



# TIMELINE

2017



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**THE SUNDAY TIMES**  
**Independent School**  
**of the Year 2017**

## EDITOR'S NOTE

I would like to welcome you to the 2016 edition of Timeline. This year itself has provided a whole host of events that will be set into history for many years to come. Most notably, the shock Brexit vote which will form the core of the future history curriculum and triggered David Cameron's resignation. As well as the emergence of Britain's second female Prime Minister, Theresa May.

When contemporary affairs are so rich with incident it is all the more important that we situate them within a historical context, if we are to make sense of

them and retain a degree of perspective - and it is for this reason that a historical journal such as Timeline is more opportune than ever.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Dr. I. StJohn for giving me this opportunity to contribute to this noble magazine. I must also mention my predecessor-Mr Roshan Panesar who contributed greatly to this final product.

This year's edition is quite special, not only thanks to a more professional look, but because of the great variety of feature articles with

contributors impressively specializing in a broad range of categories. Rest assured, this year's edition caters for any budding historian with an appetite for high quality writing.

I hope you do enjoy this year's edition and, if you have been inspired, why not try to contribute next year and who knows? You might see your name published in Timeline 2017!

Purusotha Thambiayah L6H1

**Student Editor**

## THE TIMELINE 2016 TEAM

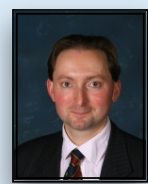
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Roshan Panesar U6R2 (OH 2016)



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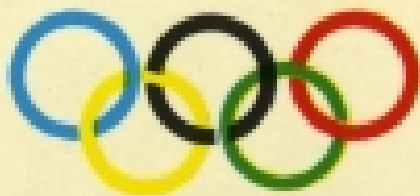
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# JEUX DE LA XVII OLYMPIADE

ROMA



25.VIII-11.IX





# INTERVIEW WITH FORMER BRITISH OLYMPIAN VICTOR MATTHEWS (OH)

**By Carolina Earle (OH 2016)**

Victor Matthews; an Old Haberdasher and well known British Olympian who partook, most notably, in the 1960 Rome Olympics was interviewed by Roshan Panesar with Carolina Earle and Natania Yeshitila in September last year.

Carolina Earle takes a look back at Victor Matthews' life and what led him to go from Haberdashers' to the Olympic stage.



## **‘The Olympian’: Victor Matthews**

As the only known Habs Boy to have competed at Olympic level, Victor's success in achieving that untouchable standard cements his name in Haberdashers' posterity. Yet, when I met Victor, it was perhaps for the way that he had lived what many of us can only imagine, or in that he was an athlete speaking from a day when the Games remained just that - games for the pleasure, the joy, the pride in an era before drugs began to tarnish their name - that he seemed so calm and tranquil in the face of sporting achievements. Born in 1934 an only child, Victor remembers his early school memories at the King Edward's School in Bath, where his father was stationed during World War II. His father had what Victor called a 'good war,' having left his 'mundane' job working in the Housing Department for the London County Council he was soon promoted to squadron leader, servicing fighter planes as an air force reserve. The end of the war marked a return to London for the Matthew's family, where once de-mobbed, Victor's father reluctantly took up his old position in the Council. Victor recalls how London was 'flattened' and accommodation scarce following the bombing and destruction of the war. Yet, it was here in London that in 1946, after having spent a year in the city Victor took up a place at Haberdashers', which was located from 1898 to 1961 in Cricklewood, Hampstead. The war was present in the school itself, with the call to arms forcing young teachers to leave for the front line and retired ones and women to take their place. Soon, after finishing their interrupted University courses, the young teachers would come back to the school, yet, the war left behind a sense of change and movement.

The bombings and displacement of the wartime years were in part the part cause of the appalling civilian conditions suffered from 1939 to 1945. However, in the time immediately following the war, life was in many ways harder. Rationing and shortages characterised the post-war condition, and Victor, keen on ‘making things’ had to make do with the scraps of wood that his (appropriately named) woodwork teacher Mr Chips gave him at the time. I asked Victor if he believes that his war experiences had any effect on his mentality growing up or in terms of his sporting career. With the rationing, the population as a whole was probably healthier than that of today, he told me, with no way in which to over-eat and a widespread lack of sugar and fat. And these were things that he did not miss, not being able to remember them. Before Victor’s father returned to Bath and then to London, having ‘followed the front,’ he had found himself in Copenhagen where he finished his war. Befriending a Danish family, Victor’s father revisited Denmark with his family, taking a boat from Newbury on the Thames Estuary where even in the summer of 1946, minesweepers were still in the process of blowing up mines left over from the war. Because Denmark had been the ‘larder’ for the Germans, Victor remembers how marvelous his holiday was in the the city, where, left largely undamaged by the occupying Germans, he had his first ice cream. And yet, one can see the way in which these ‘accepted’ ways of life may have afforded Victor with a strength both mental and physical for his later life. Living in Fulham, which Victor described as a working class district, much unlike the gentrified area it is now, after taking the Number 28 bus, he would cycle to Cricklewood each day for school. On Wednesday - ‘Games’ afternoon - he would cycle out to Chase Lodge from Cricklewood to play rugby or train for athletics before cycling back to Fulham on roads with little traffic - petrol also rationed at the time. Newfangled technologies can approximate that the journey from Cricklewood to Chase Lodge alone was a half hour ride, and so one could assume that this routine most likely did keep ‘me fit!’

In Victor’s time, Habs was one of the direct grant schools which had existed from 1945 to 1976. Rab Butler’s Education Act of 1944 led to a restructuring of the education system and the introduction of the eleven-plus examination which all children sat. According to Victor, the top students following these exams were ‘creamed off to the direct grant schools,’ many of them becoming professors at Cambridge and so forth. A ‘mixed bag,’ Victor entered Habs in the second form (or in other words, the second year of Secondary school) where he was sorted into the third stream. Each year he was promoted, until he reached the top stream in the fourth form. Enjoying the sciences and maths, giving up German to take Woodwork which was originally not offered in the top stream, Victor had never aspired to be an athlete from an early age. He concedes to me that he was good at school sports. In lower school he won the cup for sports, but in the fourth and fifth form his sporting achievements were overshadowed by his great love for science, which Victor said was his passion. However, in his last year at Habs he returned to athletics, joining the London Athletic Club with his

fellow classmate, Fred Benghiat. Unsure of what it was exactly that 'brought him back' to athletics, Victor ponders over how being the youngest of the Seniors in Athletics in the Fourth Form, he won little, and so, when he was at the top of the age group - winning once more - his interest picked up once again.

'Enjoying the sciences and maths, giving up German to take Woodwork which was originally not offered in the top stream, Victor had never aspired to be an athlete from an early age.'

Yet, though Victor became more involved, and increasingly successful in sporting life, he says that he never saw athletics as a career. Compared to today, he believes that the system and sporting 'life' in itself was amateur. When he was on the Olympic team, all of his fellow teammates were either students or held a job, with only one or two 'who got a bit of money under the table,' all the athletes would have to buy all their own shoes and clothing. Recalling how Roger Bannister's four-minute-mile shoes were auctioned for a quarter of a million pounds, Victor remembers how, like Bannister's, his shoes were made by CT Law. Everybody went to CT Law of Wimbledon, which was a little cobbler. You paid 5 guineas - at the time a lot of money - and a wooden cast was made of your foot. Every year for Victor's birthday in June, his parents would gift him a new pair of shoes which would come just in time for the British Championships which always took place in July. Only in his last year did Victor receive a free pair of shoes, whereas now, 'they get it in by the truckload.'

And it was through the British Championships that Victor's Olympic path in a way began. In his first year after leaving school, Victor arrived second in the British Junior Championships, winning the competition in the following year. As a Junior he came fourth in the Senior Championships, and was taken up by a national coach. From here, after seeing an astounding improvement in his abilities in the two years after leaving Habs - arriving fourth in the Senior Championships - Victor then 'plateaued.' Not disheartened, Victor tells me that this was 'the way it went, you'd have another surge' and go on. Victor's 'surge' - so to speak - took him to the British Empire and Commonwealth Games (now known as the Commonwealth Games), and to the 'country versus country' international matches which were staged at the time. With World Championships being a fairly recent phenomenon (the International Association of Athletics Federations holding its first Championship in 1983) matches would be held between Britain and France, Britain and Russia, and so on, an experience which took Victor to Moscow in the midst of the Cold War, where he was taken to the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow Circus, and given a tour of the Kremlin as a part of his sports team. Whether or not one may infer that this formed part of a propaganda stunt on the side of the Soviets, the experience nonetheless remains a testament to the opportunities afforded to Victor through his sporting life. Though Victor says that he did not qualify for the European Championships, eventually giving up serious athletics relatively early at the





age of 26 (not only a teacher, but also married with two children), in the same year his career took him to the 1960 Rome Olympics - a feat which shall be remembered (at very least) in the annals of Haberdashers' history forevermore.

Moscow, 1950s.

Victor ran the 110 meter hurdles, advancing to the third heat. He tells me that Rome was great, despite

feeling that his performance had not been the greatest of his career. At the time Victor was running, tracks had only seven lanes, and were made out of cinder (the last time such a surface was used at the Olympics was in Tokyo, 1964, before our modern-day synthetic tracks became the norm) which was a soft material to run on. Drawing the inside lane in both his heat and quarter final, this was the one which was always 'chopped up,' and in his quarter final Victor hit a hurdle hard, arriving sixth in the heat. Yet, this was all 'part of the scene really,' and Victor's levelheadedness did not fail to surprise me, approaching his Olympic performance as another part of his life - which, indeed, it was - reminding us of the ordinary in all the extraordinary, and that though any moment of greatness or fall, life ultimately does go on. I asked Victor if at any point he feared failure, and how he managed to maintain his mental tenacity and resolve. Having reached the Olympics and having run in many different competitions and places, he had become used to preparing himself, or getting hyped up for a particular event. In fact, the worst thing about the Olympics according to Victor was in that after warming up away from the Stadium, then walking through the tunnel, looking around at all his fellow athletes, that once you're out on the track, you have almost no time to warm up on the 'actual' hurdles before the race. Used to warming up outside and taking trial runs, Victor called this a 'bit of a downer,' reminding me that being a program this was just the way in which the Olympics were run.

Opening Ceremony, Stadio Olimpico, Rome, Italy.

Despite always coming to watch Victor locally - always in White City when he ran - his family was unable to watch him in Rome. Yet, they remained incredibly supportive, Victor remembering his father as a great support, and Rome as a superb experience. Aside from his own run, Victor tells me of how the Olympic competitors were allowed to attend their events in their own discipline free of charge. Yet, covering the ATL (for athletics) mark on his identity card, he and his fellow runners would eat and then go to watch the weightlifting in the middle of the village - being originally rejected from the gymnastics events as they looked nothing like gymnasts! He recalls watching the marathon where - running barefoot -

Abebe Bikila of Ethiopia became the first black African to win a medal at the Olympics as it ended by the Colosseum in the era before East Africans came to dominate long distance running. Still interested in athletics, Victor tells me how he was able to watch the 2015 IAAF World Championships in Beijing live from New Zealand, and how the Sky coverage was fantastic. This live coverage was a reminder for me of the evolution of the sporting world and how it is received around the world. Victor's Olympics were the first to be entirely covered by television, this in itself marking a great change from the 1948 Olympics that Victor watched as a Habs boy at Wembley. At the 'silly price' of 5 shillings - though standing - Victor tells me how he 'watched it all' apart from the end of the decathlon because of how long the pole vault took with all vaulters good and bad in the same pit. Though now the vaulting event uses two pits to stream different level vaulters, at that time the event could go on for hours, and it did. There were no floodlights at Wembley, and though Victor himself was not there, he recalls hearing about how the judges for the javelin would use flashlights to search for the poles in the dark, a highly dangerous operation. The 1500 meters following the javelin would have taken in total darkness. Victor attended the Opening Ceremony, where after the teams marched in, took their oath, the flag raised and the Olympic Torch lit, the events began - no 'great circus event' - that was it, and all on the same day. Victor remembers how somebody had forgotten to mark the track for the 400 meter hurdles that were to be the first event, remembering officials running around with tape measures, and it all being 'a bit of a picnic!'



John Mark, torchbearer and Olympic cauldron lighter carries flame into Wembley Stadium, London, 1948.

And yet, Victor is not content with the so-called 'evolution' of the Olympics as it is hosted in modern times. He explained to me how he believes that there are too many sports now held at the Olympics, and so that it is becoming prohibitively expensive to put on. At the Athens Olympics in 2004 the stadium erected for the games is now falling to pieces as a result of disuse. And though Victor tells me how he has nothing against white-water rafting, and that it is a great sport, it should take place on rivers as opposed to in concrete tanks through which millions of gallons of water are continually pumped through and enormous amounts of money spent. And of course, the issue of drugs. The use of drugs at the Olympics began to come into prominence just after the end of Victor's career and mostly in Eastern Europe. The International Olympic Committee first established anti-doping measures in 1967, with Hans-Gunnar Liljenwall, a Swedish pentathlete, being the first





person to be disqualified from the Olympics for his use of drugs - in this case two beers to calm him before his shooting event. As a coach for New Zealand, Victor talks about how he has seen the use of drugs in various athletics events. A flailing hammer thrower whose steroids kicked in over the course of a season to a point where he became successful, and this in the 1970s. Drugs weren't around when Victor competed, for which he is glad, because as a result now people are always looking sideways -

any improvement must be down to drug-taking - this a pitiable shadow fallen upon athletics. Whether they will stamp it out, he does not know.

And yet, for the question of drugs to become so prominent, rumours will often dog the heels of the most famed athletes, another point of concern that Victor takes with the modern athletics system. To be at the so-called 'top end' of the sport, one must be a professional. To reach this professional level one must overcome 'the gap.' Visiting the British Championships held at Birmingham six years ago, Victor noted how the top two or three athletes were performing at levels much above what he, and his Olympian friend who was with him at the time had ever produced, and yet, that after these top athletes that there was a drop off. Not only a drop off in performance but in numbers as it seems that if an athlete is unable to secure a sponsorship and the money and train full time that they are often unable to reach a professional standard. When he competed, the system mirrored a pyramid, in the sense that if one climbed higher as they went. Now however, it seems that you climb up and then are stuck until you somehow manage to get to the next stage. 'But that's the way it is.' The story is similar in New Zealand. When Victor arrived in the 1960s, the great Colin Meads would leave his farm just to the South of where Victor lived on a Thursday, and play a test match on a Saturday, having shorn sheep only two days before. Yet, now if a rugby player is not offered a contract for a 'Super 15' team, they have no chance of becoming an All Black or playing for New Zealand. It is a completely different level, and is seen across all sports. Victor tells me that in a way, this is a disappointment for people who just want to do their best for recreation, but this is the way in which sports have evolved.

