA/ADC had responded positively to requests for book grants from agricultural colleges and faculties in the young Asian universities. This was first done by the purchase and shipping of requested lists of titles, later by a standard packet of titles thought to be essential for a minimal library in agricultural economics and rural social sciences. From the late 1950s onwards however, it was decided that the Council should also become active in the production of dedicated teaching materials.

Mosher wrote to all field staff in 1959 and again in 1961, airing the idea that CECA

should get itself involved in

... the creating and distribution of teaching materials in agricultural economics for use in Asian colleges of agriculture. I am of the opinion that the time may be ripe for us to give special emphasis to this for a period of perhaps three years.²³

I am impressed by the power of ideas and slogans in many countries of Asia. Should we devote more of our attention to writing? If so, at the level of what audiences? Should we try to develop materials to increase understanding of the requirements for rural development among high school students? Among elementary and high school teachers? Among legislators and administrators? Among extension and community development workers?²⁴

In January 1963, the Ford Foundation approved a major grant to CECA for a program “to assemble, synthesize, and convert into teaching materials what is now known about important aspects of the process of agricultural development.”²⁵ The Training Materials (TM) proposal envisaged three stages:

In the first year of the program, the topic to be considered will be the broad one of the many different requirements for accelerating rural development and the interrelationships and complementarities among these.

[...] special attention during the second year to arrangements for making readily available to farmers the new purchased inputs essential to agricultural development: fertilizers, improved seeds, implements, pesticides, etc.

In the third year, the emphasis may be on the special forms of education that can best serve agricultural development.²⁶

Mosher was to devote one-third of his own time to directing the project, leading a team which initially consisted of three professionals, Donald Green, Horace Holmes, and Conrad Oliven.

The team’s two tasks—assembling and selecting case-materials as the basis for a “five-foot shelf” working library, and the writing of a book synthesizing those materials—proceeded simultaneously, and slowly. Letters were written to hundreds of academics and development professionals all over the world, asking them to provide successful case studies of agricultural and rural development.²⁷ By 1965 some 1800 items had been assembled as a “working library.” A cumbersome system of classification and indexing was developed, with ten main headings, (for example: “the farmer: husbandry and management,” “the farmer: behavior and attitudes,” “education and group action,” “markets,” and “public policies and programs”) each with numerous sub-topics, making a total of one hundred twenty-four topics

for classification. A specially-designed “index booklet” was completed for each of the case studies reviewed, and later the same information was entered on to McBee cards, so that the reports with information on any of these one hundred twenty-four topics could be manually shaken out of the pack in this pre-digital age.²⁸ It appears that the TM team members really thought that the “essentials” or magic bullets for successful agricultural and rural development could be distilled from the case materials in this inductive process.

In June 1964 Donald Green (head of the TM project) wrote to Evelyn Wood in Bombay:

As you perhaps have suspected, the project has not moved along as rapidly as Art had first hoped [...] This has been partially due to the necessity of some “spinning of wheels,” considerable difficulty in setting up the mechanics and rather severe understaffing [...]

It was not until January [1964] that we finally licked the mechanics problem, including the little index booklet, the McBee cards and a card file ... You may be interested in knowing that as of today we have 1,100 different items indexed ... We now have three girls [sic] working full-time on the TM project and they still have a hard time keeping up ... We will be obtaining three additional professional men [sic] to work entirely on the TM project.²⁹

The three “additional men” were Raymond Borton, (later to take over as head of the project) Herman Southworth, and David Penny; two more, Ralph Allee and Rainer Schickele, also joined the team for shorter periods.

