

# SGS HISTORIAN

A magazine produced by the Lower Sixth Form historians at Stockport Grammar School

## OLIVER CROMWELL

SAINT OR SINNER?

INTERVIEW WITH WORLD  
RENOWNED HISTORIAN

## MICHAEL WOOD

## IRANIAN REVOLUTION

HOW IT ACTUALLY HAPPENED

A BOOK REVIEW OF

## A COUNTRY DOCTOR'S NOTEBOOK

Issue 1 - Summer 2016





## **Editorial Comments:**

Revolutionaries and freedom fighters; bold individuals and courageous groups of people who act in the face of terror and use their inhibitions to try and achieve their ultimate aspirations. Their actions are usually over extreme political conflicts for example Martin Luther King Jr's quest for racial equality but these people and their missions can relate to the ordinary citizen for the fact that we try our hardest despite the odds to fulfil our aims which can relate to anyone at some point in their lives. This is the theme for the first edition of the SGS Historian. The articles will explore various revolutionaries and freedom fighters throughout history; criticising their actions and delving deeper into their pasts. Also, check out our interview with Michael Wood and let's hope we make history. **Rachel Whatley**



I'd just like to thank all of the pupils involved in putting the first issue of this new publication together for their efforts this year. It is a new venture for Sixth Form historians at Stockport Grammar School and they have set the bar high for future cohorts with a selection of pieces that extend class based studies and explore new areas of interest. Well done! **Mr Stone**

## **Contents:**

Page 3—Oliver Cromwell: Saint or Sinner — by **Patrick Magner**

Page 5—Martin Luther King Jr: a Legacy made of Glass? — by **Harriet Lambon-Ralph**

Page 7—Suffragettes: Political Activists or Terrorists? — by **Lilia Sebouai**

Page 9—Interview with World Renowned Historian Michael Wood — by **Oliver Robinson**

Page 10—The Secret Women of Hitler's Past — by **Rachel Whatley**

Page 12—Iranian Revolution: How it actually happened — by **Arvin Araghi**

Page 14—Book Review: A Country Doctor's Notebook — by **Emily Fowler**

Page 15—The Polish Solidarity Movement: Why it was a success — by **Will Rothwell**

Page 17—Oliveira Salazar: the conservative revolutionary who revolutionised Portugal, but at what cost? - by **Mr D J Stone**

Design & Production by **Oliver Robinson, Will Rothwell** and **Mrs S Phelan**

# Oliver Cromwell: Saint or Sinner?

Having recently watched Richard Harris portray Oliver Cromwell in the iconic film 'Cromwell' as the saviour of the British people from the tyrannical Charles I, it begs the debate - was Cromwell the heroic figure he is made out to be or did he just become yet another autocratic and ruthless ruler?



Throughout his reign, Charles had induced fear into his people by constantly showing absolutist tendencies and allowing Catholicism to gain momentum in England, be that by talks with the Pope or demanding the Scots and Irish use his prayer book.

It was also quite clear Charles was more interested in himself and his favourites, such as Thomas Wentworth and William Laud, than the people he was ruling.

*“ I tell you we will cut off his head with the crown upon it. ”*

Cromwell put an end to this tyrannical rule and in doing so ended the fear of Catholicism overtaking England. During the Civil War (1642–1651) Cromwell, through great desire and courage, took up needed action against the King. His skilful and organised New Model Army crushed Charles's forces at Naseby, Marston Moor and Newbury. Particularly at Marston Moor, Cromwell showed great strength and leadership in taking arms at the head of his troops.

His military success cannot be questioned as in only a handful of years he transformed the peasantry based rebellion into an efficiently trained army capable of dethroning Charles. He consistently attributed his military success to God's will. Perhaps the biggest success of his rule was beating the Scots in the Battle of Dunbar in September 1650, a result which emphasised Cromwell's superior effectiveness as a military leader in contrast to Charles who failed to defeat the Scots in the Bishop Wars years earlier. Cromwell also implemented his desire for order and democratic development by setting up a system of 'Major-Generals', who ran the country as a military dictatorship until 1657. Therefore, historians will find it hard to question Cromwell's desire and attempts to at least start a democratic system of government.

Arguably, as shown in the film, Cromwell wasn't seeking power himself. Instead of becoming the new King, he became, 'Lord Protector', and with this title he wanted to set up a democratic parliament to govern England fairly. Thus, the welfare of the people would be better. Overall, Cromwell achieved his aim in liberating the people from Charles' failing rule; he also made England a feared nation by transforming the army and finally he did make attempts to set up a democratic system of government.

However, by his death in 1658 his desired democratic parliament was weak. He had become a hated man within England, Ireland and Scotland as well as overseas. Furthermore, he failed to establish a written constitution or leave a lasting system of government. After the execution of Charles, England was ruled by a small group of MPs called 'the Rump'. After three years, they had still not agreed to call a new Parliament. In April 1653, Cromwell and 40 musketeers marched into the Rump Parliament and closed it down. This almost mirrors the actions of Charles when dissolving Parliament in 1642.

Perhaps this great liberator – with now new powers- was becoming autocratic and obsessive himself. Furthermore, over the years of his rule he became anxious and deluded and he constantly wore armour because he feared assassination. He also banned drunken celebrations and he even went as far as to restrict Christmas celebrations in the fear people would celebrate it in a more Catholic-styled manner. Of course the strain of leading a nation was taking its toll but Cromwell showed ruthless and arguably barbaric actions across his own kingdom. In Ireland Cromwell sent 12,000 men to storm Drogheda, north of Dublin. His troops massacred nearly everyone in the garrison and the town - which Cromwell justified as the "righteous judgment of God upon these barbarous wretches". These ruthless actions show the once mighty Cromwell as a dangerous autocrat simply killing those who shared different beliefs.