'And what advice would you give to the young, aspiring athlete?' I asked. To take part and perform as long as you're enjoying it, and striving to go there. But Victor stressed that drugs are not the way to do it. You must make many sacrifices, a fact which was true then, and which remains true now. You must be single-minded, and most likely to the detriment of social events or social 'other things.' But nonetheless, Victor assures me that he would not have done it any other way. Having been able to travel, to visit places was a fantastic experience, that he would in no way have had otherwise. And Habs? He enjoyed his time at school, one thing striking to him then was how even in his day it had been an incredibly

cosmopolitan school. The different cultures and religions would make open ones eyes, and Victor remembers his friend Fred Benghiat once more who had come from Egypt and who became his close friend through athletics. He had a large family, which as an only child, had struck Victor, yet, it was the facility in which the Benghiat's moved from talking in English then French and then Arabic which was truly new as compared to Victor being what he describes as 'depressingly monolingual.'

After studying at Loughborough College for three years, Victor became a teacher of design for wood and metal crafts, now visiting England for the Rugby World Cup. He hopes to make his next trip back to England in 2017 to watch the Athletics World Championships - watching them from New Zealand had made him feel 'all enthusiastic again,' and it is perhaps most evident in the way in which athletics forms a continuing thread of Victor's life that reminds us of the power of sport, and so, of our pride in our 'Habs Olympian.'

***Victor Matthews Interviewed by The Combined TIMELINE team.***



# THE LIBERAL ARTS



AN IMAGE FROM THE  
NEWLY REFURBISHED  
RIJKSMUSEUM IN  
AMSTERDAM, THE  
NETHERLANDS.

# TIMELINE

HABS HISTORY PRESS







## THE DUTCH PAINTER FROM REMBRANDT TO VERMEER

‘Every picture tells a story’-(Jan Steen, Leiden, the Netherlands) Is this true when applied to pictorial art in any age?

*By Purusotha Thambiayah L6H1*



Jan Steen was born in the sleepy southern town of Leiden. Like most of the Dutch youth during 1646 he skipped mainstream education to pursue the lucrative Dutch Art market which was flourishing during the 17th Century. It was during 1648, at the height of the Dutch golden age, with paintings being produced in mass quantities by various different Dutch genre painters that Jan Steen was able to famously say ‘Every picture tells a story’. Examining both past, present and possibly future pictorial art does this famous sentence still apply? To understand whether or not Jan Steen’s statement can apply to different ages of pictorial art, we must understand the work of other artists of his time in the Netherlands and abroad. Many famous painters of his time were also pursuing the same market of genre paintings during the height of Steen’s operational years. This choice of painting served him well with many art collectors preferring his cheery and colourful scenes capturing the essence of Dutch society during its height of international dominance

and world trade, conveying Holland's flourishing seafaring trade and the benefits to its people from the top of the hierarchical ladder down to the lowly peasants and destitute. From the viewer's perspective it is clear that most Dutch painters spent time on capturing the essence of the scene they were trying to depict. If we initially focus on some of the more obscure Dutch painters, the technique of appealing to one's senses was a favourite tool for painters like Emanuel De Witte, who was influenced by recreating images



of Dutch city life. This contrasts with the work of Karel Dujardin, an eccentric with a passion for painting Holland's Polders and marsh lands. Within this short slice of work by two unrecognised painters of Holland we can see that Jan Steen's message was not an empty one-these two paintings do have their own messages to convey. It points that, despite the contrast in stories within the pictures, they both 'tell a story'. A striking similarity between the two paintings are the influences of the Italian Baroque style flavour, which is

also clear in Jan Steen's work too. In these paintings, the appeal to the senses is also clearly evident. With De Witte's sense of movement of the freshly caught fish and the store seller advertising his goods; providing a sense of hustle and bustle within the city. Sailing ships in the background also express a 'story' of imperial power on the seas and wealth through trade for the Netherlands. Dujardin's piece is a contrast, depicting a small settlement, most likely to be near the Polders/Dykes of South Holland or the coastal town of Zeeland. Despite the contrast in settings and scenes, there is an evident similarity between the techniques of expressing to the viewer the action which is taking place. Karel Dujardin uses the sense of smell, in particular, with the images of manure and the grotty earth to convey to the viewer that this place is very impoverished with a sooty ash fire in the background poisoning the already weathered brick of the shack which is present. The differences in clothing between Dujardin's and De Witte's pieces also illustrates a tale, on the other hand, of wealth and grandeur in the city with the customer wearing fine silks with white fur linings, where on the other Dujardin presents us with the differences to the working clothes of the blacksmith shoeing a very obstinate ox. Either way the differences return to one main aim which both Dutch artists achieve successfully-



they both 'TELL A STORY'!  
Furthermore, not only do they both tell a story; the techniques are almost textbook, using classic scenic genres and they have both opted for the classic oil paints which enhance minute details such as the manure, the flapping fins of the fish and the creases in clothing of the people depicted in both scenes.



Continuing on with 17th Century Dutch artists, it would be beneficial for us to look at the work of the more recognised 'Dutch MASTERS'! Their pieces were probably in direct competition with Jan Steen who ranked to the reputable Rembrandt. Moreover, it would be interesting to see if their compositions differ to Steen's statement.

Firstly, the work of Rembrandt van Rijn, arguably the finest painter in Holland; Rembrandt had a passion for producing scenes of religious and cultural importance. Consider one of his best known paintings, which is most loved by the Dutch people, 'The Night Watch!' If anything Jan Steen's statement is best applied to this painting. A colourful scene depicts the Night Watch of Amsterdam's elite patrol squads. In the centre the section commander is shown organising his able-bodied militia with his lieutenant assisting him. The exciting picture is incredibly well crafted and feels as if it may come to life. A sense of tension and vulnerability to a Spanish and French threat at the time is made into almost virtual reality by Rembrandt's work conveying a story of how the Dutch Republic during this time was besieged on all fronts by the most powerful nations in Europe. Consider now the work of Johannes Vermeer- a family man with almost eleven children to his name, whose artistic talents were only recognised during the 19th century. Vermeer had an interest in painting scenes that were more homely, with a calm canvas if viewed at a glance. Yet, the underlying message is cunningly gifted to the reader through his brush strokes and little slices of detail which he stingingly provides us. His most famous paintings include. 'The girl with the pearl earring' and 'the milkmaid'. Compared to Rembrandt and the other Dutch painters, his compositions are very simple and not "as cluttered". Dutch painters are notorious during the 17th Century to produce a 'Dutch Mess' a term referring to a very busy scene with many 'stories' to tell. Steen

used this technique frequently for his compositions. Vermeer follows a different technique and this refers closely to his work on 'The girl with the pearl earring', as here Jan Steen's message does not apply directly. From the viewer's perspective it seems that it is a simple portrait of a woman with a surprisingly large earring. Despite this the viewer has the freedom to create his or her's own story from this painting and feel free to ask questions: 'Who is the girl'; 'Why does she have such a large earring'; 'Is she sad or contented?'. Moving further away from the 17th Century Dutch painters, let us see some more modern pictorial art to really put Steen's message to the test. Here are the works of Henri Matisse, Malevich and Edvard Munch (respectively). Now, to a traditional viewer it could be said this is NOT pictorial art and there seems not to be any story behind it. Yet, in my opinion, Steen's message is incredibly true and insightful but ambiguous and can be moulded to suit different people's thoughts. For all we know, Steen could be referring to a story behind the paintings

creation, conception or even production. It is therefore, my view that despite these paintings having no clear or evident story, deeper thinking is required to understand the full tale. Looking at Malevich's painting of the black square I think this is the



best example of a modern 'picture' which has an important story behind it. Research into Malevich's life reveals a turbulent existence during World War One and the October revolution shows that he was mentally scarred by the terrible scenes he saw. Consequently, this led him to produce a series of abstract geometric shapes which triggered a new age of art-'Modernism!' His simple 'Black Square' summarises the unstable period of diplomatic relations during the conception of the picture, its dominance as a defying message to those in higher authority led it to being kept secret even after Malevich's death.

In summary, it can be said from looking at various different Dutch painters and the Dutch masters of the 17th Century that Jan Steen's simple but famous message is valid. The Italian Baroque style genre the Dutch became infatuated with always had a story to tell. Interestingly, while analysing various different works of abstract, geometric and modernistic art the viewer can also identify a story. While the pictorial art of the 17th Century portrays a story more easily to the reader, the works of art during the modern age with the likes of Matisse and Malevich have a more

personal story to tell. A story of feelings-emotions of the mind. Feelings that only the artist knows but exerts through this new, refreshed form of art. If anything, Steen's message can be further applied through the progression of pictorial art. As seen 'modernism' forces the viewer to think more carefully and insightfully to understand the 'story' behind any work of art. It shows man's progression to think deeper and delve into his soul to think freely, a right which is essential to human life as without free thought there is literally no reason to live. Therefore in conclusion, through viewing two different ages of art we have seen that pieces from both ages have very strong stories to tell. We can also understand that progression of art does not render Steen's message redundant-ON THE CONTRARY! The progression of pictorial art only enhances Jan Steen's message and is testament to the skill and intelligence, not just of the artists themselves, but also of Jan Steen, who rightly said in 1648: 'Every picture tells a story'.



***By Purusotha Thambiayah L6H1***



# POLITICAL LEADERSHIP



A STONE FACED DAVID  
CAMERON RESIGNS ON  
THE 24TH JUNE 2016  
AFTER A SHOCK BREXIT  
VOTE IN THE EU  
REFEREUNDUM.



**TIMELINE**  
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## WINSTON CHURCHILL: AN UNLIKELY PRIME MINISTER?

In this article Roshan Panesar explains Churchill's part in critical events in Britain at the outbreak of World War Two.

**By Roshan Panesar U6R2 (OH 2016)**

Few men are so famous or as celebrated as Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill.

The legacy of his leadership during the Second World War has endured to this day. However, not very many people remember him for much else than his first premiership and know relatively little about his time before taking office. In the public consciousness at least, it has been forgotten that he made many mistakes before 1940. In this piece, I will argue that Winston Churchill, from his career in the First World War to his time in the 'wilderness', was not as great and infallible as is commonly thought though, despite making these mistakes, was a likely Prime Minister.

### **BRITAIN'S SITUATION APPROACHING 1939**

The memory of Neville Chamberlain is synonymous with the idea of 'appeasement'. They go together despite the fact that he did not invent the policy or the word. During the 1930s, in the face of crises in Manchuria, Ethiopia and the Rhineland almost everyone favoured the policy of 'appeasement'. It was not until 1938 and 1939 that it became the personal policy of Mr. Chamberlain, who applied it longer than most of his cabinet



colleagues and the public would. In Britain there was no will to go to war again less than a generation after the Great War. This was what led to concessions to Japan in Manchuria to Italy in Ethiopia, and to Hitler in the Rhineland. Even as the Third Reich grew stronger and more aggressive, the French and British governments lacked the gumption to stop them by force. Moreover, in Chamberlain's own words (about the Munich agreement), appeasement: was "a wonderful opportunity to put an end to the horrible nightmare of the present arms race". This shows another aspect of his association with appeasement, he personally thought it was the best possible way to deal with Hitler and a resurgent Germany. In a way, this confidence paid off in 1938. Hitler seemed certain to invade Czechoslovakia and in the weeks preludeing the Munich agreement Britain was poised for war: gas masks and guides on protection from air raids were distributed to households across the nation; local authorities dug trenches in parks; plans for the evacuation of children from cities were brought up to date; searchlights were erected in Horse Guards Parade; and Anti-Aircraft Guns were set up there and along Embankment.

When Chamberlain returned to London on 30th September 1938 and, echoing Disraeli 60 years before him, claimed he had brought "Peace with honour...peace for our time" there was genuine relief across Britain and admiration for Chamberlain. The Newsreels that day heralded him as the "one man who saved us from the greatest war of all". However, within a year the policy of appeasement, and Chamberlain's over-confidence in his abilities to restrain Hitler, led to an anxious British government eager to prevent war yet preparing for attack, a tired French government who were wholly against repeating the casualties of the First World War, and a reluctant Polish government who would forsake a collective alliance with Britain, France and the USSR against Germany because of their historic prejudice against Russia. Though even after the limp British guarantee to Poland in March 1939 three were MPs who openly denounced the Prime Minister, saying that Germany could only be curbed by war or the prospect of overwhelming force and that alliances should be made between nations and they should not just be ways of bargaining with Germany for peace. Mr. Chamberlain was getting too arrogant with his policy: that as long as the United Kingdom remained independent and the Empire could hold its international power Germany could take what it so liked. This was evident in the Polish guarantee. It was worded so conservatively in order not to aggravate Germany and did not bind the United Kingdom to "defend every inch of the present frontiers of Poland...Mr. Chamberlain's statement involves no acceptance of the status quo" and was not so much an ultimatum to the Germans as it was "an appeal to their better nature". As the Prime Minister's critics were keen to point out, appealing to the better nature of potential enemies might alienate potential friends. Regardless, this was the state of affairs with Poland and the government was now very keen to establish a front against the Third Reich as the German economy began to endure a severely bad balance of payments position and Hitler had to choose between conquests of other nations for resources or to reduce military spending in favour of exports (it was clear to many which of those he

would choose).

