

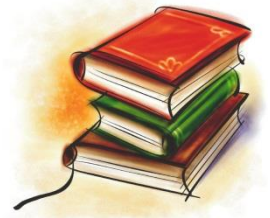
Atherton High School
History Department



AQA GCSE History Study Booklet

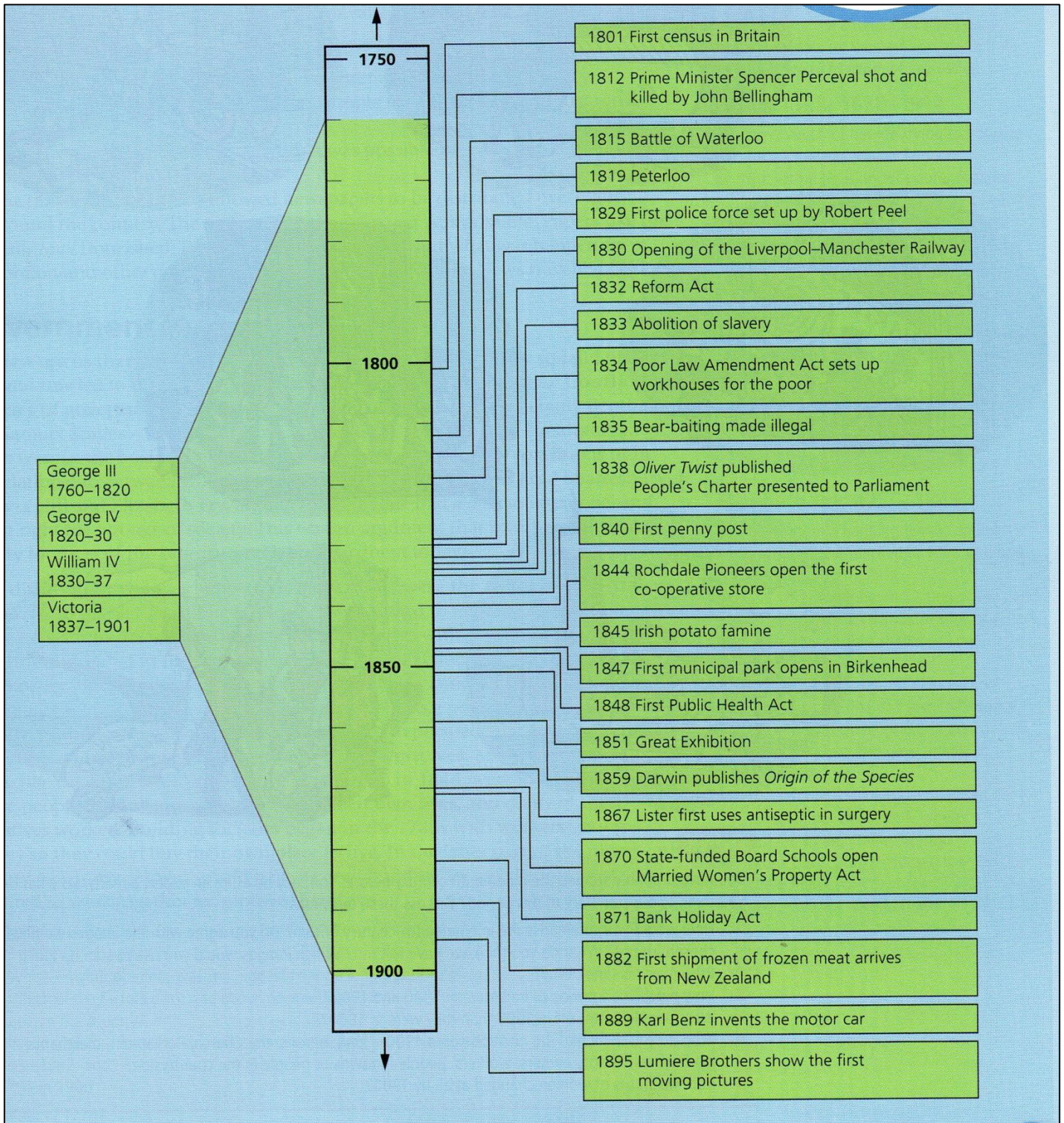
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British Thematic Study:
Power and the People
Part 3:
Reform and Reformers

Timeline of Nineteenth century reforms



Background to the Nineteenth Century

The C19th was a time of great change in Britain. The population grew rapidly, while the industrial revolution brought urbanisation. By 1851 more people lived in towns than in the countryside. The gap between rich and poor grew: manufacturers became rich from the profits of industry whilst the working class often suffered from poor working and living conditions and poor health. A movement to secure the vote and other political rights for workers grew during the early C19. Most working men had gained the right to vote by the end of the century. They put pressure on governments to make reforms to help the working class. Governments began slowly to break with the old idea of "**laissez-faire**" - the belief in "leaving things alone", that it was not the job of governments to help the people, but that people should help themselves. At the same time, workers were gaining an education and were beginning to organise themselves into protest groups and unions. Better communications such as the "penny post" and a growing railway network meant that ideas could be spread quickly. Some of the reforms were the result of government actions, whereas others were made by the people themselves.

1. The Extension of the Franchise

The problem in the early nineteenth century

No changes had been made to the **franchise** (right to vote) for centuries. Elections had to be held every 7 years. Each county and each borough (a voting area within a town) had two MPs. In practice, only rich landowners could vote. No workers or manufacturers, who were now often the country's richest people, could vote. Most industrial towns had no MPs at all. The worst problem was thought to be the "**rotten boroughs**" where there were few or no voters at all, but there were still MPs. Seats in parliament were sold to those who paid the highest price. Also there were "**pocket boroughs**", which were controlled by

one individual, who could pay all the voters to vote for the man he wanted as MP. Voting was done openly by a show of hands, not by secret ballot. Therefore it was easy to bribe or threaten voters. Many conservatives supported this system, believing that it preserved the social order with landowners in power. They believed it would be dangerous to give a say to workers.

Task

Explain the following terms:

Laissez-faire _____

Franchise _____

Rotten borough _____

Pocket borough _____

Secret ballot _____

Why did people demand change in the early C19?

The American Revolution (1776 - 1783) and the French Revolution showed that it was possible to get freedom. The end of the wars against France and the Battle of Waterloo of 1815 meant that a lot of soldiers had come home in search of work. The introduction of the Corn Laws (see later in this booklet) and bad harvests meant that people were starving. They needed MPs to represent them in parliament. They were influenced by the speeches and writings of radical orators (speakers) such as Major John Cartwright and William Cobbett. These men toured the country speaking of the need for reform. Cobbett produced a weekly newspaper called "The Political Register" for working men.