Overall, Oliver Cromwell (the great liberator and killer of the tyrannical King) had failed to impose democracy and peace. The people were subject to an anxious man who didn't really have the appropriate people around him to help build a constitutional government and thus develop England away from monarch dictatorship. The failure of his protectorate was signalled by the arrival of Charles II in 1660 and by request of the very people who had once backed him. Perhaps had Cromwell had better advisors and a more peaceful approach towards Catholics, he would have succeeded as the heroic people's revolutionary he intended to be.

Patrick Magner





# Martin Luther King Jr: A Legacy Made of Glass?

Arguably the most influential speech ever to have been spoken is the “*I have a dream...*” speech, which was made by one of the most famous and widely celebrated revolutionaries to have ever been recorded by history. I don't think you could write a magazine on revolutionaries and freedom fighters without including Martin Luther King Jr. He dedicated his life to a cause that left a legacy still in effect today. Therefore, there is no doubt that he should be commended for the work he did, changing the social landscape of America and the world forever. However, I think the danger with freedom fighters, as a branch of revolutionaries, is to see them on a pedestal. There is no doubt that Martin Luther King should be remembered for what he accomplished but he should also be remembered for being human with character flaws and poor decision making, not for being a saint.

Martin Luther King was a civil rights activist who worked towards racial equality in America in the mid-twentieth century. He was a highly educated man, especially for someone of his race at the time, and this arguably led to him being chosen as the movement's leader. He was chosen to be the leader when bus boycotting took place after Rosa Parks refused to give her seat to a white man. Martin Luther King was heavily inspired by Mahatma Gandhi who prized peaceful, non-violent actions as a means of protesting. He was also President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, a group that supported and worked with him towards racial equality. After Martin Luther King took part in a campaign in Birmingham in 1963, he was arrested. It was in the same year that the march in Washington took place which ended with Martin Luther King giving his most widely recognised speech. It was this moment that Martin Luther King will be most remembered for as it captivated not only America but also the world. After this Martin Luther King was given the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, the youngest person to have ever received it at the time. Martin Luther King also took part in the march in Selma after the outbursts of violence there. In August 1965, all African-Americans were given the right to vote. Martin Luther King continued his work towards racial equality and also worked to combat poverty. Tragically on 4th April 1968, Martin Luther King was assassinated. He was honoured by a national holiday in his name, which signifies the work he did during his life time and for the legacy he left behind.



Martin Luther King was no doubt an incredible man, whose work could never be discredited. However, as with all freedom fighters, there is a great tendency to view them as flawless, almost saint-like figures. However, Martin Luther King was human and consequently not faultless. It has become increasingly common knowledge that he engaged in extramarital affairs causing the dynamic of his marriage to Coretta Scott King to undoubtedly change. This was used against Martin Luther King at the time by the FBI, after the organisation caught him engaging in such affairs because of the surveillance they had on him at the time. The FBI's role at the time can undoubtedly be seriously questioned as after Martin Luther King refused to be swayed by threats they leaked it to the media.

“*I have a Dream.*”

However, with the majority of the media being focused on news instead of gossip, Martin Luther King maintained the image of a pastor, family-man and freedom fighter. When discussing people of public interest, their personal lives are often scrutinised as well as the work that they do. There is no doubt that Martin Luther King's personal life should not undermine his actions in his quest for racial equality. However, what it does do is remind us that even the favourable people in history should still be treated as humans as well.

Martin Luther King was indisputably dedicated to the cause and the movement towards racial equality. However, this unquestionable loyalty led to legal problems facing his own family. Martin Luther King left no legal will and donated a significant amount of his financial wealth to the movement. Therefore, it was left to his wife to support their children and set up a legacy for him. Legal battles are something that has affected the majority of families of freedom fighters as it is disputed who should own or have the rights to what. The most recent legal issue that has emerged in the King family is between the children themselves over the Nobel Peace Prize medal and Martin Luther King's Bible. The issue stems from if the items should be brought under the control of the King estate which could mean the sale of them in the future. Due to the number of disagreements over the more physical legacy of Martin Luther King, those involved have been condemned by some due to it affecting what Martin Luther King should be remembered for.

However, this could all, arguably, be linked back to Martin Luther King himself and his drive to influence the future of America, possibly overlooking the future of his family. Martin Luther King was a complicated and possibly flawed character. Despite reports of less favourable aspects of his personal life, he is still remembered as one of the most significant revolutionaries and freedom fighters to have been recorded by history, and rightly so. His actions and bravery challenged an issue that is unfortunately still affecting America today, with more reports of police violence and discrimination emerging. Therefore, no matter what issues challenged Martin Luther King in his private life, what his legacy should lead us to remember is a motivated and dedicated man. The fact he was no saint does not detract from the work he did but only leaves history to remember him as a man who sacrificed all he had for what he believed in.

Harriet Lambon — Ralph

*"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today! I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of 'Interposition' and 'Nullification'-- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today! I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together. This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with."*  
— Martin Luther King Jr, I have a Dream speech.

