

SGS HISTORIAN

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Forgotten History



Editorial comment, courtesy of ChatGPT

Here at SGS, whilst recognising the value and importance of originality and integrity in academic work, we also embrace the onward march of progress. In this respect, we recognise how for historians, new tools like ChatGPT can be utilised for the benefit of research and to inform our thinking and writing. With that in mind, for this year's foreword, I asked ChatGPT the following question: **can you write a 200 word summary of why forgotten histories are important.** This is what it said:

Forgotten histories are essential because they reveal the experiences and contributions of marginalized communities, challenge dominant narratives, and provide a more comprehensive understanding of historical events. Traditional historical accounts often overlook the voices of minorities, women, and other oppressed groups, leading to a biased representation of the past. By uncovering these forgotten histories, we honour those who have been overlooked and offer diverse role models for future generations.

These histories also help us understand contemporary social, political, and economic issues by tracing their deep historical roots. This context is crucial for developing effective solutions and promoting social justice. For example, understanding the history of systemic racism can inform initiatives aimed at achieving racial equality.

Engaging with forgotten histories fosters empathy and inclusivity by highlighting the shared humanity of diverse groups and promoting mutual respect. Additionally, these histories enrich our cultural heritage, preserving the traditions, knowledge, and achievements of various communities, and contributing to a more vibrant and multifaceted cultural identity.

In summary, forgotten histories are vital for a truthful, inclusive, and just understanding of human history, enabling us to learn from the past and build a more equitable future.

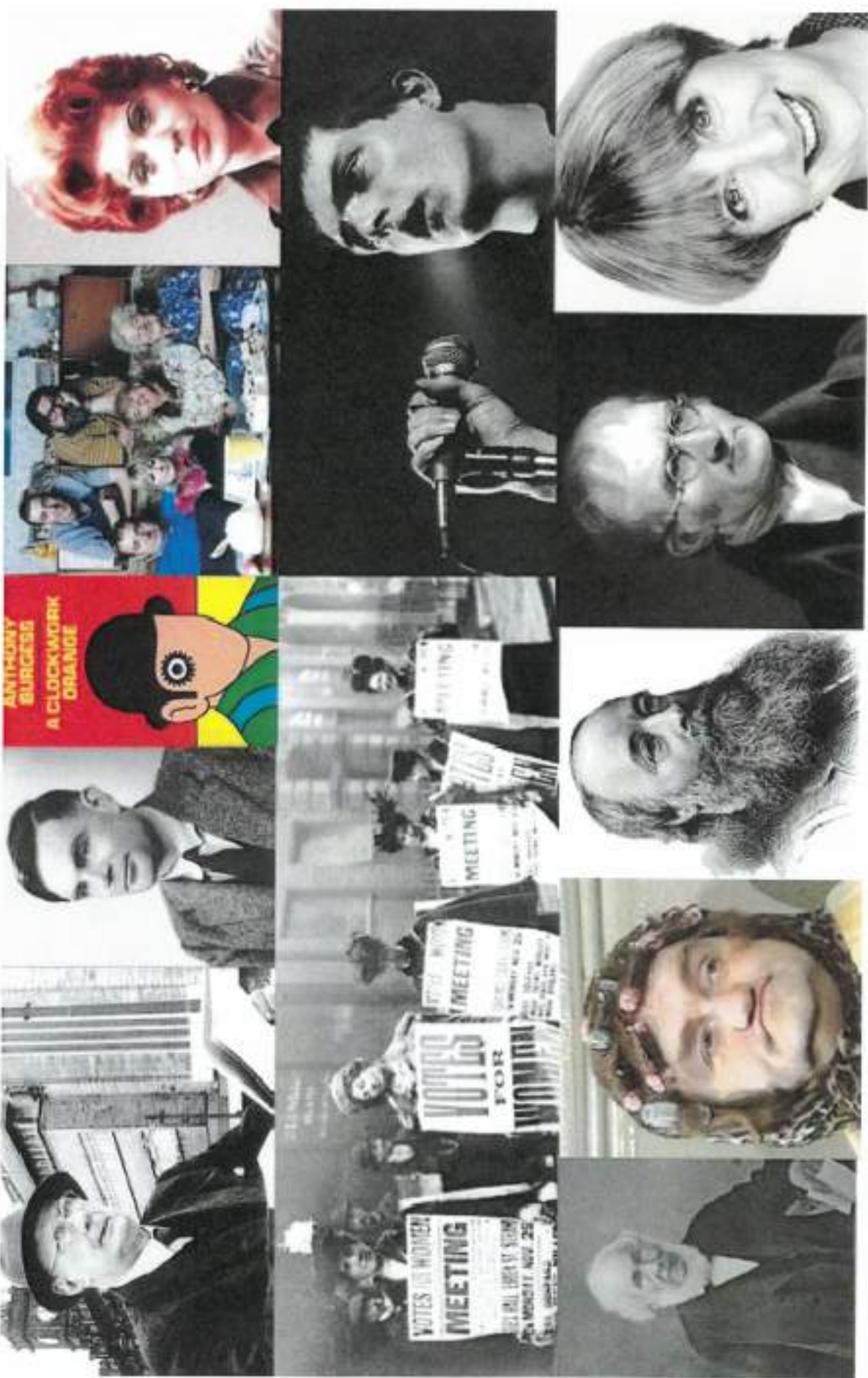
I'm not sure I could have put it any better myself! From the first meeting, the contributors felt that this focus was what they wanted to explore this year. Enjoy the magazine, featuring a broad selection of contributions, all original in their entirety, reflecting on overlooked and often forgotten episodes, individuals and stories from the past.

Mr D J Stone – June 2024 [the first time I have used ChatGPT]

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Cover designed by Eddie Griffiths [L5]



Forgotten Stories from Manchester's Past – Unsung Mancunians

Eddie Griffiths [L5], Mr A C Thorley & Priya Burrow [L4]

On Thursday 16th May 2024, Mr A C Thorley, Eddie Griffiths and Priya Burrow gave an assembly to the Lower Sixth form on Forgotten Stories from Manchester's Past – Unsung Mancunians. After some careful persuasion and with interest piqued, all three agreed to share these three insights in this year's SGS Historian!

Eddie Griffiths on Ted Wickham

This story isn't really about Ted Wickham, it's about small actions and big results. He was born in the East End in 1911, left school at 15 to work in a factory but was left unemployed by the great depression. During his time unemployed, he taught himself Greek, Latin and Hebrew, no mean feat I'm sure. His studies eventually got him a place at London University where he studied to join the Church of England. After being ordained in 1939, his first job was as Chaplain in a munitions factory in the East End, he still hadn't been anywhere near Manchester. It was in 1959 that he finally set foot in our glorious corner of the world, when he was invited to become the Bishop of Manchester, one of few working class men to ever be offered such a high-ranking position. He even joked later in his life that he was the only Bishop to have ever been on the dole.

After a scandal involving a celebrity being outed as gay, in 1954, the Conservative government of the time commissioned the Wolfenden report to advise the government



Figure 1: Ted Wickham

as to whether homosexuality should remain illegal. In 1957, the Conservative government ignored the results of this commission when they advised the legalisation of homosexuality. An unsatisfactory result for many people across the country, this decision led to the foundation of many different pressure groups advocating that the government follow the advice of the commission. One such group was the Homosexual Law Reform Society (HLRS) which was set up in 1958 and 5 years later looked at expanding its operations up North. Wickham re-enters our story here as the chair of the C of E's North-West Board of Social Responsibility - essentially the church's charity wing - one of his workers, a man called Colin Harvey, approached Wickham one day. Although heterosexual and happily married, Harvey had attended a small meeting of people aiming to set up a North-West branch of the HLRS. He approached Wickham about the group and the Bishop

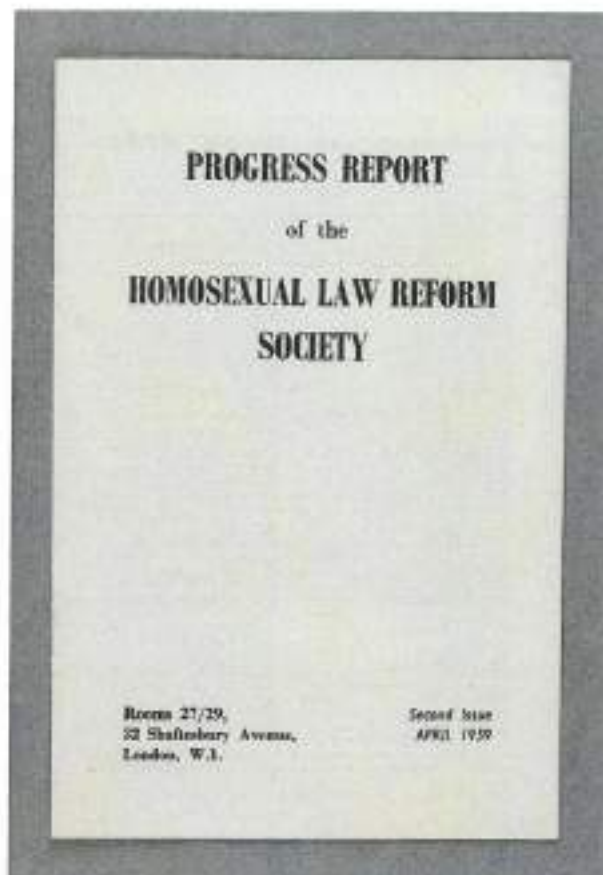


Figure 2: Homosexual Law Reform Society pamphlet - UK Parliament

offered to facilitate the group's establishment and let them meet in his boardroom, provided it became a proper committee. The first proper meeting of the group was held on the 7th of October 1964 in the Church's building on Blackfriars Road.

This small action, sponsoring the starting of this group, had huge repercussions however. When homosexuality was decriminalised in 1967, the HLRS ceased operations but the North-West branch knew there was still a long way to go to make being gay or a lesbian something people weren't afraid to admit. In the 1970s the group adopted a different name: the Campaign for Homosexual Equality. This group was the biggest gay rights group of the decade, the less radical equivalent of

the Gay Liberation Front. Peaking at 5000 members nationwide, their impact was tangible through their lobbying efforts to equalise the age of consent for gay and straight couples.

Ted is significant precisely because he wasn't an activist, because he didn't devote his life to the cause or die for some nebulous idea of progress. He was a hero because of his contributions to the collage of small actions that make the world better everyday. He was a 'rough, tough east end cockney' said Ray Gosling, a founder of the North West HLRS and he is an adoptive Mancunian. His achievements in his own right, triumphing over the odds to achieve a position of influence, are complimented perfectly by a simple act of kindness that led to so, so much more.



Figure 3: The Davenport, Buxton Road, Stockport

Mr A C Thorley on the Davenport Cinema/Theatre, Stockport

Lionel Richie's father once said to him: "You never know your home until you leave it". Lionel didn't understand initially what his father meant by that. Maybe the 2024 Leavers (amongst whom I include myself) might realise the truth of Richie Senior's words when September comes around. Until then, my understanding of the phrase is that it is a version of an idea which began with the Romans: "genius loci", the idea

that a place has an enduring power or energy beyond its construction, inhabitation or usage.