Moreover, across the world, Britain was facing having to give concessions to the Empire of Japan. Whilst trying to maintain a firm line, there was a sense that without US intervention Britain could not risk a war with Japan and keep an eye on Europe and consequently, concessions would have to be made to Japan despite their terrorising of the local Chinese and Korean populations. The Empire faced threats from Germany, Italy and Japan and there was no realistic possibility that the British could wage war against all three. This was why, as early as 1938, Churchill among other notable Conservatives called for a Grand Alliance of any countries which would resist Hitler in Europe and there was pressure in the Government to form an Anglo French alliance, especially in the run-up to Munich (at this point there was no indication that France would surrender in 1940) though Chamberlain and the government was rather hesitant to get drawn into a war on behalf of a foreign nation which would forsake British sovereignty and keen not to get entangled in alliances which led to the Great War. In addition, while rearmament had begun in Britain (3 years after Germany), there was reluctance to declare a state of emergency to increase arms production for two reasons: it would harm Britain's exports industry and create a poor balance of payments position (which would harm the hopes of being attractive to American banks to loan to) and it could make Hitler gain more support among moderate Germans and compel him to be more aggressive. Hence, this hesitation and this policy of appeasement lasted until 2nd September 1939 until after Hitler had invaded Poland and even then Chamberlain still wobbled! The British and the French governments were seriously considering attending a peace conference hosted by Mussolini on the 5th of September to 'discuss' a peaceful settlement over Poland; clearly memories of Munich were revived. It took the House of Commons to bully the British government to declare war and to pressure the French. Corbin, the French ambassador in London, received a phone call from Churchill who allegedly shouted so loud that he "made the telephone vibrate". If France failed England, he asserted, he would never take interest in European affairs again. Around 10.30pm on the 2nd September, Ribbentrop and Hitler reached out to the British government, asking to settle this in a conciliatory manner but that came too late. The cabinet was adjourned until 12pm on 3rd September and they agreed war should be declared by then, or they would face being overthrown by the Commons. They agreed that an ultimatum should be handed to the German government at 9am that would expire at 11am. It did. The French followed suit and declared war at 5pm the same day. At 11.15am, on Sunday 3rd September, the Prime Minister broadcast to the nation and said the words which so many people wished never to hear again, that "consequently, this country is at war with Germany". Chamberlain sounded subdued but dignified, explaining that his attempts to bring peace by conciliating German grievances had failed and that Hitler had no intention of negotiating peace at all. He ended his speech with another reason for war: "It is evil things that we shall be fighting against, brute force, bad faith, injustice, oppression and persecution and against

them I am certain that the right will prevail.”

## **MISTAKES BY CHURCHILL**

From 1931 until 1939, Churchill had held no public office. These are usually referred to as his ‘wilderness years’. It is a misconception that during these years he was infallible, and that he provided warnings and denounced everything Chamberlain and his government did. Two notable examples spring to mind: he was unperturbed in 1935 by Mussolini and hailed him as “a historic figure” and so “wise a man” even during the Abyssinian crisis and thought it was a mistake by the League to have admitted Abyssinia; he was also inactive during the Rhineland crisis and in fact supported the government’s evasion of any meaningful action at this point, which has since been dubbed as the last moment where Hitler could have been decisively stopped without a large and long-lasting war. These 8 years were also characterised by Churchill’s turn to and appeal to the right of the conservative party – notably over the issue of India. While Baldwin’s Conservative Party were keen to be more conciliatory and less brash with the Labour and Liberal Party, and acquiesce on issues such as reform in India, Churchill wanted British rule in India to stay and certainly did not want them to be elevated to the status of Dominion anytime soon. He believed that any sort of self-governing reform in India would be awful to the ordinary Indian populace and perceived that should India be reformed, as was being debated, there would exist tyranny over minorities such as the untouchables in India. Of course, there were also British interests at stake. He warned that relations with India could sink to those like China and that millions would end up unemployed. He came across, or at least tried to come across, as the great defender of the British Empire. Unfortunately for him, his break with Baldwin’s attitude led to him not being given a post in his government.

Another aspect of his career that earned him unpopularity, or at the very least, distrust, was his decision to cross the floor of the Commons, twice-first from Conservative to Labour and later from Liberal to Conservative. Crossing the floor of the Commons earned him the distrust of many Conservatives, and even those who admired him were wary. The Liberals, grateful though they were to have him on their side were hesitant. In 1908 the editor of *The Daily Tribune*, A. G. Gardiner, recorded the comments of one of his Liberal Colleagues: “I love Churchill and trust him...he has the passion for democracy more than any man I know. But don’t forget that the aristocrat is still there...The occasion may arise when the two Churchills come into conflict...”. Whatever doubts there are now of his fidelity in retrospect, they were of less significance at the time. Churchill and Lloyd George were heroes of the Liberal Party. Beatrice Webb observed that “they have practically taken the limelight not merely from their colleagues but from the Labour Party, they stand out as the most advanced politicians”. Regardless, there was still remnants of distrust in both parties.

More disastrous and damaging, however, was his infamous involvement with the

Gallipoli campaign in the First World War. The campaign, for which he has shouldered most of the blame should have ended his political career. The idea behind the campaign was to deliver a blow against Turkey to knock them out of the war by sailing a fleet through the Dardanelles, destroying Turkish forts and guns, continue to the Gallipoli peninsula (perhaps with an invading force) to establish a fleet in the sea of Marmora which could “advance to the golden horn, intimidate Constantinople and induce the Turkish government to sue for peace, while at the same time bringing Greece, Bulgaria and Roumania into the war on the allied side”. Such was the vision. The reality, on the other hand, was a disaster. Churchill (and Kitchener) were unsure about whether the campaign should be just the work of the fleet or whether an occupational invading force should be implemented. Finally, on 18th March 1915, under the command of Admiral de Robeck, a naval attack commenced. Addison notes that “whether it could ever had succeeded against the dual threat of minefields and gunfire from Turkish Forts remains a subject for debate” After three ships were destroyed the attack was halted, despite Churchill’s protests and the War Council decided on a combined operation. The phase which concerned Churchill was now over and after some delays troops from Britain, Australia and New Zealand landed in Gallipoli on 25th April. Soon it became clear that the troops were pinned down and were sustaining heavy losses from Turkish fire. The War Council sent reinforcements but it was clear that the situation was poor and *The Morning Post* decided to single out and lay the blame on Churchill, arguing that such an attack should never have even been attempted: “We assert that the first Lord of the Admiralty acted against the opinion of experts...The truth is Winston Churchill is a danger to the country”. This brought Churchill himself under heavy fire, especially after Lord Fisher resigned and fled leaving him the obvious scapegoat. The affair cost the lives of 46,000 Allied troops, 8,700 of whom were Australian and 2,700 from New Zealand. This, along with his bungled attempt at saving Antwerp in 1914, forced his resignation in May.

These events did not help Churchill’s popularity and support. However, despite making these mistakes (among many others) he was not utterly redundant. In fact, one of the reasons Chamberlain excluded him from office for so long was his prophetic warnings about Hitler, which of course turned out to be justified.

## **CHURCHILL AND CHAMBERLAIN**

While I have outlined above Churchill’s unwillingness to resist Hitler over the Rhineland Crisis in 1936 and his apparent admiration of Mussolini, it would be wrong to think that this characterised his attitude to appeasement as a whole. Even though he was not overly active in opposing the Rhineland crisis he was one of the first to see that Hitler, economically, would have to either begin to disarm, or to invade neighbouring countries. This was where he began to diverge from accepting Neville Chamberlain’s proposed policy of ‘appeasement’. He also began to articulate what many others were beginning to



become wary of around that time – that Britain needed to rearm faster. As Parker notes, “British foreign policy could have been much simpler if Britain was militarily stronger than Germany”. The unwillingness to rearm was tied up in the government’s idea of collective security through disarmament. However many such, as Churchill, began to worry that British manufacturing could not keep up with Germany, indeed in 1934, 1935, 1936 and 1937 German factories turned out more than two and a half the amount of aeroplanes than Britain did; it wasn’t until 1940 that the manufacture of aeroplanes actually overtook Germany. In 1936, Churchill also began to speak strongly against Hitler’s “horrible, cold, scientific persecution” of the Jews. Another notable instance between Churchill and Chamberlain was over Czechoslovakia, where they both pursued peace, but by different means. Chamberlain looked for close personal contact with Hitler to try and negotiate how best to relieve the German people of their grievances while Churchill sought to try and establish the most powerful armed coalition against Hitler, in order to deter him from any aggressive action. Churchill’s more bellicose (albeit in retrospect perhaps most sensible) way of thinking was denounced by Chamberlain and his government, and was a reason why Chamberlain was keen to keep him out of government: he thought that men like Churchill who proposed rapid rearmament and assertive policies towards the Third Reich would force Hitler to be even more aggressive and lead to an arms race. Indeed, Hitler did use the possibility of Churchill becoming Prime Minister as an excuse as to why Germany had to be prepared to defend itself. More prophetically, however, Churchill also denounced the Munich agreement on the grounds that Czechoslovakia would eventually be subsumed into Germany. While Chamberlain predicted that Czechoslovakia would have a secure a national existence “comparable to that which we see in Switzerland today”, Churchill (rightly) predicted that Czechoslovakia “cannot be maintained as an independent entity” and that soon it would be “engulfed in the Nazi regime”. Despite how Neville Chamberlain, after March 1939 when Hitler engulfed Czechoslovakia, moved away from appeasement there was still a reluctance to bring Churchill into the Cabinet despite calls from the public as well as other members of Parliament to include him in the government. This was, as previously stated, to try and not unnecessarily provoke or upset Hitler but also so that Chamberlain could maintain control over his cabinet (which was also why when Churchill did join the cabinet in 1939 he was made the First Lord of the Admiralty as opposed to a more senior position). The approach of trying to maintain an alliance (with France, Poland and the USSR), however, was strongly Churchill’s idea while Chamberlain and his government dithered with a reluctant French government and were too tentative in negotiating with Russia in favour of Poland. He spoke many times in favour of alliance with Russia and as Parker notes “Churchill’s continued exclusion from government would cause the collapse of alliance with Russia and encourage Hitler to defy the ‘peace front’: indeed, within weeks of the failure of newspaper campaigns for Churchill’s entry into the cabinet, the negotiations with Moscow had collapsed and the second Great War had begun”. In this



light, not only does Churchill seem to have been more alert and forward thinking than the Prime Minister when dealing with Germany, but also more indispensable into forming an armed coalition to deter Germany.

## CONCLUSIONS

The tentative conclusion of this piece is to try and show how Churchill, despite his mistakes and poor judgement in certain times during his career, was more equipped to deal with Hitler and the Nazi regime. It is to try and dispel the idea that Churchill was a failure throughout his career before his Prime Ministership yet also trying to remove the veneer that he was a faultless hero of sorts, which is the image that perhaps many people still hold of him. To answer the titular question, Churchill would have very well been an unlikely Prime Minister if the British government had been more assertive towards Hitler in the 1930s or if 'appeasement' and the Munich agreement had actually persuaded Hitler to stop his aggressive foreign policy. However, given the situation Britain was in, and how he had correctly (for the most part) seen the underlying German strategy, it made sense that he succeed Chamberlain as Prime Minister, especially it would seem instead of Lord Halifax who predominantly agreed with Chamberlain's policy. To this end Winston Churchill, perhaps not deserving of the iconic status that he has, was indeed a likely Prime Minister.

**By Roshan Panesar U6R2 (OH 2016)**



# WHY DID PITT THE YOUNGER BECOME PRIME MINISTER IN 1783

Why did Pitt the Younger become Prime Minister in 1783?

William Pitt the Younger was appointed on 19th December 1783, the beginning of an administration that was labelled the “mince pie administration”, making light of the temporary nature of Pitt’s tenure; since it was expected to be over by Christmas. This article would argue that the principal reasons why Pitt was elected was down to King George III and the American War of Independence.

The first reason why William Pitt was appointed was because there was no other good enough alternative to lead the country. Prior to Pitt’s coming to power, there were a series of unsuccessful governments since March 1782. Pitt had served as the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Earl of Shelburne’s administration. The resignation of Shelburne in February 1783 outraged King George III because he thought that the Earl was a good politician and did not have to resign. Secondly, Shelburne’s resignation can largely be blamed on Charles James Fox, a man the King passionately despised. Fox had schemed with Lord North to group their followers together and gain a majority in Parliament, forcing Shelburne to resign. Even though elections did take place, the King still had large control over who would become the First Lord of the Treasury and due to Fox’s actions, even if he had won the election, the King still would have stopped him. So, even though this factor was not as significant as the War of Independence or the King’s influence, it still had large impact on Pitt becoming Prime Minister in 1783. The lack of other suitable candidates left the door open to Pitt to assume his position in office.

Secondly, William Pitt came into office due to the political instability caused by the American War of Independence. The War of Independence brought an embarrassing defeat to Britain, causing dramatic domestic instability. Events in America started to heat up in the 1770s and early 1780s, at the time Lord North was Prime Minister. This brought criticism to King George III as well because he exercised his patronage in order to keep North in power for a further six months. Eventually, North resigned only to return in the Fox/North coalition. The King bitterly opposed this for two reasons: he hated Fox and had trusted North. At the end 1782 and the beginning of 1783, the King used his influence to shape the pattern of voting in his favour in the House of Lords. The War of Independence was significant because it created the Fox/North coalition as a direct consequence.

# TIMELINE

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George III used the India Act to oust the government, the Lords defeated the Bill and this was the second time that Parliament had been defeated by Lords. This gave George III a pretext to say that the Fox/North coalition was incompetent and so it had to oust them, this left the door open for Pitt. The American War of Independence is a more significant factor than there not being other alternatives instead of Pitt because it was only due to the war that the coalition was introduced, the incompetence of the ensuing government being one of the key factors in Pitt the Younger becoming Prime Minister in 1783. The political instability caused by the War of Independence with America allowed Pitt to take over the government, and hence was a very significant factor in allowing Pitt to become Prime Minister.

William Pitt was an exceptional politician while some may say he was just a lucky beneficiary of circumstance, but he was actually an astute and skillful politician. The historian Eric Evans wrote, "Pitt's gifts exactly matched the needs of the first decade of his premiership." Significantly, Pitt came to power simply down to the fact he was an exceptionally good politician. Pitt's consolidation of power was equally impressive, his clever technique of getting on the good side of people both in and out of the Commons won him a lot of admirers. Pitt's request that the proposal of election be delayed so that he had a chance to face and impress the opposition, was important because it highlighted Pitt's reputation of being fearless. The War of Independence had put Britain into financial turmoil, and it was, Evans says through "his amazingly professional grasp of the complex financial issues of the day," that Pitt managed to win over a lot of people by his clever management of the economy, and soon Britain's fortunes were starting to turn around. So, Pitt the Younger's ability as a politician was a very significant factor in bringing him to power in 1783 and, equally important, consolidating him in that position. Without this ability, the two other factors would be meaningless because the King would never have considered him in the first place, had he not been so impressive. So, Pitt's exceptional ability was a very significant factor for him coming to power in 1783.