# Suffragettes: Political Activists or Terrorists?

The initial motivation behind the campaign for women's suffrage was to achieve the vote for women on the same terms as it was granted to men. The inability to vote resulted in further restraining the few rights that Victorian women had, their marginalised status had become a symbol of civil inequality. Campaigners wanted the vote to be granted to women as they felt that the law was too often biased towards men reinforcing the idea of women as inferior to men. Campaigners felt that the best way to achieve equal status with men, in society and in the home would be to get the vote and participate in the parliamentary process.



The battle for women's suffrage took several forms and involved an abundant group of individuals. The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, formed in 1897, was constitutional in its approach meaning that it campaigned peacefully and used recognised 'political' methods such as lobbying parliament and collecting signatures for petitions. However, in order to gain publicity and raise awareness, the more militant Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) was formed in 1903, given the mocking diminutive name 'suffragettes' by the Daily Mail in 1905, which engaged in a series of more violent actions.

It was Emmeline Pankhurst, leader of the WSPU, who advocated militant action. They started out as moderate activists, they chained themselves to railings, set fire to public and private property and disrupted speeches both at public meetings and in the House of Commons, simple acts of rebellion in an attempt to achieve newspaper headlines and therefore publicity for their cause.

However, the movement developed dramatically and was soon involved in serious acts of destruction including arson and the use of explosives. The movement had grown to encompass uncivilized and deliberately uncultured behavior such as spitting at policemen and the slashing of paintings, amid other examples of cultural violence as seen in the British Museum where mummy cases were damaged and bombs were even discovered in Westminster Abbey. Such behaviour challenged the Victorian notion of the moral superiority of women, even as the suffragettes themselves promoted this view of women as one clear reason why they should have the vote.

When a bomb was discovered in the home of Lloyd George, Prime Minister of Britain, Mrs. Pankhurst proclaimed: *"Perhaps the Government will realise now that we mean to fight to the bitter end ... If men use explosives and bombs for their own purpose they call it war, and the throwing of a bomb that destroys other people is then described as a glorious and heroic deed. Why should a woman not make use of the same weapons as men? It is not only war we have declared. We are fighting for a revolution."* Surely such strong words demonstrate that the WSPU was publically pronouncing their absolute association with violence.

Reading Pankhurst, it's difficult to comprehend why the powers of these words have been diminished by time? If the speaker had been a male protagonist, would historians have hesitated to describe the militants as terrorists? The use of rhetoric in the language used to discuss militancy without a doubt proves that the women fully recognised that their actions in pursuit of political change were illegal, dangerous and life-threatening.

*“ We are fighting  
for a revolution.”*

This was further made evident with the formation in 1913 of what became known as 'Mrs Pankhurst's Army'. A meeting was held for the purposes of inaugurating the projected suffragette 'army', to be known as the People's Training Corps. About 300 people gathered, mostly young girls and women and it was Miss Emerson, in an address, who said that their intention was to train the corps that they could proceed in force to Downing Street and there imprison Ministers until they conceded women's suffrage. Many suffragettes went to prison as a result of their actions and their campaigns did not always stop there – whilst in prison they often chose to go on hunger strike to continue gaining publicity for their cause and as a result were sometimes brutally force fed. One of the most infamous suffragettes was Emily Davison who, in 1913, threw herself in front of the King George V's horse, 'Anmer', at the Epsom Derby, creating mass publicity.

After her death the leaders of the WSPU found themselves facing an unexpected plethora of attention from the media, so they therefore managed to put together a jaw-dropping funeral procession on June 14<sup>th</sup>, stretching from Victoria to King's Cross. The usual opposition who turned up to heckle at suffragette events were in fact very respectable, they even grouped together to carry a large cross at the front of the procession and observers in Hyde Park noticed that many removed their hats when the cortege arrived.

However, where the funeral was very fitting of Davison's bravery and determination, Emily Davison was, after all, not the only casualty of Derby Day. The King's horse had suffered injuries so great that there was no option other than for him to be put down. Even though Davison had not targeted, 'Anmer', some people took her intervention as an insult to the King and with the Suffragettes clearly not being afraid to target the government, this theory of conspiracy raised the question of whether they would dare to stretch their terrorism to the monarchy. Considering the wider context of rising popular hostility towards the suffragettes in 1912-14, these mixed reactions make sense. *'The Daily Sketch'* newspaper, while they appreciated Davison's bravery, insisted that society could not yield to what it described as an undeniable form of terrorism. However, the government retained their policy towards the suppressing of the WSPU after Derby Day.

Indeed, it continued to raid its headquarters, tap its telephones, intercept its mail and seize copies of its newspaper and by 1914 had even progressed to being on the verge of prosecuting the WSPU's financial backers. The leader of the WSPU, Emmeline Pankhurst, was actually successfully arrested while on her way to attending Davison's funeral. This reflected the politicians' confidence that they could get away with 'illiberal' methods because the movements excessive use of militancy had alienated public opinion. This view stemmed from the way the crowds routinely attacked any suffragettes who appeared in public as they were perceived as lawless terrorists, so much so that they had to be protected from violence by the police.

However, the 'peoples' opinion seems to be more of a male gendered dominated opinion. They have a tendency to try and diminish the Suffragettes contribution or to write them out of winning the vote. It cannot be disputed that the suffragettes contributed to the making of our modern democracy by manifesting a cultural change in the way in which women were seen. They aroused a passionate discussion about women's status and inequality in society resulting in men's ideological hold over women never again being the same. Women were no longer simply wives but assertive, strong-minded women and without their valued struggle, the 1918 franchise act would not have been passed.

