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The Last Attempt at Land Reform in Spain: Application and Scope of the Andalusian Agrarian Reform, 1984–2011

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Abstract: In this article, we contextualise, describe and analyse the last attempt at land reform in Spain—the one passed by the Autonomous Parliament of Andalusia in 1984. The Andalusians had passed their Statute of Autonomy by referendum in 1981, incorporating the mandate to carry out an agrarian reform that would boost the rural economy, generate employment and balance the agricultural structure of this region in Southern Spain, peripheral to both national and European centres of power. The Andalusian socialist government complied with this mandate, pushing the agrarian reform law through and applying a package of reform measures, which met with resistance from landowners and conservative political forces from the outset. Political, economic, legal and administrative obstacles swiftly discouraged the Andalusian socialists from persevering in the endeavour, and at the beginning of the nineties, its dismantling began. Finally, in 2011 the end of the agrarian reform was declared, and with it, the waiver of the right to consider alternative models to the liberal management of the agricultural sector. Archives and newspaper libraries, as well as administrative and legal sources, have been consulted, and the information has been examined using content analysis and cross-checked and triangulated with the specialised literature. This article hails a breakthrough in the understanding of the socio-territorial scopes of an agrarian reform little studied to date.

Keywords: agrarian reform; Andalusia; Spanish transition to democracy; 1984–2011



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1. Introduction

It is a fact that all of Europe shares a rural background that gives it a certain transnational and transhistorical unity [1] (p. 90), but it is also true that socio-agrarian inequality in Europe is deep and divisive, the product of disparate socio-economic and geopolitical transitions to the present day. In the 1970s and 80s, an ironclad divide prevailed between Western and Eastern Europe, each embedded in different economic systems: capitalist and socialist, respectively. The Cold War, in its final stage, was also being waged in the field of ideas, resulting in the strengthening in the western world of liberal imaginaries where democracy, freedom and private property were intrinsically joined while at the same time reinforcing the belief in the collectivisation of the means of production exclusively within the domain of regimes that were communist totalitarian or irretrievably on the way to becoming so, both inside and outside Europe. In the Americas, for example, Salvador Allende's democratic government in Chile was under constant criticism, and its agrarian reform was branded as totalitarian by the same collectives that were to join forces with the coup d'état and the subsequent dictatorship from the very onset of the military uprising in 1973 [2].

This clash of ideas was shaped by the agrarian issue, i.e., the controversy surrounding the best way of finding a solution to the evident state of financial hardship suffered by much

of peasant farmers and agricultural workers around the world and which, from the first third of the 20th century onwards, contributed to backing the need to undertake intense agrarian reforms that would enable access to land for landless workers at the expense of expropriating large estates. This was intended to improve both the household economies of farming families and national economies while restricting oligarchic power in terms of the political control of the state. The transcendence of the positive effects of the agrarian reforms of the time was even recognised by the entities dependent on the anti-socialist regimes, such as the Centre for National Defence Studies of Franco's Spain, which reported in 1975 on the development of the Soviet economy in the first decades after the Bolshevik Revolution: "The industrialisation of the nation, the collectivisation of agriculture, the dissolution of the exploiting classes and the cultural revolution carried out by the Soviet people in the initial five-year plans under the party's leadership enabled the USSR to grow its economy rapidly" [3].

In Spain, the agrarian issue had a transcendent influence on political decisions during the Second Republic (1931–1939), to the point that its leaders embarked on an agrarian reform that placed the landowners' privileges at such risk that some authors claim it played a decisive role in the 1936 military coup [4]. The subsequent Franco dictatorship (1939–1975) paralysed that agrarian reform but did not stave off the hunger for the land of small-scale farmers and, above all, agricultural workers with no other means of subsistence than their toil and with little alternative other than working the land¹. The mechanisation of agriculture from the 1950s and 1960s onwards further complicated the situation of the workers employed in extensive non-irrigated estates, as this reduced the demand for workforce, which was already heavily seasonal. This situation drove many agricultural workers on the poverty line, especially Andalusians, to emigrate. In fact, during the 1960s and 1970s, nearly two million Andalusians², mostly from rural areas, left their villages in search of a better future on the fringes of cities, such as Barcelona, Madrid, Munich, Frankfurt, Brussels or Zurich, among others [8].

The political demise of the dictatorship and the beginning of the transition to democracy also failed to improve the living conditions of agricultural workers in Andalusia significantly. Many agricultural holdings had been modernised, but this did not stop the situation of rural Andalusia from being classified as underdeveloped [9] (p. 466). The extractive nature of the economic, financial and demographic policies of the Franco regime in the south of Spain remained firmly in favour of the industrialised regions, which increased regional disparities. However, the transition to democracy brought opportunities for the countryside. The transformation of the centralised state into a country of autonomous communities required a transfer of political competences from central to regional entities, which ushered in a time of unprecedented leeway for the management of their own affairs. In this context, the Andalusian Regional Government—at the time without autonomous powers—began to receive the first official powers from the State Administration in 1979, including services and functions in the field of agricultural training and research [10]. This was the first package of powers, which would be followed by others over the next decades, to cover almost all responsibilities for Andalusian agricultural management, including plant health and certifications of agricultural products and EU financial aid for the agricultural and livestock sector [11–18].

The broad limit of the independent decision-making ability of the Autonomous Community of Andalusia resulted in the passing of a Statute of Autonomy in 1981—similar to a constitution on a regional level—which entrusted the Andalusian public authorities, and especially its autonomous government, with an agrarian project that was as historically and culturally significant as it was erratic in implantation. We are referring to the agrarian reform that was to achieve "the transformation, modernisation and development of agrarian structures (. . .) as an instrument of a policy of growth, full employment and correction of territorial disparities" [19] (Article 12).

Our goal is, therefore, to present and analyse the agrarian reform actions in addition to the sequence of events that led this reform to go from being the most politically significant

project of the first democratic legislature of Andalusia to becoming a symbolic rather than a prescriptive reference—subject, moreover, to the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy (hereinafter CAP)—in the second Statute of Autonomy, passed in 2007 [20] (Article 10, point 13).

2. Materials and Method

This study has applied the historic method [21] in order to identify the contextual condition of the Andalusian Agrarian Reform in the recent past—that of Spain’s transition to democracy, of contested political, economic and socio-cultural frameworks. In doing so, we have sought to extend the presentation and discussion of the results beyond coherent and suggestive descriptions [22] to offer interpretations consistent with the reform project.