We may feel this most obviously when visiting an ancient site, where the ruins which surround us remind us most starkly of the inexorable passage of time and perhaps temporarily remove the stays of the modern world: a castle which has been besieged or stormed, a temple or other repository of people's hopes and dreams, a home in which people have laughed, loved and died, a battlefield where heroism has flourished or been newly discovered. Can we feel the presence of those who have gone before us, or are we kidding ourselves?

I have been where Alexander, or Caesar or Churchill once walked, where Pheidias, or McCartney and Lennon, or Michelangelo once created. Darth Vader can feel the presence of Obi Wan on the Death Star, simply by him coming aboard (does one "come aboard" the Death Star?), but he has the Force and is fictional. And yet, I still believe that I can feel a "genius loci": which brings me back to Stockport Grammar School.

I joined the school in 1999, two years after the Davenport Theatre was pulled down. This event is described on the Cinema Treasures website: *"The Davenport Cinema was closed in March 1997 and demolished in August 1997 to provide a car park!"* ([Davenport Cinema in Stockport, GB - Cinema Treasures](#))

The closing exclamation mark suggests perhaps indignation or shock that a place replete with so many memories could be



Figure 4: Local newspaper report on Tina Turner's 1984 Davvy performance

replaced by something as coldly functional as a staff carpark. I am sorry that I never got to visit "The Davvy", where in 1984, one of the memories created was of Tina Turner strutting the stage (and what a strut it would have been!).

Esther Burns and then her nephew, Jack Edge, may no longer be household names in the local area, but they were instrumental in transforming the Davenport Theatre from a cinema to the go-to venue for live music. And so, for their insight and ambition, I add Esther and Jack to this article's pantheon of unsung Mancunians. Many others trod the Davenport Theatre's famous stage (well, famous in Stockport — my mum, who was brought up in Cheadle



Figure 6: Album cover for the Four Tops, who performed at the Davvy alongside other world-leading acts

Hulme, said “Yes, of course I went to the Davvy, everyone did.”), as well as Tina Turner there was Frankie Valli, Leo Sayer, Roy Orbison, the Everly Brothers, legendary drummer Buddy Rich and, the favourites for me and Mr Stone, The Four Tops.

The Four Tops are the act I most like to imagine performing as I stroll across the car park. It is said that visitors to the site of the Battle of Marathon, fought between the Greeks and the Persians in 490BC, can still hear noises of the fighting (I did try, but unfortunately a bloke with a strimmer ruined the moment). I have tried to pause in the staff car park and see if I can hear the soaring vocals of Levi Stubbs and the rest of the Tops belt out “Reach Out, I’ll Be There”, “Loving You is Sweeter Than Ever” or “Walk Away Renee” (my favourite Four Tops songs) or “Going Loco, Down in Acapulco” (Mr Stone’s favourite), but, unfortunately, I can’t deceive either the reader or Mr Stone with a story of a transformational Wednesday morning in February when the sound came to me over

the rumble of the A6. Much as I would like to.

So, perhaps it will be enough to know that they were there. Heraclitus said that “No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it’s not the same river and he’s not the same man”. This is true but I still like to think that there is something of the essence of Tina, Roy or Levi left in the staff car park and that maybe this “genius loci” inspires the staff at SGS to be as creative, moving and inspirational.



Figure 5: Louise De-Cocodia, or Mrs D

Priya Burrow on Louise Da-Cocodia

Take a walk down Market Street in 1955. Charging crowds of hardened faces, viscous pollution muddying a clearer sky, crystallised smog clinging to blackened, brutalist buildings; this was the gruelling reality of Manchester, a reality which juxtaposed a lifestyle in Jamaica for Louise Da-Cocodia.

Initial optimism would have been quickly eroded living in a poverty-stricken Manchester, working, tirelessly, in a collapsing NHS, hindered by racial and educational barriers. Yet, this was the lifestyle adopted by Louise, and so many in the Windrush generation. Us British have a tendency to gloat about our free healthcare system, but how many of us know who we must thank for its continuing existence? This narrative of British exceptionalism, where the British man saved the economy, and the British man rebuilt the towns, and the British man saved NHS needs to be overturned, which is why Louise's story deserves so much more recognition.



Figure 8: Louise with colleagues on the wards

As the first black senior nurse in Manchester and a dedicated advocate for improved race relationships, Louise demonstrated the significance of the Windrush generation to the social and cultural climate in Manchester and Britain today. We are indebted to people like Louise Da-Cocodia, and we are indebted to the empire we once had.

At the time, the arrival of HMT Windrush in 1948 was contemplated as one of the great success stories in an imperial and commonwealth history, delivering new music, new food, and new dialect to Britain. We like to teach and share stories of smooth integration and British allegiance, yet swiftly gloss over the rampant racism and culture wars which accompanied it.



Figure 7: Louise qualified as a Staff Registered Nurse in 1958

It is the experiences of women like Louise, which illuminated these problems and ignited a craving for racial justice and equality. Transcripts from her earlier years in nursing bear witness to the fact that discrimination and racism was institutionalised and commonplace throughout the NHS.

Limitations were placed on black women, through requiring additional British educational qualifications, which hindered their progression throughout the NHS and kept them low ranking positions performing menial tasks.

Louise was subjected to comments such as “those black so and so’s, coming here and giving us orders.”, a sentiment which was shared by some patients who denied her care. Such ill treatment is what motivated Louise to publish a research paper into the institutionalised barriers in the NHS for women of colour and serve as an active member of the regional race relations board.

Social change in Manchester did not just happen. It was not instantaneous. 30% of Manchester’s population are BAME, me being one. The diversity and tolerance in Manchester which we enjoy and pride ourselves upon has been consolidated because people like Louise continued to fight for it and for that reason, she deserves greater recognition.



Figure 9: An undated photo of Louise meeting the then-Prince Charles

Secondly, A new brand of xenophobic hatred within Britain stresses the importance of giving women like Louise

Da-Cocodia, a greater spotlight. We, as a nation, seem to have selective amnesia when it comes to our imperial legacies. Between 1953-1962, over 200,000 people arrived in Britain from the West Indies alone, on the request of the British Empire. Louise’s story promulgates a truth which is often ignored. They are here, because we were there.

Through her sustained appetite to learn and dedication to the care of others, Louise was promoted to Assistant Superintendent of District Nurses, which provides an inspiring story of hardship and perseverance despite the paradigms fed to the British population surrounding imperial migration. It is the story of Louise-Da Cocodia which allows us to truly appreciate the contribution of the British colonies to our NHS, and truly understand the extent of her achievement, and for this reason, she deserves greater recognition.



Figure 10: Louise Da-Cocodia receiving her MBE in 2005

To summarise, the story of Louise Da-Cocodia embodies the story of a commonwealth immigrant who succeeded in Britain. This is truly inspiring and may resonate with many individuals in the room. I, myself, am proud to say that I am the granddaughter of two Indian immigrants who came to the UK and worked in the NHS. It is people like Louise that stepped up because we needed them and held up a crumbling and unstable organisation, allowing it to eventually thrive and become the invaluable NHS which we access every day.

But the story of Louise serves another purpose. This is a story of racial abuse, hardships and obstacles for the Windrush generation. Her story deserves greater recognition as it allows us to value the hard-fought effort that was made to reach the diverse Manchester which we know today and without her story, we cannot ever truly understand the Britain which we are proud of.



Figure 11: Logo of the Louise Da-Cocodia Education Trust, which provides education, cultural, enterprise and community programme to support people of African and Caribbean heritage.



The Lesser-Known History of the Slave Trade in St Helena

Tom Farrelly [L7]

I'm very close to my 90-year-old great grandmother and I love visiting her and hearing all about her childhood growing up on the remote island of St Helena. My family connection to St Helena, most famous for being the place where Napoleon was exiled in 1815, means I am always looking out for any mentions of it in the press. Last month I spotted a story which shows a darker side to this idyllic outpost.



Figure 12: Jamestown, the capital of St Helena

St Helena is in the mid-Atlantic and, standing 1200 miles from the nearest landmass off the west coast of Africa, is about as remote a place as you will find. For many years the only way to visit was by boat but in 2010 the UK Government agreed to the funding of an airport for St Helena.

During early construction work, the remains of hundreds of formerly enslaved Africans were uncovered. What was St Helena's role in the slave trade?

In the 1800s, slavery was a booming business with European ships taking

manufactured goods to Africa which they would trade for slaves. The slaves would then be delivered to the West Indies, Brazil and, until the abolition of slavery in 1809, the US. To get to these places, the ships transporting the slaves would use a route known as the 'Middle Passage'. St Helena was one of just two mid-Atlantic islands located en route from Africa to the Americas, making it the ideal port of call for refuelling and restocking.



Figure 13: Image of a typical slave ship in 18th C

Britain was trying to suppress slavery in the Caribbean and the Royal Navy played a critical role in this. The Royal Navy established a base on St Helena, so the island became the landing place for many of the slaves taken off slaver ships.

In 1840, St Helena's role in the abolition of slavery was further cemented, when the British established a Vice-Admiralty court here. The court operated for 27 years, condemning 450 slave ships and liberating 26,000 slaves.

The freed slaves were housed in a 'Liberated African Establishment' that was set up in Rupert's Valley on St Helena which was described as an 'arid, shadeless and always windy tract' and thus was poorly suited for a refugee camp. The establishment also acted as a hospital which was needed for the slaves who had been kept in appalling conditions on the

ships and were likely suffering from various conditions from dehydration to smallpox and a quarantine zone.

The establishment was said to be crude, with the liberated Africans housed in a series of large tents and wooden huts. At the worst periods, well over a thousand Africans were held in the depot at a time – far more than it had ever been intended to accommodate.



Figure 14: Liberated slaves who settled on St Helena.

So what happened to the liberated slaves? Most of the slaves were shipped back to Africa or on to other countries but a small number settled on St Helena. Sadly, about a third of all those received into Rupert's Valley perished there.

It is thought around 8,000 Africans were buried in Rupert's Valley in unmarked graves in the 1800s. And there they remained undiscovered and undisturbed until 2008 when preparatory work started on the proposed airport.

Although the presence of burial grounds was well known to St Helenians, the extent of those grounds was not. When the proposal for the airport started to take shape, it became apparent that archaeologists should be on site to play an essential role in the construction process.

Teams of archaeologists from the UK went to St Helena in 2008. The leading archaeologist on the project was Professor Mark Horton from Bristol University. The dig uncovered the remains of 325 former slaves. At the time, Professor Horton commented "Here we have the victims of the Middle Passage – one of the greatest crimes against humanity – not just as numbers, but as human beings. These remains are certainly some of the most moving that I have ever seen in my archaeological career."