The government was not yet prepared to listen to these ideas, and used fear of the violence of the French Revolution to present anyone speaking in favour of reform as a "revolutionary". A Reform Bill introduced into parliament in 1809 was easily defeated.

Task: Make a spider diagram to show the reasons why people demanded change in the early C19.

**Reasons for Demands
for Change**

The Peterloo Massacre 1819

On 16 August 1819 around 60,000 people met at St Peter's Fields, Manchester. (This area is where St Peter's Square is now - Central Library and the tram stop). This was a peaceful protest to listen to speeches by radicals such as Henry Hunt, calling for the reform of parliament. Men, women and children had turned up in their best clothes, waving banners. Some had travelled 30 miles to hear the famous speaker. However, the sight of so many people caused local magistrates to panic, in fear of violence. They read the Riot Act, telling the crowd to break up. However, most people in the crowd could not hear this. The local militia (soldiers) was sent in to break up the crowd and arrest the leaders. They rode in on horseback, waving their sabres (swords), slashing at the crowds. There was nowhere for the protestors to run. Within 10 minutes up to 600 people had been wounded, and 15 killed.



After the protest, the leaders were tried for treason. Hunt served two years in prison. The magistrates and militia were cleared of any wrongdoing by an inquiry, and were congratulated by the Prince Regent. Journalists present were arrested.

The events were quickly labelled by radicals as the Peterloo "Massacre" (after the Battle of Waterloo). There was considerable public sympathy for the plight of the protesters. The Times newspaper printed a shocking account of the day, causing widespread outrage. A huge petition with 20 pages of signatures was raised, stating the petitioners' belief that the meeting on 16 August had been peaceful until the arrival of the soldiers.

To ensure that the demands for reform were stopped the government passed the **Six Acts**. These made public meetings of more than 50 people illegal, allowed local magistrates to search properties for arms, increased stamp duty (tax) on publications, and increased punishments for seditious or libellous publications (i.e. writings which criticised the government).

The significance of the Peterloo Protest

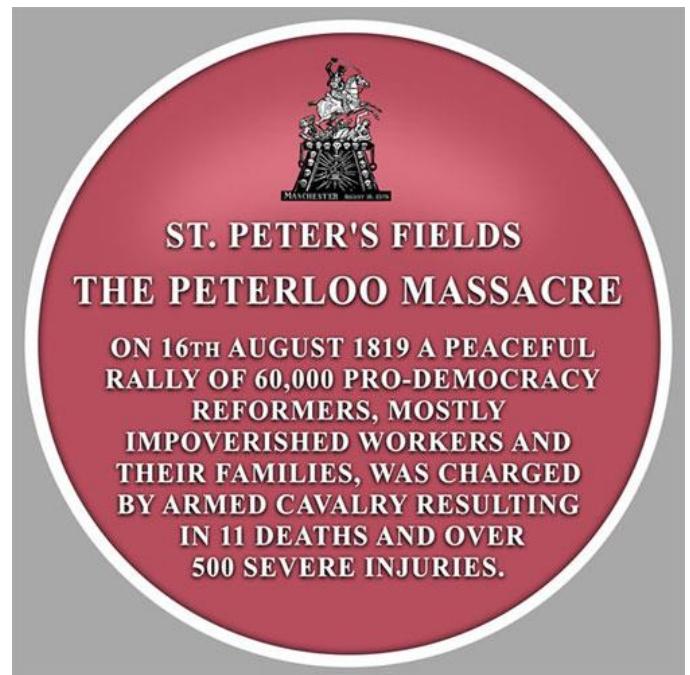
Peterloo is often remembered as a case study of sacrifice by working class protestors. Although the protest did not achieve its aims, and was followed by harsh restrictions on protest, many historians think it increased the demands for reforms. Chartism, which was a more organised movement, emerged from the failures of the Peterloo protest. Peterloo was an important turning point in the thinking of workers, as it showed that the government was not prepared to listen

to them easily. It also showed that they had some support from the middle class press. The businessman John Edwards Taylor went on to help set up the Guardian newspaper as a reaction to what he had seen at Peterloo.

There is a memorial campaign in Manchester, and plans for a big celebration at the 200th anniversary of the massacre in 2019. The campaign achieved a success in 2007 when the official blue plaque on the Radisson Hotel was replaced by an orange one. You can see the difference in the wording below.

The People's History Museum in Manchester commemorates the events. Its director, Nick Mansfield, said this:

"This was a world changing event that happened right here in Manchester. It was world-changing because this appalling event made those people that had power in the 19th Century realise that there had to be changes in the political system. It was a long process that lasted more than 100 years but it eventually gave people one person, one vote."





Tasks - read p 6-8

1. How many people met at St Peter's Field? _____
2. Who had they come to hear? _____
3. What did they want? _____
4. What did the magistrates do when the crowd did not break up?

5. How many people were killed or injured? _____
6. What happened to the leader? _____
7. What was the reaction of the press? _____

8. What were the effects of the Six Acts?

9. What words would you use to describe the response of the authorities to

The Great Reform Act of 1832

The Six Acts made organised protests more difficult. However, a moderate group called the Birmingham Political Union, was formed to represent the working and middle classes, promising to act within the law. This type of union was copied around the country, and began to worry the government when its leader, Thomas Attwood, called for people to stop paying taxes until they got the vote.

Gradually in parliament attitudes began to change. Some now argued that it was better to give in to moderate demands than to face violent protest. In

1830 a new Whig government, led by Earl Grey, took power. The Whigs were more interested in reform than the Tories (Conservatives). William IV, who became King in 1830 when his father, George III died, was also more open to reform. In 1830 Earl Grey's government twice introduced a reform bill, which was passed by the House of Commons, but blocked by the House of Lords. The approval of the House of Lords was needed for all new laws. The House of Lords, which was unelected and made up of rich Tory landowners, was naturally opposed to (against) allowing ordinary people to vote.

The failure of the bills led to riots in Nottingham, Bristol and Derby in 1830. At the same time, "**Captain Swing**" protests against new farm machines, were taking place across the country. Earl Grey wanted to act quickly. He was successful in passing a third bill through the House of Lords in 1832 because he threatened to ask the King to create new Whig peers (members of the House of Lords). The Tory peers were so afraid of losing their power that they voted for the **Reform Bill**.

The effects of the Act were:

- London and other large towns and cities were given MPs;
- 56 places lost both MPs (this meant the end of "Rotten boroughs");
- 30 other smaller towns lost one MP;
- People who earned £150 per year got the right to vote;
- The number of voters increased from 435,000 to 652,000.

What was the significance of the Reform Act of 1832?