In gathering information, we have prioritised the sources whose documentation met the documentary validation criteria proposed by Scott and summarised by Grant: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning [23,24]. Hence, we examined primarily documents from administrative archives, newspaper libraries, public statistical and mapping services and official gazettes. With regards to the documentation of a historical nature, the most important archive for our study was the Central Archive of the Regional Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries of Andalusia (Archivo Central de la Consejería de Agricultura y Pesca de Andalucía—hereinafter ACCA)³. The ACCA safeguards the documentation of the central services of the entity in charge of implementing the agrarian reform in question—the Andalusian Institute for Agrarian Reform (Instituto Andaluz de Reforma Agraria—hereinafter IARA). The newspaper libraries of *El País*, *La Vanguardia*, *Canal Sur* and *ABC* were consulted, and regarding the latter, the editions of the *ABC* of Madrid and the *ABC* of Seville, safeguarded by the newspaper library of the National Library of Spain, were analysed. The *ABC* newspaper was the most relevant source of all the press consulted, as its editorial took a stance against the Andalusian Agrarian Reform from the onset, and its pages served as a national and regional mouthpiece for employers’ organisations and conservative political parties, reporting on every advance and setback of the reform. In turn, the agro-economic and socio-occupational statistical information came mainly from the Spanish Statistical Office, the Institute of Statistics and Cartography of Andalusia and the statistical and territorial information services of the Regional Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries of Andalusia. Finally, the legal and administrative documentation has been taken from the *Spanish Official State Gazette* (*Boletín Oficial del Estado*—hereinafter BOE) and from the *Official Gazette of the Andalusian Regional Government* (*Boletín Oficial de la Junta de Andalucía*—hereinafter BOJA).

The documentation was organised and classified based on the following categories: source, issuer, date of creation, type of content, subject matter, validity period and geographical area [28] (p. 5). Once classified, the content analysis technique was applied to the documentation [29,30], prioritising both quantitative and qualitative codes linked to the statistical and socio-historical variables in the research design—such as location, surface area, capacity, investment, duration, timeframe, agency, institutions, representation, strategy and ideology. Lastly, the results of the analyses were cross-checked with the available specialised bibliography, showing high consistency with the data developed by third-party authors, as well as providing a significant breakthrough in the understanding of the Andalusian Agrarian Reform.

3. Discussions Leading up to the Push for Agrarian Reform in Andalusia

The years preceding the passing of the Andalusian Agrarian Reform witnessed a noteworthy debate on the ultimate meaning of land expropriation in the context of capitalist agriculture, which had already shed, at least outwardly, all traces of feudalism. The large private landowning provinces in Southern Spain were no longer lands of large estates in the hands of mainly absent owners but rather modern agricultural areas in many aspects. Better use of land by corporate land ownership was based on a capitalist profile with holdings fully inserted in the financial system and employing agricultural workers, which

weakened the opposition to land grabbing [31]. The concentration of capital in the form of land stopped being subject to review and criticism by an important part of the left-wing political and academic sector, who seemed to be convinced by the supposedly progressive nature of the social function of property. It was sufficient for the large private estates to be profitable and provide work, regardless of considerations regarding the effects that the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few would have on the widening of socio-economic inequalities and the striking imbalance in the agrarian structure. More recently, Florencia Pasquale has postulated that the social function of property has led to the creation of legal-institutional operations with a certain social character without really meeting the challenge of refuting the dominant liberal notion of property, acting as an “aporetic core” that does not correspond to a strictly rational proposition but rather to the desire to satisfy the commitment to the excluded sectors without breaking the capitalist conception of property [32] (pp. 237–243).

The ground gained by the notion of a social function of property during the transition-to-democracy years matched the ground lost because of the belief in the need for an expropriation and redistributive agrarian reform. Nevertheless, the obvious precarious living conditions of the agricultural worker sector, which at the time suffered the highest unemployment rates in Spain, prevented a complete circumvention of the debate on agrarian reform that would transform the social and economic situation in the rural areas of Southern Spain. To put it another way, the historical paradox of “A land without a people for a people without a land” became relevant in the midst of the democratic transition, thus forcing political parties to position themselves on realistic alternatives to this situation, among which agrarian reform had unquestionable political and symbolic capital ⁴.

One of the most outstanding voices with academic weight calling for the application of an agrarian reform was that of Martínez Alier, who, faced with the “verifiable validity of the will to distribute” lands among the agricultural worker population and the “persistence and possible worsening of unemployment” among these workers, recommended the following points for the south of Spain: (1) Compulsory purchase of all large estates, regardless of whether owners were absent or not, that could support over eight or ten workers; (2) intervention on all large private holdings, understanding they constitute an economic-productive unit that requires all its parts to function; (3) speediness in the expropriation process to prevent interruptions in investment and production; (4) transfer of the estates to farm workers’ groups from neighbouring villages familiar with the environment; (5) guidance to beneficiaries by local and regional agricultural services; (6) formation of farm workers’ unions more horizontal in nature than the agrarian brotherhoods or chambers of agriculture in which the large private landowners participated; and (7) compensation for the compulsory purchase by payment of the market value of the property in bonds for affected landowners who cooperate with the reform by paying the cadastral value of the property in bonds for landowners who do not cooperate and decreeing non-compensation for those who try to sabotage the process [31] (pp. 237–243).

After winning the first regional elections with an absolute majority in May 1982, the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party of Andalusia (Partido Socialista Obrero Español de Andalucía—hereinafter PSOE-A) paid no heed to the experts that came up with swift and ambitious measures to implement the agrarian reform, to which it should be recalled that they were obliged to do so by statutory mandate, opting instead to present a project that could be considered moderate. With the exception of the promoters, the rest of the members of the Andalusian Parliament took a stand against the socialist Agrarian Reform Draft Bill from the start of the debate in the Andalusian Parliament on 3 April 1984. At the time, the Andalusian Regional Government had not yet received the agroforestry powers from the Spanish central government that the State granted to the National Institute for Agrarian Reform and Development (Instituto Nacional de Reforma y Desarrollo Agrario—hereinafter IRYDA) and the Nature Conservation Institute (Instituto para la Conservación de la Naturaleza—hereinafter ICONA). This was no minor issue, as some members of parliament began to discuss a project that the Andalusian government still lacked the

legal capacity to carry out. In fact, some days previously, the opposition had registered in parliament the request to postpone the debate until they received the authority from Madrid, but the PSOE-A refused and continued with the procedure [37] (p. 15).

Once the debate had begun, the spokesperson for the Andalucist Party, Luis Uruñuela, gave a heated speech accusing the socialists of subjecting the Andalusian institutions to the moral outrage of discussing legislative initiatives they had no authority to implement. To neutralise the evident weakness of the procedure, the socialist Miguel Manaute, Regional Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, read out to the session a telegram signed by the Vice President of the central government, Alfonso Guerra, undertaking to approve the transfer of authority the following day in the Cabinet. The press called it a mere “manoeuvre” [38] (p. 1).