Figure 15: Dr Andrew Pearson of the University of Bristol.

Dr Andrew Pearson, another leading archaeologist connected to Bristol University said "From the moment that we began excavating this site its importance was obvious. Archaeologically it is unique, allowing an insight into the transatlantic slave trade that goes far beyond the historical texts and brings us – literally – face to face with the human consequences in the trade of enslaved Africans."

Dr Pearson said 83% of the bodies were those of children, teenagers or young adults. Sadly, youngsters were prime material for slave traders because their youth meant they had the potential for long working lives.

Only five of the people were in coffins, the rest had been put directly into shallow graves that were hastily covered. Cause of death was impossible to establish in most cases as the main killers of the time – dehydration, dysentery and smallpox – leave no pathological trace.

But there was evidence of scurvy and some evidence of violence with two children appearing to have gunshot wounds.

The dig uncovered some important artefacts that later went on display at Liverpool's International Slavery Museum such as jewellery, coins, buttons and iron tags which would have been numbered and used to identify the slaves.



Figure 16: Reburial in St Helena in August 2022.

In August 2022, St Helena held a two-day reburial ceremony. It had taken 14 years to secure the funding for the reburial.

The remains were transported from part of the island where they had been housed to a newly designated 'Liberated African Cemetery' in a funeral procession. Once all the remains had been carefully laid to rest, the islanders came together for a special

ceremony where they recited poems and sang songs. One St Helenian gave a powerful speech about tracing her lineage to a liberated African that had been integrated into St Helena's Society.

The island is now in the process of creating a permanent memorial at Rupert's Valley which will commemorate this period of history and provides opportunities for further knowledge transfer on this significant but somewhat hidden role that St Helena had in the ending of the African slave trade.



Figure 17: A map of St Helena.

The island of St Helena is one little known to many in Britain, despite being a British overseas territory. Whilst slavery is frequently reported in history, the role of St Helena in the slave trade is a significantly lesser-known history. Many liberated slaves lived on the island and faced treacherous conditions in a refugee camp. The discovery of the bodies of slaves, many of whom were young, further shows the poor conditions they faced.

The recent discovery and movement of the bodies is a prominent step in the telling of the story of the slave trade and the redress of the inadequate burial of the bodies in

unmarked graves, many not in coffins and some had faced extreme causes of death, such as scurvy and gunshot wounds. The movement of the bodies provided an opportunity for many islanders to gain closure and bury the bodies of their ancestors, as well as providing a memorial to help acknowledge the island's vast history.

St Helena is most famed for its housing of Napoleon in his final years of exile, but the remote island's role in the slave trade was also prominent. The island was used by Britain, setting up a base there for slaves taken off slaver ships and establishing a vice-admiralty court. It thus played a key role in the liberation of slaves, freeing them from slaver ships.



Figure 18: Artists depiction of Napoleon in exile on St Helena.

Therefore, it is vital that there is greater awareness of St Helena's role in the slave trade. The memorialisation of the bodies and re-burial shows more respect and recognition of the island's history. Despite dismal standards in the refugee camps, the island did play a role in the relocation of many African slaves and some did continue to live on the island, now liberated.



21ST ANNIVERSARY EDITION



Wild Swans

THREE
DAUGHTERS
OF CHINA

鴻

Jung Chang

Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China by Jung Chang (2016)

A book review by Frances Walmsley [L7]

Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China chronologically tells the story of three generations of women in Jung Chang's (the Author's) family. It explores the massive cultural shifts, turmoil and conflict in China, which occurred over a relatively short span of history.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book and found it fascinating. It is not something I would have ever learnt in the curriculum but has definitely made me eager to learn more about the culture and politics of different regions. China has both a rich ancient and modern history, and this book explores the leap from traditional Chinese culture to the rise, rule and fall of the Chinese Communist Party.

Firstly, the book begins with Jung Chang's grandmother: Yu-Fang, who grew up relatively poor, and at a young age was married to a military general (Xue Zhi-heng) as a concubine in order to raise the social status of her family. Despite her marriage to him, Xue Zhi-heng already had multiple concubines and a wife, and Yu-Fang rarely ever saw him.

Eventually she conceived a child, De-Hong (Jung Chang's mother), but shortly after, the general died. This meant that Xue Zhi-heng's wife was to gain control and authority over all the concubines, and despite the easy and luxurious lifestyle as a concubine, Yu-Fang feared the general's wife and fled from the home. Yu-Fang embarked on a dangerous journey across

China on foot to travel back to her parents' home and settle there. When she reaches Jinzhou, Manchuria, she falls in love and marries Dr Xia, and lives the rest of her life, less well off than she was as a Concubine, but much happier.



Figure 19: Mao in his youth, as depicted in a later propaganda poster.

Yu-Fang's daughter, De-Hong, grows up alongside the rise of Communism in China of the 1930's and 40's, and joined the Chinese Communist Party, led by Mao Ze-Dong, just aged 15. De-Hong meets Jung-Chang's father in the party, who she marries.

Their relationship is constantly strained due to their political status. The novel highlights the pressure families in general face, being torn apart in order to fulfil cultural or political roles deemed more important than family relations. For example, due to the busy work lives they led, Chang's father had not known De-Hong was pregnant until she suffered a near deadly miscarriage. Eventually, De-

Hong has Jung Chang, the author of the novel, along with four other children.

Chang grew up amidst the 'Cultural Revolution' of China, where Mao Ze-Dong converted the nation into the 'People's Republic of China'. Despite Chang's involvement in the movement, she expresses various emotions about the Revolution, but always kept quiet to avoid punishment. Similarly, her parents, once die hard party members, start to question the cultish, oppressive nature of the Communist party, but receive harsh punishment of public embarrassment and torture for doing so.



Figure 20: The public punishment of the son of a purged official in 1968.

Chang's story continues as she becomes part of the millions 'Sent-Down' to in the countryside and harvest to fuel the nation's growth without any salary. Much of the way Chang described her experiences in the

1970's sound eerily similar to those of a war movement, it becomes clear that the optimism of the 'Cultural Revolution' is wearing off by this time, and the tragic, poverty ridden reality of mainland China is setting in.

Not long after, Mao died in 1976, sending the nation into shock. Chang describes herself feeling ecstatic at his death, however there was a general feeling of uneasiness as the whole country was unsure how to feel, they had lost their leader, and many were confused whether to be delighted or upset. The personal insight into a Chang's views of the glory days and downfall of Mao's time in power in China are fascinating, it especially interests me as it is a lot more recent than other totalitarian leaders such as Hitler or Stalin, and also takes place in a completely different region and culture. Chang eventually went to university to study English, using her degree to move to the UK, where she still lives today.



Figure 21: Jung Chang pictured for BBC Arts in 2014.

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed reading *Wild Swans*. Learning about the pivotal transformations that took place over just three generations of China was very eye opening. Additionally, I like how Chang chose to focus on three generations of women, as globally, women are usually the most oppressed in any culture.

The focus on female struggle was especially interesting because it highlighted the ways that the Chinese Communist Party both brought about a degree of equality and opportunity for women, but also how they struggled in different ways in comparison to Chang's grandmother's generation. I would strongly recommend this book and regard it as one of my favourites, the personal stories are gripping and emotional yet informative and interesting. *'Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China'* was a brilliant journey through women's experiences of the tyranny and transformation of China in the 19th and 20th Century.



Figure 22: The structure of the CCP, the Communist Party of China



Romania's Hidden History

Penny Horsford [L2]

In September 1940 King Carol II abdicated due to significant territorial losses to Hungary (supporters of Nazi Germany) and his inability to effectively prevent the collapse of his regime. Army General, Ion Antonescu, became Prime Minister, and with little alternative, Romania became an ally to Nazi Germany during the war. However, 1944 marked a period of martial supremacy for the allies, and King Michael I (son to King Carol II) organised a coup d'état to overthrow general Ion Antonescu, and transferred Romanian allegiance to the Allied nations, against Germany.

Following the armistice, the allies divided Europe into spheres of influence, and the iron curtain, isolating Eastern Europe (under USSR direction) from Western influence, was formed. Despite its unpopularity the presence of victorious USSR troops and the political instability caused by the King's coup, allowed the Romanian Communist party (led by Petru Groza), to assume power. Through a series of show trials, opposition imprisonment, and the forced abdication of King Michael in December 1947, the party eliminated all remaining resistance. The Romanian People's Republic was now formally established, and the communists were now able to enforce the sovietisation of public life.



Figure 23: Romanian communist leader, Petru Groza.

The communist leaders purged Romanian society and reorganised it to follow a Soviet Model, that reflected the structures of a totalitarian regime. In 1948, they adopted a soviet-style constitution, designed to give the party utmost authority, whilst the governmental institutions served simply as a mechanism for communist imposition. Political parties were banned, opponents imprisoned, and the establishment of the vast security network (the Securitate) allowed the party to maintain strict control over the running of the state. At least 600,000 Romanians were arrested during the communist period and were conscripted into force labour camps.

One of the most notorious cases is the Danube-Black Sea Canal, in which 60,000 detainees were held in this camp, in 1950 alone. It was labelled as the 'a graveyard of the Romanian Bourgeoisie', by the first Communist leader of Romania; Gheorghiu-Dej.

The economy was restructured in order to centralise communist control: banks became state owned, private enterprises were banned, and in 1949 the Romanians began a soviet-inspired collectivization process, in which agricultural land was transferred to state-ownership. There was significant opposition to the exploitative system of collectivization, and in the first three years of its introduction 80,000 peasants were arrested.



Figure 24: Propaganda poster promoting agriculture c. 1960s.

Despite the mass resistance, by the end of its thirteen-year imposition, 96% of the arable surface of Romania was transferred under state control. This abusive form of control undermined the previous democratic structures of the Romanian state and emphasised the immediate integration of corrupt Soviet policy into the country.

Romania underwent a large cultural shift during the Communist period, in an attempt to reflect and emulate the traditions of the USSR. The government imposed an expectation on Romanian artists and writers to subordinate their creativity to promote communist party leaders and Soviet ideals and, History books were also rewritten to glorify Communist take-over, with little

information left about the period prior to 1940. Additionally, in an attempt to intensify Russian affiliation, the Romanian state worked to make Russian its second language. However, this imposition of Sovietization failed to resonate with the people and simply intensified their traditional Russophobia.



Figure 25: Romanian leader Nicolae Ceausescu.

Gheorghiu-Dej died in 1965 and was succeeded by Nicolae Ceausescu, who appeared to employ a more liberal attitude towards the running of Romania. He defied the repressive tactics used by his predecessor, in an attempt to establish himself as an independent leader, that was separate from Moscow.

In the 1960s, Ceausescu challenged the dominance of the Soviet Union, and publicly condemned the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Soviet troops and its

military intervention to extinguish the Prague Spring rebellion (1968). Romania was the only Warsaw Pact (Communist version of NATO) member to do this and established them as autonomous from the Soviet Union. This opened up relations with the West, and in 1969 Romania became the only Communist state in the Soviet Bloc to be visited by an US president.



