SGS

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HISTORIAN

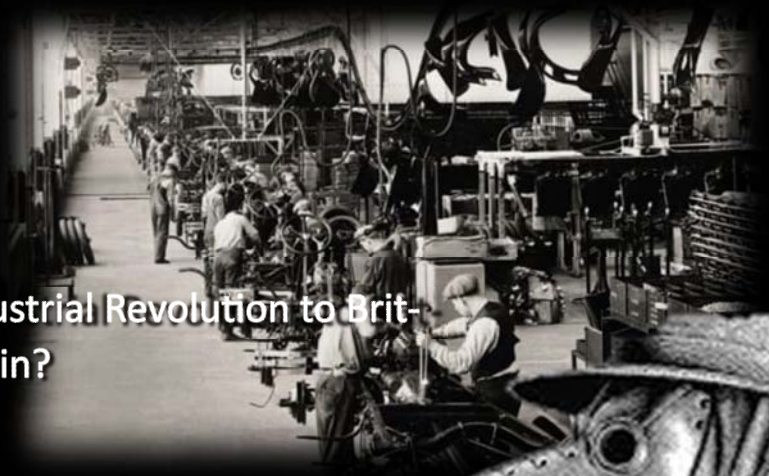
Produced by the Lower Sixth Form

The Abolition of Slavery from Britain

Women of Britain say 'Go!'

The Media's Role in the Mining Strikes

The Nazi Economic Miracle ?



Just how Important was The Industrial Revolution to Britain?

Was the Great Fire of London a Good Thing?

Did We learn anything from the Bubonic Plague ?

Editorial Comments

As I write this in lockdown during the global pandemic, it is amazing to think that we are currently living through history in the making. In years to come, future Stockport Grammar students will be studying our daily lives and using todays newspapers and everyday items as “sources.” However, despite the current situation, the SGS Historian team have come together to produce what we think is a wonderful edition of the magazine. In light of the pandemic, we decided to focus on how different events throughout history have shaped Britain from the bubonic plague to the miners strikes.

At the moment it is difficult to know what the long-term impacts of the corona virus will be, but perhaps we can glean some clues from the articles we have written. As a team, we have very much enjoyed researching and writing these essays, we’ve all worked very hard to produce a magazine which we are extremely proud of and which we hope you enjoy reading!

Kate Langton

Sixth Formers at Stockport Grammar School are most certainly creative, tenacious, and interested in the world beyond their immediate surroundings; especially the historians! I have not been surprised that this year's Lower Sixth form have willingly embraced the challenge of putting together this year's issue of the SGS Historian. It would have been easy to use remote learning, the coronavirus pandemic and other priorities as a reason not to go ahead with this yet, if anything, this year more than ever there will be an appetite amongst the school and wider community to digest the historical musings of this talented bunch! They have taken pride in their work, chosen themes that are important to or are of interest to them personally, and used this platform to share their ideas with you. As a result, this year's issue contains an eclectic mix of articles on themes as divergent as the Great Fire of London and the Miners' Strike! Well done to all, including Georgia Sykes, who has put it together superbly. We hope you enjoy an excellent read!

Mr D J Stone, Head of Sixth Form

Design and Layout by Georgia Sykes

SGS HISTORIAN

Contents

The Miners' Strikes 1984-1985: The Media's Role in the Outcome

Written By ***Martha Ryan***

On the 1st March 1984 the National Coal Board (NCB) announced the closure of the Cortonwood pit in Yorkshire which led to the miners at the pit walking out in protest. The closing of this pit came after months of speculation surrounding Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government's plans to severely cut Britain's mining industry following their claims that the pits were uneconomical and inefficient.

As these claims gained momentum, the rumours of widespread pit closures led to many miners not only fearing for the security of their jobs, but also for the tight-knit communities that had formed around the mines. Just eleven days later, half of the country's miners instigated strike action and this number would rise to over 80 per cent during the year long strike; the longest in Britain since 1929. Three months later, on the 18th June, around 5,000 miners picketed at Orgreave coking plant in South Yorkshire, aiming to block the lorries that were transporting the coal from entering. The events that followed are now considered to be one of the most bitter industrial disputes in British history. Almost six thousand police officers assembled on the picket line, with mounted officers charging at the strikers. The 18th June was the most violent day of the strike with an estimated total of 123 injuries sustained across both sides. Miners who were present at Orgreave felt they had been deliberately set up by the police and insisted that their protest had been intended to be peaceful; this is far from how the events at Orgreave and the strikes in general were portrayed by the media.

The events that took place at Orgreave were broadcast the same day and triggered a fervent debate over whether it was the police or the miners who initiated the violence. The National Union of Miners (NUM) and others accused the BBC of deliberately showing footage of Orgreave in a reversed order, creating the impression that the miners were to blame.

Thousands of miners march in Mansfield, May 1984

A miner faces a line of police at the Orgreave coking plant during the miners' strike, June 1984 by Don McPhee, left, and Martin Jenkinson

On the BBC nine 'o' clock news video footage of miners throwing missiles and stones at police was followed by clips of officers on horseback charging at the crowds.

According to documents leaked from the BBC News and Current Affairs meeting of the 19th June, there was an immediate feeling from within the BBC that Orgreave had been reported on with "a marginal imbalance".

The violence shown was shocking to many TV viewers who solely relied on the media to gain information on the strikes. By portraying the miners as violent and unruly the general public was less inclined to sympathise with their cause and led many to feel that the police's actions were justified. Later that same day, the ITV news showed footage of the violence that, unlike the BBC's footage which was filmed from behind the police officers, was filmed from the viewpoint of the picketers, this painted a vastly different picture of the policemen charging at assailable miners. However, the BBC's portrayal of events was the only perspective that many of the public would have seen at that time and the image of the apparently aggressive and combative picketers was cemented in their minds. The prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, made it clear that she backed the police and famously referred to the miners as 'the mob' reinforcing the impression held by some of the public that the miners, and in extension NUM, were a threat.

The BBC's imbalanced handling of the portrayal of Orgreave was not a unique case, in fact, the government had a well thought out media strategy that they used to control the public's perception of the strikers. Despite the government being careful to make Thatcher's responses to the strike as limited as possible, her animosity towards the strikers, the National Union of Miners and Arthur Scargill, the NUM leader, was very clear. Cabinet papers released in 2013 show Thatcher's intentions to 'crush the power of Britain's trade unions', which she believed were preventing the development of a free market.

With a clear aim, along with the fact that strikes had manged to bring down Ted Heath's Conservative government eleven years earlier, Thatcher's government were determined to crush the strikers. With expert advice an advertising budget of £4,266,000 was spent on national campaigns with an additional £300,000 targeted to areas where support would benefit the Conservatives.


DAILY Mirror

'God knows we can't let the miners lose'

'We are all in this together now'

COAL BLOCKADE!

Unions back the miners

Di, you're looking so wonderful

Article from the Daily Mirror from 1984

SIX ARGUMENTS FOR PIT CLOSURES

1. Oil, natural gas and nuclear power were all cheaper than coal for producing electricity.
2. The coal industry had not made a profit for over 40 years.
3. It was cheaper to import coal from overseas than it was to mine it in Britain.
4. It did not make economic sense for the British people to subsidise a loss making industry.
5. By closing inefficient coal mines the future of the remaining coal mines could be safeguarded.
6. People should not look to the government to protect their jobs and livelihood.

