

## The Book Trail

### AMERICAN FARMERS IN THE WORLD CRISIS

By Carl T. Schmidt

Oxford University Press, \$3.00

This is not the first time *The Freeman* has reviewed one of Dr. Schmidt's works. In the issue of February, 1938, there appears a review of "The Plough and the Sword: Labor, Land and Property in Fascist Italy." Dr. Schmidt is also author of "The Corporate State in Action." He was Senior Agricultural Economist of the AAA for two years, a Research Fellow in the Social Research Council, Lecturer in Economics at Columbia University, and has been in the army since August, 1940, with the rank of Captain.

Dr. Schmidt concerns himself with the economic problems that beset the farmer, and the attempts which are made to solve them. He is not over-optimistic about the AAA technique. "The powerful weight of pressure groups long has left its imprint on American agricultural policy, and there is little reason to suppose that future administrations will not be swung back and forth by such forces. Indeed, this is one of the gravest problems confronting those who would co-ordinate the industrial life of a community within the framework of free institutions. There is even a question whether self-seeking pressures do not make impossible any truly democratic social planning." And Dr. Schmidt quotes Eugene Staley: "Can democracy find ways to make its economic planning be broad social planning and not a hodge-podge of concessions to pressure groups? This is the fundamental question before the planners and administrators of our farm policy—and indeed of our entire national policy."

Though Dr. Schmidt does not here advocate any specific remedy—certainly not making land common property—he recognizes the nature of the problem clearly enough. "Our

farm problem is part and parcel of our national problem. We shall have surpluses of goods, surpluses of farmers, cries for public help, so long as the incomes of American families remain on their present levels. . . The task before us is to find means for making a wise and humane use of all our resources."

Translated into Georgist terminology, this means that there can be no solution of the farm problem while our resources are kept out of use by speculators. And short of dictatorship we may confidently expect such speculation to continue while it offers a hope of profit. Dr. Schmidt is wise and honest, and has made a wise and honest study of American agriculture. Every such study must lead irresistibly to the conclusions of Henry George.

PAUL PEACH

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