

SOME TRIBUTES TO A GREAT CAMPAIGNER

ARTHUR W. MADSEN As His Friends Remember Him

Author, Economist, Linguist, Philosopher, Statistician and Statesman

THE United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, Ltd., place on record their profound sorrow at the loss of their beloved secretary, colleague and friend—ARTHUR MADSEN; and pay their tribute of admiration and gratitude for the wonderful example he set by his tenacity and devotion, his lovable character, moral courage and high intellect. They believe his loss will be long felt.

Excerpt from the minutes of a General Meeting of Members of the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, Ltd., held in Westminster on April 16, 1957.

To those who had the privilege of working closely with Arthur Madsen he will never be dead, countless happy memories will keep his spirit with them. I knew him for nearly 50 years and worked closely with him for the last 30. He was wonderful, never was there anyone so capable in so many ways. His grasp of the philosophy of Henry George was profound, he could express it eloquently with tongue and pen. Only perfect work was good enough for him; authors of papers for the International Conferences know how much he trimmed and improved their work. He knew all the technical as well as the legal points in relation to the practical application of the policy. He was a completely capable business man and administrator, and withal a jolly happy fellow, a delightful companion with his wisdom constantly flowing.

His spirit never wavered. Twice in his career measures were put into law in Britain against all the forces of entrenched privilege. Twice they were repealed. His office was destroyed by bombs in 1941 with the loss of many valuable records. Many a man would have yielded—but not A.W.M. He fought without respite to the very end.—ASHLEY MITCHELL, *Yorkshire*.

Arthur Madsen was a man of high intellectual accomplishments, a logical thinker, and a forceful and often moving speaker and writer. Yet with all his ability and attainments he was a modest man. This is no idle or unconsidered statement. To those who were closest to him his humility was his most outstanding and endearing quality. To those who saw Arthur Madsen only on the public platform or who knew of him only by his writings in *LAND & LIBERTY* this may sound paradoxical for there was no humility in him when he was espousing the cause of freedom and equal rights—rather the reverse! He would brook no contradiction of the Georgeist economic analysis and its conclusions. He would suffer no compromise on principles no matter what the political issues, the apparent immediate advantages or the pressures from friend or foe. Battling with the problems that confronted him, he often sought the opinions and judgment of his colleagues. It can be said of him what he once said of John Paul, his predecessor: "He taught us all the virtue of putting our thoughts into the common pool and of adopting suggestions that might or might not interfere with the originality of any piece of writing."

The standards he set for himself were high—so high that
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he invited the charge of being a perfectionist. But if that be a fault then it is one that the movement will be ever grateful for in the years to come. Slipshod or inaccurate work was foreign to him; he sought the best results in all he undertook, irrespective of who contributed to it and although he claimed the privilege of those who seek advice—that of not always taking it—his desire for counsel and consultation with his colleagues was a very real thing. The finished job was all that mattered. "A.W.M.", as he was affectionately known by many, must often in the course of doing battle have given the impression of a stern disciplinarian. Yet the reverse was true. The welfare of his staff was always his concern and it was never neglected, no matter how pressing his work.

His personality has left a deep impression on the movement not only in London but throughout the world, and his influence will long be felt amongst those who carry on after him.—V. H. BLUNDELL.

During the seven years I knew him, I saw A.W.M. as Mr. Blundell has portrayed him. Officially he was my "boss": in practice he was my friend, mentor and a second father, solicitous always for my personal welfare as he was for that of all fellow Georgeists. He had the gentleness and modesty that are the hallmarks of the strong and the supremely able. In private conversation he used revealing expressions. For instance, often he would laughingly refer to himself as "Lord Pooh-Bah" because of the many offices he held in the movement. He spoke of "the sin of preparation" in the sense that a man or woman newly fired by the Georgeist philosophy should take up the cudgels immediately without waiting first to become an accomplished speaker, writer or economist. He had always too much work to do, habitually doing two days' work in every 24 hours. Sometimes, when half a dozen jobs needed his immediate attention he would choose the one which appealed most to him and would then come along to my room to make his excuses, saying that he was a "lazy devil" for engaging in "escapism." He was an educated man from a well-to-do social environment yet the unlettered and the humble were always at ease in his delightful company, and he sought and valued their counsel and friendship. Perhaps no more fitting description can be found than the one he used often when talking of companions who had predeceased him—"he was a lovable *Single Taxer*."—P. R. STUBBINGS.

