

SGS HISTORIAN

Issue 6
Summer 2021



DOES HISTORY REPEAT ITSELF?

🏰 **1918 Influenza Pandemic vs 2019
Coronavirus Pandemic – comparisons,
contrasts and learning points**

🏰 **Greenland and Iceland: A Renewed
Struggle for Independence from
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Editorial Comments & Contents

A note from the writing team:

I have found it an incredibly rewarding experience to write an article for this magazine. It allowed me to express myself by creating an informative and interesting article in order to help educate others and bring to light lesser known aspects of history which aren't always taught in the main syllabus at school. We felt history repeating itself was an appropriate topic to base the magazine around due to the concerning cyclical nature of recent events such as the 1919-1920 flu pandemic vs the 2019-2020 coronavirus pandemic, the rise of far right extremism or some recent religious and racial conflicts. These all paint a worrying picture of the constant similarities to countless historical events which many people, both historical and modern, falsely believed were one time issues. *Alex Ward*

A note from the teaching staff:

Whilst this is the sixth edition of this magazine, I do think it is important to recognise that this is the second issue to be produced during the coronavirus pandemic. This is important because we should recognise the impressive additional commitment to scholarship, beyond A Level work, that is reflected in this publication. The pupils returned to in-person teaching on 8th March. Many have combined their writing with early EPQ work, the limited resumption of co-curricular activities and continuing with four A Level programmes of study. 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. I am also delighted that Dr Stephen Smith has agreed to write a piece for this issue for two reasons: firstly, the Fischer controversy is an area of debate within history that I am really interested in having taught it before, but more importantly it is a fitting way for someone who has enthused countless generations of SGS historians to sign off ahead of a long, happy, healthy and no doubt History-influenced retirement! *DJS*

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Knights in shining armour? How the first truly modern war ironically brought back medieval warfare

By Alex Ward

When people imagine the First World War they will often think of it as the first truly modern war and this is a fair assessment: machine guns, tanks, planes, artillery, submarines, gas all swept away the previous traditions of cavalry and sportsmanly conduct. In most cases it would be right to assume that warfare at this point had been truly revolutionised and it would never revert to what it was before. Instead these advancements in technologies ironically resulted in a return to a sort of basic medieval style of combat which was presumed to have died out long ago with the invention of the first firearms but, instead and ironically, returned to the trenches of the western front as a response to the advancements in firearms; the weapons that made this type of warfare obsolete in the first place.

Whilst it can be argued that the war started with an old fashioned capacity and that in 1914 the battlefields of northern France would have looked very different to those that would come just a year or two later, the opening battles are characterised by the use of cavalry on all sides. This was a far cry compared to clashes of armoured knights in centuries past and would be

made obsolete by the weapons that would dictate a return to medieval brutality, such as the machine guns and artillery. Most armies in 1914 fielded some sort of heavy machine gun such as the Vickers, Maxim or Hotchkiss. These were all capable of wiping out squads of soldiers in an instant,



Figure 1 A WW1 soldier in armour!

combined with artillery which could fall from the sky at any time with no warning. Such was the devastating power of these shells that over half of the casualties on both sides came from shells. As a result, elaborate trench systems were built to protect the soldiers from these weapons and the entire western front as well as the Italian Alps settled into stalemate. As a result of this rapidly developing situation, soldiers needed to find ways to improve

their offensive and defensive capabilities, to do this they looked to the past.

As was natural in these static conditions, many soldiers on both sides of no man's land would become quite close due to shared experiences, interests and background. As a result, many soldiers had no desire to kill each other as shown by the Christmas truce of 1914. Something had to be done. Officers on both sides soon adopted the tactic of trench raids which became commonplace on the Western Front especially for a variety of reasons; they maintained fighting spirit, reduced enemy morale, acquired intelligence and generally kept soldiers well practised to help reduce complacency during long stretches on the frontline. The practise of trench raiding involved a small party crawling across no man's land to the opposing trench in the dead of night to either collect prisoners, intelligence or to simply eliminate a number of soldiers before returning to no man's land. It was easy to see if a trench raid had even gone ahead or not as soldiers would come back with prisoners or useable intelligence or they would come back with casualties; if neither happened they had simply crawled out into no man's land to wait out the time. Due to the close confines of the enemy lines, soldiers soon found problems with their equipment in that the standard issue bayonet either on a rifle or on its own was simply far too long to be practical in a fight and to fire a handgun which was usually in short supply or to detonate a hand grenade would alert sentries. The issues with the bayonet was not just confined to trench

raiding, soldiers who by some miracle made it to the enemy lines after going over the top of the needed to clear trenches of enemy infantry when grenades and pistols were unavailable. As a result soldiers would make or acquire melee weapons for silencing enemies and close combat.



Figure 2 Trench clubs

Knives, axes, hammers especially clubs and by far the most common. Weapons that had last been seen in battlefields like Bosworth or Agincourt made a return to warfare in the age of the machine gun. Soldiers soon realised the need for so called 'quiet weapons'. Soldiers and officers would write home to request these sorts of weapons but the vast majority were either made on the front line from scavenged parts or in field workshops, such as unit blacksmiths. Wooden clubs would have hobnails hammered into them as well as being wrapped in barbed wire. The Germans and Austrians would manufacture purpose built clubs as well issuing the feldspaten (a small shovel with a sharpened edge designed to be used like an axe). By the second year of the war, it would seem that the soldiers on raids were armed with weapons that 13th century infantry would be accustomed to.



Figure 3 A soldier in the Farina with spear or lance

On the flip side of the coin there is protection. In the Middle Ages, full plate armour developed as a direct response to projectiles, specifically arrows, then it was later made obsolete by projectiles in the form of powerful primitive rifles and cannons. Nearly 500 years later, types of armour began to spring up in response to the exact same threat of projectile based injury. Armies began to develop armour to protect their troops, this was often heavy segmented plates, chain mail, coats of plate and steel helmets. The German forces created Sappenpanzer, a lobster like breastplate system for sentries to absorb incoming rounds. In addition to this they created bulletproof sniper masks and brow plates for helmets, these would allow snipers to survive direct headshots. Soldiers wearing this equipment looked more like medieval Knights than modern soldiers! Other protection methods were experimented with such as the British who used chain mail which is ubiquitous of Norman knights to protect their tank crews

from fragments inside tanks. These masks would be acquired by trench raiders for their own protection. Interestingly the French and Italians would go on to develop mobile steel bulletproof shields, Coats of plates, solid pieces, chainmail, leather was all used to help protect soldiers from shrapnel, gunfire, knives and clubs.

By the end of the war, the machine gun and artillery had been joined by poison gas, armoured trains, zeppelins, heavy bombers, tanks, submachine guns, and flamethrowers, but despite this the clubs and armour remained. Elite German Stormtroopers from the final last ditch 'Kaiserschlacht' offensive, which pushed the allies back to the city of Amiens, are often seen and pictured wielding their sharpened shovels and clubs in addition to their brand new submachine gun and wearing armour as they assaulted enemy trenches and broke through enemy lines; conjuring up images of Teutonic Knights of old. But by far the unit who employed armour and melee weapons the most were the Italian Arditi shock troopers. The Arditi, which translates to the 'daring ones' was the special forces unit formed in 1917 whose single specific aim was to assault enemy trenches and eliminate all those



Figure 4 The Farina cWW1

inside to facilitate a breakthrough in the lines.

They employed a full suit of armour called the Farina, which could withstand rifle fire within 125m and used wire cutters mounted on long poles to cut through the tangled obstacles on the approach to the enemy lines. They also mostly carried no firearms or only pistols and instead relied almost entirely on knives and clubs as their primary offensive weapons. They would begin their assault before the opening artillery bombardment had even finished. After cutting their way through the barbed wire, they would dive into enemy trenches and use their weapons to great effect. Having cleared the frontline, the secondary infantry would begin to move forward. The Arditi would suffer 25-30% casualties but on a tactical level they were greatly feared and did contribute to the final Vittorio Veneto offensive of October 1918. They are perfectly encapsulated by their motto "O la vittoria, o tutti accoppati", which translates to "we either win or we all die". Whilst not

as successful in overall offensives like German Stormtroopers, the Arditi were masters at the art of taking trenches under fire and providing moral. The Arditi and the German Stormtroopers would be disbanded after the war and, coincidentally, would be the basis for many of the political struggles in the 1920s; such as the Freikorps.

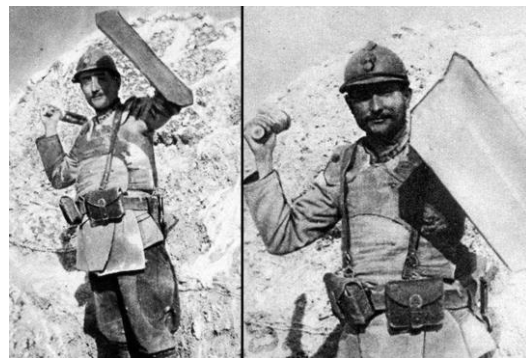


Figure 5 WW1 soldier with trench shield

If photographs had existed in the Middle Ages, it would be hard to tell many soldiers apart from knights of the medieval period. In many cases, the line between types of warfare long since past and the so-called "modern war" was a very blurry one indeed. It is also incredibly ironic that as projectiles and technology improved, armour improved to meet it in the shape of trench armour and, in some cases, even tanks. This directly mirrors the arms race between arrows, spears and armour over half a millennia ago. In many places, WW1 had technology and combat not at all dissimilar from warfare today but on the other hand the new methods of killing brought back tools and equipment long since deemed obsolete and overly brutal and uncivilised by modern standards.