William Pitt had the unconditional support of King George III, and this was the most significant reason for him coming to power in 1783. Britain was a democratic nation, it held elections and had a Parliament, but the King still had a



# WHY DID PITT THE YOUNGER BECOME PRIME MINISTER IN 1783 CT.

large say in the politics of the country. Patronage was key to this, the King got people to do what he wanted by offering them high level positions and promotions. Prior to Pitt, the King hated the Fox/North coalition, because he felt betrayed by Lord North and hated Charles James Fox as a person. George III had always held a great admiration for Pitt; this is shown by him asking Pitt to become Prime Minister two years earlier. King George's opinion on people mattered greatly, partly due to patronage but also because he could make life very difficult for people if he wanted to, shown by his relationship with Charles James Fox. A man who could have been a good Prime Minister could not simply because the King did not like him, and this harshness worked in Pitt's favour. One of the primary reasons as to why the Fox/North coalition failed was due to their own supporters losing trust in them, this was more because it became evident that the King was disapproving and most MPs wanted to agree with the King because it increased the likelihood of promotion. Had it not been for King George III, its supporters may not have lost faith in the Fox/North coalition and William Pitt may never have come to power. So, this article would argue that the most significant reason for Pitt the Younger becoming Prime Minister in 1783 was because he had the support of King George III and the system of Patronage worked in his favour.

So, in conclusion, Even though the lack of alternatives and Pitt's skill as a politician both had a significant impact in him coming to power, these were not as significant as the American War of Independence or King George III's input. This article would argue that the most significant factor was the impact of George III because he had such a great influence over British politics and he also caused the lack of alternatives by his hatred of the Fox/North Coalition. Had Pitt not had the backing of King George III, it would be highly likely that he would never have become Prime Minister in 1783.

**By Ben Markham U6H2**

# GENOCIDES



THIS IMAGE DEPICTS THE TAMIL TIGER REBEL LEADER V. PRABHAKHARAN INSPECTING HIS MILITA DURING THE TWENTY FIVE YEAR LONG CIVIL WAR. IT IS ONE OF MANY MODERN EXAMPLES OF GENOCIDE .



**TIMELINE**  
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# WERE THE EVENTS IN VAN DIEMEN'S LAND RESULTING FROM BRITISH COLONIALISM BETWEEN 1803 AND 1829 A 'HUMAN GENOCIDE'?

*Michael Nio focuses his attention on the ever present issues of human genocide combined with interesting details of how British Colonialism exacerbated this issue.*

“By genocide we mean the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group.” This was said by Raphael Lemkin in 1944 to describe the horrors of the holocaust in the Second World War. But what does this definition entail and include? Does the deliberate targeting for extermination of people for their political beliefs in Pol Pot's Cambodia in 1975 not qualify as a genocide, despite the deaths of over 1 million people or 1/7 of the population? When the term genocide is used, the immediate associations are, on average going to be about the Holocaust but there are other examples that could spring to mind which might include the slaughter of the Armenians by the Turks in 1915 or the mass murders in Rwanda in 1994. But there was always one genocide, which I like to refer to as the “forgotten genocide” on the basis that, in my eyes, it is the most clear cut case of genocide in human history but the fact that it not well known is the result of a British cover-up some of the dark parts of their history. Let us look at Van Diemen's Land, now known to us as Tasmania.

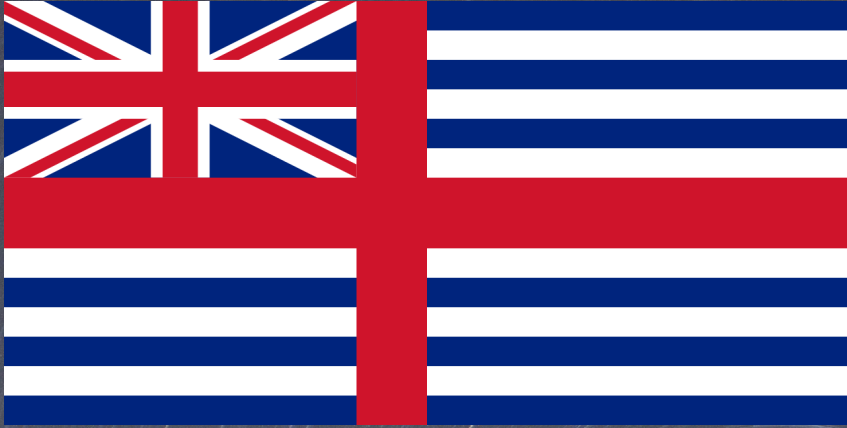


Tasmania is located a couple hundred miles south of mainland Australia and is best known for housing the rare “Tasmanian Devil” which is a rather large species of rat that is native to that island. The events that occurred on this island all started in 1803 with the first arrival of British settlers who were instructed by the government to treat the native people with “amity and kindness.” It was the plan for the inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land to become British subjects and to be introduced to the benefits of “civilisation.” The land was very good and the conditions made it ideal for raising sheep which the British first noticed in 1817. From 1819 to 1824 the British government took, without treaty or payment, huge amounts of Tasmanian land using the justification that the islanders were not managing the land in the right way and therefore had no right of ownership of the land. This instigated a conflict between the islanders and the settlers that was known as the “Black war” in which, over 30,000 islanders were killed. For every British death, approximately 70 Tasmanians were killed in retribution. The whole event was a result of the British settlers refusing to recognise that the native people were only seeking to defend their



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land- something that the British would have had difficulty in acknowledging as it would have called into question the legitimacy of British usurpation of the territory in the first place. In 1828, the editor of the *Colonial times* magazine Henry Meville arrived on Van Diemen's land and said that the

natives "had been treated worse than any of the American tribes by the Spanish" and that very "few events have tarnished the history of any Colony more than in the manner in which the civilized portions of society conducted themselves towards (them)." This view was backed up by Herman Merivale, the political economist from Oxford University in 1842 who stated that "The nation of Van Diemen's land was reduced to a few families by long maltreatment...settlers...shot them down in the wood, or laid poisoned food within their reach." From these accounts, it is clearly unsuitable to classify the Black war as a war but as a genocide or slaughter.

Furthermore these reports show that even some of the British people agreed that what took place in Van Diemen's Land was clearly not right and leads to calls that what took place was a human genocide committed by the British. However it is worth mentioning the existence of the Aboriginal

Tasmanians, who were the survivors of the Black war who surrendered to the British on the grounds that if they surrendered, they would be protected, provided for and have the land returned to them eventually.

There were approximately 200 of these Aboriginal Tasmanians, which was a small part of the whole population of roughly 30,000. These Aboriginal Tasmanians were made to live in prison camps that had vermin and poor water supply. They were subjected to high-salt diets and white respiratory diseases that the population later died from. In this slow, painful death, the Aboriginal Tasmanians had their families separated and were subjected to the humiliating process of re-education in Christian





# WERE THE EVENTS IN VAN DIEMEN'S LAND RESULTING FROM BRITISH COLONIALISM BETWEEN 1803 AND 1829 A 'HUMAN GENOCIDE'?

civilization and forced to denounce their previous beliefs and tradition that their ancestors followed. As the last islander perished, the event could be described as a cultural genocide, as an entire, ancient culture was eradicated by the events of the British killing off every follower. More importantly it must be noted that in 1948, the United Nations adopted the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*. According to the convention, "Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such, (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group." The convention also outlawed, as a separate crime, "complicity in genocide," which involves the roles not of genocide perpetrators but of accomplices of it. By this definition, surely what took place in Van Diemen's Land has to be classified as a human genocide? If we follow the convention to the letter, then we can see that: a) members of the group (the natives) were killed by the British, b) It is fair to say that death qualifies as serious bodily or mental harm, c) the account by Herman Merivale surely means that this qualifies. Part D of the clause is the only part that cannot be proved but it is insinuated that for the fact that the population of Aboriginal Tasmanians died out relatively quickly, they were not allowed to breed. As the convention states that if "any of the following acts" are "committed" then Tasmania is a British genocide by the grounds of the definition given by the United

Nations. After taking two separate definitions of the word genocide and seeing that the events of Van Diemen's Land does qualify for both of these, therefore the conclusion has to be that it is a genocide and it was committed by the British. Furthermore, the overall significance of this event is that it ultimately highlights how British colonial policy was morally a crime against humanity and that it is an example of how





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the British deployed violent and aggressive measures in order to oppress and quieten those who sought freedom as a result of the initial legitimate claim the British had to the land. There can be a defence against this conclusive statement in that the British carried out the event without intent, and did not intend to carry out a

genocide but only intended to make Van Dieman's land part of the colony. The argument against this logic is that if one commits murder, even if it was not premeditated and very spontaneous or heat of the moment, it does not make the crime any much better. This applies for other inhumane crimes such as rape, with the point being made that whilst it was not premeditated, it simply does not make it any better. These are still very bad things and it does not seem to be able to qualify as justified. Overall it was the violent measures that carried out by the British that simply cannot be condoned in any way, and in conclusion, the events that were carried out a result of British colonialism does hereby qualify as a genocide on the grounds of the United Nations.

**By Michael Nio U6R2**



## What was the most important cause of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide?

The 1994 Rwandan Genocide was a mass-killing of approximately 800,000-1,000,000 of the Tutsi minority and moderate Hutu carried out by Hutu extremists in a roughly 100 day period from the 7th April 1994 to mid-July, commencing after the assassination of the Hutu Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana. The genocide can be explained by reference to several factors such as the anger generated by the Arusha Accords of August 1993, past grievances from Belgian colonialization and paranoia that was exasperated by the extremist Rwandan media about the Rwandan Civil War. Other more immediate causes were President's Habyarimana's assassination, the influx of cheap weaponry into

# What was the most important cause of the 1994 Rwandan Genocide?

By Rob Morris U6C1 (OH 2016)

Rwanda from 1973 and the economic decline of Rwanda since 1989. This article will argue that the Arusha Accords were the most important factor, as it threatened the powerful Hutu extremist oligarchs, who effectively co-ordinated the crucial military and media aspects that were required for the genocide to be carried out.

### How did the Civil War divide Rwandans?

The initial stages of the Rwandan Civil War from 1990-1993 must be considered as an important factor in the build up to the genocide as it helped create a culture of fear amongst both urban and rural Hutu populations. The mass migration of Hutu

refugees southwards helped to create an agenda of victimisation, in that the Tutsis were preying on 'innocent' Hutu civilians. Research by Robert Gersony, stated that from April 1994 there were observable acts of genocide against Hutus carried out by the RPF (Rwandan People's Front). This report does correlate with other acts of genocide that were reported by Hutu locals against the RPF during the Rwandan Civil War. These accounts can hence explain the Hutu fears of persecution – resulting in them resorting to violence as a means of self-defence. Gerard Prunier illustrates this particularly poignant point, as when the RPF

stopped 30km north of Kigali in 1993, “Everybody [Hutus], including the most resolute opponents, was prepared to fight. President Habyarimana could count on massive popular support...”.

What this shows is that the fear of this Tutsi-dominated army was incredibly important in controlling the people and making them willing participants in the genocide. However, the violence in the war can only partially explain why people resorted to such drastic measures, as what truly shaped public opinion was the radical media (particularly RTLMC-**Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines**) that exaggerated and fabricated stories to such an extent that it created a “them and us” mentality. Realistically, once French and Zairean support had been secure, the Rwandan government was in no real danger and so any paranoia was that created



A graphic image of the result of a Hutu massacre in Rwanda during the genocide.

by the government and its various media outlets. One example of this is a RTLMC broadcast, where on the 24th November 1993; RTLMC stated that “40 people [Hutus] were slaughtered like cows [by Tutsis]”, despite no attack of this kind being recorded anywhere. The fact that Habimana (interviewer) gives no reference to either the time or place of the massacre shows how it is a blatant fabrication, but its impact would still be incredibly important as there was no other source of popular information due to high illiteracy in the country,

meaning popular opinion was more likely to be shaped by the media’s (specifically RTLMC’s) interpretation. Thus, the violence and acts of war carried out in the initial stage of the Rwandan Civil War were not self-evidently what shaped popular Hutu opinion, as both sides committed atrocities and gave conflicting reports. The exaggerated *Inkuruishushe* extracts that the media used (upon the orders of the *Akazu*) must be considered more important as these scared civilians more and were an effective mobilising factor. By using a mix of

both actual (including exaggerated) accounts and complete fabrications, the Rwandan extremist media was able to create an intense culture of fear, which was crucial to making people both more violent and sympathetic to the genocide. The individual acts of violence in the initial stages of the civil war can therefore not be considered as important as other factors, due to the need for radical interpretation in order to mobilise the masses, which RTLMC provided.

### **A Belgian Legacy?**

An incredibly important factor that must be considered as the grounding of Hutu-Tutsi tensions is the impact of Belgian colonisation. By radically reforming society and elevating the Tutsi's due to a 19th Century obsessive preoccupation with 'race', the Belgians allowed a chasm to form between the two groups. This can be explained in part due to John Hanning Speke's

'Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile', where he drew ethnic comparisons between Hutu and Tutsi, beginning the early migration hypothesis, which was very effective at deeply dividing Rwandan society in a way that it had not been beforehand.

