



online sources

# David Rumsey map collection

Learn how to 'read' and explore maps with this highly searchable resource

Maps are one of the most important resources for historians. They will almost certainly appear in any textbook to illustrate the fate of nations and empires, or the shifting fortunes of war. But maps can offer so much more than an accurate representation of geography in a handy format.

## Reading maps

Maps were (and are) made for a huge variety of reasons. Sometimes they are simply there to aid navigation, or locate new lands in relation to old places. At other times maps are there to inform the public, sponsors, politicians or rulers about the possibilities of land (or sea) for future exploitation. Maps can therefore be 'read' just like any other historical text, and it is vitally important for us to understand the context in which a map was created and the audience it was intended to reach.

Maps have been made for thousands of years and have been printed and widely circulated since the early modern era. Online collections of maps make it easy for historians to study maps, and one of the largest is the David Rumsey Map Collection held at Stanford University in California: [www.davidrumsey.com](http://www.davidrumsey.com).

## Exploring the site

The website contains more than 93,000 maps covering a wide range of places (you can search by continent, country, region or place), time periods (from the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries) and types (globes, atlases, printed maps, hand-drawn maps etc.) You can search for a specific place at a specific period, for example London in the seventeenth century, or you can browse atlases for a snapshot of how the world was understood at a particular time.

Once you find a map you want to look at in more detail, it opens up in a separate window and you can zoom in, just as if you were looking at the original with a magnifying glass. Since some details are very small on maps this is a great feature. One really useful tool is a modern map that gives you the options for all the historical maps for a particular place as you zoom in. So, for example, you could start with a map of Europe and all the historical maps showing the continent of Europe are linked, but as you zoom into the UK then just the historical maps of the UK are linked, then in order of zoom, northern England, Yorkshire, West Riding, Leeds right down to a street map of the city centre in 1941. Built into the site is a 'georeferencer' tool that allows you to overlay an historical map onto a modern map, showing how the understanding or depiction of a place has altered over time.

The home page also has a section on 'featured maps' where you can browse a variety of maps with an accompanying blog post written by an expert academic. While the coverage is inevitably patchy, the essays are very informative and you might find there is one on the place and time you are most interested in.

It is very easy to spend hours on this site, and it is worth every minute.

If you are studying the Tudors, you could explore John Speed's atlas of Britain, containing detailed maps of every county. Also included are maps of Ireland documenting the Tudor conquest of the island and subsequent fortification of key towns.

Tim Lockley teaches a course on the mapping of England's Atlantic empire in the seventeenth century at The University of Warwick.

Get more from this issue of MODERN HISTORY REVIEW, with free online resources. See page I and [www.hoddereducation.co.uk/historyreviewextras](http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/historyreviewextras)

Tell us what you think @HodderMagazines

ISBN 978-1-5104-7069-9



9 781510 470699



Please note single issues are not available for separate purchase

A-level history

# Modern History

# review

April 2020 Volume 22 Number 4

## Exploring the Peninsular War

Causes, outcome and legacy

## The American Indian Movement

How great was its influence?

## Exam skills

How to make the most of visual sources

# The 'Eastern Question'

History of a troubled term

eMagazine  
available



**HODDER  
EDUCATION**  
LEARN MORE

# Modern History review



## Editorial board

Academic editors

**Professor Tim Lockley**

**Professor Christopher Read**

**Professor Sarah Richardson**

**Tracy Smith** (administrator and

contact for all editorial correspondence:

**T.Smith.2@warwick.ac.uk**)

Department of History

The University of Warwick

Associate editors

**Nicholas Fellows**

**Andrew Holland**

## How to subscribe

For details of prices and ordering information go to **www.hoddereducation.co.uk/magazines** or contact magazine subscriptions, Bookpoint Ltd, 130 Park Drive, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4SE  
tel: 01235 827827, fax: 01235 400401  
e-mail: **subscriptions@bookpoint.co.uk**

For support with access to MODERN HISTORY REVIEW Online Archive  
e-mail: **customerservicemags@philipallan.co.uk**

Published by Hodder Education,  
an Hachette UK company, Blenheim Court, George Street, Banbury,  
Oxfordshire, OX16 5BH

ISBN: 9781510470651

Use the ISBN above to order more copies at

**www.hoddereducation.co.uk**

© HODDER & STOUGHTON LTD 2020

ISSN 2055-0510

Cover image World History Archive/Alamy Stock Photo. Other photographs reproduced by permission of Steve Skjold/Granger Historical Picture Archive/Jim West/INTERFOTO/GL Archive/Kohl-Photo/The Granger Collection/The Print Collector/Baker Street Scans/Pictorial Press Ltd/elxeneize/The History Collection/Peter Horree/Alamy Stock Photo, photokozyr/develi/Roop Dey/Federico Magonio/BasPhoto/ChiccoDodiFC/tamas/Janis Lacis/Ruslan Gilmanshin/plus69/AdobeStock, Len Owens/Keystone/Getty Images.

Publishing editor: Benjamin Roberts

Artwork: 320 Design

Printed in Great Britain

All website addresses in the magazine

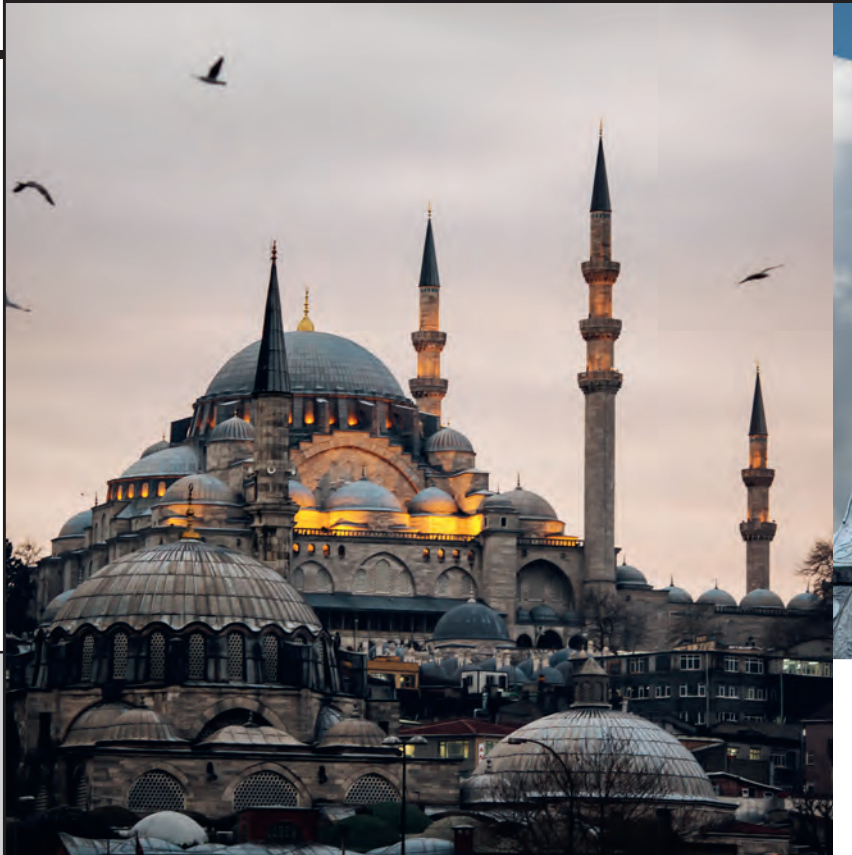
are correct at the time of going to press.

MODERN HISTORY REVIEW takes no responsibility

for the content of any recommended sites.



## IN THIS ISSUE



8

What is the relevance of the 'Eastern Question'?

## eMagazines

MODERN HISTORY REVIEW  
is also available as an  
eMagazine:

- ▶ Downloadable to any two devices
- ▶ Lets you add, edit and organise personal notes
- ▶ Ongoing access to the whole volume (no expiry date)



Student subscriptions can be purchased  
and set up through your school at:

**www.hoddereducation.co.uk/magazines**

**18** How was Italy unified?



**22** Explore a key document of the English Reformation

## Free online resources

No log-in required. For this issue's extras go to:  
[www.hoddereducation.co.uk/modernhistoryreviewextras](http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/modernhistoryreviewextras)



### Colonialism

Print off our centrespread poster



### Italian unification

Essay guidance and commentary on the topic

...and more

eMagazine users click this icon for extras



## CONTENTS



**2** The American Indian Movement of the 1960s and 1970s: from the local to the global  
*Kate Rennard*

**7** Next steps  
Reading strategies  
*Christopher Read*



**8** The Eastern Question and the Ottoman empire  
*Banu Turnaoglu*

**13** Exam skills  
Visual sources in the study of history  
*Andy Holland*



**16** Timeline  
Decolonialism  
*Tim Lockley*



**18** Risorgimento: the struggle to unify Italy  
*Caterina Sinibaldi*

**22** Document  
John Foxe's Book of Martyrs  
*Matt Phillipott*



**24** The Elizabethan Poor Laws: the birth of the welfare state?  
*Dave Hitchcock*

**28** Object  
The social impact of the bicycle  
*Harry Oosterhuis*



**30** The Peninsular War: causes, outcome and legacy  
*Kevin Linch*

**34** Online sources  
David Rumsey map collection  
*Tim Lockley*



# The American Indian Movement of the 1960s and 1970s

From the local to the global



Kate Rennard

The civil rights movement for American Indians had a greater influence, and wider audience, than has often been recognised

ModernHistoryReviewExtras



Go online for a quiz on this topic  
([www.hoddereducation.co.uk/modernhistoryreviewextras](http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/modernhistoryreviewextras))

## Exam links



**Edexcel paper 3, option 39.1** Civil rights and race relations in the USA, 1850–2009

**OCR Y319** Civil rights in the USA 1865–1992

The American Indian Movement (AIM) is often considered solely within a national US context as part of the broader civil rights era of the 1960s and 1970s. However, the media attention that followed its famous protest at Wounded Knee in 1973

enabled AIM to attract attention and develop links that went beyond the borders of North America.

### Ireland 1985

On a chilly day in January 1985, the persistent beat of a drum carried across the Irish Republican plot of Belfast's Milltown cemetery. Members of the AIM, an indigenous rights group, laid wreaths and sang songs to honour the Republican dead. According to the *Irish Times*, AIM leader Clyde Bellecourt said that the activists had 'come to pay respects to people who had given their lives for peace, equality and liberty in their homeland, the aspirations for which American Indians were struggling in their homeland'.

How did a group that had originally focused on local concerns, such as police brutality, reach this point of finding common ground with a movement thousands of miles away?

### Origins

During the 1960s, there was an upsurge in social protest and ethnic power movements in the USA that argued for equal rights, such as the civil rights movement and 'Black Power'. This period also saw the rise of the 'Red Power' movement, which was connected to but also distinct from these other organisations. Red Power groups, such as the National Indian Youth Council, were a continuation of earlier American Indian activist organisations in their demand for distinct indigenous rights, such as **tribal sovereignty** and **treaty rights**. However, unlike earlier organisations they believed in using more militant tactics to achieve their goals.

Inspired by these earlier Red Power activists, the American Indian Movement was founded in the twin cities (Minneapolis and St Paul) of Minnesota in 1968 by activists including Dennis Banks and

- **Red Power movement**
- **American Indian protest movement from the early 1960s to the late 1970s. It encompassed organisations that used militant tactics to fight for tribal sovereignty, including the National Indian Youth Council and AIM.**
- **tribal sovereignty** A contested term but generally refers to a tribal nation's right to govern itself.



AIM Alcatraz occupation, 1969



Dennis Banks, AIM founder

**treaty rights** Legal rights that tribal nations retained when they signed treaties with the settler government.

**Alcatraz occupation** A 19-month occupation of the island of Alcatraz, beginning in 1969, by the organisation Indians of All Tribes. One of the most high-profile protests of the Red Power movement.

**Trail of Broken Treaties** A protest organised by several indigenous North American organisations, including AIM, who caravanned from the west coast to Washington, DC in autumn 1972 to draw attention to treaty rights.

Clyde Bellecourt. While some members were present at the **Alcatraz occupation** in 1969, AIM initially focused on addressing local concerns, including police brutality and economic problems, through such tactics as forming AIM patrols and co-founding the Legal Rights Center.

By 1972, however, AIM had expanded its focus with its participation in the **Trail of Broken Treaties**. Their takeover of the offices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the government agency responsible for overseeing tribal nations, attracted media attention as some activists burned papers and vandalised offices as part of the protest.

### **Wounded Knee and the national media**

Despite years of protests it was the siege at Wounded Knee, a small town on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, that really brought AIM to national prominence.

In February 1973, AIM protested the corruption of the tribal government on the reservation, as well as the US government's violation of treaty rights, by occupying the town with support from some residents. FBI officials and the US military surrounded Wounded Knee, resulting in a violent

stand-off that lasted over 70 days. Two activists were killed and many more injured.

