

has discovered that the land companies are a hindrance to the development of our colonies, an expedient must be found to put a stop to the grievance, such as has been adopted in Kiaochow."

And it may now be said that the repetition of mistakes made in the past in regard to the disposal of land in our colonies has been rendered impossible by the energetic agitation of the League of Land Reformers. Many colonies have carried through land taxation, for instance Southwest Africa since 1909. In the same year the ordinance for Togo was promulgated, according to which rights over ownerless land can only be acquired subject to the consent of the Colonial Governor.

(To be continued).

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## THE GERMAN LAND REFORM LEAGUE AND PARTY POLITICS.

*(For the Review.)*

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By H. FREESE, Honorary President Bodenreform League.

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*(Translated by Grace Isabel Colbron)*

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The question of the attitude taken by the Land Reform League towards the various political parties is one that comes up constantly. To my mind it is a question which touches the very existence of the League and I would like to make my own position at least clear in the matter.

In the very beginnings of the League, in its prenatal days in fact, the question of its partisanship already demanded an answer. The matter came up in the very first Land Reform meeting in Berlin. This meeting took place some time about the middle of the 80's in the Brandenburg City Hall in Berlin. It was called by the Democratic Club, or at least organized by this association. This club itself had been founded by a group of former members of the Progressive Party when the party changed itself into the *Freisinnige* party. These members, dissatisfied by the change of affairs, made an association of their own which they called the Democratic Club. Several men who latter became prominent in the Land Reform movement, Herr von Helldorf-Baumersrode, Attorney Depner, the writers Hilderbrandt and Max Sebaldt, were present at the meeting. I regret exceedingly that I cannot in any way ascertain the exact date of this first Berlin Land Reform meeting. But I do know that during the course of it Mr. Michael Flürscheim, the founder and part owner of the Gaggenau Iron Works, made a speech on the Land Question which was so convincing that it won me completely to the movement. The discussion which followed this speech concerned itself with the question as to what attitude we should take towards the various political parties. Opinions differed widely among those present. The majority were members of the Democratic Club and seemed inclined to take the question

of Land Reform as a plank for their party platform. Herr von Helldorf-Baumersrode asserted that no success for the movement could be possible unless some established political party took it up. He was a Democrat by party affiliation although not a member of the club.

If the newly organized Democratic party had utilized the opportunity offered it, the question of partisanship for Land Reformers might have been decided once for all. Land Reform would become the economic creed of a new political party, the aim of which was to make a place for itself midway between the Social Democracy and the Liberals of Manchester inclinations. It would not have been easy to win this place, for, in South Germany at least, the South-German party filled the need completely. And in North Germany Eugen Richter's Freisinnige party was rapidly growing in power.

It was soon clear however, that the new born Democratic party was built up on no more sensible and economic foundation than were any of the older parties. Some of its influential members raised an energetic protest against so dangerous an innovation from traditional politics, notably the well-known Leipziz lawyer, Melos. So this matter fell through.

Friends had taken me to this meeting, but in spite of being an outsider I raised my voice against the combining of political and economic demands. I could hardly have done otherwise, as I was then a convinced member of the Freisinnige party. But Land Reform offered to me an economic programme which filled me with enthusiasm, and which dwarfed in my eyes all subjects of merely political conflict, such as tariff or free trade, direct or indirect taxation, gold or silver coinage, religious or non-religious schools and the like. Even the question of a constitutional or monarchical form of government, of a republic or a monarchy, seemed to me of very little importance compared with the question of ownership of the land. In my opinion, the land question could unite in enthusiastic work men of all political parties and I did not wish that it should be weakened by being attached to the destinies, to the mistakes and weaknesses of any existing political party.

It is often asked nowadays whether this conviction which came to me when I first saw the light is still as strong, still as justified. For my own part I can only say that it is. The first Land Reform Association for which at the above mentioned meeting I suggested the name "Land Reform," although I did not join it as a member, was short-lived. Then Flürscheim organized the "German League for Ownership Land Reform." After his experience in this first meeting Flürscheim did not make the mistake of attaching himself to the Democratic party and its utterly colorless existence. He kept his association free from all partisanship. Its first members were almost entirely of the extreme Left, among them a large number of convinced Social Democrats. As the movement grew, however, a number of members of the more conservative parties joined the Land Reformers and began a more or less effective propaganda in their own circles. A number of evangelical clergymen joined the association, something which was only possible as long as the League remained unpartisan.

In November 1892 the Social Democrats under the leadership of Dr. Leo Arons drew up a resolution disagreeing with my administration, and towards the end of the year 1893 they all withdrew from the League, as their resolution had not been adopted by the other members. Since then the Social Democrats have had nothing whatever to do with our work, but members of almost all the other parties have joined the League and have spread our doctrines among their own parties. This was possible only as long as we remained quite unpartisan, and untouched by the actual political conflict. Anyone who has ever been through the political battle knows that the fight is made not against the things our antagonists say as much as against the things they do not say. An association which remains neutral between the parties stands above them all. This, it seems to me, is the position the Land Reform League should take.

It is not an easy position to keep and it demands from the members of the League much tact, self-control and diplomacy. But I am happy to say that our members have thus far never shown any lack of these qualities and I believe that they will continue to show no lack of them in the future.

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## THE ABOLITION OF POVERTY BY THE RESTORATION OF EQUAL RIGHTS TO THE USE OF THE EARTH.

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### AN APPEAL TO THE WHITE SLAVES OF LANDLORDISM.

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By GUSTAV BÜSCHER, of Zurich, Switzerland.

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*(Translated expressly for the Single Tax Review.)*

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### CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

#### AN APPEAL TO THE READER.

One final word. You who have been won for the good cause, the cause of the emancipation of the whole human race, do not allow yourselves to be deceived by the hope that the prevailing injustice can be abolished by words without deeds. Words without deeds can never lead to victory. Words without deeds remain mere empty noise, "sound and fury signifying nothing."

Nor should you ever seek to win people for the good cause who do not firmly believe that Justice must necessarily result in the well-being of all. I have spoken of the advantages of recognizing the equal claim of all to the use of the earth, not to convince, but to give some insight into its meaning. He who thinks rightly must believe that a cause based upon Justice must necessarily bring salvation to mankind. Where this conviction is wanting, there all other persuasion will be futile.