

THE SINGLE TAX REVIEW

A Record of the Progress of Single Tax and Tax Reform
Throughout the World.

LAND REFORM IN GERMANY.

(For the Review)

By DR. W. SCHRAMEIER.

I.

COMMENCEMENT OF THE MOVEMENT.

The German Land Reform Movement was started in 1898. It came into existence at the moment when the League adopted the programme published on the 20th of March of that year, and when the man who formulated this programme took charge of the leadership of the league. That man was A. Damaschke. In his person the movement became embodied. The importance of the movement to the public life of Germany is, in the first instance, due to his energy and enthusiasm.

This is not to say that prior to this time the ideas of land reform were unknown in Germany. The doctrines of the French physiocrats and of the great English political economists, Adam Smith, James Mill and John Stuart Mill had often found attention, and the conclusions therefrom for the taxing of land had been deduced by various eminent writers. In 1852 Karl Arnd of Frankfort-on-Main published his "Die Naturgemasse Steuer," in which principles concerning land taxation are formulated. "If it is not sacred rights," he urges, "but grounds of expediency, on which the state of possessing land is based, this must be subject to modification whenever demanded on grounds of expediency. It is everywhere the general purpose of the state to which that possession must accommodate itself." He aims at a natural taxation, i. e., a land taxation intended to take the place of indirect taxation. The genial Friedrich List, in his "Wirthschaftliche Reform des Konigreichs Ungarn," (Economic Reform of the Kingdom of Hungary) as early as 1845 pointed to the unearned increment on lands and declared, "If by constructing waterways, roads, and railways, the State often causes a twentyfold enhancement of land values, the State should, at future sales, take a tax of at least half the increment." A number of names may be quoted, Gossen, Samter and others, and in recent times particularly Professor Adolf Wagner, have all labored in the same direction. In glancing over the long list, not only in Germany, but in other coun-

tries as well, we may state that the problems of land taxation contain no postulates peculiar to any special times, or interesting one people more than another. The problems of the equal right to land runs through the history of almost every country; it has been the starting point for more than one revolutionary movement in the life of nations. Very small practical value, indeed, can result in research to discover who first established certain principles of land reform and demonstrated their necessity to the social order. It is not that one thinker or practician seems to have adopted it from the other: Wherever there is a conformity of postulates, it often rests on the fact that great economic or social truths have, under certain conditions, been at all times discovered and proclaimed.

HENRY GEORGE'S INFLUENCE ON THE PIONEERS OF THE MOVEMENT.

But the mere discovering and proclaiming of a truth does not make it productive. It must be reduced to life or be made the object of an effective propaganda for attaining this end. The truth of the French physiocrats, whose aims, of course, differ from those of modern land reformers, and the ingenious theories also of a Mill, of a List and others would have been buried and supplanted by others, if they had not become real postulates of the day brought home to the masses. Without any contradiction Henry George is, for this reason, called the father of land reform, regardless of the fact that this doctrine existed before him. It was the manner in which he brought home his ideas to the conscience of the people, his ardent eloquence, his buoyant and enthusiastic style, which secured for himself this unique position. And it is in close connection with Henry George doctrines that the land reform movement has spread in Germany, supported by leaders who are entirely devoted to the realization of these ideas, fostered by the enthusiasm which enraptured the masses and carried them forth to the spheres of the knowledge of right and truth.

In saying that the German movement is identified with the name of Damaschke, it must not be left unnoted that before him there were tendencies in this country to direct the land question into the current of political life. One of the earliest pioneers, A. Theod. Stamm, in the third edition of his book "Die Erlosung der darbenden Menschheit" (The Rescue of Starving Mankind), even claims, that he had sown the seed in Germany which had thereupon in America grown and developed its finest blossoms in Henry George, and says, "The Society for Promoting Humanism (Verein fur humanismus) started at Berlin by myself and kindred spirits in April 1874 stood firm against private ownership in land. The Society spread their programme by distributing thousands of pamphlets and numerous newspapers in America and abroad, and similar societies for land reform were formed in the United States. In the States the agitation was not confined to German circles, and as consequence of the initiated movement, the excellent book by Henry George, 'Progress and Poverty,' appeared. The principal results of the publication, 'Rescue of Starving Mankind,' and of the arguments as promulgated by the Society and

printed as early as 1870-71 are repeated here in the technical terms of the old school of political economy."