SIX ARGUMENTS AGAINST PIT CLOSURES

1. Closing down coal mines will create massive unemployment
2. There is usually no other type of industry in coal mining areas – unemployed miners and their children will have little chance of finding new work
3. There are vast reserves of coal underground; collieries should be worked no matter what the cost.
4. A coal mine is central to the community; if you close the mine you kill the community.
5. The closure program is simply the Conservative government's way of getting revenge on the coal miners for defeating the Conservative government in1974.
6. The government should protect and ensure the long term future of the country's important natural resources.

This table shows the argument from both sides

With the help of a compliant media, the government had significantly more control over the representation of the strikes than the miners did. The media strategists responsible for the Conservatives became aware of the importance of Sunday newspapers in setting the news agenda for the week that followed. Events that occurred on Saturdays would be reported on the following day, television programmes would report on reactions to stories deemed to be important. With careful timing one story could be extended over two or three days and this tactic ensured maximum exposure of the government's stance.

An example of this strategy being utilised was making sure that the head of the National Coal Board, Ian MacGregor, was available for comments first thing on the Mon-

A crowd of around 400 angry miners blockade National Coal Board boss Ian MacGregor inside a colliery office at Ellington in February,

day following the weekend news.

In direct contrast to this, Scargill found it almost impossible to have any sort of control over his presence in the media and his persistence and conviction, which was an inspiration to the miners, was distorted to portray him as aggressive and a threat to democracy. He said to The Guardian in 1985; 'the industrial correspondents, along with the broadcasting technicians are basically our enemies. Responsible for vilification, distortion and untruth.' What, to the miners, was an effort to save their livelihoods became a debate about the personality of government and the personality of the NUM, each with drastically different ideologies that they were willing to fight for. Yet the media's skewed representation didn't stop there. Perhaps the most blatant method of persuasion used during this time was the frequent comparisons made between the miners' strike and the First World War. Early on in the strikes The Sun published the headline 'Pit War: violence erupts on the picket line as miner fights miner'.

Picketers were referred to as 'the


THE Sun

THE OTHER MAN

20

£40,000 BINGO

PIT WAR

Violence erupts on the picket line as miner fights miner

Philip quits over hippo steak!

Article from the Sun newspaper comparing the strikes to war, 1984

army' and Scargill 'the army general' (The Sun). 'War framing' used by the right-wing media portrayed the miners as antagonistic justifying both the government and the police's disproportionate reaction to the picketers. This war metaphor continued throughout the year of the strike and played a crucial role in shaping the public opinion of what was going on. Furthermore, images used in newspapers were strikingly similar to photos of war. For example, photographic images of armed police on horses charging towards the massed strikers at Orgreave, a pile of wooden stakes supposedly used by the miners and most prominently, a photo of miners at Bilsthorne colliery in Nottinghamshire playing football was captioned 'playing on no-man's land during a break from picketing'- of course a reference to the Christmas Day truce between enemy soldiers and the allied troops in 1914. Even at the very end of the strike. The Sun's front page was a photo of an

Miners returning to work at Bates Colliery, Blyth, on March 5, 1985

injured police officer with the infamous phrase 'lest we forget' as the headline. War imagery was upheld throughout the miners' strike and gave weight to Thatcher's use of the phrase 'the enemy from within'. To this day war metaphors are used to evoke feelings of national pride and unity, and also prejudice.

On the 5th March 1985, miners marched back to work and in the years to come all of Scargill's predictions about pit closure plans were proven to be correct. The mining strikes of 1984-85 were a defining moment in British Industrial history; the NUM's defeat significantly weakened the trade union movement across the country.

The National Miners Strike 1984,Pickets 22 February

To Thatcher's government the events were seen as a major victory, which allowed them to consolidate their economic programme. An alternative visual and linguistic representation in the media of the miners and their cause, might have resulted in a completely different outcome and, by extension, a drastically different Britain.

Just how important was the Industrial Revolution to Britain?

Written By ***Dan Grant***

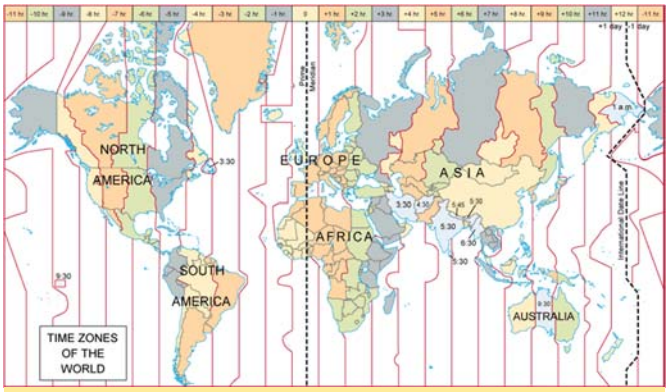
The Industrial revolution was a time in Britain where the production of most goods by hand became a thing of the past, its place being filled by new advanced machinery. It led to mass migration across the country, with the bustling industrial cities acting as magnets attracting hundreds of thousands of workers to these new epicentres of manufacturing.

For Britain, this period of industrialisation began in the 18th century and spanned approximately 80 years until around 1840. Subsequently it spread from Britain to other parts of Europe and eventually to the rest of the world. The period marked the use of new materials in Britain such as steel and iron which, before 1760, had only been utilised on a relatively small scale. These materials were in huge demand as they were key components in the making of most of the machinery created during this time. However, these new machines needed power which in turn led to the invention of steam power and the development of the revolutionary internal-combustion engine which, in turn, led to an increase in the demand for coal due to steam powers' reliance upon the burning of coal.

'Wentworth works' during the Industrial Revolution

The requirement for this energy resulted in the development of new methods of transport; most importantly trains. The first railway was the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 1825. Rail transport became the fastest method of transport available at the time and the trains united the nation, leading to a national time zone being established. Previously, time zones fluctuated from village to village, with the level of light determining the time of day. However now, due to the availability of trains and the need to synchronise journeys, a national time zone was developed.

In addition, the increase in ease with which products could now be transported across the country resulted in



Map of the time zones. Greenwich mean time was introduced in Britain (the Black line)

newspapers now being able to bring national affairs to the attention of the people and subsequently MP's could now be sourced to suit the requirements of their constituency.

The industry that developed most significantly during the industrial revolution was the textile industry. Inventions such as the Spinning Jenny and the Water frame, which used hydraulic power, hugely increased the productivity of the weaving industry. The invention of the Spinning mule meant that one person could do a job which had previously required 3000 labourers to do and this basically sounded the death knell for many of the cottage industries.