The Act made limited changes. The middle class benefited as many industrialists could now vote, and their towns had MPs for the first time. The working class did not benefit: most workers earned around £50 a year, so they still could not vote. Those few who could vote had to do so openly, so in practice they had to vote for their factory owner or landowner. However,

the Act did show that the government might make changes when it was pressured to do so. Demands for reform continued.

Task

Decide whether the following statements are true or false. Correct them if they are false.

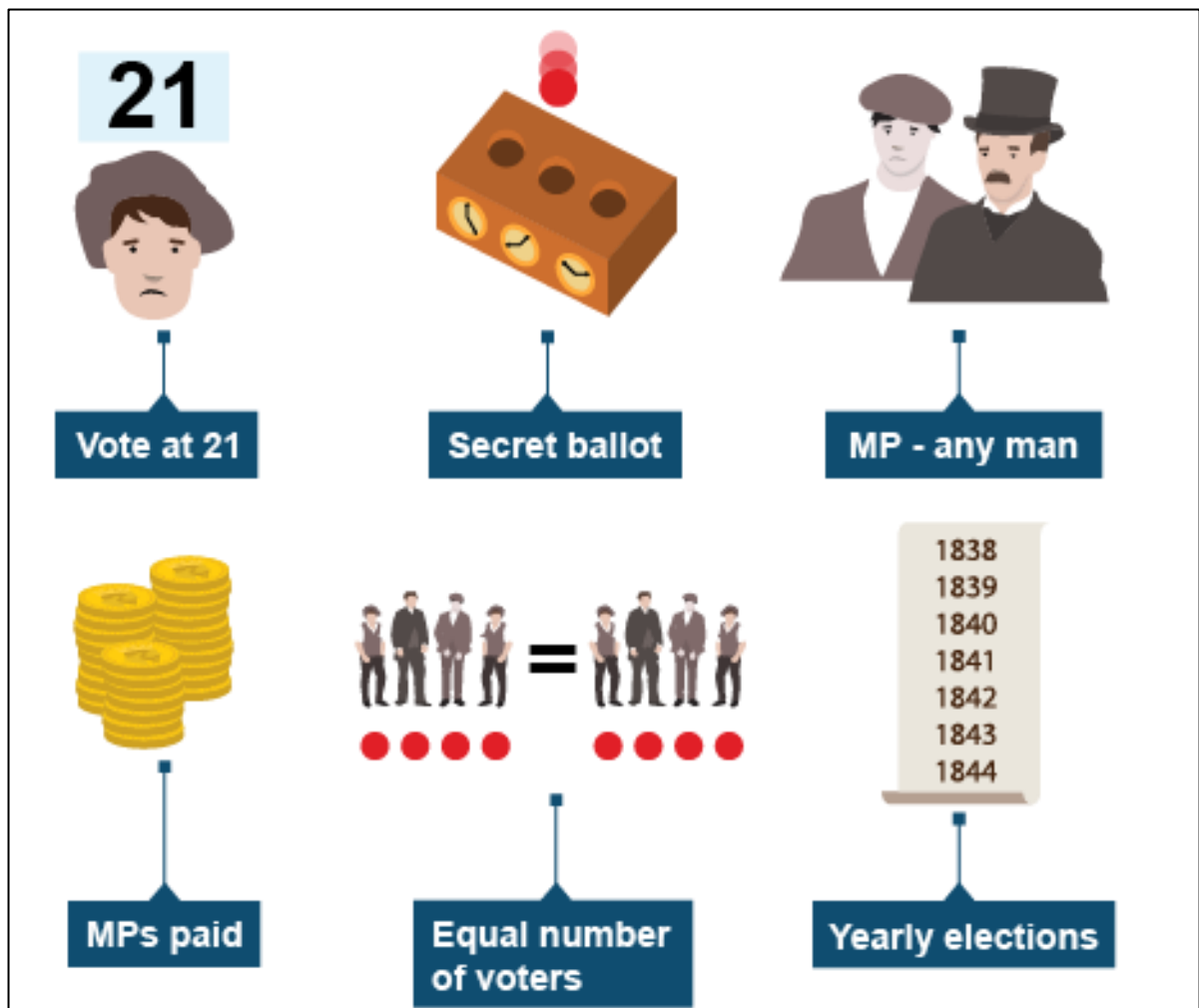
- Thomas Attwood and the Birmingham Political Union argued that people should stop paying taxes until they got the vote. (TRUE / FALSE)
- The new Whig government formed in 1830 was more likely to introduce reforms than the previous Tory government. (TRUE / FALSE)
- *The Captain Swing protests of 1830 were worrying for the government* (TRUE / FALSE)
- The Reform Act was passed in 1830. (TRUE / FALSE)
- The House of Lords supported the Reform Bill. (TRUE / FALSE)
- The Reform Act gave the vote to workers. (TRUE / FALSE)
- The Reform Act gave MPs to large towns for the first time. (TRUE / FALSE)

Chartism

By the 1830s conditions for workers in rural and urban areas were often worse than ever due to poor harvests. The government had reformed the Poor Law (the methods used to deal with poor people). The reform meant that poor people were forced to go into workhouses instead of receiving relief where they lived. Disappointment grew.

The Chartist movement was formed by William Lovett in 1836. It was a peaceful campaign with groups across the country. In 1838 a Peoples' Charter was published. It listed six demands:

1. A vote for all men over 21;
2. A secret ballot;
3. Equal electoral districts;
4. No property qualification to become an MP (the existing law stated that men could only become MPs if they owned property worth a certain value);
5. Payment for MPs;
6. Annual parliaments.



Chartist activities involved pressurising MPs to grant their demands. Huge mass meetings were held across the country. One of the largest was held at Kersal Moor, near Manchester, in September 1838. At least 30,000 people came to listen to speeches by leader Feargus O'Connor and others. Chartist newspapers, in particular the "Northern Star" were widely read. Some historians argue that

Chartism was the first modern national political party, with subscriptions, branches, monthly meetings, newsletters and organised speakers.

Women were involved in campaigning for their husbands' political rights. In most of the large towns in Britain, Chartist groups had womens' sections. These groups were often very large: the Birmingham Charter Association for example, had over 2,000 female members. The "Northern Star" reported on 27th April, 1839, that the Hyde Chartist Society, near Manchester, contained 300 men and 200 women.

Chartist petitions

However, the main weapon of the Chartists was the petition. The Chartists presented three petitions to Parliament in 1839, 1842 and 1848. Each petition was rejected.

The 1839 petition contained 1,280,000 signatures - its rejection was met with a march on Newport in South Wales, where unemployment was particularly high. The aim was to free Chartist leaders from Newport prison, but soldiers guarding the prison fired, killing 22 men. 11 men were transported to Australia following the failure of the petition, including six involved in the Newport rising.