With regard to the draft bill, the conservative opposition, on the one hand, called it regressive, unfair and unconstitutional, and the communist deputies, on the other, classified it as incapable of solving the problems of the rural areas, as it moved away from the expropriation and redistribution principles of traditional agrarian reforms. For the communists, the expropriation principle of the “social function of property” was to be replaced by the more ambitious “public utility”, was to guarantee that the reformed lands could not revert to private and needed to guarantee the participatory character of the social classes involved in managing the reform, and the project was to be extended to cover the entire Autonomous Community [39] (p. 20). For the spokesperson of the Andalusian Communist Party (Partido Comunista de Andalucía—hereinafter PCA), Felipe Alcaraz, the refusal of the socialists to include the previously suggested elements reflected their weak intention to revert or restrict the “abusive” concentration of land (Table 1), hindering, in his opinion, the development of rural areas, which is why the communists continued to support the agricultural workers’ protests [40] (p. 21). While the PSOE-A tried to salvage the first day of the debate with the pledge of the La Moncloa Palace outside parliament, the Trade Union body (Comisiones Obreras—CCOO) had called for a gathering of agricultural workers to highlight the urgency of making progress in resolving the socio-economic problems of Andalusian agriculture. The agricultural workers had to hear that same day, 3 March 1984, the agrarian reform designed by the PSOE-A would place the business community at the centre of the initiative. With the clear proposal of containing the critics of agricultural entrepreneurs, Miguel Manaute said during his speech that the agrarian reform was intended to establish “the best entrepreneurs in each region as an example of what others should do” [41] (p. 19).

Table 1. Large holdings (>200 ha) per sub-regional level in Andalusia, 1982.

Sub-Regional Level	Holdings			Area			Average Extension
	Number	% of Sub-Regional Level	% of Total	Ha	% of Sub-Regional Level	% of Total	Ha
Sierra Morena	2045	5.4	33.9	1,480,864	70.8	33.3	724.1
Guadalquivir River Basin	1488	1.3	24.6	727,422	39.5	16.3	488.9
Atlantic Seaboard	465	2.4	7.7	428,621	75.5	9.6	921.8
Northern Side of the Betic Mountain Range	562	0.8	9.3	456,672	52.1	10.3	812.6
Inland High Plateaus	755	1.3	12.5	562,089	50.7	12.6	744.5
Penibaetic System	444	0.6	7.4	575,214	58.3	12.9	1295.5
Southeast Coast	278	0.7	4.6	219,540	48.3	4.9	789.7
Total	6037	1.4	100.0	4,450,422	55.1	100.0	737.2

Source: [42,43].

The central government, also socialist, did not make it easy for the Andalusian government to debate the agrarian reform by delaying the publication in the BOE of the annexes on the transfer of powers from the IRYDA—the state body most linked to the agrarian reform policies—and, above all, by reserving the basic legislation on compulsory purchas-

ing [44] (p. 23). The conservative opposition saw in this its star argument: the Andalusian Law for Agrarian Reform (Ley andaluza de Reforma Agraria—hereinafter LARA) needed to avoid any measures relating to the compulsory purchase of land. Nevertheless, the transfer decree left open the possibility for the Andalusian authorities to carry out compulsory purchases, but only to a limited extent, as in the case of non-compliance with the social function (Table 2). The transferred powers, which were broader than those ceded at the time to the Basque Country or Catalonia [45] (p. 3), enabled, in any case, the discussion of the draft to continue. The opposition submitted the same 295 amendments and announced an appeal on the grounds of unconstitutionality [46] (p. 27). Finally, the Andalusian Parliament passed the LARA on the afternoon of 20 June 1984, with only its driving force, the PSOE-A, voting in favour. It should be recalled that, thanks to the absolute majority with 66 of the 109 seats in parliament, the socialists could legislate on their own.

Table 2. Summary of the functions taken over by the Autonomous Community of Andalusia by Royal Decree 1129/1984 on agrarian reform.

a.	The programme, in accordance with the bases of general planning and the general organisation of the economy, is the implementation of all actions in the field of agricultural reform and development in the interest of the Autonomous Community.
b.	Agree on and carry out actions of interest in terms of agrarian reform and development to the Autonomous Community, in particular, those corresponding to the areas and districts provided for in the third book of the Agrarian Development-Reform Law.
c.	Agree upon and implement actions that aim to acquire and redistribute rural property, fulfilment of its social function within the framework of state legislation on compulsory expropriation.
d.	Carry out the actions that correspond to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the IRYDA pertaining to compulsory exchanges and private mergers.

Source: [15].

4. The Agrarian Reform Law: Development and Application

The LARA had an extensive statement of reasons, 65 articles, an additional provision and a final provision [47]. Before starting the enacting terms, the text of the law evoked a historical significance of the land, remembering that Andalusian society had been divided into two rural groups based on land ownership: one consisting of a small number of large landowners, and another composed of a majority of agricultural workers and small-scale farmers without enough land to sustain their family economies. The law blamed the extensive use of large estates and the few alternatives to agriculture in rural areas for the generation of precarious economic foundations aggravated by prolonged periods of unemployment. The resulting acute social problem, the law recalled, led to strikes and revolts among the agricultural workers when poor harvests afflicted them. For the legislators, this agrarian structure underutilised land resources, an issue that had not improved over the previous decades given the large private landowners' business strategy of making profits with the lowest risk, i.e., opting for crop growing systems with minimum investments: rainfed, extensive and low-labour crops. This strategy generated "insufficient overall demand for work and the creation of a structural unemployment" that big agribusiness had turned into routine and antisocial behaviour [48] (p. 212–239).

The LARA sought to be a tool of economic and social change focusing not only on the correction of the agrarian structure of Andalusia but also on land consolidation, support for agricultural associations, an extension of irrigation, agro-industrial revitalisation, commercial promotion, financial aid, professional training and use of forest land combining "the criteria of productive planning with those of nature conservation" [47] (point 4). The law established three major goals to achieve this: (1) guaranteeing the social function of the property, (2) ensuring the social and economic benefits of the agricultural holdings, and (3) expropriating the holdings in a situation that prevented the fulfilment of the first two purposes. In this last case, the compulsory purchases were of a 'one-off nature', were to respond to situations of 'extreme hardship' and had to be motivated by 'social interest' [47] (point 10). Evidently, the one-off or temporary nature of the compulsory purchases, which

the law had an impact on, from the outset distanced the LARA from the collectivist spirit of the major agrarian reforms of the 20th century, such as the Soviet and Chinese land reforms.

By prioritising the pursuit of the “best use of the land and its resources” [47] (Article 2, point 1) above social equity or an equal distribution of wealth, the approved agrarian reform rested on the conceptual framework of socio-economic efficiency rather than on those of freedom, equality and justice demanded by the Statute of Autonomy [19] (Article 1, point 2). The reform project was thus designed under a concept that hypothetically exceeded the limited interventions centred on the redistribution of the land, broadening the focus to development programmes combining technical and economic measures within the political framework of international relations and markets [49,50]. This made LARA different from other rural development programmes solely because it included a “certain redistributive component” [50] (p. 19). These “comprehensive land reforms”—expression adopted by the FAO at the World Land Reform Conference of 1966 [51]—emphasised the increase in productivity, i.e., in the efficiency of the components of the socio-agrarian system, relegating to second place the right of citizens to equitable access to resources, such as land, despite it being strategic and irreproducible. For some authors, the indirect attack against large properties in this type of agrarian reform was not only down to a productive emphasis but rather to the conditions of a possibility that, in states with a guarantee of private property, such as Spain, prevented a “direct attack” [50] (p. 19).