By Alex Ward L2

1918 Influenza Pandemic vs Coronavirus Pandemic – comparisons, contrasts and learning points

By Jessica Horsford & Harry Brown

The 1918 influenza pandemic was the deadliest pandemic since the Black Death that arrived in Europe in 1347. This pandemic was called the Spanish flu; however despite the name there is uncertainty around where it began. There is said to be a major pandemic every 100 years and nonetheless in 2019 we faced a new pandemic; Coronavirus. This article is a comparison of how these two major pandemics have affected our attitudes towards medicine, our advances in science, but also the changing societies of our world.

There are a few possibilities for the origins of the 1918 pandemic. One theory is that it arose from China, much like our current pandemic, and was spread as Chinese migrant labourers were transferred to help with the war efforts for the allies. These labourers helped with the supply chains behind the front lines and have their own military cemetery in the Somme valley.

However, you may expect that the graves are of those who died in the war effort but in fact all of the gravestones are from the

pandemic instead of the war. This is an incredibly poignant point just showing that even those that were directly involved in the war effort were more likely to succumb to the pandemic than to the war they were aiding. This is surprising as the pandemic is very rarely mentioned in relation to the war and often as a separate factor on its own, when in fact the two went hand in hand, resulting in a staggering combined death toll.

Another possible source of the pandemic is the British army camps in France in 1916 as scientific articles published in the Lancet by teams of doctors and pathologists in the army show that an outbreak of respiratory disease had broken out among the soldiers. At the time they did not believe it to be influenza despite the disease killing half of those it infected with many soldiers experiencing a blueness in the face before they died.

This blueness in the face was caused by the extensive consolidation of the lungs, where the lung tissue goes from light and spongy to being filled with fluid, reducing the capacity of the lungs for oxygen transfer.



Figure 6 Warning signs in US military base

This fluid is from the person's own immune system going into overdrive and ultimately resulting in the death of those infected.

Heliotrope-cyanosis occurs when faces turn blue as oxygen is less able to be circulated. This symptom was common in those infected with the influenza virus H1N1 and also those in the British army camps in France. Once the pandemic had broken out all over the world another paper was published by the same team saying that this was what they had seen two years ago.



Figure 7 The pandemic response

This is a similar predicament to that of which we have seen with the COVID-19 pandemic, with doctors in Wuhan noticing a respiratory disease comparable to SARS. Perhaps the suppression of these findings by the Chinese authorities ultimately aided the spread of the pandemic globally and prevented any early measures that could be taken. The final possible location for the beginning of the outbreak of the 1918 influenza pandemic is a military base in the US where animals were cared for and a lot of people were living in confined quarters, allowing for the easy spread of disease.

This pandemic was unusual as it killed those with strong and healthy immune systems,

making the soldiers in the trenches particularly susceptible. Furthermore the conditions were cramped, dirty and filled with diseases of all kinds that led to the perfect breeding ground for a pandemic that would overall cost 50 million lives. This catastrophic death toll is two and a half times greater than that of WW1 and is also thought to be a contributing factor in the ending of the war. According to the memoirs of David Lloyd George, "when the influenza epidemic, which swept over the world and caused more deaths than even the great war, reached the German trenches the inferior nourishment of the troops made them more vulnerable than the well-nourished British troops" and this ultimately led to the "casualties from this epidemic [being] exceptionally heavy" for the German troops.

This was a new form of influenza that very few people had been exposed to before so there was little to none pre-existing immunity, meaning a much greater proportion of the population was impacted. It can be said that the increase in globalisation has played a massive role in aiding the spread in the current pandemic we are facing; however our greater interconnectedness has also allowed us to lockdown swiftly and allowed us to move to staying at home more easily. It may be thought that the countryside villages of the UK would be able to be isolated from the rest of the population and not be impacted by this pandemic; however it must be known that even though we believe that we are much more interconnected now than we used to be. The countryside was still

very well connected with a vast number of train stations all over connecting villages to towns.

Additionally, the spread of the virus to the countryside was exacerbated by the fact that even before the war many men were joining the army as a route out of rural poverty. This meant that during the years of WW1 and the pandemic there was a vast migration of soldiers to and from the countryside regions, therefore aiding the spread even further.



Figure 8 Policemen in face coverings

During the influenza pandemic, there was a clear loss of societal trust which affected forthcoming generations negatively. The virus would rip through countless families and leave many without anyone to turn to for support. Funeral parlours became overwhelmed as bodies piled up, leading to many having to bury their own loved ones. As recently as April 2021, we have been all saddened to see a similar case in India with COVID-19, where many dead bodies are left for weeks on end and cremated without any family in attendance.

The 1918 pandemic also changed many citizens' preferences around consumption-people became greedier and hoarded to

protect themselves and allow them to avoid social contact. With COVID-19, we have seen the rapid increase of online shopping, which again allows a decrease in social interaction and lets many over purchase. This brings in the economic effects of a pandemic, an example is the US during 1918 where basic services such as the mail and waste collection were severely hindered due to a lack of workers who had the flu.

Yet there are worse examples, in some areas there weren't enough farmers to harvest crops due to the flu, leading to a lack of produce that could sustain many lives. Therefore, often hidden in data of "death by influenza", there were clear malnutrition cases also affecting the population.

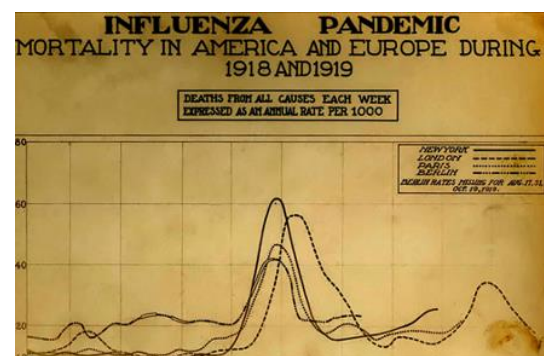


Figure 9 Waves of infection during the 1918-19 pandemic

Recovery from the 1918 pandemic was a slow burn as containment measures did not have much effect on the control of the virus, due to the lack of knowledge available. In fact, most containment measures were not even implemented prior to the peak of the pandemic. Therefore, in comparison to the modern technique of stringent lockdowns, the recovery from the

Spanish Flu took far longer than what we are seeing unfold today.

A lack of medical infrastructure and ability to create vaccines and antibiotics further slowed the recovery during this time, variants went undiscovered and people did not have ICUs, like current times, in order to receive top level medical care to survive their illness. Sadly, it is unknown specifically how this harrowing pandemic ended, following WW1 it was overshadowed in the news of 1919 and seemed to slowly disappear, yet as we all well know Influenza is still around even today!



Figure 10 John Hultin conducting research into the pandemic in Alaska

Many years later, a molecular pathologist by the name of John Hultin wanted to understand why this virus was so variable and contagious, allowing them to gain a greater understanding of future pandemics and how they could be dealt with effectively. There were very limited tissue samples available from 1918 so they decided to try and get a live strain of the virus.

This expedition would lead the scientists to the Inuits of Breivig in Alaska, where they believed that some of the bodies from the

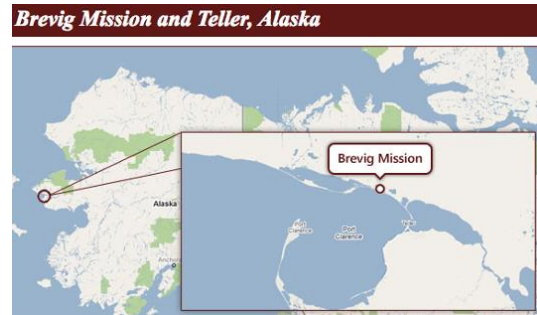


Figure 11 The location of Breivig, site of Hultin's research

pandemic would be perfectly preserved under the permafrost. With the permission of the leader they were able to dig up the bodies of those who had died in the pandemic and ultimately found lung tissue that they were able to use. This enabled the team to obtain a live sample of the virus; however this was not the greatest challenge they would face and spent the next 10 years sequencing its genome.

From this information it is now known that the virus is an avian influenza virus that has adapted itself through mutations to be infected and transmitted in humans. The virus when compared with avian viruses not transmissible in humans showed mutations in certain genes. This now acts as a screening tool to see if an avian influenza is on the oath towards humans, therefore aiding in the prediction and prevention of future pandemics. However, as we now know this was not a fool proof technique given the current pandemic we are experiencing in 2020/21.

By Jessica Horsford L9 & Harry Brown L6

The Fischer controversy and the continuity of German history

By Dr S J D Smith

Hamburg professor of History Fritz

Fischer published *Griff nach Weltmacht: Die Kriegszielpolitik des kaiserlichen Deutschland* (1961) and *Krieg der Illusionen: Die deutsche Politik von 1911 bis 1914* (1969) to a barrage of controversy. In these seminal works he stated, using original and hitherto never seen documents, that Germany planned a war of conquest in Europe in 1914 in a similar way to Hitler planned his expansionism and domination of Europe in the Second World War. Therefore, war in 1914 was not defensive but aggressive and expansionist.