Mahmood Mamdani rejects Speke's presumptions, claiming that the divide between Hutu and Tutsi was a socioeconomic difference that occurred "normally" in every observable society (an example being to state the difference between a City of London banker and a steel worker from Sheffield). These future tensions could be traced back to this moment that Europeans began to distinguish between "more European" looking Tutsis and the darker-skinned Hutu but this completely harmonious generalisation before colonialization is not entirely valid, as there had been Hutu and Tutsi

conflicts, such as in 1897. One of the most important stages in causing tensions between Hutus and Tutsis was the Belgian control on the *Umwami* and the reorganization of local domestic governance through the 'les reformes Voisin'. The radical reform of centralisation and replacing many chieftain roles that were predominantly Hutu (such as the 'Chief of the Land') with a single Tutsi official caused great outrage in the educated Hutu communities, as it showed clear favouritism for the minority by the colonial rulers. This can be proven as by 1959, 43 out of 45 Chieftains were Tutsi and 549 out of 559 sub-chieftains were also Tutsi. The introduction of *corvée* (later called *Kazi*) by the Belgians not only helped to both isolate Hutu men, because this unpaid labour was only undertaken by them, but also to cause anger channelled at the Tutsi elite and the *umuzungu*. This stereotype of Tutsis



as traitors was to be used in rhetoric later in the 1959 Hutu revolution, showing how the Tutsi alliance with the Belgians negatively affected Hutu popular opinion. But to say that the introduction of a feudal system negatively changed Rwanda is incorrect because forced labour had been commonplace in Rwandan society before the colonialists arrived, with the systems of *ubuhake* and *ubureetwa* meaning that this style of feudal governance was generally accepted as a societal normality. It was only once European-style taxation, privatisation and police brutality were brought into this system that strains began to show, as the Hutu peasants who could not afford the cost of living were extensively oppressed, showing how European feudalism was incredibly different to its African equivalent. This resulted in a formation of a Tutsi dominated elite in



both the economy and government, again increasing this socio-economic divide between Hutu and Tutsi. Prunier summarises the reforms of 1926-31 as “The time bomb had been set and it was now only a question of when it would go off”. The creation of ‘race cards’ – whereby on identification papers it would state which section of the *Banyarwanda* group people were from, created a definitive divide between Hutu and Tutsi, removing all prior forms of social mobility that existed through the possession

of cattle. These also aided the efficiency of the genocide, as it made it much easier to identify Tutsis. The most important event that undermined Rwandan security that the Belgians carried out was their switching of allegiance to Hutu groups from 1959, which led to the rise of Gregoire Kayibanda’s Hutu-power movement. This was significant as it put the once oppressed Hutu groups above their Tutsi counterparts, allowing the Hutus more freedom to persecute Tutsis out of a sense of revenge. But, to say that the impact of imperialism

fundamentality determined the genocide is inherently wrong, as it required years of manipulation by the *Akazu*-controlled mass media to ‘educate’ the younger generations in an extremist ideology in order to incite future ethnic violence. The young Hutu men who carried out the genocide were not directly affected by imperialism and the media merely used colonial grievances and the legacy of the 1959 revolution as a form of indoctrination to implement an anti-Tutsi agenda. The creation of Hutu nationalism based on both the colonial years and the 1959 Hutu revolution carried out by Gregoire Kayibanda was what fundamentally determined the genocide, rather than lasting impacts from colonialism. This was illustrated by Raoul Peck in his “Sometimes in April”, where one scene depicts an RTLMC broadcaster describing the

“whipping” that the Hutus suffered under the Tutsi regimes. This illustrates how rather than the actual events that took place under colonialism themselves, it was the social psychological legacy and stereotypes that they left in the uneducated Hutu population that was an even more important cause of the genocide, which was warped and exaggerated by the radical media. As this was carried out by the *Akazu* once they felt that their power would be threatened by the Arusha Accords, the terms of this agreement must be seen to be more important than that of Belgian colonisation, as this led to the creation of this influential radical Hutu media. Only with this racist doctrine could future Hutu populations be mobilised to carry out acts of violence and so the media’s influence must be considered more important than the individual acts carried out

under colonial rule.

## **The Media – Divide and Conquer**

“If Rwandan crimes against humanity ever come to trial, the owners of Radio des Mille Collines will stand at the head of the accused.”

Here Misser and Jaumain show how one of the most decisive factors in the genocide was the influence and doctrines of RTLMC (and radical media as a whole), in that it warped popular opinion to that of a racist mind-set, which allowed the genocide to become more universally accepted in Hutu communities. Research by David Yanagizawa-Drott showed how radio coverage increased violence in the direct vicinity from the public by 12-13% and 10-11% for militias. This shows how the radio was clearly an important tool in encouraging people to commit acts of genocide. The fact it was colloquially named

“vampire radio”, as it called for more blood and massacres, shows how closely linked it was to the events that were carried out in the genocide. However, to say that the radio wholly defined both public opinion and actions would be an over-exaggeration. This was shown by Dr. Omar McDoom, who when asked about this topic by Chris Arnot, stated, “Those they [militias] recruited were part of an intimate social network. If you lived in isolation at the top of a hill, you were far less likely to get involved”. This shows that the radio could only have had a significant impact on the genocide through an acceptance of its interpretations by society, which relied upon prior misconceptions based on the legacy of colonial rule and the paranoia surrounding the RPF advance from 1990. But radio did have an incredible effect on entire

communities into committing horrific acts. So whilst there may not be an exact linear relationship between radio coverage and violence committed, when taken into account both pressures from the media and local Hutu communities, it does imply that radio coverage did inspire a significant amount of people to commit acts of genocide. Another way the media can be shown to have an effect is that of the use of rape as a weapon of genocide. The extremist media’s (particularly Kangura) explicit reference to Tutsi women’s sexuality acted as an effective tool to encourage mass rapes. This can be proven to be true by the fact that roughly 100,000-250,000 Tutsi women were raped during the genocide, with 67% of these women being infected with HIV. However, Dr. Omar McDoom states that it would be wrong to state that it was the media’s

influence alone that caused people to commit acts of violence, instead stating, “I began to realise what they [Hutu perpetrators] did had less to do with unusual pre-dispositions towards violence, and more to do with particular opportunities for violence”. This shows how rather than media indoctrination, violent acts were carried out by young men who thought that their crimes would go unpunished due to the chaos that was ensuing in that time period. Therefore, their acts were more opportunistic and personal rather than politically-motivated. Ultimately, it must be considered that the media was ultimately being dictated by the *Akazu*, who were acting in response to the terms of the Arusha Accords. The original fifty shareholders of RTLMC, who were either *Akazu* or those who had a similar racist ideology, poured 100 million



Rwandan francs (roughly US\$1m) into the station once they knew that the President was going to sign the deal with the RPF. Hence, it is impossible to consider the media as an independent body from these elite Northern Hutu groups, as they were heavily involved both financially and administratively with these media outlets. The constant anti-Arusha agenda pedalled by all forms of radical Hutu-power media shows how these organizations were a direct response to this treaty and an explicit order from their financiers. Without this treaty, there would have been no need for these radical media outlets, as the President would have simply carried out a united war effort against the RPF 'invaders' with the help of both the *Akazu* and *Amasau*. Therefore, the signing of the Arusha Accords must be considered a more important factor as it caused a dramatic

increase in Hutu extremist press due to *Akazu* investment, as they felt their power and security was threatened. As the signing of Arusha fundamentally shaped the propaganda that the radical press spouted, which warped the opinions of those who would eventually carry out the genocide, the Accords must therefore be considered a more important factor.

### **The Arusha Accords and the Akazu**

The signing of the Arusha Accords on the 4th August 1993 must be considered to be the most important cause of the Rwandan Genocide, due to the actions it generated in consequence by the *Akazu* and *Amasau*. The foundation of the *Amasau* by Colonel Bagosora was a direct response to the terms of the Accords, which were that the 'new' Rwandan military would be composed of both the government troops and 20-35% RPF troops, with the RPF also obtaining

half of senior military roles. This organization's founding was a pivotal point in the genocide, as without it the local militias would not have had access to anywhere near the amount of weapons that were required to kill nearly 83% of the Tutsi population. Whilst it could be argued that the *Amasau* depended on foreign financial and military aid, they played an active role in diverting large amounts of investment that was intended for humanitarian purposes to military expenditure, which was crucial in enabling the genocide to happen. The establishment of the local militias and death squads (such as Réseau Zéro) was a direct attempt to sabotage the peace process by causing civil unrest and harassing Tutsis, hoping to invoke a reaction from the RPF. This shows how the actions of these local militias were a direct consequence of the signing of the Arusha

Accords, as they sought to undo its effects. This can also be proven by the fact that on the 18th October 1992, 'Coalition for the Defence of the Republic' (another Hutu extremist party who formed a significant amount of the *Impuzamugambi*) riots publically denounced Arusha, showing how the genocide was carried out by those who only acted as a means of preserving of Hutu dominance. Whilst it could be argued that the general civilian Hutu population was motivated more out of a sense of fear than in outrage at the terms of Arusha, the majority of the killing was carried with a militia or armed forces member involved – meaning that whilst civilian-on-civilian killings did occur, they were extremely rare and more based on a personal grievance (again relating back to McDoom's argument that substantial amounts of the violence was opportunistic) rather

than a collective one for Rwanda that could be traced back to October 1990 or the colonial era. "Habyarimana was flying back to implement the deal,' said Mulvaney. 'If that plane had landed, Bagosora would have personally lost his house, his job, his position. That's on a very personal level. But he would also have had to demobilise his forces in the army and integrate them with the RPF and they felt Habyarimana had capitulated, and Bagosora wanted to stop him. It was the catalyst to start the killing.'"

Here Mulvaney shows how *Akazu* opposition to Arusha can fundamentally be summarised as a fear of losing personal power, as the North-Western Hutu oligarchs did not wish to share their incredible political and economic power with anybody else but their direct family. By framing the Tutsis as a threat through their

privately-funded media outlets, the *Akazu* were able to scare the masses into fighting for them and hence avoid having to share power with the RPF. Downing summarises this by saying, "For them [*Interahamwe* and *Akazu*], fear and hatred of Tutsis was more important than Rwanda's economic well-being" This shows how these powerful Hutu elites relied upon distracting the local population with an exaggerated threat in order to maintain their own personal power, which the Arusha Accords would inevitably undermine and possibly diminish. Therefore, the signing of the Arusha Accords must be considered the most important cause of the Rwandan Genocide as it isolated the influential *Akazu* group due to the concept of a multi-party state threatening their personal power, which led to them starting an

intense anti-Tutsi propaganda campaign in order to discredit the RPF and an arming of local militias with vast weapons, which fundamentally enabled and caused the genocide to occur.

### **Conclusion: The oligarchy and a manipulated population**

To say that the Arusha Accords were the single ‘most important’ cause in the genocide would be a gross mistake upon my part. Rather than viewing these events as isolated, we must look at them in their respective contexts and relations. All the factors stated above were necessary in the cause of the genocide. There was no distance or isolation with this genocide and the general population as unlike the Holocaust, Bosnia or Cambodia, this genocide was carried out by normal people – the vast majority of killings were not carried out by soldiers or official members of Hutu militias. The method of these



killings itself separates 1994 from other genocides as these were not carried out efficiently on mass with gas chambers or methods of war. These people were independently chased before being cut down with machetes and disfigured by gangs of what we could consider supposedly ‘normal’ young men. What we must consider therefore, is how an entire population were convinced that genocide was a viable option and why they became active participants in these grotesque killings. The obedience to authority in Rwandan culture is hard to articulate to a Western worldview, and the impact that colonialism

had on this only served to exacerbate this principle. Further, the 19th Century European obsession with ‘race’ was a crucial part to deeply dividing Rwandan society – as ultimately different socio-economic groups were pitted against each other as ‘races’ in a way that Rwandans had never experienced before. However, it would be wrong to state that such long-term factors were as Prunier puts it a deterministic “time-bomb”, as whilst there may have been several spurts of anti-Tutsi violence after the 1959 Hutu Revolution, none of them were on the same scale of 1994. The nation was truly divided in the



following 20 years after independence, rather than during Belgian rule, as the *Akazu*-sponsored media's rhetoric began to take effect on the population through its use of *Inkuruishushe*. Whilst I may dismiss the economic arguments of van Ginneken and Bank's, the importance of being in an impoverished and illiterate country must be regarded as crucial to the genocide's beginning due to the nature of a competition for resources in such a crowded country. Whilst economics itself may not self-evidently be able to explain why one-million people were killed by their neighbours, we can begin to understand how the stresses of an impoverished lifestyle, whilst being exploited by the most wealthy men in the nation, could lead to people being more prone to violence. The assassination of President Habyarimana was important, as it served to act as a justification for



violence, this is again evidence of the *Akazu*'s effect on Rwandan politics, as the scheming for this assassination started in as early as February 1992 as the *Akazu* heard that Habyarimana would go for peace with the RPF. Adding to the fact that the Presidential Guard were all affiliated with *Akazu* and *Amasau* members, we cannot view these groups as separate, but part of the same movement. Taking account for these other necessary factors, the Rwandan Genocide can be most concisely explained, as both Downing and Mulvaney

state, by the powerful Hutu elite using all their influence to distract the general populous by creating civil disorder and a scapegoat in the Tutsi minority, so as to protect their own personal power and destroy the group that they perceived would threaten their oligarchic positions under the terms of the Arusha Accords.

**By Rob Morris U6C1  
(OH 2016)**



# LITERARY REVIEWS



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# REVIEW OF 'THE GREAT DEBATE'

By Adam Feldman U6H1

Adam Feldman provides an interesting review on Yuval Levin's 'The Great Debate' commenting on his perspectives of conservatism and rationalism.

## Review of 'The Great Debate'

Yuval Levin attempts in his book, **'The Great Debate'** to capture the intensely important debate between Edmund Burke, the father of modern conservatism, and Thomas Paine, the hero of enlightenment rationalism. Levin correctly identifies this immense battle as helping to forge the ideologies of the right and left that have lasted for centuries. Fought on the battle grounds of pamphlet, speeches and treatises, it took place in the late 18th century during the time of the American Revolution and the French Revolution. Levin, an American, finds that by comparing these two

English political philosophers he can help us understand the political divides of liberal democracies across the Atlantic, between those who wish for "reforming conservatism" and those that wish for "restoring progressivism".

Importantly, Burke and Paine were not just political thinkers, but political actors. An increasingly rare breed of politician, still rare in their own time, their position allowed them to understand first-hand the political movers of the day and their desire to impact is expressed continuously in both of their writings and in **'The Great Debate'**. Burke was a civil servant and politician

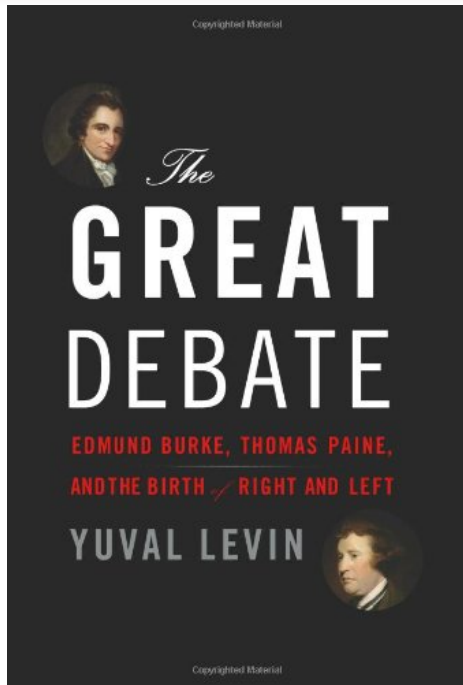
whilst Paine was a pamphleteer and adviser to some of the leading lights of his era, from the Marquis de Lafayette to Thomas Jefferson.

The book gives much time to the central issue of debate between Paine and Burke - The French Revolution. While Paine exulted at the toppling of the ancient regime, Burke expressed first skepticism, then outright horror at the events unfolding in Paris. His most famous work, **'Reflections on the Revolution in France'**, published in 1790, warned that by tearing up the roots of society, the revolution, led by "a sect





# REVIEW OF 'THE GREAT DEBATE' CT.



of fanatical and ambitious atheists" would end in anarchy, bloodshed and tyranny. "It is not the victory of party over party," he wrote. "It is a destruction and decomposition of the whole society." This passionate and articulate presentation of the revolution is arguably why Burke entertained such a following during a time when many were initially sympathetic towards the Revolution.