Media attention was key to AIM getting to tell their story, since the majority of the American public got their information from the news. AIM hoped that the coverage of the siege would raise awareness of their concerns and, initially, the US media was sympathetic to the activists' story and goals. One poll showed that 93% of Americans were aware of the protest and 51% of those were sympathetic to the native people involved. Given this, the FBI soon began to limit media access to the AIM activists inside Wounded Knee during the siege.

With limited access, national media attention soon waned and reports on the siege became less supportive of AIM. While initially the coverage had depicted AIM leaders as heroic warriors with a just struggle against government oppression, later reports called them 'renegade' or 'hostile Indians', who were not deserving of public sympathy.

### **International media at Wounded Knee**

It was not only the US media who were present at Pine Ridge, however. Reporters from at least 12 other countries covered the story, allowing AIM to reach a

## Box | Key figures

### Dennis Banks (Ojibwe)

- AIM co-founder.
- Born on the Leech Lake Indian Reservation in Minnesota in 1937.
- Prominent indigenous rights activist until his death in 2017.
- Involved in many of the major AIM protests, including the Trail of Broken Treaties (1972) and Wounded Knee (1973).

### Patricia Bellanger (Ojibwe)

- Co-founder of AIM, as well as Women of All Red Nations (WARN), an organisation dedicated to indigenous women's issues such as forced sterilisation and children's and family rights.
- Member of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, who participated in many famous AIM protests, as well as local programmes in Minneapolis and St Paul, Minnesota that focused on indigenous women and children.
- Worked with the International Indian Treaty Council to raise awareness of indigenous issues and concerns in the United Nations.

### Clyde Bellecourt (Ojibwe)

- AIM co-founder, who was born on the White Earth Indian Reservation in Minnesota in 1936.
- While involved in AIM's major protests, he also helped establish the Heart of the Earth Survival School in Minneapolis in the early 1970s, which provided an alternative cultural education for indigenous children.
- Bellecourt continues to fight for indigenous rights, including protesting against native mascots in sports.

### Russell Means (Lakota)

- Oglala Lakota activist from the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota.
- A prominent AIM leader, especially following the Wounded Knee siege at Pine Ridge, he worked on several of the movement's national and international initiatives, including the International Indian Treaty Council.
- In the 1990s, he became a prolific actor, with roles in films including *Last of the Mohicans* (1992) and Disney's *Pocahontas* (1995).

## Longest Walk, Washington D.C., 1978



much wider international audience. While Europeans, for example, had shown interest in American Indian issues and other Red Power organisations before this, the Wounded Knee campaign and the subsequent trials of those involved captured headlines in such newspapers as the *Guardian* in the UK and *Le Monde* in France. This coverage was overwhelmingly positive and remained so until the siege ended.

As a result of this media attention, AIM began receiving letters of support from around the world

during the siege. In its aftermath, as AIM neared bankruptcy from spiralling legal costs, the movement's activists were able to reach out globally for financial and moral support. These supporters often raised money for AIM, wrote letters and petitions on their behalf, and distributed information about American Indian campaigns and struggles. These efforts also enabled AIM to put increasing pressure on the US government during their protests as the world was watching.

**Longest Walk** In 1978, hundreds of American Indian activists walked from California to Washington, D.C. to protest continuing problems, including Congressional bills that sought to violate treaties and limit native rights.



### From the local to the global

AIM's national profile slowly declined after the events at Wounded Knee, although members continued to participate in such protests as the **Longest Walk** (1978) and against the use of native mascots in sport (1990s onwards). However, their international profile strengthened in this period as they established common ground with other peoples who were also facing threats to their lands and cultures. For example, in the 1970s and 1980s, AIM activists visited with Irish Republicans in Northern Ireland and Ireland, as well as with Welsh nationalists, often drawing inspiration from their strategies.

The most successful and enduring of AIM's international efforts, however, has been their International Indian Treaty Council (IITC). It was formed in June 1974 at Standing Rock in South Dakota and gained non-governmental organisation status at the United Nations in 1977. There it works to promote the participation of indigenous peoples in order to address their struggles for human rights and sovereignty. As a result of IITC's work, along with that of other indigenous organisations, the UN now hosts a permanent forum on indigenous issues and, in 2007, passed the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous

#### Exam-style questions

- 1 What problems faced American Indians in the 1970s?
- 2 What role did the media play in AIM's protests?
- 3 How do AIM's tactics compare with other activist organisations during the civil rights era?

### Further reading



*Akwesasne Notes* (radical Mohawk newspaper that often reported on AIM): [www.tinyurl.com/yy9tfgfx](http://www.tinyurl.com/yy9tfgfx).

American Indian Movement: [www.aimovement.org](http://www.aimovement.org).

American Indian Movement Interpretive Center: [www.aim-ic.org](http://www.aim-ic.org).

'The American Indian Movement, 1968–1978', a primary source at the Digital Public Library of America: [www.tinyurl.com/y3uoproq](http://www.tinyurl.com/y3uoproq).

'Taking AIM: The Story of the American Indian Movement', a documentary: [www.tinyurl.com/y6354m58](http://www.tinyurl.com/y6354m58).

'We Shall Remain: Wounded Knee', a PBS documentary about the siege. Online transcript available: [www.tinyurl.com/y2krw9k7](http://www.tinyurl.com/y2krw9k7).

People (UNDRIP). This declaration is a non-legally binding document that sets out guidelines for how indigenous peoples should be treated.

### Legacy

While Red Power dimmed in the late 1970s, AIM's actions in recent years, especially on the global stage, have demonstrated their continued presence in and influence on campaigns on behalf of indigenous peoples worldwide.

**Kate Rennard** is a research associate at the University of Kent, working on the AHRC-funded project 'Beyond the Spectacle: Native North American Presence in Britain'.

# Using this article in your exam



How could this article be useful in your exam?

The plight of American Indians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is usually taught as part of the broader topic of the evolution of civil rights in the USA. However, the role of AIM is sometimes overlooked by students who might view it as simply an adjunct all that had gone on before.

A strength of Kate Rennard's article is that it shows the central role that AIM played (and still does) in pressuring governments into giving full civil rights to American Indians. Of note is the point made about the non-government organisation status gained at the UN by AIM in 1977. This was a monumental achievement often glossed over in general textbooks dealing with civil rights issues.

Also, Rennard skilfully shows how AIM had a seldom-acknowledged global impact on other groups concerned with civil rights, such as those in Northern Ireland in the 1980s. An exam-type question that could be asked on this topic is, 'To what extent was AIM responsible for furthering the political rights of American Indians in the period 1865–1992?'

# Reading strategies



## Studying history involves plenty of reading. What techniques can you use to master this skill?

**T**hirty per cent of the book usage in the library at my university is generated by history students. This tells us many things, but one thing above all others — there is still a persistent core of old-fashioned book reading at the heart of the subject. (It does not tell us that history lags behind everyone else in the digitisation of the subject.)

The materials to be read while studying history are diverse. In the forefront are printed books, newspapers and so on, together with archives and manuscripts which have survived to the present. But reading is not just about what has been written. Historians need to read images, landscapes, film, clothing, buildings and so on. All contain evidence of the past, which is what we are looking for.

### Reading lists

For history students, one of the biggest steps up from sixth-form to university is the massive reading requirement. Module reading lists can run to 20 pages. Seminar reading may be made up of five to ten items for a single meeting. How can history students handle this enormous challenge?

In the first place, it is important to understand that no one is expected to read everything. The lists are produced to cover all areas of the module topic and provide alternatives for those who are interested in one sub-theme more than another. For example, a seminar on the outbreak of the French Revolution might include items on the various social classes of the time, or the culture and ideas, plus items on economics, politics, international relations and so on. Having this large list is very helpful when the time comes to write essays as these will tend to focus on a specific aspect of the main topic, whether it be the role of women or the policies of the monarchy.

### Prioritise and select

Even if one cuts down the reading in this way it will be still be necessary to read maybe five to ten books for an essay, and these might be anything from 100 to 1,000 pages long. Clearly there is not time to sit down and read them all from cover to cover. So what do we do? The two essentials are to prioritise and to select. The former means deciding which of the available materials needs most attention. The second means that it is important to identify which parts within the prioritised items need to be read most carefully.

### Intensive reading

As most A-level students will already know, there are wide varieties of intensity involved in reading. The most intensive involves reading selected books or chapters very carefully, often every word, as they are the key to the topic being investigated for an essay or a seminar. Note-taking here is relatively detailed and designed to pin down what we read in our heads and provide a record to refresh our ideas later.

### Speed reading

Beyond that, there are different kinds of reading. There are various kinds of speed reading, where a person glances through the pages picking out key words and phrases and noting what is relevant. Another version of this is to read the key sentence (usually first or second in the paragraph) and then move to the next. In this way one can build up a strong sense of what a piece of writing is about, especially its argument and the kind of evidence being called on to support it, and the reader can dwell on what is most relevant to the task in hand. Here, note-taking will be much briefer but it is as well to ensure one writes a brief summary of each chapter that has been read. Even if it is only one or two sentences it will remind you what that chapter is about.

The ability to speed read develops with experience and there are online sources of advice on how to do it. It is quite possible that the Study Skills centre at your future university may have advice, or even courses, on how to do it efficiently.

### Decoding other materials

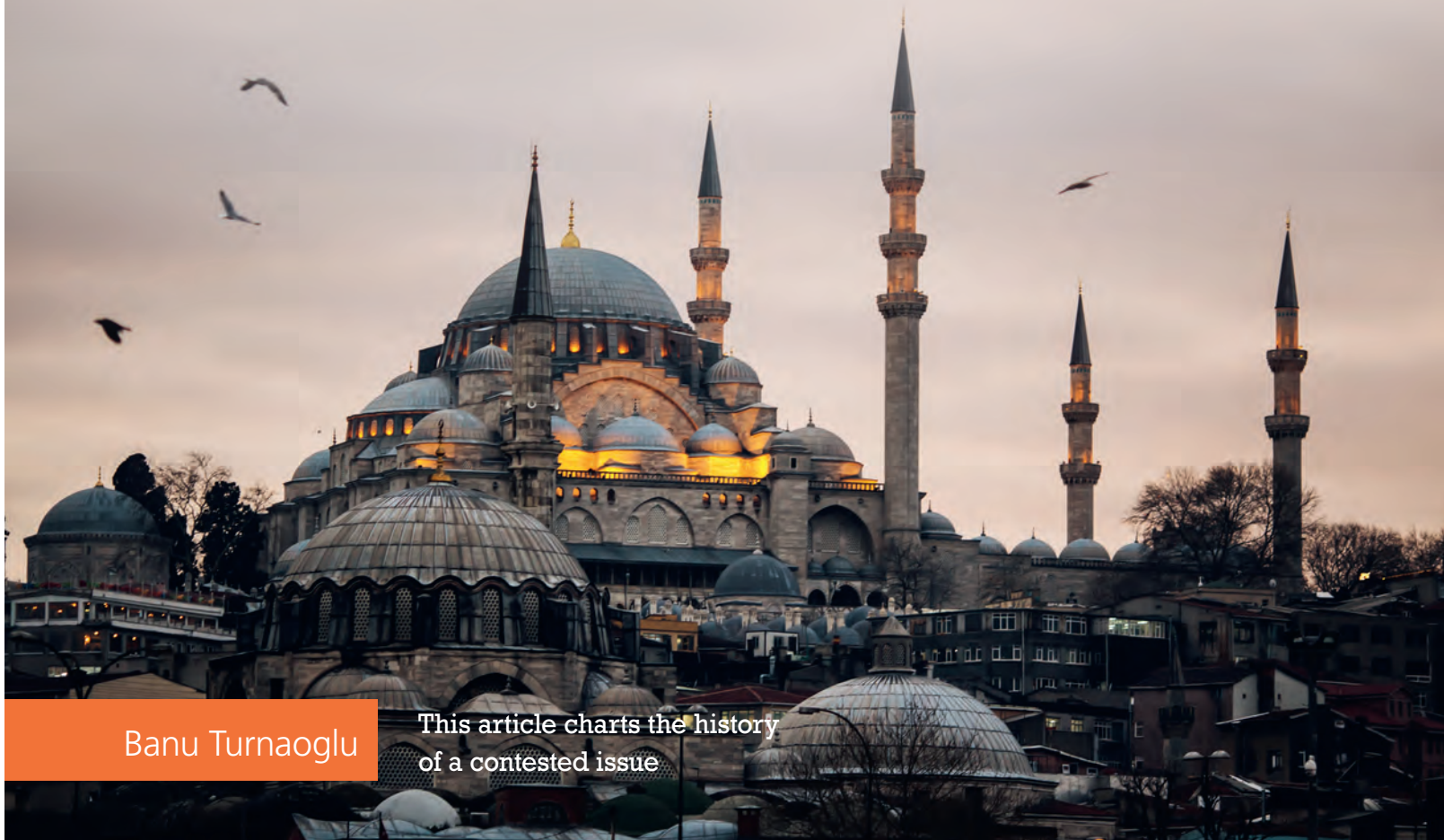
So far so good, but when it comes to reading items other than written materials the situation becomes more complex. Everyone has different aptitudes when it comes to this kind of reading. Some are very good at reading character from faces, even when those faces are in photos. Others are more inspired to read/decode films with great ingenuity and imagination, penetrating the literal surface to discuss what the film was about. There is also a skill in reading landscapes to see how past societies interacted with it. Hedges, walls, fences and shapes in the ground left by anything from an iron-age fort to a medieval fishpond can help us see into the past. Buildings can also be read as embodiments of the values of a particular society at a particular time.