Lilia Sebouai



## Interview by Rachel Whatley and Emmily Fowler with renowned historian Michael Wood

**O**n Wednesday 9th March 2016, Michael Wood came to Stockport Grammar to talk about his latest television series on China. We seized this excellent opportunity to interview Michael on his experiences and his career as a historian. Michael told us that he was inspired to become a historian because he loved history when he was growing up in his home city of Manchester. He loved the fact that the area contained so much history as it was fundamental to the industrial revolution within Britain. Michael's main ambition as a teenager was to become a history teacher and *"to be able to teach in a school as great as this."* However, things led him away down a different path.

Like many historians, Michael was unsure of who his favourite person throughout history is. *"It's very difficult to decide, I love the Anglo Saxons so I'd have to say Alfred the Great. Although, an evening with William Shakespeare would be my ultimate historical buzz."* It's understandable for him to say something like that, who wouldn't enjoy an evening with William Shakespeare in the 1590's?

Michael has written numerous books and done many TV series as well so no wonder he found it difficult to name his favourite. *"Of British history, I did a series of essays called In Search Of England which I really enjoyed. Of the worldwide ones however, I wrote a little book called the South Indian Journey about Tamil culture and it was a labour of love."* Tamil culture is rooted in the arts and the ways of life of Tamils in India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore and across the globe. Once again, I think it is understandable that a noted historian such as Michael Wood enjoyed writing about such a vibrant and traditional culture as the Tamil culture.



*“An evening with William Shakespeare would be my ultimate historical buzz.”*

Michael's career veered away from his original aim of *"going into teaching after having gone to MGS and Oxford University. However, life led me down a different path."* However, the world renowned historian was still incredibly lucky with the experiences that he has had throughout his life. *"I was lucky, partly to see the world, to see history functioning you know, to be in the marshes of Iraq or the mountains of China, they are great things to have experienced so I am thankful for all that."* Despite this, Michael does still regret not doing certain things in his youth. *"I hitchhiked to Greece when I was a teenager which was an all round wonderful experience but I do wish that I had done something more adventurous like hippie-trailed to India or something like that."*

We have all envisioned ourselves, at some point, as being successful and having our whole lives planned out in front of us but as Michael has said, sometimes life can lead you down a different path than you intended.

Oliver Robinson

# The Secret Women of Hitler's Past

**H**itler was a revolutionary, deceptive man who managed to create a German empire over his 25 years in politics. We are all aware of his motives; his desire for Lebensraum and avenging the Treaty of Versailles as well as his impacts on humanity such as murdering approximately six million Jews as part of his, 'Final Solution', which had affects worldwide. However, I wish to reveal to you the intimate details of Hitler's love life, in particular four women who captivated the man and make quite an interesting tale.

Hitler's first love was a woman called Stefanie Rabatsch. They met in 1905 when Hitler admired her as she was walking down the street with her mother. His friend August Kubizek wrote in his book called, *"Adolf Hitler, My Childhood Friend"*, about their first meeting saying, *"Adolf gripped my arm and asked me excitedly what I thought of that slim blonde girl walking along the Landstrasse arm-in-arm with her mother. 'You must know, I'm in love with her', he added resolutely"*. Their interaction seemed innocent at times. Hitler was too shy to speak to her and therefore sent her adoring love letters. She also on one occasion gave him a flower from her bouquet as she passed him in her carriage. According to Kubizek, *"He dragged me aside and with emotion he gazed at the flower, 'this visible pledge of love' "*, showing Hitler in a loved-up daze. However, Hitler had an actual deep infatuation for her. He was jealous that she was around military officers and he hated that she used to enjoy dancing reportedly saying that Stefanie danced because, *"She was forced to by society on which she unfortunately depended on"*. He asked Kubizek to spy on her every movement and he even sent her a love letter telling her he would return one day and marry her. Hitler even became suicidal and threatened to kidnap Stefanie and kill both of them by jumping off bridge into the Danube. Unfortunately, this never happened. Evidence shows that Stefanie was unaware of Hitler's emotions at the time but realised after she was questioned. This obsession occurred until 1908 when she became engaged to an officer in Linz and both Hitler and Stefanie moved on.



Another fascinating lady was Geli Raubal, Hitler's half-niece. She was in close contact with her uncle from 1925 till 1931. Geli moved into the Berghof Villa in the Bavarian Alps in 1928 when her mother was given the position as Hitler's housekeeper. Later, she then moved into Hitler's Munich apartment in 1929 to study medicine at University. Hitler was very protective over her and when she was discovered to be having a relationship with his chauffeur Emil Maurice, he ended this relationship and fired Maurice. He then demanded that she be accompanied everywhere by himself or someone else including her shopping trips and to see the Opera. Raubal felt trapped and wanted to escape to Vienna for singing lessons. The relationship then become toxic when Hitler refused. When he left for a rally in Nuremburg the following day, he reportedly said, *"For the last time, no!"*, angrily to Geli as he was leaving but the day after he came returned to Munich after discovering she had shot herself in the lung using Hitler's pistol. Rumours then began about their relationship but historian Ian Kershaw stated, *"Whether actively sexual or not, Hitler's behaviour towards Geli has all the traits of a strong, latent at least, sexual dependence"*. Hitler then developed a deep love for her. He suffered from depression and visited her grave in Vienna two days after her death. He also kept her room in the Berghof and the Chancellery in Berlin identical in memory of her.

*“ This visible  
pledge of love. ”*



He later recovered from his depression and focused again on politics. Geli's suicide was also the reason that he became a vegetarian as he claimed that her suicide and subsequently looking at meat reminded him of her corpse.