(Transportation was a punishment for serious crimes: convicts were usually sent away for seven years, but in fact they rarely returned).



The 1842 petition containing 3,317,752 signatures, was also rejected by Parliament, leading to calls for violent action and a general strike from Feargus O'Connor. Many workers in the North of England began to vandalise machinery in actions known as the "plug plot". 54

people were transported to Australia in 1842 following strikes and unrest.

Economic conditions became worse again in 1847. The final Chartist petition of 1848 petition was claimed to hold over 5 million signatures. In fact there were around 2 million. The government sent 85,000 special constables to stop a crowd which met on Kennington Common in London from advancing to parliament. O'Connor took the petition himself. Parliament treated it as a farce (a joke) when they found some of the signatures were forged, some in the name of Queen Victoria! There were further arrests and transportations.

Physical force or moral force?

The founder of Chartism, **William Lovett**, held strong Christian beliefs and was against any form of violence. This became known as "moral force". Moderate groups such as the Birmingham Political Union supported his form of Chartism, but by the early 1840s many workers were impatient. Many were attracted by **Feargus O'Connor's** more radical (extreme) methods and plans. As well as being recognised as the main leader of Chartism by 1842, O'Connor drew up a Land Plan to divide up land between workers.



William Cuffay

One of the more militant leaders was William Cuffay, a black man, whose father had been a slave. In 1848 Cuffay was transported to Australia after trying to start an armed uprising.

Why did Chartism fail in the short term?

Chartism died down after the failure of the third petition.

- Harsh repression (crushing of the protest) by the government - a total of 102 people were transported to Australia for Chartist activities.

- The division between “moral force” and physical force weakened its impact. Its leaders were interested in a range of different causes, and not united.
- As violent protests erupted in 1842, the government could brand Chartism as a dangerous, revolutionary movement. This put off some moderate middle class people who might have supported some of the Chartist demands.



Tasks - read p 11 - 15

1. What was the main tactic of the Chartists? _____

2. Were they effective? _____

3. What evidence can you find of womens' involvement in Chartism?

4. Who were the leaders of the Chartists? _____

5. Why did these leaders disagree?

6. Give two reasons for the failure of Chartism _____

7. Which is the only one of the Chartists' six demands that is not in place today? _____

What was the significance of Chartism?

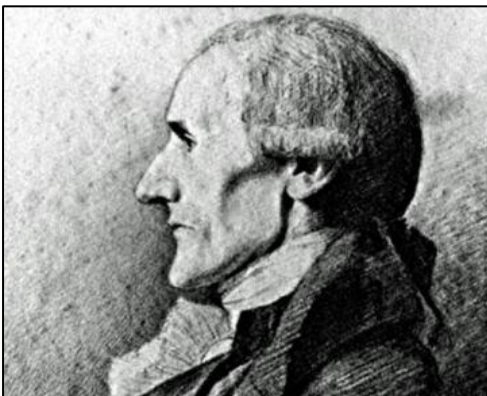
The Chartists did not achieve their aims in the short term, although all of the Six Points except for annual parliaments had been put in place by the early C20. The franchise was extended to more men in 1867 and 1888, with the secret ballot introduced in 1872.

Many historians stress the significance of Chartism as a mass grassroots (made up of ordinary people) protest movement. The National Charter Association had 401 branches by 1842. Women were involved in its activities alongside men, although some would argue that its failure to include women in its demands was a weakness. Some say the movement inherited a British radical tradition which stretched back to the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 and forward to the suffragettes.

2. Protest and Change

The Anti-Slavery Movement

The transatlantic slave trade had led to the capture of up to 20 million Africans. The plantation economy of the Americas depended on slave labour on cotton, sugar and tobacco. Much of Britain's wealth, which had fueled the industrial revolution, had been gained through this trade. However, despite this, by the late 1700s abolition had become a very popular cause in this country. It became the biggest single-issue protest movement in British history.



Granville Sharp and the beginning of the abolition movement

One Sunday evening in 1767 a civil servant named Granville Sharp stepped out of his brother's doctor's surgery after the family's usual Sunday evening

concerts, where they entertained the rich and famous. This particular evening, Granville was alarmed to see a black man in a terrible condition on the pavement. This man, Jonathan Strong, was so badly injured that he was nearly blind and he could hardly walk. Strong had been thrown onto the streets after being beaten about the head with a pistol. His master had hit him so many times that the mouth of the gun separated from its handle. Jonathan Strong had been brought to London from Barbados by a plantation owner named David Lisle. Granville Sharp and his brother William took Strong to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where they paid for him to stay.

After Strong regained his health, the Sharp brothers helped him to find work as a messenger. Quite by chance, David Lisle, the man who had assaulted him, saw him and, without capturing him, sold him for £30 to a Jamaican planter. Two slave hunters kidnapped and imprisoned Strong while they waited for a ship to take him to the Caribbean. Strong asked for Granville Sharp's help. Sharp demanded that Strong be taken before the Lord Mayor, who declared him a free man.

Sharp then turned to fighting the idea that an enslaved person remained, in law, the property of his master, even on English soil. Although he had no legal training, Sharp did this both by his writings and in the courts of law. He saved many African people from being sent back to slavery in the West Indies, often at his own expense.

In 1771 a slave, James Somerset, who had been brought from Jamaica to Britain, ran away. He was recaptured and put on a ship bound for Jamaica. Sharp put the case before Lord Mansfield, the Lord Chief Justice (the most important judge) of England. After many months of legal argument, Mansfield finally decided that a master had no right to force an enslaved person to return to a foreign country. Somerset was freed. This case was known as the **Somerset case**. From this time on, most English courts followed the decision in the Somerset case that an enslaved person could not be forcibly removed from England.



Sharp was also involved in other legal cases, such as the slave ship **Zong** in 1783. This case was brought by Luke Collingwood, captain of the slave ship Zong, who had thrown 133 slaves overboard on the journey from Africa to Jamaica, arguing that they were sick and would infect the other people on board. The trial was not a trial for murder: it was the insurance company that was on trial for refusing to pay the owner the

premium for the slaves who had died. The court decided that the insurance company did not have to pay, as the ship had been badly managed. However, despite the protests by Sharp and others, Captain Collingwood was never brought to trial. Cases such as this help to raise public awareness of the horrors of slavery and started to turn public opinion against the slave trade.

Task:

What important legal decision was made in the Somerset case in 1771?

Why was the Zong case of 1783 so shocking for the British public?