To some extent you will have encountered reading of this kind as part of A-level, but at university it usually gets more extensive. First-year modules often try to develop a sense of reading, or decoding, a rich variety of sources. One exercise we conduct at Warwick is to encourage students to visit the reconstructed Coventry Cathedral and see what they can make of its form and structure. It blends traditional elements — stained glass, fan vaulting, columns, a giant tapestry, large hanging candelabra, which can be found right back to Gothic cathedrals — with modern materials, bright colours, a large internal space and a sense of the 'modern'. What does this contrast tell us about the moment when it was built? How does it interact with the remains of the older cathedral bombed into ruins in 1940?

All these sources and reflections help us think about and understand the past and reading the wide variety of sources is the crucial element. In the final analysis, a key component in studying history is becoming an expert in the most advanced forms of reading.

**Christopher Read** is a professorial fellow in the history department at The University of Warwick.

# The Eastern Question and



Banu Turnaoglu

This article charts the history of a contested issue

**Ottoman–Russian War (1768–74)** Six-year major conflict that witnessed many Russian territorial gains from the Ottoman empire, including Crimea and parts of Moldavia.

**Greek War of Independence (1821–32)** Greek struggle for independence from the Ottoman empire which was ultimately successful. The Greeks gained support from Russia, Britain and France, which proved decisive, and the Greek state was established by the Treaty of Constantinople in 1832.

## Exam links



**AQA 1J** The British empire, c.1857–1967

**AQA 2K** International relations and global conflict, c.1890–1941

**Edexcel paper 3, option 35.1** Britain: losing and gaining an empire, 1763–1914

**OCR Y320** From colonialism to independence: the British empire 1857–1965

The 'Eastern Question' was a defining issue in international relations between the 'East' and the 'West' in the nineteenth century. It has recently attracted increased academic interest thanks to its renewed relevance.

The 'Eastern Question' concerned the various ways in which the Great Powers (including Britain, France and Germany) and Russia sought to control Ottoman disruption, as well as the Ottoman empire's strategies in the face of these external threats to its national unity and integrity. Today, ongoing turmoil in the Middle East, the Ukrainian crisis, and the Russian annexation of Crimea — in addition to the souring

of the Turco-Russian relationship consequent to the Syrian crisis and its recent rapprochement — have put the issue firmly back on the agenda.

Russia's original interest in the Eastern Question was mainly to increase its control over the Orthodox minorities in the Ottoman empire, and to advance southwards from the Black Sea through to the Straits to reach the Mediterranean. The European powers, on the other hand, were concerned with the 'Eastern Question' because Ottoman decline was having a critical impact on the balance of powers on the continent. They feared that the collapse of the Ottoman empire could lead to a struggle for territory which would destabilise existing international relations and possibly lead to global war. However, they disagreed on whether to manage Ottoman decline by attempting to reverse it, or by gaining from it territorially and politically.

The Ottoman empire was not a passive actor in this power game. Rather, it responded to the Eastern Question by various means — through diplomacy, forming international alliances, the implementation of domestic reforms, and sometimes through waging war.

# the Ottoman empire

## Interpretations

Throughout its evolution, the 'Eastern Question' has generated a number of questions and conflicting solutions. Historians, politicians, diplomats, intellectuals, journalists and scholars have written numerous works about the origins, management and responses to this international conflict, along with projections and predictions about a future international order.

Ubicini (1854) saw the issue as a dispute regarding the administration of holy sites. Marx described it as a diplomatic diversion from the forces of revolution at home, denouncing the imperialist interests of the Great Powers. Sorel (1889) traced the origins of the question to the first partitioning of Poland. Driault (1898) defined it as religious problem, related to the decline of the political power of Islam.

In the twentieth century, a number of important works appeared about the Eastern Question following the publication of Anderson's major study, *The Eastern Question: 1774–1923* (1966), which updated Marriott's seminal work *The Eastern Question: An Historical Study of European Diplomacy* (1917). Said, for instance, describes the Eastern Question in his *Orientalism* (1979) as one of the most visible and 'flamboyant projects' of the Orientalists.

As we can see, there are various interpretations and approaches as to what exactly constitutes the Eastern Question. Is it primarily a religious, moral,

economic or political question? How did it emerge? How should it be defined? Despite this vagueness, the 'Eastern Question' encompasses four intersecting themes:

- the decline of the Ottoman Empire, precipitated by military defeat and the breakdown of administrative and financial institutions
- the ultimate failure of Ottoman modernising reform to rejuvenate the 'sick man of Europe'
- the rise of nationalism within the empire, especially among the Balkan Orthodox Christians, Arab Christians and Muslims, and Armenians
- the competition among the Great Powers for commercial, diplomatic, political and strategic gains in the Ottoman Near East

## Historical overview

The Eastern Question is clearly a historically vibrant issue. To make sense of what the Eastern Question actually is and how it came about, its historical usage as a term needs to be understood. Events such as the **Ottoman–Russian War** (1768–74), the **Greek War of Independence** (1821–32), the **Egyptian Crisis** (1831–40), the **Crimean War** (1853–56), the **Bulgarian Agitation** (1876–78), the **Balkan Wars** (1912–13), and the **First World War** (1914–18) were prominent moments in which the meanings, dealings, politics and potential solutions around the Eastern Question shifted dramatically.

### Egyptian Crisis (1831–40)

As a result of helping the Ottoman empire in the war with the Greeks, Muhammad Ali Pasha demanded, and temporarily won, control of part of Syria. Six years later in a second conflict, Egypt renounced its claim to Syria. In return, Britain recognised Muhammad Ali as ruler of Egypt.

### Crimean War (1853–56)

A war fought mainly on the Crimean peninsula between Russia and Britain, France and the Ottoman empire. The Russians were eventually defeated and peace was established by the Treaty of Paris in 1856.

### Bulgarian Agitation (1876–78)

Nationalist uprisings in Bulgarian territories which were ruthlessly suppressed by the Ottoman empire. Although the uprising failed, a Russian-led coalition fought the Ottoman army and defeated it, opening the way for the independence of Bulgaria on 3 March 1878. Outrage from Western powers led to calls for the reform of the empire.

### Balkan Wars (1912–13)

Conflicts on the Balkan Peninsula which led to the Ottoman empire ceding most of its territory in Europe.

Treaty of Paris, 1856





The Battle of Telish,  
1877

### The Ottoman–Russian War

It has generally been assumed that the Eastern Question dates back to 1774, when the Ottoman–Russian War (1768–74) resulted in defeat for the Ottomans. The war ended with the humiliating Treaty of Kuchuck-Kainarji which granted Russia the right to protect Orthodox Christians throughout the Ottoman empire, and to intervene in Wallachia and Moldavia in the event of Ottoman misrule. This marked the beginning of subsequent future conflicts between Russia and the Ottoman empire, and also the beginning of European involvement in Ottoman domestic affairs.

### The Greek War of Independence

When and how exactly the term ‘Eastern Question’ entered the lexicon of European diplomacy still remains unclear. Nonetheless, scholars have suggested it first gained wide currency in the period between the Congress of Vienna (1815) and the Greek Revolution (1821), when it was used to describe military weakness and the breakdown of financial and administrative power in the Ottoman empire.

### The Egyptian crisis

The Egyptian crisis (1831–40) erupted as an Ottoman domestic issue when Mohammad Ali, the governor of Egypt, captured Syria and much of western Anatolia. This soon turned into an international conflict with the intervention of Britain and Austria. It was in the midst of these events that the term ‘Eastern Question’ began to appear in the international press.

Tsar Nikolai I denounced Turkey as ‘the sick man of Europe’, a metaphor later adopted by all the Great Powers, while the British press referred to the Egyptian crisis as the ‘Oriental Question’. The French used the term ‘*la Question d’Orient*’, and the Germans ‘*die Orientalische Frage*’. The term ‘*Mesele-i Sark*’ was used as a Turkish equivalent in Ottoman diplomatic writings for the first time in the 1830s, but the debates surrounding it found little resonance in Ottoman writings until the 1850s.

### The Crimean War

The outbreak of the Crimean War in 1853 marked a fresh phase of studies and pamphlet literature around the Eastern Question. France and Britain deemed the preservation of the empire to be in their best interests, fearing Russian expansionism into Europe. Their involvement in the war, allying with the Ottomans to combat this Russian threat, transformed the Eastern Question’s regional significance into an international one.

The war ended with an Ottoman victory and the Treaty of Paris of 1856, which guaranteed the territorial integrity of the Ottoman empire by European powers, and ensured the Ottoman entrance into ‘the concert of Europe’. In return, Sultan Abdülmejid promised reforms concerning Christian minorities and declared *Islahat Fermani* (The Reform Edict) of 1856. The reforms, nevertheless, granted the European powers the right to intervene in the empire’s internal affairs, under the guise of protecting non-Muslim minorities. In the 1860s, the ‘Eastern Question’ became not only

a focal point of theoretical discussion but also a lived reality and a pressing practical concern.

### New imperialism

The outbreak of the Eastern crisis in 1875, followed by the Russian–Ottoman War of 1877–78, stimulated another major debate in Europe, Russia and the Ottoman empire. The rise of ‘new imperialism’ in the West suddenly reoriented European interests towards colonisation. In other words, the Eastern Question had evolved from its initial focus on whether or not European powers should intervene in Ottoman decline in order to preserve the empire’s unity. Now it was a question of international rivalry, as countries jostled for dominance on the international stage.

In the context of this global imperial struggle, the Ottomans were also repositioning themselves in their relationships with the West, and seeking new alliances. Contrasts between Christianity and Islam and divisions between Eastern and Western civilisations began to emerge in political works and historical writings. The ‘Eastern Question’ spawned the Ottomans’ ‘Western Question’, prompting new ways of thinking about politics and the emergence of new ideologies like Pan-Islamism, Pan-Turkism, and Pan-Germanism as a response to Pan-Slavism and Western imperialism.

### The 1890s

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Eastern Question was now a question of establishing a new world order, and had become a key to understanding international politics. The 1890s witnessed the

world divide into camps and the ‘Orient’ became a geopolitical battleground for European rivalries. The Eastern Question writ large — expanding in the context of newly emerging issues in Asia — dominated the Great Powers’ concerns.

The extension of the scope of the Eastern Question to all of Eurasia produced a new set of questions and formulations, concerning China, Japan and India and also Ukraine and Romania. Concerns around China came to be the ‘Far Eastern Question’, with India and Persia posing a ‘Middle Eastern Question’, and the Turkish/Ottoman situation constituting a ‘Near Eastern Question’. Based on these geographical units, the first maps of the Middle East were drawn up, and the territory partitioned between the Great Powers.

The last decade of the nineteenth century underlined the growing distance of the Ottoman empire from Britain and France but also its growing links to the German-led bloc. It also saw the multiplication of further ‘questions’, including Cretan, Armenian, Macedonian, Bulgarian and Kurdish questions, with the rise of ethnic nationalism. In this period, scholarship on the causes, processes and solutions of the Eastern Question flourished throughout Europe, Russia and the Ottoman empire.

### The First World War

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 brought the Eastern Question to its next evolutionary stage. The Allied Powers had declared the purpose of the war against the Ottomans to be a ‘liberation of the peoples who now lie beneath the murderous tyranny of the Turks’ and were seeking to expel the Ottoman empire,



The legacy of the Ottoman empire and the Eastern Question continues to provoke debate and protest

regarded as alien to Western civilization and culture, from Europe. The general Ottoman war expectation was that a large-scale international crisis would resolve the centuries-old Eastern Question by wiping out all internal and external enemies, freeing the Ottoman empire and Muslim nations from Western oppression and slavery, and ultimately bringing international peace. Those hopes and expectations, nevertheless, were not met, and the Treaty of Sèvres (1920) partitioned the Ottoman empire among the European powers.

