

result of such protection many who desired to, but could not find economically secure sites on the shore, came to Fairhope. Besides finding Fairhope sites accessible, without the necessity of paying speculative premiums, the collection of the socially created economic rent of its lands gave it a locally controlled public fund with which to provide improvements of its own choice and its own direction. The relatively rapid growth of Fairhope as contrasted with the much slower growth, or even the long-term stagnation with some retrogression, of other Eastern shore centres, may, with considerable certainty, be attributable to the colony plan."

Single-taxers in Fairhope can fairly claim that colony's relative superiority—its growth, the wealth of parks, the system of improved streets, the more intensive and even development of commercial and residential areas—is attributable to the underlying system of land tenure. The Alyeas have weighed and balanced, found the results in Fairhope superior, and been able without a doubt to give

colony policy the credit. Fairhope's site and soil were inferior; Fairhope's "single tax" bias made the difference.

#### A Note on the Somers System.

The Somers system of land valuation was introduced in Fairhope in 1914. Mr. Somers based his system on the theory that "the only foundation for valuation of land is its use and the specific value can only be determined by comparison and the only reliable measure for making this comparison is community opinion." Somers therefore held a series of public meetings with the leaseholders of Fairhope colony, and, after discussion in these and committee meetings, fixed comparative values on city lots—taking the most valuable at 100 and marking other lots in proportion. The same method was adopted for farm lands in the colony, marking every other tract proportionately. Then at a general meeting the best farm unit was rated against the nearest town site unit and thus a comparison of all colony land was established.



JOHN C. LINCOLN

**B**Y any standards the author of this book must rank as a remarkable man. Born in 1866—fifteen months after the death of another Lincoln—he is still well known as one of America's leading business men. Since 1888 when he graduated from Ohio State University he has founded and organized a whole string of industrial companies, and these have, for many years, provided him with a strategic window on the economics of American industry. That his observations from this vantage point should have made him a zealous disciple of Henry George is a reflection of a sincerity of approach to the economic problems of life. That he should set up the Lincoln Foundation to speed the dissemination of Henry George's teaching is clear evidence of a restless desire to improve the lot of his fellow men.

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BOOK REVIEW—BY B.W.B.

## Government Revenue —The Natural Source

*GROUND RENT, NOT TAXES, The Natural Source of Revenue for the Government.* An Economic Study by John C. Lincoln. Exposition Press, Inc., 386 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, N.Y. 1957. pp. 72. \$2.50.

The secret of his personal interpretation of the Henry George philosophy is given in the title of this book. Avoiding any reference to land-value taxation—apparently any form of taxation is anathema to Mr. Lincoln—he insists that the root of the social problem lies simply in the collection of ground rent—or rather in the question "Who collects ground rent?" Ground rent, he points out, is what is paid for the use of land. The amount of it depends on the presence and activity of the community. When John Lincoln was a boy he watched the "prairie schooners" going from Illinois to Iowa to take up the new land of the West, practically free. Now, he sees \$1,000,000 an acre being paid annually for land in the vicinity of New York City. The community he insists, has a natural right to the value it creates. Should not this

ground rent be paid to the Community instead of to the individuals who "own" the land? If this were done the selling value of land would disappear. For who could demand payment for land if ownership did not convey the privilege of receiving rent? Who would pay anything for it?

To convey this angle on Henry George's teaching Mr. Lincoln writes this 72-page economic study. His manner is deft and forceable. In short, spirited sentences he conveys a convincing economic and social argument and backs it with an impressive array of facts and figures which cannot be ignored.

We live in a world, he says, in which our natural actions and reactions are governed by natural law. True, we have man-made laws, and to the extent that they interpret natural law he accepts them as good laws. "Thou shalt not steal" is an example. But where man-made laws transgress natural law—there will be found the anomalies, the injustices and perhaps the tyrannies of life.

Our man-made system of land tenure, under which individuals are allowed to appropriate the ground rent due to the whole community is seen as the supreme example of the violation of natural law. He likens it to the situation in which the community builds roads and appoints toll-gate collectors. Fair enough? Yes, but in this analogy the toll-gate keepers keep the takings. He likens it too, to that era of American history ended by his great namesake when the power of white man to appropriate the wealth produced by the black gave the latter slave-value. Men in bondage were sold on the slave-market. In his toll-gate analogy "toll-gate collectorships" would be sold on the toll-gate market. Under our present system of land tenure land is sold on the "property" market. In each case what is being sold is not wealth itself but a power and a privilege. The price paid will reflect the income which ownership of that privilege will bring.

What would be the effect of a reform designed to right this great injustice? That land would have no selling value has been mentioned. It would be easy to acquire but costly to keep in idleness, for the economic ground rent would be payable—and it would be payable to the community. That the receipt of this ground rent into the national exchequer would enable government to reduce and ultimately eliminate the present pernicious taxes on the products of man's industry will be obvious to all. But what would be the ultimate effect? How would the lot of the common man be different from what it is today?

In a chapter headed "The Kind of Society in a Community Supported by Ground Rent," Mr. Lincoln shows where such a reform would yield its most striking dividends. If every landholder had to pay the economic ground rent for his holding, land would be forced into its best use. No longer would valuable land be held in idleness while speculation forced its price to skyrocket levels. No longer would the community be held to ransom until its need for land reached breaking point. Land would be freely available for productive enterprise. And

productive enterprise means jobs. There would be more jobs than men—and all without that kind of currency manipulation and control practised by governments under "full employment" today.

There would be no knot-holes in this New Deal. Instead of trade unions striving to wring increased wages from stubborn employers, competition between those employers for workers would raise wages all round. Here, then, is the ideal world of John C. Lincoln, of Phoenix, Arizona.

Readers of *LAND & LIBERTY*, and other fair-minded citizens of discernment will find this an interesting, informative and instructive book. If some should find it a little repetitive it is well to reflect that no nail worthy of the name was ever driven home with one blow of the hammer. King Arthur did not unsheath Excalibur for one solitary stroke. After a lifetime's crusade against the mulcting of the community Mr. Lincoln has a right to beat the gong. May he hammer it ever louder for many more years to come!



## Pioneers of the Social Frontier

NORMAN CASSERLEY

reporting from Washington, D.C.

**I**RELAND, Spain, Greece, Afghanistan, India, Japan, Formosa, the Philippines, the Hawaiian Islands. These are but a few of the areas where isolated pioneers are dedicating a lifetime of strain and struggle to spreading the message of free enterprise and equal opportunity for all. Till now, most of these people have known little of each other or of us. Some are at the close of their lives, with ample fortune and facility for influencing their fellow countrymen. Others are in the prime of youth, working without leadership training and without knowledge of the mistakes and achievements of others in the same field elsewhere. Some go in danger of jail, exile or execution. For this reason much that could be told must be withheld.

That is the main finding of my first study tour of Europe, Asia and Australasia. From preliminary correspondence I expect to find that the same is true when I make my next tour—of Africa and South America.

There is much that we can do to help these friends of ours, and much that we can learn from them. They must be made known to each other and to us, and helped in their unequal battle. Wherever it is safe to do so, outline sketches of their heroic work will be given in this column. Your individual interest and support is needed, however, if effective assistance is to be given to them.