Henry George himself expressed his opinion on this statement and declared in the monthly *Deutsch Land*, Vol. 1, Page 69, "At the time when I was writing *Progress and Poverty* I had neither heard of Dr. Stamm nor of his book, nor of the Society for Promoting Humanism, nor of any other publication or efforts made in Germany, but I am perfectly willing to leave to Dr. Stamm the honor of having been in the field before me. When I spoke at Oxford, England, Mr. Marshall, professor of political economy at the University, declared that there was nothing in *Progress and Poverty* which was both new and true. I replied that I was perfectly willing to accept his characterization of my book, *for what ever is true, cannot be new*. And the fact that so many men arrived there independently, is certain proof to me that the conclusions I have drawn must, in their essentials, be true."

ERRORS AND MISTAKES.

There are several accounts concerning the first efforts of the German land reformers, two of which contain rather exhaustive material for the formation of an opinion, viz: Dr. Hans Wehberg on "A. Theod. Stamm und die Anfänge der deutschen Bodenbewegung" (A. Theod. Stamm and the beginnings of ~~German Land Reform~~) (1911), and A. Damaschke "Zur Geschichte der deutsch-~~German Land Reform~~" (1911), and A. Damaschke "Zur Geschichte der deutschen Bodenreformbewegung" (Papers relating to the History of the German Land Reform Movement). On reading the former it becomes plain why the movement in which able men like Michael Flürscheim, Theodor Hertzka, Dr. Wehberg, C. F. W. Van der Leeden and Heinrich Freese were concerned and from which emerged "Der Deutsche Bund für Bodenbesitzreform" (German League for Land Property Reform) in 1888, only succeeded to a semblance of life and eventually had to die out, because practical aims were wanting and activity was wasted on utopian schemes. The seat of the league was Baden-Baden, then Düsseldorf, and finally, since autumn 1890, Berlin. From that time until the spring of 1898 H. Freese was president. Hertzka went to Africa, there to realize his dream in Free Land; Flürscheim devoted his energies to the province of Sinoloa in Mexico; Franz Oppenheimer, later on, proposed a colonial corporation in Germany—all experiments failed by reason of the shortcomings of men, means and ideas. Stamm and Flürscheim were at feud with each other over the priority of their theories. It was only natural that with such quarreling the small sect which numbered never more than about 100 members eventually fell to pieces. Notwithstanding many a good intention the intrinsic, vital strength was wanting; over the accentuation of the "Pure Idea" which assumed different forms in the various minds, no practical results were achieved, which in politics can alone lend stability to an idea.

Dr. Wehberg is perfectly right in deploring, at the end of his publication, that the development of the German land reform idea has been checked by too many rivalries, both of a personal and a real nature. "Even at present such

want of concord still exists. Since a new programme has been submitted to the league, many members have become discontented. 'Flürsheim, also the founder of the league,' he continues, 'has declared that the League of German Land Reformers cannot be taken seriously, and the honorary member of the League, Freese, differs from the leaders in regard to the object of the league. But this," Wehberg winds up, "is characteristic of the history of the land reform movement, that during the times when enthusiastic pioneers of the movement tried to bring home to the masses the pure idea, all efforts failed, and that, on giving the League a programme, by which the old leaders were estranged, crowds of adherents joined the league."

THE PURE DOCTRINE.

The pure idea! What a check on progress it is that men, in position to foster it, cannot get over this. Countess Hatzfeld, La Salle's friend, once wrote in defence of that great democrat: "Men with nothing but honest sentiment who always take up the position of looking at future events from an ideal and vague point of view and base thereon their present actions, may otherwise be regarded as very worthy people indeed, but they are absolutely useless and quite unfit for actions which are to have a real influence on the course of events." And again she writes: "La Salle knew one thing more than these people. That is, that by a mere exclaiming of a word the object of one's desires is not obtained. Politics mean actual influence on events, and this influence only can be realized by the weighing and the utilization of the actual elements. Trying to argue these away is childish and of little use; they, nevertheless, make themselves felt with sufficient force."