Figure 26: New housing development in communist Romania.

Additionally, Ceausescu committed himself to improving the economic conditions, as Romania underwent a massive industrialisation process that improved the economic agency of the state. Modern factories were built, which incentivized the government to build apartment blocks to house its workers, and to provide monetary aid to help individuals buy homes. This encouraged relocation from rural areas to small developing towns, which increased the size of the labour force.

Ceausescu's schemes not only provided employment, but improved welfare standards with free healthcare and state-sponsored education. Additionally, his relaxation on censorship, soon gained him a wave of popular support, as Romania appeared to enter a Golden Age of freedom.

However, this assertion is undermined by Ceausescu's Decree 770 in 1966; a measure employed to outlaw contraception and abortion, leading to a drastic increase in maternal mortality rates as women sought outlawed methods to terminate their pregnancies. Despite, subverting elements of the totalitarian regime, Ceausescu endeavoured for control, and employed authoritarian tactics, such as the Securitate, to achieve this.

In 1971, Ceausescu sought to reconstruct his policies, following his visit to the People's Republic of China, North Korea, Vietnam, and Mongolia. He was influenced by the state's strong nationalistic tendencies and the personality cult the leaders of the countries had developed. Ceausescu proclaimed a new cultural revolution within Romania, that employed strict regulations, aimed to centralise control. This marked the end of a brief period of relative liberalism, and the imposition of political despotism and dictatorship.



Figure 27: Elena Ceausescu.

The Securitate's power was strengthened to not tolerate any internal dissent, and fear became the primary source of obedience. Such control allowed Ceausescu to impose his personality cult

through the use of mass indoctrination, state propaganda, and rallies to glorify the dictator. This corruption permeated the government itself, with the largely incompetent Elena Ceausescu (Ceausescu's wife), promoted to high office, who has been accredited by oral historians as being responsible for over half the poor decisions made by Ceausescu, often overturning decisions with little justification.



Figure 28: Ceausescu's pet project, the vast and costly House of the People.

In doing this Ceausescu, established a practice of government that undermined the system of meritocracy and allowed ill-equipped members of nobility to infiltrate the political sphere despite their lack of qualification. Fuelled by megalomania, the dictator introduced massive industrial, but unviable economic projects such as the House of the People and mass exportation of internal products, in order to pay off the foreign debts that amounted during the industrial ventures of the 1970s. This drastically reduced the Romanian living standard, as Ceausescu's strategies resulted in mass shortages of basic necessities, such as food and medicine, that were designed to satisfy his personal desire for national independence.

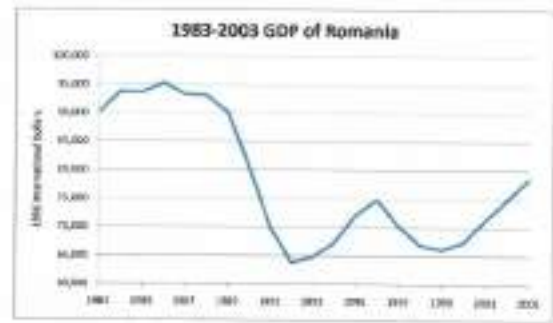


Figure 29: the GDP of Romania 1983-2003, reflecting the end of communism and its legacy on the people.

By the end of the 1980s, Romania's were reduced to queuing hours for essentials, whilst hot water and television was only permitted for limited hours of the day. During this period there was a heightened sense of despair cultivating within Romania, which contributed to growing unrest.

By 1989 physical hardship and moral despair was commonplace within Romania, with Ceausescu's harsh repressive methods of control overwhelming society. As Radio Free Europe, a radio broadcasting organisation created by the US to provide information to the Soviet Bloc, became increasingly popular, new political ideologies were accessible, stimulating unrest.

Romanians showed signs of civil unrest through strikes and anti-communist manifestos; however, these oppositional forces were suppressed by the Securitate. Nevertheless, when a local Pastor was arrested in Timisoara on the 16th December 1989, there was a wave of popular support that escalated into an anti-communist protest. The communist authorities attempted to utilise the workers to stop resistance, however they soon joined the protest against Ceausescu.



Figure 30: Protests in Timisoara, December 1989.

Despite using the army to open fire on demonstrators, Timisoara was soon proclaimed a free city by the 20th December. News of the protest spread, which catalysed a series of revolutions within Romania. In retaliation, Ceausescu organised a support rally in Bucharest on December 21st, however this resulted in disaster as the crowd's became hostile and protested against the Communist regime.



Figure 31: Protests spread, with the eyes and emblems being removed from portraits and flags.

The spectators soon turned violent, and the Romanian army defied orders to open fire and sided with the protesters. The Ceausescu couple fled, whilst loyal Securitate members attempted to destabilise protests and opened fired against civilians, with a total death and injury toll of 1566 all over the country.



Figure 32: the dark side of the end of the Cold War in Romania - the Ceausescu's after their arrest at the point of their trial and executions.

A military tribunal was set up to investigate the Ceausescu's couples abuse of power, in which they were swiftly found guilty and executed on the 25th December 1989. So, in less than 10 days, 42 years of Communist rule came to an end with Romania proclaimed as a free, and democratic country.



Peterloo and Revolutionary Britain

Eddie Griffiths [L5]

I do not think that Peterloo should count as forgotten history. For many people I am sure it is not, but fewer still will know of its context: the period after the Napoleonic wars that was marked by mass unrest and the constant fear of revolution. As aristocratic Britain was taken to its limit in one of the most volatile periods in European history, the potential for revolution mounted and was then slowly diffused by concessions. Manchester, as a new economic force within the country, was at the centre of this revolutionary, industrial Britain.

The discontent in Manchester at the time of Peterloo was caused by many things, not least the state of parliament. It was divided between two groupings, the Whigs and Tories (crucially, these were not parties so did not always vote as a unit), with the whigs being slightly less conservative. Basically, MPs were elected in two categories: county MPs and borough MPs.

In county constituencies, you could vote if you held land worth enough. The very small number of voters, all with the same interests led to most MPs from these constituencies being agreed upon between local landowners before the election had even happened: Nottinghamshire did not see an election contested from 1722 to 1832.

The borough constituencies were created by a monarch to provide towns with representation; they could be better but were often worse. At their best they were like Bristol, with 1,000 property owning

electors deciding who could best represent them and their town. At their worst though, they were the subject of well-deserved mockery: in burgh boroughs the right to vote was dependent on ownership of specific properties, meaning that a wealthy individual could simply buy up all these properties and have complete control over the election of MPs for the area.



Figure 33: the corrupt nature of burgh, or rotten, borough elections as parodied in Blackadder III (you might have seen this in one of Mr Stone's History lessons if taught by him over the last 19 years...).

Old Sarum was a burgh constituency which had its properties owned by someone who did not live in the constituency in fact, no one lived in the constituency meaning that the only things that the MPs were representing was a flock of sheep; Dunwich, once a thriving port granted representation in 1296, stopped being a place needing representation but kept its MPs, even after most of the constituency had fallen into the sea. These are extreme examples but it is important to understand that in most constituencies, only wealthy property owners could vote and, in those that were nominally more democratic, corruption and bribery generally ensured the rich got their way.

As well as this, the economic transformation of Manchester from a township in Lancaster to the industrial

capital of the world was in its most volatile stage in the early 1800s. Sociologist Alexis de Tocqueville described Manchester in 1835 as a 'foul drain' from which 'the greatest stream of human industry flows out to fertilise the world'. By the 1800s, Manchester had a rapidly growing population: migrants from all over Europe came to 'Cottonopolis' where weavers could make as much as 15 shillings a week, producing cloth made from cotton that had been shipped from slave plantations in the new world.



Figure 34: Inside a cotton mill at the peak of the development of Cottonopolis.

Despite its growing significance, Manchester did not become a borough constituency: no new borough constituencies had been created since 1674 leaving industrial cities like Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds and Sheffield unrepresented. Lacking a voice in parliament, the people did not have an outlet for their plight during economic crises and the fallout of the Napoleonic war was just that.

The mass return of troops from the war, the transition back to a civilian economy and the gradual mechanisation of the workforce combined to create a recession that left Manchester workers unemployed and worse off. On top of this, the Year Without a Summer, a dramatic cooling of the climate due to a volcanic eruption,

caused crop failures, driving down the supply and quality of British grain.

Not wanting this to impact their profits, the landowner parliament passed the 'Corn Laws' which lasted from 1815 until 1846. These laws put restrictions on cheaper foreign grain imports, causing food prices to spike. As they rose, the wages in Manchester were cut from 15 shillings a week to 5, keeping industrialists within their profit margins. The people's response to their poverty was to protest; the starving and unemployed had no hope left but to demand representation.



Figure 35: A 1793 call for political reform to the House of Commons.

In 1817, a petition went to Parliament with 750,000 signatures, demanding votes for all men; this in a country of just 11.3 million

people, but the petition was flatly rejected by the Commons. As well as the Whigs and Tories in Parliament, the voices calling for democratic reform had been organising under a third political faction: the Radicals.

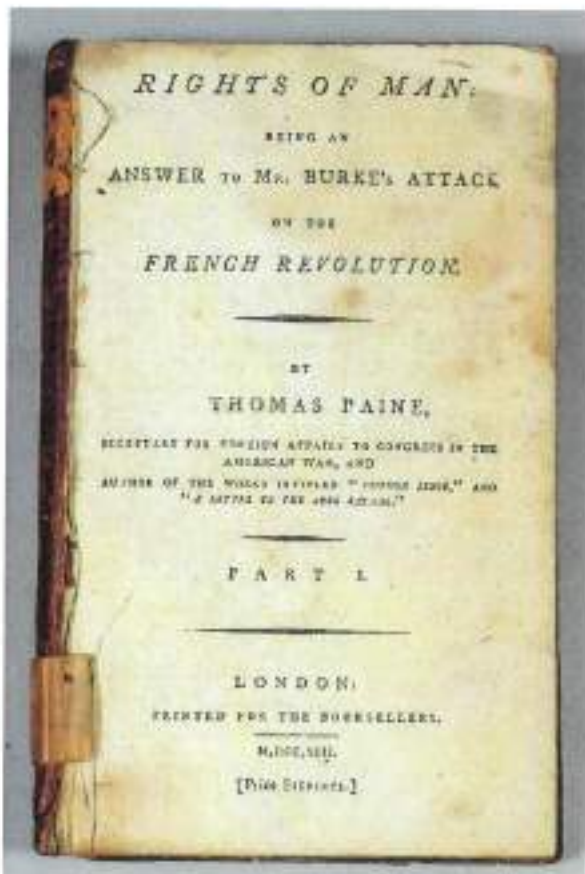


Figure 36: Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man* (1791).

An inspiration for the Radicals was the writer Thomas Paine who had, in 1791, published 'The Rights of Man'. His vision for governance in Great Britain was the abolition of monarchy and aristocracy, subsidised education for the poor and progressive taxation to prevent the re-emergence of a wealthy gentry.