For Paine, politics consists of the application of rational principles based on natural equality. Rationalisation, not preservation, is the central goal.

"Government, in a well-constituted republic, requires no belief from any man beyond what his reason can give." This is crucial in understanding perhaps the most central issue of the revolution – hereditary power. As Levin puts it, Paine "sought to desentimentalise politics". Here, still, is an important distinction between the disposition of the conservative right and the liberal left. The idealistic liberal starts with pure rationale e.g. equality, inclusion, democracy. After focusing his theory he then tries to apply, mould or force his ideas onto a society with too

much inertia to appreciate its qualities. The right starts with the institutions and norms that already exist – probably for good reason – and only reluctantly realises that there is slight room for improvement.

Unfortunately, Levin, like everyone, has a political disposition which he admits himself in the preface. "I'm a conservative, and I would not pretend to leave my worldview at the door". After reading the book this disposition becomes somewhat clear. His political purpose in writing this book is to bring Burke back to life and transport him across the pond, in order to temper the enlightenment individualism of his fellow American conservatives. Paine's radical vision of democracy based on the

natural equality of individuals and the capacity of rational men to design political institutions – "we have it in our power to begin the world over again" – is in the DNA of American politics, on both left and right. Levin wants to inject greater respect for the intermediate institutions of community and civic associations, in counterweight to individual liberty. Paine, unlike Burke, is taught in America as one of the founding philosophers of the 1776 revolution. In this sense Levin can be forgiven for attempting to 'level the score' for his American audience.

Despite this tailoring for his Burke, deprived audience, Levin cannot be forgiven for his ultimate failure to give practical credit to Paine's ideology.

While the mind of Burke is brought authentically to life, Paine never quite makes it off the page. His ideas are repeatedly referred to as "abstract", "hard", "utopian" or "stark". Paine naively saw the French Revolution as a pure and noble cause compared to Burke's more accurate description of its overreaching nature (He describes the revolution to be like someone who "set his house on fire because his fingers are frostbitten"). As it turned out Burke was right about the French revolution – but Paine was right about the trajectory of politics for the following two centuries. Intellectually, Burke won the battle, but lost the war. Levin does not do justice to Paine's idea that any rough edges resulting from the revolution are trifling by

comparison to the injustices of the preceding regime and any following regimes without liberty.

Levin may have failed to give anything but a two-dimensional image of Paine's philosophy but ultimately he does create two very clear summaries of the two men's views. Full of intricacies and comparisons, Levin displays '*Rights of Man*', '*Reflections on the Revolution in France*' and various other writings on the same stage. This results in a history where all the writings of these two thinkers help to illuminate each other and thereby give a powerful insight into the division between right and left today.

**By Adam Feldman**  
**U6H1**



# REVIEW: THE TSARIST ECONOMY

*A comprehensive and informative guide which allows one to be immersed in the context of the Tsarist economy through a period of seven decades leading up to the Russian revolution in 1917.*



One of the key achievements of this book is how Gatrell manages to effectively summarize with reasonable clarity the three most common interpretations of the Russian economy in this time period; the liberal, populist (narodniki) and Marxist-Leninist interpretations. He does this through the process of giving clear, concise arguments to support each theory as well as by explaining their origins through the means of respective theorists and finally by critically evaluating each interpretation against extensive background knowledge in this particular field of study. The difference between each interpretation is made explicitly clear with the liberal model being focused on barriers to economic growth with mass

industrialisation being the solution. The populist model is similar but rejects the need for rapid industrialisation for economic growth. Finally the Marxist/Leninist view is that of class struggle being the main problem having manifested from capitalism. However it is important to note that in this book, Gatrell does not provide a new or unique model of the Tsarist economy in this time period but instead he has done an ample job in organising and amalgamating existing models into a comprehensive summary with his own personal take on the subject interjected at various points within the book. By evaluating each interpretation in three distinct stages: a central problem, an obstacle and then the solution posed by the respective interpretation. Gatrell does however by some extension from doing this fall into the trap of anachronism; when in essence it does appear at times that he is trying to look for something that isn't there in the means of trying to conform each interpretation about the economy into his own model. Gatrell has the belief that the role of the state as the initiator of economic growth and with the repartitioned commune as a physical restraint on economic growth are both concepts that he argues were grossly exaggerated by older theorists in terms of their impact on real economic growth. He



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argues for this view and it represents a strong and highly critical evaluation of existent theorists that in turn helps the reader to a better understanding of explaining the motions of the Tsarist economy in this time period.

Overall, the book does its job in informing the reader of the context behind this time period as well as providing a comprehensive summary of the economy up until the Russian revolution of 1917. The survey of the economy at the outbreak of World War I is particularly adept with the mobilization of Russian troops covered in extensive detail. Ultimately, the Tsarist economy 1850-1917 by Peter Gatrell remains a fantastic starting point to all those interesting in studying the field of Russian or Tsarist history with the content ample in constructing a firm foundation for all aspiring historians.



By **Michael Nio** U6R2



# THE NARRATIVE OF FREDRICK DOUGLASS

**By Jordan Urban U6H2**

Jordan Urban, investigates Fredrick Douglass' views of slavery which incorporate interesting details of social myths regarding the taboo in contextual terms.

Frederick Douglass' view of slavery is, unsurprisingly, negative. He dispels many of the myths surrounding slavery through describing his own experiences in bondage, and offers an incredibly useful and compelling insight into the world of the slave trade.

Douglass firstly rejects the notion that owners treated their slaves well because they were valuable property. In the opening chapters of the book, he describes how slaves are often given food which is inadequate in both amount and substance, given clothes which are coarse and unforgiving, given a blanket to sleep on rather

than a bed, and are forced to sleep on the cold damp floor. He describes how, as a child, he was often 'left naked...through all seasons' which led to his 'feet being so cracked from the frost' that 'a pen...might be laid in the gashes.' While this is all compelling evidence that owners did not treat their slaves well, despite their perceived value, the clearest evidence that slaves were mistreated by their owners comes in the many descriptions of whippings which Douglass was party to. Whipping is ever-present throughout the book – even masters such as 'Master Hugh', who he found kind, occasionally whipped him to keep him in order. If owners truly

viewed their slaves as valuable property, and thus treated them well, then the concept of whipping would be abhorrent – instead, it was actively used. In fact, it is very clear that the owners who treated slaves well did so out of pity rather than because they were more valuable when in good health – Douglass 'mistress' in Baltimore was initially kind to him not because she saw him as valuable, but because she pitied his situation.

Douglass also examines the effect that slavery has on their white owners. He demonstrates the corrupting power of slavery through Mrs Auld, who was the wife of his owner in Baltimore, Mr Auld. He writes that initially, she was 'a kind-hearted and tender woman,' who began to teach him how

to read and spell. However, she was soon corrupted by the 'irresponsible power of slavery'. After Mr Auld warned her that 'if you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell,' she became determined not to allow that inch, becoming angry and cruel to Douglass, due to the fear, articulated by her husband, that he would become 'unmanageable,' and that in essence, the more knowledge he gained, and the more kindly he was treated, the more discontented he would become with his terrible situation, which would make him 'useless'. Through the corruption of Mrs Auld, it becomes clear that white people were not instinctively cruel to blacks – rather, they were taught to be in order to keep them under control,

believing that the key concept of slavery was to repress slaves to the extent that they could not even contemplate a life without bondage. In essence, in order to keep control of black people, they sacrificed some of their own humanity, and became brutal taskmasters. This completely rejects the idea that whites were better off due to the slave trade. Rather, Douglass is putting forward the idea that although white people benefited economically, they lost part of their humanity to do so – an unacceptable trade-off.

Douglass explores the differences between rural and urban slavery. He describes that when he first arrived in Baltimore, he saw a 'marked difference' in how slaves

were treated, and that 'a city slave is almost a freemen compared to the slave of the plantation'. He writes that there is 'a sense of decency' in cities, which prevents many of the atrocities common on plantations from being performed. This 'sense of decency' comes from the fear of being branded a 'cruel master', which would adversely affect someone's reputation. His exploration of the issue reaches largely the same conclusion that historians do – that city slaves were generally better off, because social pressures which only existed in the cities led to masters treating their slaves far better than masters in rural areas did.

Douglass also addresses the slave family unit. He describes how he was



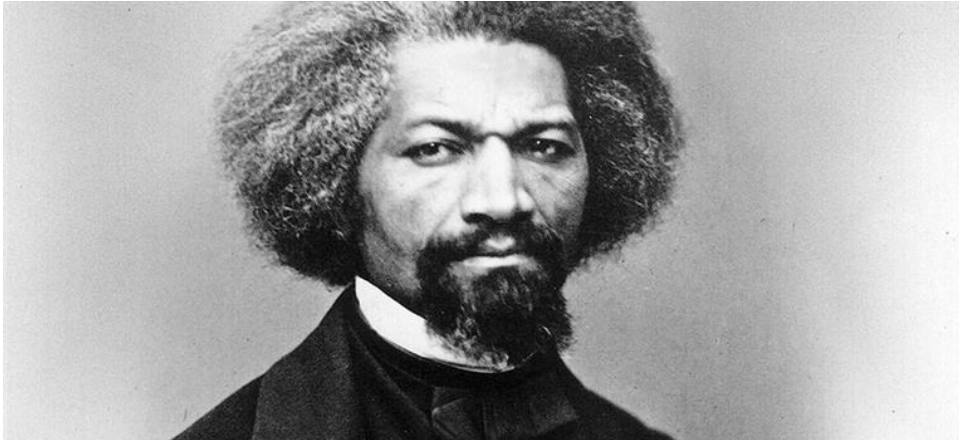
# THE NARRATIVE OF FREDRICK DOUGLASS CT.

taken from his mother as a young child, and barely saw her after – he was so far removed from her that when she died he felt ‘much the same emotions I should have probably felt at the death of a stranger.’ This contradicts much of what historians today suggest – that owners went to pains to keep slave families together. Certainly, on Colonel Lloyd’s plantation, great pains were taken to *separate* the family unit – children were habitually taken from the mothers and entrusted in the care of older slaves, who were incapable of doing anything other than looking after children. However, the concept of family still existed in a rather unconventional way. Slaves formed bonds with each other, and

friends in a sense fulfilled the function of family – they provided outlets in which one could confide, and gave support when necessary – Douglass often states the ‘love’ he has for his friends. Thus, it is clear that while the traditional family unit did not remain intact, there was certainly a familial element present in most slaves’ lives.

What is clear from Douglass’ Narrative, however, is that there was a huge difference between how slaves were treated by different masters and owners, ranging from the astonishingly brutal to the almost humane. On one end of the spectrum, Mr Freeman was almost humane in his treatment of the slaves. He gave them ‘enough food’ and ‘sufficient time to eat it’. He worked them hard

from sunrise to sunset, but didn’t force them to slave away through the night. While he was hardly kind to them, he at least treated the slaves like human beings. On the other hand, Douglass encountered many masters who treated slaves worse than any animal. His first overseer, Mr Plummer, was ‘a savage monster’ who cut and slashed women’s heads for sport. He spent considerable time in bondage to the notorious ‘slave breaker’ Mr Covey, who gave slaves ‘enough food...but scarce time to eat it’, and who seemed to enjoy whipping slaves, devising ‘elaborate deceptions’ in order to catch them slacking so he could punish them. And, while in Baltimore, he lived in the house opposite to an old lady



named Mrs Hamilton, who kept two slaves – the ‘most mangled and emaciated creatures’, who she subjected to ‘cruel lashings’ which left their heads full of ‘festering sores’. Thus, it is painfully clear that while some masters were almost humane, others were savages, with the majority falling under the latter category. Douglass supports the general feeling among historians, which is that while some masters were not cruel, most were, and that very few even considered slaves as human beings.

Overall, Frederick Douglass explores many concepts in his *Narrative*. He dispels the notion that slave owners treated slaves well because they were valuable property, as he in fact demonstrates that owners saw slaves as more valuable when they were pummelled into submission and kept in line, and therefore willing to do whatever they needed to please their master. He examines the impact of slavery on the owners, and discovers that slavery can ‘darken the heart’, as people are taught that the only way

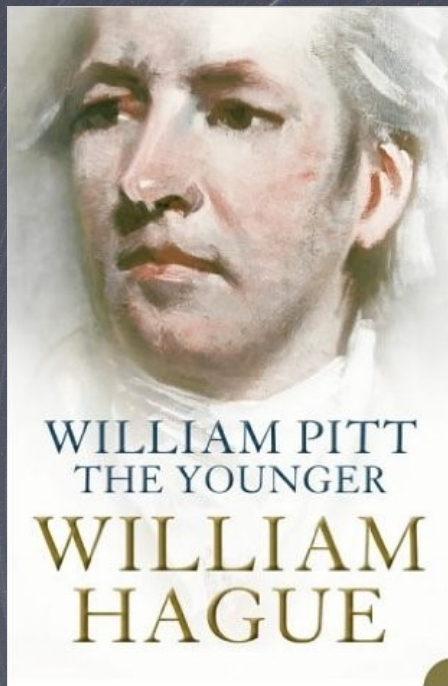
to keep a slave from rebelling is through depriving him of all humanity. He looks at the differences between urban and rural slaves, finding that urban slaves are positively ‘freemen’ in comparison with their oppressed rural counterparts. Addressing the family unit, Douglass describes that while a slave’s family by blood often meant nothing to them, slaves felt part of a huge family, and that family gave them solace in their darkest moments. Finally, Douglass illustrates that there was no such thing as a typical master, but one thing was clear – most masters were brutal savages.

**By Jordan Urban  
U6H2**



# WILLIAM PITT THE YOUNGER (WILLIAM HAGUE)

*Zak Wagman reviews William Hague's biography of his well known predecessor-William Pitt the Younger.*



Both William Pitt (subject of this book) and William Hague (author) share a similar start to their political career. Pitt was made the youngest Prime Minister in British history, at the age of 24, whilst Hague was prematurely thrust into leading the Conservative Party at the age of 36. However, it is a testament to what happened next for both of them that saw Hague writing from the backbenches about arguably Britain's greatest ever leader.

With an equally vast knowledge of both British politics and history, Hague is extremely well-placed to write an authoritative biography of William Pitt the Younger. From a brief history of his father, William Pitt the Elder, a man who in his own right was a great leader of this

country, right up to Pitt's dying words, Hague excellently and efficiently accounts all aspects of Pitt's life, in a succinct yet detailed manner so that the reader feels sufficiently well-versed in late 18th and early 19th century politics and world affairs.

