

# Land Reform

## PROGRESS IN ENGLAND AND GERMANY

THE ideas developed more than forty years ago by Henry George in his famous book "Progress and Poverty." ideas, which in Germany are designated under the term "Bodenreform," are slowly but surely winning recognition everywhere. Anyone who has not heard of the great movements inaugurated by Henry George should also read Damaschke's book, "Bodenreform."

The main theme of both books is as follows: 1. Just as the air is the common property of mankind, so the ground is there to be lived on and wrought by all men. It must pass from the hand of the speculator into that of the State, which must not sell it to the individual settler but let it out to him as heritable holding. 2. Indirect taxes should be abolished, and a light tax on cultivated, a heavier on uncultivated land take their place, so as to bring the necessary income to the State without burdening the individual. The latter should then live much more cheaply and each family could have its own house without any great difficulty.

Professor Damaschke is a man of the people. As a young teacher in an elementary school, he read Henry George's book and was inspired by it to consecrate his life to the spreading of its message throughout Germany. He made studies in political and rural economy, and became more and more convinced that an improvement of social conditions could only be achieved by a radical change in hitherto accepted views, and by a practical application of the principle of land reform.

He was confirmed in these opinions when, in 1897, Kiatschau was organized according to the principles of land reform. Great was his joy and that of his colleagues over the practical realization of their long cherished opinions. The rapid prosperity of this colony, now snatched from

Germany, was without doubt due to the working of these measures of land reform.

For 25 years Professor Damaschke has led the Land Reform Society in Berlin. By speeches and pamphlets he has carried out a great pioneer work for the last quarter of a century. Today, as a result of his campaign, the Society counts its membership in hundreds of thousands, among whom are many eminent men and women.

From the point of view of land reform, the most important elections of recent date were those for the Saxon Landtag. The different trade unions, the civil servants' union, the great organizations of ex-service men drew up a proposal for the formation of a State law embodying the principles of land reform, a proposal which received the support of all parties, from the extreme right to the extreme left.

## ENGLAND

In England, too, these ideas have made headway. Lloyd George owes his position not a little to his support of the policy formulated by Henry George.

At the British general elections in November 1922, 24 candidates, belonging to the Asquith and to the Labor Parties were returned as pledged supporters of land reform. But the influence of the movement has a far wider sphere, for all members of the Liberal and Labor Parties are bound by party principles to work for the main idea of land reform. In England that idea is expressed thus: "Comprehensive reform of the present land laws, including State and local taxation of ground rents."

The great work of land reform incorporated in the budget of 1909, and held up by the war is being taken up anew. May it achieve a triumphal procession through the whole world, and thus form a bridge of understanding between nations.

*European Press, Munich, Bavaria.*