The regulatory development of the LARA materialised in two regulations—October 1984 [52] and December 1986 [53]. Both regulations were very similar, but the first had to be replaced as the Contentious-Administrative Court of the Regional Appeal Court in Seville declared it null and void because it had been approved without the required State Council report [54] (p. 2). Whatever the case, the size and type of the estates affected by the agrarian reform did not change. The reform was only to be applied to agricultural holdings with an extension of ≥ 50 hectares of irrigation land, ≥ 300 hectares of non-irrigated land or ≥ 750 hectares of pasture and woodland. In the event that the holdings show a typology of mixed uses, the following equivalence would apply: one hectare of irrigation land = six hectares of non-irrigated land = 15 hectares of pasture and woodland [47] (Article 40, point 1). All owners with estates of such an extension located in the selected areas where the agrarian reform was to be applied, a point we will go into in greater detail further on, had to submit a statement to the IARA giving the technical and economic indicators of their holdings over the last 5 years. The indices proposed by the IARA to assess the efficiency of each agricultural holding were inspired by those established by the Substantially Improvable Holdings Law (Ley de Fincas Manifiestamente Mejorables) of 1979 [55], mainly gross production per hectare, employment generation per hectare and level of farm intensification [47] (point 12 of the statement of reasons). In the regulation of 1984, the use of the “crop intensity” index was optional [52] (Article 45), whereas, in the 1986 regulation, it became compulsory [53] (Article 40). Finally, depending on the compliance of the indicators of each holding with the average and optimum values calculated by the IARA in each district, the instrument and level of intervention were decided. The intervention of the IARA after evaluation of the declarations submitted by the owners and cross-checking with other administrative sources are summarised as follows (Table 3):

Table 3. Intervention measures by the IARA in the holdings affected by the agrarian reform.

Compliance with the Average Value (%)	Intervention Instrument	Compliance with the Optimal Value (%)	Underutilised Land Tax Payment
>100	Exemption	≥ 80	No
≥ 50 and ≤ 100	Enforced Improvement Plan		
>50	Compulsory Purchase	<80	Yes

Note: The average value was calculated from the weighted average of the “average value 1” and the “average value 2”, where the “average value 1” was the weighted average of the values of each index declared by the owners of the holdings concerned, and the “average value 2” being the weighted average of the values of each index calculated by the IARA for all the holdings in the region with data external to the owners’ declarations. The optimal value was the average value of 10–15% of the affected holdings, with the highest indicators reported in the area. Source: [47,52,53,56].

Both the law and the two regulations established that the framework for action of the agrarian reform would be the regions, but they did not specify them, i.e., the delimitations of the areas in which to act were left open. One of the first tasks of the IARA, therefore, was to define the districts for reform (Comarcas de Reforma Agraria—hereinafter CRA). At the time, an agrarian district-level division had been approved for the entire country in 1976 by the Ministry of Agriculture [57], but the IARA chose to follow the Andalusian delimitation proposed by the Regional Ministry of Territorial Policy and Energy in 1983 [58], although reviewing some of its limits to define “homogeneous farming systems” [56] (p. 138). Because the young autonomous administration and the implementing agency of the reform, the IARA, lacked the necessary resources and capacities to drive a comprehensive agrarian reform throughout Andalusia, it was decided to do so progressively, setting a limit of no more than four CRA declarations at the same time. The order of declaration of and intervention in the CRA indicated that Alfonso Sánchez, ex-director of the Research Service of the IARA, was based on the following criteria: most agricultural holdings, highest agricultural unemployment and best prospects for optimising the efficiency of the holdings concerned [56] (p. 140). The Andalusian Regional Government declared the first CRA in Antequera and the last in Los Vélez. In total, there were 10 CRA, one in each province, with the exceptions of Seville and Cádiz, which had two CRA each (Table 4 and Figure 1).

Table 4. Regions designated for agrarian reform.

CRA	Declaration and Publication in the BOJA
Antequera (Málaga Province)	Decree 297/1984 of 20 November, in BOJA of 27 November 1984
Osuna-Estepa (Seville Province)	Decree 319/1984 of 18 December, in BOJA of 29 December 1984
Vega de Córdoba	Decree 323/1984 of 18 December, in BOJA of 29 December 1984
Vega de Sevilla	Decree 323/1984 of 18 December, in BOJA of 29 December 1984
Campaña de Cádiz	Decree 239/1985 of 6 November, in BOJA of 10 December 1985
Medina Sidonia (Cádiz Province)	Decree 240/1985 of 6 November, in BOJA of 10 December 1985
Campaña-Condado (Huelva Province)	Decree 272/1985 of 26 December, in BOJA of 04 February 1986
Los Montes (Granada province)	Decree 273/1985 of 26 December, in BOJA of 04 February 1986
Vega de Andújar y Campiñas Bajas de Jaén	Decree 151/1988 of 5 April, in BOJA of 20 May 1988
Los Vélez (Almería Province)	Decree 152/1988 of 5 April, in BOJA of 20 May 1988



Figure 1. Territorial scope of the districts designated for agrarian reform. Source: [59].

Regarding the district delimitations proposed by the IARA to the Regional Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, they did not always coherently conform to the objectives of the LARA. We have two examples that prove this. The first refers to the delimitation of the CRA Condado-Campiña in the Huelva Province, whose southern boundary left out the entirety of the municipalities of Moguer and Palos de la Frontera [60] (Article 2). The decision prevented comprehensive action in the area of the fastest agricultural transformation in Western Andalusia, the area of Las Malvinas, where residents had initiated a de facto heterodox local land reform in the early 1980s. Since then, they have been using, ploughing and deforesting public woodland to grow strawberries [61]. When the boundaries were set for the CRA Condado-Campiña in 1985, the agrarian strawberry frontier and the social, economic, political and environmental conflicts produced as a result were booming; however, it was decided to ignore this fact of prime regional importance and to intervene in the area only by means of one-off actions.