For a German academic to argue that there was a similarity in the origins of the two wars and that Germany was largely responsible for both, was seen as traitorous by many fellow academics in the 1960s and afterwards. Fischer believed therefore that the Kaiser's and Hitler's Germany planned for war and should be held responsible for the bloodshed that followed and be rightly punished. However, he preferred not to blame the individuals in charge and sought a structuralist approach which focused on the belief that Germany was dominated by a combination of social and economic forces which helped to shape both foreign and domestic policies. To

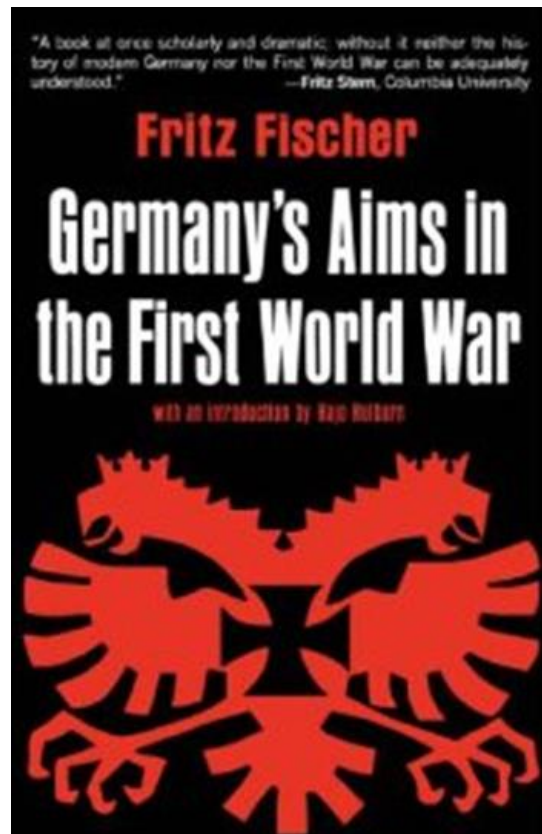


Figure 12 One of Fischer's inflammatory books

blame the Kaiser or Hitler was too simplistic in his view. The controversy surrounding the origins of the First World War came when it was generally accepted amongst historians that Germany should share the blame with the other powers and therefore the War Guilt Clause was wrong and had a role in causing the next war.

Fischer argued that German war aims before 1914 included the creation of a German economic and political hegemony over central Europe, or a so-called *Mittel Europa*. Land would also be taken from France, Belgium and Russia. In addition, Poland and the Baltic states would become vassal states, serving the German economy.

Furthermore, the plans were to take colonies from the defeated powers

and a Central African area under German control would be created marking the end of British dominance of Africa. Fischer emphasised the links between the Kaiser, the military High Command, the Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg, the industrialists and landowners who would benefit from annexationist aims and domination of Europe.

Only the extreme left of German politics, he said, opposed the Germany's annexationism and later on the moderate SPD supported the Brest-Litovsk Treaty (March 1918) with Lenin's Russia which grabbed huge tracts of land in the east for Germany. Fischer argued that the Kaiser and his allies felt that this was the only way to compete with the enormous power of the British and French empires because Germany was unfairly denied a similar empire by the British and French who stopped his imperial ambitions.

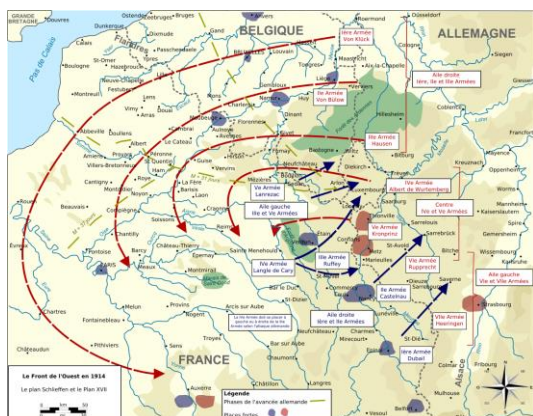


Figure 13 The Schlieffen Plan

The Schlieffen Plan (1905 onwards) bears out these aims. It was the only military plan that Germany had right up to 1914 and included a pre-emptive attack on Belgium

and France before the Russians could fully mobilise. This plan, if successful, would lead to German hegemony over Europe and so Fischer argued this was not defensive. From 1912 onwards, it is also argued, Germany consciously planned for a war and especially from the War Council meeting of 8 December 1912 onwards where the German High Command sought to build up German military forces and to also prepare Germany psychologically for war with Russia in particular. Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg also wanted a preventative war against the French.

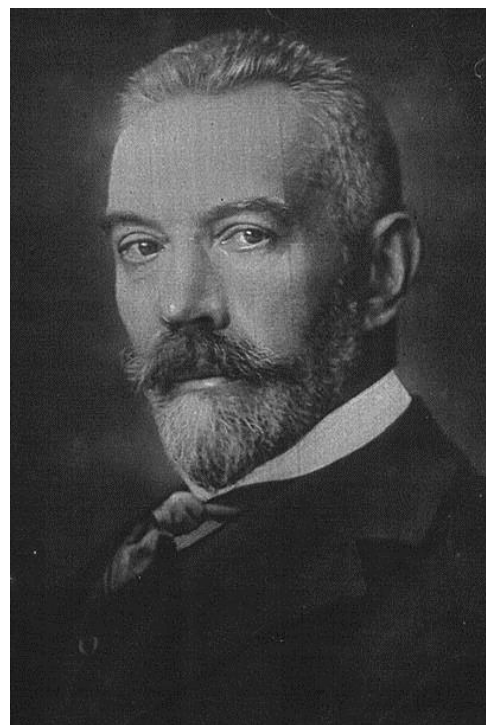


Figure 14 Theodore von Bethmann-Hollweg

A key part of the Fischer view is that the growth of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), which became the largest party in the Reichstag in 1912, posed an enormous social and political threat to the landed and industrial elites. The German elites therefore sought to win over the

working class and get them away from Marxist-Socialism by first embarking on an extensive welfare programme.

But they also sought to distract the working class by aggression and glory abroad (Weltpolitik) and by the building of battleships (Flottenpolitik). The working class would then no longer seek revolution, but support the Kaiserreich and its social structure would be retained (social imperialism) and democracy would be avoided. Fischer uses Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg's September Programme (1914) written at the point of an expected German victory, to show plans for German domination of Europe as far as the Belgian coast. Furthermore, he cites the German pressure on Austria-Hungary to deal with Serbia after the assassination in Sarajevo,

knowing full well this would lead to war with Russia.

Fischer's arguments have remained persuasive because of his use of original sources. However, the sole guilt placed on Germany ignores the responsibility of Russia, Austria-Hungary and the Allies. Russian Pan-Slavists planned to expand its army to 2.2 million men following reforms in 1906 and 1908; what was the purpose of such a large army and Russia also had plans to expand into the Balkans.

Russia in 1914 had reached its greatest geographical extent so far and it sought to extend its borders further again. The unlimited support the Russians were prepared to give Serbia caused consternation in Vienna and Berlin and it is clear that the Russians mobilised their huge army first. Pan-Serbian nationalists posed a great threat to the existence of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and with the support of the Russians they could carve up the Balkans together.

The German General Staff were also concerned about encirclement by an aggressive Russia and its allies Britain and France – hence the Schlieffen Plan had been created to break this imprisonment. Britain and America were also both spending hugely on their armed forces. The British press was anti-German with press baron Northcliffe allying with Foreign Secretary Grey in their anti-German phobia.

There are plenty of examples of powerful English politicians who sought to knock



Figure 15 Russian Tsar Nicholas II, the defender of Pan-Slavism

the Kaiser's Germany back and to teach them a lesson for having the temerity to challenge British imperial might. In contradiction to Fischer, on 31 July 1914, Kaiser Wilhelm wired his cousins Nicholas and George and stated that the decision to halt war once the Russians had started their mobilisation rested with them and not him. He said that Germany posed no threat to Russia and the military preparations for war by Russia must stop immediately due to the threat they posed to Germany and its ally Austria-Hungary. When nothing came of his plea, the German mobilisation was announced on 1 August 1914 and Germans of all social classes poured onto the streets in jubilation.

It is a matter of contention though just how much influence the Kaiser had on foreign policy decisions by this point. However, it could be argued that the war when it came was defensive, but it did get the German working class and its representatives the Social Democrats



Figure 16 British Prime Minister David Lloyd George



Figure 17 Adolf Hitler - not an unlucky accident?

behind the elites due to the threat of the feared Russians, which is exactly what Fischer argued when he talked of social imperialism. However, Lloyd George's opinion that the guilt for the outbreak of the First World War should be commonly held remains more popular today than the Fischer contentions and it is the view taught in schools.

Fischer also argued that Hitler was not an unlucky accident. In spite of the democratic Weimar Republic, he argued that Stresemann was committed to the review of Germany's eastern frontiers in line with the Kaiser and the Nazi period. Exactly the same social elites - military, Junker landowners and capitalists, supported the Führer's expansionist foreign policy and therefore the Hitler period was not an aberration but a continuation he postulated.