The following year Horace Holmes wrote to Ben R. Ferguson (USAID, Karachi) expressing his frustrations at the unsuitability of many of the case studies in the “working library:”

We have gone through thousands of materials here and abroad, most of which are either too long, too windy, or too general. We have discovered that most of the people who do the writing seldom get out and actually do the job. Those who get out and actually do the job are not inclined to do much writing; this is the dilemma.³⁰

The case study which Holmes himself contributed, however, was no less problematic. His one hundred four-page manuscript *No Pone Valley* describes, in rather vague and sentimental terms, how the people of No Pone Valley, Tennessee had “followed an unknown path that

wound its way through many obstacles from a subsistence level of farming to a more progressive agriculture.” The monograph concludes by comparing the many No Pone Valleys that can be found “on every continent ... each with their special problems and their common ills.” Many valleys, he wrote, are characterized by conservative values, traditions resistant to change and stifling customs and vested interests, where urban elites and administrators look down on agriculture,—but there are other valleys “where courage, determination and common sense are aimed at solving old and nagging problems,” where “the benefits of developing science are taken to the farmers,” and where “businessmen and officials, teachers and tradesmen, see the farmers in the valley for what they really are—vital to progress.” Holmes then concludes: “What is happening in your valley?”³¹ The text reads like quite an example of the “long, windy and general” work that Holmes himself had criticized, and the manuscript was rejected by several publishers. Harper and Row’s reader wrote, “As a farm story it seems to fall between exposition and narrative. I guess it might be more appropriate to Reader’s Digest than for a book publisher.”³² Holmes’ colleagues clearly were dubious about publication, and Holmes himself left the Council at the end of 1965.

The team was also at work on the synthesis book. A first “tentative preliminary draft” titled *Agricultural Development* was produced in mimeograph on September 1, 1964 and widely circulated to solicit reactions.³³ Besides soliciting individual reactions, the draft of the book was tried out in seminars in 1965 in Uganda, (January) Nigeria, (March) and the Philippines, (May) “each time with a group of about fifteen potential trainers of middle-level echelon workers:” and was well-received after some initial hesitation:

In each case, the reaction of participants on the first day was that the book contains nothing new: it merely re-states “what everyone already knows.” By the fifth day, however, each group had reached the conclusion that they really need the book and want substantial numbers of it as soon as it is ready.³⁴

David Penny (who had been ADC Visiting Professor in Medan, Indonesia from 1958-1962 and 1964-1965) arrived in New York in April 1965 to help with the revision and finalization

of the book.

Getting Agriculture Moving: Five “Essentials,” Five “Accelerators,” No “Ideologies”

The preliminary draft of *Getting Agriculture Moving (GAM)* includes in its preface a curious section on “the confusion of ideologies.” This seems intended to deal with the “other ideologies” problem raised by Clifton Wharton some years earlier (see above). It notes the “vexing” tendency “to identify certain words or phrases with one or another particular ideology such as socialism, capitalism, free enterprise or ‘a cooperative society,’” and that in efforts to make the agriculture of a region or a country more productive, “there are different ways of going about this and different forms of organization within which it can be accomplished.”

The plain fact is that no country in the world today tries to improve agriculture by methods that are exclusively socialistic or exclusively free enterprise [...] Where this experience indicates that a governmental program, a socialistic measure, works best, we have not hesitated to say so. Where private decision-making and operation have proved superior we have pointed that out also. What works? What is most effective in each of the many, many tasks that have to be accomplished if agriculture is to move forward? These are our questions.³⁵

In the introduction, agricultural development is defined simply as “a substantial, sustained increase in the total agricultural production,” and in Chapter 1 the elements of agriculture are listed as energy from the sun, photosynthesis, soils, (but not “land”) plants, water, and husbandry (but not “labor”). Chapter 2 on “The Farm and the Farm Business,” notes the stages of agricultural development from shifting cultivation to “settled subsistence farms, with common lands,” “settled semi-commercial farms,” and finally the “modern farm”—“a farm whose operator uses a number of purchased inputs—seed, fertilizer, insecticides, implements, and perhaps irrigation water.” This chapter also describes the four types of modern farm organization as “family farms, corporate farms or plantations, cooperative farms, and collective or state farms” and describes the “four steps toward highly commercial agriculture:” “land survey and titling,” “enclosure,” “consolidation of holdings,” and the

“breaking up of post-feudal land holdings” into smallholder-operated holdings.

