

LETTER FROM GERMANY

ON behalf of the Bund für Land und Freiheit (Union for Land and Liberty), Dr. Rudolf Schmidt writes: "We have had to explain to our members and friends that on account of new decisions in Berlin we are not able for the time being to publish anything. In the British zone we are, however, trying to obtain permission to print so that we can carry on our work there. But everything goes most slowly in Germany, and I believe that the paper shortage is not the only obstacle. We do not doubt good intentions, at least among the Western Allies, for giving us help, but military government seems to be even more bureaucratic to work with than the civil administration.

"Pending better prospects for developing our publicity plans, we have, as a small beginning, established a circulating library, the object of which is to provide Georgeist literature for our friends; and even that is not easy. Our own new production, the 2-volume *Homesteads for the People*, by Dr. Liertz, is about the only thing we have and the import of foreign publications is almost impossible as we are not able to pay for anything. We have to depend on charity, that is to say, in the way of gifts from friends abroad. We hope that a money exchange basis with Germany will soon be established making it possible for us to procure books on credit for discharge later on. Meanwhile, can you send us 10 to 20 copies of LAND & LIBERTY each issue? It is of great interest to us. From the catalogue you sent me I have chosen a number of titles which we should much like to have. Germany is extraordinarily poor in Henry George literature. Only when economic circumstances permit, that is when paper becomes available, will we manage to make up for that. A great help is being promised by the Henry George School in New York, who propose to produce by the photo process, and send to us 500 copies of one of the German translations (of which there are three) of *Progress and Poverty*.

"For the time being, also, we have had to stop the issue of our Bulletin. Anything that can be done to help us in the way of procuring paper and the licence to print will be heartily welcome. One incident in our struggle in that regard was that in our application there was a slight mistake and all the forms were returned to us with the requirement that we had to write them all over again, fourteen times in German, six times in English, four times in Russian and three times in French! We could be aided by any recommendations that would influence the authorities—a matter I put to Professor Glen E. Hoover, of Mills College and member of the board of editors of the *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, whom I recently met in Berlin.

"There is an astonishingly keen interest for our cause in Germany. Without any advertising on our part, I receive letters and visits every day from people who are anxious to take part in our work; how much more progress we could make if only we had our Journal in circulation."

The circulating library which Dr. Schmidt mentions and which is in charge of Mrs. Schmidt, has at its disposal a number of the works of the late Dr. Damaschke, and we have been glad to be able to furnish the library with a considerable number of books and pamphlets published by the United Committee and its Land & Liberty Library. But arrangements for book-sending to Germany are such that if any readers are interested in giving such help they should first communicate with us at 4 Great Smith Street, London, S.W.1.

IN THE PALESTINE POST

From an article in the "Palestine Post," July 25th, by Dr. Alfred Bonne, the Director of the Jewish Agency's Institute for Economic Research.

"The conception of landed property has undergone many changes in the course of time, but some fundamental notions have been common to mankind from the earliest times to the present day. History is marked by constant conflicts between landowners and landless classes, conflicts which time and again shook the foundations of society, gradually and continuously changing it. That is why those who at different times have tried to tackle the all-important problem of land distribution had and still have an important message to convey to mankind. Among them Henry George, who died 50 years ago this month, was outstanding. . . .

"According to George, it is not a scarcity of the gifts of nature, but the wrong distribution of land which is at the bottom of all our social and economic evils. The monopolistic character of land ownership is the cause of the unequal distribution of goods, creating great fortunes on the one hand and dismal poverty on the other. Land rent claims a disproportionate share of the yield of the soil, thus robbing those working on it of their fair wages or extorting exorbitant sums in the form of house rents from those who dwell on it. Where land values increase most the contrast between rich and poor is most appalling.

"The soil, Henry George maintained, is a gift of God, like air, and nobody should have the right to exploit it for his personal profit. However, he did not recommend its 'nationalization,' but the confiscation of land rent by taxation. This is not the place to delve into an analysis of his 'Single Tax' theory which became the starting point of a not unimportant political and social movement.

"In this country we are more interested in the affinity of Henry George's ideas with the old biblical conception of the inalienability of land and its modern application in the reconstruction of Palestine by the Jews. Henry George was an ardent admirer of Moses the Lawgiver, on whom he wrote a brilliant essay. He realized that the biblical land laws prevented Jewish civilization from degenerating into the kind of despotism which finally destroyed both Greece and the Roman Empire, and which is to-day the cause of the disastrous social conditions of agricultural societies in many Oriental countries.

"Among the most outstanding disciples of Henry George was Franz Oppenheimer, who, in founding Merhavia, attempted to realize his theories in Palestine. . . . He developed his master's ideas in his work on 'Communal Settlements,' which had a strong influence on Jewish settlement work. One has only to read the following quotation from Oppenheimer to recognize the influence of Henry George and to realize that Henry George's ideas are as topical to-day as they were 50 years ago:—

"The unchangeable Holy Law in our hearts commands us to re-establish in the Holy Land brotherhood and sensible equality. The Roman law of property is the creation of the bloodthirstiest nation of warriors history has known. It is rightly called the Law of Private Property, as it is a depriving law. Nobody has suffered more from that law of conquest than the Jewish people, dispersed throughout the whole world by the Roman sword. It is not this law of conquest which the Jew has to re-establish in Palestine, but its eternal historic opposite, the law of brotherly co-operation."