More recent historians such as Ian Kershaw have shown how much Germany's major businesses gained from Hitler's 'Aryanisation' of businesses such as Krupp, Thyssen, Flick and IG-Farben. Given the dreadful horrors of the Second World War, many German historians such

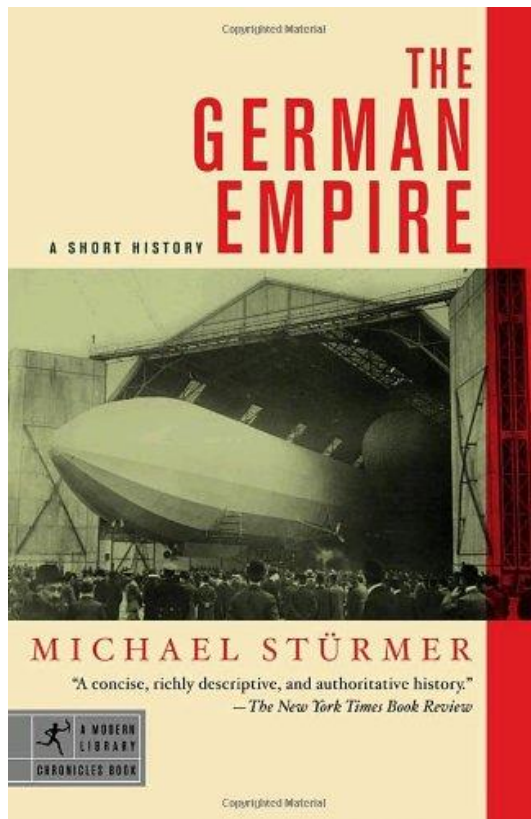


Figure 18 Stürmer offers a conservative perspective

as Gerhard Ritter found the view of a continuity of German history abhorrent.

However, Pan-Germanism views of a superior German race dominated politics before World War One and can be used to explain the emphasis Hitler also placed on race. There are plenty of examples of anti-Semitic utterances from the Kaiser before and during the Great War; anti-Semitism was then subsequently evident in the violent Freikorps of the early Weimar Republic which would spawn the Storm Troopers of the NSDAP. The defeat was blamed by many members of Germany's elites on the 'Jewish German Army' and the Republic was a 'worker's state' led by Jews in their opinion. In both wars, Germany used slave labour (Belgians in 1914-18 and Poles, Jews and Russians in WW2).

It is disturbing to read that Nazism may have had deep roots in German history. Fischer also points to the 1931 Harzburg Front as an indication of the links between the traditional elites and Nazism. To also show planning for war with the elites, one can also refer to the 1937 Hossbach Memorandum. However, the origins of the Second World War were also sown in the Versailles Treaty imposed by the Allies, appeasement and the Great Depression; Germany did not cause the war alone in a great conspiracy designed by the Junkers.

The key to the Fischer controversy remains just how much one should read into the documents he found. Only official documents were used by Fischer to support his views on hegemonial imperialism and therefore he would have argued that he had proof of the war aims of Germany. The view that Germany was an aggressive expansionist power just like Nazi Germany has never been fully accepted, but his views influenced further historians such as Hans Ulrich Wehler in the 1970s who also showed that power rested with the traditional oligarchies of landowning elites and the new industrialists. Both Germanys were desperate to stop the rise of the Left and to rally Germany behind the regime



Figure 19 Hans-Ulrich Wehler - WW1=pressure release?

using a Sammlungspolitik to prevent democracy or any social levelling. The continuity between pre-war Germany and the Nazi period can also be seen in the importance of anti-Semitism to both regimes. Although the view that there was a direct continuity of German history between 1890 and 1945 has much evidence, it is clear that the cruelty and mass murder of the Nazi regime was unique and devastating.

By Dr S J D Smith, Head of History

How Vladimir Putin stimulated corruption in modern day Russia despite the fall of the Soviet Union

By Jack Brown

Vladimir Putin has been ruling Russia

since 1999, eight years after the fall of the Soviet Union. Putin has shaped modern day Russia into an authoritarian and militaristic society, successfully invading two of Russia's neighbours and strengthened ties with other corrupt nations like Syria and Iran.

A former Soviet KGB spy and Head of Russia Security Service, Putin aimed to remould Russia into a nation similar to the Soviet Union which was centralised, insular and secretive. Once Yeltsin had resigned in

December 1999, it made Putin the interim president.

He began to change the Russian state to his vision, doubling down on his authoritarian governance style at home and his militaristic strategy abroad, invading Georgia in early 2000s and bolstering an aggressive foreign strategy in aiding dictator Bashar Al-Assad fight a civil war in Syria. This aiding of foreign powers and fighting proxy-wars can be again shown during the Soviet era, whereby Soviets



Figure 20 Vladimir Putin: President, PM, President...

contributed to the Vietnam war in 1968, signing a set of military and economic agreements. In the present day this still occurs in Russia, fighting against western nations and endeavouring in extending Russia's influence in the west.

In 2014, Putin's vision of retrieving lost territory from the collapse of the Soviet Union, culminated in the targeting of Ukraine, another former Soviet country.

Putin feared that Ukraine's president was opening up to the West and that he would join NATO, so Russian hackers launched a propaganda campaign against him, sparking protests in the pro-Russian eastern part of the country. Before long, violence erupted and Russian troops entered, causing Putin to annex the Crimea, extending Russian territory.

Putin's aggressive foreign policy successfully weakened his neighbours whilst also rallying Russians around him, similar to the growth of chauvinism during the Soviet period. All of these decisions on foreign policy are made directly by Putin himself due to there being little opposition to his commands.

Putin ensures that he remains in power by surrounding himself with the most powerful men in Russia, they control predominantly all big businesses in Russia and the nation's wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few very wealthy men. Putin protects the rich, who swore loyalty to him and those who do

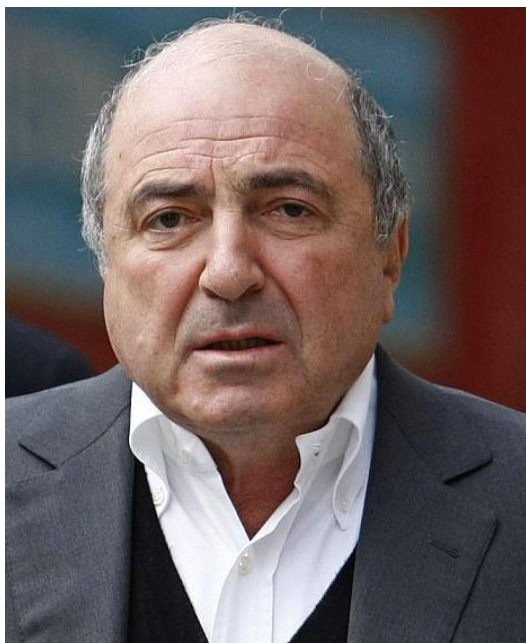


Figure 22 Boris Berezovsky

not are arrested on trumped charges, most famously under 'embezzlement' charges or mysteriously killed. Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Boris Berezovsky and Nikolay Glushkov are all Russian oligarchs who were charged with embezzlement due to their refusal to swear loyalty to Putin. These false allegations and removal of un-loyal men from powerful positions is how the judiciary is weaponised under Putin's regime. He is effectively insulated with the most powerful elements on all sides which is all held together by corruption.



Figure 21 A political prisoner behind bars in court

This corruption isn't a flaw of the regime, but more of a structural feature. It is not inefficient for Putin but is rather at the centre of his power. Over \$400 Billion was lost to corruption in Russia between 2000 and 2008 and \$50 Billion is lost per year; making Russia the second highest illicit financial outflows of the developing world. This behaviour is mirrored from officials under the Soviet control, whereby public officials diverged from their formal duties of a public role to serve private ends, bribery's and incentives were often the cause of corruption in the USSR.



Figure 23 United Russia emblem

Despite this behaviour supposedly stopped by its collapse, it still occurs today although the vast majority of the public is blinded by false media reports. You may think, how is Putin still in office today? Well, it is virtually impossible to run against Putin and his party. The regime manipulates who is able to run for office, which is typically Putin's party and fake candidates which are used to splinter the opposition vote which is sanctioned by the regime. Additionally, the vote counting is also rigged, making it impossible to run against Putin or his party, enabling Putin's party - United Russia, to have control of the central and local governments across Russia.

It may seem that there is virtually no opposition in Russia due to how strict its governance is, but in the last two years, an opposition group containing all Russian middle and working class men and women, led by Alexi Navalny have been directly challenging the corruption of Putin's

regime and how dismissive it is of the ordinary Russian civilian.

This almost sounds like a repeat of the situation in Russia 100 years ago when Tsar Nicholas II resigned due to working class upheaval. Alexi Navalny publicly posts online, rallying Russian people against Putin and making them more awake to the ins and outs of Russia's governance. Alexi Navalny shed light on the corrupt voting system and called for the use of 'Smart Voting' which is the idea of everyone voting for one party to overthrow the ruling party.

Of course this chosen party received more votes than Putin, but due to the corrupt nature of the electoral system, Putin remained in power. In the last year, Putin has been using the cold war drug used by the Soviets, Novichok agent, to kill off his political opponents. Novichok was used against Alexi Navalny in an attempt to kill him whilst he was on a flight from Tomsk to Moscow. The Novichok agent was laced in Navalny's underwear by the Russian secret police (FSB) the night before his flight. The flight had to be aborted and landed early in Omsk.

Later, Russian hospitals denied there being anything wrong with Navalny until he was examined in Germany, where they later discovered the dangerous agent used against him. The attempted cover up, and initial plantation of Novichok on Navalny, supports the idea that the regime is corrupt and that they wish to hide their activities away from the public eye to avoid the further tarnishing Putin's corrupt regime. Upon Navalny's arrival back to Russia, he



Figure 24 Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny

was immediately arrested under violating his 'parole after his embezzlement charge'. Navalny would later go on to release another exposure of Putin in January 2021 named "Putin's Palace" whereby he explores the illegitimate sources of Putin's financial income.

Putin is currently the face of corruption in Russia and around the world and it's hard not to realise that it was inevitable Putin would turn to this type of ruling because of how embedded corruption is in Russia's history, and how normalised bribery has become. The Russian economy is heavily dependent on the flow of illegitimate funds which is supported by the shadow economy accounting for 20% of the economy's GDP. Russian ministers have recently been more open in addressing their economic matters, stating that \$90 Billion worth of taxes is lost each year due to businesses hiding their profits. If Putin was to condemn and use the

law efficiently, it could potentially implode the Russian economy and have detrimental effects. Putin has by his own cause stimulated a tycoon of corruption in Russia to secure his power in a nation which is close to the abyss of civil war, which may repeat the events of 1917.