Wehberg's account has been set right by the witnesses to whom he refers. H. Freese, who, to this day, is a member of the League, says "On looking through the early numbers of *Freiland*, our League's journal in those days, it will be found that the small association at the time developed great activity. It continued to win, in increasing measure, public acknowledgment and approval. Since the present Chairman took charge of the League, the number of adherents has, owing to his great personal activity, constantly grown and with it the influence of the League on legislation. The immediate postulates which the League has advocated since its formation are identical with those contained in the first programme of 1888 and 1890. The difference is that we have given another formulation to the theses established by Flürsheim and placed at the beginning of the programme, and measures and methods on the hopelessness of which if generally applied, there was some doubt, have been replaced by others, on the practicability of which we are all agreed."

Flürsheim has also defined his position with regard to Progress and Poverty. With all the esteem he feels for Henry George, with whom he had personal intercourse, he has, in course of time, arrived at opinions differing from those of his master. In his late work, "Not aus Ueberfluss" (Distress from Abundance), a summary of his views of life, he proclaims that the advantage of nationalization of land over the Single Tax system lies not alone

in the field of principle but also in the field of expediency. "Whereas nationalization of land can be realized by means which commend themselves to the sense of justice and fairness of the average citizen, the Single Tax appeals to the instincts of robbery, and can never hope to convert a majority of the nation." He, of course does not agree with the objects of the League of Land Reformers, of which Damaschke accepted the Chairmanship only on condition that everything which looked like the postulate of nationalization of land with the ensuing leasehold system, should be suppressed in the programme. Flürscheim openly confesses in the *Bodenreform* of June 5th, 1911: "I wish to explicitly state my conviction, which I have always held, that without Damaschke our League, at the time would have ceased to exist. By practising the wisdom of moderation, he achieved what we all admire to-day and created an organization which seems destined to accomplish greater things. At the end of my life-work I feel pleasure in admitting this."

THEORY AND PRACTICE.

From among errors of many kinds the German League of Land Reformers has thus grown up. Before finding the path to practical work, the league had to wind its way through much tangled brushwood and waste tracts. How different Damaschke's account of the early movement reads! It does not lament the ideals temporarily laid aside with all the passionate disputes about them, but evolves, with ever increasing clearness, the points on which practical work may be begun. Here there is a spirited overcoming of all obstacles and obstructions. "As usual with the birth of each new movement, much sentimentality accompanied it in its earlier stages. The principal concern was, that the final aim be not marred. The programme proclamation embraced, of course, the social problem in its absolute entirety. Under these circumstances it was the great merit of Heinrich Freese's business acumen to have demonstrated by a concrete example, how the highest ideal can be reduced to practical experience and what blessings may be derived, directly and indirectly from a realization of land reform ideas. Much consideration has been devoted to the question of the condition of workmen in the building trade, as raised by Freese, and with great success. Among the artisans and workmen the land reformers were widely looked upon as disinterested, courageous champions of their rights. The proclaiming of a "pure" principle is a somewhat peculiar matter. In the long run people are not satisfied with a brilliant principle, merely: they want to see the steps leading to it, or at least the possibility of constructing the steps. Besides, the arrangement of lectures is one thing and the sober, often minute, but still unavoidable detail work, which cannot be separated from the building up of any organization, is another."

During the sterile discussion of the preceding years it had become plain to Damaschke that if the ideas of Henry George, the land reform apostle, were to gain a footing in Germany, and if they were to bring about a transformation of social life, it would be absolutely necessary to divest them of their abstract forms and mould them into practical shape. It was not in keeping with his

active nature to reason on the "pure doctrine;" with a firm grip he made the most of the smaller opportunities for activity, such as were prepared by Freese, R. Berg, and Dr. Oertmann. Thanks are due to him that the fantastic Debating Club developed into a League with attainable aims; that a disputing sect of visionaries outvying each other in the profitless discussion of humanitarian problems, was steadfastly turned into a buoyant league of devoted workers.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MODERATION.