The next woman, Erna Hanfstaengl, lived throughout Hitler's lifetime. She was an acquaintance of Hitler throughout his political life. They met in the 1920's through her brother's friend and Hitler was reportedly attracted to her. He then attempted to charm her that amused Erna but she was teased by the friends about this unwanted attention. Therefore, she made sure she was never alone with him. It is rumoured that she and Hitler had sexual relations after the failed Munich Putsch of 1923 where Hitler was hiding in a country house in Uffing, Bavaria. It is also rumoured that they were engaged. This news spread around Munich in 1923 as the, 'Münchener Neueste Nachrichten paper', published a story on this topic.

These events made her become more accepted into Hitler's friendship circle but later in the relationship according to Himmler's personal aid Walter Schellenberg she was involved in a plot to overthrow Hitler and attempted to agree peace negotiations with the allies due to her political influential position. It is reported that she made contacts in Paris supporting the plan but she was later dropped from the case by Schellenberg.

The final woman is a British lady who had a fascination for Adolf Hitler. Unity Mitford was an English socialite born in 1914. During her teenage years she developed a deep infatuation for the future Führer. She kept swastikas and pictures of Hitler all over her bedroom and was a huge fan of the fascist ideal. When she travelled to Germany in 1933 for the Nuremburg Rally with her sister, she said about seeing Hitler, "*The first time I saw him I knew there was no one I would rather meet*". She then returned to Germany in 1934 by attending a language school near the main party headquarters in Munich and after 10 months of stalking she was able to meet him when he invited her to his table in a café. He became smitten by her and Mitford then received invitations to conferences and rallies. Hitler even described her as, "*A perfect specimen of Aryan womanhood*". She battled for attention against Eva Braun and she also showed her support for the Nazi Regime. Unity gave a violent anti-Semitic speech at a Nazi Youth Festival which was rewarded with a golden swastika and other extravagant gifts from Hitler.

Her continued support gained praise from him. He even kicked a Jewish couple out of their home in order to give Unity a Munich apartment. However, war was looming imminently. She was encouraged by her family to return home but refused. When war did break out she was so upset that she took her pistol given to her by Hitler for protection and shot herself in the head.

Luckily, she survived the attempt and was sent to hospital where she was visited by the Führer despite the war. He paid her bill and arranged for her to return home to England ending her contact with Hitler.

These four formidable women have suffered ordeals as a result of their relationships with Hitler. Unfortunately, not all of them survived due to their mental state but they all had a profound impact on the Führer during their lifetimes.

Rachel Whatley



# The Iranian Revolution: How it actually happened

In February 1979, the world was shocked to see one of the most powerful leaders Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi flee Iran and becoming its last ruling monarch ever. He was a leader who was backed by the west in particular the USA. He had the 5<sup>th</sup> largest army in the world and a tight grip on media allowing no one to oppose him in public. Oil prices were nearly at an all-time high giving him billions to spend on the nation. However, after years of repression and rule the people of Iran led by Ruhollah Khomeini, managed to overthrow this leader against all the odds. How could a nation of people who had no outside help, who took orders from an exile (Khomeini was exiled in France at the time) defeat such a powerful leader?

*“Let all of us work together to establish democracy in Iran.”*

Iran in the years up to the revolution had experienced democratic times before hand. In the midst of World War Two the British and Soviets had occupied Iran forcing the ruling Shah at the time to abdicate who was the father of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. This paved the way for young Pahlavi to become King. He quickly pardoned many of the political prisoners in his father's reign, whilst contributing more to the war effort against the Nazis. After the war, Iran started to prosper with increasing oil revenues with the Shah acting in a more constitutional way with parliament. However, Iran may have been too democratic in its choice of prime minister for the West and Shahs liking. In 1951, Mohammad Mosaddegh was elected Prime Minister. He was a hugely popular choice and was elected on the pledge to nationalise Iran's petroleum industry from the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. With parliament voting unanimously to nationalise it in 1952, the USA was angered but nowhere near as much as Britain. They felt aggrieved to be losing out on major revenues being made. With the help of the USA they co-lead Operation Ajax with the CIA planning to get rid of the then PM. However, this operation hinged on the fact that the Shah had to publicly dismiss the PM then replacing him with a military general Fazlollah Zahedi.

At first, the coup in early 1953 failed with the Shah fleeing to Iraq then Italy, this showed early signs of the Shahs inept inability to stay whilst the going was tough. However, after a short exile the Shah returned whilst his own popularity was falling so was the PMs. After the PM narrowly missed out on gaining control of the army there was chaos in Iran. The large communist presence at the time saw an opportunity to try and take over ripping down statues of the Shah. The communists failed in an attempt to usurp the Shah and after appealing to the army the Shah had the revolution crushed. Mohammad Mosaddegh was arrested accused of aiding the communists in the coup and was given three years in prison followed by life in exile. In July 1953 Operation Ajax was deemed a success with the privatisation of the petroleum plants. This was a fundamental reason in the build up to the revolution why the Shah was so repressive. It also is one of the main reasons why the people of Iran grew disillusioned with the west especially the USA, becoming wary of their interventions. This suggests why in 1979 people were determined not to give up despite the hardship but eventually triumphing.

The Shah now introduced a much stricter secret (SAVAK) police who seemed to dominate the streets. He took a lot more political prisoners and restricted heavily the freedom of the press. The Shah had decided to govern himself in a more brutal way than ever. In the years that followed 1953 there was a repressive peace in Iran but in 1978 the people of Iran had had enough and they wanted change. There are a wealth of reasons as to why so many joined to try and overthrow the Shah.



