

Preface

The proposition that ground rent is the natural source of revenue for the community is radical at the present time in the sense that only a few people will admit that it is true. The proposition that the community collect ground rent for community expenses and abolish the taxation of wealth was made by Henry George, seventy-five years ago, in his book *Progress and Poverty*, as a cure for unemployment, poverty, depressions, and unjust distribution of wealth. The Lincoln Foundation was founded to get people to see that ground rent belongs to the community and that it will be possible to abolish the taxation of wealth if it was collected by the community for community expenses. Many people who read *Progress and Poverty* do not see that ground rent belongs to the community because it is created by the community. That ground rent is the natural source of revenue for the community is a logically necessary conclusion from propositions that are generally accepted by the public:

1. Everyone admits that land value is due to the presence and activity of the community.
2. Land value is ground rent capitalized. Therefore, ground rent is produced by the presence and activity of the community.
3. The ground rent the community creates belongs to the community and not to landowners to whom it is given by our man-made land laws.
4. Landowners as landowners do nothing to produce ground rent; therefore, they have no moral right to ground rent.
5. If ground rent is created by the presence and activity of the community; it is only reasonable and logical that the community collect the ground rent for community expenses, and abolish the taxation of wealth.

In my book I approach the question by considering the natural rights of the individual and of the community. The individual has a natural right to the use of sunshine and air and

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land, which the Creator has provided for everyone, without paying some other man for the privilege. The community has a natural right to collect the ground rent it produces by its presence and activity, and use it to pay community expenses. If this were done the selling value of land would disappear. Land could be free of purchase price as air and sunshine are now, and it would be possible to abolish the taxation of wealth if the ground rent were equal to the normal expense of the government. In a later chapter I estimate the ground rent at about seventy-five billion dollars per year within the United States at the present time. Stopping the gigantic legal stealing our man-made laws make possible will produce an improved society, and I quote two chapters from Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*, the first to show how collecting of ground rent by the community would affect the distribution of wealth, and the second to show the kind of world we would live in if justice were done and natural law obeyed. The last chapter shows that experience, as far as it has gone, demonstrates that we would have a better world if the community collected the ground rent for community expenses and abolished the taxation of wealth.

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