In May 1787, Sharp joined with Thomas Clarkson and nine Quakers, to form a society. The group became known as the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. It continued to work for abolition until the act was passed in 1807. Their actions involved lobbying the House of Commons, led by MP William Wilberforce. Wilberforce made his first abolition speech in parliament in 1789. It was 3 and a half hours long. He continued to speak and raise the issue for the

next 18 years. He introduced the first abolition bill in 1789, and several more in the 1780s, but all were defeated. Many MPs represented men who profited greatly from the slave trade, or they profited themselves. There was a West India lobby of 60 MPs who strongly opposed every bill.

Petitions were another tactic used by the Society. Manchester sent a petition with 10,000 names in 1789. In 1788 103 separate petitions were sent to



Parliament. Parliament's response was to hold an inquiry. This

produced a long report after collecting evidence. Meanwhile the Society continued to produce propaganda, led by **Thomas Clarkson**. Clarkson travelled thousands of miles around England on horseback, looking for evidence in support of the abolition of the slave trade. This included interviewing 20,000 sailors and obtaining equipment used on the slave-ships such as iron

handcuffs, leg-shackles, thumb screws, instruments for forcing open slave's jaws and branding irons. He travelled around Britain with these objects and gave talks

on the Slave Trade. He also had a box full of beautiful items made in Africa to

show that there was culture in Africa. Part of the evidence that Clarkson collected was the diagram of a fully loaded slave ship Brookes. The diagram of the Brookes soon appeared in newspapers, pamphlets and books.

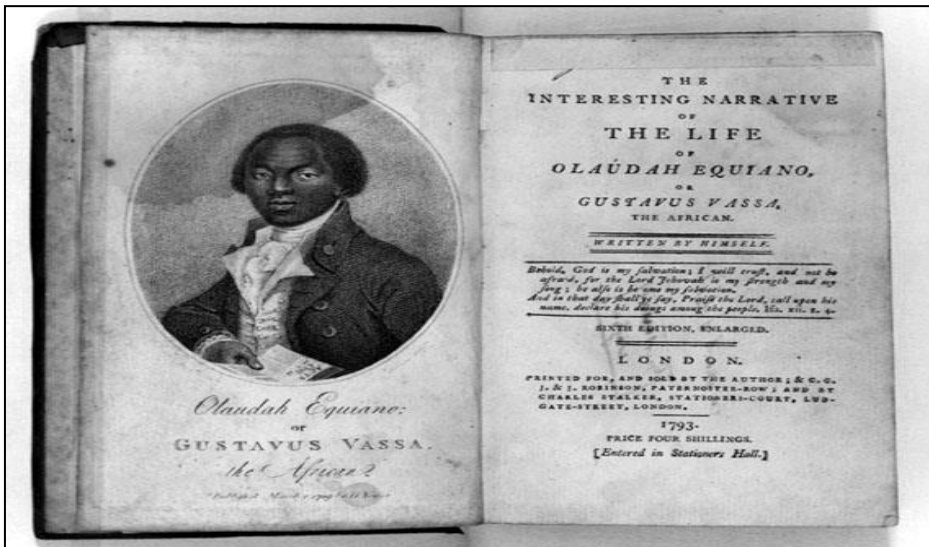


The Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade ordered 7000 copies which were



hung on the walls of homes, churches and pubs across the country and on village notice boards. Clarkson even had a model made of the ship for Wilberforce to show Parliament how awful the conditions were. Famous porcelain manufacturer **Josiah Wedgwood** created anti-slavery pottery, mugs, plates, hair slides, bracelets. This image became very popular, with its slogan, "Am I not a man and a brother?"

The abolitionists were not just powerful white men. Some ex-slaves who had come to Britain also played a part.



The most well-known was **Olaudah Equiano**. Captured as a boy and sold into slavery, he bought his freedom, and published his autobiography 'The Interesting narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavas Vassa, the African'. He toured the

country telling people about his life. He read to them from his book in order to get publicity for the abolition of the slave trade. This was a great success and crowds of people flocked to see him and he was welcomed into the homes of people who had power and could influence the government and the law.

British women were also involved. Women were key players in the anti-slavery movement especially in **Quaker** and Christian circles, where they were among the earliest campaigners. By 1778 there were 206 women members of the Society. They helped to organise the petitions, displayed the mugs and plates, and wore the hair clips and bracelets that showed they supported the abolitionists. Women such as **Hannah More** and Amelia Opie wrote poems to publicise the evils of slavery. **A boycott of slave-produced sugar was organised by women**. In 1791, thousands of pamphlets were printed which encouraged people to boycott sugar

The campaign was not the only reason for abolition. The change in the British law was influenced partly by economics. Slave rebellions had taken place, with notable success in San Domingue, which became the first free black republic (named Haiti) in the Caribbean in 1804. Slave owners were spending huge resources on slave hunters who chased runaway slaves. There were economic arguments in favour of paying workers and of trade with India, where cotton was not produced by slaves. However, the abolition campaign played a large part in changing the minds of the ruling classes who could change the law in Britain. Its success can partly be explained by the unity of its leaders and members over a single issue. The abolition of slavery has been widely commemorated. A campaign continues in Africa and in Britain to persuade the British government to make an official apology for the role played by Britain in the slave trade.

Task: Summarise the significance of the abolition campaign.

Task: Read pages 16 - 21 on the anti-slavery movement

1. Briefly explain the role of each of these people with their role in the abolition campaign. The first one has been done for you.

Granville Sharp	Presented evidence in favour of slaves in court. Used his money to pay for keep of ex-slaves. Wrote pamphlets.
Olaudah Equiano	

William Wilberforce	
Hannah More	
British women	
Josiah Wedgwood	
Thomas Clarkson	

2. When was the Society for the Abolition of the Slave trade set up? _____
3. What religious group did most of its founding members belong to?

4. What year was the slave trade abolished for the British empire? _____
5. In what year did it become illegal to keep slaves in the British empire?

6. What words would you use to describe the anti-slavery protest?

The Anti-Corn Law League

In 1815 Parliament passed the Corn Laws. These were tariffs (taxes) on imports of foreign corn and other grains that were used to make bread. Their aim was to stop foreign corn from being sold, so that British farmers could get higher prices for their corn. Prices had fallen greatly as the wars with France had just ended, and it was much easier to get corn from overseas. The Corn Laws were hated by the people living in Britain's fast-growing towns, who had to pay these higher bread prices. They saw the Corn Laws as an example of how Parliament passed legislation (laws) that favoured large landowners. Manufacturers complained that they would have to pay their workers higher wages because the price of bread was

going up. When the laws were passed, Parliament had to be defended by armed troops against a large angry crowd.