By Jack Brown L2

Our Fight for Dominion: The Great Emu War By Gabe Keeble

Humanity has undoubtedly established itself as the dominant species on this planet for the past few thousand years. A foundation of tool-crafting from our ancient ancestors has expanded exponentially to allow us to set up full civilisations across the globe. We have driven out previous wild inhabitants and colonised the lands with buildings, flags and fencing. Examples of this inter-species conflict exist even in recent eras – such as the Great Emu War of 1932.

While it may seem strange to include an article about such a unique event in a magazine relying on discernible patterns throughout history, I assure you that asserting our dominance over animals is an everyday occurrence for us all: destruction of habitats in The Amazon, to make products that we buy off Amazon; placing mouse traps around the house to rid your walls of interloping rodents or simply

tucking into your Sunday roast. These are all modern-day examples of the current impossibility for complete cohabitation with creatures. Nobody, however, wants to read an article about my attempts to capture a house spider yesterday, so instead, I present an extreme example to portray my point – a literal battle for dominance in Western Australia.



Figure 25 Emus in Australia

Similar to our domestic conflicts today, the events in Australia focused on “pests”. In the midst of WW1, the Australian Government devised a “Soldier Settlement Scheme”, which granted plots of land to discharged veterans in order to provide them with a steady farming job (and also to show appreciation for their service). Unfortunately for these 5000 novice farmers, the pressure began to mount following the Great Depression of 1929, its economic effects sweeping across the lands. The Government demanded increased production of wheat from these farmers (to make up for its plummeting price), but the promised subsidies to aid this growth never arrived.

Then came the emus. Previously, they had been a protected species in Australia,

regarded somewhat as a national treasure – an emu stands next to a kangaroo on the Australian Coat of Arms, commissioned by King George V in 1912, which is still in use today. During the late 1920s, however, they were classified as vermin. This is because, as a first act of war, groups of wandering emus had been consuming or destroying the wheat crops in these Western regions, thus exacerbating an already financially unstable time for the farmers. The prior combat experience of the veterans meant they could attempt to fire at the intruders with old service rifles, but they lacked the ammunition to make any significant impact on the emu numbers.



Figure 26 The emu as part of the 1912 Coat of Arms

Frustration grew in parallel to the regional emu masses, which had peaked at an approximate 20,000 by November 1932 and the veterans demanded military intervention from the Minister of Defence, George Pearce. The decision to send troops out to deal with these feathery flocks was a quick one. Government authorities envisioned a speedy victory against the birds, which would prove to be a brilliant propaganda campaign, portraying the

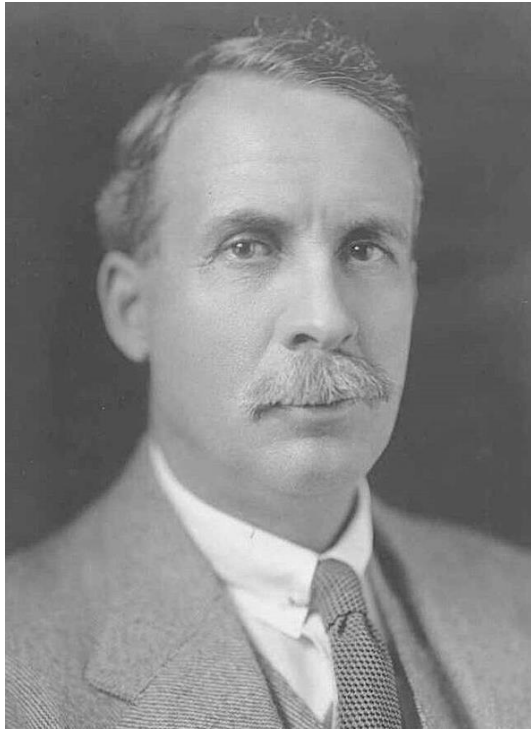


Figure 27 George Pearce, Australian Minister of Defence

Government as a caring body for their past war heroes' concerns.

A unit of troops (the Seventh Heavy Battery of the Royal Australian Artillery), led by Major G.P.W. Meredith, was deployed to the western region of Campion. With them, they brought two Lewis automatic machine guns, 10,000 rounds of ammo and the intention to collect emu feathers for the hats of the army's light horsemen division. Immediately on arrival, the unit sighted a group of 50 emus and opened fire.

Unfortunately, they had seemingly underestimated their feathered foes. Only 12 were shot dead, thanks to their chaotic speed that made it impossible to hit them - whether this was sheer animalistic panic, or a tactical masterclass from the emus, I'll let you decide. Furthermore, the birds could continue to run even when hit, meaning multiple rounds were needed to bring them

to the ground. Major Meredith would later compare their endurance to tanks and claimed that a "division with the bullet-carrying capacity of these birds...would face any army in the world."

Two days later, on the 4th of November, the unit prepared to initiate an ambush against a large group of 1000 emus that had amassed near a dam. This was a second chance to avoid complete humiliation for Meredith and his troops prepared for a day of birdy bloodshed. Unfortunately, the launched attack resulted in an incredibly dull anti-climax, as the guns they were using jammed after only another dozen emus had been killed, allowing time for the rest to flee. The unit moved south in the search for emus, but the same issue remained that the birds were too quick to hit.

Troops even began to anthropomorphise the flightless flocks, claiming that each group had a "watchman" tasked to warn the others, who were gorging on wheat, if humans were spotted. In a desperate attempt to keep up with the rapid pace race, Meredith ordered that a Lewis gun be attached onto the back of a truck. While this granted the humans some speed, the bumpy Australian countryside meant that shots fired were too inaccurate to threaten the lives of any emus. The driver resorted to running the birds over, but this too backfired, as one of the feathered fallen became stuck in the tyres, causing the truck to crash into a fence.



Figure 28 The Rabbit-Proof Fence

The fence in question was a section of the “Rabbit-Proof Fence”, which stretches over 1.5 kilometres across Western Australia. Emus had been creating gaps in this fence to access the delicious wheat crops, which led to an even greater threat – rabbits. They too were menaces to wheat farmers in Western Australia as they constantly grazed on the produce, when they weren’t too busy breeding. One only has to imagine the impossibly steep task of eradicating an exponentially growing rabbit population for an army that could not even accurately fire on the, much larger, emus.

It may seem ridiculous for an army’s main adversaries to be some flightless birds and fluffy mammals but the effects of their feasting, alongside those of the Great Depression were shaping up to be an economic crisis for Australia. Therefore, perhaps this inter-species conflict should classify as a “war”, although I expect that the Australian Government wish to view it differently, especially when one considers the aftermath.

That is, because, if one were to define this as a “war”, it would be one in which the Australian Army arguably lost. After only one week of conflict, Pearce withdrew

military personnel and guns from the West. Meredith’s unit had spent 2500 rounds of ammunition, only to kill a maximum of 200 emus: a disappointingly infinitesimal percentage of the population. Fortunately, the Major reported no casualties in his troop. The agricultural damage continued, however, and so a second campaign was soon launched. Whilst this one proved more successful, with close to 1000 emus felled, Meredith was recalled once more in December of the same year.



Figure 29 A farmer with a dead Emu

The Government opted instead to supply the veteran farmers with enough ammunition to protect their own individual farms – a method that worked much more effectively and saved the remaining crops. Future appeals for army intervention were denied as adequate supplies of ammo and sturdier fencing proved to be a better solution – almost 300,000 emus were killed between the years 1945-1960.

Naturally, these killings caused outrage from conservationists and animal rights activists and, if faced with the same problem today, I would hope that alternate methods to prevent crop destruction would be sought. Nowadays, emus have fortunately been reinstated as a protected species and their population in Australia is stable.

The Great Emu War stands out in history, not only for its farcicality, but as an example of humanity's effort to assert dominion, in which humanity fails to achieve its aim. If animals were like teenagers, the posters in their rooms would be of these emus – they would be idolised as a symbol of hope against the oppressive regime of humanity. That is because it is such a rare occurrence in modern times, that humans can be bested, as our advanced technology enables us to change the world to suit our own desires, whilst we easily and selfishly disregard the needs of animals. While the Great Emu War is an amusing anomaly, the fact remains that only humans can change the way in which we treat animals and perhaps, by looking at the patterns arising from history, we can determine a new and different way to move forward that benefits all creatures on earth.

By Gabe Keeble L1

Greenland and Iceland: A Renewed Struggle for Independence from Denmark **By Jack Stockton**

The Act of Union of 1st December 1918

established the Kingdom of Iceland, an independent nation that came under the control of the monarchy of Denmark in a personal union between the two countries. However, it wasn't until 17th June 1944 when the Icelandic people finally gained their independence after 99.5% of the country's voters approved the abolition of the Act in a referendum, which meant that the island would cease to be governed by the Danish monarchy. They also approved the new constitution several days later, creating the Republic of Iceland.

At this point, you may wonder whether an article on the struggles of the Icelandic people for independence from Denmark should be in a magazine themed around history repeating itself. In fact, the same



Figure 30 Greenland & Denmark flags flying side by side

story of a fight for freedom from a faraway mainland country, Denmark, is being played out again - however this time, it is not the Icelandic fighting for this self-determination, it is the citizens of the world's largest island, a mass of icecaps and rocky, mountainous coast, Greenland. So, what do these independence movements have in common?

