

Some Important Axioms By JOHN CROWWELL LINCOLN

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1. In order that mankind could exist, the Creator provided air for the lungs and land from which, by labor, man could produce food, clothing, and shelter. Therefore, everyone has the same equal right to land that he has to air. The word "land," used as above, means everything provided by the Creator or nature for the satisfaction of man's desires, and would include waterfalls, oil, oyster beds, mines, and fishing grounds.

2. When agriculture and mining arose, it became necessary to have continuous, exclusive, and private possession of land in order to use it to the best advantage. Private property in land arose in this way.

3. As population increased, the demand for land increased, and land values appeared. It is clear and a matter of common experience that land values are created by the size and activity of the community, and that therefore they belong to the community.

4. This community-created land value can be measured by the yearly ground rent it will produce. Therefore, it is fair to say that land value is ground rent, actual or expected, capitalized.

5. At the present time, only a small part of this community-created ground rent is collected by the community as yearly taxes. Most of it is collected by land holders, and this privately collected ground rent, capitalized, is the selling value of the land. For instance, land values in Phoenix, Arizona, where this is being written, have at least doubled in the last three or four years, due to the fact that the population of the city has doubled.

6. It is evident that if the community collected all the community-created ground rent in yearly installments, land values would tend to sink to zero.

7. Community expenses increase with the size and activity of the population. Community-created ground rent increases with the size and activity of the population. Therefore, ground rent is the natural source of revenue for the community. Ground rent belongs to the community because the community creates it.

8. Since land values appear as population increases, population is a measure of land value. If 0.8 of the population of the United States live in villages and cities, 0.8 of the land values are in the villages and cities. Land value and population are related. Land value and land area are not related.

9. A landholder is one to whom our man-made laws give the privilege of collecting part of the community-created ground rent. A land-user is one who uses land to produce wealth. A tenant farmer is a land-user, not a land-owner. A tenant in a New York apartment house is a land-user, not a land-owner. There is an increasing proportion of land-users, but not land-owners. In New York and Chicago, probably less than 10 per cent of the land-users are land-owners.

10. As a land-owner, no one produces wealth; only as a land-user can one produce wealth. Our man-made laws make it legal for the land-owners to take part of the community-created ground rent, thereby enabling him to get something for nothing. Getting something for nothing is stealing, and stealing is wrong, notwithstanding the fact that our man-made laws make it legal. Slavery was just as wrong a hundred years ago when it was legal as it is today when it is not legal. We live in a world

in which moral laws are enforced just as certainly and inevitably as natural laws. In fact, moral law is part of natural law. The amount of community-created ground rent taken by the land-owner from the community is of the order of one hundred billions of dollars per year in the United States. The penalty inflicted by the moral law for this legal stealing is unemployment, poverty, depressions, and the unjust distribution of wealth, for it is impossible for land-owners to get one hundred billions a year they do not produce unless the land-users produce one hundred billion a year they do not get.

11. Our man-made laws which permit the landholders to collect most of the community-created ground rent are responsible for high land values. High land values make it possible for the landholder, a non-producer, to take half of his product from the land-user. This is very apparent on farms where it is the usual practice for the tenant to pay about half of what he raises for the use of the land. In villages and cities, it is harder to trace the amount the land-user pays to the land-owner, but it is probable that the proportion is larger than on the farms.

12. All wealth is produced by the land-user. All wealth equals land plus labor, assisted by capital. Wealth has a very short life. Wealth in the form of milk has a life of only two or three days. In the form of most food, it has a life of six months to a year. In the form of clothing, not over three or four years. In the form of houses, thirty to forty years, provided labor is used quite frequently to make repairs. Land is the source and sepulchre of all wealth. Labor has to be continually applied to land or its products in order to make up for the decay of wealth, if the amount of existing wealth is to remain constant.

13. Wealth producing employment is impossible without access to land or its products. The truth of this proposition is obvious in the primary industries of agriculture, mining, fishing, and lumbering. Transportation moves the products of primary industry to the factories and mills. The products of the factories and mills go to the warehouses and stores, which serve the people directly. It is clear that employment is decreased by anything that makes it more difficult to get land from which to produce wealth. As land increases in price, land is more difficult to get. If the price of land gets high enough, it does not pay the land-user to pay the price the land-owner demands, and production stops, employment stops, and we have a depression.

14. Experience shows that as the rate of wealth production increases, people tend to gather together in villages and cities. It may be difficult to persuade a city man who lives in an apartment house and works in an office building, and who never touches the ground except on his trips from one place to the other, that land is necessary for his existence. Nevertheless, the extremely high land values in cities demonstrates that the city office worker is just as dependent on land as the country farmer. There was a time when the land values in New York City were equal to the land values of all the southern states that fought in the Civil War.

15. If land is to be used to the best advantage, it must be possible for an individual to have private, continuous, and exclusive use of certain land. The size and activity of the community creates ground rent in the land the indi-

vidual wants to use. At present, a small part of this community created ground rent is collected as yearly property taxes. Most of it is collected by the land-owner and, when capitalized, equals land value. Does not justice require that the community collect and the land-holder pay all the community created ground rent yearly to the community? If this were done, land values would go to zero and the land-user would not have to pay half his product to the land-holder for the privilege of using land and producing wealth by providing employment.

