Different systems of land tenure in Ethiopia under Haile Selassie and their history are explained and their economic and social consequences analysed. The centralisation and commercialisation of the economy under Haile Selassie leads to increasing pressures on peasants and kindles growing peasant discontent and protest. The increasing dispossession of peasants inspires the radical opposition of the student movement. The radical land reform of 1975 is explained as a consequence of the suppressed status of peasants and as a genuine liberation. Sadly, it was rather soon brought back under the control of the central authorities which needed access to the resources of the peasants to finance their militarisation of society.

See also:
The land reform law, or lex agraria, of Tiberius was passed by popular support against serious resistance by the nobility. It applied only to former public land, ager publicus, which had been usurped and concentrated in the hands of large landholders. Land concentration reduced the number of owners and hence the number of citizens and those eligible to serve in the army. On the eve of the Revolution, French society was polarized, with the nobility and clergy on one side and the rising business class on the other. The middle class was relatively small, especially in the rural areas. The social and political objectives of the reformers were fully realized. The censiers and serfs became owners. Feudalism was destroyed, and the new regime won peasant support. The problem of land reform in Ethiopia has hampered that country’s economic development throughout the late 19th and 20th centuries. Attempts to modernize land ownership by giving title either to the peasants who till the soil, or to large-scale farming programs, have been tried under imperial rulers like Emperor Haile Selassie, and under Marxist regimes like the Derg, with mixed results. The present Constitution of Ethiopia, which was put into force January 1995, vests land ownership exclusively "in