The remainder of the book outlines “the measures that need to be taken within the wider economy ... in order that farmers may develop a progressive agriculture.” One chapter is devoted to each of the five “essentials for agricultural development:” transportation, availability of purchasable inputs, markets for farm products, “new patterns of husbandry and management,” (this chapter was not yet written) and “production incentives for farmers.” Further chapters are then devoted to the four “accelerators of agricultural development:” farmer education, production credit, coordinated local programs, and improving and expanding the land base for agriculture. The three final chapters deal with “research and higher education,” the citizen and public policies affecting agriculture,” and “elements of professional skill for agricultural technicians.” In all of these chapters there is no mention of land reforms, nor of the “socialistic” forms of organization, beyond a brief page on “cooperative marketing” in the chapter on markets for farm products.

Although no author or authors are named on the title page or in the preface to the preliminary draft, it is clear that its writing had been the work of the team. Writing to another friend in Medan , Penny observed,

For about two years now, the Council has been preparing a “little book” on agricultural development. Even though there have always been four to five men working on it, the book still isn’t finished [...] You may wonder why five men have taken so long to write such a short book. Is it because five men are too many and they get in each other’s way? Well, there is a little of that.³⁶

At some point however—perhaps because of the “too many cooks” factor—the book became a one-man project, and Penny later described his work in a letter to a friend as “helping Dr. Mosher finish his [sic] book on agricultural development.”³⁷ By February 1965 Mosher was already describing his role as “personally writing the first draft of the first book being prepared by the project [...] It has been given the tentative title *Getting Agriculture Moving*.”³⁸

The final version of the book, *Getting Agriculture Moving: Essentials for Development and Modernization*, was published in April 1966 with an initial print run of just under 12,000 copies. Mosher, listed on the frontispiece as sole author of the book, notes in the preface that all members of the ADC staff had “provided materials and criticized early drafts,” but makes no mention of any contributions they had made to the writing of the book.

GAM in its final version was somewhat shorter than the preliminary draft, and gave (even) greater prominence to the five “essentials” and the five “accelerators” (formerly four, but now with the addition of “national planning for agricultural development”). These “essentials and accelerators” chapters now took up more than sixty per cent of the whole book (compared to fifty-one per cent of the draft version). The three final chapters on “serving agriculture” were dropped. In the preface the introductory remarks about socialistic and free-enterprise “ideologies” have been completely dropped, and in the chapters on “The Farm” and “The Farm Business” there is no longer any mention of another type of “modern farm” other than the individual smallholder farm (the corporate farms or plantations, cooperative farms, and collective or state farms mentioned in the preliminary draft do not appear anywhere in the book). Interestingly, the brief section on “breaking up post-feudal land holdings” has now become a somewhat longer discussion on “land redistribution,” noting that pressures to break up large holdings and transfer ownership to the operators of small farms are both political, economic, and psychological, and that land redistribution can both accelerate and retard agricultural development. Another new section on “changing the conditions of tenancy” emphasizes that tenancy can play “a constructive role” in agricultural development, so long as rents are reasonable, tenure is secure, and management decisions are left in the hands of the tenant.³⁹

GAM is basically a well organized overview of the problems of smallholder farm management, and the steps and policies necessary to bring smallholders into the world of

commercial, intensified farming using purchased inputs on the “Green Revolution” model, all expressed in easy-to-read and virtually jargon-free language.

One important dimension of smallholder modernization, as Mosher argues in Chapter 8 on “production incentives for farmers,” is by making new consumer goods and services available for farm families to buy, so they will want more for themselves: “the more things they want to buy, the more farm products they must sell.” Mosher insists on the theme of teaching peasants to want more for themselves, to abandon collective habits, and to get on with the “business” of farming. Mosher goes so far as to advocate educational programs for women and youth clubs to create more demand for store-bought goods. The “affection of husbands and fathers for their families” will make them responsive to these desires and drive them to work harder.⁴⁰

