PREFACE

Three generations ago Henry George electrified great numbers of our ancestors on both sides of the Atlantic and in Australia and New Zealand. In the history of the English-speaking world there is no other figure who quite compares with him. Driven by a demon of the spirit, an inner force which combined love of God with love of man and desire for fame, George managed to find the language with which to say what many men were ready, and some were longing, to hear.

This was especially true, and early true, in England. *Progress and Poverty* has fallen 'on old and deep lines of thought in my mind,' Philip Wicksteed wrote the author in 1882, from an inner circle of liberal thought and conscience in London. It lit the light he 'vainly sought for' himself. Through minds as keen as Wick- steed's, and through leadership as gifted as Joseph Chamberlain's, the ideas of Henry George influenced English thought, and, more than a little, England's policy. George's ideas deepened the Fabian movement; they helped to give force to trade unions; and they inspired the Radicals who were rising in the Liberal party.

The influence of George on the United States was hardly slower in becoming effective. By the middle '80s surges of acceptance and rejection delighted or dismayed Americans, according to their sentiments. Then gradually his ideas worked their way into the deeper strata of public thought and conscience. When Georgism seized minds of legalistic bent, like Thomas Shearman's, it impelled the single-tax movement, which began during 1887 and 1888 in New York. When it seized practical and political minds, Tom Loftin Johnson's most notably, Georgism entered near its source the stream that later broadened to become the progressive movement of the twentieth century. When, at their farthest reach, the ideas of Henry George engaged literary and philosophical minds, such as George Bernard Shaw's and Leo Tolstoy's abroad, and Hamlin Garland's and Brand Whitlock's in the United States, the moral appeal of *Progress and Poverty* extended with added charm beyond the circle of those who had read

George's books or listened to his lectures or joined organizations, and had pondered his argument for themselves. No other book of the industrial age, dedicated to social reconstruction and conceived within the Western traditions of Christianity and democracy, commanded so much attention as did *Progress and Poverty*. Only *Das Kapital*, conceived outside that tradition, is fairly comparable in purpose of reconstruction, but this book was much slower to catch on than *Progress and Poverty*.

In one respect like *Progress and Poverty* itself, the present biography was begun in California; and more than half the time required for investigation and writing has been devoted to the regional origination of Henry George's thought. Perhaps I should explain that I determined to do this book in the wake of the depression of the '30s, but that I began without the slightest hostage in the Henry George camp. My family had been Republican since 1856; I had cast my first vote for Norman Thomas; and I believed, as I still do, that at the time the New Deal was essentially what the United States needed. I know now that if I had designed my own background to avoid contact with Georgism, I could have chosen no points of political attachment more indifferent to the ideas of the subject of this biography than these three — traditional Republicanism, Thomas socialism, and the New Deal. Only international communism, or some fascism like Huey Long's, would have been wider of the present subject. The nearest American national politics has ever come to George—-and that not very close — was the democracy of Woodrow Wilson. Wilson and George, each in his own way, the later figure not uninfluenced by the earlier, did have a magnificent purpose in common. They each devoted a career to establishing a Jeffersonian ideology and policy for the America, and for the world, of the industrial age.

Although the effort that follows is a historical biography, my first incentive was a moral, rather than a historical, appreciation of Henry George. At an early stage of the investiga-tion a professor of literature addressed me in a lowered voice one day, in the Huntington Library cafeteria, to inquire what is wrong with the argument of Henry George. He always gave a little time to *Progress and Poverty,* in the annual cycle of teaching, he said, and every year he was embarrassed because he knew no satisfying reply to the reform idea he thought must be mistaken. The question reassured me, because I had begun at about the same place. By that

time, which was during the war summer of 1944, I was committed to examine the circumstances of Henry George: to try to discover the sources of his somehow persuasive and disturbing book, and to report the reactions of acceptance, rejection, and criticism with which his contemporaries did him honor. For a decade, Henry George has wearied me many days, but those days have always been interesting ones, and I retain the conviction with which I started, that moral problems are the most important problems to which an historian can address himself.

