

equalized by carrying out this simple and fundamental reform. He showed too, with the insight of genius and with prophetic foresight, how our civilization which seems to excel and overtop all others will crumble into decay if we do not adjust our economic system so as to secure freedom of trade and of production for all men.

WHERE POLAND WAS WEAK

IN *The Times* of 26th September a correspondent contributed a special article on the position in Poland, which is all the more noteworthy because facts of the kind have been given the certificate of *The Times*. The following extracts refer to the land question:—

In the former Russian and Austrian territories of Poland the agrarian question was a burning one, and the Poles have failed to solve it by thorough-going agrarian reform. One great obstacle was that Polish dominion beyond the Curzon Line was mainly based on the Polish ownership of the big landed estates. Had these estates been broken up completely, although part of them might have been settled with Polish colonists, the local White Russian and Ukrainian peasantry could not have been excluded from a share in the land.

In these eastern provinces the relations between manor house and village were tense, even before the last War; and they have become much tenser in the last 20 years. The Russian armies now entering these provinces need little encouragement from Moscow, Kiev or Minsk to make the White Russian and Ukrainian peasants seize the estates of the Polish big, or merely substantial landowners, who must be deemed lucky if they have escaped with their lives. Probably their Polish officials and retainers, the Catholic clergy, and a good many of the Polish colonists planted in these territories in the last 20 years have also fled or are in danger.

If the Russians had stopped on the Curzon Line, the present population of ethnic Poland would have heard about the horrors beyond the line, about murders of Polish landowners, clergy and colonists, and might have been less affected by the revolutionary aspect of the new régime. But as the Russians advance to the new demarcation line, they are certain to "expropriate" the non-peasant landowners or even so-called "kulaks," also in the purely Polish districts; and however good Poles and Catholics the Polish peasants may be, men who have no land, or too little to live on, will be sorely tempted to seize the land of the big squires, their forests and pastures. The Russian advance into the Polish ethnic territory between the Curzon Line and the Narew, Vistula and San foreshadows a revolutionary change in the social structure of the country.

The Germans, in their attempts to gain the support of the masses—they have no chance of gaining that of the upper and middle classes—can hardly resort to agrarian reform, for they could not carry it through in late Russian Poland and Posnania without applying it also to Upper Silesia, where the peasantry is Polish and many of the big landed estates are German. Polish landowners, *intelligentsia*, clergy and professional men may easily be the victims of mobs, acting without a definite social revolutionary programme—merely taking "vengeance" for the "misfortunes which they have brought on the country by their corrupt policy," and so on.

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The following personal note taken from the *Daily Telegraph*, 28th September, is also significant. It referred to the return of Major-Gen Carton de Wiart from Poland. "For the last 20 years he has lived

The world has not yet learned that lesson. May we hope that our two nations which have contributed so much to political freedom and liberty of thought will set their hands to securing that economic freedom which alone can give wealth and happiness to men, peace between nations, and dignity to life.

eight miles from the Russian border on a 300,000-acre estate lent to him by one of the Radziwill family. It has some of the best wildfowl shooting in the world. . . . Prince Radziwill's property, indeed, is a sportsman's paradise. In addition to its feathered game, it has elk, wild boar, wolves, lynx and bear."

Under the Soviets

The *Manchester Guardian*, 30th October, reports:

The nationalization of banks, important industries, mines and railways, and the confiscation of land were unanimously adopted by the National Assembly of the Western Ukraine in session at Lwow, in Soviet-occupied Poland.

The declaration nationalizing banks, industries, mines and railways proclaimed that this measure was taken "to ensure the ruthless suppression of exploiters and the abolition of the exploitation of man. Henceforward all valuables in banks, all large factories and plants, all mines and railways are proclaimed the property of all the people—that is, State property."

The declaration enacting the confiscation of land said:

"The only lawful master of the land of the Western Ukraine liberated from the landlords and capitalists is the working people. In full conformity with the unanimous will and aspirations of the working people of the Western Ukraine, protecting their immediate and vital interests, following the example of the peoples of the Soviet Union, the Ukrainian National Assembly proclaims on the territory of the Western Ukraine the confiscation of land belonging to landlords, monasteries and high officials, with all livestock, implements and estate buildings.

"The National Assembly approves the alienation of landed estates without compensation through the peasants' committees under the guidance of provisional administrations and the handing over of this land for the use of the working peasantry. The question of the lands of the 'Ossadniks' (Polish military colonists) will be decided by the peasants' committees.

"All the land of the Western Ukraine, with its mineral resources, all forests and rivers, are proclaimed the possession of all the people—that is, State property.

"The Ukrainian National Assembly calls upon all those who toil on the land and the peasants' committees to observe iron revolutionary discipline and to protect against plundering the former landlords' estates, buildings and implements now the sacred and inviolate possession of the people. Only the peasants' committees are entitled to distribute the landlords' land. Only the peasants' committees are entitled to dispose of the landlords' properties."

The newly elected National Assembly of Western White Russia—the other district into which the Soviets have divided the Soviet-occupied area of Poland—met at Bialystok on 28th October. Proposals for the establishment of the Soviet system, the incorporation of the territory in the Soviet White Russian Republic, the confiscation of landed estates and the nationalization of banks and heavy industry were placed on the agenda.—*Reuter*.