Impact and Responses

By February 1967, less than a year after the first printing, more than 13,000 copies of the standard edition of *GAM* had been distributed, plus 25,000 additional copies of the “student edition” financed by United States Information Services (USIS) and sold at retail for only U.S. \$0.20. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) had purchased 2,000 copies of the Praeger edition (intended for sale in North America and Europe, while the 7,500 copies published by ADC itself were intended for free distribution in developing countries). A second print run of 10,000 copies had been ordered. In 1970, Pyramid Books published a “Ladder edition” of the book. Ladder editions were “made easier to read for the enjoyment of readers for whom English is a second language ... The book uses 2,000 English words.” The Ladder version, funded by USIS, had an initial print run of 25,000 copies and was priced at only U.S. \$ 0.20.⁴¹ All ADC fellows leaving for post-graduate studies abroad under the ADC scholarship program received a letter offering “Congratulations on your selection for study abroad!”—with an enclosed copy of *GAM* and

advice to read it before departing for their studies.⁴²

Four companion volumes were published in the following two years. *Selected Readings to Accompany Getting Agriculture Moving* reproduced one hundred thirty-five articles in its two volumes, each keyed to the chapter headings of *GAM*; *Case Studies to Accompany Getting Agriculture Moving* assembled thirty-five short case studies of specific development projects (the result of the sifting of the 2,000 assembled case studies), and a *Training Manual for Group Study of Getting Agriculture Moving* was designed to support group study of *GAM* and the supporting volumes. Each of these volumes had an initial print run of 5,000 copies, which were distributed free to all who requested them.

By August 1966 the USAID had received requests for *GAM* from “approximately twenty-five countries, for copies numbering over 1,000.”⁴³ In September 1966, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) asked for 1,000 copies to distribute to their regional offices.⁴⁴ In 1967, the United States Information Agency (USIA) requested permission to translate the book into thirty-one Asian languages, and Borton replied that the ADC had already had requests for translation rights into Chinese, Greek, Indonesian, Korean, Malay, Sinhalese, and Thai.⁴⁵ The USAID reported in a memo of June 20, 1967 that *GAM* had become “so popular that 3,000 copies have been sent to missions on their request: Spanish editions have been published and a French one is in preparation.” USAID had also prepared “a condensed summary of Mosher’s major ideas” in nineteen typed pages.⁴⁶ Translations of *GAM* were published in at least seventeen languages (Arabic, Burmese, Chinese, French, Greek, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Malay, Portuguese, Sinhalese, Spanish, Thai, and various Indian languages including Bengali, Kanarese, and Malayalam).

In September 1967, after accompanying JDR 3rd on another Asian trip, his aide Datus C. Smith Jr. wrote to Mosher:

As the modest author of a book that is setting the woods afire, you should know that—entirely on the initiative of local people, without any invitation from JDR 3rd

or myself through even raising the question—we heard wonderfully gratifying things about your book in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines on our recent trip.⁴⁷

GAM was reviewed in various academic and professional journals.⁴⁸ The reviews were universally appreciative and bland, with only one exception. I.R. Jahns of Florida State University wrote in *Rural Sociology*:

These ideas are not unique or new [...] Unfortunately the ideas are not as fully developed as they might be. The uncritical reader could easily gain the impression that development is a simple matter that can be brought about by a few well-timed and appropriate administrative edicts based on the precepts set forth in this book [...] The academic sociologist will have little interest in the material presented [...] The book can be criticized for its limited social and cultural orientation, but its value as an in-service training tool is without question.⁴⁹

Professor M. Douglass at the University of Wisconsin's College of Agriculture forwarded to Mosher a summary of the critical comments which his graduate students had made, after reading *GAM* in his course "Introduction to Extension Work in Developing Countries."