Hic Rhodus, hic salta is the password. We are not living in Utopia. We demand what *can* be done at once in order to make useful in Germany the land reform teaching in its various branches. "We do not claim to possess the art of making the world perfect by one stroke," said Pohlman in 1904 in the journal *Bodenreform*; "just as little as we pretend to be able to do away with the inequality of men. But we do consider the removal of a serious anomaly in our economical evolution, i. e., the appropriation of ground rent by private capital, to be the preliminary of all modern reform. We do not believe, as orthodox Marxists do, in the possibility of regulating the whole economic organism like a machine. All we are trying to create are the necessary preliminaries for a sound social evolution, and for the rest leave sufficient elbow room for all individual effort. There is nothing to prevent our land reform friends joining in hygienic, pedagogic, unionist, or co-operative movements, but all are united in the conviction that to all these efforts the highest results will be denied until our land laws have been reformed."

Beyond a clear emphasizing of the object in view, there was required a certain limitation of the problems, the avoidance of all unnecessary burdens, the elimination of political party questions and religious disputes. Let us hear how Damaschke himself argues this point: "The decision," he said in 1906, "will always be hard if economic postulates are established as coercive deductions of land reform principles. I need only refer to the question of Free Trade or Protection, which before the last elections for the Reichstag were dominating issues in the public life of Germany. A number of friends demanded that our League should declare for Free Trade, and, no doubt, there were strong arguments for such a course. In this regard much effect was produced by references to Henry George's "Protection or Free Trade," a book which has contributed perhaps more than all other publications to defeat Chamberlain's campaign against Free Trade in England. Not only the English movement, but the majority of American land reformers as well are on the side of Free Trade, and likewise the entire, fast growing Danish league. Nevertheless, most of the German land reform leaders have adhered to the policy not to make this question a concern of the League. Not without a certain justification, the friends of protection claimed that the German peasantry were not in a position to compete with foreign industry.

Certainly, the German land reformers know that the aim of their teaching involves the abolition of protection. But why, they ask, unfold a question

which is not as yet ripe for final disposition, and which would alienate many friends of the movement, there being so very many problems permitting of the joint action of all? Let us turn, for instance, to Australia which, in land legislation, has attained a more advanced position than any other country. They are doing their best to restore the land to the people, but at the same time they hold fast to protection, going so far as to exclude foreigners, Chinese and Japanese, from touching their shores and from working among them. And I may refer to Henry George himself, who said in 1891: "The truth for which we stand has now made such progress in the minds of men, that it must go on conquering and to conquer. Far off Australia leads the van and has already taken the first step towards the Single Tax." Are we not justified in drawing the conclusion that Henry George himself did welcome their efforts in spite of many short-comings not in strict accordance with his ultimate demands, but dictated perhaps by state reasons?

HENRY GEORGE'S IMPORTANCE TO THE PRESENT GERMAN MOVEMENT.

Henry George's superior genius is the beginning of all modern land reform. With him the land reform movement, which has taken possession of all countries, begins, but it does not end with him. Henry George never dreamed of dogmatizing; he never laid down a system, which could straightway be applied to all conditions and under all circumstances. He restricted himself to his surroundings and therein perhaps lies a certain limitation of his teachings. A number of countries remained unfamiliar to him; he has never been in Germany and had never acquainted himself with German law. When writing his famous book, he had American conditions chiefly in mind; it is to these that nearly all his comparisons, considerations, reform proposals, and postulates refer. To lay them down as applicable to all times and all countries had evidently never been his intention; there can be little doubt that it is more in accordance with the spirit of his teaching that the forms in which his doctrine may be realized be allowed to develop organically and in full freedom. The method proposed by Henry George was "Single Tax," i. e., the taxation of land values apart from those values due to individual exertion. Single Tax seemed to him and his followers to be the most just and, in a social politic sense, the most valuable source of taxation, because it relieves capital and labor from all burden and abrogates the abuses of land, the most important factor in production. To reduce this maxim to practice, several ways are open. The essence of modern land reform rests on the recognition that the doctrine of its founder does not mean an ingenious theory for his adherents, but an *ethical postulate* which is to be reduced to life, and that against traditional resistance, against the fettering usages and neglect of centuries. The means used must be commensurate with circumstances; the application of this ethical postulate in the pastures of New Zealand or in the wheatfields of America may differ from its application in Scotland's hunting grounds, and on the virgin land of a young colony will not be the same as in the overlaid organism of a city like London or Berlin. The form in which Henry George has left the doctrine has nothing