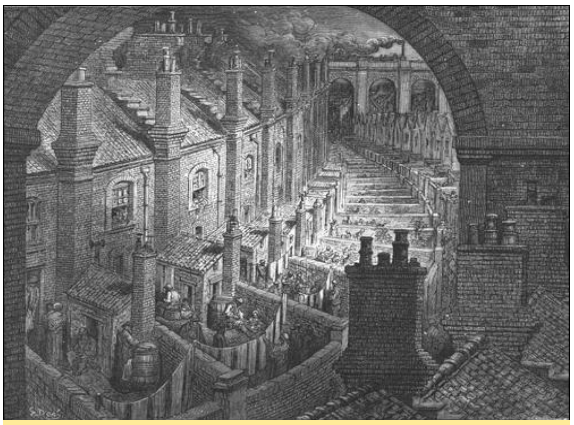
The industrial revolution heralded the construction of huge factories. These factories were compact working places and opportunities for employment were enormous. Sadly, this also led to the exploitation of child labour as the small children could to fit into tight spaces in the overloaded factories and carry out tasks the adults were too large to do and the factory owners could pay children significantly less than the average adult.

Image of Children working in a cotton

Factories were not safe places. There are countless records of factory accidents such as from 'The Times', on the 14th of July 1827. They reported a malfunction of a boiler next to the factory of 'Kearsley and co', which lead to an explosion, and consequently the deaths of 9 of the 17 girls working in the factory, with the other 8 seriously injured. However, for many families this was a risk worth taking as it meant an income for the family and for some an education. Many factory owners would send those under their employment to school, so the industrial revolution had an indirect effect on the literacy rate in Britain. In 1760 the literacy rate was only 60%, however after the Industrial revolution it had increased to approximately 90%.

Until 1760 the amount of work an employee would do in a day was simply judged by the level of light. Therefore, with the factory working hours being introduced, the clocks and factory bells became crucial, bringing structure and measured time to people's days. Factory hours also meant payment by the hour was introduced on a universal scale, as before this the only measure of payment was by the number of days for completion of a job or a payment for the whole job was agreed irrespective of the time taken for its' completion.

Prior to the industrial revolution, 9 out of 10 British citizens lived in rural areas. Society mainly consisted of farmers and peasants, accompanied by a small landholding elite and the middle class did not exist. The Industrial Revolution enabled the development of a middle class. The middle class was a group within society who were not as wealthy as the elite, however they were wealthier and more educated than the unskilled labourers working on the factory floor. They could introduce their small businesses to a wider market than the peasants and farmers although their businesses were smaller than that of the factory owners. These people were often merchants, mid-level bureaucrats and skilled labourers whose products remained in demand but often could not be manufactured by machines. Unfortunately, the living conditions at this time in the cities were horrendous, with poorly constructed cramped housing, crammed in wherever there was room to spare. People flocked to the cities to gain employment but there was very limited housing available. This increased demand for housing resulted in houses being built rapidly and often poorly and, in some cases, pre-existing small houses had to be shared by far too many workers. There was a lack of clean water due to the pre-existing poor plumbing, with some residential areas having no plumbing at all.



Gustave Dore, London (1872) - an idea of what conditions were like in the cities

These dreadful conditions and poor sanitation resulted in disease spreading rapidly through the cramped streets and lead to such epidemics as the influenza outbreak of 1775-1776 with its huge death toll. However, ultimately the industrial revolution was a great leap forward for Britain, with rapid advancements in manufacturing, travel, the growth of conurbations, opportunities for education and the development of the middle class, all of which rightfully earned Britain the title 'the workshop of the world', in this time.

The Women of Britain say 'GO!'

Written By Ms C F Griffiths

The When the men of Britain opened their papers on the morning of August 7th 1914 they were greeted by the heading 'Your King and Country Need You'. What followed was an appeal from the new Secretary of State for War, Lord Kitchener:
'An addition of 100,000 men to His Majesty's Regular Army is immediately necessary in the present grave National Emergency. Lord Kitchener is confident that his appeal will be at once responded to by all who have the safety of our Empire at heart.'

The ensuing flood of recruits was so heavy that the authorities found it hard to cope with and men were, for a time, turned away. Indeed, given that by the end of September 1914 some 750,000 men had enlisted, it is no surprise that the military machinery was placed under strain.

The initial rush of recruits is often attributed to the huge propaganda campaign launched early in the war. Very quickly Britain was confronted with the oversized image of the finger-pointing Kitchener and the message "Your Country Needs You!" The efforts continued and by January 1915, the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee had organised in excess of three thousand recruiting meetings, one million posters and thirteen million leaflets. Propaganda soon had to appeal to more than a sense of patriotism, however, as Eric Field, a worker for the advertising agency which produced recruiting literature for the army, wrote:

'Pure patriotism as a recruiting appeal soon lost its initial force…We ran the gamut of all emotions which make men risk their lives and all the forces which deter them from doing so.'

Thus men were confronted by posters asking "Daddy, what did you do in the Great War?" "Women of Britain say Go!" and "An Enquiry from the Front – When are the other boys coming?"

It is the slogan "Women of Britain say Go!" that is of interest for the purposes of this article. In an effort to persuade men to enlist, they were often informed that it was in defence of their womenfolk that the war was being waged. In recruitment propaganda, women and children were often evoked as defenceless targets and the reasons for the war were translated into simpler terms as the defence of 'family and honour.' Recruitment posters almost immediately portrayed the enemy as a brute from whom women needed protection as did novels and stories which often depicted the innocent female victims of war. My interests here, though, lie in the wider methods by which women were used as recruiting agents in the First World War.

Women of Britain Say "Go!" (E. J. Kealey, 1915)

'When are the other boys coming ?'

The defence of women and children as a justification for fighting was used by the recruiting authorities very early in the war when the behaviour of the invading German army in Belgium was described. The atrocity stories which abounded from August 1914 onwards invariably depicted the Germans as brutish and told of their mutilation of women and their brutality towards children. Many of these stories were at first unsubstantiated, but the British and French governments, anxious that the war should continue to be viewed as a chivalric crusade against a monstrous enemy, carried out official investigations which were presented to the public as truthful eye-witness accounts. The public were bombarded with tales of the 'rape of Belgium' – they were told, amongst other things, of women and children being used as shields during enemy fire. With papers such as the *Daily Sketch* asking 'can you still hold back? It may be *your* sister next' it seems probable that men felt they had no choice but to enlist. As Robert Graves noted, 'it never occurred to me that newspapers and statesmen could lie. I forgot my pacifism – I was ready to believe the worst of the Germans.'

Women, however, were not always depicted as the passive victims of war, but could themselves act as proactive recruiters for the army. Baroness Orczy, author of *The Scarlet Pimpernel,* for example, called for women to join her "Active Service League" in 1914:

Women and girls of England, you cannot shoulder a rifle, but you can *actually serve her [England] in the way she needs most. Give her the men whom she wants…use all the influence you possess to urge him to serve his country.*

It is clear from the Baroness' words that she viewed the recruitment of men as a form of active service for women and was successful in persuading 20,000 women to join her crusade. That women felt it was their duty to enlist men is also clear by the words of one young munitions worker who said of her un-enlisted male colleagues "Oh, I used to go mad, I used to call them all the white-livered whatsonames I could lay my tongue to." No doubt, given such pressures, many men felt they had no option but to enlist. That many women themselves risked their lives, as nurses at the front or in the munitions factories back home, may also have shamed men into enlisting. Women's sacrifice during World War One is historically well documented, but was also amply acknowledged at the time. H.G. Wells, for example, writing in the *Ladies Home Journal* in June 1916 wrote of the 'girls who have faced death and wounds so gallantly in our cordite factories' and he continues 'there is not inconsiderable loss of dead and wounded from these places.'