Due to the distress caused by the high price of bread, the government tried to relieve the situation in 1828 William Huskisson sought to relieve by introducing a "sliding scale" of tariffs on corn, so that when the price of corn went up, the taxes on foreign imports went down. However, this was not enough. A trade depression in 1839 and a series of bad harvests created a great deal of anger towards the Corn Laws. Riots took place across the country.



The first Anti-Corn Law Association was set up by manufacturers in Birmingham in 1833. Branches were set up in London and Manchester and in 1839 Richard Cobden established a new centralised Anti-Corn Law League. Cobden was now able to organise a national campaign. The members were mostly middle class men. Cobden and John Bright became prominent leaders and orators, touring the country to get support. They sent pamphlets to every voter in the country, using the new, cheap "penny post". Petitions were collected and adverts placed in newspapers. Memorabilia such as milk jugs, plates and cups were produced. They argued that the laws were unfair to the poor and that if the price of bread was lower, it would allow poorer people to spend more money on other food items. Repealing (ending) the Corn Laws would also lead to trade with other countries, which would help to keep the peace as well as encouraging British industry. Cobden and Bright gained a popular following. Both were elected as MPs in 1841.

How effective was the Anti-Corn Law League?

There were votes on the Corn Laws in Parliament every year from 1837 to 1845, but the Whig government did not want to repeal the Acts. The economic depression of 1840-1842 increased membership of the Anti-Corn Law. Cobden and

Bright spoke to very large audiences all over the country. By 1845 the League, with support from wealthy industrialists, was the wealthiest and best organised political group in Britain.

The failure of the Irish potato crop in 1845 and the famine (starvation from hunger) that followed, forced new Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel and his Conservative government to reconsider the Corn Laws. Irish nationalists also became involved in the campaign. Peel was gradually won over and **in 1846 the Corn Laws were repealed**. Peel's actions were not popular with his party, and he was forced to resign, never to hold office again. The price of wheat did not fall disastrously, as landowners had feared.

The League was therefore effective. This was because:

- Economic conditions were poor at the time: it was not just the work of the League that persuaded Peel to repeal the laws, but also economic needs of the country;
- It ran a single-issue campaign;
- It was well organised with strong leaders, who spoke to large crowds of up to 5000 people;
- It never used violence and was considered respectable by the ruling classes;
- It had wealth to fund a nationwide campaign;
- It used elections and especially by-elections (elections for one seat, where an MP had died or had to step down) to advertise its cause. It put candidates up for election, for example Cobden and Bright were elected in 1841 and it won a by-election in South Lancashire in 1845 where a Tory majority of 600 voters was turned into a League majority of 3000.

Some historians argue that the work of **the League was significant because it made a successful challenge to traditional landowners in favour of the workers**. This led to more protection for the working class in future years.

Task: complete the diagram to show why the League was effective.



Tasks - read p 23 - 25

8. When did the Corn Laws come into effect? _____

9. Why did workers hate the laws?

10. Why did manufacturers hate them?

11. Who were the leaders of the Anti-Corn Law League?

12. When were the Corn Laws repealed and why?

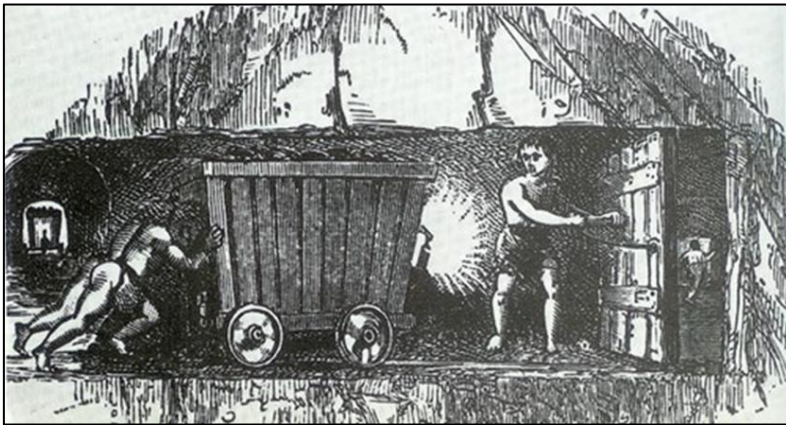
13. Give two reasons why the League was effective.

Factory and Social Reform



The change from working at home to working in factories in the 18th century brought with it a new system of working. Factory and mine owners controlled their workforce through a system of long working hours, fines and low wages. In the factories, the

shifts were 12-14 hours a day, with extra time required during busy periods. Workers were often required to clean their machines during their mealtimes. Women and children as young as 6 were employed, because their wages were lower than a man's wages. Accidents involving unguarded machinery were common, and discipline was cruel. The health of workers was poor: the air was full of dust, which led to chest and lung diseases, whilst the loud noise made by machines damaged workers' hearing.



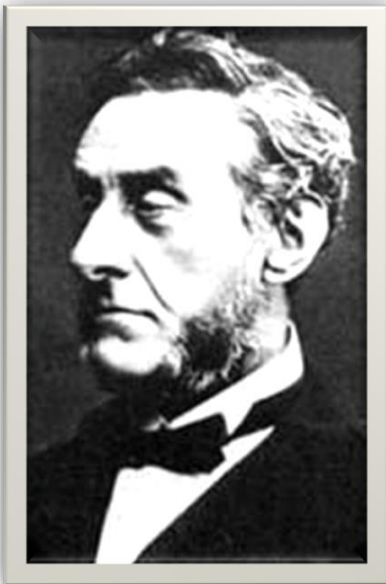
In coal mines, conditions were equally poor. Men worked cutting the coal, whilst women carried it and children pushed the carts. Children as young as four worked as trappers, in the dark for up to 12 hours a day, opening and shutting doors for the carts. Accidents with

the carts were common.

There were demands for reforms from the early C19. The first supporters of factory reform were caring mill owners, many of them in the Tory Party, who were motivated mainly by their religion. One such factory owner was **Robert Owen**, who owned a cotton mill in New Lanark in Scotland. Owen provided good houses and a school for his workers and their families. He would not allow a child under ten to work in his mills. He thought that if workers were treated well then they would work harder.

Reports began to come in from inspectors and supporters of reform. In 1830 Richard Oastler wrote to the Leeds Mercury newspaper, complaining that the conditions for factory workers in Bradford was "more horrid than that hellish system of colonial slavery". Some MPs, such as Michael Sadler, were influenced. Sadler wrote a report in 1832 to include testimonies (personal stories) from factory workers to reveal appalling conditions, especially for women and children.

