

## NEWS—FOREIGN

## Bulgaria

**B**ULGARIA is essentially an agricultural country. Forty years ago when she began as a free State the more equal distribution of the soil may be traced to the fact that the population was much smaller, and the community possessed land to which the industries might obtain access. Community land was not scarce at the time. The Turkish common law provided for large areas of inalienable community land and so opportunities for work were plentiful to those who desired it. Since Bulgaria had been administered under this law for several centuries, it strongly influenced new legislation. The small holdings were many and flourishing and the land question had not become acute.

As time went on conditions changed. Prosperity increased, towns were growing, public improvements grew, and as a matter of course, land values were constantly mounting. Public revenues were raised in the usual unwise and harmful way, while community-created values were allowed to go into private pockets. Community land now began to be looked upon merely as profitable real estate that might be sold upon occasion for the purpose of bringing in revenue. A tendency profitable to landlordism set in and conditions grew that militated against small holdings, though there are still a large number of peasants that possess their own lands. I think I may venture the prophesy that within a short period the nation will witness the failure of the small holdings system which we are still so proud of. That it is rapidly tending to failure is proved by the fact that the government is recurring to a plan of reforming the standard of land owning. What is aimed at is a more equal redistribution of land.

Nevertheless, the present land reform in Bulgaria is not a trifling one. It is a measure of some scope, and starts from a point worth consideration by the readers of the REVIEW. I wish to expound to your readers the new Labor Property Act whose advent was hailed by no less an authority on land reform than Adolph Damaschke. I will try to point out the fallacy and probability of ultimate failure of such attempts to bring about a sound and thorough land reform.

The Agrarian Party which holds at present the real political power in the country, saw the predicament in which the agricultural masses were placed and tried to find a way out. They were induced to do so because practically all their support is derived from the small farmers that are threatened by approaching land monopolization. While the agrarian statesmen were anxious to prevent the total failure of the cherished system they could conceive of no far reaching measure of reform, and confined themselves to a palliative that at best would only be temporary.

The fundamental principle announced in this act is in accordance with Single Tax beliefs. It is expressed as follows: Nobody is entitled to possess more land than he

has need of to develop his working powers and those of the members of his family. In exceptional cases he may be assisted by others as well. Further it is stated that the scope of private ownership cannot exceed 5 acres in case the proprietor is cultivating the land himself, or together with his family. Thus a small amount of landlordism is provided for. The property of such persons as do not cultivate their land is limited to 10 acres if the proprietor is alone, and to 25 in case he has a family. In order to carry out these provisions the State is empowered to acquire all land that does not fall in the categories mentioned above and then proceed to distribute it among the landless. Of course, an indemnification of the landlords is embodied in the measure. Accordingly the whole Land Reform may be reduced to compulsory sales on the part of the latter and a rather fair offer of land to those who have hitherto been divorced from it. The indemnification is fixed at the average prices of land between 1905 and 1915. Owing to the depreciation of the currency the present price is much above that average. Now if we take into consideration the conditions of modern life now prevailing in Bulgaria, and along with this the fact that her population is constantly increasing, it is seen that another redistribution of land would be required within a few decades.

That the principle stated at the outset could have been thoroughly realized by an application of the taxation of land values did not occur to our Agrarian statesmen. They have failed to see that if they started to confiscate rent, the dismal phenomena of landlordism would soon disappear, and there would be no possibility of its emerging again.

Moreover, the present land reform does not apply to land in and near the towns, ports, highways, mines, etc. Thus the reform of our land system, while announcing at the outset principles to which we subscribe, falls short in scope and duration of providing any adequate remedy. Hence the slogan of the Georgists in this country—Single Tax versus Land Reform!

Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

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## Brazil

**S**UBSTANTIAL progress toward Single Tax legislation is reported to us from the State of Sao Paulo. Dr. Washington Luis, President of the State, who has long manifested his leaning toward the Georgist philosophy, decided early this year to consult with an expert on property valuation. Accordingly, Dr. Garcia Martinez, who had carried out the valuation of the City of Montevideo, was invited to come to Sao Paulo to discuss the organization of the same service there. A Bill establishing the tax on land values, apart from improvements, will be presented to the State Legislature at the opening of the sessions in July. In the event of the Bill becoming Law, it is understood that, first of all, the export taxes and the taxes on sales of real estate will immediately be suppressed.

The Agricultural Society of Sao Paulo has been a strong