The fact that women were prepared to make such sacrifices called the very masculinity of unenlisted men into question and almost as soon as the war began, advertisements in *The Times* accused unenlisted men of cowardice and effeminacy.

One such advertisement announced:

Englishwoman undertakes to Form and Equip a Regiment of Women for the Firing Line if lawn tennis and cricketing young men will agree to act as Red Cross nurses in such a regiment.

Another, meanwhile, asked for "Petticoats for all able-bodied youth in this country who have not yet joined the army." Thus, unenlisted men began to be seen as effeminate and had their very masculinity attacked. Women's contribution in the war and their presumed willingness to make sacrifices posed yet another psychological pressure forcing men to enlist.

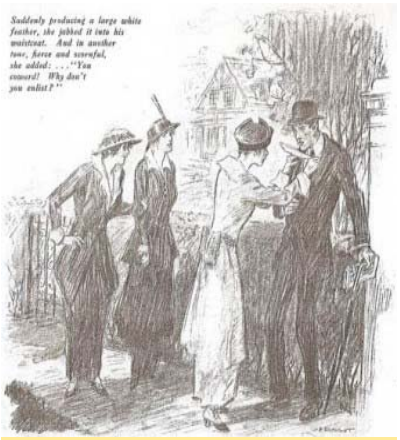
That unenlisted men had their very masculinity called into question is amply illustrated by the well-documented practice of handing out white feathers to men not in uniform. Begun in Folkestone in August 1914, women throughout Britain soon joined the 'Order of the White Feather.' The effect that the receiving of a feather could have on a man should not be underestimated. The Times correspondent Michael MacDonagh described it as "almost as terrible to the young male who has no stomach for fighting as an enemy with banners – and guns." The shame felt by some men at being handed the white feather by a young woman no doubt acted as a driving force for some to enlist.

'Daddy what did YOU do in the Great War?'

Female sexuality was also wielded as a force to encourage men to enlist. The popular songs of music halls

as well as literature stressed the desirability and attractiveness of the soldier. Gwendoline Brogden, in her song 'The Passing Show' for example, clearly links sexual attraction with soldiering with the refrain "On Sunday I'm willing, if you'll only take the shilling / To make a man out of you." This was a theme picked up and expanded on in official circles. Lord Leconfield, for example, stressed that the men who enlisted "will be the men with whom the young ladies walk out with. Where are those who do not come forward going to find their Sunday afternoon companion?" Baroness Orczy, meanwhile, urged women "never to be seen in public with any man who being in every way fit and free…has refused to respond to his country's call." Certainly, among some women, there was a feeling that a man not in uniform made an undesirable partner.

Women, it seems, were used in a number of ways to encourage enlistment amongst men. In the first instance, their supposed vulnerability provided a moral justification for the war and the apparent threat to their own womenfolk was used as a tactic to encourage men to enlist. Unable to themselves sign-up, however, women became proactive recruiters, encouraging their men to enlist and questioning the very masculinity of those not in uniform by the handing out of white feathers. It seems likely that, for some men, it was not an existing sense of patriotic duty, built-upon by the fervent actions of the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee, that led them to enlist, but rather a feeling that they were under attack by women who accused them of cowardice and flaunted their lack of desirability if they failed to do so.



Woman handing a man a white feather — calling him a coward.

Axis , Allied and Neutral countries

Could it be argued that the Great Fire of London was a positive event?

Written By **Kate Langton**

It was on September 2nd, 1666 that a seemingly insignificant event would change the face of London forever. In the early hours at Thomas Farriner's bakery on Pudding Lane, it has been claimed that a small spark fell onto a nearby pile of fuel and caused a fire that raged through London for 4 days, killing 6 people and destroying 373 acres, 13,200 houses, and the majority of St Paul's Cathedral. The fire also triggered racial violence and discrimination as people rushed to point the finger. Despite Charles II's attempts to quell the rumours by declaring that the fire was an act of God, people were convinced that it was an act of arson. Quickly, racial divisions were brought to the surface as people blamed London's immigrant population.

This suspicion led to horrendous acts of violence such as the lynching of a Swedish diplomat and a French woman's breasts being cut off after the chicks she was carrying in her apron were believed to be fireballs. It was a massive blow to London, its growth and its confidence, it has been estimated that in all it cost the city £10 million at a time when London's annual income was only £12,000. However, despite these factors, London treated the fire, not as a setback; but instead viewed it as an opportunity. A chance to rebuild the city-in a more modern and planned way- to be able to eradicate the haphazard slums of the East end and so, many argue that the fire was a positive and defining moment in London's history, a moment in which the city came together and bounced back against the odds, ready to take on the challenge of a new century with renewed confidence.

In 1666, the majority of London's houses were made from wood, the streets were narrow, and houses contained hay and animal feed. This alongside unusually strong winds resulted in an uncontrollable blaze which destroyed 13,200 houses. As a result of this devastation, there was an urgent need for new, safer housing.

The Great Fire of London in 1666 destroyed most of the city, as well as St Paul's Cathedral (Herry Lawford)

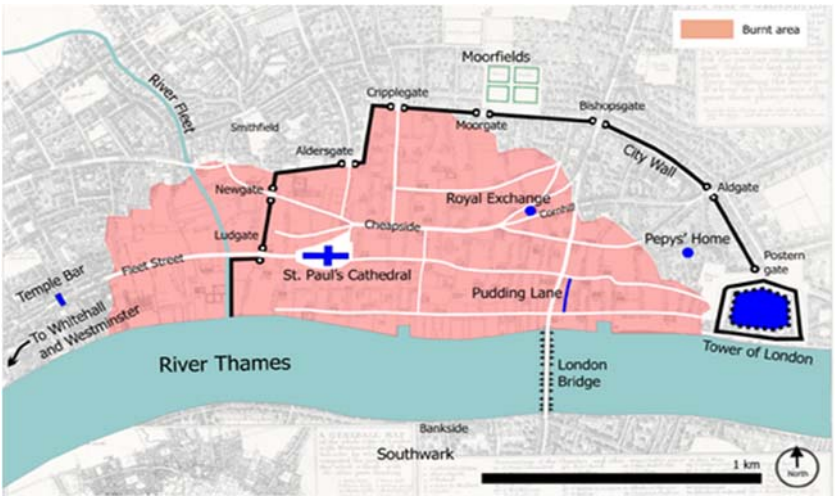
Charles II acted quickly and appointed six commissioners to rebuild London. Architect Christopher Wren submitted plans for a radical reorganisation of the city influenced by the grand and formal street of Paris. However, Wren's plans were not taken up as the main aim of the project was to get the city back on its feet quickly and to save money. Although they did not go along with Wren's grand ideas, the plans did include safety measures to prevent future fires. These measures came in the form of the 1667 Rebuilding Act which aimed to eradicate unsafe factors which had helped the fire spread such as introducing wider streets and changing building materials. The act stated that, 'no man whatsoever shall presume to erect any house or building, whether great or small, but of brick or stone.' This act was not only effective in preventing fire, but it was well regulated as anyone found to be violating the rules would be punished by having their house demolished. The rebuild was efficient and by the end of 1670, almost 7000 sites had been surveyed and 6000 houses had been built. As a token to commemorate the fire and to celebrate the rebuilding of the city, Wren also designed a monument for the Great Fire which was completed in 1677 and still stands today at the junction of Monument Street and Fish Street Hill in London. Although the re-building of London may not have complied with Wren's plans of grandeur, the new houses were a significant improvement and helped to prevent future fire and ensure the safety of residents. The new houses were also built efficiently and were a cost-effective solution to a colossal problem. Many may also share the opinion of Historian Charles Hind who claims to, 'like the higgledy-piggledy, piecemeal nature of London's development over the centuries,' as the nature of the buildings and their layout is now a quintessential part of London and its history.

