

In Memoriam: A. W. Madsen, 1880-1957

IN THE PASSING of Arthur W. Madsen, editor of *Land & Liberty* and secretary of the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, London, England, the movement for the taxation of land values loses one of its staunchest and best informed advocates.

Arthur Wilhelm Madsen was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, of Scottish-Danish parents, on April 6, 1880. He studied at the University of Marburg, Germany, and was graduated from the University of Edinburgh in 1902. Soon afterward he emigrated to South Africa, where he was associated with a large importing firm. There he met E. J. Evans, through whom he became acquainted with the social philosophy of the American reformer, Henry George. Mr. Madsen became a lifelong advocate of George's principles. He, Mr. Evans and other young men began the campaign that laid the foundation for the adoption of land value tax legislation in South Africa.

Mr. Madsen returned to Scotland in 1909, when John Paul, then secretary of the United Committee, and other Georgist leaders were waging the campaign that democratized the British Parliament and came within a hair's breadth of winning adoption of land value taxation. For a time Mr. Madsen was secretary to the Edinburgh League for the Taxation of Land Values. Going to London to help organize the 1909 Hyde Park "Land for the People" demonstration, Mr. Madsen was invited by John Paul to join the staff of the United Committee. Upon John Paul's death in 1933, Mr. Madsen succeeded him as editor and secretary. He gained an international reputation for his criticism of the Tory Socialist policies of the British Government and for his studies of the technical aspects of the assessment and taxation of land values.

One of his last contributions was the editing of a condensed version of George's *Progress and Poverty*, published in 1953. On behalf of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation in New York, he was editing, at his death, a German translation of this work. It will be dedicated to his memory. He died on April 7, 1957, at Shornells, Bostall Heath, Kent.

There, as principal of the Henry George School of Social Science, London, he was acting as a discussant at a Labor Party presentation of its proposal that the State acquire and manage 6,000,000 rental houses. In a cogent and reasoned analysis of the Labor spokesman's case, he pointed out the hardships that would inevitably arise. The speaker replied that then the help of the local Member of Parliament should be solicited. Mr. Madsen replied, "What! On our bended knees!" He died almost immediately afterward. Those five words constituted his last speech, but it summed up his career.

His was a lifelong crusade for Land and Freedom. Through his own journal, through the British and international movements in which he was an outstanding leader, through occasional contributions to this and other journals, he brought that crusade closer to victory.

He is succeeded as editor by P. R. Stubbings and as secretary by V. H. Blundell, whom he trained, and the work goes on. But he will be sorely missed.

W.L.

¹¹ Private letter from Mr. G. Marin, Dec. 4, 1955. *Manchester Guardian*, Nov. 23 and 24, 1955.

¹² D. Shut, *Lenin*, New York, 1951, p. 951; A. P. Dudden and T. H. von Laue, "The RSDLP and Joseph Fels," *American Historical Review*, 61 (1955), p. 26.