One aspect that Hague details most impressively is that of Pitt's personal and family life. Well known for never marrying and with strong rumour that he may have been gay, Pitt's life outside of politics (if indeed he did have such a thing) is often seen as enigmatic and irrelevant. However, Hague excellently presents the reader with a glorious account of Pitt's inner circles and family relations, and sheds light on a previously little-spoken of topic. Hague interweaves this topic throughout the chronology of Pitt's time in power, thus allowing for a connection and relationship to be made by the reader demonstrating how although his public and private lives were completely separate entities, they were indeed closely linked.





# TIMELINE

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With a cast list including the good and great of British history - William Wilberforce and Charles James Fox both occupy large sections of this book - Hague well and truly details and explains everything that happens in both Pitt's life and his time as Prime Minister. Hague perfectly understands both domestic and international affairs in this time period, expertly summarising the increasingly changing and hostile landscape across Europe, and relating that at all times to Pitt and any matters arising in Britain. One chapter that especially captures the excellence of this book is that describing Addington's stint as Prime Minister and the decline in his relations with Pitt as the latter seeks to regain his old job. Hague charts the relationship between the two men through the second half of the biography, and then writes about the natural progression for Pitt to pass over power to Addington, when he felt he could no longer continue. However, having already provided the reader with a vast knowledge of Pitt's personality, Hague then explains how Pitt grew frustrated outside of power, and how he longed for it back, and he excellently describes how Pitt found himself back in his former office.



Although the book is no short read - it is in fact by far the longest book I have read - it is well worth it. Written in a simple yet informative and impressive manner, Hague excellently synthesis thousands of primary and secondary sources to present a book

that could stand to educate the reader in any one of a number of subjects, from history to politics, or economics to theology. This book should be of huge interest to anybody with just the faintest interest in politics or history, or at the very least a crucial companion to the A Level History Late Modern Courses. William Hague is not simply a great orator, but a historical writer of the highest order.

By **Zak Wagman U6C2**



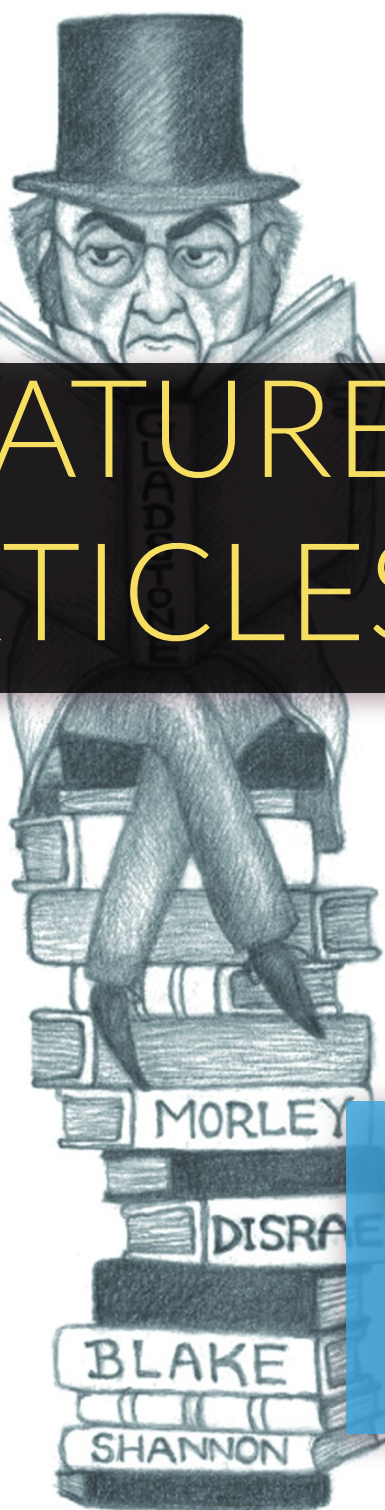


# THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF GLADSTONE AND DISRAELI

Ian St John

DR.I.STJOHN'S LATEST  
WORK WHICH WAS  
PUBLISHED IN 2016!

FEATURE  
ARTICLES



**TIMELINE**  
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## **Prefix:**

The Industrial Revolution, occurring around 1760, no doubt transformed the lives of the British population dramatically, but did it forever alter the lives of the proletariat for better or for worse? This is a topic which has been widely covered by historians of differing opinion, split into recognisably opposing sides; optimistic and pessimistic. There are two main areas one focuses upon to when discussing peoples' benefit, namely economic and social gain. I will attempt to decipher what effects the Revolution had on British workers in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, and furthermore, which opinion rules in the retelling of history.

## ***The Case of the Optimist:***

### **1. Economic**

In simple terms, one would expect the working class to be much better

# **Did the Industrial Revolution benefit the working class?**

**By Harry Jacobson U6c2 (OH 2016)**

off due to the unprecedented growth of Britain's economy in the eighty-or-so years of the Revolution, as production rose drastically, which in turn generally leads to increasing living standards. From this assumption alone, it would seem as if real income per head should have increased dramatically, and there is some evidence to support this. A paper written in 1983 by Peter Lindert and Jeffrey Williamson produced new estimates of real wages in England for the years 1755 to 1851, showing that real wages grew slowly between 1781 and 1819, and that after 1819, real wages actually grew rapidly for all groups of

workers. They have data to show that working class wages doubled in just thirty-two years alone. As one can imagine, the increase in real wages resulted in significant improvements in the standard of living. One excellent example where this improvement can be seen is in the changes of diet that occurred, as the English 'per capita consumption' of sugar, tea, meat, eggs, and beer all increased. Furthermore however, an even better indication of the rising affluence of the British was the great increase of imported foods into the country from abroad. The per capita consumption of such luxurious items as foreign cocoa, coffee,



cheese, sugar, tobacco, and rice all increased as well. Meanwhile, meat, fruits, and vegetables, all of which were previously perceived to be luxuries only to be consumed by the wealthy, were by 1850 eaten regularly. The obvious significance of these improvements is however of even greater importance when one notes the large population increase that took place during the Revolution. Due to a sustained fall in the British death rate, the population of England and Wales rose 1.25% per year between 1780 and 1860, which translates into an unprecedented threefold increase in an annual expansion. Rising real wages coupled with this rapidly growing population, was not just a first in European history, but its occurrence completely defies the theory put forward by Thomas Malthus, that a population increasing in exponential terms would soon outstrip increasing food supplies. The

British population was certainly increasing at a previously unseen rate, however food production and supply was also rising, keeping at such a rate that the increasing population was sustained. Generally, the majority of people were buying more than ever before, but often these were items which most workers could not afford, e.g. coffee, which was still seen to be a bourgeois luxury in 1850. Yet a lot of workers could afford some non-food items that were expanding rapidly in general production and consumption such as: clothing, bricks, fuel, bottles, iron goods, hard soap, and simple furniture. Although it can be said that data differs to such an extent that workers' incomes could have been either stagnant or declining between 1770 and 1800, and either stagnant or rising in the first half of the 19th century.

## **2.Social**

Many historians vehemently argue that it was through the Industrial Revolution that a true social hierarchy emerged. However Eric Hobsbawm points out that a class system was already discernible by 1760, conveying that whilst it can be stated that the Revolution essentially brought to the forefront a clear social divide in Britain, this class system was evidently present during the century since the Restoration of 1660. There was much for workers to gain socially, as there was noticeable inequality by 1760 in the form of wages, seen as “it was estimated that the poorest class of merchants earned as much as the richest class of ‘master manufactures’”, displaying how industrialists were greatly

under-appreciated up until the Revolution, and so one can make the case that around 1760 as manufacturing increased rapidly, in turn these previously under-valued workers were in high demand. Thus, many workers who previously worked in different areas and/or for extremely low wages could easily find jobs. The Industrial Revolution caused somewhat of a great population explosion, and this was fuelled by a steep fall in death rates. Even in cities, where living conditions were supposedly the worst, mortality rates were said to have improved. These improving mortality rates indicate that the standard of living clearly rose during the Revolution. The overall mortality rate did not just improve between 1750 and 1850, but there was a great gain in English life expectancy in this same period, especially after Waterloo. However, the true national average that is

often used is not a purely working-class average, unfortunately. In the early 18th century (mainly 1720s and 1730s), death struck at very young ages, as seen especially in London, where more than one third of all babies died before they aged a year. The more affluent were living much longer around 1850 than their wealthy counterparts a century prior, whilst workers could not stay alive as long in 1850 as they did in 1750.

***Assessment (from a pessimistic viewpoint):***

Fundamentally, pessimists claim that as a whole the Industrial Revolution led to a great deal of opportunity in Britain, with potential for working class benefit, however the argument they put forth is that the lower classes actually had a contracting share of the rewards available to be reaped, as the Revolution generally benefitted the aristocracy and to an extent, also the

bourgeoisie. Another integral point made is that the extreme population growth that took place in Britain as a result of the Industrial Revolution largely offset any initial benefits the working class may have gained. For example, the increasing population led to declining incomes, as more people than ever before were able and willing to work in factories, often for low wages. Some critics claim that there was no real improvement in the standards of living to be noticed until the 1840s or 1850s, implying that the Revolution did not directly benefit the working class, but that any effects only occurred long afterwards. A great issue caused by the Revolution is that often, new machines replaced many of the proletariat, albeit, admittedly some manufacturers gained new jobs in factories working alongside the new machinery. Workers lives transformed due to



changes in production and the introduction of such machinery, but largely this had detrimental effects for them. The average adult worker worked five to seven days a week, but being generally unskilled, they worked for relatively low wages due to their incapability to produce goods. Their housing was not at all desirable, being both unsanitary and frequently overcrowded, leading to the rapid spread of disease in many cases. Some very desperate workers even chose to live nearby factories, where their homes were in the midst of large amounts of air pollution. The amount of carbon dioxide increased two-fold as people moved closer to factories hoping to obtain employment. Resources started diminishing, and the use of pesticides and hazardous chemicals began to increase. Many pessimists continue to argue that there was a great cost for such gains

as higher wages and more food. They contend that the evils of squalid working conditions, increased pollution, and various other discomforts outweighed any progress gained due to increasing real wages. E.P. Thompson, in his influential book *'The Making of the English Working Class'*, summarises this pessimistic position very succinctly, arguing that, "By 1840 most people were 'better off' than their forerunners, but they suffered and continued to suffer this slight improvement as a catastrophic experience." Workers' behaviour reveals that they resisted industrial and urban conditions, yet the value they put on better living conditions implies extremely little about trends. The share of total income going to the lowest 65% of the income distribution would only have had to fall to 86% of its 1790

level to negate the benefit of rising income. Many agree that the distribution of income became more unequal than ever between 1790 and 1840. Moreover, other researchers have speculated that if we add the effects of unemployment, war, poverty, pollution, harvests, urban crowding, and other social ills, the modest rise in average income could well have been accompanied by a fall in the standard of living of the working classes, and any gains in well being attributed to rising wages would be offset. Wages were higher in English cities than the countryside, but rents were higher and the quality of life was lower. Average incomes grouped by socio-occupational class suggest a widening of inequality after 1760.

An important fact to mention is that trends in workers' living

standards during the Revolution have often become obscured by the absence of data on unemployment for any year before 1856, and due to the post-war depression which occurred, the rise of workers' incomes most likely did not begin until around 1820. There are enough strong hints to suggest that post-war unemployment (due to reduced production) could have very well completely cancelled out any real wage gain felt by workers. Additionally, scarce and fragile data implies that women's real wages rates must have either stagnated or declined during this same period of time. Thus one can safely assume that any increases in standard of living due to real wages rises or similar prospects may have purely been perceived but not actual.

This pessimistic outlook has been the more adhered to of the two opinions, generally being

the insight of favour, with many historians, including many British Marxists choosing to write on the topic. Those who side with this opinion often speak of how, whilst there was high demand for labour in industry, this did not always mean complete good fortune for the working class of Britain, as, whilst unskilled labourers could now easily find work, "more people means more labour and cheaper labour", and so whilst as a whole more jobs were available, workers were earning less money, and had less bargaining power than ever before. This sudden growth of Britain can be shown and noted as relative to the alteration of the industrial landscape of the country as "the national population grew only very gradually in the century before 1750, and its rapid rise coincided with the Industrial Revolution." Manchester for example, which was a

new and revolutionary city at the time, "multiplied tenfold in size between 1760 and 1830", its population increasing from a mere 17,000 to over 180,000 in this same timeframe. Thus, Britain was definitely growing, economically as well as in terms of population, and more people were working, but socially those of lower class were generally losing out, more than anything earning very little. Many workers were in fact reluctant to enter factories, because in doing so men supposedly lost their so-called birth right and independence. Skilled and organised cabinet-makers are just one example of such workers who had expertise yet soon declined into becoming slum-workers as a result of industrialism.

### ***Nuance:***

There is much information to suggest that actually, the effects of the Revolution on the working class were



largely subjective, both regionally and otherwise. Between 1750 and 1790, behind the trendless national average, workers' fortunes drastically declined in London and also in the rural south, whereas they improved noticeably in the midlands and the north of England, conveying the presence of regional differences. From 1750 to 1790 (and especially on to 1815), an hour of a man's labour brought less and less in the south, whilst the opposite trend held in the industrial midlands and industrial north.

Eccleston (1976) found developments in real wages in the midlands, especially for skilled trades. Furthermore, whilst most historians readily acknowledged the sordid living conditions of workers brought about by the Revolution, the aforementioned improvement in mortality rates indicates that conditions were not always bad enough to

grievously affect the health of the city dwellers. Also, many workers (especially those who previously led agrarian lifestyles) voluntarily moved into urban areas and nearer to factories, suggesting that the adverse effects of pollution and various other urban discomforts did not outweigh the gains in real wages. As a whole, this information does not prove or disprove that British workers experienced any benefit, but it is useful in ascertaining an insight into the subjectivity of the matter.