The medieval church, St Paul's Cathedral did not escape the blaze, already unrecognisable to most in 1666 after suffering years of neglect, notably at the hands of Oliver Cromwell who used it as a stable for his horses. St Paul's suffered greatly as cinders carried by the wind set the roof and the wooden scaffolding around the cathedral alight. This was only exacerbated by local Londoner's who, Simon Carter described bringing, 'their furniture to the churchyard as they thought it would be safe,' inadvertently worsening the blaze as they, 'stacked it high against the cathedral walls.' However, this complete devastation allowed Wren to completely design the building. Wren did not have great concerns for preserving any salvageable remains, although some may argue there was little point in this as a witness described some of the medieval stones, 'exploding like grenades.' Instead he made great changes to the Cathedral, the most obvious being to omit a spire and enlarge the grand dome. Another impressive feature is the famous Whispering Gallery whose incredible acoustics make it possible to hear a whisper from the opposite side of the gallery, an enormous 34 metres away. Most importantly, in terms of future fire prevention, Wren constructed most of the Cathedral in Portland stone and some, in the centre of the building, were recycled from the rubble of the old St Paul's. At the top of the south door, you can see a nod to the fire and its effects through an inscription of a phoenix and the Latin word Resurgam, meaning 'I shall rise again.' The fire, although tragic, allowed for the complete reconstruction of St Paul's and a new fire-resistant design, few can forget the iconic photograph of St Paul's standing amidst the fire of a blitzed London.

Another crucial safety development introduced following the fire was insurance. In this period, the most common risk was fire and so building insurance became a very profitable business. The first insurance company called the Fire Office was set up in 1667 by economist Nicholas Barbon, but many other insurance companies were set up following this as savvy businessmen saw a new money-making opportunity. In fact, by 1690, every one in ten houses in London was insured. Each insurance company established its own fire brigade which were created for insured properties in the event of a fire to try and minimize damage. However, these brigades were not as useful and effective as they appeared. Insurers created 'fire mark' plates which were used to identify which houses were insured by which company as they arrived, this was particularly important before a system of street numbering was introduced in the 1760s. If a building was on fire, several brigades would attend and use the fire marks to establish if the building was insured by their company. If it was not, they would simply leave the property to burn. Although clear attempts were made to set up a firefighting system, the lack of unity meant that there were no significant advancements in firefighting until the creation of the London Fire Engine Establishment in 1833. This amalgamation of London's separate fire brigades created a unified force with constant, 'attendance day and night,' across seventeen locations in central London and three, 'floating engines,' on the Thames to extinguish any fires on the docks. This was very successful and a key development in the reduction of fire risk in London as now brigades worked together with better equipment and preparation to combat fires effectively.

To conclude, although the Great Fire of London was a tragic event in the history of London which caused loss of life, destruction of property, and a surge in racial violence, there are certainly several positive initiatives and changes which were sparked by the fire. The rebuilding of London and St Paul's Cathedral had a huge impact which can still be seen to this day as we enjoy the widened streets and the addition of the Cathedral dome which now stands as an iconic image beloved of tourists and Londoners alike. The development of insurance and the emergence of fire brigades are significant events and, although the separation of the brigades was a costly mistake, it laid the groundwork for later development and saw the start of safer living in London. Despite some issues with the system of insurance, the rebuilding of London was a colossal feat of engineering, organisation, and budget managing which stands as testament to the strength of the London population, symbolised today by the monument which acts as a symbol for the journey of recovery in the aftermath of the fire.

King Charles II



The Red area shows where the Fire caused the most dam-

The Abolition of Slavery from Britain

Written By **Ciaran Morgan**

When slavery is discussed in Britain today, what tends to be focused on more: the work of the abolitionists or the work of slave traders? Unsurprisingly we prefer to reflect on the hard-work and determination which lead to the eradication of slavery in Britain, rather than the years of a shameful trade that preceded it.

Slavery has existed for as long as civilisation and can be seen in some form in most societies throughout history. Britain's main involvement in slavery came through the Atlantic Slave Trade. Spanning from the early 1500s up to 1888 when slavery was abolished in Brazil, this trade had its origins in Spain and Portugal where merchants traded in Africa for the possession of African people, who would then be sailed to the Caribbean. Whilst Britain was not responsible for the creation of the Atlantic Slave Trade, its involvement is undeniable. Britain was one of the European powers which was a part of the so-called triangular trade and by the 18th century Britain was one of Europe's biggest traders. Approximately 10,000 ships left British shores for Africa before involvement in the trade was abolished in 1807.

For many years Britain prospered considerably from the trade. Factories were provided with raw materials such as cotton and cities like Liverpool and Bristol were able to develop as a result of their major slave trade ports. The sugar and tobacco that could be produced by slaves in the Caribbean became very popular in Britain as a result of the trade.

By 1800 60% of all British exports were going to Africa. Britain depended heavily on the trade during the 18th century, providing jobs to thousands and supporting factories during a time of industrial revolution. However, for all the profits it brought Britain, it had devastating effects in Africa. The benefits that the trade brought African Warlords, who were offered goods or arms in return for capturing other Africans, caused a lawlessness to spread across the continent. Small villages and towns had no real means of resistance against the resources these African Warlords had at their disposal. Those taken into captivity were often young men, good for labour, or women entering their child-bearing years. Groups deemed unable to provide any service, such as the elderly, were ignored which caused huge depopulation problems throughout Africa.

It would be nice to think that the damage the trade imposed on African civilisations would've caused a mass outcry against the trade. However the trade provided such a good service for too many, especially in the upper classes, and large parts of the British public had misconceptions towards Africans, viewing them as cannibals, which ensured many didn't seeing them as worth protecting.

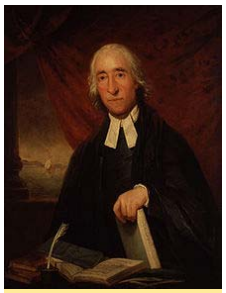
This just makes the work of abolitionists in Britain ever more admirable. Britain's contribution to the Atlantic Slave Trade was so widely accepted in politics that abolitionists would have to endure for decades to see meaningful results. Out of the abolition movement came one of Britain's earliest human rights groups, the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. Lead by the MP William Wilberforce, the group set out on Parliamentary campaign to ensure abolition could become a possibility.

