

Land Reform in Japan

GENERAL DOUGLAS MAC ARTHUR, chief of the Allied Occupation Forces in Japan, has succeeded in bringing about an agrarian land reform in that country which has now been completed. Before 1945, Japan was a land-lord-ridden country. Half its farms were tenant-operated. Tenancy has now been reduced to 13 per cent. Land holdings have now been broken up into small holdings, which will permit Japan, long noted for its intensive agriculture, to pursue the path to democratic freedom and progressive civilization on which Denmark has been the trail-blazer. The wealthiest villager in Nakago, who had 97 acres before the reform, now has six. It is the same everywhere; with only a few exceptions, carefully delineated, nobody can own more than six acres or rent out more than three.

It is to be hoped that the smallholders of Japan will now tie the sack to the political parties that would exploit them and develop a political party of their own, so as to forge ahead as the Danish housemen have done. The land reform is a good beginning, but it is only a beginning. What is needed now is tax reform (for which General Mac Arthur, incidentally, has also been pressing), tariff reform, monopoly regulation, the development of co-operatives, an agricultural extension program dominated by the smallholder and a host of similar measures designed to insure progress by safeguarding the freedom of the individual and equality of opportunity. Most important of all, the benefits of the land reform must be protected for all time by a rent socialization program, which would permit the whole nation to enjoy the benefits of the most advantageous sites while permitting the individual to enjoy the full benefits of his improvements in and on the land.

There is much to be done. But for the measure of progress that has been achieved, General Mac Arthur, and the supporters of the agrarian reform program in the United States Department of State, deserve the congratulations of all advocates of ethical democracy.

W. L.

Expansion of National Fund Land in Palestine

A SPOKESMAN for the Jewish National Fund organization, according to a Transjordan source, said it had been decided to purchase 2,500,000 feddan of land in Palestine during 1949. The spokesman said the area would be equal to the total purchased in the last fifty years. This should increase the importance of the Palestine experiment for students of land tenure.