### To the present day

The term 'Eastern Question' began to disappear from diplomatic writings after the First World War, but the same cannot be said for the concept itself. Indeed, the terms 'Near East' and 'Middle East' were now applied in reference to the same nebulous entity, and the same uncertainties once euphemised under 'the Eastern Question' still lingered, even in the absence of the term itself.

### Exam-style questions

- 1 What was the Eastern Question and how was it understood by contemporaries?
- 2 Why did the Eastern Question preoccupy the 'Great Powers' of Europe between 1850 and 1914?
- 3 Is the Eastern Question still relevant for relations between East and West today?

### Further reading



Frary, L. J. and Kozelsky, M. (eds.) (2014) *Russian-Ottoman Borderlands: the Eastern Question reconsidered*, University of Wisconsin.

Kent, M. (ed.) (2005) *The Great Powers and the End of the Ottoman Empire*, Routledge.

Irrespective of its disappearance from the language of diplomacy, the historical concept of the 'Eastern Question' still freights each of these terms with a negative charge, which continues to be ignored even as a new series of conflicts has shaped regional and international politics. This must be addressed in order to put the present in its proper historical context.

Thus, the Eastern Question remains unresolved. It resonates today in conflicts throughout the Middle East, the Islamic world and Europe. Its legacy endures in the Armenian and Kurdish Questions and in longstanding debates surrounding Turkey's EU membership. With boundaries between East and West still contested today, and with alliances shifting along the Black Sea, in the former Soviet republics, and in the Balkans, revisiting and rethinking the Eastern Question is more important today than ever.

Banu Turnaoglu is an early career fellow at the University of Cambridge. She published *The Formation of Turkish Republicanism* in 2017.

# Using this article in your exam



How could this article be useful in your exam?

Banu Turnaoglu's article should prove very useful to those studying one of most complex topics in modern history.

First, it provides an extremely clear and accurate narrative of the main developments related to the Eastern Question. It is easy to follow who the main players were and how they interacted in their attempts to resolve the Eastern Question.

Second, the article gives good indication of how the Eastern Question is defined and how this might vary according to which geopolitical perspective is taken.

Third, there is mention of some of the historiographical issues that pertain to the topic, but without getting bogged down in this.

Finally, the article is a good example of how history can help us make sense of the present-day crises (in this case, for example, in Ukraine, the Crimea and the Middle East) and lead to a greater understanding of why states adopt different attitudes towards the same challenges. A typical exam question on this topic might read, 'How far was the Egyptian Crisis (1831–40) a turning point in attempts to resolve the Eastern Question from 1821 to 1913?'

# Visual sources in the study of history

Visual sources provide the historian with complementary evidence to written material and give a wider perspective. This column considers the uses and abuses of handling visual sources

Visual sources come in the format of pictures, paintings or moving images. Such sources differ in terms of content and construction from those of a written kind, although the approach to assessing their utility and reliability as evidence is roughly the same. What differs is the way in which visual material is interpreted and fitted in to a historical context that is usually provided by written sources.

## The range of visual sources

You are likely to encounter the following main types of visual source:

- paintings (portraits, landscapes and abstracts), drawings (including cartoons), prints and etchings
- maps
- graphs, tables and diagrams
- film, photographs

The nature of such sources has varied over time (diachronically) but has also been subject to developments (particularly of a technological nature, such as the application of sound dialogue to create the 'talkie' in cinema production) that have occurred at a point in time (synchronically). Thus, the range of visual sources is not only vast but also complex.

## Interpreting visual sources

Making sense of a visual rather than a written source can be challenging. That is due mainly to the way visual material is composed, which can often result in crucial detail being overlooked by the observer. This reinforces the importance for historians to systematically 'read' pictures. The guidelines below may enable you to do this.

### Paintings, prints and etchings

Imagine you are shown a copy of a painting on an aspect of the Peninsular War as part of the topic of Napoleonic rule after the French Revolution.

- Start 'reading' the painting from left to right and in a clockwise direction, identifying the main background features as you progress. If you can obtain a paper copy of the picture, label what you think you can see and can make sense of.
- Move on to the centre or foreground of the painting. What can you identify? Again, label what you think you can see and can make sense of.



Satirical cartoon of 1877. The caption reads 'Peace Rumors. Let us have (a) peace (piece).'

- Now match the information you have extracted against that which you may already have access to in a textbook (or from articles like the one by Kevin Linch in this issue of MODERN HISTORY REVIEW). How far does the written contextual material confirm what is in the painting and help you gain greater understanding of what the painting is depicting?

- Finally, consider how the painting sheds greater light on the topic in question. How does it do that?

### Maps

Consider the layout of the map you might be consulting. Does it conform to what you already know, and can it be verified by reference to other similar maps and/or written records? If this is not the case how might you best explain the discrepancies? For example, some world maps show the USA in the middle — why might that be?

Take note of whether the map is printed in colour or black and white. How might the colouring affect your interpretation and perspective of the document? Pay attention to the scale of the map. Why is this important?



## Graphs, tables and diagrams

Look at how the graph, table or diagram is presented. This can shape the impression you get about the nature of the data on offer. In particular, look out for whether:

- information is in the form of a line graph or bar chart
- numerical data are expressed in whole numbers or percentages
- the scale of the picture is realistic (is it used to exaggerate the importance of the data?)
- the title of the picture is unambiguous (does it present what it purports to?)

## Film, photographs

Make sure you are clear about whether a film is a documentary or a non-documentary production. This can be trickier than it might seem at first as some films 'cross over' and become a hybrid of a documentary and feature film.

Find out as much as you can about the background to the preparation, direction, production and distribution of the film — this can be very useful before arriving at judgements about the usefulness and validity of it as a historical source. Also try to find out how much the film has been edited.

When you watch a film remember to take notes on what you hear and see. This includes not just the dialogue but also the *mise en scene* (backdrop or surroundings) and camera angles (especially the difference between long-shot and close-up). Soundtracks can also influence how we perceive film material.

With photographs, consider whether:

- they might have been staged
- they might have been 'photoshopped' or heavily edited (why might this occur?)

With respect to the latter, it is sometimes possible to find what appear to be identical photographs of a scene or group of people, but which show discrepancies in detail.

## Exercise 1: Interpreting a cartoon

Using the guidelines above on how to interpret visual sources, look at the cartoon on the Eastern Question and answer the questions that follow:

To gain the context/historical background to the cartoon (assuming this is a topic you may not have covered), read Banu Turnaglu's article on the Eastern Question and the Ottoman Empire in this issue of *MODERN HISTORY REVIEW*.



AIM occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1972

From left to right, read the picture:

- Who are the characters in the cartoon?
- What objects in the cartoon are noteworthy and why?
- Look at the caption at the bottom. Explain the pun.
- What is the general message being conveyed by the cartoonist and what do you think the cartoonist's attitude was towards the Eastern Question?
- What does this picture tell you about the use of cartoons as a political tool? How can satire, in general, be used to criticise those wielding power?

### Evaluating visual sources

Visual sources should be treated like any other kind of historical source when it comes to testing their validity (relevance) and reliability (trustworthiness). Hence, focusing particularly on the provenance of the visual sources you may have in front of you, you should carry out an initial interrogation of them:

- Who produced the source?
- When was it produced?
- Where was it produced?
- Why was it produced? (i.e. the motive behind the production of the source)

With respect to the latter point, remember that it can also be useful to classify sources as either official or non-official. As a rule, official sources are said to be more reliable as evidence about topics than the non-official variety, but this is a generalisation.

However, certain types of visual source require more specific types of questioning before arriving at conclusions about their value.

### Paintings

Was the artist commissioned to paint his/her picture? If so, by whom? Was the artist under pressure by a governing regime to paint only on certain themes?

### Cartoons

Does the cartoonist show a bias towards their subject matter? Cartoons are notoriously tricky to interpret and analyse — how can you be sure about the messages they convey? Are you sure you understand the type of humour being utilised (such as pun or irony)?

### Maps

What is the specific purpose of a map? How is a degree of accuracy achieved in mapmaking? Can maps ever be totally accurate?

### Graphs, tables and diagrams

These sources often contain much statistical material. How and from where were the statistics obtained? What is included and what is missing from the data?

### Film, photographs

Were the filmmakers persuaded to make a type of film to portray a certain type of message? If so, by whom?

Are documentary films more valid and reliable than feature films? Feature films are often well researched and can tell us much about the period in which they are set and/or produced. They also tell us much about the ideas, beliefs and attitudes of the director, producer and projected audience.



How are photographs composed? How far do people pose or are asked to pose for photographs? How far does the use of different types of technology and photographic technique influence the reality being depicted? To what extent does 'the camera never lie'?

### Exercise 2: Evaluating a photograph

Using the guidelines above on how to evaluate visual sources, look at the photograph that relates to the pressure group American Indian Movement, and answer the questions that follow.

- To gain the context/historical background to the photograph (assuming this is a topic you may not have covered), read Kate Rennard's article on the American Indian Movement of the 1960s and 1970s in this issue of MODERN HISTORY REVIEW.
- Who produced the photograph? When was it produced? Where was it produced? Why was it produced? You may have to carry out some extra research to answer these questions although sometimes it is not always possible to identify the information you need.
- What do you notice about the way the people in the picture are dressed? What does this tell you about AIM and the time in which it was operating?
- Why is the Stars and Stripes being held upside down?
- How useful is the photograph as evidence about the strategy and tactics deployed by AIM in the 1960s and 1970s?

### Conclusion

Visual sources serve a purpose not merely to illustrate text in history books and articles but as historical evidence *per se*. However, it is unlikely that, as a historian, you could rely solely on visual material to concoct a historical narrative. Invariably, written sources are needed to provide the context in which the visual source was produced. Nevertheless, visual sources play an important role in bringing history alive and providing an added dimension to the way we interpret the past.

Andy Holland is an experienced history teacher.

# Decolonialism

## Timeline of independence

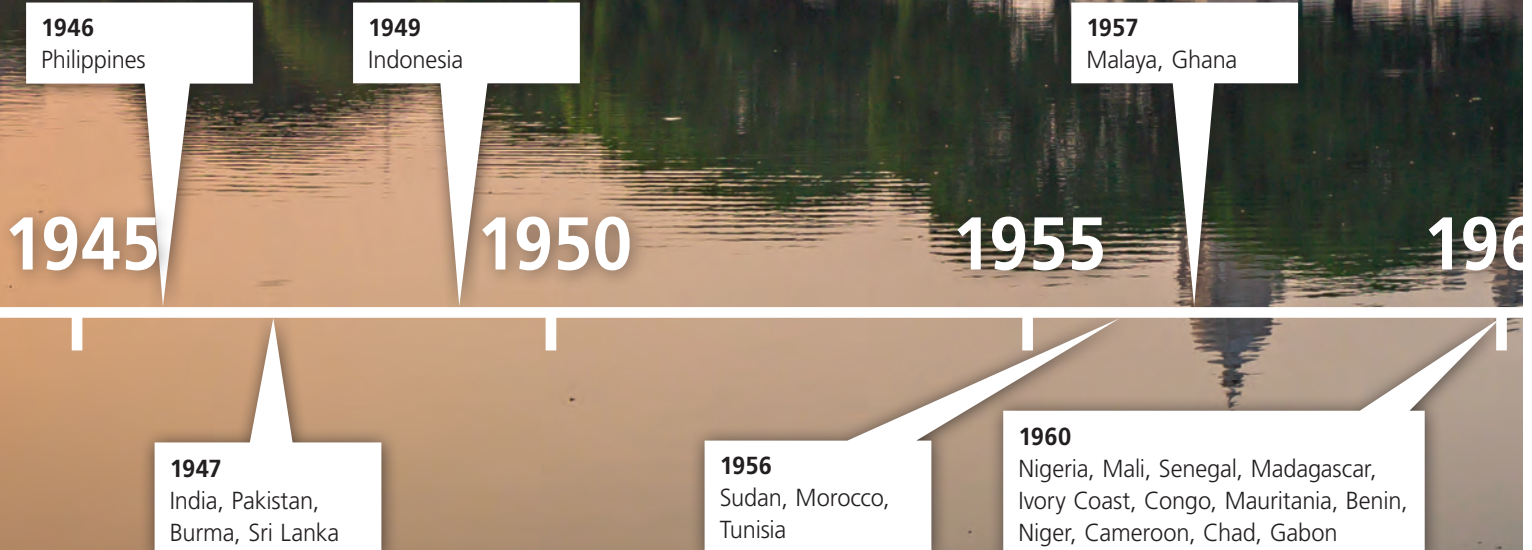
The ending of colonial empires was a long and sometimes bloody process. Although some colonies had either seized independence (the USA, Haiti) or been granted independence (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa) before the Second World War, the main thrust of decolonisation came after the end of that global conflict. The war certainly accelerated the process, either through the destabilising impact of outside powers (for example the Japanese in Asia) or because of the long-term economic problems it caused. European colonial powers simply lacked the resources to sustain global empires and when the decolonisation process started it quickly accelerated.