RESOLVED, that the news of the passing from this life of ARTHUR W. MADSEN is received with sorrow by the Trustees of the Henry George School. He was at the centre of the world-wide Henry George movement and his long-standing and inspiring leadership will be sorely missed. Mr. Madsen cannot be replaced, but the work to which he dedicated his life will be carried on by others, and this is perhaps the best tribute that can be paid to his memory.

Excerpt from the minutes of meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Henry George School of Social Science held in New York on April 10, 1957.

Arthur Madsen devoted his eminent talents not to the personal gain that could have been his but to the advancement of supremely important public ideas: ideas as lofty in aim as logical in conception and practical to apply. Those who shared his ideas have lost a great teacher and a generous friend, but we can never lose the influence of his character about us, making us ashamed of indolence and despondency, and encouraging us always to that disinterested and often unpopular labour on which all human improvement ultimately depends. No life could be more useful than his.—FRANK DUPUIS, *Dorset*.

In A.W.M. I found that kinship in thought and spirit which strengthened my convictions and rallied my resolution. He was to me, as a libertarian, one of the few people to whom I could turn when doubts beset my mind. Many are the times that my heart has been uplifted, by confirmation from his lips and pen, of the line of action I was taking. In his quiet and unassuming way he was most uncompromising when principles were the issue. He knew not the meaning of the word "expediency" and he was intolerant of charlatans.—STEPHEN MARTIN, *Kent*.

For myself the loss is tremendous. I had great respect and much affection for him. Arthur was a man single in his purpose, and that purpose was Henry George. He had a firmer grasp on the subject than anyone else in the world that I know of. Besides this he had a tremendous background about the people and events in the Georgeist movement that was of constant benefit to the rest of us who constantly turned to him for counsel. A great man has left us.—MISS V. G. PETERSON, *Robert Schalkenbach Foundation. New York*.

He came to East London about 1903 and returned to Great Britain in 1909 and we have more or less kept in touch with one another through correspondence for many years. He was a man of many talents and his passing will be a great loss to the cause.—E. J. EVANS, *South Africa*.

I had a deep affection and respect for Arthur Madsen. He was my last personal link (except for my friend Eustace Davies) with the stalwarts of the land values movement; and I am one of the few still surviving who remember John Paul when he had his little office in Glasgow. I am sure that Mr. Madsen's high integrity and transparent sincerity have been of the greatest help to the movement during his many years of service.—DR. D. G. TAYLOR, *Cardiff*.

Despite disappointments and setbacks—and there must be many in such a movement as ours—he pressed forward bravely and undismayed with the work to which he dedicated his great energy and gifts.—EUSTACE DAVIES, *Cardiff*.

It is not far short of 50 years since I first met him. During that time he was a good, wise and understanding friend. He proved again and again that he possessed a wonderful memory and an ice-cold brain on economic questions that unerringly picked out any fallacy he heard or read.—GEORGE MUSSON, *Derby*.

Arthur Madsen has had on me—a relative newcomer to the movement—a profound, decisive and, I believe, a life-long influence. He extended to me a welcoming hand into the movement when I had first looked into *Progress and Poverty*. Once I was in he was to me friend, guide and mentor, never failing to answer or counsel promptly and at length when I intimated to him my difficulties.—RAYMOND CROTTY, *Ireland*.

I had enjoyed the privilege of his friendship for close upon 50 years and never failed to appreciate to the full the wide knowledge he displayed.—F. MITCHENER, *Eastbourne*.

I can still picture him explaining in so simple and straightforward a manner that we wondered why it needed explaining at all, a problem which had appeared most complex, and all with such a modesty of speech as to make one think that you were doing him the favour of asking the question. Mr. Madsen's clarity of vision and expression, sincerity and absolute honesty, patient and painstaking devotion to duty have served our movement better than we know.—RICHARD C. CLARKE, *Hong Kong*.

I have known, liked and respected him for nearly 50 years.—R. W. JENKINS, *Sheffield*.

In the course of our correspondence Arthur Madsen and I had become friends . . . his letters were so full of joy and satisfaction that I really thought that he was in full vigour again as he was when we met here last year. I was so looking forward to the time when we should meet again after finishing our task [the German translation of *Progress and Poverty*] . . . I am very, very sad and dreary.—ERICH ZINCKE, *Hanover*.

I have memories of his work dating back longer than most people on the United Committee. I am afraid that his enthusiasm took him back to work before he was really able—he had a good life working for what he knew to be the truth.—MRS. DAISY CROMPTON, *Carlisle*.

How many, many friends he has who will mourn his loss. In my trip around the world a number of years ago I met them everywhere. How they liked to talk about him and to discuss his views. They were both readers and students of *LAND & LIBERTY* and looked up to him as their most outstanding authority in that school of thought

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which he has expounded so ably and sacrificially for so many years.—H. BRONSON COWAN, *Ottawa*.

