

FOREWORD TO A CONDENSED EDITION OF

PROGRESS AND POVERTY By Henry George

The first appearance of *Progress and Poverty* in January of 1880, created a tremendous commotion. Journals throughout the world were thrown into a furor of praise and criticism. The name of Henry George, stirring writer from San Francisco, became a byword in the discussion of economic and social problems and particularly of the problem of poverty in the midst of plenty.

In the latter half of the twentieth century, destitution amidst abundance should long ago have passed into history. It is a tragic, perverse phenomenon that should have taken its place with other barbaric practices, such as slavery and piracy.

An understanding of the proposals of Henry George can reveal whether or not they might be useful for alleviating poverty and increasing the returns of labor and capital.

In many parts of the world today, Marxism has seized the imaginations of vast numbers of people seeking a more equitable distribution of this world's goods. In some countries its proponents have either captured governments or have become a significant force in political affairs. To this writer, at least, the conclusions of Karl Marx are not only irrelevant to any real society, but also dangerous to the liberties of mankind. Those of Henry George, in my view, are worthy of much more respectful attention than they have received.

Since 1880, millions of copies of *Progress and Poverty* have been distributed, in English and in many other languages. Adoptions of George's ideas have occurred in rather large measure in New Zealand and Australia, to a lesser extent in Denmark and Canada. However, it is both unfortunate and strange that they have not become more generally rooted in the United States.

It may be argued that *Progress and Poverty* contains well over five hundred pages and that it includes certain refutations of the Malthusian doctrine and wages-fund theory that are hardly of world-shaking interest to the twentieth century rider of the freeways.

But the book is written in a moving, dramatic style. The central message, which is pointed to the problem of poverty, is directly pertinent to some of the most fundamental questions of the day.

To provide a readable and constructive introduction to and understanding of Henry George, I have produced this little supercondensed version of Progress and Poverty. The words are exclusively his. The phrases are presented in the same order that he wrote them. Of course, expressions have been thrown together which in the original volume were separated by many pages or chapters. For this rather drastic abridgment, I alone am responsible.

James L. Busey, editor
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