On the other hand, the declaration of the CRA Los Vélez in the Almería Province incurred what seems to us to be the most serious case of perimeter error. The provisional limits declared in 1988 were retained once, given that a year later, the studies by the district administrative office to fix them in detail had been completed, and it was shown that they were not suitable. During this year, an IARA team conducted research in the land registers, chambers of agriculture and land registries in their territorial area and concluded that not a single farm in the district met the minimum standards set by the LARA to be considered for reform and thus eligible for intervention: “No owners have estates larger than the minimum (. . .) neither have the cadastral data yielded sufficient information, the visits to the local councils failed to provide any meaningful answers, but rather negative information, i.e., it appears that there are no properties covered by the decree (152/1988)” [62] (pp. 1–2). This suggested that the perimeter of the districts was limited to “those areas offering suitable agrarian structures for the intervention of the instrument created by the Law (8/1984), which required the presence of large holdings” [56] (p. 136). In the documentation conserved, there are no references to the reason for which the perimeter error persisted, although in the light of the research carried out, we point to two possible causes, which are most likely interrelated: (1) That the LARA area/use indicator setting the limits of the large holdings on which to intervene did not fit in well with the agrarian structure of the non-irrigated land in Almería and, therefore, modifying the limits of Los Vélez did not resolve the issue and (2) that the political pressure against the land reform exerted by the opposition as well as the legal-administrative difficulties of the agrarian reform convinced the Andalusian Regional Government that persisting with the perimeter error was, in any case, a lesser evil. In the rest of the CRA, the area of the district used by large holdings ranged from 58.8% of Vega de Córdoba and 11.7% of Los Montes de Granada [56] (pp. 145–146).

The decrees that declared the CRA set a deadline of 2 months for the owners of the affected farms to collect and submit information on the yields of their holdings. After the deadline, the IARA published a list of submitted declarations and pending declarations, opening a period for a correction and/or submission of complaints. Once the first phase had finished, the IARA submitted the technical-economic indices calculated by the provincial boards and the measures, if any, to be applied in each holding as public information for 10 days. This second phase was also subject to the possibility of legal appeal by those affected. Finally, under the proposal by the IARA, the Governing Council approved the decree of the Regional Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries with the district action plan for each of the CRA.

The first plan that was declared was the CRA of Antequera in 1985 [63], and it covered the following: guidelines were given for agro-livestock production and the use of natural resources, a forestry transformation plan was approved, grazing and hunting were regulated within the district’s perimeter, work was instructed (general interest, common interest and private interest) as needed for the reform of the district, technical and training support (as well as coordination measures for the initiatives) were made available to those

concerned, the land allocation was initiated, land consolidation was authorised, and both the index values declared by landowners and the land values declared by the owners of the affected holdings were published, as well as the list of properties subject to compulsory improvement plans and properties suitable for compulsory purchase (Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5. Holdings affected by the action plan of the CRA of Antequera according to intervention instrument and municipality, 1985.

Municipality	Total Affected	Exemption	Tax on Underutilised Land	Enforced Improvement Plan	Compulsory Purchase
Alameda	3	2	1	1	0
Almargen	0	0	0	0	0
Antequera	35	5	15	30	7
Campillos	3	2	4	1	1
Cañete	4	1	1	3	0
Fuente de Piedra	1	0	1	1	1
Humilladero	2	1	1	1	0
Mollina	2	1	0	1	0
Sierra de Yeguas	3	0	2	3	3
Teba	4	0	2	4	0
CRA Antequera	57	12	27	45	12

Source: [63] (annexes I, II and III) and [64] (p. 25).

Table 6. Holdings designated for compulsory purchase in the action plan of the CRA of Antequera, 1985.

Name of the Holding	Municipality	Area (ha)
Alfonso Aragón Domínguez	Campillos, Teba, Casariche * and Badalatosá *	627 non-irrigated land and 28.1 woodland
Antonio Aguilera Luque	Antequera	197 non-irrigated land and 389.9 woodland
Antonio Moreno Guerrero	Sierra de Yeguas and Martín de la Jara *	175.93 irrigation land
Azucarera Antequerana, S.A.	Antequera	41.96 non-irrigated land and 1654.2 woodland
Carmen and Teresa Rojas Arrese	Antequera	110.6 non-irrigated land, 22.8 irrigation land and 477 woodland
Eduardo Más Fernández	Antequera	16 irrigation land, 14.9 non-irrigated land and 375.2 woodland
Hermanos Borrego Ruiz	Sierra de Yeguas	63.1 non-irrigated land and 45.1 woodland
Investimor, S.A.	Antequera	50.18 non-irrigated land and 801.6 woodland
Juan Acuña del Pozo	Humilladero and Fuente de Piedra	46.5 irrigation land and 73.9 non-irrigated land
Julián Romero Velasco	Antequera and Campillos	49.3 irrigation land and 19 non-irrigated land
Luis Casero Carvajal and Hermanos	Sierra de Yeguas	61 irrigation land and 27 non-irrigated land
Pedro Palomo Lobato	Antequera	80.2 irrigation land, 304.9 non-irrigated land and 83.9 woodland

* Municipality outside CRA. Source: [63] (annexe I) and [65] (p. 23).

Despite the fact that the agrarian reform moved forward with the publication of all implemented decrees, the opposition never ceased. As we previously indicated, the political opposition, especially from the conservatives, was strongly against the reform from the onset. In fact, they even presented their alternative reform before the beginning of the debate on the draft bill of the party with the majority in parliament, the PSOE-A. The conservative proposal focused on the economic viability of the agricultural enterprise and the promotion of the agro-industrial sub-sector, ruling out any kind of compulsory purchasing, as well as the taxation of underutilisation of land [66] (pp. 21–22). Without sufficient parliamentary backing, the conservative project never even advanced to the point of being debated. This did not stop the opposition, both political and trade unionists, from paralysing or obstructing the passing of the LARA within whatever the legal framework allowed them, especially in the courts. In this regard, the anti-reformists opted for two parallel pathways: the attempt to completely nullify the LARA in the Constitutional Court and the attempt to hinder the process by lodging allegations and appeals against the progress of the reform. The first pathway was led by 53 senators of the conservative People's Alliance party (Alianza Popular), which, relying on the legislation on fundamental

human rights [67], reported the hypothetical overreaching by the LARA in terms of compulsory purchases. Authority to expropriate had not been transferred by the State to the Autonomous Community, and it also violated the constitutional rights to private property and freedom of enterprise. The Constitutional Court rejected both arguments, recognising the full constitutionality of the LARA, its regulatory framework within the Spanish legal framework and the powers of the Andalusian government to apply it [68].

The second legal-administrative pathway was broader, more complex and, in our opinion, more fruitful. Pérez Royo grouped these measures into four types: (1) appeals against the decrees declaring the CRA, (2) appeals against the implementing decrees in the CRA, (3) appeals against the decisions of the IARA regarding the classification of land and equivalency tables and (4) appeals against lists of owners of affected holdings [39] (p. 24). This was a general attack on all reform action, ranging from the most technical levels, such as the decisions of the roundtables for the definition of land typologies in the provincial boards of the IARA, to the highest levels and the compulsory purchase of lands by the Andalusian Regional Government, passing through intermediate levels, such as the refusal of the owners concerned to hand over agro-economic and socio-occupational information on their holdings for the evaluation of their efficiency. The latter forced the IARA surveyors to draw up ex officio lists of those affected and to collect the missing information from the land registers, agricultural fuel-consumption surveys, property registries, the agrarian chambers, the irrigation communities and even the Delegation of the Ministry of Finance in Andalusia, at times unsuccessfully [69] (pp. 1–2) [70] (p. 24). This strategy achieved significant goals in the courts, such as the precautionary suspension of compulsory purchases in the CRA Vega de Córdoba (Figure 2) to safeguard fundamental rights [71] or the annulment of the decree on proceedings in the CRA of Antequera. The defencelessness of the persons concerned was exposed due to the lack of a hearing following the publication of the measures [39] (p. 25). However, what seems to us to be the greatest success of this continuing appeal by those who challenged the agrarian reform can be presumed in two points: (1) gaining enough time to carry out the changes in ownership to sidestep the causes of expropriation of the LARA [72] (p. 2) and (2) neutralising the intervention of the IARA that exceeded the capacity of the administration, especially the Regional Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries [73], through the successive lodging of legal-administrative appeals. González de Molina calculated that approximately 6000 appeals were submitted [74].

