

# The Torches Are Lit

by  
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SEVENTY-odd years ago, a comely young woman walked into the riding stable of James R. Brown, and said, "I want to learn to ride a horse!" Brown, an ardent disciple of Henry George, took upon himself the instruction of this new pupil and it was while they cantered along the shady bridle paths of Central Park that he told her his views. What she learned, she carried home to her husband, Robert Schalkenbach, who bought *Progress and Poverty*, studied it, and was convinced of the truth of it. Later he sought the acquaintance of its author, and thereafter was fired with the burning desire to advance the principles in which he now so firmly believed. When he died in November, 1924, his will bequeathed the bulk of his modest fortune towards this purpose. Six months later, in April, 1925, the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation was organized, "for teaching, expounding and propagating the ideas of Henry George as set forth in his book *Progress and Poverty*, and in his other writings."

The Foundation's initial task, that of bringing this and other books by

Henry George back into print, was fulfilled within the first ten years. During that period, Oscar Geiger held his first classes and laid the cornerstone of the present Henry George School of Social Science.

With the books of George restored to circulation, the Foundation was able to undertake the publication of additional works and, in some instances where it seemed advisable, to subsidize other publishers in bringing out special studies. Thus the present long list of books available on Henry George and his philosophy, has been helped to grow and to gain an audience.

In the last dozen years new projects have pushed the Foundation's efforts into other fields as well. Research projects have been initiated and financed to provide factual evidence of how a change in our municipal tax system would be likely to affect selected areas. Lecturers have been brought from foreign shores to arouse interest in the successes of land-value taxation in those lands in which it has been enacted. For a limited time, grants were made to college students to encourage studies which would entail an

examination of George's theories. Not wholly successful, this latter adventure nevertheless provided a background of experience for another approach to the goal of educating economists to lead the future advances in this field. Thus, in 1955 the Foundation became partner in a three-cornered enterprise which commences with the gifted high school graduate facing his college years. Small stipends are given to the boys and girls selected and are continued as long as their scholastic records and the sincerity of their intentions warrant it. Those who survive the various screenings, of which periodic interviews are only one aspect, are to be given a two-year intensive course of training at the American Institute for Economic Research, Great Barrington, Massachusetts, and thereafter will be helped to acquire higher degrees and to find their niche in the place most suited for them—in some instances, perhaps, within the Georgist movement itself. Each year, new high school graduates are started on the first rung of this ladder. At present 250 students are participating.

A basic part of the Foundation's work has always been to encourage a favorable presentation of George's theories in college classrooms. This objective has been pursued in various ways of which the personal visit has been found to be the most effective. An example of the latter is the ninety-day tour made by Weld S. Carter beginning September 15, 1957. During this tour, Mr. Carter visited 77 colleges and universities and talked with 158 professors. In some instances Mr. Carter was invited to address classes, and in others, groups of the faculty were assembled for round-table discussions. The results, as demonstrated by the requests for books and the many long letters which came, contin-

uing the discussions which his visits had begun, provide such convincing evidence of success, that a more extensive tour now is being considered.

Another aspect of the Foundation's work presently being advanced as opportunity and funds permit, is that of translating *Progress and Poverty*, or its abridgment, into other languages. A new German translation is almost complete, and negotiations are underway for one in modern Hebrew. The latter, if carried through, would be published by a well-established house in Israel.

An important item in the Foundation's current program is the making of a 16 mm. documentary film which can be shown to groups that know little or nothing of Henry George.

This report has not attempted to fill the long gap between the Foundation's first task of bringing back into print the books of Henry George himself, and the eventual enlargement of its program to include other publishing, research, lecturing, public relations, and mass communication. To sketch, even though briefly, a line of progress and growth is as much as time and space allow. Nevertheless, it would be inappropriate to close without a word of thanks to those many friends, past and present, whose bequests and gifts have made this progress possible. To them, and to the many hundreds of others whose letters have encouraged us to persist in the work our founder, Robert Schalkenbach, outlined for us to do, we pay humble tribute in these inspiring words from *Social Problems*. "Whoever," George said, "becomes imbued with a noble idea, kindles a flame from which other torches are lit. . . . How far that influence, thus perpetuated, may extend, it is not given to him here to see. But it may be that the Lord of the Vineyard will know."

Report delivered at the Henry George School Conference in San Diego, on July 13, 1958, by the Executive Secretary of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation.