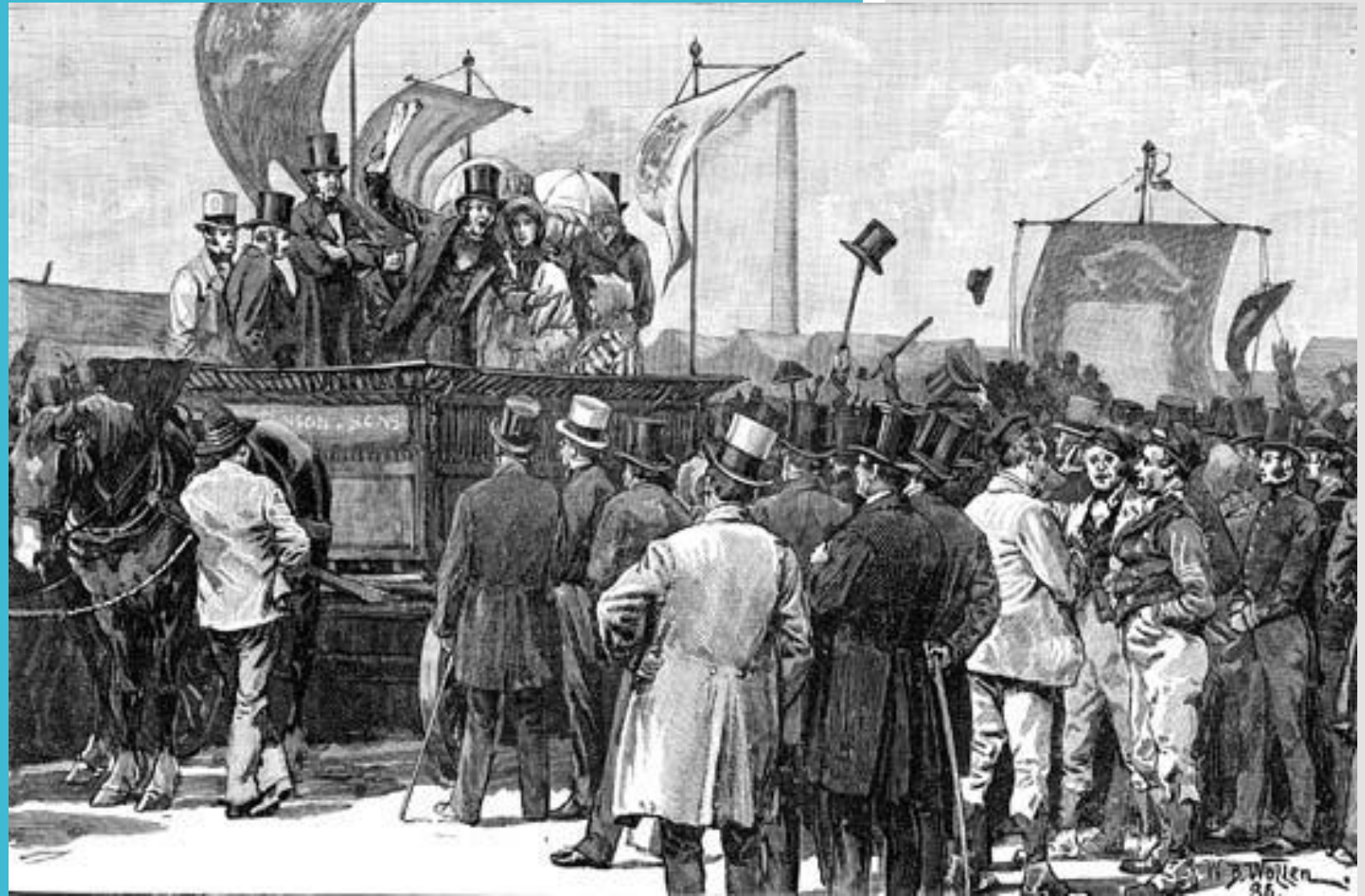


# Chartism

A Historical Background



## What was the campaign about?

- When the Chartist movement was established in the late 1830s, only 18 per cent of the adult male population of Britain could vote (before 1832 just 10 per cent could vote).
- Much of the working-class population were living in poverty, but without a voice in politics, they did not feel they could change their situation.

# The Peterloo Massacre, 1819.

## LIST OF PERSONS KILLED AT ST. PETERSFIELD,

On the 16th August, 1819.

*Or who have subsequently died, in consequence of the Injuries there received.*

Name.	Residence.	How injured.	Remarks.
Ashton, John.	Cowhill, Oldham.	Sabred.	
Ashworth, John.	Bulls' Head, Manchester.	Sabred and trampled on.	A Special Constable.
Buckley, Thomas.	Baretrees, Chadderton.	Sabred and stabbed.	
Dawson, William.	Saddleworth.	Sabred and crushed.	Killed on the Spot.
Fildes, ———.	Kennedy Street, Manchester.	Rode over by the Cavalry.	An Infant.
Lees, John.	Oldham.	Sabred.	A Coroner's Inquest on the Body adjourned without a Verdict. Was in the New Bailey till last Sessions.
O'Neil, Arthur.	No. 3, Pigeon Street, Manchester.	Inwardly crushed.	
Partington, Martha.	Eccles.	Thrown into a Cellar.	Killed on the Spot.
Whitworth, Joseph.	Hyde.	Shot.	
Crompton James.	Barton.	Trampled on by the Cavalry.	
Heys, Mary.	No. 8, Rawlinson's Buildings, Oxford Road, Manchester.	Rode over by Cavalry.	



# The Peterloo Massacre



## Reactions

- Reform of the electoral system finally arrived with the 1832 Reform Act, which increased the proportion of eligible voters in England and Wales to 18 per cent of the adult-male population and 12 per cent in Scotland.
- Although the working classes had high hopes for the Reform Act, they eventually felt betrayed as despite the new legislation, the poor ultimately remained voiceless in the way their country was run.

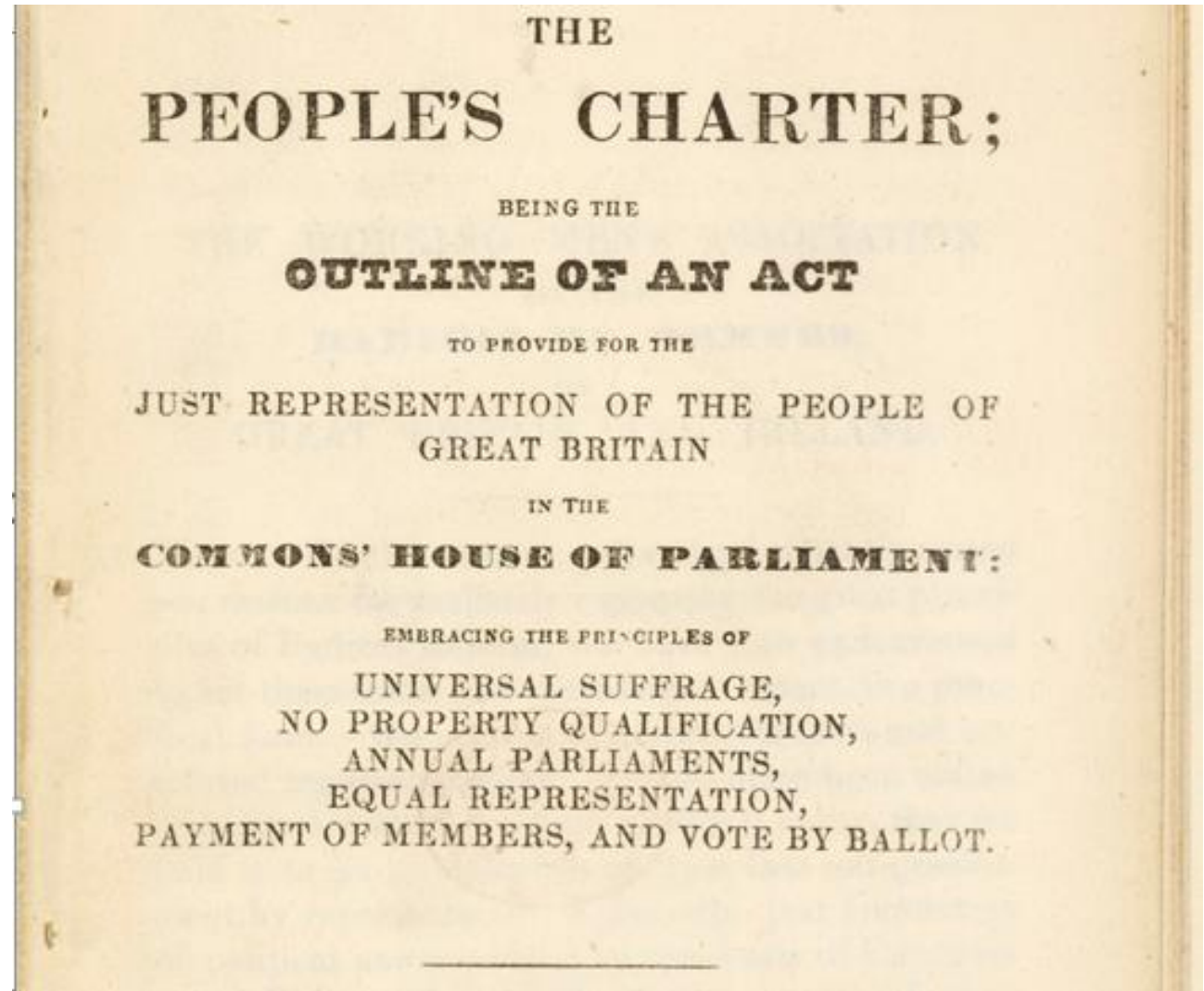
## Result

- The meeting at St Peter's Fields did not directly achieve any parliamentary reform and actually led to a suppression of civil liberties.
- Following the massacre, the Tory government introduced 'Six Acts' to suppress radical newspapers and seditious meetings, with the aim of reducing the chance of an armed uprising.
- However, the Peterloo Massacre did create martyrs for the cause of reform and the anger of the masses only served to strengthen support for change.

## What was the goal of the campaign?

- 
- The ultimate goal of the Chartists, as stated in the first minutes of the London Working Men's Association, was 'to seek by every legal means to place all classes of society in possession of their equal, political, and social rights'. This was to be achieved by campaigning for six key changes to the parliamentary system:
-

# The People's Charter





## How did the campaigners become experts on the issue?

- The Chartists were able to spread information relatively quickly using a network of newspapers, as well as mass meetings and speeches.
- This enabled supporters of Chartism to learn about the issues and keep up to date with news and events. The Chartist leaders also met regularly at conferences and meetings.

Spence



1241 WHO ASK NOTHING BUT THEIR OWN JUST LIBERTY, HAVE ALWAYS A RIGHT TO WIN IT, AND TO KEEP IT, WHENEVER THEY HAVE THE POWER, BE THE VOICES NEVER SO NUMEROUS THAT OPPOSE TO 'EM.—[18] 1242 LIBERTY, SUCH AS DENOTES THE NAME, IS THE PORTION OF THE MASS OF THE CITIZEN, AND NOT THE HAUGHTY LICENSE OF SOME PREDOMINANT FACTION.—Edmond Burke.

No. 16

SUNDAY, MAY 12, 1839

PRICE 6D.

POLITICS.

DUTY OF THE RADICAL ELECTORS.

The probability of a general election, as a consequence of the change of Ministers, have set Whigs and Tories on their feet, and already many measures have been joggling from door to door, with cap in hand, soliciting the votes of the "independent electors" for "the liberal" Mr. Tomkins, or "the Conservative" Mr. Smith. We see no reason why the Radicals should not exhibit the same activity, and adopt the like means, for adding to the strength of their party in the next House of Commons. The chances of illness, though never so great or numerous, should not be permitted to deter them from the employment of all available means to obtain as much as they can. The two factions will, of course, return between them an overwhelming majority, ready on all occasions to vote against any measure which the Radicals may attempt to make; and they will, of course, render any effort to realize a radical object nugatory and hopeless. But the presence of twenty good men of this class—or of even half that number, if they were men of undoubted honesty, of sound judgment, and of indomitable firmness—in the midst of the people's agents—would do much to enlighten the public mind, and to increase public discussion, where there still exist ignorance and indifference, in reference to the present subjects, pernicious, and poverty-creating systems of legislation and government. How comes it to pass, that all trade and commerce in a state of almost unexampled advancement—the gold currency leaving the metropolis for exportation by waggons loads, almost daily—the depositors' savings' Banks pouring for their money—the manufacturing districts on the verge of insurrection—Discouragement and Poverty stalking about, and exhibiting their ghastly

and distract the unenfranchised—see things in which they have no interest, because from them they can derive no good;—show them that hoarding taxation—a prodigious expenditure of the public money,—a system of legislation that makes the poor poorer, and drives them to desperation—that separates society into distinct classes, the one hostile to the other—that is taking away all security for property—all motives for industry—all reasons for contentment;—show them all this, and the way to bring it to an end, by rendering the governing body less exclusively selfish less short-sighted, by rendering it more popular—by making it in fact what it is in theory, the representative—not of a class or a section of the country, but of the country at large—do this, and the middle classes will, from the mere force of instinct—for the purpose of self-preservation—unite in the demand for the reform we desiderate. The mode of effecting this, in the shortest time, and at the least expense, is to place some ten or twenty men, who understand the whole thing, and have the honesty and capability of trying to make others understand it, also, in the House of Commons. There they can address themselves not only to the wrong-doers, but to the country at large. There they can lay hold upon such one of mischief as it is produced and is, or in its way to maturity; and if they be not strong enough to prevent its consummation, they will, at all events, have informed the public of its character and object. A very few instances that watched over, and its proceedings exposed in their true light, after having compelled the supporters of the various measures to avow their real nature and objects, would suffice to effectuate the object required. It only remains to suggest how the power to work it out may be realized. It is this, and it remains for the Radicals to set about it without loss of time, and to

THE ARMY.

One squadron of the 1st Royal Dragoon, under Captain Owen, embarked here yesterday on board the Jane steamer, for Liverpool. A second division, which started into town this morning from Billingsley, is expected to follow on Monday.—Card paper of Saturday. The detachment of the 25th Foot at Dover, consisting of six officers and 106 rank and file, is under orders to join the service companies in Canada. A troop of the 12th Lancers has arrived in France, where it is expected to remain for some time. On Tuesday, the head-quarters of the 7th Regiment of Dragoon Guards marched into Leeds from Edinburgh. They are to be stationed there for the ensuing year. The 25th Regiment are proceeding to Newport, Massachusetts; 157 of them left Bristol on Thursday, by the Ulster steamer. The depot companies of the 11th Regiment are under orders to embark immediately at Cork for Aberystwith, in consequence of the alarming excitement prevalent in Wales. The Queen's Bays, or 2d Dragoon Guards, left Hales for Glasgow, the last troop on Monday. They are succeeded by the 6th Dragoon Guards from Dorchester, all of which regiment has arrived, except two troops, one expected to-day, and the other on Wednesday. The staff and the other troops arrived on Wednesday. The colonel of the regiment is the Hon. R. Taylor. We hear that the 1st, or Royal Dragoon, is expected here shortly, though probably not to be stationed in Manchester. Of this regiment Sir H. Vivian is the colonel. In addition to the 26th Infantry, which has been in the Regent's-road barracks since October, under Major Hutchinson, five companies of the 79th, which would arrive at Liverpool from Dublin yesterday, are coming by railway this morning from Liverpool, and for the present are to be billeted in the town. The staff and the remaining five companies are to remain at Liverpool for the present, as the head-quarters of the regiment.—Manchester Guardian of Saturday.

THE PRINCIPLES OF LIBERTY.

BENTHAM says, the difference between a free and despotic state consists in the manner in which that whole mass of power which when taken together is supreme, is in a free state distributed among the several ranks of persons that are shewers in it; in the source from whence their titles to it are successively derived in the frequent and easy changes of condition between the governors, and governed, whereby the interest of one class we mean or see indistinguishably blended, with those of the other; in the responsibility of the governors or the right which a subject has of having the reasons publicly assigned and canvassed of every act of power that is exerted over him; in the liberty of the press, or the security with which every man be he of the one class or the other may make known his complaints and remonstrances to the whole community; in the liberty of public association or the security with which individuals may communicate their sentiments, concert their plans, and practice every mode of opposition, short of actual revolt before the executive can be justified in disturbing them. No country or state can be either social or civilized, unless its inhabitants possess the liberty of communicating, in the most unreserved manner their opinions. Is it reasonable to conclude that when mankind gave up part of their natural rights, if they had any other idea but that the rest were to be protected against the physical power of the stronger? If such were not the principles of the original social contract, what kind of benefits have those derived to themselves who perform all the labour, without being allowed the fruits which their own hands produce in the creation thereof. When the physical power of the few is suffered to preponderate over the many, what are we then to do, to be saved; but to set our shoulders to the wheels, leave off praying to Heaven, and help ourselves out of the slough? Will the tyrants of the earth have the hardihood to declare that the operative part of mankind have not a prepossession right to a sufficiency of the most common blessings which the God of nature has so easily disposed to all, indistinctly? ENGLISH says, when a nation changes its opinion, and habits of thinking it is no longer to be governed as before, but it would not only be wrong, but not only to attempt

