

HENRY GEORGE IN WEST GERMANY

By Emanuel Mandel

THIS summer Georgists from all over the world will hold a convention in West Germany, which is a good thing. But will the ideals of Henry George be inculcated in the minds of a people who within a generation have been led into two disastrous wars by their leaders? One would like to believe that the present government is free and democratic, yet within its body politic are many who are unrepentant for the crimes committed by the past regime. Moreover, while the power of Naziism has been destroyed, there still remains the nucleus of that which made it possible. The Hitlers, Goerings and Goebbels are no more, but the Krupps, Schachts and land-owning Junkers are very much alive.

There is no doubt that Germans, like any other people, particularly those who have felt the brunt of war, want to live in peace. But should a period of depression and unemployment prevail, undoubtedly the same cliques which supported Hitler would support another demagogue seeking political power by exploiting the misery of the hungry.

The coming convention provides a fine opportunity for Georgists to instill in the minds of the West Germans (and East Germans as well) the cause of the debacles which wrecked their country. One good way to do so would be to publicize a pamphlet called "Why the German Republic Fell," written by Bruno Heilig, an Austrian journalist now living in England. In his work, Mr. Heilig relates how, dur-

ing the inflationary period following the First World War, when the necessities of life carried exorbitant prices and unemployment was widely prevalent, the land monopolists were enjoying a field day. While nominally the old regime which had flourished under the last Kaiser no longer existed, in fact that great militaristic land-owning class, the Junkers, remained very much in evidence. Controlling the land, they controlled the press and industry as well; and the German people were pathetically dependent on them for their sustenance. Heilig clearly shows, based on his own observations, that in Germany, as in the rest of the world, land monopoly is the fundamental cause of poverty and its consequences.

In the past there has been a Georgist movement in Germany, but this (as elsewhere, unfortunately) was a mere voice in the wilderness. Perhaps it may be hoped that the summer convention will amplify this small voice so that it will be heard throughout all of Germany. What great things might be accomplished were this nation, so pre-eminent in the fields of art, science, music and industry, to emulate its northern neighbor, Denmark, and spread the teachings of Henry George!

Then this country could add proficiency in political economy to its other assets, and create a truly great nation where, the spirit of Henry George pervading, a future of progress might be built on the shambles of the past.