

Bodenreform Survives Nazis

By Rudolph Schmidt

In the November issue of the HENRY GEORGE NEWS Dr. Otto Juliusburger wrote about Dr. Adolf Damaschke's fruitless attempts to procure homes for the veterans after the first world war. Dr. Juliusburger is right in saying that the failure of land reform in Germany is the true reason for the growth of National Socialism and the second world war.

There is, fortunately, an error in Dr. Juliusburger's letter. He says, "the former German Land Reform Movement." However, the German Land Reform movement which was founded by Adolf Damaschke continued to exist after his death in 1935. National Socialism did not succeed in extinguishing the Bund Deutscher Bodenreformer. The movement continued its work under the direction of my father, Dr. Kurt Schmidt, who is one of Adolf Damaschke's oldest co-workers. It was very difficult to steer the movement through all the reefs of Nazi persecution and to edit the movement's journal "Bodenreform." In this journal my father always criticised the Nazi laws which were in contradiction to land reform and their own promises. He did this until 1941 when the editing of "Bodenreform" was prohibited by the Nazis "on account of lack of paper." Since that time the work of the Land Reform movement was stagnant, but my father was in close contact with the members in all of Germany as long as communications permitted. After the allied occupation of Germany we tried immediately to begin our work again, and in September, 1945, we wrote to the Allied Comandantura in order to get a license to continue the work of the "Bund Deutscher Bodenreformer," but until now we have received no answer.

In the meantime a so-called Bodenreform has been achieved in the Russian zone of Germany. Although there are many things to be criticized, there is no way to do this effectively because until now we have not had our own newspaper. But we succeeded in getting in touch with Mr. Madsen in London, editor of LAND AND LIBERTY. In the September issue he published a letter from us, and we have sent him an article about the so-called land reform in the Russian zone which we hope he will also publish.

When we have permission from the Allied Comandantura to begin our work again, we will try to do it in close contact with you and the British Henry George movement because we believe that it was, perhaps, a mistake for the German Land Reform movement to work alone. If we want to work for the peace of the world we must work together.

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