It would be wrong to try to reduce to some formula the California story of the growth of Henry George's ideas, during his years in the state as journalist, observer, and servant of the Democratic party. Most of Part One is an embryology of the philosophy of *Progress and Poverty*, and such a study requires stage-by-stage reports of his western life. Yet the reader will have an easier time with those reports if he is told beforehand that from the very first until the very last, from the political ideas acquired in his parents' home to the campaign that made him a martyr, seventeen years after he had left California, the axioms of his thought were always the same. They were the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian principles of destroying private economic monopolies and of advancing freedom and equal opportunity for everyone.

We shall of course discover a few exceptions along the way. The most glaring one will be Henry George's Californian attitude toward Chinese immigration. But his liberal first principles inform every one of the major items of the economic program he conceived on the West coast: absolute free trade, the abolition of private-property values in land, the repeal of discriminatory taxes, and the public ownership of telegraph lines and other public utilities. The same principles underlay also the eight books he wrote, two in California and six in New York; and they are at the moral center of all the main causes for which he labored and fought, after *Progress and Poverty* was published: land reform in the British Isles, the labor party of 1886-8 in the United States, the exposing of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in New York politics, the single-tax movement, the establishing of a free-trade policy for the Democratic party, the Bryan candidacy of 1896, and the party he called the Democracy of Thomas Jefferson.

The reformer's many undertakings were linked on a chain of consistent purpose, but much of the fascination of his life derives from the incredible largeness and flexibility with which at different times and in different

situations he appeared the same actor in contrasting roles. During the Civil War he was a Republican but at other times a Democrat; between 1886 and 1896 he was, successively, a party bolter, a Cleveland man, and a Bryan man. He was an admirer of Roman Catholicism, and yet an extreme and effective critic of bishops and pope; indirectly he assisted socialism, but he fought socialists and their doctrines; the single-tax reform for which he is remembered was supported by lawyers and businessmen, principally, but the interest of working men was Henry George's prime loyalty. In one lifetime he drew the threads together, and when he died he received a salute of the people's affection as did no other American between Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt.

Time, money, access to books and manuscripts, and the sympathy of family and colleagues are needed to write a book. For enough of the first and second, and for a wealth of the third and fourth, I am more grateful than I can say.

Serious expenditures on behalf of this research and writing began while I was a member of the faculty of Stanford University. The Council for Research in Social Science of that university made possible the microfilming for me of the best of the Henry George Collection of manuscripts in New York. During the second half of 1944, a research fellowship at the Henry E. Huntington Library allowed me time free from my regular duties, and a wonderful opportunity to study the California background of my subject. This award, which like the Stanford one was derived from Rockefeller funds, was allotted from the Huntington's grant for the study of the civilization of its own region of the United States.

In addition to the summer and autumn of 1944, I had time largely free from duty during the university year 1949-50. This was made possible, after only four years of service at the Johns Hopkins, by that university's uncommonly generous policy toward members of the faculty. For a travel grant and other assistance during that year, I am indebted to the American Philosophical Society.

The libraries I have called on have been many. Though for years I have been accustomed to handsome treatment by library people, the quick responses I received to letters of inquiry concerning George materials, the aid efficiently given during stop-over visits, have been for me a revelation of efficiency and help. For this kind of accommodation, I owe thanks, on

the West coast, to the California State Library, both the main institution in Sacramento and the branch in San Francisco, and to the library of the Sacramento *Bee*. For similar help in the Middle West and in the East, I thank the Wisconsin State Historical Society, the John Crerar Library in Chicago, the Historical Society Library of Illinois, the State Library of Indiana, the University of Michigan Library, and the libraries of Smith College, and Yale, Columbia, and Princeton universities. In nearly every case the goal of inquiry has been unique manuscripts, and these collections are mentioned in detail in the ‘Notes on the Sources’ at the back of the book.

