

Ground Rent, Not Taxes:

**The Natural Source of Revenue
for the Government**

An Economic Study by

JOHN C. LINCOLN

"THE COMMUNITY, and not the land-owner, has the right to collect ground rent and use it to pay community expenses," writes John C. Lincoln at the outset of his searching and provocative study. This, he says, would abolish the need for taxation of wealth* (if ground rent equaled normal government expenses) and would lead to a semi-Utopian state in which there would be more jobs than men.

The avowed purposes of his work are "to call attention to the fact that men as individuals, and governments representing the community, *both* have natural rights not recognized by our man-made laws" and "to see whether the government has the moral right to collect an appreciable part of the wages of the worker in the United States to support the government."

"Our man-made laws . . . are descended from the dawn of history. . . . Our land laws are the same as the land laws of the Egyptians and Mesopotamians, and the fact that they have not been changed indicates they should be examined with suspicion."

Mr. Lincoln examines them with suspicion, and with erudition, and

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*The author defines wealth as "material things produced by labor from land to satisfy human desires."

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concludes that they operate in such a manner that every year billions of dollars are taken from the majority of the population and given to a minority, and that this minority does nothing in the way of production to entitle it to what it gets.

The community has a *natural right* to collect ground rent, the author asserts, because it produces such rent by its presence and activity. (Would parts of Manhattan have annual ground rent approaching \$1,000,000 an acre, but for the presence and activity of its millions of people?) If this were done, land could be free of purchase price as air and sunshine are now, as Mr. Lincoln would consider eminently fair, because "the individual has a natural right to the use of sunshine and air and land, which the Creator has provided for everyone, without paying some other man for the privilege."

He further explores the subject in revealing chapters entitled "Amount of Ground Rent Available for Government Support" (\$75,000,000,000 a year), "The Kind of Society in a Community Supported by Ground Rent" ("so much better that it is hard to believe that such a society could exist") and "Practical Results of the Application of Ground-Rent Collection Over the World," explaining ways and means.

This penetrating volume can be understood and should be read not only by students of economics but by all taxpayers and, in fact, all Americans who rent or own property.

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