Sadler suggested that children under 18 years old should not be allowed to work more than 10 hours a day: this was the start of the **10 Hours Movement**. Reports from the mines highlighted that girls were carrying baskets of coal weighing up to 150kg a day (the luggage allowance on a plane is usually 20kg!). The reports shocked public opinion. As the campaign for the abolition of slavery was still in place, people began to refer to factory workers with the emotive term "white slaves".



In 1832 Lord **Shaftesbury** took over leadership of the movement for factory reform and a Mines Act in Parliament. An MP influenced by his Christian beliefs, Shaftesbury organised campaigns that achieved new laws to improve conditions. He sat on four separate parliamentary committees investigating social issues, and became the driving force behind the 1833 Ten Hours Act and the 1842 Mines Act. He also supported moves to stop the employment of boys as chimney sweeps and in 1844 became the President of the Ragged Schools Union.

Ragged Schools were set up to educate the poor at a time when education was not free. The boys at the schools were taught a trade, whilst girls were taught to become housemaids. There were 300 of these schools across the country by the time education became compulsory in 1870.

Opposition to reform

Most people in government and the ruling class in general still believed in "Laissez-faire": that it was wrong to interfere in the free working of the economy. Some

people argued that the workers would only spend the extra time and money in drunkenness and crime. Some argued that increased costs would ruin industry.

Many workers themselves did not support the factory reform act because of fear that they would not be able to make enough money through family wages to survive. Titus Salt (a manufacturer and politician from Manchester) argued that it was better for a child to work in a factory and earn a wage that provided food and clothes, than to force them to stay outside and starve or freeze to death.



Tasks - read p 26 - 28

1. Give three problems with conditions in factories in the early C19.

2. Name three people who were involved in the campaign for reform

3. Give two reasons why some people did not want reform. _____

What factory and social reforms were passed?

Year	Act	Who proposed it?	What did it say?	Was it effective?
1833	Factory Act	Lord	No child under the age of nine to work. Children	Four inspectors made sure the

		Shaftesbury	between the ages of nine and 13 years: 48-hour week; must go to school part-time.	law was obeyed.
1842	Mines Act	Robert Peel	No child under the age of ten to work. No woman or child under 15 to work underground.	Inspectors employed to report conditions.
1847	Ten Hours Act	John Fielden	No worker to work more than ten hours a day.	Ineffective monitoring.
1878	Factory and Workshops Act		No woman to work more than 60 hours a week. No child under ten to work. Laws on safety, ventilation and mealtimes.	Covered all factories, and workshops. More inspectors.

Task: Which of these reforms do you think was most important and why?

Other social reforms in the C19 included reforms to prisons, led by Quaker **Elizabeth Fry**, and the **Public Health Acts of 1848 and 1875**. The first Act set up a Public Health Board whilst the second enforced the clearing of slums (bad housing) and provision of sewers and clean water.

What was the significance of Factory and Social reforms?

All of the reforms signified a move away from the idea of "laissez-faire". It began to be seen as government responsibility to enforce fair conditions for the workers. As more people could vote, this became an increasing priority into the C20. The C19 reforms set a precedent (example) for the wider social reforms (such as pensions and National Insurance) of the early C20, and later for the Welfare State, which was created after WW2. Although some were opposed to the Factory Acts at first, workers began to see that their rights and conditions must be protected. Their expectations were raised and they continued to demand social political reform, forming trade unions and later the Labour Party to represent their interests.

3. Workers' Movements

The number of industrial workers grew rapidly during the industrial revolution. Some workers organised themselves into groups in order to give them more power to bargain with their employers. Such unions were not new in the C19. Since medieval times there had been workers' guilds which controlled prices and wages. Skilled workers in Britain began to form trade unions in the 17th century. During the C18, when the industrial revolution prompted a wave of new trade disputes, the government felt threatened. It introduced measures to prevent collective action on the part of workers. The Combination Acts, passed in 1799 and 1800, during the Napoleonic wars, made any sort of strike action illegal.

Despite the Combination Acts, workers continued to press for better pay and working conditions during the early part of the 19th century. It was easier for skilled workers, than for the unskilled, to form unions, as they could afford to pay weekly subscriptions. The union would then help them out in times of sickness or unemployment. They acted within the terms of the Combination Acts. However,



some skilled workers, known as Luddites, resorted to violent protests in 1811 and 1812. They smashed up the machines that they believed to be taking their jobs and forcing them to accept lower pay. Afraid of more violent protests, Parliament repealed the Combination Acts in 1824 and 1825.

During the 1830s labour unrest and trade union activity reached new levels. Agricultural workers were also adopting new forms of collective action - a notable example being the **Swing Riots** in 1830-1. For the first time men began to organise trade associations with nationwide aims. The most ambitious example was Robert Owen's short-lived **Grand National Consolidated Trades Union (GNCTU)**, formed in February 1834. Within a week it claimed half a million members. It proposed a "National holiday" or general strike of all workers. This never took place. The GNCTU quickly broke up because the workers involved had different needs and interests. Its failure led many to turn to political action and the Chartists.

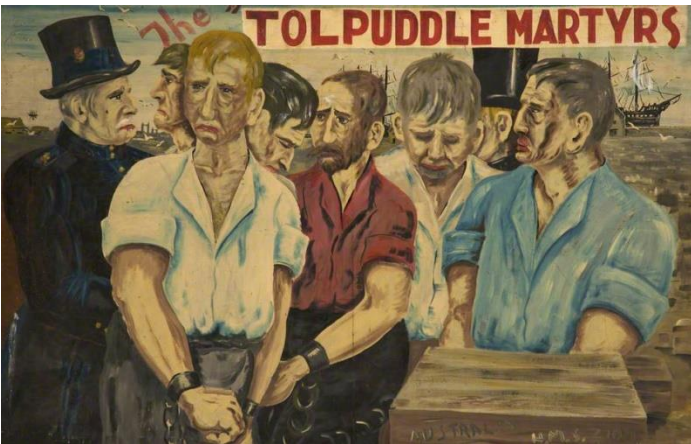
The Tolpuddle Martyrs

In 1834 six agricultural (farm) labourers formed a trade union in the Dorset village of Tolpuddle. Their wages had just been cut for the third time to 7 shillings a week (the average pay for a farm worker was 10 shillings a week). The union was led by George Loveless, a local Methodist preacher. The local landowner

was worried about the union following the violent Luddite Protests and Swing Riots. It was now legal to form a union. However, as these workers had sworn an oath of allegiance when they joined, they were arrested on the charge that they had broken the 1779 Act Against Unlawful Oaths. They were found guilty. Their punishment was transportation to Australia.