In 1795, after the French Revolution, the 'Gagging Acts' were brought in to repress these ideas by banning public gatherings of over 50 people. The government even went as far as suspending the right to a trial. After 1815 and the defeat of Napoleon, the

middle class started spreading these ideas more actively in Hampden Clubs which many working class people attended. Government suppression did not cease however, and the short lived Hampden Club in Manchester was closed after its founder was arrested and sent to prison for months before being released without charge.

It is worth remembering though that the attitude of Parliament to the poor was not one of blanket contempt, there was sympathy for their plight. But their insistence on paternalism, the idea that they knew what was best for the poor, meant they were unwilling to grant universal suffrage; they thought the country would descend into mob-rule if they did. A 'few desperate demagogues' were riling up people who had nothing better to do: the Tories consistently under-estimated the desire for reform.



Figure 37: Henry Hunt arrives at St Peter's Field to address the crowds, as depicted in Mike Leigh's 2018 film.

Nevertheless, it was from this base of middle and lower class cooperation that sprang Peterloo. On Monday 16th August, around 50,000 people walked to St Peter's Field from as far as Altrincham, Salford, Stockport, Bury and Rochdale. The man speaking was Henry 'Orator' Hunt, who had earned his nickname at rallies like this. Those in attendance brought banners

saying 'No Corn Laws', 'Universal Suffrage' and 'Liberty and Fraternity' and at noon Hunt arrived to speak.

To deal with the growing discontent in Manchester, a Yeomanry had been set up, a fairly disorganised militia made up of local volunteers. They had been left to manage the event; the army would arrive later. General Byng, leader of the army in the North, wanted to be at a horse race in York at the time of the event so excused himself from it, leaving his deputy in charge. The leader of the local magistrates, upon seeing the crowd's roar of approval at Hunt's arrival issued an arrest warrant for him and the other speakers at the event. The Yeomanry was sent in to get them at 1:40pm.



Figure 38: Contemporary cartoon of the Peterloo massacre.

As the inexperienced men thrust inexperienced horses deeper into the crowd, both began to panic. The Yeomanry reached Hunt and arrested him as well as John Tyas, a reporter from *The Times*, then set about destroying the radical flags that waved from the speaking platform.

When the crowd started to throw bricks at the assailants, Tyas said, 'the Yeomanry lost all command of temper'. The horses lashed out with hooves, the men with sabres, as they tried to carve their way out

of the densely packed square. A cavalry regiment arrived at 1:50 and ordered the crowd's dispersal, fearing for the lives of the Yeomanry. They charged into the crowd, forcing them towards the exits of the square. But the sheer number of people in the space caused a crush and people were trampled as they desperately tried to get away.

A captain of the cavalry regiment was heard trying to restrain the Yeomanry that were still trapped in amongst the crowd, hacking at those around them: he said 'For shame! For shame! Gentlemen: restrain yourselves! The people cannot get away!'. The Yeomanry, far more inexperienced than the military, were largely made up of local business owners, the employers of the people they slashed at.



Figure 39: Peterloo massacre plaque.

Sources from the time described them as the 'younger members of the Tory party in arms' and 'hot-headed young men, who had volunteered because of their intense hatred of Radicalism'. Some reports even allege that they were drunk during the massacre.

The culmination of their incompetence and the packed square was a death toll of at least 18 and 600 or more casualties, most of them sabre wounds and injuries from the

crush. The government never made any attempt to find out how many people had been injured and it is likely many hid their injuries to avoid losing their jobs; three children of one attendant were fired from a factory owned by a member of the Yeomanry.



Figure 40: 1819 newspaper report on the Peterloo Massacre.

It is in the immediate aftermath of the massacre that it was christened Peterloo, named for the notoriously bloody Battle of Waterloo that had occurred just 4 years earlier. An Oldham worker called John Lees, who had been at both events, was quoted as saying he had never been in more danger than at Peterloo: 'At Waterloo there was man to man but there it was downright murder'.

A satirical cartoon from the time depicts an overweight Yeomanry carrying butcher's axes that drip with blood and has one of them giving this speech: 'Down with 'em! Chop 'em down! my brave boys! Give them no mercy, they want to take our beef and pudding from us! And remember, the more you kill the less tax you'll have to pay so go for it lads, show your courage and your loyalty.' This wasn't actually said by one of them but this was the way almost all the press depicted them: as sadistic and brutal.

Such was the extent of the coverage that the government cracked down further on freedom of the press, the journalist who first called the event Peterloo was sentenced to a year in prison and fined £100 pounds and Henry Hunt was given 2 and a half years in prison for sedition. Unsurprisingly, a civil case on behalf of a wounded weaver produced a not guilty verdict for the Manchester Yeomanry.

The Home Secretary of the time sent a letter of thanks from the Prince-Regent to the Yeomanry, showing the government's complete lack of remorse for the action of the magistrate. This only served to inflame the anger of radicals even more and the atmosphere that followed in Britain was rancid. The authorities were perpetually afraid of revolt and the people perpetually unable solve the problems they faced without government help.



Figure 41: Contemporary report on the Cato Street conspiracy.

Within a year of Peterloo, there had been aborted uprisings in Huddersfield, Burnley and all across West Yorkshire, the “Radical War” in Scotland, where 60,000 men downed tools to strike and also, the Cato Street plot: a foiled attempt to blow up the prime minister and his cabinet. All the while, the emblem of Peterloo persisted as an extreme act of violence by the powerful against the powerless. In 1821, a confrontation between Shropshire Yeomanry and coal miners striking over repeated reductions in pay led to the deaths of 3 workers: it was called Cinderloo, named for the now iconic massacre.



Figure 42: 1832 cartoon reflecting on the inequalities within British society.

Skipping forward to 1832, circumstances had changed. In the wider world, reform was coming: 1830 had seen the absolutist French king deposed in favour of a constitutional one and a democratic government had come out on top after civil strife in Switzerland. Britain was an industrial nation by 1832 and the old system of medieval counties and towns simply no longer worked. Calls for reform had persisted since Peterloo along with Parliament ignoring them, but it was the changes in the fabric of the country that revitalised the calls for reform.

Despite the deck being stacked against them, the massive populations of cities started to wield an influence on who was elected at the county level. Tories started to reconsider the need for reform as they got hurt at the ballot box by people who didn't even own estates in the country! The final straw was, strangely, Catholic emancipation; the extreme-right ultra-Tories were deeply opposed to Catholics being able to hold seats in parliament or roles in the judiciary. They supported reform on the assumption that by standardising who could vote (and having that person always be a property owner) they could keep the Catholics out of Parliament.



Figure 43: Charles Grey, the 2nd Earl Grey and reforming Whig PM.

The death of the traditionalist George IV, and the ascension of more lenient William IV cleared the way for a coalition of the Whigs and Ultras to win the 1830 election with a slim majority. Reform was on the agenda for PM Earl Grey (whom the tea is named after) but legislation kept on getting scuppered by small numbers of MPs.

The coalition, due to it being made up of groupings not parties, was unable to force its members to support the reform so instead Grey called the 1831 general

election. It was a Whig landslide, they won a majority of 136 seats, as large as they could feasibly get with the unreformed system; the vast majority of Tory seats were rotten boroughs and seats in Scotland and Wales where less people could vote.

There lay in Grey's path one final hurdle: the House of Lords. So decisive was the Prime Minister's mandate, but so resolute was the Lords in resisting reform that it caused a constitutional crisis. When they vetoed the reform act, Grey resigned and the situation was met with riots and strikes up and down the country, the threat of revolution was never far from realisation in this period. Commentators from the time describe the country as 'in a state little short of insurrection' and the Queen as having the 'fixed impression ... that her own fate is to be that of Marie Antoinette'.

Seeing the chaos and presumably listening to the fears of his wife, King William defused the situation by reinstating Grey and promising to create peers that would vote for his reform act if the Lords would not comply. He kept the monarchy alive by his compromise and the reforms granted an expansion of the franchise to the upper middle class but not the working class.



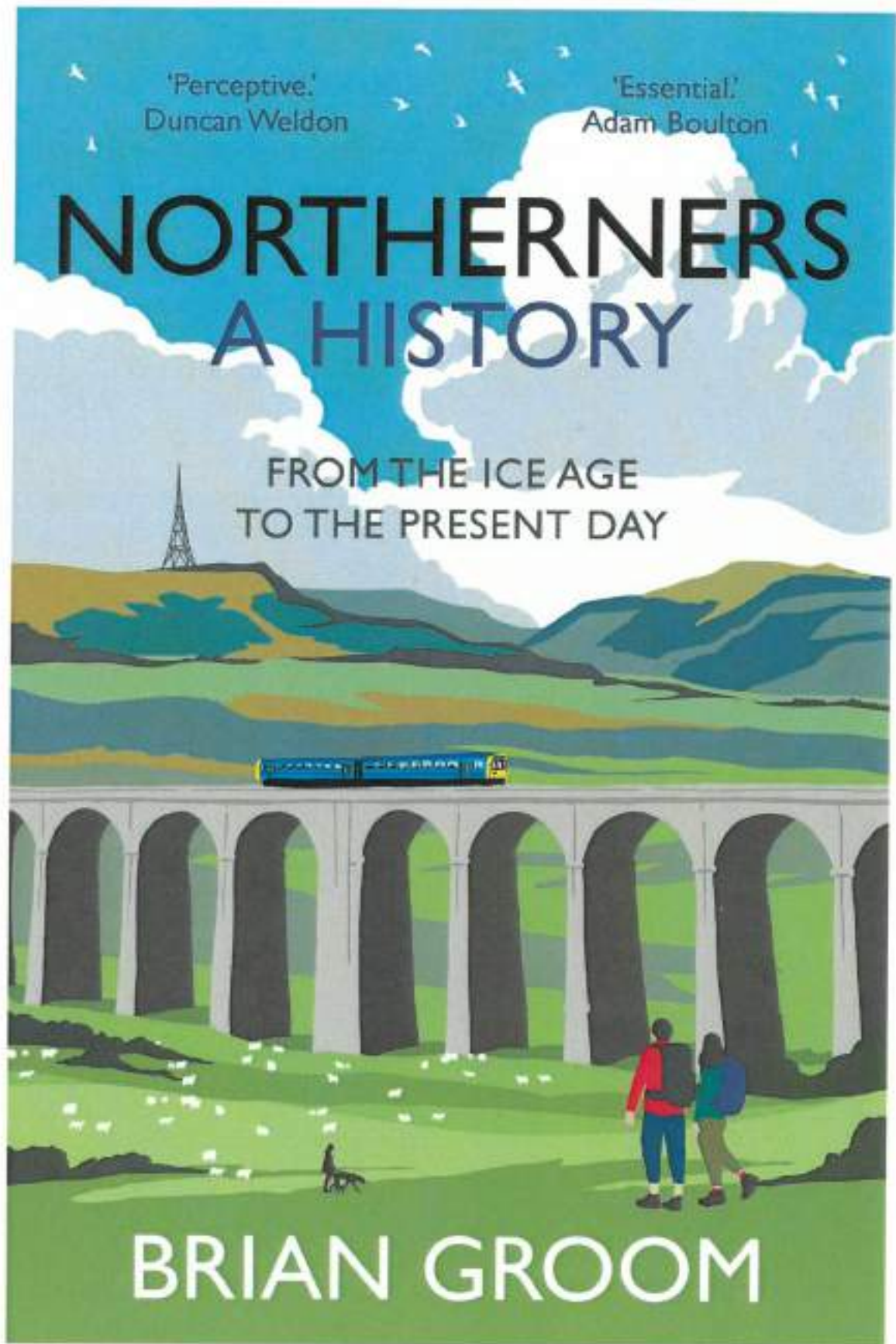
Figure 44: Transcript of part of the 1832 Great Reform Act.