rigid, and it is the German course which has contributed much to deepen and extend his ideas, both scientifically and practically.

LAND REFORM PROGRAMME.

Now, the German land reformers who, in overcoming existing abuses, proceed step by step, try to concentrate their efforts on objects which, at the time being, seem within reach in order to obtain higher aims on the shoulders of accomplished feats. At the same time they remain fully conscious that the smallest step can only be made by keeping the eyes steadily fixed on the ultimate goal. That goal lies in Henry George's principle of an organic reconciliation of social claims with individual freedom, by the means of a just taxation of land values. To Henry George the League of German land reformers owes its existence and its ethical object of life; on the other hand, this League gives the most effective diffusion to Henry George's teachings. There is scarcely any book on land reform which does not refer to his name; he is mentioned at nearly every meeting, and Damaschke, in his standard work on "Bodenreform" and in his History of Political Economy devotes whole chapters to him; Pohlman, Freese, and all other advocates of any consequence speak of him. The works of Henry George are brought into the market by the publishing office of *Bodenreform* and have for years been distributed free of charge. The fact that Henry George's name has become widely known in Germany and that he is in high esteem with the men of science here is, in a large measure, due to the indefatigable pioneer work of the German Land Reformers.

The aims of the German land reform movement are the same as those in other countries, where Henry George is looked upon as father of the movement. In Germany they were framed in April, 1898, by Damaschke as follows, viz:

"The League of German Land Reformers regard the land question as the most important part of the social problem. The object of the League is to ensure that the land, this fundamental factor in national existence, be placed under laws which shall promote its use for industrial and housing purposes, which shall prevent its abuse and which shall secure to the community, as far as possible, the increased value not due to the exertions of the individual owner."

With this programme the systematic activity of the League commenced and gradually spread through all branches of public life. Under this programme the League has been growing from small beginnings to the extensive organization which is now represented in nearly all parts of Germany, and which is an influential factor in public life.

In the very year, almost within the very month's time indeed of the re-organisation of the German League of Land Reformers, an event took place which, though having no connection with the League and quite independent thereof, has always been considered of no mean influence on the progress of our movement. I refer to the inception of the land ordinance of Kiaochow.

In studying the development of the League this event cannot be overlooked; this much is certain, that the League found more than one supporting point in this land ordinance which has been, and still is, of great influence on the direction in which the league is moving. If Henry George thus sums up the essence of his doctrine, "to secure equal rights to land to everyone and, thus, by way of taxation to prevent inflicting hardships on the masses," it was natural that in a young colony like Kiaochow the opportunity to apply this doctrine offered itself with great force to the thinking mind, thus avoiding many difficulties arising at neighbouring ports on the China coast, and the delivery of land from private speculation. Thus from the beginning the maxim was proclaimed, "Neither the Chinese landowner, nor the native cultivators of the soil, is entitled to the increased value of the land which has been exclusively brought about by the German Government, nor can it be tolerated that the first buyers after the occupation shall derive the whole benefit of a subsequent rise in values."

Regarding this system of land tenure in the German colony of Kiaochow I refer to the SINGLE TAX REVIEW for March-April, 1911, where I have given a full account of it. The matter has also been exhaustively dealt with in the "Jahrbuch der Bodenreform" (Annual for Land Reform) for 1911 (page 62), and, in connection therewith, the taxation ordinance for Kiaochow has been treated in the said annual for 1912 (page 168). I therefore confine myself to a short summary.