He was a splendid man and commanded the affection of all who were privileged to know him. He did more than anyone else I know to keep alive a knowledge of great and enduring principles. He did great service and that will be his monument.—S. W. ALEXANDER, *Editor, "City Press," London*.

It is nearly 25 years since I first called at United Committee offices and was cordially received by Arthur Madsen, John Paul and others. Since then I have had the good luck to meet Mr. Madsen at many conferences and meetings. I shall always cherish the memory of these, not least for the able way in which Mr. Madsen directed and organised them and for his kind attention to everyone.—OLE WANG, *Norway*.

The best tribute that can be paid to Arthur's long years of devoted service is to carry on the work to the best of our ability.—AUSTIN H. PEAKE, *Devon*.

Even we who had only a short association with him knew of his sterling qualities and were conscious of one firm in principle, of kindness, courtesy and solid worth. Yet I know also that he was not alone, and that you of the younger generation will worthily carry on the work he had laid aside. I have tremendous confidence in you all.—W. E. STANDRING, *West Australia*.

He was a great man. Although his name is not likely to appear in history books of our times, I feel that he has done more for good in this world than most whose names will be chronicled.—COLIN C. PATON, *Liverpool*.

The sad news that the indefatigable organiser of our international activities, the valiant champion of the Georgeist cause has departed this world, is overwhelming. All who knew him will mourn his passing but the fine example he set us will never be forgotten.—MAX TOUBEAU, *France*.

For very many years I have appreciated his fraternal collaboration, his personal charm and the skilful manner in which he has promoted the Henry George cause.—A. DAUDE-BANCEL, *France*.

We hope that in making this brief selection of extracts from the very many tributes received we shall be pardoned if we appear to be invidious.

SOME PUBLISHED TRIBUTES

Translated and condensed from VEJEN FREM April 13, newspaper of Retsforbundet, the Danish Justice Party.

The many friends whom A. W. Madsen had in this country almost identified the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade with him, he having been the secretary for so many years. . . .

The work for Henry George's great political ideas was his dearest interest and as secretary of the International Union and editor of *LAND & LIBERTY* he found an outlet for the energy and warmth with which those ideas imbued him.

Presidents and vice-presidents in the Union changed but A. W. Madsen remained as a central figure in the great May, 1957

universal work. He had during his life voyaged much in the world and through these travels in connection with the conferences which the Union held in various countries and the many visitors he received at the office in Great Smith Street in London, he had personal contact with hundreds of Georgeists over the whole world, a contact which he maintained through his legendary large correspondence.

Of course, "Madsen" is not an English name. A. W. Madsen had his roots in Denmark. His father was born in Holstebro and was a lieutenant in the Danish Army in 1864. A. W. Madsen himself was born in England (*sic*)* and English was his mother tongue but he had built up an extremely good knowledge of Danish, which he could read with little difficulty and he was by no means displeased if his Danish friends wrote to him in Danish. . . .

The many Danes who took part in the International Conference held in Odense in 1952 (the second held in Denmark) will remember him as the energetic organiser—always in the middle of any activity. A fighter for Henry George's ideas has passed away. He will be missed by his many friends and he leaves an empty place in this work.

S. H.

[*Mr. Madsen was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, on April 6, 1880.]

LORD DOUGLAS OF BARLOCH in *The Times*, April 13.

Arthur Madsen played a notable part in the agitation which preceded and followed the introduction of the famous Lloyd George budget in 1909 and in connexion with all the parliamentary and municipal activities since that time relating to taxation or rating of site values. His work was distinguished by the strictest devotion to factual accuracy as well as undeviating adherence to the economic principle upon which this policy rests. Madsen was a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society. His ability as a statistician and economist was displayed in his book *The State as Manufacturer and Trader*. This was a searching examination of the commercial, industrial and fiscal results of state tobacco monopolies. It demonstrated that the efficiency of these enterprises, the quality of their products and the yield of public revenue were all inferior to those achieved under a régime of private enterprise coupled with state taxation. Most of his writing, however, was in the monthly journal *LAND & LIBERTY* of which he was assistant editor and later editor for many years, and in numerous pamphlets and articles in other papers. He was also secretary of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade. He made its office in London a clearing house for information—a task which his knowledge of languages facilitated—and he conducted an extensive correspondence on his chosen topic with persons in many countries.

A. W. MADSEN MEMORIAL MEETING

A special evening meeting to honour the memory of Mr. A. W. Madsen will be held in London later this summer, probably on a Saturday. The date and details will be announced in our columns.