The Great Reform Act of 1832 marked a transformation in British politics.

Revolutionary spark points still happened in the 1840s during the chartist movement and if I had more space on the page I would write about them as part of this history of mass-movements aimed at extension of the franchise. But 1832 is a good place to stop not because it changed who controlled politics in the country, the landed gentry and rich city merchants still held control of Parliament, but because within it lies the potential for further extension of the franchise. It marked the day Britain changed from an aristocracy in the form of a Parliament to a parliamentary democracy that happened to be controlled by the aristocracy. It was 1867, when the working classes were partially afforded the vote that that fact changed.

The role Peterloo played in setting the winds of change blowing is minimal, it is its symbolic power, as an act of innocence versus brutality, liberty versus tyranny and what happens when society refuses to listen to its most desperate. Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote the poem 'The Masque of Anarchy' about the massacre which ends with the line 'Ye are many they are few'. The poem has been quoted many times: Gandhi quoted it to encourage non-violent protest for Indian independence, protesters in Tiananmen Square and during the 2011 Egyptian revolution read out excerpts and that final line in particular has been used on everything from Labour Manifestos to album covers.

That is the lasting influence of Peterloo: a persistent symbol of how far we have come and how far we have yet to go.



Northerners: A History – from the Ice Age to the Present Day by Brian Groom (2022)

A book review by Mr D J Stone

As many readers will be aware, I am not a northerner myself but by virtue of marriage and our family move to Stockport when I joined SGS nine years ago, over the last eighteen years I have become an adopted son of the North; learning so much from the people and environments I have experienced.

Yet it remains a challenge to capture what it exactly is that makes Northerners and shapes northern culture and identity, which can contain many subdivisions within, so distinctive from the rest of the UK including other distinct national or regional identities. It was this curiosity to learn more that led me to pick up Brian Groom's 2022 book "Northerners" as it caught my eye whilst perusing the History section in Waterstones at the Merseyway shortly after Christmas.

Groom's book is certainly ambitious. He tells the remarkable history of the North of England through the people and events that have shaped it and the wider world, from the Ice Age to the post-Brexit era. It is in this ambition that Groom's undoing becomes evidently clear, particularly in the second half as the North enters the modern age (post-1750); a time that for many is defining in shaping northern England as we know it in 2024.

In many ways, in particular at the outset, Groom's narrative is informative and entertaining as he cavorts through the

dramatic events that have shaped the north, from invasions and battles to the industrial revolution. He captures effectively the significance of the rise of the Anglian kingdom of Northumbria, which became for a time Europe's leading cultural and intellectual centre.



Figure 44: The Venerable Bede, great Northumbrian cleric and scholar.

The Northumbrian monk Bede, or the Venerable Bede, is depicted as both the original Renaissance man and as England's first historian, as well as writing more than sixty works on science, cosmology, biblical commentary and orthography amongst other subjects. This was at a time when, typically, the Dark Ages are seen as a period of English and British backwardness and decline. With power often extending northwards across the tribal divisions of the Anglo-Scottish border and southwards deep into the modern day Midlands, Northumbria stood as a beacon of resistance to Nordic invasion (although

sometimes collaboration with invaders motivated by tribal infighting was as much an occurrence!) and a powerhouse comparable, if not superior, to our understanding of Alfred the Great's rule over Wessex.



Figure 45: The Kingdom of the Brigantes at the time of Cartimandua.

Groom combines his narrative of events with chapters on the people who have shaped the North. He presents Cartimandua, queen of the Brigantes, ruler around the time of the Roman conquest and who succeeded in keeping her lands free from occupation for thirty years. She should be as famous as Boudica, but is not.

Great emphasis is placed on the catastrophic impact of William the Conqueror's Harrying of the North and how this genocide, instigated by William in the face of persistent resistance to Norman occupation and conquest, left a lasting legacy of damage and division on the North. This is a point Groom advances with measure and credibility. He courts controversy in his suggestion that William's initial attempts to devolve oversight of the North to the Saxon ruling elite, only for

them to consistently rise up against him; perhaps unfairly seeking to victim-blame the tens of thousands of men, women and children who endured famine, starvation, villages and crops being burned to the ground, rape, pillage and murder at the hands of Norman knights who had everything to gain from their victims' demise. His likening of the closure of the pits and mining in the 1980s to the Harrying of the North by William the Conqueror is a bit farfetched.



Figure 46: The Harrying of the North, c. 1069.

Having got to 1750 in entertaining but also historically credible fashion, interspersing the narrative of the North's story with a sharper focus on key individuals and events, Groom begins to write in a fashion that feels like he is trying to rush through the remaining 250 years, adopting more of a thematic approach but perhaps not paying more than lip service to important moments in the North's more recent history. He becomes a little more "listy", lists of statistics or dates, or comparative data with the South with very little analysis to complement or comment on the data.

At times, particularly post-1750, the book read more like something of a curated list of points of interest in northern history, than a compelling narrative about the North. This made it harder to stick with and

seeing it through to the end became something of a chore!

In some ways, Groom's conclusions are somewhat predictable. He suggests that the culmination of this evolutionary tale, perhaps with the Harrying of the North as a turning point, is that society "casts the north as the back end of the English economy pantomime horse". This division has been mirrored politically in more recent events, such as the Miners' Strike, the Poll Tax Riots, the Brexit referendum and the 2019 General Election.



Figure 47: A T20 Blast cricket match between rivals Yorkshire and Lancashire.

Perhaps he has missed the opportunity to fully draw upon the features that divide the people he identifies as Northerners, with being from the North East, Yorkshire or Lancashire far outweighing in importance for many the collective tag to which the author chooses to focus on. I'm not sure, as a southerner, there would be much interest in or traction for a book about southerners, yet countless titles have been written about regional communities across the South over the centuries.

I did see this through to the end and, as I expressed strongly at the outset, I did really enjoy and engage with the first half! Seeing it through to the end became a bit of a

battle, especially as I knew I had Ian Thatcher's book on Trotsky lined up to be read next.



Figure 48: Two out of three characters in BBC sitcom *Last of the Summer Wine*, filmed in Holmfirth, sporting flat caps.

As a southerner/adopted son of the North, do I feel like I have a better understanding of Northern history as a result of reading this book? Yes I do. But has it helped me to develop a stronger understanding of the differences between us – the north/south divide to which Groom dedicates this study. No it hasn't. I do now better understand the perception of northerners and their history as seen through the eyes of Brian Groom.

It is too simplistic to band together as one different groups of people who have made the North their home throughout the centuries and, contrary to much of Groom's doom for the future, the North today is far from being predestined to repeat a cycle of failing to evaluate and learn from its history.

THE KILLING FIELDS

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Produced by DAVID PUTTNAM Directed by ROLAND JOFFE



Communism, Starvation & Genocide in Cambodia: the policies of the harsh communist regime in Cambodia, and how they led to the starvation and genocide of 3 million people between 1975 and 1979

Kiera Field [L4]

Under the paranoid leadership of Saloth Sar, better known as Pol Pot, and the communist party of Kampuchea, or the CPK, 3 million people, mostly including those who were citizens of Cambodia, either starved to death as a result of the brutal agricultural policies of the CPK, or were deemed as enemies of the state and imprisoned, tortured, and murdered.



Figure 49: Pol Pot, the leader of the CPK.

When the CPK were able to seize power in Cambodia as a result of the civil war in 1975, its members, known as the Khmer Rouge, aimed to rapidly build the country under their own vision, with Pol Pot proclaiming that no revolution would be as

fast as his. Pol Pot was obsessed with the speed of this revolution, having been inspired by Chairman Mao's great leap forward in China, where the goal was to industrialise China within the years 1958 to 1962 by forming peoples communes.

The Khmer Rouge announced a 4-year plan, and aimed to triple the country's rice production, with party members being dedicated to the speed of the operation, as many were paranoid that they'd be replaced, so saw working quicker as making themselves safer.



Figure 50: Members of the Khmer Rouge.

Undeterred by the fact that China's great leap forward led to widespread famine and economic hardship, Pol Pot planned to ensure a purification of Cambodian society, both socially and politically, with his idea for a 'super great leap forward'.

Failing to cater to the fact that Cambodia had suffered severely during the civil war, having had drastically lost almost three quarters of the animals that were required to plough fields by 1975, which consequently led to rice production decreasing by 84 percent, Pol Pot aimed to achieve his rapid revolution without foreign aid or investment. The aim was to stimulate the rebirth of the country's industrial capacity via self-mastery and an initial period of self-imposed economic isolation.

Realistically, this rapid increase in production wasn't attainable due to the economic climate of Cambodia, due to the impactful decrease of land available for rice cultivation dropping from 3 million hectares in 1969, to fewer than 800,000 in 1972, as well as the significant increase of population, with this raising from just 50,000 in 1955, to 2 million in 1975 in the capital, Phnom Penh. Both these factors contributed to food shortages, which were only worsened under the CPK.

However, Pol Pot ignored these problems, as he believed that they simply needed revolutionary willpower, so created a nationwide system of forced manual labour, as he maintained the view that the purpose of every Cambodian was to work and advance the revolution, going as far as to force thousands of people living in cities out of their homes to make them to live and work on farms.



Figure 51: Citizens working on farms.

Despite the fact that Pol Pot's 4-year plan was so heavily focused on rapidly improving the industry through agriculture, the working conditions were appalling, expecting workers of all ages to do 10-14 hours of hard labour per day, including making them work late into the night during harvest time. Not helping the workers

sustain the energy required for the expected long and tedious hours of work was the fact that the CPK didn't give them anything back in return, they simply took some of the rice produced and either ate it themselves or exported it, not leaving enough for the Cambodian workers to eat.

As a result of Pol Pot's paranoia, any shortfalls in production were viewed as being due to the fault of saboteurs and ideological enemies, and any individuals accused of being an enemy of the state were immediately arrested and executed. Thousands of arrests were made due to this, worsened by the fact that the CPK accused those who were overworked and underfed, and therefore ill, as feigning illness to avoid work, so those who were starving were said by the Khmer Rouge to have had caught an imaginary disease, resulting in their arrest.