William Wilberforce

Wilberforce's propositions for the abolition of the trade was denied almost ten times by Parliament between 1789 and 1804.

Such was the determination of Wilberforce and his fellow abolitionists that in 1807, Parliament passed the Slave Trade Act, prohibiting Britain's involvement in the Atlantic Slave Trade. The actions of abolitionists like William Wilberforce and Thomas Clarkson were vital in gaining success for the abolition movement. However, one key abolitionist has often gone unnoticed when the work of British abolitionists are discussed.

James Ramsay was born in 1733 in Scotland and died years before the Slave Trade Act of 1807. For his time Ramsay was one of the most influential and progressive abolitionists in Britain.



James Ramsey

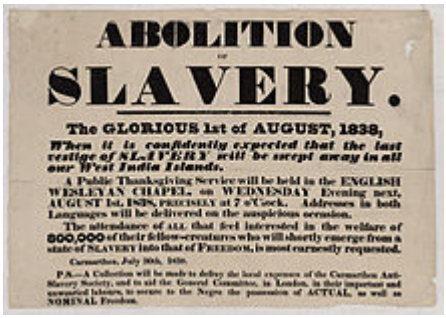
In 1757 Ramsay joined the navy and embarked upon the *HMS Arundel* in its tour of the West Indies as the ship's surgeon. Whilst on board the *Arundel* Ramsay encountered a British slave ship, the *Swift,* for the first time. Ramsay soon experienced first-hand the inhumane conditions on the ships and subsequently treated around 100 slaves and sailors alike for dysentery. The images Ramsay witnessed upon the ship shaped the course of his life and the contributions he made to the abolition movement.

Soon after Ramsay left the naval service, following an injury he received upon the *Arundel*. In 1761 he was ordained as an Anglican Priest and immediately moved to the island of St Kitts, a key grower of sugar canes in the trade, in order to work close to slaves and British plantations. This once more had a profound influence on Ramsay's campaign for abolition as he was able to gather a greater understanding of the way slaves were being treated. Ramsay welcomed both white and black people into his church as well as offering free medical support to the poorer members of the community. He was soon employed by a number of plantations as a surgeon, where he was able to offer some relief to slaves in critical conditions, much like he did whilst upon the *Swift.* Ramsay even became the son-in-law to a plantation owner whilst positioned in the Caribbean, marrying Rebecca Akers in 1763, daughter of Edmund Akers.

Despite professional commitments in St Kitts and a newly formed link in his family to plantation owners, Ramsay remained determined in his quest for abolition. He openly reported on the violence he witnessed against slaves from their owners, much to the anger of sugar planters. The backlash and criticism Ramsay received was so great that he left the island for Britain in 1777. Ramsay's main influence into the abolitionist movement came upon his return to Britain. He wrote several works on his experiences, most notably *'An Inquiry into the Effects of Putting a Stop to the African Slave Trade',* published in 1784. Ramsay's essays and novels were the first written by an influential and mainstream Anglican writer which described the conditions of plantations to the British people.

Once again Ramsay was targeted by English plantation owners, who viewed him as a threat to their livelihood. He died five years later in 1789 and was unable to experience himself the product of the hard-work of the abolitionists. In his final years Ramsay met with Wilberforce and Clarkson separately, encouraging both men to continue the effort to end slavery in Britain. Some argue Ramsay became a martyr for the abolition movement due to the nature in which he was attacked for speaking out against the trade. The Scottish inventor James Watt went on to state this about the legacy of Ramsay: *"the abolition of the British slave trade in 1807 probably owed more to James Ramsay's personal integrity, ethical arguments, and constructive proposals than to any other influence."*

Britain was not the first nation to abolish the slave trade and the ownership of slaves, nor was it the last. The Slave Trade Act of 1807 and Slavery Abolition Act 1833 did also not signify the end of the battle for abolitionists. The British Government only completed loan payments in 2015 as part of the compensation given to



ABOLITION
OF
SLAVERY.

The GLORIOUS 1st of AUGUST, 1838,

When it is confidently expected that the last vestige of SLAVERY will be swept away in all our West India Islands.

A Public Thanksgiving Service will be held in the ENGLISH WESLEYAN CHAPEL, on WEDNESDAY Evening next, AUGUST 1st, 1838, PRECISELY at 7 o'Clock. Addresses in both Languages will be delivered on the auspicious occasion.

The attendance of ALL that feel interested in the welfare of 800,000 of their fellow-creatures who will shortly emerge from a state of SLAVERY into that of FREEDOM, is most earnestly requested.

Carmarthen, July 30th, 1838.

P.S.—A Collection will be made to defray the local expenses of the Carmarthen Anti-Slavery Society, and to aid the General Committee, in London, in their important and unwearied labours, to secure to the Negro the possession of ACTUAL, as well as NOMINAL Freedom.

plantations owners following the Slavery Abolition Act. However the influence of people such as James Ramsay cannot go unnoticed for the significance it had in the fight for abolition. We should still appreciate the work of abolitionists today for the struggles they had to overcome to gain freedom for ordinary people, captured and forced to work against their will.

Am I not a man emblem used during the campaign to abolish slavery

Has Britain learnt anything from the Bubonic Plague ?

Written By ***Rabeeah-Nuur Mohammed***

In 1346, Britain found itself enmeshed in what we know as the most lethal pandemic in human history; The Bubonic Plague.

A Plague Doctors uniform — it didn't protect them

The bubonic plague, commonly known as The Black Death, was a disease caused by the bacterium Yersinia Pestis, commonly found among wild rodents. The plague killed colonies of flea-ridden rats. Upon the death of the rats, the fleas that once relied on them as a source of blood, sought out humans as an alternative. Once bitten, the lymph nodes, located in the neck, armpits, groin, guts and lungs, swelled up. The result of this was the formation of a 'bubo,' and it is for this reason, the disease was named 'The Bubonic Plague.' Presently, the world is facing another deadly pandemic, the Coronavirus, caused by the virus COVID-19, hence the name. Generally, viruses attach themselves to a host cell within the body, thus destroying it. The virus affects the lining of the throat, airways and lungs. These areas find themselves hosting the virus and allow its rapid replication. Symptoms of the Coronavirus include fever, a sore throat, coughing and headaches; this list is forever increasing as we learn more about the behaviour of COVID-19. On the other hand, the Bubonic plague could result in abdominal pain, diarrhoea, nausea and vomiting as well as gangrene, which turned the skin black. From this information we can agree the two conditions are symptomatically dissimilar.

The scale at which the Bubonic Plague swept across Europe was mainly due to unhygienic living conditions and a lack of scientific knowledge as seen by 14th Century cures. Responses to the Bubonic Plague included rubbing onions on blisters, drinking vinegar and/or ten-year old treacle, sitting close to a fire or sewer as well as acknowledging the plague was a punishment from God, resulting in the consequent whipping of oneself. Presently, prevention of the Coronavirus has included the use of face masks and hand sanitiser, the frequent washing of hands and reduced use of public transport. To treat COVID-19, people are encouraged to drink lots of fluid in order to prevent dehydration and to take Paracetamol, as a means of mild pain relief. In severe cases, the Coronavirus can cause trouble breathing and lung failure results in the victim needing to be put on a ventilator. A ventilator takes over the body's breathing mechanisms and gives the patient time to respond and effectively fight off infection. This information demonstrates the evolution of the medical world and the progress we have made since 1346.