HEAVY FROST.—During Wednesday night the me-

**Was there a  
resource pool?  
Who were  
their allies?**

- Chartism had a huge amount of support from the working classes, particularly in industrialized areas. The largest Chartist petition claimed to have nearly 6 million signatures.
- Many prominent Chartists had skills in writing, printing and oratory, which helped attract the support necessary to make Chartism a mass movement.

This is a daguerreotype (an early form of photograph) of the Chartist meeting held at Kennington Common on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1848.





## Female Chartists

### MEETING OF FEMALE CHARTISTS.

A meeting of female Chartists was held on Monday evening, in the National Charter Association Hall, Old Bailey; for the purpose of forming a "Female Chartist Association," to co-operate with the Male Association; and for other objects connected with the interests of "the People's Charter."—On the motion of Miss Susanna Inge, seconded by Mrs Wyatt, Mr Carey was called to the chair.—After a suitable address from Mr Ridley, in which he commented on the present state of woman, and pointed to the position which, according to his judgment, she ought to occupy in society, elevating her thoughts to political aspirations, Mr Cohen expressed the high degree of satisfaction which he had received from Mr Ridley's address, but could not help saying that woman would be more in her proper character and station at home, where she was the pride and ornament of "the domestic hearth," than in the political arena. (Sensation among the ladies.) He



## Who were their opponents and what stood in their way?

- Chartism was opposed by almost all those who had the vote, together with MPs and the ruling classes – all of whom were among the wealthier members of society. The Chartists were sometimes portrayed as worthy of ridicule in the media, and sometimes as a source of danger.
- The Chartists created obstacles for themselves and the success of the movement through lack of unity and disagreements over tactics. There was a split between those who wished to use peaceful 'moral force' and those who wished to use the threat of 'physical force' to achieve the aims of the Charter.

s. Had the petition been anything but a hoax, HER MAJESTY  
ave been at an early hour wending her way towards Kennington  
with seventeen DUKES OF WELLINGTON at her side, and SIR  
would have been conspicuous in the van that was bearing the  
document.



The *Illustrated  
London  
News* in 1848.

## How did they plan for success?

- The People's Charter was written by William Lovett, but Feargus O'Connor became the main leader of the Chartist movement.
- The Chartists were extremely clear about their central aims, which were published in The People's Charter, together with plans for a secret ballot. They planned for success by presenting three enormous petitions to Parliament.

## The Newport Rising

- The more radical Chartists took part in riots in Newcastle, Birmingham and elsewhere round the country, at which leading members of the movement were arrested.
- The most infamous episode in the history of Chartism was the disastrous Newport Rising, which took place on 4<sup>th</sup> November 1839. A group of Chartists stormed a hotel and 22 of the protestors were killed by waiting troops.

## How successful were they?

- Although the Chartists gathered enormous support in the form of signatures for their petitions, their demands were rejected by Parliament every time they were presented.
- By the time Chartism ended in 1858, not a single demand from the People's Charter had become law. Although the Chartists failed to achieve their aims directly, their influence persisted and reformers continued to campaign for the electoral reforms advocated by the People's Charter.



## Some Improvements

- A new Reform Bill was passed in August 1867 that gave the vote to all male heads of households over 21, and all male lodgers paying £10 a year in rent.
- Further reform arrived with the Ballot Act in 1872, which ensured that votes could be cast in secret – a key demand of the People's Charter.

## Getting Better

- In 1884 the Third Reform Act extended the qualification of the 1867 Act to the countryside so that almost two thirds of men had the vote. Eventually, only one of the Chartists' demands – for annual parliamentary elections – failed to become part of British law.
- At the time, Chartism may have been judged unsuccessful, but there is no doubt that the movement's campaign for electoral reform played an important role in the development of democracy in the UK.