In 1946 the Philippines secured independence from the USA and the following year India and Pakistan became independent of Britain. In 1949 the Dutch finally realised they had little hope of reasserting control over the Dutch East Indies after the Japanese occupation, and Indonesia became independent.

Between the mid-1950s and the mid-1960s most African colonies became independent. Some achieved independence with little opposition from the former colonial power but others saw protracted campaigns to secure independence. Particularly bloody were those fought in Algeria against France and Mozambique against Portugal.

The pace of decolonisation slowed notably after 1975, mainly involving small Caribbean territories, but included the return of both Hong Kong (1997) and Macau (1999) to China. Numerous colonies remain, but the appetite for independence seems to have slowed. Voters in Bermuda and New Caledonia have recently rejected independence.

Across the world, former colonies gained their independence in a variety of ways



Victoria Memorial, Kolkata



**1962**  
Uganda, Burundi,  
Rwanda, Algeria,  
Jamaica, Barbados,  
Trinidad

**1965**  
Rhodesia (white  
minority rule)

**1975**  
Mozambique,  
Angola

1960

1965

1970

1975

**1963**  
Kenya, Tanzania,  
Singapore, Borneo

**1966**  
Botswana, Lesotho,  
Guyana

ModernHistoryReviewExtras



Go online for a printable pdf of this centre spread  
([www.hoddereducation.co.uk/historyreviewextras](http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/historyreviewextras))

Tim Lockley is professor of North American history at The University of Warwick.

# Risorgimento

## The struggle to unify Italy



Caterina Sinibaldi

ModernHistoryReviewExtras

Go online for essay guidance on this topic  
([www.hoddereducation.co.uk/modernhistoryreviewextras](http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/modernhistoryreviewextras))

Battle of Calatafimi, 1860

### Was the process to unify Italy really a ‘war of the people’?

**Napoleonic Civil Code**  
A uniform set of laws, based on Roman law, developed under Napoleon in France. It replaced the confusing accretion of laws, rights and privileges which had built up over centuries. It was applied in parts of Europe under French domination and remains today as the basis of law in several European countries.

The unification of Italy was the outcome of a long and difficult process, which lasted for around 60 years. It is commonly referred to as the Risorgimento, meaning renewal or renaissance. Historians identify the beginning of the Risorgimento with the aftermath of the Vienna Congress in 1815, which established a new order in Europe after the defeat of Napoleon. However, many of the

#### Exam links

**Edexcel paper 2, option 2D.1** The unification of Italy, c.1830–70

**OCR Y245/Y215** Italy and the unification 1789–1896

fundamental ideas and values which underpinned the Italian fight for national unification were already present by the time of, and were heightened by, the French Revolution.

#### The influence of French domination

During the period of the French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars (1796–1815), northern and central Italy became a kingdom of the Napoleonic empire. As a consequence, the Napoleonic Civil Code (1804) was imposed, and promoted a greater sense of uniformity and cohesion over a highly fragmented country. In an attempt to modernise Italy, Napoleon established a powerful administrative system which abolished feudal rights and jurisdictions, and repossessed all properties belonging to the clergy. Greater territorial unity was also achieved through the improvement of transport links.

From a political perspective, Italy experienced a period of order and cohesion under the rule of a single, central authority. From an ideological point of view, a new interpretation of the concept of 'nation' emerged from the experience of Napoleonic rule. Before the French Revolution, the nation was identified with the king. In the post-revolutionary period, the monarch was replaced by the people as a symbol of the nation.

## The birth of patriotism

### The restoration

Following the end of Napoleonic rule and the Vienna Congress (1815), the kingdom of Italy established by Napoleon was broken into around eight independent states. While the pope regained control over central Italy, the rest of the peninsula was mostly dominated by the Austrian empire, through the powerful **Habsburg family**, with the south being ruled by the Spanish House of Bourbon-Two Sicilies. In 1814, Austrian statesman **Klemens von Metternich** had famously referred to the Italian peninsula as a 'geographical expression', rather than a nation with a distinctive cultural identity.

The authoritarian turn which followed the Vienna Congress, also known as 'the restoration', sparked considerable protest and resistance throughout Europe, with Italy being no exception. The nobility recovered its official status as separate from the rest of society, the country was fragmented and under the domination of foreign rulers, and the papal states had recovered their political power and enforced reactionary policies. While the country suffered from political instability and economic unrest, the legacy of Napoleonic rule was still present.

### Secret societies

It is during this period of foreign domination that secret societies began to gain more power in Italy. These clandestine movements were originally formed in opposition to the authoritarianism of the Napoleonic regime, but in the aftermath of Napoleon's defeat, they became fundamental in channelling nationalist feelings. With their patriotic and anti-Austrian ideals, secret societies were mostly formed by young Italians who organised a series of insurrections throughout the peninsula, often with the support of local aristocrats aiming to expand their power.

Despite the failure of these uprisings — which were invariably suppressed by the Austrian and Piedmontese troops — the ideals and ambitions underpinning them continued to grow. This is also reflected in the literary and artistic works of the time. One notable example is Alessandro Manzoni's civic ode 'March 1821'. In the poem, Manzoni describes Italy as a country which is currently enslaved by foreign dominators, but which shares cultural and religious values:

'One in arms, language and faith in memories, blood and heart.'

### Young Italy and its successors

An important figure who emerged from the political turmoil and ideological ferment of the 1820s and 1830s was **Giuseppe Mazzini**, founder of the political movement Young Italy (*Giovine Italia*). The movement, which was open to all Italians under the age of 40, was created in 1831 with the clear aim of liberating Italy from foreign rulers through a popular insurrection, and establishing a free, united republican nation. Under the slogan 'Union, Strength and Liberty', Mazzini organised a series of insurrections throughout Italy between 1833 and 1853. However, despite a few short-lived victories (such as the creation of a Republic in Rome in 1848–49), Young Italy essentially failed to fulfil its ambition.

However, the movement became internationally renowned and established European connections in France and England, which would prove useful in galvanising support for Italy's fight for national liberation. Moreover, among the members of Young Italy was another key figure of Italian unification, **Giuseppe Garibaldi**. In the years leading to the 1848 revolutions, Garibaldi became what would be nowadays described as a political celebrity, and the heroic cult surrounding him made him very popular in Italy and abroad. The reception he received on his visit to London in 1864 is described by historians as being without precedent, with over 25,000 supporters gathering at Crystal Palace for his speech.

Garibaldi was seen as a humble hero, a 'man of the people', displaying strong ideals and exceptional bravery. While other leaders of the Risorgimento, such as Mazzini or Cavour (aristocrat and founder of the journal *Il Risorgimento*), were educated politicians who belonged to intellectual circles, Garibaldi's unique charisma came from his perceived simplicity and genuine loyalty to the nationalist cause.

**The Habsburg family**  
A ruling dynasty of Austrian origin whose control, through various branches of the family, spread to parts of Italy, Spain and The Netherlands.

Giuseppe Garibaldi



## Box | Key figures

### Klemens von Metternich (1773–1859)

A leading Austrian diplomat credited with being the architect of the agreement made at the Congress of Vienna. He was Austrian foreign minister for 40 years and chancellor from 1809, remaining a highly influential figure in Europe until he was forced to resign during the 1848 revolutions.

### Giuseppe Mazzini

Born in Genoa on 22 June 1805. Mazzini was a charismatic individual, always wearing black, and an activist for the unification of Italy. He was an original political thinker, who believed in democracy and national self-determination. Forced into exile in Marseilles for his revolutionary activities, he founded the nationalist society Young Italy in 1831. Moved to London in 1837, where he became well known in liberal intellectual circles. Died in Pisa on 10 March 1872.

### Giuseppe Garibaldi

Born in Nice on 4 July 1807, Garibaldi was an Italian patriot and a republican who contributed to the achievement of Italian unification. He lived in exile in South America from 1836 to 1848, after taking part in an unsuccessful mutiny, aiming at provoking a republican revolution in Piedmont. In May 1860 he led a corps of 1,089 volunteers and, also thanks to the support from the local population, successfully liberated southern Italy from the Bourbons. He died on 2 June 1882 in Caprera.

### Camillo Benso di Cavour

Born in Turin on 10 August 1810, Cavour was the son of a noble family, who devoted himself to the liberation of northern Italy. Through his diplomatic skills, he promoted international support for the Italian nationalist cause. He was prime minister of Piedmont from 1852 and first prime minister of Italy for 6 months until his death in Turin on 6 June 1861.

### The Bourbons

The Bourbons, distant relatives of the old French monarchy, ruled in Naples (1734–1806), in Sicily (1734–1816), in a unified Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (1816–60) and in Parma (1731–35, 1748–1802 and 1847–59).

## 1848 to 1859

### The 1848 revolutions

In 1848, Europe was shaken by a series of revolutions, aiming to remove the old monarchies and replace them with independent nation-states. In Italy, several nationalist groups organised insurrections across the peninsula, with the most violent uprisings taking place in Milan, Rome, Naples and Sicily.

King Charles Albert, who ruled the powerful state of Piedmont-Sardinia in northwest Italy, also declared war on Austria, but was soon defeated by the Austrian

imperial army. As a result of the revolutionary insurrection, Charles Albert was forced to grant a constitution to his subjects. This legal code — known as *Statuto Albertino* from the name of its creator — would later become the official constitution of the kingdom of Italy.

Following the failure of the 1848 revolutions Charles Albert had to abdicate, leaving his son, Victor Emmanuel II, to rule. However, with the Proclamation of Moncalieri (1849), Victor Emanuel II permitted elections, thus setting Piedmont-Sardinia apart from other Italian states and paving the way for a democratic turn. As a consequence, the parliament was composed of a liberal majority who resented Austrian rule. Among them was **Camillo Benso di Cavour** who entered the cabinet in 1850.

Piedmont's prestige began to grow in Italy and abroad, where the state was perceived as an example of modernity and stability. In 1857, the Italian National Society was founded in support of Cavour's policies, aiming to achieve the unification of Italy through political means, and relying on international alliances, rather than a violent revolution.

### The Plombières agreement

Thanks to Cavour's political acumen and carefully crafted strategies, a Franco-Piedmontese alliance was sealed in January 1859, marking a real turning point in the Italian Risorgimento. At a secret meeting at Plombières, Cavour ceded Savoy and the county of Nice to Napoleon III in exchange for military protection from France in the event of Austrian aggression.

Soon after the Plombières agreement, Victor Emmanuel II delivered a famous speech at the Turin parliament, where he acknowledged the 'cry of woe' of Italian people under Austrian domination. The Austrian emperor perceived the speech to be provocative and, in April 1859, declared war on Piedmont.

In June of that year, after only a few months of fighting, the French and Piedmontese troops defeated the Austrians. As a result, the state of Piedmont-Sardinia gained control over most of northern Italy including the Central Duchies and Lombardy. The victory was the result of widespread popular support for Piedmont's leadership, as shown by the plebiscites which were held in northern and central Italy, as well as the support of Britain, wishing for a strong Italian state to hinder French influence in Europe.

### The expedition of the thousand

The unification of Italy could not have been achieved without the contribution of Garibaldi and his heroic expedition to liberate the southern mainland from the Bourbons. In 1860, 1,000 volunteers led by Garibaldi sailed from Quarto, near Genoa, and landed in Sicily, in order to invade and liberate the Kingdom



Piazza Risorgimento, Avezzano. The Risorgimento is a founding myth of the Italian nation

of the Two Sicilies. Having captured the island in less than 3 months, Garibaldi's troops crossed the straits of Messina, joining Sicily to Calabria, and invaded the kingdom of Naples. On 26 October 1860, Garibaldi met King Victor Emmanuel II in the region of Campania and handed over the reclaimed territories. The two rode back to Naples side by side and were greeted by enthusiastic crowds.

The territory of Venetia and Mantua was ceded from Austria to France, and from France to Italy in 1866, while Rome, which was protected by French troops, was annexed in 1870 during the Franco-Prussian War. The unification of Italy was completed, marking the end of the Risorgimento.

### Debate

The heroic narrative of the Risorgimento is a founding myth of the Italian nation, which inspired literary,

artistic and musical masterpieces and is celebrated by numerous paintings and public monuments. However, the significance of the Risorgimento is not without controversies. For instance, the question of who unified Italy is still being debated, in particular with regard to the roles of Cavour and Garibaldi. While the former seemed satisfied with the unification of northern Italy under the leadership of Piedmont, the latter fought against all odds for the liberation of the southern mainland. After achieving his goal, Garibaldi returned to his farm on a small island off the coast of Sardinia, far removed from political life.