A Ventilator >

The Coronavirus has killed 162,826 people in Europe. We must take into consideration that the Coronavirus is still in its early stages and so that number is set to increase. It is difficult to estimate how many people died of the Bubonic Plague in Europe due to a lack of mortality records however it is estimated to be 25 million. At a time where little was known about the virus and medicine in general, its containment was nearly impossible. Presently, there are people that become infected with the Coronavirus yet show no symptoms and are completely oblivious to the fact that they have it. Nevertheless, for those who do suffer, medical technology used by the National Health Service has the ability to save lives and ease suffering. Protective equipment can also be worn by those on the front-line in order to ensure their own safety and people are able to access information which can inform them about the virus, its transmission and prevention through the internet.

The Bubonic Plague introduced ideas that have been used as a basis to our own response to the Coronavirus. The Privy Council discouraged public gatherings and homes were 'shut up.' This had deadly ramifications for those who were living in poverty. Similarly, the government slogan 'Stay at Home, Save Lives' encourages people to avoid leaving the house, a form of quarantining, and due to the possibility of people becoming financially overwhelmed, the government furlough scheme as well as local donation drives has eased the impact of such realities. Unfortunately, at the time of the Bubonic Plague spreading, homes usually consisted of one room only and so upon one member of a family becoming infected, the rest of the household would almost definitely suffer too. (It also didn't help that fleas didn't seem understand the message!) One must also acknowledge the idea that it is human nature to blame. The public reacted to the Bubonic Plague by finding an ethnic group to hold accountable. Due to members of the Jewish Community experiencing only a small number of fatalities, people suspected them of causing the plague through the poisoning of wells, rivers and springs. As a result, Jewish people found themselves being mistreated. The Coronavirus has largely been linked and traced back to those living in China. In this modern climate, persecution isn't as severely resorted to however Chinese businesses have seen a reduction in business and trade as well as experiencing xenophobic attacks from those with pre-existing prejudices. Popular explanations for the Bubonic Plague included divine punishment or the imbalance of the four humours. Similarly, the origins of the Coronavirus have ranged from the consumption of bats to a leaked US bio weapon and 5G towers; one clearly cannot deny the continual power of misinformation through the decades.

It seems as though Britain have not needed to learn much from the Bubonic Plague, due to medical and technological advances not requiring them to. Instead, we should be grateful for such a notion, and reflect upon the Black Death as a means of acknowledging how far society has progressed both medically and technologically. Nevertheless, the 34,466 deaths in the UK suggests developments in our economy have actually acted as a means of increasing the rate at which viruses are able to spread and that living in a consumerist culture has magnified the scale of infection. Many losses have been extremely tragic and especially painful for those grieving at a time where funerals are not currently taking place.

Modern-day Doctor wearing PPE to treat a patient with COVID-19

Whether we have learnt anything or not, it cannot be denied that we must never forget those who have lost their lives to pandemics across the world nor should we fail to thank and commemorate the key-workers who risk their lives on a daily basis in order to help upkeep society as best they can.

The Nazi Economic Miracle? Schacht's New Plan 1934

Written By ***Mr D J Stone***

With the UK economy set for a period of significant economic downturn and recession due to coronavirus, commentators inevitably find themselves comparing the challenges of today with financial crises of the past. In relatively recent memory, some look back to the Credit Crunch of 2007. Go back a little further and after the end of the Second World War, a massive US loan helped to underpin Attlee's Labour governments introduction of the welfare state. The standout point of comparison for many remains the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Whilst Britain floundered in its response to the Wall Street Crash, floundering from Baldwin (Con) to MacDonald (Lab) and on into National Government to find a solution, the USA twice elected Franklin Roosevelt to the Presidency with successive landslides in 1932 and 1936 drawn to his promise of a New Deal. To observers at the time, however, it was in Nazi Germany that the most dramatic economic recovery seemed to be evident. What was their secret?

Whilst the Nazis didn't really offer any clarity or clear policy on the economy in their 1928-1933 election manifestos, Hitler was savvy enough to understand that if he didn't take Germany out of Depression, the regime's chances of survival were minimal. One of his first steps was to turn to Hjalmar Schacht as the President of the Reichsbank to take charge of the economy.

Schacht was not a Nazi, but as a conservative nationalist he was sympathetic to many of the Nazis policies and was a friend of Big Business. He was an economic genius who had navigated the Weimar Government through its period of prosperity, having set up the Rentenmark for Streseman to rescue the German currency in 1923. His leadership of the economy gave Hitler and the Nazis credibility, and in exchange Hitler was more than happy to allow Schacht to become the economic dictator.

Hjalmar Schacht

Schacht realised that there could be no quick fix and that, like in the USA, a massive injection of state funds was essential to revive demand and raise the national income. His initial steps saw the state take greater responsibility for the control of capital and the setting of lower interest rates. Measures were introduced to reward and protect farmers and the mittlestand (lower middle class); both groups having played a pivotal role in helping the Nazis into power. Import tariffs protected their produce. The Reich Entailed Farm Law and the Reich Food Estate secured land ownership for small farmers and provided the security of a planned system. This encouraged farmers to borrow and, with interest rates at low levels, economic growth was easily stimulated.

