

and when it is paid (and added to the public debt) it should be regarded as "of historical interest only". A blank cheque is presented which with equal flippancy is signed by political assemblies and is endorsed by organs of the press calling themselves progressive. Once the concession is given that there be this land purchase at an unnamed cost, there will be no stopping the rot. Between the time when any Bill was promoted for the purpose and the final Act is passed, whatever figure government experts may put down as a guess, for they can only

guess, is certain to be increased under pressure from the interests involved. No one could foretell to what the country had been committed.

The plan of the Uthwatt Committee far from expediting and facilitating development, will retard and obstruct it. The cumbersome procedure requires the demarcation of the built-up areas, the prohibition against development except under licence by the State, the arbitration necessary to purchase the land from owners after the development rights have been acquired and the leasing of the land

to the developers. The intricacies and complexities, the opportunities of interested parties to obstruct at each stage, are too many to attempt to describe. Many of the other proposals made for amending and improving the existing Town Planning legislation are unexceptionable. It is the land purchase scheme of things to which objection is taken and which must be stoutly resisted by those who hold to land value taxation as the just and effective means to liberate the land and promote its development.

A. W. M.

LORD WEDGWOOD

The death of Lord Wedgwood at the age of 71 will be a heavy blow to his many friends in the various movements with which he was associated, and not least to land reformers. For more than forty years he was an outstanding figure in the advocacy of land-value taxation.

Wedgwood was born of one of those families, which it is now fashionable to call bourgeois, which have contributed so much to liberal and radical thought both in political and other fields. He was educated at Clifton and the Royal Naval College at Greenwich. For some years he worked as naval architect at Elswick Shipyard. During the South African war he served first as a captain with the Elswick Battery and after with General Birdwood's cavalry brigade. After the war he was resident magistrate in the Ermelo district of the Transvaal. Here, on the advice of his brother Ralph, he first endeavoured to put the taxation of land values into operation.

Coming back to England he became deeply conscious of the importance of Henry George's ideas, and sought election to Parliament as one means of advocating them. In 1906 he became member for Newcastle-under-Lyme, which he represented continuously until his elevation to the peerage in 1941. Soon after entering Parliament he became Secretary of the Land Values Group, which did most valuable work in the period from then till 1914. During all this period he was an untiring exponent of land-value taxation, both inside the House of Commons and in the country. He was a member of the Northern Nigeria Lands Committee which, in a report that must always be a classic, first laid down in clear and coherent terms the principles upon which colonial land policy should be founded. As a result, there was enacted into law, and came into force on 1st January, 1911, what *The Times* described as "the most far-seeing measure of constructive statesmanship West Africa has ever known." Colonial administrators and others interested in such questions are even yet unfamiliar with this profoundly wise legislation directed to ensuring for all time that the natives of Nigeria should not become a landless and exploitable proletariat but should have safeguarded for every one of them equal opportunity to use the land and for all of them collectively whatever value should attach to it not as a result of individual labour, but of economic development and common effort.

In 1914 Wedgwood served with Churchill's Royal Naval Brigade at Antwerp and in France. In 1915 he took part in the Gallipoli landing, was twice

mentioned in dispatches, won the D.S.O., and was severely wounded. He was a member of the Mesopotamia Commission, then Assistant Director of Trench Warfare, and afterwards was sent on a special mission to Siberia.

At the end of the War he became first an Independent and then a member of the Labour Party. For three years he was vice-chairman of the Labour Party, and in the first Labour Government was Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

He did not again hold office, although he continued to be an active member of the House of Commons until his elevation to the peerage in December, 1941.

He was a man with a great variety of interests. The history of Staffordshire, of the Wedgwood family, and finally of Parliament, which he initiated and partly wrote, but which still remains to be finished, were one field of activity. The Zionist movement and every effort to secure freedom from oppression received his fervent support. The slightest hint of injustice or misuse of power roused his indignation. Most of all, tenaciously and consistently, in season and out of season, he seized every opportunity to advocate the taxation of land values and the philosophy of Henry George. Of his writings, particular mention may be made of *Essays and Adventures of a Labour M.P.*, *Memoirs of a Fighting Life*, *Testament to Democracy* and the Penguin anthology, *Forever Freedom*. These reveal in some measure the texture of his mind, and his passionate love of freedom in all the aspects of life; but those who enjoyed his friendship will always treasure the memory of a spirit which was at once kindly and passionate, free from self-seeking, simple and spontaneous, and ever devoted to the welfare of his fellow-men.

The Times and the *Manchester Guardian* obituary notices (27th July) contain other details of his life and activities. From the latter we may quote this tribute:—

His great width and variety of experience, his important personal connections, and his bold, forceful character rendered him a valuable colleague, even though his individualist instinct and his intense pre-occupation with Single Tax were at times difficulties. . . .

"Josh" Wedgwood—the nickname is proof sufficient—was always popular in the House of Commons, the dark, lean, aggressive Single Taxer and divorce law reformer of pre-war years hardly less than the mellower, though still uncompromising, fighter of the last phase. Such passionate sincerity as his always wins respect in the House of Commons, and when it is salt to a personality so arresting,

downright, and utterly English as Josiah Wedgwood's, affection inevitably follows. Cobbett or Scawen Blunt would have known him for a spiritual brother. He was of the true line of the pugnacious libertarians. There was pugnacity in the projecting chin which was always, metaphorically speaking, being pushed in the face of oppression, whether it was oppression in the mills of Bombay or in the Indian States, or in Hitlerite Germany. There was something even pugnacious about the square set of his broad shoulders, and his speeches were like nobody else's. They got white-hot and yet they were always controlled; they were marked by appreciable pauses, during which the speaker gathered himself for a great effort at concentrated expression, and the effort often issued in a burning phrase. This vehement mind seeking the vehement word was an heroic sight and a rebuke to so many "light half-believers" who throng every party. There will be no one again quite like Josiah Wedgwood. The mould of him was all original.

To Lady Wedgwood and his children, and to all who have lost in him a dear and valued friend, we tender our sincere sympathy.

The basic evil in the economic condition to-day in our own and in other countries is that, while valuable land is all "taken up," there are vast quantities that are not in use, but merely held for speculation. This is the natural result of the present taxation system which fosters speculation at the expense of trade, building, manufacturing and agriculture. The taxation of land values would incline things the other way. It would foster useful trade and industry at the expense of speculation.

To be more specific, I believe that the land-values tax, by correcting this radically wrong condition, would make it easier to own and keep a home with some ground around it; easier to own and run a well-kept and developing farm; easier to establish and operate a manufacturing, mercantile, transportation or other useful business; to diminish the overcrowding of cities and to do away with slums; to make preventive medicine effective; to reduce rents, lower the cost of living and raise wages; and besides all this would tend to increase the comforts and security of life for all who usefully participate in the work of the world, whether by hand, brain, or capital—whether in city or country. It should make us a nation of landowners and home-owners. There is land enough.

PROF. LEWIS J. JOHNSON
(Harvard University).