The guiding principle was first of all to reserve to the Colonial Government the monopoly of purchasing land. For the disposal of the purchased land it had to be considered whether the land required was for charitable purposes or for undertakings like railways, private dockyards, factories, missions, etc. In such cases the land was surrendered partly gratuitously, partly at a nominal charge. For housing the Chinese workmen a modified leasehold system was introduced. In all other cases of land transfers it was sold. In this connection the maxim was established that as far as the increase in value was not due to the exertions of the owner but had been caused by the development of general conditions, i. e., by the surroundings, by the increase of population, by expenses defrayed by government, it should not fall entirely to the individual owner, but that this unearned profit should, as far as possible, be appropriated by the community and the Government. The following provisions were adopted by the Colonial Government with the intention to attain this end: viz

- (1) Public Land Sales by Auction.
- (2) A Land Tax of 6% on the capital value, i. e. after deduction of all improvements.
- (3) The Direct and Indirect Increment Tax of $33\frac{1}{3}\%$ levied at every change of ownership or on owners of land not brought into the market periodically every 25 years. Discrimination is made whether the increment is due to expenditure of capital for improving the land, when no tax is leviable, or when the increment is traceable to causes of a general nature. The general

rule resulting therefrom is that every landowner receives, as rent uncurtailed by taxes, that amount which is in excess of that for the site unimproved. Finally the right of pre-emption for the Colonial Government, and the obligation to build coupled with increased land taxes on a sliding scale in case of non-building form part of the conditions of sale.

INFLUENCE OF THE KIAOCHOW LAND SYSTEM ON THE LAND REFORM MOVEMENT.

The said land ordinance of Kiaochow realized the land reformers' programme in a German Colony suddenly and unexpectedly at the very time when this programme was in course of promulgation by the League. It was quite natural that such legal condition concerning landed property did not long remain without its influence on the land reform movement in Germany. Here they saw a realization of the aims set forth in their programme; the means were simple and practical; above all, the land reformers could point to the fact that Government and Reichstag had vied with each other to give life to these reforms so vastly different from all existing systems of land taxation at home.

The Secretary of State for the Navy, Admiral von Tirpitz, in the beginning of 1899, assured us in a speech on the budget, that the purpose of the land ordinance was, in the first instance, to ensure cheap housing for the colonists and to facilitate settlement; financial intentions were the second consideration. The members of the Reichstag were not sparing in cheers, members of all parties proclaiming their approval of the action of the Government. Eugen Richter said:

"I find that the Colonial Government of Kiaochow deserves praise for the expedient manner in which they try to prevent a few private persons from being benefitted by the increment of their landed property caused by the action of the Government, and that they have devised ingenious measures to get a share of this increment by way of taxation."

In availing themselves of the example of Kiaochow to further their cause the land reformers could point out that what they proposed did actually exist already, and that it had been hailed as a commendable reform by the Reichstag.

The first energetic movement of the new league was directed against the fatal system of large land monopolies in other German Colonies. In a special pamphlet entitled "Kamerun oder Kiautschou" (The Cameroons or Kiaochow) published in the beginning of 1899, Damaschke placed a finger on the main sore of our colonial policy. He said: "The guiding principle may be reduced to the question, is the land in the colonies to be definitely and finally handed over to single groups of speculators, or is it, in any shape or form, to be reserved to the German people?"

"In rising emporiums of commerce like Kiaochow the principle underlying land reform will be carried into effect in a different manner than for instance in the Cameroons or Southwest Africa; that goes without saying; not the form, but the essence is of paramount importance." The initiative of Kiaochow has attained that much, that it has *opened the eyes of the people to the*

unsound conditions connected with the land monopolies in other colonies which have aroused general indignation.