Figure 52: People protesting against the Khmer Rouge.

Making the sickness and starvation of the people worse was the fact that citizens who had been educated or who had received professional training were viewed with extreme suspicion by the CPK, so were also arrested. As this included doctors, this led to a lack of medicine and healthcare that was necessary to help the

many Cambodian workers who were sick and starving.

The strict regime of the CPK furthered into the banning of owning private gardens, food, and cooking privately, will all of these being punishable by imprisonment and execution. These rules were enforced by villages being searched, which could be as frequently as every 3 days, and also by the Khmer Rouge's secret police, called the Santebal.



Figure 53: Farmers who have been detained and blindfolded by the Santebal.

The Santebal arrested, tortured, and executed all those deemed enemies of the state, which included all foreigners and ethnic minorities, anyone with a connection to the previous Cambodian government, professionals, intellectuals, such as anyone who had an education or could understand a foreign language, as well as party members who hadn't worked hard enough, and anyone who had criticised the CPKs policies.

Those arrested, including innocent men, women, and children, even including newborn babies, were brought to prisons, and coerced through torture to confess to imaginary crimes and provide names of other alleged enemies of the state, like their friends and family members. Whole

families were brought in together to be interrogated and executed.

An example of these prisons is security prison 21, known as S-21, a former high school in Phnom Penh. S-21 had been enclosed in electrified barbed wire, and had iron bars covering all the windows to keep all the prisoners in. At S-21, at least 18,145 people had been imprisoned there, with all but a handful having been executed. S-21 was just one of more than 150 torture and execution centres that had been established by the Khmer Rouge.



Figure 54: S-21 prison, one of the most notorious used during the Khmer Rouge's rule.

One of the few survivors of S-21 was Chum Mey, who was an engineer at the time. He was tortured for 12 days and 12 nights, with tormentors whipping him with bamboo sticks and breaking his fingers when he attempted to defend himself. His legs were shackled, and his toenails were removed with pliers. Chum Mey was also electrocuted, having electrodes placed inside of his ears, making him feel like his eyes were on fire and deafening him. He claimed that this torture made him prepared to tell them everything they wanted to hear.

He was forced to sign a false confession that stated that he was working for the CIA,

and even that he had recruited other men and women. The innocent acquaintances that he was forced to name were also arrested and tortured, and eventually murdered. This included his wife and children. Chum Mey had never heard of the CIA, and didn't find out why he had been arrested.



Figure 55: Chum Mey, a rare survivor of S-21.

Another victim of the Khmer rouge and S-21 was John Dawson Dewhirst, a 26 year old British teacher. John Dewhirst was travelling to visit a friend in Malaysia, when he met a Canadian man, Stuart Glass, and a man from New Zealand, Kerry Hamill, who together owned a small yacht. The three decided to sail along the coast of Thailand towards Bangkok during the summer of 1978, but ended up in Cambodian waters. Their boat was seized by a revolutionary patrol boat owned by the CPK, and Stuart Glass was shot dead immediately, whilst John Dewhirst and Kerry Hamill were taken to S-21 and tortured.

John Dewhirst was forced to write false accounts of events in his life as a CIA agent, which he wasn't and had no association with. John and Kerry were both murdered by the Khmer Rouge and never returned home again.

After being forced to confess, most inmates were brought to sites known as killing fields, where they were executed and buried in mass graves, with one of these holding the remains of 20,492 people. These citizens were forced to dig their own graves in some cases, before being murdered in various ways, such as being poisoned or beaten to death.



Figure 56: A killing cave in rural Cambodia, now a tourist site.

In the countryside, bodies were thrown into deep caves known as killing caves, which are now memorials to the many casualties of Pol Pot's reign. Nearly a quarter of Cambodia's population were either killed by the CPK, or starved to death as a result of their policies. Remains of the people murdered by the Khmer Rouge are still being uncovered to this day.



Figure 57: The notorious Killing Tree at Choeung Ek orchard near Phnom Penh.



Figure 58: Image of a Killing Field.

In 1979, the Vietnamese army captured Phnom Penh from the Khmer Rouge, seeing the terrible state of the city and its depraved and starved citizens. This led to Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge fleeing to Thailand, and the CPK losing its influence and power, and eventually disbanding. Its members were either arrested, or joined the new Royal Government of Cambodia.



Figure 59: Surviving leaders of the Khmer Rouge were put on trial for their crimes in 2018.

Pol Pot died of a heart attack in 1998 after being arrested, and in his final interview before this, he stated that his conscience was clear, and that everything he had done was for his country.



The 1979 Iranian Revolution: The forgotten consequence of the Cold War's fight for influence

James Hood [L7]

The year is 1979, the volatile Cold War between the USA and Soviet Union lingers on, both sides of the ideological battle remain in an ongoing tussle for influence and proxies within the world's nations, especially that of the resource rich Middle East. Iran (or Persia to many) itself made revenues of £23.6 Billion from its vast array of Oil reserves in 1977 alone, with its lucrative oil production peaking at a staggering 6 million barrels per day in 1974. Financial Opportunities from this were endless and the superpowers wanted influence, unsurprisingly.



Figure 60: Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, ruler of Iran 1941-1979.

Picture the scene: Iran is in the year 1979, ruled as the Imperial State of Iran, a Constitutional Monarchy ruled by the

Pahlavi dynasty with a Parliament and Prime Minister as head of Government.

The Shah was specifically Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi since 1941. Pahlavi himself, a staunch anti-communist, was undoubtedly the West's ideal leader of a resource rich nation like Iran that would presumably be desired by the Americans bitter rivals of the Soviet Union, as a strategic ally against the West and for their own economic gain. This dynasty had been in place since 1925 when his father Reza, a former army officer had led a coup against the previous imperial dynasty of Iran and crowned himself as Shah.



Figure 61: Shah Reza Pahlavi, the first Shah of Pahlavi Iran.

It is important to consider the context of the period on which the Shah ruled from the 40s to late 70's. The Cold War had begun around 1945 after WW2. The USA and Soviet Union were fundamentally ideologically opposed regimes between the liberal premises of Capitalism and the

tightly state guided restraints of Communism. A brief interlude of consensus against the Nazis and the common threat of fascism had faded post 1945 and their contrasting outlooks on society came to a head.

By the 1970s, both nations had been on the journey for influence for some time now. On the Capitalist side of the scrap was NATO, set up in 1949 by a group of “western-thinking” capitalist nations such as the USA, UK and France. They looked after each other, an attack on one is an attack on the other. Ideologically opposed to NATO was the Warsaw Pact, created in 1955. This was similarly an alliance of nations (all soviet satellite states) with Communist regimes, of which were all in everything but name, loyal the Soviet regime on foreign policy and economic affairs within their states.



Figure 62: Europe divided between the Warsaw Pact and NATO in 1971.



Figure 63: Ayatollah Khomeini returning from exile to Iran in 1979.

Back to the context of Iran in 1979, there is a point of view that the Pahlavi dynasty, especially within the influential Islamic Clergy leaders such as Ayatollah (High ranking Shia clergy) Ruhollah Khomeini, that they represented the unwanted yet expected external influences of the USA within the Cold War. The Pahlavi dynasty greatly benefited from American interference themselves, this had been a precedent set since the short and swift occupation of Iran by the allies in 1941 to secure a trade route for the Soviets during WW2, in which little to no resistance was met by the Iranian dynasty or population at the time.

Yet, Problems in support for the Shah are easy to see the causes of. The Narrative of him being an American proxy, like the past states of South Vietnam or South Korea are

hard to look past. Though unlike the latter two, Pahlavi didn't base his somewhat proxy status for the benefit of a military affair, but in his case, it could be argued it was ideologically based in his anti-communist stances of which were inherently opposed to the Shah's natural inclination to authoritarian rule as would soon be displayed. His actions were largely backed by the USA, to benefit their interests against the supposed threats of the USSR and their quest for squashing American-backed Governments.

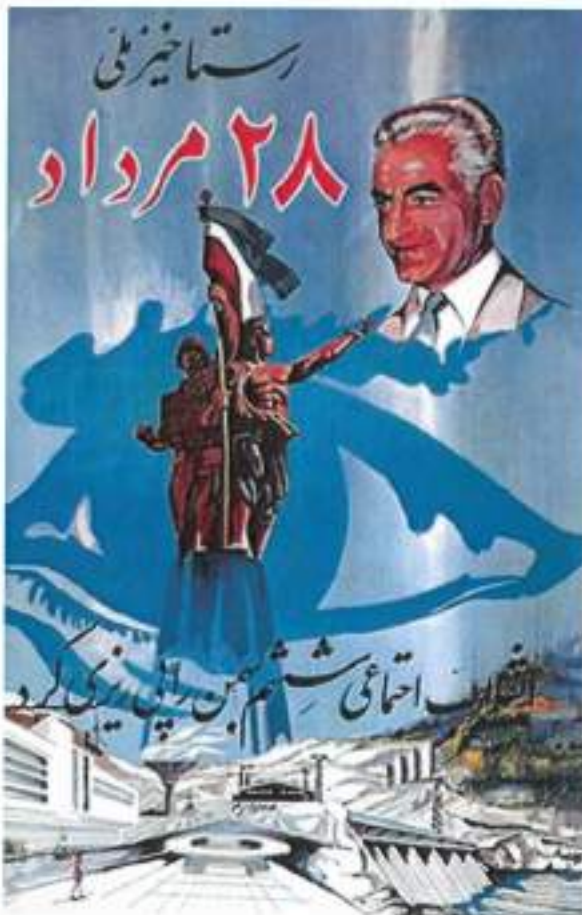


Figure 64: A 1966 propaganda poster celebrating the rule of the Shah.

The Pahlavi dynasty as well, cannot be put down as blameless in its label as an American proxy in the midst of the Cold War. This American influence, was not forced. The Shah himself, supported

willingly American foreign policy against the soviet sphere of influence, notably in the Vietnam war, with the Shah publicly supporting the American/South Vietnamese cause.



Figure 65: Deposed Prime Minister of Iran, Mohammed Mossadegh.

An example of Pahlavi's opposition case of his regime acting in a manner to please western interests above all else is when in 1953, the democratically elected Prime Minister of Iran Mohammed Mossadegh, that ruled with limited power under the increasingly authoritarian Shah, was overthrown in a coup that has over time been proved to be backed by the Mi6 and to a larger extent the CIA. A move recently in 2023, admitted by the CIA to have being undemocratic. The outcome of which resulted in the instalment of a PM incredibly more pro-Shah than the figure of the elected Mossadegh, himself often a secular (much like the Shah) yet Iranian nationalist with anti-imperialist

tendencies, as displayed in his increasing audit of the British and American oil companies in Iran in the lead up to the 1953 coup.



Figure 66: An Anglo-Persian Oil Company oil tank.

