



THE HISTORY OF
PARLIAMENT
British Political, Social & Local History

Commemorating Josiah C. Wedgwood

Key Stage 3 History materials

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Study pack

This pack introduces KS3 students to the main themes of Wedgwood's life, using archive sources as a starting point for enquiry, study and creative response. Students are encouraged to take on characters within a fictional local family of the era, in order to explore and understand responses to Wedgwood's campaigning at the time.

Students are also encouraged to enter the History of Parliament's annual competition - further information on page 33.

Contents:

Workshop 1: Who was Josiah C. Wedgwood? [Page 4]

Pupils will use a range of archive materials including portraits, excerpts from speeches, and writing to create a timeline of Wedgwood's life and a portrait of the man

Workshop 2: Helping refugees to escape from Nazi Germany [Page 11]

Pupils will take on characters from a local family in 1939 to help them explore Wedgwood's work assisting Jews and others trying to flee from Nazi Germany, and the responses of local people

Workshop 3: Against appeasement [Page 18]

Pupils will explore Wedgwood's arguments for challenging Hitler, and his opposition to Neville Chamberlain's appeasement approach

Find out more:

Follow-on sections with more source materials and encouragement to further study.

Campaigning for refugees' rights [Page 23]

More resources exploring Wedgwood's efforts to assist Jewish and other refugees out of Nazi Germany and territories.

Kindertransport [Page 26]

After Kristallnacht in 1938, restrictions were lifted to allow 10,000 unaccompanied Jewish child refugees to enter Britain from Nazi-occupied territories.



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The Holocaust and afterwards [Page 27]

What happened to Jews who did not escape from Nazi-occupied Europe?

The formation of the State of Israel

How Wedgwood's efforts to assist Jewish refugees were commemorated in the new State of Israel

Wedgwood and the History of Parliament [Page 29]

Wedgwood's founding of the History of Parliament Trust and his questionnaire for MPs

History around you [Page 32]

How was your family affected by the Second World War?

History clues in your neighbourhood

Competition [Page 33]

Imagining Josiah Wedgwood had had access to 21st century communications technology, create campaigning material in a variety of media.

Teachers' introduction

Josiah C Wedgwood, 1872-1943, was MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme for 36 years from 1906. From a privileged background, Wedgwood campaigned throughout his life for justice for the oppressed.

Wedgwood opposed Nazism and the spread of fascism from the early 1930s and spoke out against the British government's appeasement of Hitler. He was a staunch campaigner for the rights of refugees fleeing Nazi Germany. He gave early warnings of Hitler's dictatorship and the dangers facing European Jewry and others persecuted by the Nazis.

Curriculum links

Studying Josiah Wedgwood can contribute to KS3 History curriculum areas:

Challenges to Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day:

- The impact of the First World War and the Peace Settlement
- The interwar years and the rise of dictators
- The Holocaust
- The Second World War and wartime leadership



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As a major local figure in Staffordshire, studying Wedgwood can also contribute to a local history study:

- A depth study linked to one of the British areas of study
- A study over time, testing how far sites in the locality reflect aspects of national history

Information for teachers: Wedgwood's life

Josiah C. Wedgwood, popularly known as 'Jos', was the great-great-grandson of Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795), who founded the Wedgwood pottery company in Stoke in the 1760s. The earlier Wedgwood was a prominent anti-slavery campaigner, who created the famous medallion and slogan, 'Am I Not a Man and a Brother?'

Josiah Wedgwood had a happy childhood in the Wedgwood family in and around Barlaston. At the age of 13 he went to boarding school at Clifton College, Bristol, (where there were many Jewish pupils). He attended Royal Naval College at Greenwich, London.

Jos married his cousin Ethel Kate Bowen in 1894. They had seven children. But Ethel left Wedgwood in 1913 and divorced him in 1919. Since divorce at that time required a guilty party, he agreed to take the blame. He pretended to have committed adultery, and to have deserted his wife and children. He was criticised in the media and the church, and again when he revealed that the adultery had been staged. He spoke out against the divorce laws that required this kind of action.

Wedgwood was renowned as a principled campaigner and a passionate fighter. He was often strongly at odds with members of his own party, but even so, remained a well-loved and popular politician. He was a keen historian, and founded the History of Parliament Trust.

Military career

In 1900 Wedgwood volunteered to fight in the Boer War (1899-1902, a war in which Britain fought to protect its interests in South Africa, part of the British Empire). He volunteered again in the First World War (1914-18), where he fought in France and was injured in Gallipoli, Turkey. He was made a Colonel in 1917.

Political career

Josiah C Wedgwood was first elected as Member of Parliament for Newcastle-under-Lyme from 1906. He supported women's right to vote. He stood first as a Liberal, but became dissatisfied when the Liberal government would not honour campaign commitments to land reform, nor give women the right to vote. In 1919 he shifted to join the Labour Party.

Campaigning

Wedgwood fought throughout his life for justice and rights for the oppressed. He campaigned for the Single Tax, changes to tax laws to reduce poverty and inequality.



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He was heavily involved in the Parliamentary Committee on Refugees and initiatives to support refugees' support in the UK and British Empire. He also supported the Kindertransport, a scheme which allowed Jewish children from Nazi-occupied Europe to enter Britain. Wedgwood personally sponsored over 200 refugees.



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