

## News From Malta

### LAND AND FREEDOM SEIZED AS SEDITIONOUS LITERATURE

IN 1929 Dr. Joseph Orlando celebrated the Jubilee of Progress and Poverty by laying on the table of our parliament a bill to tax land values. Those veterans of our movement who remember the "bitter eighties" will appreciate the statement that Malta is fifty years behind her times.

When parliament was dissolved he sought re-election; but as the local bishops imposed a ban on all who voted for the labor and constitutional parties the elections were postponed. When they were resumed proclamations were suddenly issued, and as suddenly repealed, which made it illegal to hold meetings in sundry places where it is customary to hold them. That favored certain parties and injured others, so in the end all parties at one time or another ignored those ill-advised proclamations. His Excellency the Governor granted forgiveness to all offenders except the meeting held in Dr. Orlando's district. He and other leaders were arrested, found guilty; some being first offenders were warned, the others imprisoned.

In October, 1931, when His Excellency was inaugurated, he said: "My only desire is to see the people of Malta prosperous and happy." In his candlemass speech of 1932 he repeated that statement, adding "that he also wished to enable responsible government to be restored," but in his candlemass speech of 1933 he said: "that which I then told you I wished for has come about and responsible government has been restored."

But Malta today is further from prosperity than it ever has been during the recollection of the present generation. A hundred years ago one-third of Malta was government land, its rent was public revenue. His Excellency and his predecessors have alienated into private ownership more than a half of that land, and have imposed taxes principally on the poor, to recoup that loss.

These acts here, as elsewhere, have created unemployment and poverty.

Thus he confessed that he had ceased even to desire to make the people prosperous. For that change there were two reasons. First he had learned that the only way in which he could make the people prosperous is the way taught by Dr. McGlynn; and secondly that: His Grace the Archbishop "does not in any way approve of Dr. McGlynn's opinion."

Where the sovereignty of God and His justice are established no man is anxious as to how he can get food and clothing and no government fears riots; but in Malta a retired government official, in his evidence before the royal commission, stated that the alternative to this was the passage by His Excellency as president of the nominated council which governs Malta in reserved matters of a

sedition propaganda ordinance, professedly to nip in the bud the plant he had sown.

Under that ordinance he signed warrants for the arrest of six leaders of the labor movement, including Mr. Orlando, on the ground that they had kept in their possession literature which it declared was seditious. But the ordinance expressly stated that those are exempt who have a *lawful excuse* to keep in their possession such literature. That clearly includes all journalists, and the trial brought to light that some of the accused had actually used said literature as basis of their articles against sedition.

He also brought to light that while the middle and lower classes in Malta are expected to know at sight what is seditious literature yet the highest legal talent that the government could buy "retained for further consideration" *Land and Liberty*, LAND AND FREEDOM, and other literature which had been seized from Mr. Orlando. Finally they acknowledge that there was nothing seditious in the first two. Other literature was considered seditious and was lodged in court, and included "Set My People Free," and a "Freeman's Citizenship."

ERNEST GEOGHEGAN.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### A VALUABLE WORK\*

Nothing can be more fascinating, more fruitful of profitable conclusions than the study of the ideas that have impelled the human race toward progress. Mr. Whitehead has chosen to adventure among various kinds of ideas, summarizing their history. For instance, there is the chapter on the human soul; on the humanitarian ideal; on freedom; on foresight; the laws of nature; science and philosophy; truth; peace—and many other ideas and ideals of humanity. We have had summations of the philosophic systems of the world, but this is the first time, perhaps, that an attempt has been made to garner and arrange in historical order the growth of ideas along many lines.

The author develops a peculiar difference between ancient and modern thought. He calls attention to the fact that slavery dominated and colored all thought in ancient times. Thinkers accepted slavery as the necessary, obvious background. Modern thought on the other hand does not start from the premise that slavery is a natural human condition, inevitable to a large proportion of the earth's inhabitants. This difference of concept, indeed, this change in the picture of civilization—is highly significant.

Pursuing this trend further, is it not possible that some day there may be a third era in human history when men will look back with pity to our time, and marvel that we had such a set concept of the ownership of land, that for thousands of years private property in land was accepted as a necessary condition?

Georgists have been heard to bemoan the fact that the progress of Henry George's fundamental idea is slow. While not intending to shirk present opportunities, and while fully intending to do all that we can to further the cause of Georgism, the following words are nevertheless comforting, and true to a very large extent:

Mr. Whitehead says:

"The slow issue of general ideas into practical consequences is not wholly due to inefficiency of human character. There is a problem to be solved. The difficulty is just this: It may be impossible to conceive a reorganization of society adequate for the removal of some admitted evil without destroying the social organization and the civilization that depends on it. Even the wisest are unable to conceive the

\*Adventures of ideas, by Alfred North Whitehead. Cloth 8 Vo. 381 pp. Price \$3.50. Macmillan Co., New York and London.