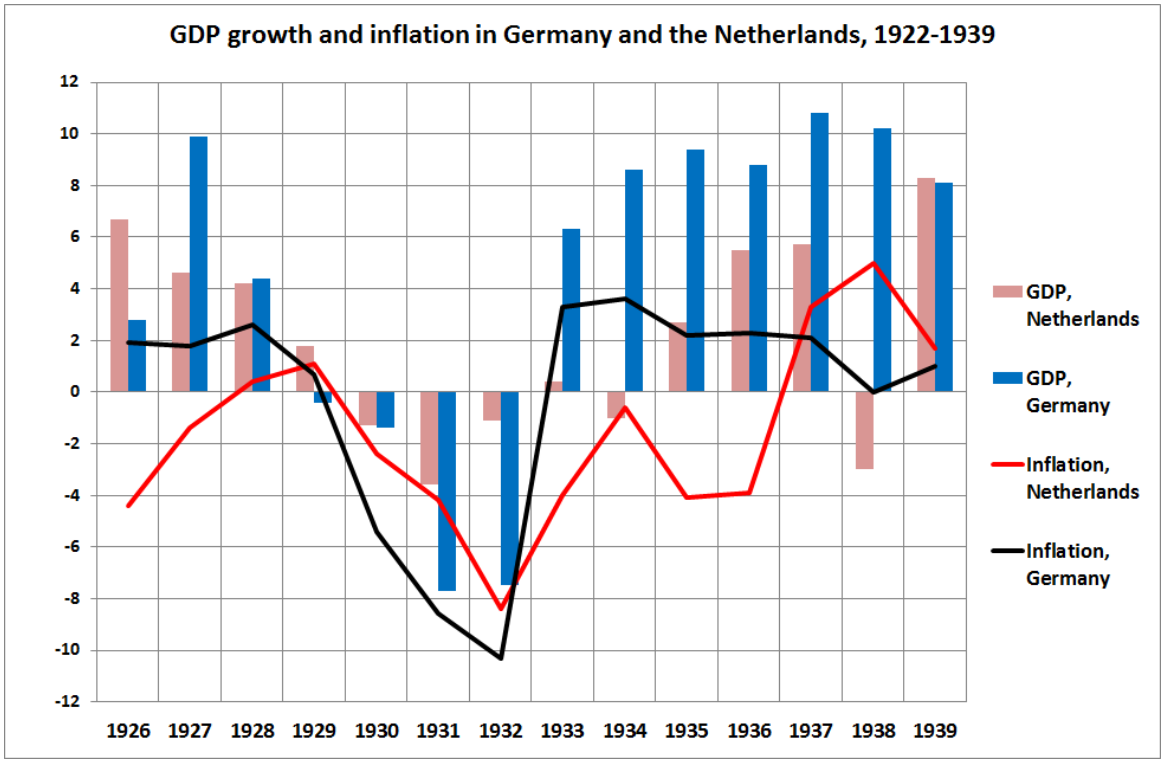
Like Roosevelt's New Deal, massive public investment in infrastructure projects also formed a significant part of the German approach. Some of these had been initiated by von Papen in 1932, but Schacht and the Nazis adopted and expanded these to provide work for unemployed 19-25 year olds in the Reich Labour Service. This saw the start of autobahn construction and Volkswagens, alongside reforestation projects and land reclamation.

The net result of this approach was that public investment tripled from 1933-36, with government expenditure increasing by 70% in the same period. Jobs were being created, tax revenue was increasing and, to all intents and purposes, Germany appeared to be faring well compared to the UK, USA, France and the USSR.

Yet Germany faced a major economic challenge in 1934, with inflationary pressures growing and a balance of payments crisis looming. The former was tackled the imposition of price controls and the abolition of trade unions! The latter was caused by the increasing German demand for raw materials for the rearmament project, which had started almost immediately in secret in 1933.

With low levels of gold and foreign currency, Germany needed to import more than it could pay for with exports if the funding of tanks, guns and aircraft was to continue. Not for the first time, Hitler had to choose between consumer spending or rearmament.

In July 1934, Hitler made Hjalmar Schacht the Economics Minister alongside his role of President of the Reichsbank. This was akin to making Rishi Sunak Chancellor of the Exchequer and Governor of the Bank of England simultaneously! In September 1934, Schacht launched the New Plan, giving the government control over all aspects of trade, tariffs, and capital & currency exchange. The government also set import levels, preventing excessive imports and ensuring that materials needed for rearmament could be prioritised. Maybe Schacht was going to let Hitler have his cake and eat it?



Reichsmark coins

Central to the success of the New Plan was the establishment of bilateral trade treaties, particularly with the Balkan countries, effectively allowing goods to be bartered saving the Germans from spending foreign currency or gold. Where possible, Germany also sought to use the Reichsmark to purchase raw materials; capitalising on growing international confidence in the strength of Germany's recovery. Lastly, Schacht introduced a form of credit note, Mefo Bills, to buy goods. Issued by the Reichsbank, these bonds were held for five years and offered holders an interest rate of 4% per annum. Mefo Bills allowed Germany to disguise spending and increase investment in rearmament.

In many ways, it was a real success. Unemployment had fallen to 1.5 million by 1936, Schacht had overseen a 60% increase in industrial production and a 40% increase in GNP since 1933, and German rearmament (still secret until 1935) had continued unhindered. Perhaps most important, however, at home and abroad Germany seemed to be on the up; with a level of prosperity returning to the country at a time when all others continued to struggle.

Yet there remained limitations. Fundamental structural weaknesses remained in the German economy and continued government investment in public works schemes still generated inflationary pressures. The Balance of Payments issues had not disappeared but had merely been masked by clever tricks. The New Plan coincided with a rapidly evolving international situation, where the Disarmament Conference failed, the Abyssinian Crisis confirmed in Hitler's mind the weakness of the League of Nations, the self interest of Britain and France, and the urgency of the need to push on with rearmament. In 1935, Nazi rearmament was no longer a secret and, in 1936, the German army marched into the Rhineland.

Only a reduction in arms spending would prevent Germany from sinking into the red, however buoyed by his international successes and given how central rearmament was to Hitler's raison d'etre, it was unlikely that Hitler was going to respond sympathetically to this suggestion. In the 'Guns or Butter' battle of 1936, Hermann Goering's view that 'guns will make us powerful; butter will only make us fat' triumphed over Schacht's advice to Hitler that a more balanced 'free market' economic approach be taken.

A measure of Hitler's high regard for Schacht is reflected in the fact that whilst Herman Goering was given oversight of the economy through the Office of the Four Year Plan, Schacht remained Minister of Economics until 1937 and President of the Reichsbank until 1939; then continuing as Minister without Portfolio until 1943. Acquitted in 1946 at Nuremberg for conspiracy and crimes against peace, his nationalist rather than Nazi affiliations and the international respect for his economic acumen certainly played a part in saving Schacht from punishment and prison.

So was it a Nazi Economic Miracle? To many at the time, they were convinced it was. In 1936, the eyes of the world were on Germany for the Olympic Games. To all intents and purposes, those visiting Berlin saw a city and a country very much on the up on all fronts. A combination of Schacht's brains and Hitler's dynamism had laid the foundations for this. Reducing unemployment had become a priority, Hitler was prepared to adopt greater state interventionism and deficit financing in a way that his Weimar predecessors had dismissed, and with the passing of the Enabling Law, the death of Hindenburg and the repression of free trade unions, as a dictator Hitler had the power to allow Schacht to manage the economy in the way he saw fit. Of course, recovery was driven hugely by rearmament on an ultimately massive scale – not for the first time, a German leader was to gamble that by winning war the cost of financing economic recovery would be met. In 1945, Germany was destroyed, economically, physically and mentally as it came to terms with the horrors of total war and genocide.

But in the 1930s and compared to Roosevelt, Baldwin and McDonald, Hitler's Germany was on the up! Hitler and Schacht were operating in favourable circumstances but consider the impact that the perceived strength of Germany's economy had on the way the outside world responded to aggressive foreign policy moves from 1936 onwards. Had the recovery not seemed so miraculous to those outside, would they have been less inclined to appease and more likely to see Hitler as being far from reasonable?

But, of course, in 1936 Schacht's assessment of the German economy was correct. It couldn't continue to focus on rearmament and grow due to the continued challenges of a balance of payments deficit and inflationary pressures. Germany needed to fatten up and scale back its focus on guns. Yet Hitler was a man in a hurry, which seems strange given his Third Reich was supposed to last for a thousand years. He was a man with a plan - a four year plan to be precise! Germany was to be self-sufficient and ready for total war by 1940. There would be no time for fattening up...

German Rearmament