Perhaps it was the growing cultural differences the Iranian people who were mainly Muslim had seen the Shah as imposing western non-Muslim values on Iran. There was mass corruption in the Shahs inner circle with many now seeing the Shah as more worried about his own pocket, whilst there was a big rise in inflation and slow economic growth to go with an ambitious economic programme. These things combined brought the masses together but the way in which the revolution took place was truly extraordinary.

The CIA had estimated that the Shah at least be in power for the next ten years in 1978 perhaps having an optimistic attitude. On the 8<sup>th</sup> September 1978 there were mass protests in the Iranian capital of Tehran. With civilians refusing to recognise martial law, the army opened fire massacring large numbers of people who were killed and wounded. A day known as Black Friday (no not the sales one). This was the catalyst for many Iranians not to stop and keep fighting. On 3rd October 1978 about 6-9 million people demonstrated in Tehran which was one of the biggest demonstrations ever at the time. This showed the magnitude of the revolution with everyone looking to one man for guidance Rulloah Khomeini. He saw the opportunity and started to get word out to his supporters back in Iran of what to do. His message was simple, to keep up the protest and try to arm to fight the army in a civil war if needs be. With large number of protests occurring people began to rob police stations for weapons and were now better prepared in a few short months for a coup.

The Shah trying to negotiate and reform, shut down 'anti-Islamic' organisations such as night clubs and casinos. He even changed his Prime Minister to a more liberal minded reformer. However, this time whatever the Shah did it was not working. Eventually, he gave brief political power to the military after pleas from many leader especially President Carter to sort the crisis out, however, after yet more marches and protests the Shah had to give in he eventually abdicated and fled in January 1979 leaving control to the Prime Minster. The tearful Shah was exiled to Egypt and was secretly suffering from cancer later dying on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 1980 at the age of 60. Rulloah Khomeini was invited back to Iran with the USA having effectively withdrawn support for the Iranian government. On the 1st February 1979, Khomeini arrived in Iran to be greeted by millions and take his place as leader. What he did remains to be judged. This includes the takeover of the American Embassy compound in Tehran and holding hostage 52 Americans for 444 days. Although it was against all the norms of diplomatic and political conventions, it emanated from the frustration and suffering at the hands of a dictator which enjoyed the explicit support of USA and the west for 25 years.

The revolution was unusual for its surprise it created around the world. It lacked many customary causes of revolution such as deep financial crisis, working-class rebellion or a disgruntled military. It occurred in a nation that was enjoying relative prosperity. It replaced pro-western semi-absolute monarchy, with anti-western theocracy. It remains the biggest original revolution in the Middle East and had even larger numbers involved than recent revolutions in the Arab Spring. The Iranian Revolution remains a powerful symbol as to what people power can really do even against the strong and powerful leaders and a nation that stands against you.

Arvin Araghi



# A Book Review: 'A Country Doctor's Notebook'

It is with the opening line, *"If you have never driven over country roads it is useless for me to tell you about it; you wouldn't understand anyway. But if you have, I would rather not remind you of it"*, that we are suddenly violently hurtled into an unfamiliar and discomforting scene in which Mikhail Bulgakov's collection of short stories, largely autobiographical, plays out. As with near all classic Russian literature, the pages seep with the cold and bleak isolation of Russian winter, used to such a great effect in this work that it is too easy to imagine the biting chill, howling wind, *"Legs ossified with cold"*, and, *"Stony, blue lips"*. Those familiar with Bulgakov's more fantastical works such as, 'The Master and Margherita', may be surprised by this more realistic piece though the quick wit and sharp mind of Bulgakov, famous for his satirical observations of the Soviet society, is easy to pinpoint. In order for Michael Glenny to pen this beautiful translation, large amounts of research and a number of sources have been consulted, including manuscripts provided by the late Manchester University Professor, Peter Doyle, *'A Country Doctor's Notebook'*, proves to be an insightful, entertaining joy to read.

The main character is not glorified yet still remains heroic, somehow managing to hold out against his formidable conditions, whose complaints and observations, inked by Bulgakov's cunning pen, lend to a sympathetic if sometimes laughable protagonist. A doctor fresh out of university is sent to the far flung, rural hospital of Muryovo which the, *"Midnight express to Moscow rushes moaning past and does not even stop; it has no need of this forlorn little halt, buried in snow - except perhaps when the line is blocked by drifts"*, where he is faced with life without the relatively modern commodities provided by his previous life in the city. Through his inner thoughts we see the awkward transition from being a student shine painfully through, offering relatable experiences of the sudden shift from the bubble educational institutes offer to the reality of the working world, challenged with gruesome operations and resistant peasants. He worries himself with hypothetical patients and procedures deciding to not, *"Take a step without [his] reference book"*, spending hours poring over manuals of operations which he had studied in class. Here we see a realistic portrayal of a medical student, perhaps students of near any vocational subject, and how he is forced to overcome these setbacks. Without the doctor lamenting of his greatly missed, *"Golden-red Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow, shop windows"*, or the nearest town which laid thirty two miles away, bearing such luxuries as electricity and four other doctors, it is easy to forget that Bulgakov's stories play out in the midst of the Russian Revolution (if one is not familiar with the almost medieval backwardness of the Russian peasants who frequent his clinic). The four staff members (who sometimes deal with around one hundred patients a day) share tales of, *"the fearsome, pre-literate, mediaeval world of the peasantry"*, as translator Michael Glenny writes, which surely are equivalent to ghost stories for those in the medical profession.