### ***Conclusion:***

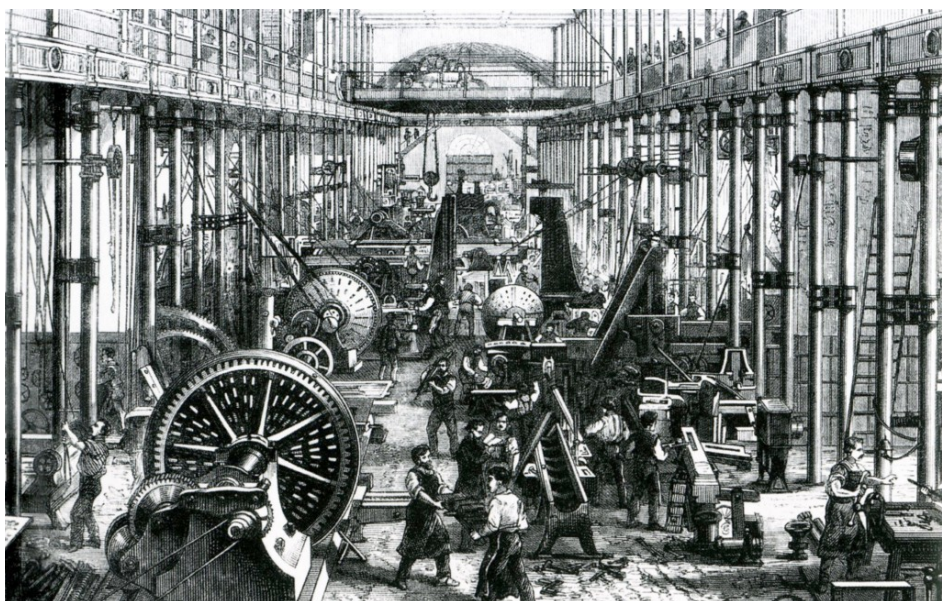
Overall, there is enough evidence to suggest that the Industrial Revolution originally had many very positive effects for the working class of Britain, such as somewhat increasing wages, which led to rising consumption and the ability to buy a wider variety of products,

often leading to improved diets. Alongside this, life expectancy increased and mortality rates were said to have improved, indicating that the quality of workers' lives may have increased to a limited degree. However, these positive effects were then offset by the negative ramifications generally caused by rapid population growth, which, in tandem with poor working conditions, impoverishment, extensive pollution and much more, led to a very poor standard of living for the majority of the proletariat. For the nation as a whole, wages stagnated in the period 1750-90, and men's real wages continued in stagnation through the whole French War era of 1793 to 1815. Whilst the grand averages may not have changed much over the war years, it was in fact a stormy time in which workers' fortunes fluctuated widely. It was



also an era of increased rioting over food supplies, price hikes, mechanisation, and many other perceived injustices to workers and social ills. Not until after 1810 or 1815 did men's purchasing power seem to improve, and even then there are arguments to suggest that this was too marginal to create any real benefit for the working class. Thus, whilst the Industrial Revolution did result in some notable positive changes for the working class, it also gave way to many more meaningful detrimental effects, that undermined any perceived benefit of the Revolution, and plagued the proletariat for years to come.

**By Harry Jacobson  
U6C1 (OH 2016)**





# TO WHAT EXTENT DOES HISTORY BELONG TO THE ELITES?

**By Imogen Sinclair (OH 2016)**

As part of our innovative collaboration with the Girls School in this combined Timeline 2016 Edition, Imogen Sinclair explores the broad topic of elitism and the legacy they maintain on modern history and society

## **Elites of the Past: To what extent does history belong to them?**

**Elite-** a small group whose decisions have at least national consequences. There is a danger when assessing the extent to which History belongs to the elites of the past of getting lost in definitional pyrotechnics; it could all depend on what is meant by ‘History’ or ‘belong’ or ‘elites’. This essay will therefore ground itself in the historiographical debate conducted between leading British historians of the last three centuries – Gibbon, Carlyle, Elton,

Carr amongst others – to examine the claim. It will be argued that ‘History’ does not belong to the elites of the past because they are not the sole drivers of ‘History’. Nor can it be said to belong to the elites because they are the only people that historians write about. It will be argued instead that ‘History’ is something constructed by historians and for this reason cannot belong to the elites of the past. Because History is alive, reconstructed by each generation, it belongs to the present not the past. Before examining the claim that History belongs to the elites of the past it is necessary to

clarify what is meant by the elites. The historian E.H.Carr provides a starting point. He contrasted “a history of elites” with that of “the whole national community”. This distinction between a small group and the rest is the core of the idea of the elite. The sociologist C. Wright Mills defined the elite as an “intricate set of overlapping small but dominant groups [that] share decisions having at least national consequences”. The elite need not necessarily always have been elite for some are born elite, some achieve eliteness and some have eliteness thrust upon them, as shown when looking at the Russian revolution. That Lenin’s father was a school inspector; that Trotsky was a member of the persecuted Jewish minority; that Stalin was

a cobbler's son; this matters not. Once they seized power they became part of the elite. But even losers in Civil Wars can take decisions that had 'at least national consequences' so perhaps the elites of the past should be taken to include those whose political influence was that of outsiders, such as the suffragettes, or even figures such as the historical Jesus who exercised no power in his lifetime. To give the argument that History belongs to the elites its strongest case we could adopt a still broader conception, embracing cultural figures from Socrates to Shakespeare. Using this definition the claim that History belongs to the elites of the past means that it belongs to those individuals who have

lifted themselves up from the anonymous mass of humanity and shaped the world. In the well-worn words of Thomas Carlyle: "the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here". Whilst 'Great Man theory' is supportive of the idea that History belongs to the elites of the past, it is highly controversial. Carlyle's contemporary Herbert Spencer, for example, inverted causation, arguing that the elites are a product of their history: "[y]ou must admit that the genesis of a great man depends on the long series of complex influences which has produced the race in which he appears, and the

social state into which that race has slowly grown.... Before he can remake his society, his society must make him". The elites belong to History as much as History belongs to them.



***A contemporary painting of the 1792 August Insurrection by Jean Duplessis-Bertaux.***

A further challenge to the idea that History belongs to an elite of greats is provided by those historians who argue that History is determined by (and thereby belongs to) changes in class



# TO WHAT EXTENT DOES HISTORY BELONG TO THE ELITES?

structures and economic forces. The words and actions of the elites are almost a distraction. Carlyle himself was not blind to the influence of forces such as the masses; “Great”, he wrote in his history of the French Revolution, “is the combined voice of men”. Nonetheless, he argued, the elite are key. They are “the modellers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain”. But social changes can create. Thus some form of revolution in France may have been inevitable: “[t]he role of the nobility had ... declined; and the clergy, as the ideal which it proclaimed lost prestige, found its authority growing weaker. These groups preserved the highest rank in the legal

structure of the country, but in reality economic power, personal abilities and confidence in the future had passed largely to the bourgeoisie. Such a discrepancy never lasts forever. The Revolution of 1789 restored the harmony between fact and law”. ‘History as biography’ does not account for these forces. The most materialist interpretation would be that in almost no sense does History belong to the elites; it belongs to drivers such as ‘guns, germs and steel’. A more moderate view would accept the role of the individual in History but argue that those individuals are themselves shaped by broader forces; in Gibbon’s synthesis “the times must be suited to extraordinary characters”. History does not belong

solely to the elite; there are always deeper forces at work.

Perhaps the argument that History belongs to the elites is a claim about who historians write about, not a claim about who drives History. However, a claim anchored in writing if it were ever true, no longer is. E.P. Thompson is amongst those who have tried to “rescue the poor stockinger, the Luddite cropper, the ‘obsolete’ hand-loom weaver, the ‘utopian’ artisan ... from the enormous condescension of posterity” by providing a detailed study of the working class as real people who individually and collectively shaped their own destiny. Thompson’s perspective that historians should write about everyone not

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just the elites has become mainstream. “[E]very historian pays lip service to this view” wrote Carr, although he could not resist noting sardonically that “performance lags behind profession”. A practical counter to the argument that History belongs to all is that paucity of evidence forces a focus on the elites. Geoffrey Elton defended the focus of historians on elites on these grounds. “The study of history comprehends everything that men have said, thought, done or suffered ... [but] not all the past is recoverable, and the study of history is necessarily confined to that part of it of which evidence ... survives”. Indeed, in its strongest form support for the claim that History belongs to the elites of the past brings together the argument that we

should focus on the elites and that we can only focus on the elites in a way that is self-reinforcing. The Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus, highly favoured by Edward Gibbon as accurate, faithful and unprejudiced, justified the focus of his histories on the elite by explaining “There are many things which are irrelevant to the underlying themes of history, itself accustomed to deal with the high points of affairs. Its role is not to investigate the minor details of unimportant circumstances. If someone wished to do that, he might as well try to count the tiny bodies coursing through space, the atoms, as we call them”



### *Coronation of Harold, the last Anglo Saxon King.*

However the argument that History belongs to the elites of the past because of evidentiary constraints is undermined in two ways. Firstly, whilst the record of those outside the elite is inconsistent there are still traces; and such traces can be productively mined. And secondly, evidence for the elites of the past can also be weak or non-existent. Robert Knapp’s study of ‘Invisible Romans’ is an exemplar of overcoming



# ELITE'S OF THE PAST: TO WHAT EXTENT DOES HISTORY BELONG TO THEM

the first kind of challenge. Knapp sought to uncover the lives of “prostitutes, outlaws, slaves, gladiators, ordinary men and women ... the Romans that history forgot”. Seeing the invisible (the 99.5% of Romans who were not members of one of the three ruling ordines) is not a simple task, but as Knapp reminds us these people “were not invisible at all; they made up almost the entire population of the Romano-Greek world and they were perfectly visible to each other”. But the elite at the time were almost blind to them so building a picture of these people’s lives means going beyond traditional sources. Knapp uses graffiti, fairy tales, obscure papyri, and the works of early Christians, fortune tellers and

magicians to weave a “tapestry of people working to make their lives as good as possible, struggling with all the emotional crosscurrents and enjoying all the satisfactions that come with it”. And of course it’s not just the 99.5% for whom evidence may be scanty. For example, the genealogies of the Anglo Saxon Kings are studded with gaps and uncertainties.



***Drawing of Ammianus Marcellinus (325/330 – after 391)***

## ***A fourth-century Roman soldier and historian.***

He wrote the penultimate major historical account surviving from Antiquity, it is unclear how Oswine makes his claim to the Kingdom of Kent; Cuthwine, an ancestor of King Alfred, may well be the same person as Cutha who is generally thought not to be of the same line; and so on. Even for the elites evidence can be incomplete, contradictory or clearly wrong.

What these examples show is both that the non-elite can be made visible to history and that some of the elites of the past are themselves almost invisible. Perhaps rather than saying History belongs to the elites of the past it would be better to say that it belongs to the visible. Of course

those visible might be disproportionately drawn from the elites of the past, but the reason History belongs to them is because they can be seen not because they were elite. This argument, however, rests on a particular conception of History which assumes that real History needs to pass an objective hurdle of robust documentation. It was this idea that lay behind Hugh

Trevor-Roper's notorious observation that there is no history of Africa before the Europeans arrived. "Please do not misunderstand me" he wrote, although misunderstood he largely was. "I do not deny that men existed even in dark countries and dark centuries, nor that they had political life and culture, interesting to sociologists and

anthropologists; but history, I believe, is essentially a form of movement, and purposive movement too. It is not a mere phantasmagoria of changing shapes and costumes, of battles and conquests, dynasties and usurpations, social forms and social disintegration".

Trevor-Roper went on to critique histories of Anglo Saxon England on this basis. Calling in aid David Hume,

Trevor-Roper asked: "What instruction or entertainment can it give the reader to hear a long bead-roll of barbarous names, Egric, Annas, Ethelbert, Ethelwald, Aldulf, Elfwold, Beorne, Ethelred, Ethelbert, who successively murdered, expelled, or inherited from each other, and obscurely filled the throne of East Anglia?". History on this argument

not only belongs to the elites of the past, but to the sub-set of those elites about whom purposive information survives.

However arguments that proper History requires purposive information which means that History belongs to the visible (whom we might allow are mainly the elites of the past) are flawed. The flaw is that historians have to make decisions about what information to make visible and what counts as purposive. Not all "facts of the past" can be "historical facts", and because facts (in some cases literally) need to be unearthed, historians who have a particular idea about what counts as a historical fact – preferring court rolls to graffiti perhaps – will necessarily be constrained in their view of what counts as historical. Historians'



# ELITE'S OF THE PAST: TO WHAT EXTENT DOES HISTORY BELONG TO THEM

purposes change too and changing fashions in historiography (such as the rise in interest 'ordinary' people's lives or the African perspective on colonisation) lead to changes in History in ways that are beyond the control of long dead elites.

It is the way in which the present shapes how History is viewed that ultimately undermines the claim that History belongs to the elites of the past. Those past elites are always at the mercy of subsequent ages that can redefine and reinterpret History as contemporary needs dictate. For example, Mary Tudor was responsible for fewer deaths than any other Tudor monarch and showed a "determination to avoid bloodshed". Nonetheless it is the Catholic Queen whom

generations of school children in Protestant Britain learnt to call 'bloody' although the descriptor is a much better fit for the founder of the Church of England, Henry VIII. Sometimes the process by which the present reclaims the past is explicit and top-down; Russia's President Putin recently ordered historians at the Academy of Sciences to prepare a definitive history of Russia free "from internal contradictions and ambiguities", with critics suggesting he was trying to "rewrite history for political ends". But the process can be more subtle. In Richard Evans's words socialists study workers, feminists study women and blacks study blacks, each hoping to strengthen their "political commitment in the present, and their hope of

eventual triumph in the future." That historians are creatures of the present is why the proposition that History belongs to the elites of the past can be rejected in its entirety. But in rejecting the proposition we can also make a stronger claim. It is the elites – be they Russian presidents or English Protestants – who set the context in which historians work. And historians not only respond to that elitist agenda; all too often they themselves are drawn from the elite. Of the historians whose views we have been canvassing – who range from an MP (Gibbon), associate editors of the Times (Carr) and the Economist (Spencer) to academics at the most prestigious of our universities (Carlyle, Elton, Evans,

Trevor-Roper) – only Thompson could begin to make a claim to be an outsider. And even Thomson spent most of his career mixing with the elite ranking in one obituary alongside Mikhail Gorbachev as a key driver of the events that ended the Cold War. We can conclude therefore that History does not belong to the elites of the past because History belongs to the present; and in particular it belongs to the elites of the present.

### **Summary**

History does not belong to the elites of the past. One reason is because the elite are not the sole drivers of History. Other possible forces of history include the social changes which led to the French Revolution. Another reason that History

cannot be said to belong solely to the elites because they are not the only people that historians write about. Robert Knapp's 'Invisible Romans' proves that those who do not belong to the elites have a history too. Finally, History is something constructed by historians and for this reason cannot belong to the elites of the past. Furthermore, as historians either tend to be drawn from the elite or work to an elitist agenda, it is the elites of the present who really control History .

**By Imogen Sinclair  
(OH 2016)**

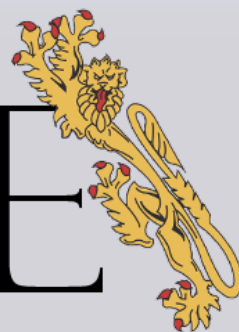




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