

Franz Oppenheimer

Dr. Franz Oppenheimer, sociologist and politician economist, died in Los Angeles September 30 at the age of 79. He came to California in 1940, a refugee from Hitler's Germany. Dr. Oppenheimer was an advocate of the economic philosophy of Henry George.

He was a member of the Board of Editors of the American Journal of Economics and Sociology, published quarterly under a grant from the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation. In volume 1, No. 1, of that publication, dated October 1941, he is listed as follows: "Franz Oppenheimer, Dr. Med., Dr. Phil., (economics and sociology), formerly professor of economics, University of Berlin; author of 'The State,' 'System of Sociology,' editor and contributor to professional journals."

In the same issue of the American Journal of Economics and Sociology, he concludes a "Forward to a Venture in Scientific Synthesis," with this statement: "Social science, I believe, must follow to the end the way that Henry George opened up but was not chosen to accomplish. Ours is the task of breaking up the monopoly of land in order to bless mankind at last with full freedom, real competition and true democracy."

Dr. Oppenheimer was born in Berlin and was graduated a physician. As a young physician with working class patients his attention was drawn to the fact that behind the physical ills of his patients was the economic causation of poverty. He therefore quit medicine, took his doctorate in philosophy at the University of Berlin, specializing in economics and sociology. He became a lecturer of economics at the Berlin University in 1909 and a professor of sociology at the University of Frankfurt in 1919.

According to an obituary notice in the New York Times, Dr. Oppenheimer, "was one of the first half-dozen sociologists of pre-Hitler Germany and one of the leading German economists during the first two decades of this century." His best known work, "The State," went through various editions in the United States and was translated into the important languages of the world.

He was a critic of Karl Marx and in the American Journal of Economics and Sociology, a series of four articles by him entitled: "Communism and the World Crisis," showed, to use Dr. Oppenheimer's own words, "how inextricably Marx entangled himself in contradictions."

He was one of the leaders of the German Bodenreform movement and carried on agitation for the breaking up of the great landed estates held by the Prussian Junkers.

Some of Dr. Oppenheimer's most talented pupils are now professors of economics in American colleges. A daughter, Renate, and a sister, the wife of George Stainmdorf, Egyptologist, live in Los Angeles. Two sons, Ludwig, who carried on his father's work in land reform, and Heinz, who is an agricultural scientist, live in Palestine.