This was a major economic and political problem for the USA and UK, they could not lose their key tight knit control of ally, Pahlavi, their loyal boundary to the looming threat of Soviet influence within the Middle East. Especially considering the incredible close location of the two nations. Iran neighboured the Soviet republics of Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Armenia.

This battle to uphold the Shah's autocracy, whilst against western ideals, from a Western perspective was undoubtedly fuelled by the deep desire from the west to prevent the expansion of soviet allies in the middle east (of which a greater power shift to Mossadegh could entail) as the highly resource rich and valuable lands of Baathist Syria and the Kingdom of Yemen had, for some time now, been in a state of agreement with the Soviet Union's cause in the Cold War.

Thus, the instalment of Mossadegh's replacement, a Royalist and therefore safer option for western interests, Fazlollah Zahedi as PM displayed the extent the USA was willing to go to the interfere in the

Iranian people's democratic will, to ensure Iranian policy at the time, favoured their western, capitalist outlook of society.

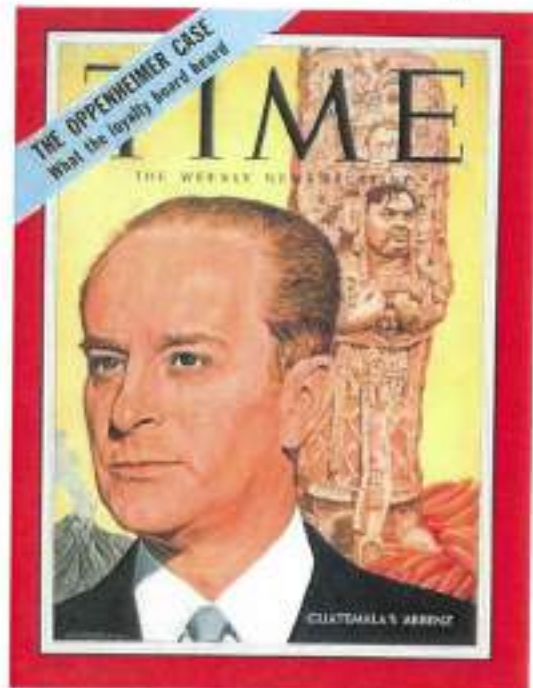


Figure 67: Jacobo Arbenz on the cover of Time magazine.

This cycle of American backed coups and installation of regimes that suited American capitalist interests was not unique to Iran during the Cold War. America and the CIA were consistently considering covert operations to aid proposed regimes that they believed to favour their anti-communist stances that were rampant and heightened in the midst of the Nuclear tensions found during the 50s and 60s. An example of this precedent beyond Iran, was in 1954 in Guatemala, where the CIA backed rebels to overthrow the dictator Jacobo Arbenz, himself in favour of close relations with the Soviet Union but speculated by most close to him, to not having been an ideological communist himself.

This was an incredibly similar turn of events as in Iran, in which again like Iran, an

authoritarian regime came out the other end of the coup, displaying how the USA in the height of the toxic cold war's battle for influence were willing to risk a nation's political stability and rights of their citizens in the name of close relations with the USA, instead of the dreaded USSR.



Figure 68: The Shah and Queen leaving Iran just ahead of the 1979 Revolution.

Skip ahead to the year 1979. 26 years after the American consolidation of the Shah's now seemingly largely unchallenged regime, he is forced out on a "vacation" never to return to Iran again.

The Man behind this fundamental shift of power in the west's much treasured ally of Iran was the previously mentioned Shia Islamic Cleric, Ayatollah Khomeini. Khomeini was an influential clergy leader within the Shia Islamic community in Iran at the time and often throughout his life before 1979, displayed his tendencies to oppose the Shah and all he stood for.

By 1963, a fundamental factor in the cause of the 1979 revolution was set out. The Shah, with the backing of the USA, went out on a series of reforms within Iranian society now nicknamed the White Revolution. These reforms entailed seemingly uncontroversial premises like

increased land redistribution among classes in Iran and a further focus on industrialising Iran for less of a reliance on oil within Iran. Yet these reforms that gave around 2.5 million Iranians redistributed land for themselves were despised by Khomeini and his followers.

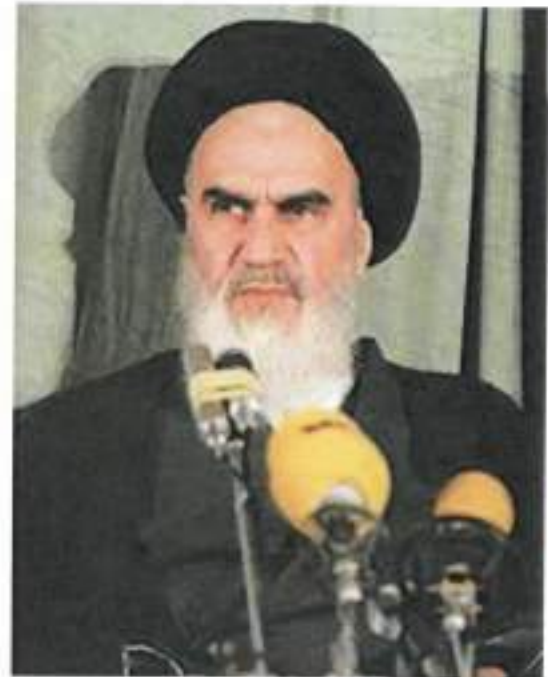


Figure 69: Ayatollah Khomeini.

Many aspects of the reforms like allowing women a greater role in society such as to vote or the diminishment of Islamic clergy authority in favour of secular, non-religious court, all naturally meant those such as Ayatollah Khomeini despised the reforms. Khomeini unsurprisingly gave speeches to large crowds denouncing the reforms and describing the Shah himself as a "wretched miserable man".

Yet, despite the seeming lack of the Cold War's blame in these reforms and subsequent reaction, its influence is not to be overlooked. The reforms put Iranian society more on a par with "western" societies like America in terms of economic, social and judicial rights of

people. President Lyndon B Johnson clearly approved of them, with himself describing Iran as the “brightest spot in the Middle East” in a meeting with the Shah in 1964.



Figure 70: The Shah with LBJ in 1964.

Khomeini himself had been forced into exile from Iran since 1964 due to his strong opposition to the Shah in an autocracy like Iran, settling in Iraq and surprisingly by 1979, Paris. While in exile, Khomeini determined not to give up his cause against the Shah, recorded his sermons and speeches on cassette tapes, of which strongly supported his case for an Islamic-led government as an alternative to the increasingly secular Shah; as was displayed in the White Revolution in 1963.

Khomeini had his supporters smuggle back these tapes to Iran. These tapes struck a chord with many Iranians fed up with the “western” ideals being imposed upon them by the Shah’s regime and at their peak, 90,000 Iranian mosques were both playing them and duplicating them for further use. Clearly, the acts of the Shah were catching up with him and the balance of power within Iran being threatened to fundamentally shift away from the Shah’s autocratic regime.

Now, there is the question of what caused the revolution itself, what was the catalyst? This catalyst can be blamed as a

somewhat self-inflicted wound for the Shah, away from the common denominator of western influenced ideas being the source of tensions within his dynasty.

In August 1978, at the Cinema REX complex in Tehran a fire started resulting in the deaths of around 400 innocent people. This act took place within the turmoil of anti-Shah demonstrations that had become rampant in Iran since early 1978 and only acted as a catalyst for further blame on the inadequate rulings of the Shah over his subjects.



Figure 71: The aftermath of the Cinema REX fire.

Events like the Cinema REX fire all highlighted the common precedent upon late 1978 in Iran of blaming the Shah’s regime for the grievances of the Iranian people, as even in the REX fire of which is believed to be have set alight by four Islamic or Marxist terrorists, the public widely blamed the Shah’s despised secret police force SAVAK. A force of which acted as the epitome of the Shah’s autocratic regime to many Iranians.

Thus, if we skip back forward to January 1979 and the colossal event of Shah Pahlavi leaving Iran “on holiday”, it’s clear that the root causes of this fundamental shift in power within Iran is not to be blamed on either the Cold war’s profound effect of western influence within Iran or

the Shah's autocratic regime solely. It came about as a complex result of years of the Shah's regime's resistance to the influence of the Islamic clergy of which included Khomeini, only worsened by the "western" reforms of the Shah and the Cold War's battle for influence between the USA and USSR, of which led to the common "western" reforms within Iran such as the White Revolution in 1963.

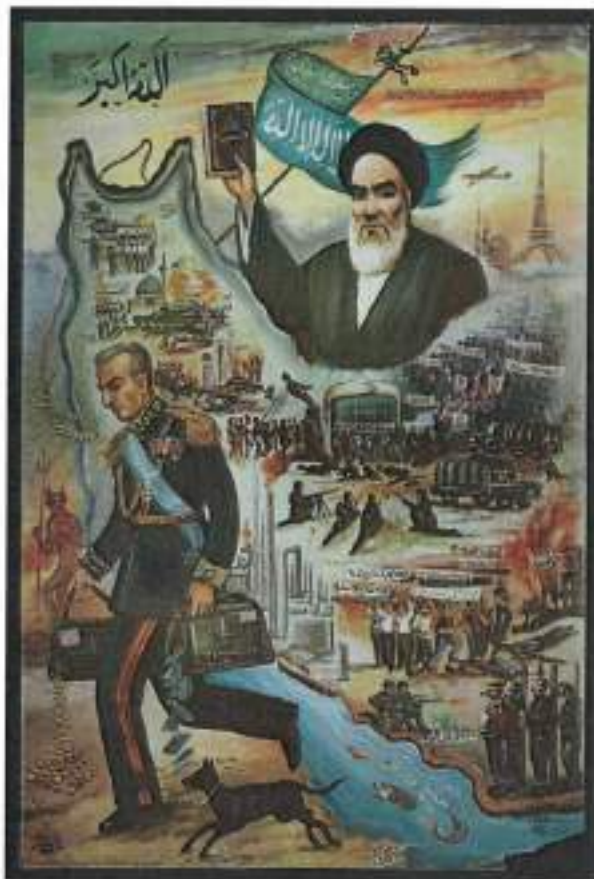


Figure 72: An Iranian propaganda poster celebrating the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Overall, the 1979 Iranian revolution is often an overlooked result of the tensions and events of the bitter Cold War. Its consequences of a removal of a key western ally for a staunchly anti-imperialist leader in Khomeini, led to a new key player in world tensions in the Iran-USA rivalry, of which was set out immediately upon the start of the new regime with the 444 day

US embassy hostage situation in Tehran supported by Khomeini himself.



Figure 73: Detained US embassy staff after the siege during the 1979 Embassy hostage crisis.

As the Cold War shifted to a calmer period within the 1980's with the emergence of a less radical and proactive soviet regime seen in the 50's and 60's, a new tension emerged indirectly due to America's own action's for influence over the Soviet Union. The result of which clearly still lingers to this day within the dynamics of global political tensions.



Figure 74: Tensions between Iran and the West continue into the 21st Century.