Bulgakov manages to interweave sharp humour with brutal descriptions of the clinically grotesque all the while narrating a fascinatingly realistic story which seems to be about anything but the more famous events of the years in question (though its shadow reaches even *"the back of beyond"* of his hospital), while watching the tragic descent of a doctor into addiction in the story, 'Morphine', is terrifyingly bleak and hopeless, as if one were a friend watching from afar with no means to help. Bulgakov's, *'A Country Doctor's Notebook'*, is an excellent book and offers a convincing recount of an individual's isolated experience of the Russian Revolution and is a book that can be enjoyed time and time again, as well as through the TV adaption. The series *'A Young Doctor's Notebook'*, stars John Hamm and Daniel Radcliffe as the doctor, which not only brings the hard to reach history of the time to life, but explores the era further, creating more stories which could have easily walked right off the pages of Bulgakov's wonderful, original manuscripts.

Emmily Fowler





# The Polish Solidarity Movement: Why it was a success

One of the biggest developments of the Cold War was the Solidarity movement in Poland, Eastern Europe. It was the first of many steps in the countries of Eastern Europe breaking away from the USSR and forming independence from Russia. It didn't start in 1980, but had instead continued from both a working class and intelligentsia (highly educated people) movement that begun in 1956, as well as two bloody uprisings in both 1970 and 1976. However, both of these uprisings were extremely violent and caused numerous deaths in Poland. This therefore sets out the differentiation between the Solidarity movement and numerous other Polish uprisings; the Solidarity movement was peaceful. There are a mixture of reasons as to why the Solidarity movement was as peaceful as it was. Whilst the movement had originated in the working class, it worked with members of the Polish intelligentsia. The working together of Poland's most influential people, including the intelligentsia, the workers and the Church, led to the defeat of communism in Poland.

Back in the year 1980 Poland experienced a wave of new strikes over increasing food prices under Russian control of Poland. These strikes were particularly located in Gdańsk, where over 17,000 workers at the Lenin Shipyards barricaded themselves in protest under the leadership of Lech Wałęsa, an electrician. Lech eventually presented the Polish government with a list of demands by the workers and eventually reached an agreement with them which allowed workers to strike.

Solidarity as an independent, self-governing trade union was formally founded on September 22<sup>nd</sup> 1980 when delegates of 36 regional trade unions met in Gdańsk and united under the name Solidarność. Lech Wałęsa was elected chairman of Solidarity. A separate agricultural union composed of private farmers, named Rural Solidarity (Wiejska Solidarność), was founded in Warsaw on December 14<sup>th</sup> 1980. By early 1981, Solidarity had a membership of about 10 million people and represented most of the work force of Poland.

As Solidarity grew, it continued to challenge the Polish government and created more strikes and higher demands not just for workers' rights but for free elections and economic reform. As tensions grew Wałęsa was pressured more and more by some members to use more violent action to achieve their goals. However, Wałęsa stuck to his belief in peaceful protest. The Polish government, however, was pushed more and more by the Soviet Union to wipe out Solidarity once and for all.

On December 13<sup>th</sup> 1981, martial law was imposed in Poland in a bid to crush the Solidarity movement. Solidarity was declared illegal, and its leaders were arrested. The union was formally dissolved on October 8<sup>th</sup> 1982, but it nevertheless continued as an underground organisation. This didn't stop political tension in Poland and for the next six years opposition to the government grew until 1988 where strikes across the country declared a wish for Solidarity to be recognised by the government again. Finally, in April 1989, the government recognised Solidarity again as well as the promise of free elections. In the first free election, Solidarity backed candidates, won 99% of the votes and a longtime Solidarity adviser, Tadeusz Mazowiecki on August 24<sup>th</sup> to become the first non-communist premier to govern Poland since the late 1940s. However, only 5 months later in December 1990 Wałęsa was elected president of Poland after disputes over the pace of Poland's economic progression under Mazowiecki.



The main debate, however, is what made the Solidarity movement a success. Solidarity was backed by millions of people when it was first formed in late 1980. Was it this large membership that caused its success? It still appeared to be the case that the government could crush this organisation, even with such large membership and a military force, and they did do so in December 1981.

However, why isn't this repeated by 1988 when once again strikes swept across Poland? It is suggested, instead, that the cracks in the Soviet Union were starting to become extremely wide and visible, with revolutions happening across the union. After all, it was only a year later that the Berlin Wall was pulled down and then only two years later when the union as a whole finally collapsed. So did the Polish government see that a movement like solidarity was inevitably going to succeed? Or did other factors come into play. Aside from a deepening sense of the crumbling of the Soviet Union, Poland itself had an under-developing economy and it seemed that without a drastic change in Russian leadership, the country could collapse into economic turmoil.

The economy was certainly a major issue for Wałęsa as he felt that Mazowiecki's pace of economic progression wouldn't cause Poland to be successful. So, whilst it can be debated what the main factor was that caused the success of the Polish Solidarity movement, there is no denying that there was an intense feeling of impending collapse for the Soviet Union and the Solidarity movement in Poland is one of many examples that ultimately brought the end of a sixty-nine year regime.

