

Bread and Democracy in Germany

By

ALEXANDER GERSCHENKRON

Latifundia perdidere Germaniam

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FOREWORD

THE FOLLOWING study by *Alexander Gerschenkron, Lecturer in Economics in the University of California*, is one of a series of research studies conducted under the auspices of the *Bureau of Business and Economic Research of the University*. The Bureau is under the general direction of a committee consisting at present of the following members of the *Departments of Business Administration and Economics*: *Professors J. B. Condliffe* (chairman), Stuart Daggett, Howard S. Ellis,* E. T. Grether (acting chairman), and Paul S. Taylor.**

The opinions expressed in this study are those of the author.

MALCOLM M. DAVISSON,
Acting Director

* Absent on leave, 1943-44.

PREFACE

THE PRESENT ESSAY is concerned with the problem of the German Junkers in the peace settlement after this war. In the two main parts, "Agricultural Protection in the German Empire" and "Junkers versus Republic," the attempt has been made to trace the policies of the East Elbian aristocracy from the days of the agricultural revolution of the 'seventies to Hitler's advent to power in Germany. The primary purpose of this study is to show, first, how, before 1914, the machinery of Junker protectionism in agriculture, coupled with the Junker philosophy—the true forerunner of the Nazi ideology of our days—delayed the development of democratic institutions in Germany; and second, how the Junkers contrived to escape almost unscathed the German revolution of 1918 and how this fact contributed to the constitutional weakness and subsequent disintegration of the Weimar Republic.

The main conclusion of this analysis is that democratic reconstruction of Germany after the victory of the United Nations and insurance of world peace call for a radical elimination of the Junkers as a social and economic group. The prerequisites for such an elimination and the methods by which it may be achieved are discussed in the last part of this study.

It is the conviction of the writer that to "forget" the Junkers this time would threaten the world with new disasters. This essay does not pretend to enter upon untrodden ground. It has been written as a reminder, a reminder of a record that is black indeed. If it helps a little to prevent a new lapse of memory at a moment when great decisions will be taken and grand policies designed, its purpose will be achieved.

This essay was originally begun as a part of the Trade Regulation Project financed by the Rockefeller Foundation and carried on at the University of California. It developed from a chapter of a larger study on "Evolution of State Trading" in which I have been engaged for the past three years. I wish to express my gratitude to Professor

John B. Condliffe, the director of the Trade Regulation Project. The association with him was a source of steady encouragement and stimulation. I wish likewise to thank for his generous help Professor Howard S. Ellis, acting director of the Bureau of Business and Economic Research of the University of California at the time of the preparation of this study for publication. I am also indebted for helpful comments to the members of the Bureau committee. My colleagues of the Trade Regulation Project, Dr. Albert O. Hirschman and Mr. Alexander Stevenson, suggested many valuable improvements. Needless to add, the responsibility for the book is exclusively my own.

I am under obligation to Mrs. Mary Anne Whipple of the University of California Press, who edited the manuscript in a thorough and understanding way. I wish also to thank Mr. Chris Calsoyas for his help with the preparation of the Bibliography and Index and the adaptation of the maps.

A. G.

Berkeley, October 1, 1943

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