



A BOOK THE NAZIS BANNED IS NOW AVAILABLE
AGAIN IN GERMANY IN A NEW TRANSLATION . . .

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ERICH ZINCKE here outlines the circumstances in which he translated the 1953 condensed version of Henry George's classic masterpiece into German.



BEFORE the first World War the ideas of Henry George were among the fundamental principles of general interest to the educated in Germany. They either read Henry George himself or Damaschke and many took part in Damaschke's Union of Land Reformers. Their political influence was considerable. Thus it was that those ideas led to practical measures in the administrative regulations of Kiauchau (1898) that were the basis of the extraordinary development of that leased territory. They were a justly assessed land value tax combined with an increment duty on empty sites. Both measures made land speculation impossible. They were so beneficial that the later occupants, the Japanese, adopted them and even introduced them in Manchuria. The carrying through of the same measures in Germany was prevented mainly by the period of war, inflation and deflation that followed. But still the ideas of Henry George found their place in the Weimar Constitution in article 155 literally in the wording of Damaschke. They were, however, not well enough known and not so generally accepted as to be of decisive success in parliamentary life, though in the municipalities their good effects are still to be felt here and there.

You know what happened then. In 1933 they were outlawed as a pretended subspecies of marxism. The three translations of *Progress and Poverty*—two of them were cheap mass issues—disappeared from the bookshops and from the public libraries, in most cases even from private bookshelves, so that nowadays scarcely any copy is to be found in Germany. The knowledge of Henry George's ideas has correspondingly dropped to zero. . .

In such circumstances it was high time to publish a new German translation. The Robert Schalkenbach Foundation have undertaken this task with great care, prudence, and liberality, so that just in time for the conference *Progress and Poverty* is again available in a cheap edition of the publishing house Econ, Dusseldorf. They, too, are to be thanked for their excellent and swift achievement. The Robert Schalkenbach Foundation have come to their resolution of making this classical economic book again available to the German speaking countries not from some sense of piety or as an anniversary, but because the

economic and political problems discussed in it and brought to a solution are now as real as they were eighty years ago when the book was first published.

But now, I think that many of you would like to hear something of my work of translating, because it was intimately connected with your friend Arthur Madsen.

Well, I knew, even before I began, that my task would not be easy. Elementary English is not difficult for a German to learn. That is why so many people believe that a translation from the English is child's play. But when you climb up to the higher regions of literature and philosophy a translation is just as difficult as a translation from ancient Greek, e.g. Thucydides or Demosthenes or Plato. So I had no illusions and gratefully accepted any help I could get.

First there was my friend Dr. Pfannschmidt. He is a highly graduated university economist. So he could teach me the secret language of his faculty in which I was as innocent as a new-born baby. But, please, I did not want to learn it in order to use it, but in order to avoid it, just as Henry George did in order to be understood by anybody. What, for instance, can you do with the term "land reform"? Land may be fertilised, ploughed, drained, leased, sold, built upon and many other things, but how it may be reformed, is an enigma to me. But then the learned economist will teach you that in this term there is not the question of reforming land but of reforming or changing the right or the laws concerning land ownership. Despondingly you drop your head and do not dare to say: "Funny, why don't you say at once what you really want to say?" Fortunately Henry George does not use this term. And as to the others—e.g. rent, which literally translated in German is "Rente" i.e. a pension—I only needed refer to Henry George who marvellously explains and defines whatever he speaks about.

The second helper was my friend Hellmut A. Hartwig, U.S.A. As an American professor of German he could, of course, best find out where I had not quite grasped the meaning of a word or a sentence.

But most decisive was the help of my youngest and at the same time my oldest friend, Arthur Madsen, the editor

Official Welcome To Hanover

Extract from Address by Burgermeister Barche, deputising for Oberburgermeister Holweg, at the Civic Reception to Members of the Tenth International Conference in the Hanover City Hall.