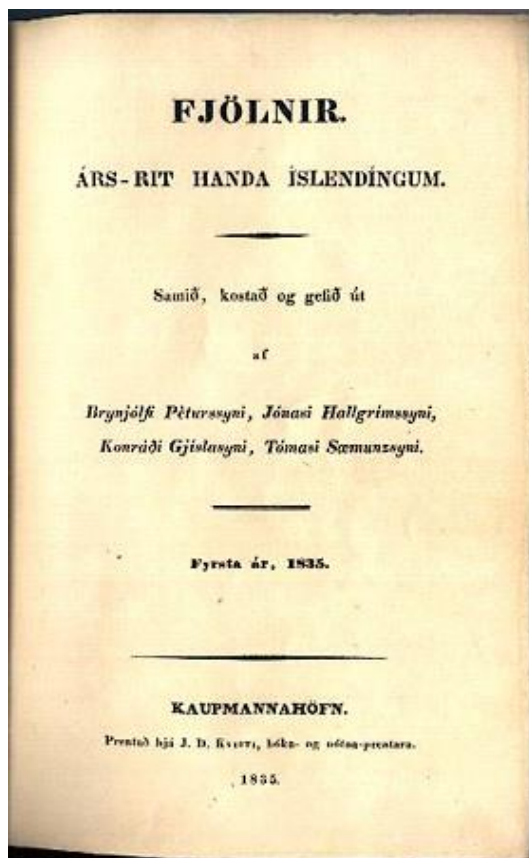


Figure 31 The Fjölnir journal

The independence of Iceland had long been a dream of many of its people. By the middle of the 19th Century, many of Iceland's intellectuals had woken up to the need for the self-determination of their homeland. The most influential of these, the "Fjölnissmenn" were in control of one of the country's most-read Icelandic-language journals (the Fjölnir journal, published between 1835 and 1847, regularly sold over 300 copies. Whilst a small number

compared to the circulation of today's literary journals, this was high for a publication of that time).

Therefore, their dream of an independent Icelandic nation had been spread like wildfire by the 1850s, when Icelandic independence became a topic commonly talked about by both the nation's intellectual elite and rural fishermen alike. However much the Icelandic people wanted freedom from the metaphorical chains of the Danish monarchy, there was never a reported case of violence from either Icelandic nationalists or Danish authorities, a very strange occurrence for the time considering the violence of the British against independence fighters in Ireland, and the unrest stirred by the Irish themselves in response to the Great Famine during the same period.

This peaceful struggle for self-determination has also been seen in the Greenlandic independence movement; Denmark's calm acceptance of a 2009 referendum where 75% of the Greenlandic people voted to give themselves more autonomy shows us that the Danes, although losing large chunks of their territories - which once spanned most of northern Europe, India, the modern-day US Virgin Islands and the Danish Gold Coast (now Ghana) - now accept the need for giving greater control of the island to those who reside there, many recognizing Denmark's past abuse of Greenland's Inuit people, a topic to which I shall later return.

Independence, similarly to in 19th Century Iceland, is also a well-talked about subject

in today's Greenland. With a population that is almost 90% Inuit and only 7% Danish, it makes sense that most of Greenland's citizens want to sever their ties with the Kingdom of Denmark in a bid to rid themselves of a constant reminder of colonialism past and present in the shape of the ever-present Dannebrog, the red-and-white Danish flag.



Figure 32 Nuuk - the capital of Greenland

Money has played a large role in both independence movements. Greenland currently receives an annual block grant of approximately 3.2 billion Danish kroner (about £370 million) from the mainland which amounts to two-thirds of the budget of the Greenlandic government, the Naalakkersuisut. Therefore, there are concerns over whether the country could survive as an independent nation with little external financial support (the then-Prime Minister of Denmark Lars Løkke declared in 2018 that Denmark would no longer give such grants to Greenland if it declared independence).

The economy of the country is based around fishing (accounting for over 90% of Greenland's total exports), valuable minerals such as rubies and electricity generation. The economy therefore is

believed by many to be too weak to cope with rising social care costs (unemployment was at 6.8% before the Coronavirus pandemic wreaked havoc on the economy) and increased government expenditure (although supposed to be following a tight fiscal policy, the Naalakkersuisut concentrates a surprisingly large amount of time on HIV/AIDS awareness for a country with only 70 reported HIV-infected residents) without the aid of the richer and more economically powerful Denmark.

Likewise, Iceland's independence movement suffered from widespread doubts over the nation's economic stability. The nation also relied heavily on fishing to generate most of its income, although the Danish crown maintained a monopoly over the island's economy until 1855, which artificially reduced the selling price of fish, further restricting Iceland's economic strength.

To give an example of why the country's restricted economic strength hindered the independence movement, a similar situation took place in the US. Many Americans were angered by the Boston Tea Party of 1773, which helped trigger the War of Independence, as they believed they needed the economically more powerful United Kingdom to survive. By the start of the 1900s the fishing-based economy of Iceland had reduced their GDP per capita to one of the lowest in Western Europe. Iceland couldn't survive without the financial support of Denmark, and so many were reluctant to declare full independence - Iceland gained home rule in 1874, when the Danes allowed the introduction of a



Figure 33 Denmark under Nazi occupation

basic constitution and tolerated the presence of a Minister of Iceland in the Danish cabinet.

In reality, their power was limited - until the Nazis ravaged the Danish economy and stopped supporting Iceland in favour of sending Danish goods to Germany during their occupation of the Kingdom between 1940 and 1945.

Both financial and physical protection was, however, offered to the island by the UK (through the invasion of the island during Operation Fork in 1940) and later during the Second World War, the United States. The traces of the US' 'protection' of Iceland can be seen on the island today through the US Naval Air Station in Keflavík, south of Reykjavík, now operated by the Icelandic Coast Guard.

Both nations have had political parties dedicated to gaining independence from

Denmark, similar to Wales' Plaid Cymru or the Scottish National Party. In Greenland, for example, several parties fight for independence under a loose coalition – Greenlandic politics is split into pro- and anti-independence groups rather than left- and right-wing groups, as is the case in the UK. Siumut, Partii Naleraq, Nunatta Qitornai and the current governing party, Inuit Ataqatigiit, oppose Danish control of Greenland and, together, have a majority in the Greenlandic parliament, the Inatsisartut, which means that laws passed by the parliament are shaped by these parties' will to be freed from the grip of the Danes. Even when the pro-independence parties don't attain a majority, pressure is applied to governing parties to push for autonomy from Denmark, even though they disagree on full independence.



INUIT ATAQATIGIIT

Figure 34 Emblem of the Inuit Ataqatigiit

Moreover, Iceland's center-right Independence Party, Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn, was formed in 1929 to promote the dissolution of the Act of Union in favour of complete independence. It became

instantly popular, and in its first election (1931) gained more support than any other party, winning 43% of the votes and gaining 15 seats in the Alþingi or Althing, the Icelandic parliament, which clearly demonstrates the popularity of the independence movement.

Every leader of the party has become Prime Minister, and it continues to be active today as the now-independent nation's largest political party. However, there is one difference between the pro-independence parties of these two nations – Iceland's Independence Party is politically center-right, but contrarily, Greenland's independence coalition is formed from centrist and socialist parties. This is perhaps explained by the economic situation that has been unfolding in Greenland since the financial crisis of 2008, and the country's younger and almost entirely indigenous population. Also, the agricultural support that the Independence Party offer to fishermen attracts many voters, seeing as today, fishing is the second-largest sector of the Icelandic economy.

The abuse of the Icelandic and of the Inuit people of Greenland is also a factor to consider when looking at the independence movements of these nations. In Greenland, for example, 22 Inuit children were taken from their families in May 1951 to be 're-educated' and brought up as "little Danes" in Denmark in an effort to find ways to solve Greenland's social problems through Europeanizing them. Although 16 of these children were sent back to Nuuk the following year, they were sent to a newly built children's home and brought up by

Danes rather than back into their old communities.

One survivor of this horrendous treatment at the hands of the Danish authorities, Helene Thiesen, told BBC News in 2015 that the Danish were "masters' in the worst sense of the word – they controlled everything." The current Prime Minister of Denmark Mette Frederiksen did apologise for the experiment in 2020, however it seems unlikely that the Inuit children whose lives were drastically altered could forgive the colonial powers that changed their lives.



Figure 35 Image from Visit Greenland website

Sadly, this discrimination against the Greenlandic Inuit is another example of history repeating itself – Greenlanders living in mainland Denmark suffer from marginalisation and gross misconceptions of the way of life of the Greenlandic people – for example, Visit Greenland reports that over 40% of Danes associate Greenland with alcoholism and social problems, even though native Danes actually drink more than the average Greenlander.

Whilst time has been kind to Denmark in the eyes of most Icelanders, unlike in Greenland, it is important to remember that, in the past, Danes have treated the

Icelandic as subhuman. For example, a 'colonial exhibition' which took place in 1905 in the famed Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen using 'live exhibits' of Danish colonial subjects from Iceland, Greenland and the Danish West Indies met stark opposition from Copenhagen's Icelandic community, sparking widespread protest across the city.



Figure 36 A royal visit to Inuits in Greenland c1960s

This, of course, is a prime example of the treatment one could expect as a colonial subject of the Kingdom of Denmark. However, the protests orchestrated by the Icelanders of Copenhagen were more aimed at discontentment with being valued the same as Denmark's non-European subjects. Today, though, whilst Icelandic nationalism has waned since the national disgust at being equated with non-white people, Denmark still has an influence over island – the Dannebrog is still seen flying in tandem with its Icelandic counterpart over the roofs of Reykjavík.