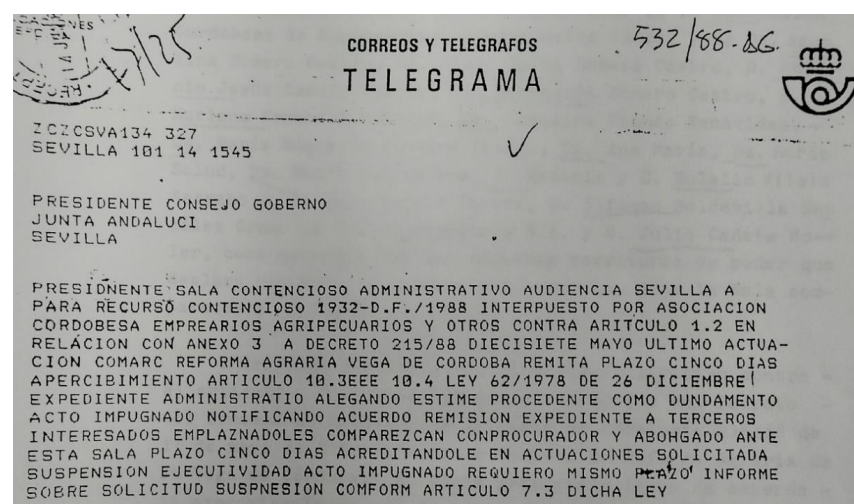


Figure 2. Telegram from the Contentious-Administrative Court of the Regional Appeal Court in Seville to the Governing Council of the Andalusian Regional Government notifying: (1) the application for an interim injunction suspending the decree on the proceedings in the CRA Vega de Córdoba (by the agricultural association Asociación Cordobesa de Empresarios Agropecuarios—ACEA), (2) the request of the administrative file of the decree and (3) the possibility of the Andalusian Regional Government of appearing in court, 1988. Source: [75].

5. Scope of the Agrarian Reform

Despite the determined efforts of the agricultural entrepreneurs and their trade unions to paralyse the agrarian reform, the work continued. The main instruments to move forward in the agrarian reform were the implemented decrees and the work plans, as mentioned above. Additionally, they were accompanied by the declarations of general interest of the Autonomous Community, which provided the impetus for irrigation in the areas of El Chanza and Valdemaría (Huelva Province), Los Humosos and Corbones (Seville Province), Tramo Final del Guadalquivir (Seville and Cádiz Provinces), Donadio Cota-400 (Jaén), Guadix and Baza-Huésca (Granada), Almanzora and Andarax (Almería), Palma del Río (Córdoba) and Axarquía Este (Málaga) [28].

In the most dynamic period of the IARA, between 1984 and 1989⁵, the public body purchased 93 forest estates and 50 agricultural estates, transformed 32,403 ha into irrigation land, upgraded a further 38,527 ha, improved soil in 22,369 ha, extended 118 km of power lines in the interior of Andalusia, reforested 50,250 ha, built and upgraded 5482 km of rural roads and forest tracks and repaired a further 5800 km, and financed the creation of nine agroforestry machinery parks for collective use by the 142 municipalities [85] (pp. 5–6).

The 68 building plans passed benefited both the CRA and other areas with productive potential, with investments of ESP 23,200 million for irrigated land, ESP 15,350 million for improving infrastructure, ESP 22,225 million for forestry actions and other payments for a value of ESP 21,225 million to finance, for example, game restocking (30,000 partridges, 1129 deer and 2243 rabbits), fish restocking (700,000 trout), hiring of workers for fire prevention (1816 forest rangers), control of plant pests and diseases (in an area over 500,000 ha), maintenance of the 12 plant nurseries of the IARA (with production greater than 129 million plants) or management of land settlers (1500 farmers in 16,826 ha) [85] (pp. 2–3).

The actions related to property and the use of land, which undoubtedly are historically the most significant in any agrarian reform, focused on land purchase, design of actions, use of estates, promotion and follow-up of settlements, land consolidation, technological support and restoring livestock trails. Regarding the holdings affected by the decrees declaring the CRA, 48, which amounted to an area of 20,723 ha, were exempt from intervention as they exceeded 80% of the district's optimum yield. The holdings levied with the Underutilised Land Tax amounted to 99, with a total area of 49,058 ha, giving them the possibility of submitting a crop intensification plan to avoid taxation the following year. In turn, the holdings subject to forced use amounted to 176, which meant an area of 67,108 ha. Finally, there were 20 estates deemed to be suitable for compulsory purchase, with a total area of 8225 ha [85] (12–13). However, not all of this area was finally expropriated. Rather, 2089 ha were declared to be of public utility, belonging to holdings with a surplus of land located in irrigable areas [85] (pp. 17–18).

As Spain's protective legislation on private property led to the failure of most compulsory purchase proceedings, the Andalusian Regional Government decided to abandon this land-purchase pathway from 1991 onward [86] (p. 39). They focused solely on the voluntary offers of owners interested in selling their holdings and, to a lesser degree, on the possibilities offered by the right of first refusal of those to whom the Andalusian Administration was entitled in the case of the sale of large estates. The acquisition of land on a voluntary offer by the landowners caused serious problems: (1) the offer was scarce, (2) the IARA lacked the resources to have detailed knowledge of the land for sale in the region, (3) the price of each estate had to be individually negotiated, which subjected purchases to values close to those set by the market and made land more expensive (on an average of ESP 580,000 per agricultural hectare and ESP 55,700 per forest hectare) [87] (p. 9), (4) many farms lacked up-to-date documentation, which created legal problems that significantly delayed the processing of applications, (5) administrative bureaucracy made it difficult for sellers to comply with all legal requirements and slowed down the procedure, which made the IARA less competitive, and (6) this made district planning difficult, as the land on offer did not always correspond to the desired location or to the type of land, coverage and utility required. An example of the latter is that only one out of every five hectares acquired by

voluntary offer was agricultural compared with the other four forest hectares [85] (p. 20). Acquisition by first refusal was a cheaper way, but the land was almost entirely forest land [85] (p. 21), which did not allow for qualitative progress in agrarian reform. When, in 1994, the IARA stopped buying land for agrarian reform, the Andalusian Administration purchased 99,846 ha, of which 34,527 ha (34.6%) were agricultural and the rest forestry (Table 7).