Some historians claim that the roots of the cultural and economic divide between northern and southern Italy, which exists to the present, can be found in the dynamics leading to the unification of the country. Moreover, historians also debate whether the Risorgimento can be seen as a 'war of the people' in the words of Mazzini, and a triumph of democratic and liberal values, or rather as an aristocratic and bourgeois movement which exploited the masses.

### Exam-style questions

- 1 What was the influence of French domination on Italian nationalism?
- 2 What was the contribution of Garibaldi to unification?
- 3 How did Cavour exploit international politics to achieve his goal?

Caterina Sinibaldi is senior teaching fellow in Italian at The University of Warwick. She researches and publishes in the fields of children's literature, cultural history and Italian fascism.



# John Foxe's Book of Martyrs



*Martyrdom of Rev. John Rogers.*

Explore a key document of the English Reformation, which remained popular for centuries

When Henry VIII declared England's break from Rome, he enabled Protestantism to become the official religion of Tudor England. This did not, however, constitute an actual conversion of the population. Most people conformed. Few actively changed their beliefs.

Fast-forward 30 years. In the first decade of Elizabeth I's reign, the lack of true conversion was perceived as a serious threat. Not only did officials worry that souls were at risk from the devil (a very real concern embedded in a universally accepted belief in evil), but more prominent was the worry of rebellion and a concern that the populace would not defend against a foreign invasion advertised as a promise to return to the Roman Catholic religion. The Elizabethan government could easily fall, and they knew it.

For these reasons, men such as Elizabeth's chief secretary, Sir William Cecil (1520/21–98) and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Matthew Parker (1504–75), instructed and supported the scholar and

cleric John Foxe (1516/17–87) to publish (and later revise and extend) a book that sought to prove the Protestant religion as the one true faith, and the Roman Catholic faith as false. This book was called the *Acts and Monuments* but became more commonly known as Foxe's Book of Martyrs.

## A revised history

John Foxe described his book as a history showing a war between a true Christian church and the false church of the Roman Catholics. For Foxe, the pope was the antichrist and so-called heretical groups were true defenders of Christ's ideals.

The first edition, published in 1563, contained a retelling of history from the Norman Conquest through to Foxe's own time, but did so in a piecemeal fashion, focusing only on a select few key events. The second edition of 1570 brought that history back to the time of Christ, covering the rise and fall of the Roman empire, the religion of the Anglo-Saxons, and the Norman Conquest. It also provided more detail to the later periods, claiming to reveal how the Roman Catholic church had become corrupted over a period of some 1,500 years.

This revision of history is important. Foxe claimed that the heroes of the past, such as Augustine and Thomas Becket, were traitors.

He claimed that the hated King John had tried to protect England's true faith from a corrupted church. He argued that the papacy had tried to destabilise various countries, including England and the holy Roman empire, so that it could rule supreme.

### Blaming the pope

According to Foxe, it was the pope who continually caused trouble between England and France and enabled William the Conqueror to destroy the Anglo-Saxon monarchy, 'enslaving' England. It was the pope who 'tricked' Richard the Lionheart into focusing on crusades so that the papacy could strengthen its grip in England while he was away. It was the papacy who enabled monks to become lazy and led priests and bishops into sexual transgressions. Foxe twisted facts about the past to fit his own vision of what had happened. There were no lies here, but neither was this a neutral telling of the past. Foxe's history was designed to convert the English to the Protestant faith by claiming the old religion as superstitious and corrupt.

### Burning martyrs

What is most famous about Foxe's book is not the history, but the many stories of Protestants being burnt at the stake by Mary I's government. Between 1555 and 1558, nearly 300 people, including clerics and ordinary men and women, were executed by the state.

### Famous martyrs

Among the famous were Thomas Cranmer (Archbishop of Canterbury), Nicholas Ridley (Bishop of London) and Hugh Latimer (Bishop of Worcester and previously chaplain to Edward VI). The stories were horrific in their detail of the suffering that these martyrs received, telling, for instance, in one case, how the flames 'burned clean all his nether parts' before it had even touched his upper body.

The stories also described at length the martyrs' beliefs as told in their own words via letters, diaries and the record of their examinations by the state. The stories not only emphasised suffering but also highlighted signs of fortitude and strength which, in Foxe's view, revealed the truth of their beliefs. For example, at their joint execution Latimer is claimed to have said to Ridley 'Be of good comfort Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle by God's grace in England, as (I trust) shall never be put out'. Latimer died in the flame 'with very little pain or none'. Ridley suffered more from a stronger flame but still shouted out his love of God as the flames consumed him.

### Ordinary martyrs

Foxe did not just focus on famous martyrs but also on ordinary people. These included women such as Agnes Wardall, Rose Allin, Elizabeth Young and Alice Drivers. In one particularly gruesome story, Foxe tells how one martyr gave birth while in the flames: 'for as the belly of the woman burst asunder by vehemence of the flame, the infant being a fair man child, fell into the fire'.

The most famous, though, was the story of Anne Askew, who insisted in writing that she had a right to read the Bible in public and that various tenets of the Roman Catholic faith were wrong. Askew is often hailed by scholars as an important figure for women's history, but a difficulty lies in that the only version of her story we have was rewritten by a man called John Bale. Can we trust that her words were truly and entirely hers?



The martyrdom of St George

### Further reading



John Foxe's 'The Acts and Monuments' Online (TAMO): [www.tinyurl.com/y46acd8x](http://www.tinyurl.com/y46acd8x).

Even den, E. and Thomas Freeman, T. (2011) *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England: the making of John Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, Cambridge University Press.

Loades, D. (1999) *John Foxe: an historical perspective*, Ashgate.

Phillpott, M. (2018) *The Reformation of England's Past: John Foxe and the revision of history in the late sixteenth century*, Routledge.

### What do historians think?

As soon as the book was published it was studied for its appraisal of history but more so for its stories of martyrdom and faith. It was used in church sermons for hundreds of years, retelling Foxe's stories for each new generation of Protestants.

From the nineteenth century to the present, historians have largely used the Book of Martyrs to better understand the English Reformation itself, focusing on what it tells us about the burning of martyrs, near-contemporary interpretations of Tudor history, and as a contemporary appraisal of religious change.

Dr Matt Phillpott is a historian and learning technologist at the School of Advanced Study, University of London.

# The Elizabethan Poor Laws

## The birth of the welfare state?

Dave Hitchcock

What was the difference between the 'deserving poor' and 'vagabonds'? And how did Elizabethan law handle these groups?

### Exam links

**AQA 1C** The Tudors: England, 1485–1603  
**Edexcel paper 1, option 1B** 1509–1603: authority, nation and religion  
**Edexcel paper 3, option 31** Rebellion and disorder under the Tudors, 1485–1603  
**OCR Y137/Y107** England 1547–1603: The later Tudors  
**OCR Y306** Rebellion and disorder under the Tudors 1485–1603

In 1601, the tenth and final parliament of Queen Elizabeth I passed 'An Act for the Relief of the Poor'. The Act created a national framework of welfare based on taxation and operated by the state. It was unique in Europe. Over time this vast system, based in parishes across the realm, would:

- grant pensions to widows and other deserving 'objects of charity'
  - build subsidised housing for pauper families
  - create apprenticeships for poor children
  - find work for the underemployed
  - provide medical care for the sick
  - imprison the 'idle and disorderly' in **workhouses**
- 'The Old Poor Law', as it has become known to generations of students and scholars, was the longest consecutively serving system of welfare in Europe, and was in operation for more than 200 years between 1601 and 1834. How did it come about?

### The world of Elizabethan England

#### Know your place

People living in England a little over 400 years ago saw themselves as all connected by an immense 'chain', as playing some small part in God's divine order which governed the cosmos and man's place within

**workhouse** A building owned and operated by a parish where the poor could be both housed and put to work if they were able. Became widespread in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.



Parliament convenes under Queen Elizabeth I

ModernHistoryReviewExtras

Go online for a presentation on this topic ([www.hoddereducation.co.uk/modernhistoryreviewextras](http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/modernhistoryreviewextras))

it. This order, as expressed in the 1547 'Homily on Obedience', dictated that there must be kings, that there would be paupers, and that 'everyone have need of other; so that in all things is to be lauded and praised the goodly order of God, without the which no house, no city, no commonwealth can continue and endure'.

People needed to know their place in society — and, generally, stay there. However, society in turn

needed to support the poor. These attitudes had long been connected to informal and private charity, but in the sixteenth century they became part of government policy. For instance, Cardinal Wolsey, chancellor under King Henry VIII, famously brought forward policies for the punishing of homeless wanderers, or 'vagabonds'. Likewise Thomas More, Wolsey's successor, was involved in an attempt at a national poor relief system in 1531. Local experimentation continued throughout the century. However, it was not until the reign of Elizabeth that a national system managed to stay in place.

### Biblical influence

In the sixteenth century, one of the most quoted biblical lines was from Paul the Apostle, who wrote that 'He that will not work, neither should he eat' in a letter to early Greek Christians. In these words, Paul drew a line between those who deserve help, and those who, by refusing to help themselves, deserved punishment.

Living as they did in a society where matters of religion were inseparable from matters of everyday life, sixteenth-century English people initially based their understanding of who was poor and why on the Bible. They saw two categories of poor people: the 'deserving' who were too young, old, infirm or ill to care for themselves, and the 'undeserving', who, it was imagined, could work but 'refused' to do so.

### The labouring poor

In the reign of Queen Elizabeth I it became clear that matters were more complicated, and that a third group of poor people existed, called variously 'poor able labouring folk', or 'decayed householders', or people that 'labour to get their living with their hands, and yet cannot help fully themselves'. Historians call this group 'the labouring poor', and many Elizabethan commentators were confounded by their existence.

### An Elizabethan minimum wage?

It became clear to the English government in the 1550s that the economy was changing, that it was producing greater levels of poverty and larger numbers of 'masterless' labourers wandering in search of work.

### War and trade

Repeated wars with either France or Spain and intra-European struggles on the continent, most importantly Spanish warfare in the Low Countries, disrupted fragile trade networks and threw the English textile industries into depression. Given that the most common employments were in agriculture or textiles, these trade depressions hit the poorest in society doubly hard. First, they raised the price of necessities like food and clothing that the poor needed, and second, they made it harder to find work to pay for necessary things.

A steady influx of Spanish silver from mines in the Americas also contributed to inflation (it cost six times more to buy the same amount of bread in 1600 as it did in 1500). As a result, by the early 1560s wages for many forms of work in England were inadequate to maintain a household.

### Mouths to feed

Population growth also played a role. In 1520 England was a kingdom of approximately 2.5 million souls. Only 30 years later historians estimate the population had risen to 3.2 million, and by 1600 over 4 million.

### Wages

Bad harvests, trade depressions, a lack of jobs and a rising population all combined to produce terrible economic conditions for the poorest. One attempt to combat the effects of these economic shifts was the 1563 'Statute of Artificers' which mandated that local judges, called **Justices of the Peace**, were to annually set minimum wages for different employments based on the conditions in their area. This law gave significant powers to local state officials that were designed to help the labouring poor, but also to keep them in their places.

### Counting the poor

Another innovation in the decades before the Poor Laws was the increasingly sophisticated counting of poor people. These 'surveys' or 'censuses' of the poor sometimes survive. The most famous is from the city of Norwich in 1570, where the names and details of 800 resident paupers and their families were noted

**Justice of the Peace**  
English magistrate responsible for ruling on a wide range of 'civic' and non-capital law, including the Poor Law. They also regulated wages and funded maintenance of roads and prisons.



A vagrant family search for work

down under the auspices of then-mayor John Aldrich, who would later sit as an MP in 1572 and 1576. This census allowed city officials to establish down to the last child exactly who 'belonged' on the city's charity and welfare rolls, and who did not.

The Norwich census of the poor is a precious document for historians, as it is in this type of source and often nowhere else that we can learn details about the lives and livelihoods of individual paupers. The census contains stories like that of Robert Barwic, aged 60, 'longe in pryson' for his debts, and Anne his wife of 40 years. The couple who had 8 children, all young. We learn that the biggest of these children ran a 'bowlynge alye' (a bowling alley, likely outdoors) to bring in some money. 'Able. No alms. Veri pore' reads the entry by their names. This practice of naming, checking, and most importantly counting the poor would become central not just to the Elizabethan Poor Laws, but to major social policies that came after it.

### Punishing vagrants

The flip side of efforts to relieve the deserving poor during the later sixteenth century were new measures to control and punish the undeserving: the 'villains', 'rogues', 'vagabonds', 'thieves' and 'sturdy beggars' that roamed the country. It was commonly assumed that **vagrants** were young, restless and fundamentally lazy people who did not want to work for a living and who wandered about deceiving people out of their money instead. In reality, terrible conditions such as family tragedies, accidents, illnesses and poor job prospects could eventually make people homeless in a manner not all that different from today.