16. The community has a right to community-created wealth (that is, ground rent) but has no right to individually produced wealth. At present, because the community refuses to collect more than a small portion of community-created ground rent and allows the land-owner to collect it (from a moral standpoint, to steal most of it), the community takes from the individual privately produced wealth to support the community. In other words, the community allows the land-owner to steal most of the community-created ground rent, and therefore has to steal enough from the members of the community to make up what the land-owner steals. All this is from a moral, not a legal, standpoint.

17. Our present method of taxation taxes, or fines, people for producing employment and doing those things everyone wants to have done. This is being written in Arizona. In this state, there are many prospective mines that are held by the owners for high prices. They are assessed at nominal prices and contribute practically nothing to the revenue of the state. However, if someone opens up one of these mines and starts to give employment, the county assesses taxes, the school district assesses taxes, the state puts on more taxes, and if the enterprise is really successful, the Federal Government takes nearly half of the profits. All of these taxes act as fans to prevent an increase of employment. In 1935 and 1936, I put up Camelback Inn on the desert in Arizona, thereby giving employment to about 200 people for a year. The operation of the inn gives employment to many people, from year to year. For doing this, we are taxed over \$50,000 a year. The high cost of living demonstrates that a large part of these taxes are passed on and paid by the consumer.

18. In the United States, we have political, religious, and personal freedom and, a hundred years ago, a large measure of economic freedom; and we all know how much better this country is to live in than most European countries. A hundred years ago, there was free land in the United States, and therefore, a greater measure of economic freedom than we have now. The Creator provided land for the benefit of all. Our land system has made it practically impossible for over 90 per cent of our people to own land. Land values are so high that only a privileged few can afford to own what the Creator provided for everyone. The chief cause of unemployment, poverty, depressions, and the unjust distribution of wealth is that our landholding system enables land-owners (non-producers) to appropriate half the product of the land-users for the privilege of using the land. This is wrong. This is stealing on a gigantic scale, and the penalty of the moral law is eventual destruction for every society that permits it. Obedience to moral law demands that society provide religious, political, personal, and eco-

conomic freedom for the individual. The United States has provided the first three, and a comparison between the United States and Russia shows that the rewards of obeying the moral law are great. Unless we provide economic freedom in the United States, it is probable that we will not have the other freedoms we now possess for long. For many hundreds of years, England has been a freedom-loving country; but the English people are permitting a bureaucratic government to try to control the distribution of wealth, which cannot be done without a dictatorship. The community has a right to control the distribution of its land, because it is, by its nature, common property. The community has no right to control the distribution of wealth, because it is, by its nature, private property.

19. All of us are land-users. Life is not possible without the use of land. The food we eat, the clothes we wear, the houses we live in, the automobiles we travel in, came from land a short time ago, and will decay into land very quickly. Only a few of us are land-owners. When a few of us own what all of us must use, most of us are "over a barrel" and have to turn over to the land-owner a substantial part of what we produce in order to live.

20. When the Creator made the world, he provided a job for everyone that came into the world. That job was to provide food, clothing, shelter, and all the other things that men live for from land, which the Creator provided for everyone.

21. A man has economic freedom when he can get enough land in order to produce what is necessary to keep him and his family alive. As long as there was good, free land in the United

States, we had a considerable measure of economic freedom.

22. Economic freedom is denied when a land-user is compelled to pay the land-owner half of what he produces for the use of the land.

23. Economic freedom exists only when the selling value of land is zero. In civilized countries with a considerable population, the price of land can be zero only when the community collects all the community-created ground rent.

24. The United States has religious, political, and personal freedom, and that makes the United States a better place to live in than Russia, where they are denied. But if the United States would grant economic freedom, which is the freedom to earn a living, the United States would be a much better place in which to live than it is now.

25. Other things being equal, an able general always defeats one less able because he uses his men and materials to better advantage than his opponent. For the same reason, an able man at the head of a business can produce goods or wealth cheaper than his competitors and therefore gets the business.

26. The capitalistic system of conducting business is better than the socialistic or communistic systems because the capitalistic system automatically puts the most able man at the head of the business. In the capitalistic system, the less ably conducted businesses go broke and disappear. Competition permits only the more ably conducted businesses to live, and therefore the public gets what it buys at the lowest possible prices. To see that this is true, one has only to compare the standard of living in capitalistic countries with that of socialistic or communistic countries.

27. The standard of living in the United States is the highest of any large country in the world because there is more freedom for the production of wealth in the United States than there is in England, for instance. Also the laws of the United States interfere less and clog the production of wealth less than the laws of any large country in the world.

28. The laws of the United States deny complete freedom in the production of wealth. If the laws did not interfere in any degree with the production of wealth, the income of the average family would probably be five times what it is now. Our tariff laws greatly retard the exchange of wealth between people in the United States and foreign countries, thereby raising prices in the United States from 10 to 25 per cent. The greatest decrease in the production of wealth is caused by the injustice of the laws which permit land values to arise, thereby preventing 90 per cent of the people born in the United States from being able to get at the land the Creator provided for them, and from which all food, clothing, and shelter must come, together with everything else that man uses.

29. The man-made laws which made slavery legal were unjust because they permitted the slave-owner to appropriate most of the wealth the slave produced.

30. The man-made laws which permit land values to arise are unjust because high land values enable the land-owner to appropriate a large part of the wealth produced by the land-user. By the nature of things, no one can live without being a land-user. Land values arise because the land-owner is permitted to collect most of the community-created ground rent.

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