Things are looking up for Greenlandic independence. Although we're unlikely to add Greenland's flag to the infamous flag-decked walkway outside the UN office in Geneva in the next few years, the Greenlandic are becoming more impatient

to release themselves from the grip of Denmark, even if this grip has been loosened more and more in recent years. Iceland remains close with Denmark, and the two co-operate closely through the Nordic and Arctic Councils. Danish is still taught as the principal foreign language in Icelandic schools.

As far as history repeating itself is concerned, after having the opportunity to delve into the strong independence movements of these two otherwise weak, hardly noticed nations, I am convinced that, even if events don't reoccur exactly as they have in the past, there are clear and strong links between past events and those that are going on around us today. Philosopher George Santayana is famed for claiming that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." Perhaps that is the most profound lesson to take from this – that if we forget the power of public will, be it for independence or another issue, we will convince ourselves that we cannot change anything. But the Icelandic did, and so will the Greenlandic, too.

By Jack Stockton L9

**Book Review: The true essence of a sporting fairytale – Exe Men: The Extraordinary Rise of Exeter Chiefs by Paul Kitson
By Mr D J Stone**

Landmark birthdays tend to prompt bouts of reflection and, with this year being a landmark birthday for me (no – I am not going to tell you which one!), the publication of **Exe Men: The Extraordinary Rise of the Exeter Chiefs** by Robert Kitson has provided a timely opportunity for me to reflect on one of the great sporting histories of the recent years – the fairy tale rise of Exeter RFC from the fourth division of the old Courage Leagues to the summit of European Club rugby. If history truly were to repeat this story, consider hearing this in twenty year's time... "the ball's kicked out of play and the Manchester players drop to their knees. They've done it! Manchester RFC 33 Racing Club 31. Manchester Rugby Club are champions of Europe!"

Whilst in the last six years I have adopted the north as my home and have increasingly come to see myself as a proud son of Stockport, I have always remained resolutely proud to be a Devonian. This manifests itself in a number of ways. On occasions during lockdown when I have been working in school, tunes from the Wurzels (technically from Somerset...) can

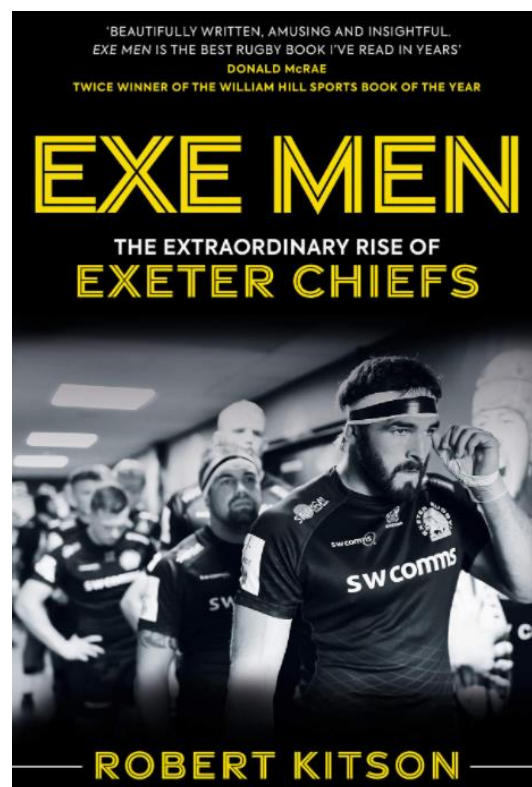


Figure 37 Kitson's masterpiece...

be heard emanating from my office. I enjoy a pasty and one of the hardest things in lockdown was not being able to go to the seaside. Granted, Hoylake and Southport are no Dartmouth or Croyde, but many a trip to Merseyside over the years has cured the occasional bout of homesickness.

My Devonian identity runs through into my sporting allegiances and this takes me to the theme of my piece. Whilst my support for Exeter City has, on numerous occasions, tested my loyalty and commitment to the cause as there has not been much to cheer about, it has been amazing to observe over a twenty-year period since I was in your shoes what constitutes perhaps the greatest sporting fairy-tale story of all time – the rise of the Exeter Chiefs.

The first item on my Christmas list 2020 was Robert Kitson's book **Exe Men: The**

Extraordinary Rise of Exeter Chiefs. When it duly arrived, I was patient and determined to finish the first edition copy of Cavour and Garibaldi 1860 by Dennis Mack Smith that I rescued from the Library's clear-out table in the staff common room. This work of historical legend was not to be rushed, but I was eager to get started on the tale that charted the rise of the Chiefs, who as Exeter Rugby Club are one of the oldest clubs in the country famous for being the first team to host the touring All Blacks, from the fourth tier of English rugby to the pinnacle of the European game.



Figure 38 Exeter RFC U16XV in 1997 - can you spot the author?

There are also personal reasons for taking an interest in this remarkable story. Early in the book, former player Bob Staddon admits to the cliquey nature of the 1st XV dressing room in the 1980s, something my father experienced that first-hand having played a few games for the 2nd XV. He also played for the Devon and Cornwall Police team that beat Exeter at 1st XV level in the mid-1980s; referred to in the early chapters of the book. Rob Baxter, Exeter's club legend and head coach, and I have never met but we both left junior teams at Exeter Saracens to play for Exeter RFC. I had two seasons, one in the U16s and one as a first year Colt playing in the famous black shirt. Back then, our fixture list was much like

that referenced in the book, where games against Gloucester, Bristol and Bath, which we invariably lost, would be sandwiched between games against Sidmouth, Barnstaple, Torquay and Tiverton, which we also sometimes lost too!



Figure 39 The Old County Ground, Exeter

Baxter reflects on the importance to the players in those early days of the big cup matches, not the Heineken Cup but the Devon Cup... my memory of going 3-0 up in a Devon Cup final only for us to lose 3-80 still gets old school friends talking on those rare occasions that we get together. He also mentions the pride he felt when running out onto the old County Ground pitch for the first time. It may have been a sand trap with a dilapidated stand and speedway cum greyhound track round the outside, but it meant something special to me when I ran out and played on that pitch, as open side flanker for the U16s vs Exmouth in 1996.

The book really picks up the story of the club and its meteoric rise in 1998, in the season where I was playing in the Colts XV. Kitson combines open access to many of the leading characters in this twenty-year story with his experience as The Guardian's Rugby Union correspondent to brilliantly capture the evolution of Exeter Rugby Club

into the Chiefs, from the County Ground to Sandy Park, and from National Division Four to the Gallagher Premiership and Champions Cup double. The insight offered to him by players, past and present, the coaching team and the chairman, local businessman Tony Rowe, makes *Exe Men* a compelling read on rugby, community, innovation, leadership and grit. Throughout the book at each of the key turning points, one of the key strengths in conveying the story sees Kitson divert from the narrative to blend together the direct insights from some of the key protagonists on all sides.



Figure 40 Tony Rowe and Rob Baxter pitchside at Twickenham

In the early chapters of the book, the Baxter family largely provide the insight into the nature of the club in the days before Rowe, professionalism and the beginnings of Exeter's rise through the leagues. The 1997/98 season saw the Exeter Chiefs enter the second tier of English club rugby for the first time, with Rowe coming on board fully at that point bringing with him a terrier like determination to achieve success from his hugely successful SW Telecommunications company, whilst retaining the treasured traditions of the club.

Kitson then charts the twelve-year journey through the Championship, where the odds were always stacked heavily in favour of the

relegated Premiership team going straight back up. The move to Sandy Park in 2006, a purpose built out of town stadium with conference facilities and the potential for both further corporate development and stadium expansion, proved to be a pivotal moment, with the same season seeing club stalwart and former captain Rob Baxter appointed as Head Coach. As the club worked towards their monumental 2010 playoff final win over two legs against Bristol, with the 29-10 away victory clinching promotion, here, Kitson aptly conveys the strength of the spirit and bond between the players, as reflected in their celebrations which one tends to associate with the days of old! It is, perhaps uniquely, a core characteristic that remains within the Chiefs, at appropriate times, to this day; led by characters such as Chris Bentley, Gareth Steenson and Jack Yeandle. The former is quite right in his assertion that Kitson's book is "so much more than a rugby book and full of genuinely funny anecdotes."



Figure 41 Promotion to the Premiership in 2010

Throughout this story, the characters within remain at its heart and are pivotal to its telling. Kitson's account of the Championship and early Premiership years is unquestionably enhanced by the input from Bentley, who upon ending his playing



Figure 42 LV Cup win in 2014

career has turned to print journalism with the Express and Echo newspaper. The coaching triumvirate of Baxter, Ali Hephner and Rob Hunter remain central to the establishment of the culture and the evolution of the squad and tactics.

If MAK IT WAR, ACE, South Coast Offensive, GRACE and Fight for All drove the rugby side of the story, some of Exeter's most important characters have also been responsible for innovations such as the Cookie Club. Messrs. Waldrom, Whitten, Mumm, White, Hortsman, Moon, Rimmer and countless others have played pivotal roles in shaping a culture that, over time, provided an inclusive environment where local talent blended with shrewd recruits, including more recently a sprinkling of stardust with the recruitment of Jonny Gray, Stuart Hogg and Alex Cuthbert. Baxter's skill in bringing in the right characters is no accident, alongside a now well-established academy set up that has seen Jack Nowell, Luke Cowan-Dickie, Joe and Sam Simmonds, and countless others progress into the Senior squad.