Their first comment was that "nowhere in the book does the author state specifically what he means by agricultural development," and suggesting that the book should have spelled out "forcefully" that agricultural development requires not only increasing productivity, but also increased levels of living for rural people—"a very good point," Mosher wrote in his response. Secondly, they questioned the distinction made between "essential" factors and "accelerators"—"are the accelerators not themselves essential [...] to stimulate the growth, expansion, and integration of those essential factors?" to which Mosher replied "I am still inclined to think that the distinction is important to the extent that it may deter people from making a strong push on one of the accelerators in localities where all of the essentials are not adequately provided."⁵⁰

In September 1967 Mosher wrote to Ralph Allee (who was by then an ADC associate in The Philippines) suggesting a local experiment in "saturation:"

What would you think of the idea of trying to saturate a small area of Bicol with copies of *GAM*? I assume that the USIA cheap edition is now available in the

Philippines and they might want to pick up 500 to 1,000 copies of it for the experiment.⁵¹

In fact several hundred copies of *GAM*, the *Training Manual* and the *Selected Readings* had already been distributed to universities, colleges and high schools, and government officials in all six provinces of the Bicol region.

After *GAM*, Mosher kept up a stream of publications, both before and after completing his presidency of ADC in 1973. These included the books *Creating a Progressive Rural Structure*, *Serving Agriculture as an Administrator*, *Thinking About Rural Development*, and *An Introduction to Agricultural Extension*.⁵² However, none of these had the appeal, or the widespread circulation, of *GAM*. With 60,000 copies of the standard English edition distributed by 1973, 25,000 of the simplified Ladder edition and so many translated versions, the total number of copies available—the majority free or at minimal cost, and the majority in developing countries, particularly Asia—is to be counted not in tens, but in hundreds of thousands. In many Asian countries, during the early years of the Green Revolution it was the most easily available and widely read book, and by far the most influential book on agricultural and rural development.

GAM therefore played a significant role in the development of the dominant discourse of agricultural and rural development, most particularly in Asia. In itself it was a readable and useful overview of what “small farmers” need to intensify production and improve their incomes. In broader perspective, it is remarkable for its studied avoidance of nearly all the issues that emerged as critiques of Green Revolution strategies of agricultural modernization from the early 1970s onwards: differentiation among smallholders, agrarian labor relations, smallholder-state relations, and the imperatives of structural reform.

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Rockefeller Archive Center Research Reports Online is a periodic publication of the Rockefeller Archive Center. Edited by Erwin Levold, Research Reports Online is intended to foster the network of scholarship in the history of philanthropy and to highlight the diverse range of materials and subjects covered in the collections at the Rockefeller Archive Center. The reports are drawn from essays submitted by researchers who have visited the Archive Center, many of whom have received grants from the Archive Center to support their research.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and are not intended to represent the Rockefeller Archive Center.

ENDNOTES:

¹ This study is mainly based on two short periods of research in the Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC) (where the archives of the Agricultural Development Council are held) in 2005 and 2011. I would like to express my appreciation for the hospitality and expert help provided by the Center, and particularly for a grant-in-aid which made the second visit possible. Since this study focuses on the Agricultural Development Council (ADC), it is proper to note that I was employed by ADC from 1975-1980, assigned as Participating Consultant to the Agro Economic Survey of Indonesia.

² Russell Stevenson and Virginia O. Locke, *The Agricultural Development Council: A History*. Morrilton, Arizona: Winrock International Institute for Agricultural Development, 1989, pp. 3-4.

³ Stevenson and Locke, *Agricultural Development Council*, p.3.

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ John Lossing Buck, *Chinese Farm Economy: A Study of 2,866 Farms in Seventeen Localities and Seven Provinces in China*. Shanghai, China and Chicago, Illinois: The University of Nanking, The China Council of the Institute of Pacific Relations and the University of Chicago Press, 1930; *Land Utilization in China*. Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1937.

⁶ J. Lossing Buck, "The 1956-1959 Program in Agricultural Economics," Council on Economic and Cultural Affairs, May 10, 1955. RAC, Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF), Series 3 (Grants), Box 37, Folder 286.

⁷ J. Lossing Buck, "The 1956-1958 Program in Agricultural Economics." (See note 6).

⁸ Charles P. Noyes, "Survey of American Activities Relating to Asia," Report commissioned by Council on Economic and Cultural Affairs (CECA), 1954, pp. 1-3. RAC, JDR 3rd papers, Series 1, Box 42, Folder 388.