The unfair treatment of the 'Tolpuddle Martyrs', as they became known, triggered brief public protests throughout Britain. On 21 April 1834 around 200,000 people met at Copenhagen Fields in London and marched to Parliament with a petition containing 800,000 signatures asking for the release of the six men. Unions supported the workers' families, and the protests continued until

1837, when the workers were granted a pardon and came home from Australia (at their own expense!). On his return, George Loveless wrote a pamphlet called, "The Victims of Whiggery". His writings were widely sold and were often quoted at Chartist meetings.



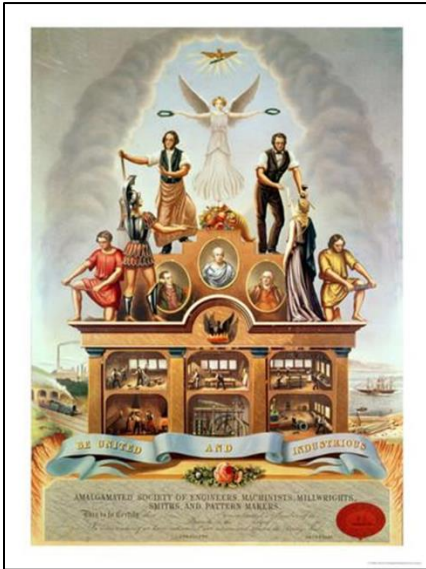
Why are the Tolpuddle Martyrs significant?

The successful protest to have them pardoned and bring them home was organised by workers, for workers. Although the harsh sentences probably discouraged other workers from joining trade unions, the workers were encouraged to join other protest movements, such as Chartism. The spirit of unionism grew from the mid C19 with the success of the new model unions and later strikes in the 1880s. Their cause is celebrated by trade unions and others today. They have been adopted as heroes in British working class history. There is a museum about them

in Tolpuddle, and a festival is held there every July, often addressed by famous political leaders.

“New model unions” and the growth of trade unions in the later C19

Up to around 1850 unions tended to be overshadowed by political movements such as Chartism. The Master and Servants Act of 1823 was often used by courts to



weaken trade unions by arguing they were breaking contracts by going on strike. But in the improved economic conditions of the 1850s and 1860s membership rose from approximately 100,000 in the early 1850s to around a million by 1874. Skilled workers, who could afford the weekly subscriptions, were in a more powerful bargaining position, because their employers would find it hard to replace them with workers of the same skills. The unions they set up were known as “model” unions because they were moderate, and wanted simply to improve their position in the

workplace rather than making radical change. One example is the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE). Set up in 1851, it charged subscriptions of 1 shilling a week and had over 35,000 members by 1870. Carpenters, tailors and other trades set up similar large unions.

The **Trades Union Congress (TUC)**, a national forum for co-ordinating trade union demands, was founded in Manchester in 1868. The 1871 Trade Union Act, introduced by William Gladstone's Liberal government, established the legal status of trade unions - although other laws still made it difficult for unions to organise strikes.

'New unionism'

The economic downturn of the 1870s and 1880s presented new challenges. 'New unionism' was a movement designed to reach the many unskilled workers in Britain who had not yet joined unions. These workers were often interested in "self help", as more working men received the vote in 1867 and in 1888, the secret ballot was introduced in 1872, and education became compulsory in 1870. A distinct working class culture was emerging around football and working mens' clubs. The new unions offered low subscriptions as were prepared to use strikes as their main weapon. The first women's 'trade societies' also began to emerge during this period.

Annie Besant and the Match Girls' Strike, 1888



Annie Besant was a journalist, who became aware of terrible conditions in the Bryant & May match factory in London, and helped to organise a strike. Annie Besant was already known to the authorities, as she had been found guilty of publishing an "obscene" (rude) book about birth control in 1877. She now published an article entitled "The White Slaves of London" to illustrate the plight of the match girls. These

women were earning 5 shillings a week for 70 hours of work in dangerous conditions. "Phossy jaw" was a common disease caused by white phosphorous used to make matches. It could lead to brain tumours and death, and was illegal in many other countries. After Besant's article was published, the employers at the factory asked their workers to sign a document to say that they were being fairly treated. Most refused, and went on strike. Annie Besant helped them to decide and publicise their demands and organise a union. She took 50 of them to Parliament to speak to MPs. After 5 weeks the employers decided to give in to most of their demands. This was the first time that unskilled workers had gone on

strike and won. The fact that this was achieved by women made it more remarkable.



Other successful strikes of 1889 were the London Gas Workers' strike and the London dockers' strike. The dockers were striking for a wage rise and overtime pay. They also wanted a minimum of four hours' employment. Dockers were casual labourers, who would turn up at the gates of the dock in the morning, in the hope of being employed for a day. Often they were offered just a few hours' work or none at all. Their leader, Ben

Tillett, was a militant socialist. Around 100,000 men were on strike. Their tactics were processions and mass meetings every day, whilst others picketed the docks to stop men who were not on strike from going to work. This brought the docks - of the largest port in the world - to a standstill for a short time. There was sympathy for the dockers across London, with food relief sent to them. However, it was a donation of £30,000 that arrived from Australia that enabled them to keep going with their strike for over 2 weeks until their employers gave them their pay rise and a minimum four hour day.

Again, this effective strike by unskilled workers was to become a milestone in union history. Trade union membership doubled between 1888 and 1891, then continued to grow. There was a huge rally on May Day in 1890 demanding an 8 hour day. This rally has become a tradition for workers since then.

However, not all strikes were successful. Employers did not always give in, and troops were sometimes sent against strikers. A court decision of 1901 also made it harder to strike. Some workers began to seek improved conditions through politics. Unions began to form a close relationship with the **Independent Labour Party (ILP)** formed in 1893. This party became the **Labour Party**, which

claimed to represent workers. The link established in this period between the Labour Party and trade unionism still exists today.

Task: complete the table about trade unions

	Key features
Combination Acts	
GNCTU	
Tolpuddle Martyrs	
New model unions	
TUC	
New unionism	
Match Girls' Strike	

Summary Tasks: 1. Find the dates for these events.

Event	Date
The Luddite protests	
The Peterloo Massacre	
The "Swing" movement	
The Great Reform Act	
The Factory Act made it illegal for children under 9 to work in factories	
The Mines Act made it illegal for children under 10 to work in mines	
The third and final Chartist petition	
The Society for the Abolition of the Slave trade is founded	
The slave trade is abolished	
The Corn Laws	
The Repeal of the Corn Laws	
The establishment of the GNCTU	
The arrest of the Tolpuddle Martyrs	
The "new model unions"	1850s
The Match Girls' Strike	
The London Dockers' Strike	
The Independent Labour Party is founded	

2. Which protests of the C19 were effective in your opinion? Give TWO examples and explain why.

3. Which protests were ineffective? Give TWO examples and explain why.