Table 7. Land acquired by the IARA for agrarian reform (ha).

Period/Province	1984–1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1984–1993
Almería	3365	-	1701	0	457	2482.9	453.43	67.23	-	8526.56
Cádiz	0	-	266	271	2129	0	0	0	-	2666.00
Córdoba	778	-	778	615	1589	3857.1	1752.23	2050.3	-	11,419.63
Granada	10,989	-	4561	2535	4199	393	4986.13	966.54	-	28,629.67
Huelva	2595	-	377	3393	788	2104.7	1443.59	0	-	10,701.29
Jaén	3795	-	1818	5071	198	142.6	0	53.55	-	11,078.15
Málaga	875	-	0	1754	0	136.3	0	582.22	-	3347.52
Seville	1946	-	2718	1025	2084	5733.8	192.9	817.61	651.65	15,168.96
TOTAL	24,343	8309	12,219	14,664	11,444	14,850.4	8828.28	4537.45	651.65	99,846.78

Source: [88].

As with land acquisition, the land settlement policy changed with the entry into the Andalusian government of President Manuel Chaves in 1990. Until then, the IARA had fostered cooperative settlements under administrative concession, moving away from the individual settlements with access to ownership [89] (199–200) that had characterised the Franco regime’s land settlement policies. The IARA promoted the formation of associations, such as the specifications for the award of land for 1986 and 1987 in the 418 ha acquired in the irrigable area of Genil-Cabra (Córdoba Province), the 200 ha of La Merlina in Lebrija (Seville Province), the 200 ha of plots in the irrigable area of Almonte-Marismas (Huelva Province) and the 111 ha of La Morla in Arcos de la Frontera (Cádiz Province). Nevertheless, shortly afterwards, the new Andalusian government, socialist as the one before it but unconvinced that the agrarian reform could operate as an instrument to transform Andalusian agriculture, decided to free itself of the economic, political and legal difficulties of land acquisition and distribution, and reach an agreement with the social stakeholders in rural areas (mainly employers and trade unions) on new guidelines for intervention in agrarian structures and their revitalisation in the framework of the CAP. In the case of land settlers, they were no longer required to apply for cooperative projects and instead were individually helped to acquire land to set up family holdings. The formation of associations was left for a “second phase” in which the already-constituted holdings required “giving technical advice to partners, procurement and marketing management” [90] (p. 201). Thus, from 1992 onwards, the transfer of land to cooperative entities practically disappeared, and the significant volume of land transfers to private individuals continued to increase, which, when unaccompanied by new purchases, can be interpreted as the beginning of the liquidation of land acquired for the agrarian reform. In total, between 1985 and 2009, the IARA accommodated 2855 settlers, of which at least 1532 were beneficiaries from previous settlement programmes inherited from the IRYDA [85] (p. 21). Of the land settlers, 65.9% were members of associations, and of the 27,822 reformed hectares, 74.8% were cultivated under different cooperative formulas (Table 8).

Table 8. Settlements managed by the IARA.

Year	Cooperative Sector			Private Sector		Total *	
	Entities	Beneficiaries	Area (ha)	Beneficiaries	Area (ha)	Beneficiaries	Area (ha)
1985	15	243	4167.00	88	1299.00	331	5466.00
1986	34	408	5759.60	175	1788.25	583	7547.85
1987	14	392	650.00	81	ND	473	650.00
1988	21	186	1481.94	0	0.00	186	1481.94
1989	57	418	6137.10	19	119.98	437	6257.08
1990	2	24	285.00	9	93.00	33	378.00
1991	21	180	1807.93	73	228.91	253	2036.84
1992	2	30	482.00	2	7.32	32	489.32
1993	0	0	0.00	60	225.62	60	225.62
1994	0	0	0.00	110	762.62	110	762.62
1995	0	0	0.00	122	963.72	122	963.72
1996	0	0	0.00	46	511.00	46	511.00
1997	0	0	0.00	5	162.00	5	162.00
1998	0	0	0.00	17	47.13	17	47.13
1999	0	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
2000	0	0	0.00	73	162.20	73	162.20
2001	0	0	0.00	3	4.51	3	4.51
2002	2	ND	51.00	22	495.94	22	546.94
2003	0	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
2004	0	0	0.00	24	ND	24	0.00
2005	0	0	0.00	20	ND	20	0.00
2006	0	0	0.00	11	ND	11	0.00
2007	0	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
2008	0	0	0.00	14	129.24	14	129.24
2009	0	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total *	168	1881	20,821.57	974	7000.44	2855	27,822.01

* The total sums of the columns with the ND abbreviation are approximate. The 2001 report states that 9.83 hectares were transferred between three local authorities. Source: [69].

Between land acquisition and farmer settlements, the IARA ceded the operation of the farms to the Agrarian Transformation Company (Empresa de Transformación Agraria—TRAGSA). In 1989, this role was taken on by the Andalusian Land Management Company (Empresa Andaluza de Gestión de Tierras—GETISA), deliberately created for the management of the estates acquired by the Andalusian Regional Government to “obtain the maximum social benefit and economic profitability from them until such time as they are handed over to the farm workers once necessary transformation processes have been completed” [91]. In 1996, GETISA became the Public Company for Agrarian and Fisheries Development (Empresa Pública de Desarrollo Agrario y Pesquero—DAP), which, in turn, was absorbed by the Andalusian Agricultural and Fisheries Management Agency (Agencia de Gestión Agraria y Pesquera de Andalucía—AGAPA) in 2011. Today, AGAPA, through general plans for the IARA estates in every province, continues to manage the few holdings left that in their day were acquired by the IARA for agrarian reform, with the exception of Somonte, an estate of 400 ha in the municipality of Palma del Río (Córdoba Province) and occupied and cultivated by members of the Andalusian Workers’ Union (Sindicato Andaluz de Trabajadores—SAT) (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Image of the representatives of the Workers' Assembly of Carabanchel in support of the agricultural workers of the SAT in Somonte, 2012. Source: [92].

With land acquisition and distribution halted, in the context of the liberal CAP, the IARA was completely stripped of its main task—agrarian reform—by the mid-1990s. In fact, its budget dropped from ESP 51,914 million in 1994 [93] to ESP 9464 million in 1997 [94]. Even so, the IARA was kept alive until 2011 thanks to its administrative and technical usefulness in managing the Andalusian rural areas in terms of agrarian infrastructures, especially irrigation, the promotion of land consolidation, the management of rural heritage under regional ownership, the supervision of agro-productive projects and the management of aids for the countryside or initiatives in the field of modernisation of the holdings. Nevertheless, the pressure of the economic crisis after 2008 on the public purse encouraged successive socialist governments to dissolve the IARA, putting all its assets on sale: “The lands, the assets and the inherent rights (. . .) of the IARA and currently attached to the Regional Ministry responsible for agriculture or to its instrumental bodies” [95] (Article 35). With the sale by public auction of the 19,851 hectares the IARA had conserved, the Andalusian Regional Government expected to earn EUR 75 million [74].