Of course one did not have to be homeless to find it necessary to beg for assistance. But the common stereotype of vagrants as 'idle shirkers' was widely believed and led to colourful stories about an 'Elizabethan Underworld' full of con-artists and petty

thieves. Actual vagrants could be harshly punished. Standard practice was meant to have a local official 'scourge' or whip a vagrant in public if they were caught. Vagrants were also often incarcerated in so-called 'houses of correction', and if they offended more than once, they could have the letter 'R' or 'V' burned on to their skin.

Laws in 1572, 1576, and indeed the Poor Laws themselves, all contain provisions about punishing vagrants, and every subsequent piece of welfare legislation leading right up to modern day has featured something similar. Today British society still uses a law from 1824 to move the homeless on from one council to another.

### The laws of 1598 and 1601

The 1597/8 parliament was summoned for an unusual set of reasons. Terrible harvests since 1593 and open rebellion in Ireland from 1594 meant that MPs had to reckon right away with serious matters of welfare and warfare. The Canterbury lawyer Henry Finch called the attention of MPs to the miserable plight of the poor on or about 5 November 1597 and a committee appointed to investigate solutions found itself deluged with proposals.

Finch and others eventually whittled the proposals down to four bills, covering many of the basics of the resulting system:

- a tax or 'rate' levied at parish level to finance either cash payments or the provision of other assistance
- further punishment of vagrants
- the purchasing of 'stock' (materials) to use in employing the poor
- the legal apparatus and oversight of the entire system

In 1601 these four bills became one, the language was updated, and the powers and responsibilities of new welfare officials called **overseers** were laid out. This 'Old Poor Law' would last until 1834.

### The system in practice

For poor people in England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Old Poor Law generally worked as follows. First, people were only eligible for assistance in the parish where they belonged, whether that was because they were born there, or they married in, or they previously moved in and took up work. Second, people generally needed a reason to be relieved — perhaps they were ill, had too many children, were a widow, could not find

**vagrant** An early modern legal term for homeless person, someone who 'wandered and begged'. It was a crime to be a vagrant for the entire early modern period.

**overseer** A local parish official responsible for administering the different forms of welfare and discipline that the Poor Laws required. Created by the 1598/1601 Poor Laws.

Vagabonds often disguised themselves as destitute beggars in order to collect charity



### Exam-style questions

- 1 What influences were there on attitudes to the poor in early modern England?
- 2 What short-term and long-term factors prompted MPs to consider the relief of the poor in 1597?
- 3 Did the Old Poor Law truly set up a system of 'welfare'?

## Further reading



Slack, P. (1990) *The English Poor Law 1531–1782*, Macmillan. Chapters 1 and 2.

'The Homily on Obedience'. Available at:

[www.tinyurl.com/y5qcer98](http://www.tinyurl.com/y5qcer98).

The 1570 Norwich Census of the Poor. Available at:

[www.tinyurl.com/y4o9xj9k](http://www.tinyurl.com/y4o9xj9k).

William Cecil's 1559 'Considerations' for Parliament.

Available at: [www.tinyurl.com/yycnsekj](http://www.tinyurl.com/yycnsekj).



Vagrants faced severe punishment if they refused to work

any work, there was a trade depression, food was too expensive to afford, and so on.

The help people received varied enormously. Relief mainly took the form of small weekly pensions of several pence or perhaps a shilling or more for larger families or the severely disabled. However, people might also be given subsidised housing, food, clothing, apprenticeships for their children, or opportunities to make money doing work on the side for the parish.

In return, poor people were expected to remember their 'Homily on Obedience'. They would have to conform to expected conduct: going to church, spending wisely, being respectful to superiors, seeking work if possible.

This system was financed by better-off 'rate-payers' in each parish and operated by local officials. If anyone disputed some point of the law, they sought a Justice of the Peace for a ruling. By 1696 officials estimated the whole law 'cost' ratepayers about £400,000, which is about £52 million pounds in

today's money, but closer to £10 billion pounds adjusted for the overall size of the two economies.

### The birth of welfare?

It might have been formalised in 1601, but the Old Poor law developed only after a century of previous efforts. Magnates well versed in affairs of state, like Sir William Cecil, busied themselves with laws governing wages, enclosure, vagrancy and poor relief for decades before anything stuck. Cecil even wrote an extensive set of 'Considerations' for one of Elizabeth's first parliaments on exactly these matters. When something finally did stick after 1601, however, it remained the consistent pattern for more than 200 years and gave rise to the modern concept of the 'welfare state' as we understand it today.

Dave Hitchcock is an early modern social historian based at Canterbury Christ Church University, and he specialises in the history of poverty and vagrancy.

# Using this article in your exam



How could this article be useful in your exam?

Dave Hitchcock has provided an informative article about the Elizabethan Poor Laws, a topic which is often sidelined or simply adjoined to the more 'glamorous' issue of Tudor rebellions.

Note how the origins of the Poor Laws are carefully teased out and how there is an emphasis on the need to look at background to the laws using a long-term to short-term framework. This is a good example of showing the relationship between causation, change and continuity over time.

Also, the article is strong on emphasising the changing context during which the laws were produced, referring to the economy (including trade and wage levels), war and population growth.

Finally, the article is strong on flagging up some interesting sources, such as censuses on the poor, which are not always referred to in mainstream texts. You could be faced with an exam-type question on this topic, along the lines of, 'Assess the reasons for the passing of the Elizabethan Poor Laws of 1598 and 1601.'

# The social impact of the bicycle

From pioneering daredevils to suburban workers, we explore the rise of bicycle power

The first cyclists in the late nineteenth century distinguished themselves as modern, progressive and, above all, sporting. Riding the crude bicycles of the time, including the penny farthing, was risky and required agility and courage, so it was considered by definition as a sport. Cycle racing, on special tracks and on public roads, was one of the first mass-spectator sports.

## Health and recreation

With the advent of the safety bicycle, which was easier and more comfortable to ride, bicycles were also used for recreational purposes. The riders, members of the affluent class who could afford this expensive item, experienced it as a 'freedom machine', enabling flexible mobility at an unprecedented speed. The bike became popular for touring in the countryside and enjoying nature. Already by around 1900 some daring cyclists made long trips in Europe and America and even world journeys.

Although in medical debates the possible drawbacks of cycling, especially for women, were mentioned, in general its health benefits were highlighted. Cycling was viewed as a counterbalance to the supposedly harmful and unhealthy aspects of industrial towns: stress, pollution, noise and the standardised rhythms and sedentary routines of office and factory labour.

## Cycling and nationalism

However, at the same time the pioneers had to fight for social acceptance. Authorities often tried to impede their freedom of movement, there were complaints from pedestrians and coachmen about their riding style and rural folk viewed tourists as arrogant intruders. In order to defend their interests, cyclists organised themselves in local clubs as well as national associations.

The activities of cycling organisations in many countries reflected not only the values of bourgeois respectability and liberal citizenship, but also nationalist aspirations. Bicycle touring, facilitating the discovery of national landscapes and heritage, and bringing town and countryside closer together, was imbued with nationalist self-esteem.

## Early twentieth century

In the first decades of the twentieth century, when the bicycle became affordable for the lower classes, it was increasingly used on a massive scale for daily practical purposes. It was a cost-effective substitute for the horse and it was introduced in postal and telegram services, police and fire departments, and the army. The bike enabled workers to cover a longer distance between home and work, and thus contributed to suburbanisation. Traders, shopkeepers

Utilitarian cycling in The Netherlands





Elsewhere in Europe, there is a rich tradition of cycling as a sport

and artisans used it to transport goods or offer their services. In the countryside, the bicycle advanced the opening up of isolated settlements. Schooling and dating opportunities broadened, distant relatives and friends came within reach.

Although women cyclists sometimes incited controversy and were pressured to develop a riding style that met the prevailing gender standards of decency, the bicycle contributed to women's emancipation. The bike significantly enlarged women's independence and habit of going out, thus breaking down their social isolation. Also, engaging in this activity loosened constrictive dress codes and enabled physical activity in public.

### The car

The upsurge of utilitarian cycling by the working class soon gave the bicycle a lower social status. The bourgeoisie and aristocracy increasingly turned to the motorcycle and the car in order to distinguish themselves from the pedalling masses. The image of the bicycle as the embodiment of speed, innovation and progressiveness was eclipsed by motoring even though the volume of cycle traffic was greater than ever between the First World War and the 1950s. In the USA, where driving a car became part of national identity, the bicycle was a vehicle for losers and eccentrics, or for youngsters and students.

### Europe and the bike

During the twentieth century, The Netherlands and Denmark, generally regarded as cycling nations par excellence, saw a development that markedly differed from most Western countries. The lasting popularity of cycling in these countries was not only related to favourable conditions, such as lack of hills, extensive urbanisation, compact towns and short distances. It was associated with supposedly typical Dutch and Danish national virtues, such as independence, self-control, modesty and stability.

These Dutch values were reflected in the typical Dutch utilitarian, solid and sturdy type of bike for everyday use and was, and remains,

related to an egalitarian social ethos and distaste for showing off. Commercial cycle racing was presented as vulgar and as contrary to the status of cyclists as respectable and responsible road users. On the other hand, in France, Belgium, Italy and Spain cycle racing became a source of national pride, embodied for example in the Tour de France inaugurated in 1903.

### Today

The English-speaking world and European countries such as Germany and France display a contrasting picture. In the UK, pro-bicycle policies are often contested and do not elicit broad support. The two-wheeler is more frequently used for recreational and sporting than for utilitarian purposes. Younger men are strongly overrepresented among cyclists, while women and the elderly are underrepresented.

Nevertheless, nowadays the bicycle is celebrated as a clean, sustainable, healthy, flexible, inexpensive and humane means of personal transport and as a remedy for traffic congestion, environmental pollution, depleting energy resources, the climate crisis, welfare diseases and social exclusion. All over the Western world, governments have launched programmes for promoting cycling. However, the widely diverging national cycling levels have hardly changed during the last two decades. The share of biking as a percentage of the total number of traffic movements amounted to:

- 27% in The Netherlands
- 20% in Denmark
- around 10% in other Nordic countries and Germany
- around 5% in France and Italy
- between 1% and 3% in the UK, North America and Australia

It is questionable whether bicycling, as a historically and culturally shaped practice, can be substantially increased through policies.

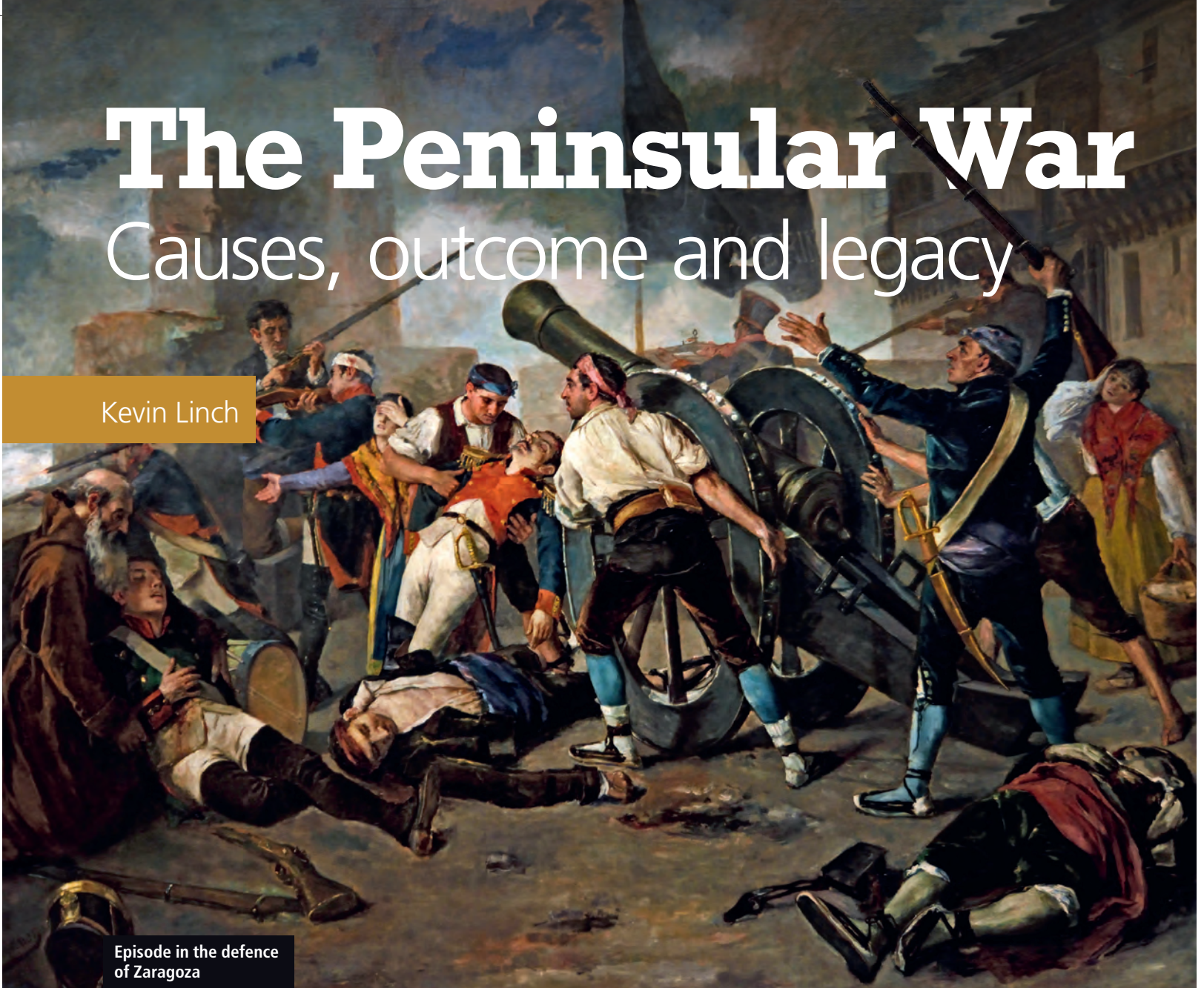
Harry Oosterhuis is a professor in the department of history at the University of Maastricht, The Netherlands.