The 2014 LV Cup victory heralded the beginning of the accumulation of serious silverware and, in the last five seasons, the Chiefs have contested the Premiership final; winning twice in 2017 and 2020.

Kitson adeptly taps into the subtle changes that have enabled the Chiefs to continue to build momentum, culminating in the double triumph last November.

Much of the more recent story has revolved around the rivalry with Saracens. Kitson captures adeptly the extent of the human impact on the Chiefs caused by the Saracens salary cap breach scandal, which saw the north London club relegated to the Championship for the 2020/21 season. Much has been said and written on this emotive issue, but again by drawing together the different perspectives offered by players, coaching staff and Tony Rowe, Kitson ensures that the reader fully grasps the palpable sense of "what if" that remains amongst those players who potentially missed out on career defining moments and how the standing of the club, financially and reputationally, could have been even stronger had there been a level playing field with their greatest recent rivals.



Figure 43 Daily Mail report on salary cap breaches by Saracens

Perhaps the feelings are best reflected in Baxter's assessment of the situation "they're (Saracens) well coached and they



Figure 44 Club stalwart, Gareth Steenson, with the European Cup

get the importance of building a good environment and having a good culture.

But on top of that, they get to do it with 30 better players than any other squad can put together... when I actually found out how deliberately it had been done and for how long... even then there was no apology, not even a hint of one."

This story is a different sporting story to those of Cambridge United, Swansea City, Wigan Athletic and others who in the round ball game rose from the lower leagues to the elite. These were already professional outfits with established fan bases and, as these sides have risen, they have also fallen away, having graced but not conquered European competition. Kitson captures this brilliantly throughout his superbly crafted book.

Yet this is a tale about far more than rugby, it is a story of grit, elation, disappointment, strategic foresight, family and the highs and lows not just of professional sport but of life. With relegation from the Gallagher Premiership cancelled for this season and

under review for the next couple of years, as the debate about its continuation rumbles on, the prospect of the Chiefs holding a franchise in an expanded 14 team Premiership would ensure their continued place at rugby's top table and, perhaps, further chapters for Kitson to write in the years to come.

By Mr D J Stone, Head of Sixth Form

The issue of Genocides being repeated through history

By Josh Martin

Genocide is the deliberate killing of a

large number of people from a particular nation or ethnic group to destroy that nation or group. The most notable genocide that comes to mind would be the persecution of followers of the Jewish faith during the period of Nazi rule of Germany in the 20th century. Having examples of such horrific genocides, it may come as a shock to see that it would seem mankind has not learnt from such atrocities, which is why in some areas of the world we see history repeating itself in the form of genocides which are occurring to this present day.

California emerged as a state in 1850 however it may be a surprise to hear the 'Golden State' of the US has a dark past. The state received its nickname from the discovery of gold dating back to 1848. Discovery of gold lead to a huge increase in

the wealth of new white settlers who were able to capitalise on the untapped precious mineral. However, for settlers to find this gold it meant they had to venture into the lands of the Native Americans who had been living on such land for hundreds of years.



Figure 45 An illustration of the Californian Genocide

Due to the nature of the Native American beliefs, it meant that they wouldn't just simply give up their land to be torn apart by settlers focused on finding gold to turn their lives around. This led to mass killings of Native Americans in the estimates of around 9,000 - 16,000 people killed simply so that white settlers could take their land. Such killings weren't just undertaken by new settlers, it led the state to become involved by financing ways to help solve what was labelled "The Indian problem".

By 1873 only 30,000 Native Americans remained from a population that should've been far greater. Recently in 2019 state governor, Gavin Newsome, issued a formal apology to the Californian Native American community in which he publicly recognised perhaps the least well-known genocide in the past 200 years.

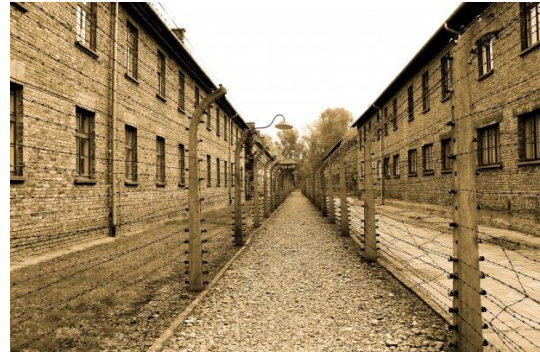


Figure 46 Inside a Concentration Camp

Perhaps the most horrific and terrifying example of genocide is the Nazi Holocaust from the years of 1941 - 1945. This was the systematic killing of the Jewish race due to the fact they didn't fit with what the Nazis deemed as biologically 'Pure'. Estimations of the number of deaths come around the 6 million figures showing the frightening efficiency of killings carried out by the Nazis whilst they were also fighting World War II.

Such methods of killing more advanced and horrifying than those seen in the Californian genocide however the principle remains the same that minorities were killed. Recently, controversy has arisen in the news due to the proposal of implementing Zyklon B gas in Arizona prisons as a method of execution for prisoners who have received the death penalty. Zyklon B is a cyanide-based pesticide that was invented in Germany in the 1920s for farmers to be able to effectively kill pests destroying their crop yields.

However, the Nazis found a new purpose for it, murder. The use of this gas was seen in concentration camps such as Auschwitz and Majdanek, the even more disturbing fact was that the Nazis were drawn to this method as the costs of bullets were too



Figure 47 Heinrich Himmler, Head of the SS which ran the death camps

high for the amount of killing, they intended to commit. There are obvious social impacts of the Holocaust, but it did serve as an eye-opener for the world that something had to change.

Following the end of World War II in 1945, it still wasn't over for the survivors of the Holocaust. Many were placed in displaced person camps. A major problem was the lack of trust they had in people, they feared returning to their old homes and with immigration being a lot trickier than it is these days it ended up ruining their chances of rebuilding their lives for the years they had led to live. However, the Holocaust did wake the world up into setting up organisations with the aim of preventing anything like that from happening again. In December 1948 the United Nations adopted the 'Genocide Convention'. This treaty was the first human rights treaty adopted by the UN and was a major step in the world coming together to prevent something of the same nature from occurring again.

However, even following the Holocaust it is clear that there is still not enough attention directed on potential genocides as in 1994

another occurred in the central African country of Rwanda. Occurring during the Rwandan civil war when members of the Tutsi ethnic group were butchered by Hutu rebels.

A famous depiction of this event can be seen in the 2004 film 'Hotel Rwanda'. In terms of ethnic conflict, Rwanda was a tinderbox. Under the colonial period, the ruling powers had divided the nation into two main groups, the Tutsis and the Hutus. Anger grew from the fact that the Belgian colonists classed Tutsis as the superior race, meaning that Hutus endeared many years of rule where Hutus were treated as inferior. This naturally leads to feelings of resentment that only intensified followings years of economic issues within Rwanda.



Figure 48 President Habyarimana of Rwanda

The spark that leads to genocide was the assassination of the president at the time President Habyarimana. Extremist Hutus saw this power vacuum as an opportunity for them to seize power and rule Rwanda how they saw fit. Therefore, the Hutu's leaders reasoning for the slaughtering of almost 77% of the Tutsi population was that they saw this as the only option for them to stay in power. Although there were United Nation peacekeeping troops stationed in Rwanda during the genocide there is little

information to suggest they made an effort to prevent such atrocities. Whereas nations such as France's main priority was to evacuate westerners living in the country, offering little help to Tutsi families in clear danger. Even though measures had been put in place for the prevention of genocide, these were ineffective since leading nations of the UN were unwilling to risk the life of their soldiers as they had no particular interest in a smaller nation such as Rwanda. Further reinforcing the fact that more has to be done in the international community for the prevention of avoidable losses of human life.



Figure 49 Memorial commemorating those killed in the Rwandan Genocide

By now the theme should have been made apparent of more has to be done against the crime of genocide. It may alarm you to discover that there is currently genocide ongoing in the Asian country of Myanmar. Currently, there is ethnic persecution of the Rohingya population by the Myanmar military. Persecution in the country is nothing new; Rohingya Muslims have fallen victim to unjust policies of the Myanmar government since the 1970s. The Myanmar government does not recognise the Rohingya, allowing this minority only

temporary residency and had to be given a white identification card to allow them to be identified. However, this card only offered limited rights and did not offer proof of citizenship. This has forced many to flee as refugees to neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh and Thailand.



Figure 50 Image from within a refugee camp for Rohingya peoples

Only recently have actions turned increasingly violent. Myanmar's security forces claim the reasoning behind their actions is to restore order in the western areas of the country. Although security forces claim they only targeted armed militants there has been plenty of evidence to show this is not the case. In 2018 the United Nations accused Myanmar's government of carrying out mass killings with 'genocidal intent', therefore causing a large-scale investigation to be held over the situation in the country hinting that perhaps the world has become warier of shutting down situations before extreme fatalities are incurred. Currently, the UN has stated they are closely monitoring the situation in Myanmar as there is 'a serious risk that genocidal actions may occur or recur'.



Figure 51 Emblem of the UNO on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect

In response to the question of how genocides can be prevented, it is largely the case of learning from past events and recognise the warning signs for international bodies to intervene before the situation worsens. The United Nations has a dedicated sector called 'The Office on Genocide Prevention' who work on being able to spot risks to eradicate them. One positive of the developments of social media is that such events can be broadcast all around the world meaning they are unable to take place secretly. This exposure will help to bring the world together to stop any such atrocities from reaching the death tolls of those seen in the Holocaust.

By Josh Martin L2