

from the value of any improvements carried out by the individual holders with their own capital and at their own risk. That this can be easily and efficiently accomplished has been proved by the example of Denmark and other countries. This completed, the Government would logically collect the value and by employing it to defray the expenses of all communal services, such as roads and harbours, administration and national defence, could ensure that this communally-created value was devoted to the welfare of the Italian people as a whole. None would be able to monopolise anything he had not produced by his labour, directly or indirectly applied; and by reducing other taxation the burden placed upon work and its production could be lifted.

To save capital and employ it without any risk to the public would thus be much easier; and each holding, rural and urban, would naturally evolve to its most economical size. Instead of losing £25 million, the taxpayers would gain; and if the American people desire to assist Italians, by lending individually, and at their own risk and judgment, they would benefit themselves as well as Italy.

The Italian people are not lacking in industrial and commercial ability as well as agricultural. The expansion of such undertakings would require the employment of more labour and, we venture to suggest, a million Italians would not then need to forsake the land of their fathers.

#### PRESS COMMENTS

From the Press reports we take the following observations and comments. The Rome correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, April 18, wrote: "The land reform, always dear to the hearts of the old Christian Democratic Popular parties under Don Sturzo and to the new Christian Democrats is, of course, full of snags. Thousands of the most turbulent landless peasants in Emilia and in South Italy will not make good peasant proprietors, and belong rather to the difficult class of the unemployable. [The old excuse of those who forget that the "destruction of the poor is their poverty!"—Ed., L. & L.] There will be sharp practice on the part of the little proprietors who live in the towns and who will try to masquerade as landless tenants and thus try to increase their holdings. There will be a hundred and one tricks by the big proprietors to pretend that their land is already divided up among different owners . . . It is likely that the Prime Minister will lose the Liberal support in his Cabinet over this reform. For example, his Minister of Justice is a very large Italian landowner . . . Signor de Gaspari reckons that it will cost the State £25,000,000 to get the scheme going."

The Rome correspondent of *The Times*, April 18, said of the scheme that the approximate cost to the State is estimated at about £44 million for the purchase of land and £176 million for its development. [Poor Italy, by what form or forms of taxation, and from whom, is all this ransom to be obtained for handing over to the monopolists of its land?—Ed., L. & L.] Further, on April 20, this correspondent wrote: "The number of private landowners to be called on to contribute (by expropriation) to the plan might reach 8,000. This figure may seem negligible compared with the 9,500,000 private owners of land totalling about 43 million acres, but it must be remembered that nearly 54 per cent. of these owners possess land of one acre or less, while 29 per cent. possess one to four acres and 10 per cent. from four to 10 acres . . . The first rumblings of opposition

to the plan, which will go a long way towards meeting accusations that the Government is following a reactionary policy in favour of the big landowners, are already to be heard. The Liberals and right wing opinion in general challenge its legality. The Communists, realising that Signor de Gaspari and his Minister of Agriculture, Signor Segni, have stolen some of their thunder, are casting about for arguments to convince their agrarian followers that somewhere or other there is a trick in the scheme."

*The Times*, April 19, in a leading article: "Little or no advance can be expected, in a country burdened by a growing agricultural proletariat, as long as land tenure remains as it is. The landless peasants can no longer flock across the sea as of old; nowadays they must stay at home and go hungry. A measure of the need for reform can be had from a few bare figures. According to the census of 1930, since when conditions have scarcely changed, about 3,000 landlords have about 12,500,000 acres, which is 18 per cent. of all the farming land of Italy and represents an average of over 4,000 acres each. At the other end of the scale there swarms a multitude of dwarf-holders, over 650,000 of them, who farm a total of 357,000 acres or about half an acre each. Here is a reason why the Communists, with their campaign against the rich and landed, have gained many adherents among the poor and landless peasants of the Italian south."

#### ISRAEL COULD BE A MODEL STATE

WITH great pleasure we have received a long-awaited letter from Dr. J. J. Pikler, of Budapest, showing that he has been in regular receipt of *LAND & LIBERTY* and has thus been able to follow the developments in the movement to which he is so devoted and has rendered such outstanding service. His great desire is that he could be present at the forthcoming International Conference.

In spite of his advanced years (he is in his 85th), Dr. Pikler retains his activity, which is remarkably exemplified in his two recent contributions to the Vienna Jewish paper *Neue Welt Und Judenstaat*. One of these is entitled "The Way to the Model State" and the other is "Inviolable Human Rights and the Constitution of Israel." He pleads that the social and fiscal basis of the State be the observance of these rights by distinguishing absolutely between that which belongs sacredly to the community and that which belongs sacredly to the individual—namely, that the public revenue be derived by collecting the rent of land and that no taxation or burden be placed upon the fruits of labour. Israel has this opportunity to set a glorious example to the rest of the world, and in this writing the principle and policy enunciated by Henry George is most brilliantly stated. One may be gratified to learn that Dr. Pikler is given this opportunity to offer persuasion to the leaders of the Israeli Government.

At home Dr. Pikler is busily occupied revising a book which he has written in these late years. It is devoted to the four typically possible forms of the social order—total communism, total anarchism, the existing social order, and Georgeism. When he has finished the revision his pupils (some of them visit him twice a month) will have it duplicated in manuscript and it will be his inheritance to them and to the cause.

As for Dr. Pikler's *absent* pupils, he will himself be glad to have our message from two of them, namely, Robert Major in Rome and Louis Hirschfeld in Tangier.