⁹ RAC, JDR 3rd, Box 92, Folder 784, Box 43, Folder 394.

¹⁰ J. Norman Efferson, "A Suggested Program for Stimulating the Development and Expansion of Agricultural Economics Research, Teaching, and Extension in Asia," Report submitted to JDR 3rd, November 4, 1953. RAC, JDR 3rd papers, Series 1, Box 43, Folder 398.

¹¹ Harry Cleaver, "Will the Green Revolution turn Red?" In S. Weissman, editor, *The Trojan Horse: A Radical Look at Foreign Aid*. Palo Alto, California: Ramparts Press, 1975, p. 175. (originally published as "The Contradictions of the Green Revolution," *American Economic Review*, May 1972).

¹² Clifton R. Wharton, Jr., "Arthur T. Mosher: The Man and his Philosophy." In Mosher, Arthur T. Jr., editor, *The Life and Work of Arthur T. Mosher*. Bloomington, Indiana: Xlibris Corporation, 2001, p. 120, (originally 1994).

¹³ Tony Judt, *Postwar*. London, U.K.: Penguin Books, 2005, p. 223.

¹⁴ John W. Gardner, "The Foreign Student in America." *Foreign Affairs* (July 1952), p. 638 and p. 650.

¹⁵ Minutes, ADC Board of Trustees meeting June 12, 1963. RAC, ADC general, Box 4, Folder 22.

¹⁶ Wharton, "Arthur T. Mosher," pp. 113-116.

¹⁷ Information and quotations in this paragraph are from Arthur T. Mosher, (2001 [orig. 1983]) "Autobiography." In Arthur T. Mosher Jr., editor, *The Life and Work of Arthur T. Mosher*. Bloomington, Indiana: Xlibris Corporation, 2001, pp. 9-93.

¹⁸ Ben White, Saturnino M. Borras Jr., and Ruth Hall (in press) "Land Reform." In Bruce Currie-Alder, Ravi Kanbur, David Malone and R. Medhora, editors, *International Development: Ideas, Experience, and Prospects*. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press.

¹⁹ Many of Ladejinsky's reports can be found in Louis J. Walinsky, editor, *Agrarian Reform as Unfinished Business: The Selected Papers of Wolf Ladejinsky*. New York: Oxford University Press for the World Bank, 1977.

²⁰ Clifton R. Wharton, August 1959 progress report, p. 18. RAC, ADC general, Box 2, Folder 11.

²¹ Clifton R. Wharton, Progress Report September 1960. RAC, ADC general, Box 3, Folder 14.

²² Wharton, August 1959 report, p. 18. RAC, ADC general, Box 2, Folder 11.