Will Rothwell

*“ I realise that the strivings of the Polish people gave rise, and still do so, to the feelings of understanding and solidarity all over the world. ”*



# Oliveira Salazar: the conservative revolutionary who revolutionised Portugal, but at what cost?

This Easter's Stone family holiday saw us venture to the surfers haven of Peniche, about an hour north of Lisbon. After a very pleasant lunch in a seafront restaurant, our afternoon stroll took us into the 16th C Fortaleza; constructed as part of Portugal's defences during the age of exploration. Yet it was as Portugal's equivalent to Robben Island that the Fortaleza became infamous during Salazar's dictatorship (1932 – 1970). Whilst I thought it might be slightly inappropriate to take my wife and two small children around the Museo Nucleo-Resistencia, a grim but fascinating display about those times, it did set my mind thinking about one of Europe's less popularised but notoriously brutal dictators.

Salazar was, in many ways, a revolutionary, but in the right-wing mould of his contemporaries Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler rather than Lenin, Gandhi or Mandela. Whereas Mussolini seized power following his March on Rome in 1922 and Hitler, having failed to emulate Mussolini in the Munich Putsch of 1923, was levered into power in the chaos of 1930's Germany, Salazar was an integral part of a militarily-led revolutionary vanguard that sought to impose stability on a nation that had seen forty-five changes of government between the end of the monarchy in 1910 and General Antonio Carmona's coup in 1926.



His ideological viewpoint was not dissimilar to that of Mussolini. His aim was to establish a corporatist republic that was to combine nationalism, Catholicism, authoritarianism and repression. Initially as Finance Minister in the new government and having secured from Carmona the guarantee that all government spending would fall under his control, Salazar set about firing up the national economy; curtailing government spending, raising taxes and balancing the budget in his first year. At a time when other western European countries were still feeling the aftereffects of war and economic instability (Baldwin's government faced the General Strike in 1926), Salazar oversaw a dramatic decrease in the number of Portuguese unemployed.

With initial success came further power, which he assumed for himself taking on other ministerial roles in addition to his principal brief until he eventually became Prime Minister in 1932. In this role Salazar was able to begin to create his New State, modelled on the family as a political concept. As the father figure for the nation, Salazar saw his role as the head of the household responsible for determining how to spend the family budget and as the father figure bearing sole responsibility for the decisions that needed to be made. The Church fulfilled the role of the 'mother'; making sure the country's thirst for spiritual values remained met. Logic dictated that families had no internal strife (?), so if the family model could be transposed onto the state, then the nation would surely prosper?



Against this backdrop, Portugal experienced continued economic growth at a time of global instability; albeit from a relatively low base. Post-war industrial growth rates were consistently in excess of 7% right up until the end of the Sixties. During the Thirties and Forties, the cunning Salazar managed to unofficially maintain his support for Franco's nationalists in the Spanish Civil War, maintain Portuguese neutrality in World War Two whilst both allowing British planes to use the Azores and continuing the illegal sale of tungsten to Germany, and allow forty four tonnes of Nazi-looted gold into Portugal.

Yet inevitably stability and prosperity were secured at a price. Naturally, in Salazar's New State there wasn't going to be much tolerance of any questioning of the patriarch's decisions by those he perceived to be equivalent to petulant teenagers. Backed by the army, political parties and trade unions were swiftly banned as Salazar's New State was entrenched in a new constitution. Rather than being fearful of socialism like Hitler, he was contemptuous of the working class and he had no intention of improving living and working conditions for the majority. In 1970, women could still not vote and Portugal had the highest rates of tuberculosis and illiteracy in Western Europe. Like Hitler and Mussolini, he believed that a mix of propaganda, censorship and brute force could be combined to keep the New State secure. Every authoritarian state needs its Stasi/Gestapo/Okhrana/KGB and in Salazar's Portugal the Policia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado (PIDE) struck fear into the hearts of those inclined to oppose with imprisonment and torture; often in the interrogation cells and chambers of Peniche's Fortaleza prison.



There is a certain degree of irony in the fact that a man who rose to prominence on the back of his astute financial acumen should be brought down by the folly of costly and doomed attempts to maintain Portugal's empire. As then British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan was ushering in the 'Winds of Change' at the beginning of the 1960's, Salazar remained determined to resist the rise of nationalist movements in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea and Cape Verde; even attempting to resist the Indian occupation of Goa in 1961. A stroke in 1968 was followed by his death in 1970, and as such it was the colonial wars and the mark they left on the officers who had fought them that led to a coup in 1974 which saw the beginnings of the transition to socialism and democracy; to many historians this finally marked the end of the revolution that had started sixty five years earlier.

There can be no doubting that the period of stability and both economic and industrial growth that Salazar oversaw did revolutionise Portugal, and in many ways laid the foundation for the further growth economically with the development of tourism and politically as seen as it joined the European Union in 1986. But as with so many leaders of the age, Salazar's ends cannot be seen as justifying the means. That we know more about the concentration camps of Nazi Germany, the bombing of Guernica and the Italian use of poison gas in the Abyssinian campaign is as a consequence of the history curriculum. Salazar was no less brutal and ruthless than Hitler, Franco and Mussolini; the countless opponents of the regime who suffered in silence or at the hands of the PIDE in the Fortaleza bear testament to this. His role in the 1926 coup, his eclipsing of rivals to develop a power base, and his determination to impose

his New State on the people to me underline his revolutionary credentials. What cannot be questioned is the legacy the man has left on the Portuguese psyche, with his biographer Dacosta confirming "Salazar is not an extra-terrestrial who just landed here. He is part of the Portuguese soul. Until we come to terms with Salazar, we Portuguese will never be who we really are."

Mr D J Stone

**Further reading:**

*Mascaras de Salazar* F Dacosta

*The Portugal of Salazar* M Derrick

*Salazar: A Political Biography* F de Meneses