Everything that men like H. von Wissmann and C. von Francois, have done in recognizing the practical necessity of land reform for the African colonies, and what they had failed to do against the opposing interests of the large capitalists, proved eventually to be logical, practicable and self-evident. For the first time in Germany, the colonial land question was, in full detail, treated in the first colonial congress which was held at Berlin in 1902. The referee at that time, von Bornhaupt, in his lecture on the land question in the colonies referred to Kiaochow as follows:

"The idea that the State has a just title to the increased rent of land and the wisdom of appropriating this rent by taxation without confiscation, has here been reduced to reality. So much can be said already that the system has been worked out in a unique manner and that it is felicitously made to suit the peculiar conditions of Kiaochow."

From that time the various colonial associations vied with each other in their manifestations favoring the introduction of the Kiaochow system in all other German colonies.

LAND REFORM AND THE COLONIES.

The League of German Land Reformers did not remain inactive. On the 1st of April 1899 they addressed a petition to the Chancellor praying that the principles underlying the land ordinance of Kiaochow be applied in the other colonies and protectorates. On the 24th of December 1904 they petitioned the Reichstag that a special Commission be appointed to examine the land question in Southwest Africa. An investigation was promised by the Government for the ensuing year.

The energetic agitation was carried far and was the means of acquainting many of the imminent dangers to our colonies. Even some of the Chambers of Commerce made a stand against existing colonial conditions. Thus the Chamber of Commerce for Bremen, on being asked to give its opinion, expressed itself as follows:

"Considering all things, we cannot recommend that the Government, by holding out privileges, should draw companies into the colonies, which, to judge by experiences, are inclined to accept such privileges, but contribute little towards the promotion and development of the colonies. The Government should dispose of crown land subject to the condition that it be utilized forthwith."

In the Annual of Land Reform, a German merchant, Vietor, of Bremen, adduces full statistical material to prove the enormous mistakes committed in connection with the granting of land monopolies to companies and criticizes the Government very severely for its blunders. He comes to the conclusion that the conduct of those companies runs counter to the interests of the German Empire and the German colonies. If this is clearly recognized, how can this untenable condition of things be abrogated? "Once the Government

has discovered that the land companies are a hindrance to the development of our colonies, an expedient must be found to put a stop to the grievance, such as has been adopted in Kiaochow."

And it may now be said that the repetition of mistakes made in the past in regard to the disposal of land in our colonies has been rendered impossible by the energetic agitation of the League of Land Reformers. Many colonies have carried through land taxation, for instance Southwest Africa since 1909. In the same year the ordinance for Togo was promulgated, according to which rights over ownerless land can only be acquired subject to the consent of the Colonial Governor.

(To be continued).

THE GERMAN LAND REFORM LEAGUE AND PARTY POLITICS.

(For the Review.)

By H. FREESE, Honorary President Bodenreform League.

(Translated by Grace Isabel Colbron)

The question of the attitude taken by the Land Reform League towards the various political parties is one that comes up constantly. To my mind it is a question which touches the very existence of the League and I would like to make my own position at least clear in the matter.

In the very beginnings of the League, in its prenatal days in fact, the question of its partisanship already demanded an answer. The matter came up in the very first Land Reform meeting in Berlin. This meeting took place some time about the middle of the 80's in the Brandenburg City Hall in Berlin. It was called by the Democratic Club, or at least organized by this association. This club itself had been founded by a group of former members of the Progressive Party when the party changed itself into the *Freisinnige* party. These members, dissatisfied by the change of affairs, made an association of their own which they called the Democratic Club. Several men who latter became prominent in the Land Reform movement, Herr von Helldorf-Baumersrode, Attorney Depner, the writers Hilderbrandt and Max Sebaldt, were present at the meeting. I regret exceedingly that I cannot in any way ascertain the exact date of this first Berlin Land Reform meeting. But I do know that during the course of it Mr. Michael Flürscheim, the founder and part owner of the Gaggenau Iron Works, made a speech on the Land Question which was so convincing that it won me completely to the movement. The discussion which followed this speech concerned itself with the question as to what attitude we should take towards the various political parties. Opinions differed widely among those present. The majority were members of the Democratic Club and seemed inclined to take the question