

### *Land Reform in Soviet Germany*

VERY CURIOUS NEWS has come from Eastern Germany about the land reform instituted by the Communist-dominated Soviet government there. Here is what Adolf Sauheitel, a member of the staff of the Administration of Agriculture and Forestry in Main, had to say about it:

Under the land reform, 290,000 new peasant holdings were set up and some 1,800,000 people settled on their own land. The total area of land resettled in the zone was 71,972 hectares. Some 38,414 hectares of this were former fallow land, 13,320 hectares woodland, 20,213 hectares pasture land. The target of 70,000 hectares would be reclaimed and for another 50,000 hectares an amelioration program would be carried through.

It was necessary (Herr Sauheitel continued) to draw certain lessons. The administrative authorities must fight "bureaucratic excesses." On the whole, co-operation between the administration and the population still left a great deal to be desired.

The strength of the land reform (he concluded) was substantiated by the quarterly report of the land reform commission, according to which 418,000 recipients of land under the land reform had so far paid a total of 159,000,000 marks, whereas only 109,000,000 marks had fallen due for payments.

Herr Sauheitel does not seem to have realized the contradictions so obvious in his report, summarized above. Nor does he seem to be aware of any link between "bureaucratic excesses" and the pre-payment of land purchase fees. Evidently the new landlords in Eastern Germany want to get the bureaucrats out of their hair.

It will not be long before these recipients of the State's largesse will be under pressure to pool their landholdings into a collective, and to surrender the status of working farmer to acquire that of serf. This, according to Comrade Stalin, the "Porphyry of World Science," as *Pravda* modestly calls its boss, is the path every agricultural economy must take. Yet there may be some delay in instituting the new serfdom. Russia wants a contented population in Eastern Germany so it can use an army of former Nazis against the west, demilitarized in this area by Communist demands, echoed by Moscow's dupes, that democrats in Western Germany be kept disarmed.

W.L.