For library hospitality sustained over long periods of investigation, my first West coast debt is to Stanford. At the Huntington, I had the use of rich and rare Californiana, both manuscript and printed, principally of the 1850s and 1860s. On many occasions, but specially during the summers of 1945 and 1948, the Bancroft Library of the University of California has helped me use its unique California newspaper and manuscript materials. On home ground, since 1945 the Johns Hopkins Library has provided, from its rich Hutzler Collection of American economic writings, a set of Henry George’s *Standard* and a number of rare editions of his works. The officials of Dartmouth College, in a region I have come to love, have made me feel that the Baker Library is a home institution also. I have used its generous resources freely for six summers of the present task.

Without any one of the libraries just mentioned, this biography would be less complete. Without the Library of Congress, especially the manuscript and newspaper materials, the book would be shorterthan it is but would have taken a longer time to write. Without the unique Henry George Collection, given by Anna George de Mille to the New York Public Library, the book would not and could not have been written at all.

During the course of a decade — in the libraries, among colleagues in the universities, and among those I have consulted as participators in the Henry George movement — I have accumulated obligations which are quite as personal as professional. I should have liked to turn a phrase for each person in the list below; I hope that anyone who sees his name there will remember what he did, over and beyond the call of ordinary obligation, for I shall not forget. I am recalling ideas suggested, manuscripts, articles, and books turned up I had not the knowledge to seek for, uncommon courtesies

and encouragements, criticisms that made a difference — and other forms of generosity. I thank: Thomas A. Bailey, Peter J. Coleman, Thomas I. Cook, Henry E. Cottle, Albert J. Croft, Father John Tracy Ellis, Ralph H. Gabriel, John D. Hicks, Robert C. Hill, Richard Hofstadter, Louis C. Hunter, Jeter A. Iseley, Sherman Kent, Edward Kirkland, Frederic C. Lane, Arthur S. Link, Will Lissner, Clarence D. Long, Margaret Lough, J. Rupert Mason, Broadus Mitchell, Fulmer Mood, Sidney Painter, Claude W. Petty, Belle Dale Poole, M.D., Robert E. Riegel, J. E. Wallace Sterling, Carl B. Swisher, Paul S. Taylor, Francis J. Thompson, and Louis B. Wright. For the memory of Anna George de Mille, Henry George's youngest child, who answered every question I asked, and who enthused over the idea of my book, though she was writing another, I am deeply grateful.

Six associates, who otherwise would appear in the list above, have rendered freely those time-consuming professional services by which scholars help one another. Professors Merle Curti of the University of Wisconsin and C. Vann Woodward of the Johns Hopkins have read the manuscript entire. Professor Robert Cleland of the Huntington Library counseled an inexpert student of California, at the beginning, and read Part One in manuscript; and Professor G. Heberton Evans, Jr., of Hopkins read the same part from an economist's point of view. Professor David Spring of Hopkins read chapters xi, xii, and xiii; and Professor Howard Quint of the University of South Carolina, chapters xiv, xv, and xvi. Miss Lilly Lavarello, department secretary, editor, and associate, has put up with the delays and met the deadlines, and in every case improved the manuscript. During a year while I was a visitor at the American University of Beirut, Miss Siham Haddad ably carried on that work. My wife has borne with the strains of authorship from first to last; and, at the stages of pencil draft and typescript, she took on the duties of critic and editor in addition to all else.

The responsibility for what follows is mine alone. But whatever achievement may be discovered there is to be attributed, in a proportion for which the words above are far from sufficient, to those who are named, and to others, whose help may have been less in amount, but whom I no less sincerely thank.

C.A.B.

The Johns Hopkins University
24 December 1954

Now, thirty-seven years later, I equally thank the Schalkenbach Foundation, publishers of the works of Henry George, for this second reprint edition. I hope it will draw many new readers, including those whose governments are in flux, to George's ideas on economic justice.

C. A. B.

Santa Barbara, California
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