# The Peninsular War

## Causes, outcome and legacy

Kevin Linch



Episode in the defence of Zaragoza

Explore one of the British army's most celebrated military campaigns

The Peninsular War, also known as the *Guerra de la Independencia Española* (Spanish War of Independence), lasted between 1808 and 1814. It was part of the Napoleonic wars, a conflict

### Exam links



- AQA 2H** France in revolution, 1774–1815
- Edexcel paper 3, option 35.2** The British experience of warfare, c.1790–1918
- OCR Y243/Y213** The French Revolution and the rule of Napoleon 1774–1815
- OCR Y345/Y315** The changing nature of warfare 1792–1945

that involved all the European powers between 1803 and 1815. The Peninsular War was fought between British, Portuguese and Spanish armies on one side, and the French supported by their allies on the other. Fighting in Spain and Portugal was a constant drain on French military resources, and it contributed to the eventual collapse of the Napoleonic empire in Europe.

### The causes of the war

War broke out between the UK and France in 1803. Alliances with other European powers were undone by rapid French victories between 1805 and 1807, leaving the UK as the only European power still in the conflict.

### France invades Portugal

Napoleon I, emperor of France, decided to wage economic war on the UK by excluding British goods from continental Europe. However, Portugal (an old

ally of Britain) was still open to British trade. When Portugal rejected a French ultimatum requiring them to declare war on Britain, a French army was sent across Spain to invade Portugal. This force occupied Lisbon, Portugal's capital, on 30 November 1807. The Portuguese royal family had fled the day before to Brazil, one of Portugal's colonies.

### Spain's position

Spain was officially an ally of France, and there were indeed *afrancesados* ('Frenchified' people) who supported the French. However, others in the Spanish government had been looking for ways to get out of the alliance. Napoleon was suspicious that Spain could switch sides and thought Spain could be better governed in French interests. French troops were stationed across Spain to support the troops in Portugal and the Spanish government.

In March 1808, tensions within the Spanish royal family, which were part political and part colossal family row, led to the abdication of King Charles IV, who was replaced by his son Ferdinand. Napoleon used the crisis to his advantage. He invited both Charles IV and Ferdinand VII to Bayonne in France to resolve the dispute. There, Napoleon forced them both to renounce the throne and made his own brother, Joseph, king of Spain.

Across Spain there were violent reactions to these events. In Madrid on 2 May 1808, Spaniards rebelled against the French occupation. The next day, the French army shot hundreds of Madrid's people in retaliation. Similar uprisings occurred across other Spanish towns, and by the end of May all Spain's provinces were in revolt. By June it had spread to Portugal too.

### The British army arrives

In August, a British army, under the command of **Arthur Wellesley** (later the Duke of Wellington), landed just outside Lisbon. War now engulfed the Iberian Peninsula, a mixture of both a civil war and conflict between different European states.

### The armies

Both sides' armies in the Peninsular War were multinational. In the British army there were Germans from Hanover and Brunswick whose countries had been conquered by the French between 1803 and 1806. The French had troops from other German states, as well as Swiss, Italian, Polish and Dutch units. There were big differences between the armies.

### Recruitment

The French army and its allies relied on conscription to find the men it needed. The government decided how many soldiers it wanted and young men were selected at random from the population and sent to serve in the military. At its height in 1810, the French army in Iberia totalled 330,000 men.

The British army was recruited by offering money to join up, but it meant that the British army was much smaller and replacing heavy casualties was difficult. The Portuguese army was in a poor state in 1807. It was kept away from major fighting in the early years of the war, giving it time to improve and integrate with the British army to create a unified force. The Spanish army was also in a poor state in 1807, but despite repeated defeats by French armies it continued to regroup and fight the French again. At their peak in 1813, these armies combined totalled 201,000 troops.



The Torres Vedras complex of fortifications, outside Lisbon

## Box | Key figures

### Arthur Wellesley, First Duke of Wellington (1769–1852)

- Born in Ireland.
- Joined the British army in 1787.
- Served in India 1798–1805, commanding an Anglo-Indian army that conquered large parts of India.
- Commanded the British army in Portugal and Spain between 1809 and 1814. In 1815, he commanded an allied army which, with a Prussian army, defeated the French at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 that ended the wars.
- Later became prime minister.

### Espoz y Mina (1781–1836)

- Took over his nephew's guerrilla band (he was captured by the French) in 1810.
- Eventually commanded an army of 13,500 men.
- Reckoned to have tied down 26,000 French troops.
- Disliked the restoration after the war, and fought against the Spanish king.

### Supplies

A further big difference between the British and French armies was how they were supplied. Both needed munitions and weapons to be brought into Spain, but the British army tried to supply its forces through contracts and paying for food. The French, on the other hand, requisitioned or plundered food for its soldiers and horses. As a result, the French army often had to disperse throughout Spain to be able to feed itself.

### Guerrilla units

Alongside the Portuguese and Spanish armies, there were numerous **guerrilla** units that harassed the French armies. Often prompted to fight the French by a vendetta or honour, they could be bandits as much as they were freedom fighters. The Spanish government allowed them to keep what they plundered from the French, and they had a huge impact on the war. Some of these units became small armies in themselves, commanded by leaders such as **Espoz y Mina** in Navarre.

### The first stages of the war

#### Early French losses

Initially, the Spanish and British armies pushed back the French. Between 16 and 19 July, a French army of 25,000 was surrounded and surrendered at the Battle of Bailén in Andalusia. The impact was immense. French armies withdrew from across Spain, retreating from Madrid. In August 1808, the British army defeated the French outside Lisbon, and the French agreed to evacuate Portugal. Following this, a reinforced British army of 30,000 men marched into Spain to support the Spanish armies.

### Napoleon's response

Taking personal command, Napoleon responded quickly. Amassing an army of nearly 280,000 men in November, the French smashed the Spanish armies in a series of battles, and by January had chased the British army to northwestern Spain. Although the Battle of Corunna (16 January 1809), was a British victory, all it did was cover the evacuation of the army back to Britain.

Meanwhile, the French retook Spanish towns, sometimes after horrific sieges. At Zaragoza, a second siege began in November 1808. The siege turned into brutal hand-to-hand fighting involving most of the town's population. When in February 1809, Zaragoza surrendered it was a burnt-out ruin and 65,000 people were dead.

Napoleon, believing that the main fighting was over, handed command of the French army to his generals, each given an independent command and region to govern. Spanish and Portuguese resistance continued, supported by British troops, money and arms.

### Stalemate

Over the next 3 years, the war was a mixture of offensives and counter-offensives but no decisive victories. The remaining British army in Portugal was reinforced and, after repelling another French invasion of Portugal in early 1809, advanced into Spain and joined up with Spanish armies to advance on Madrid. They defeated a French army at the Battle of Talavera (27–28 July 1809), but suffered almost 25% casualties. The victory was a hollow one, as other French forces were concentrating against the British and Spanish armies.

Fearing that the British army would be cut off from its base in Lisbon, Wellesley ordered a retreat to Portugal and separated from the Spanish armies. Cooperation between the Anglo-Portuguese and Spanish armies was poor after this until 1813.

### Famine and terror

Outside Lisbon, British military engineers had devised a series of fortifications. Known as the Lines of Torres Vedras, they were built using conscripted Portuguese labour. During another French invasion of Portugal in 1810, the British used **scorched earth** tactics to deny the French food as they withdrew to the Lines. Over the winter of 1810–11, however, this decision had a catastrophic effect on the Portuguese population — 300,000 people were forced to abandon their homes and an estimated 50,000 died.

In 1810 and 1811, the war between the regular armies concentrated on the border between Spain and Portugal, around four fortresses that guarded the main routes between the two countries. In 1810 the French held all these key towns, and were also besieging Cadiz, where the Spanish government had moved.

#### guerrilla warfare

Warfare conducted by bands of armed civilians who often hide in inaccessible retreats, such as mountains, large forests and marsh lands, emerging to make surprise attacks on the enemy.

#### scorched earth

A desperate defensive strategy sometimes used by retreating armies whereby, as they withdraw, they deprive the advancing enemy of all assets by burning crops and food stores, destroying bridges, disrupting routes and so on.

## Further reading



Esdaile, C. (2003) *The Peninsular War: a new history*, Penguin.

Esdaile, C. (2008) *Peninsular Eyewitnesses: the experience of war in Spain and Portugal 1808–13*, Pen and Sword Military.

Gates, D. (2002) *The Spanish Ulcer: a history of the Peninsular War*, Da Capo Press.

For a chronology, see Age of Revolution at: [www.tinyurl.com/y528ab89](http://www.tinyurl.com/y528ab89).

The Napoleon Series. For documents and discussion papers about different aspect of the conflict, see the entries under 'The Peninsular War of 1808–1814' at: [www.tinyurl.com/yxahn6sy](http://www.tinyurl.com/yxahn6sy).

Two hundred thousand men of the French army were dispersed across Spain fighting the guerrilla war, protecting roads, supply convoys, or trying to restore order. Although the guerrillas could not completely defeat the French forces, they made large parts of Spain ungovernable. This part of the war was brutal. Terror, torture and mutilation were common on both sides in a cycle of atrocities and retaliation. The horror of the war was reflected in 82 prints produced by Francisco Goya. Known as the 'Disasters of War' they are arguably one of the most important examples of anti-war art ever created.

### French defeats and the end of the war

The strategic situation changed in late 1811. Napoleon was preparing to invade Russia, and so reinforcements to Spain diminished and troops were withdrawn. The Duke of Wellington had an excellent intelligence network and knew that the French army was shrinking. The balance of strength of the armies was shifting in favour of the British, Portuguese and Spanish. In 1812, while Napoleon was fighting a war in Russia, the French were defeated at the Battle of Salamanca (22 July 1812), and Madrid was liberated from the French. However, French forces regrouped much more rapidly than Wellington anticipated, and it took another campaign in 1813 to expel the French from Spain. The French army suffered a significant defeat at the battle of Vitoria (21 June 1813) and retreated to the Pyrenees.

### Exam-style questions

- 1 What motivated soldiers and people to fight in these wars?
- 2 What was different about the guerrilla war compared to the conflict between the British and French armies?
- 3 How did the war impact civilians in Spain and Portugal?



The Duke of Wellington commanded the British army to victory in several campaigns and later became prime minister

The war continued until 1814, with British and Portuguese forces invading southern France. However, it was the war in central and western Europe that determined Napoleon's fate, as the Russians, joined by the Prussians, Austrians and Swedes, continued to fight in 1813 and 1814, taking Paris on 31 March 1814.

### Legacy

Many units of the British army have battle honours from the years of the Peninsular War, which also created several regimental traditions. For example, today the King's Royal Hussars invite officers to drink from King Joseph's silver chamber pot, which was taken from French treasure captured at the Battle of Vitoria. The war also made the Duke of Wellington a famous military commander. He was respected throughout Europe as a general.

For Spain, the legacy was more complicated. Most Spaniards welcomed the restoration of Ferdinand VII, but politics was split between those who wanted to return society to pre-1808, and those who wanted to keep some of the reforms. These splits led to civil wars in the nineteenth century. Just as significantly, the war weakened Spanish authority in its overseas empire, and Spanish colonies across South and Central America gained greater autonomy and freedom. These movements became wars of independence that created new states in the 1820s and 1830s.

Kevin Lynch is associate professor of modern history at the University of Leeds. He teaches European and British history in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.