This is the first time the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade has held its international conference in our town. It is therefore the more heartily that I welcome you in the midst of us. I am glad to have this opportunity of welcoming so many guests from many countries of Europe, from U.S.A. and Canada and even from Australia.

Henry George's ideas about the solution of social problems not only had a wide circulation between the two world wars in Germany, but they even found their place in the Weimar Constitution. Through the events following 1933, however, they were practically extinguished in our country. Nevertheless, we think that these ideas may help to abolish some harmful phenomena that appeared during the reconstruction of our towns. Above all I am thinking here of the land specu-

lation that, after being first artificially locked by "stop prices", has begun to run wilder and wilder. With the growth of the big towns and — as we frequently saw in Hanover — by the change of the use of land caused by the new planning it was inevitable that enormous increases in land values occurred, the profits of which should not be allowed by the community to enrich individuals.

These reflections clearly show us that the ideas of Henry George are as real today as they were at the time of their origin.

Thus it seems to me very good that you all, and especially the Germans among you, should have the sincere wish that this conference may help you to re-establish a German Georgeist organisation of your own within the International Union.

of the condensed edition which is the base of my translation. We met only late in life, in 1956 in Paderborn, where he came for preliminary negotiations concerning the translation and its publication. We were soon in a friendly talk. But on a sudden I had the dim feeling as if he were testing my knowledge of English. This unexpected situation raised my spirits, and as good spirits are infectious we had a splendid evening in our hotel. I was so animated that I did not go to bed when the Madsens retired, but celebrated the day with a quiet drink. Suddenly—I didn't trust my eyes—Mr. Madsen, whom I thought peacefully in Morpheus' arms, came in again, went up to me, and sat down opposite me like Marley's ghost to have another talk with his lonely companion. Very nice! We talked about everything, about God and the world and at last drifted to old English poetry that is ordinarily not too well known in Germany. And Mr. Madsen was rather surprised that whenever he made an allusion or began to quote, this terrible German went on with his quotation. And when we at last went to rest we both knew that we had many things in common.

The next day intensified this feeling. And when we parted I knew that I could never find a better co-operator. And he was glad when I assured him that I would submit to him any passage where I was not quite sure of the meaning.

A long and extensive correspondence followed. I asked him many things and sent him many drafts. Often the discussion went to and fro several times before we found a solution. But there was no case where we could not come to a result that satisfied us both. It was a happy time for him. His letters bristled with joy and humour, and soon he asked me to be allowed to address me by my Christian name. I, of course agreed, and from then on, our letters used to begin with "Dear Erich", "Dear Arthur". This

need not mean much, but our young friendship came to an ordeal where it had to prove its validity. He had difficulties when the first attempt of a manuscript came, in which I had only been the philological adviser. In his younger days he would have easily mastered the situation, but now he was old and his health not so good as it seemed to be. He fell ill and had to go to hospital where he recovered.

When he returned home and resumed work, that translation matter again towered up and troubled him. He asked me to send my full drafts, which, of course, only partly existed, because according to my part in the job I had concentrated on the difficult passages only. What to do now? I saw that he needed them badly. So, without hesitating, I sat down and worked feverishly. And he was glad when one chapter after the other fluttered to his writing desk. He revised them as carefully as ever and added his comments and suggestions with such a regularity that I really thought he had completely recovered. All his letters were full of joy and tranquility. He had indeed already my full translation in his hands, and I was just about to drive to Provence for a holiday when a telegram came that he had suddenly died in the middle of work. I was so depressed that my wife had to urge me forward.

When the Arthur Madsen Memorial Meeting came, we both flew to London in his honour and to see and to hear those who were his friends and to learn who he had been. Much later I was informed that my translation, when completed, would be taken. So in the following year I took it out of the corner where I had packed it away. And always remembering him I completed it. It has been dedicated to his memory. For I think I do not exaggerate when I say that this German edition was his last will and his last service to the cause of Henry George. May his memory last together with the book.