In agrarian spheres, only the SAT opposed the privatisation of the land. Its spokesperson, Diego Cañamero, unsuccessfully insisted on the need for land acquired for agrarian reform to remain public. On the other hand, farmers who had been working the land for decades in the IARA were enthusiastic about the news that the government was speeding up the procedures for sale in their favour. Farmers with the right to access land amounted to 547 and had priority over a total of 5350 ha. The land for sale included a further 13 farms, totalling 5320 ha, 1832 ha used by concessionaires without rights of access to ownership, 2386 ha used by beneficiaries with expired concessions, 4963 ha under provisional allocation and 24 ha of urban land [96].

In 2013, the political alliance United Left/The Greens—Assembly for Andalusia (Izquierda Unida Los Verdes Convocatoria por Andalucía—IULVCA), a member of the Andalusian government in coalition with the PSOE-A tried to contain the sale of public land by creating a land bank of which other agricultural holdings could be added, either offered voluntarily by their owners or expropriated because they had been abandoned. Nonetheless, the socialists rejected the proposal because basically compulsory purchases, encumbrances of underutilised holdings and access to land for landless workers [97] reactivated the agrarian reform that they had been dismantling since the early 1990s.

At the end of 2021, under the presidency of Juan Manuel Moreno of the conservative Partido Popular (PP), the Andalusian Regional Government still held 4900 ha, subdivided into 248 plots, with a market value of around EUR 49 million [98]. Today, there are still no buyers for some of the largest estates of the IARA, including Guadalora, which covers 449 ha in Lora del Río and La Campana (Seville Province); La Parra, which covers 375.5 ha in Puebla de Don Fadrique (Granada Province); the 300 ha still available in the scattered agricultural areas of El Chanza across the municipalities of Ayamonte, Isla Cristina, Lepe and Villablanca (Huelva Province); Matalagrana, which covers 227.3 ha in

Almonte (Huelva Province); or Chozones, which covers 183.5 ha in Dehesas de Guadix (Granada Province) [99]. Through contact with senior officials of the Andalusian Regional Government, we know that there is no intention on the part of the Regional Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries to reverse the situation or at least to manage what is necessary to conserve these estates as public heritage, a privatisation stance shared by the socialists and conservatives in Andalusia [100].

6. Conclusions

For a long time, agrarian reforms symbolised the most effective way of addressing the precarious living conditions of small-scale farmers and landless agricultural workers. In Andalusia, during the transition to democracy, this was also the case with the progressive parties, such as the PSOE-A and the PCA. Nevertheless, as the socialists won the first regional elections in May 1982 with an absolute majority, their reform project was more moderate than the communist proposals and was the one to be finally approved. That agrarian reform was the last to be passed in Western Europe, at a time when average- and high-income countries abandoned reformist terminology and rural development policies were consolidated in its place.

As with other reforms, the owners of the land in question opposed the project. The farmers, the employers' organisations and the conservative political parties, with the support of the press, activated all the obstructive mechanisms at their disposal. They found it particularly useful to lodge administrative and legal appeals, which not only slowed down the progress of agrarian reform but also managed to overwhelm the administration's capacity to manage the proceedings and thus neutralise the implementation of the measures.

The Andalusian government could have expropriated and redistributed land, but it seldom did. Despite the Spanish legal framework, the Constitutional Court of Spain endorsed the compulsory purchase powers of the Andalusian Administration, but legal difficulties soon discouraged it from continuing to do so. As a result, the Andalusian Regional Government refrained from balancing the agrarian structure, especially in western Andalusia, where the large private landowners had considerable economic and social weight. The only pathway to continue with the agrarian reform was, therefore, purchasing land; nonetheless, the high price of the holdings acquired at market value rendered the process unfeasible. Only the forestry holdings were affordable, but, as we know, agrarian reform cannot be carried out on forest land.

What started out as a timid agrarian reform subject to the principle of economic efficiency and the liberal precept of the social function of land became practically from the start a set of technical-administrative provisions for improving rural infrastructure and boosting agricultural production. The IARA, with its powerful initial budget and presence in all Andalusian provinces, came to lead and/or participate in numerous rural projects: improving and extending roads and power lines, fire control, plant health, agricultural training, game and fish management and, above all, upgrading and extending existing irrigation by transforming areas of general interest for Andalusia into highly productive agricultural areas. However, its statutory objective (i.e., to undertake agrarian reform for economic development, full employment and territorial balance of rural Andalusia) was never accomplished.

The rejection of the Andalusian socialists of the agrarian reform marked a liberal U-turn in their position until then in terms of expropriating and distributing lands, aligning more with now-mainstream neo-liberal principles, such as the protection of private property, freedom of enterprise and the transfer of production and exchange to the sphere of private initiative. Transforming agrarian reform into a rural development policy meant minimising the role of the administration in the social-economic management of the countryside, where land continues to be a strategic resource and an inelastic variable whose ownership and use determines the well-being of rural areas, as well as agri-food sovereignty and security.

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Notes

- 1 Debates on the need for agrarian reform did not disappear from Franco's Spain completely. The works of Alberto Ballarín [5] or Manuel González [6] in the journal of *Fomento Social* bear witness to this.
- 2 Antonio Ramos referred to this volume of Andalusian migration as a "human bloodletting" [7] (p. 219).
- 3 The ACCA is an administrative archive. Further information on the nature, management and legislation of Spanish administrative archives can be found in the works of Pomed [25], Alcalde [26] and Ramos [27].
- 4 To verify the political and symbolic value of land in Andalusia, we recommend the work of Antonio Ontiveros on the land property problems of Andalusia [33] and the book compiled by González de Molina on Andalusian peasants and farm labourers [34], with special attention to the work of Isidoro Moreno and Pablo Palenzuela on the identity traits of this group [35]. Juan Antonio Lacomba's work on agrarian reform and political Andalusism is also very recommendable [36].
- 5 This period of greatest dynamism of the IARA evidently coincides with the period of greatest academic production on the Andalusian agrarian reform. In this respect, the works of Francisco Ferraro and Fernando Pascual [76], Francisco Ojeda et al. [77], Gabriel Cano [78], Manuel López [48], Rafael Mata [79], Manuel Sáenz and Amparo Ferrer [80], Carlos Romero [81], José María García [82] and Lina Gavira [83] stand out. We also include the work of Francisco Amador et al., published in 1992 [84] in this period, as it is a consistent analysis of the agrarian reform application during the mentioned years with fieldwork at that time. Afterwards, the Andalusian agrarian reform disappeared from academic interests, and there was a complete lack of analysis of the entire period.

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