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- ²³ ATM to CECA staff in preparation for the Staff Conference, Bandung 1959 [no exact date given] RAC, ADC general, Box 3, Folder 400.
- ²⁴ Mosher, memo to CECA staff, August 1, 1961. RAC, JDR 3rd papers, Series 1, Box 44, Folder 401.
- ²⁵ Mosher memo to ADC Trustees, January 4, 1963. RAC, ADC general, Box 3, Folder 20.
- ²⁶ CECA grant announcement, June 1963. RAC, ADC general, Box 6, Folder 46.
- ²⁷ These included one addressed to "Mr. Paulo Freyre" [sic] in Brasilia requesting "information about a new method of teaching literacy that you have developed ... a description of the approach, the type of persons taught and the results you have had would be most helpful." No reply is to be found in the files. Conrad Oliven to "Paulo Freyre," April 16, 1964. RAC, ADC general, Box 3, Folder 21.
- ²⁸ For those generations who no longer remember them, McBee cards or "edge-notched cards" were a common manual data storage and manipulation device used for data storage, classification and sorting for the first seven decades or so of the 20th century. The cards, bevelled at one corner, had numbered holes punched at regular intervals along all four edges, and data was recorded by clipping out the part of the card between the hole and the edge. The cards could not be read by machines, but were sorted by passing needle-like probes through one or more selected holes; the cards in which those holes had been clipped would then remain behind, as the rest of the cards were lifted out by the needles. Using two or more needles enabled sorting with a logical "or" function, and combining the results of more than one selection a logical "and" function.
- ²⁹ Donald Green to Evelyn Wood, June 30, 1964. RAC, ADC general, Box 2, Folder 19.
- ³⁰ H. Holmes to Ben R. Ferguson (USAID, Karachi), (exact date unclear, circa 1965). RAC, ADC, Box 4, Folder 27.
- ³¹ Horace G. Holmes, *No Pone Valley*. Third (typewritten) draft, September 1966, RAC, ADC general, Box 9, Folder 81.
- ³² J. Macrae (Harper and Row) to Horace Holmes, October 27, 1965. RAC, ADC general, Box 4, (ADC/TM correspondence).
- ³³ A copy of the draft is available in RAC, ADC general, Box 1, Folder 3.
- ³⁴ Mosher memorandum to F.F. Hill (The Ford Foundation) on the "Future of the Training Materials Project," September 2, 1965. RAC, ADC General, Box 6, Folder 46.
- ³⁵ Agricultural Development Council, *Agricultural Development*. Preliminary draft, September 1, 1964, pp. ii-iii. RAC, ADC general, Box 1, Folder 3.
- ³⁶ David Penny to M. Sirait (Medan), July 1, 1965. RAC, ADC general, Box 4, Folder 27.
- ³⁷ David Penny to Ir. Tan Hong Tong, (Medan) May 1, and June 17, 1965. RAC, ADC general, Box 4, Folder 31.
- ³⁸ Mosher, "Second Progress Report to the Ford Foundation: Training Materials Project 1964," February 17, 1965. RAC, ADC General, Box 6, Folder 46.
- ³⁹ Mosher, *GAM*, Chapter 3, pp. 47-49.
- ⁴⁰ Cleaver. "Will the Green Revolution turn Red?" pp. 179-80 (referring to *GAM*, pp. 108-109).
- ⁴¹ A copy of the Ladder edition is available in RAC, ADC general, Box 6, Folder 48.
- ⁴² RAC, ADC general, Box 7, Folder 59.
- ⁴³ L. Gill (USAID) to Mosher, August 29, 1966. RAC, ADC general, Box 6, Folder 50.
- ⁴⁴ RAC, ADC general, Box 7, Folder 56.
- ⁴⁵ The languages for which translation rights were requested were Arabic, Assamese, Bengali, Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Kannada, Korean, Laotian, Macedonian, Malay, Malayalam, Maratha, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Serbo-Croatian, Sinhalese, Slovenian, Tagalog, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Turkish, Urdu and Vietnamese. E. McNicoll (USIA) to R.E. Borton, May 25, 1967 and Borton to McNicoll, June 27, 1967. RAC, ADC general, Box 6, Folder 46.
- ⁴⁶ A copy of the USAID summary is in RAC, ADC general, Box 6, Folder 56.
- ⁴⁷ RAC, ADC general, Box 6, Folder 56.
- ⁴⁸ Various reviews are to be found in RAC, ADC general, Box 6, Folder 59.
- ⁴⁹ I.R. Jahns, review of *GAM, Rural Sociology*, 1966. RAC, ADC general, Box 7, Folder 61.
- ⁵⁰ Douglah to Mosher, March 28, 1968 and Mosher to Douglah, April 17, 1968. RAC, ADC general, Box 7, Folder 56.
- ⁵¹ Mosher to R. Allee, September 15, 1967 and R. Allee to R. E. Borton, February 21, 1967. RAC, ADC general, Box 6, Folder 44.
- ⁵² Borton, Raymond E., editor, *Selected Readings to Accompany Getting Agriculture Moving*. New York: Agricultural Development Council, 1966; Mosher, Arthur T., *Training Manual for Group Study of Getting Agriculture Moving*. New York: Agricultural Development Council, 1966; Borton, Raymond E., editor, *Case Studies to Accompany Getting Agriculture Moving*. New York: Agricultural Development Council, 1967.