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World Histories

FRESH PERSPECTIVES ON OUR GLOBAL PAST

Did the Cold War ever really end?

"We are living in an age of anger"
The roots of our 21st-century rage

Fidel Castro's divisive legacy

CLASH OF EMPIRES
The naval battle that shaped 16th-century Europe

SYRIA
Historians predict its future

EXPLODING THE PHARAOH MYTH
Are our ideas about ancient Egypt wrong?

TRUMP Why his win must change our take on history

"They didn't expect me to survive"
Eyewitness to the WW2 D-Day landings

RUSSIA'S REVOLUTIONS
How 1917 shaped a century

ISSUE 2 FEB/MAR 2017

Revolutionary road

A 1930 Russian textile featuring a tractor design. This issue, we explore the global impact of Russia's tumultuous 20th-century history, from its 1917 revolutions to the reverberations of the Cold War – which, arguably, continue today

A number of commentators have suggested that 2016 was somehow uniquely fated to be terrible – and that, at its end, things might revert to their 'normal', calmer state.

Putting aside the fact that such a view is to some extent a uniquely western one – there are, of course, parts of the world in which much more severe crises are depressingly routine – a more likely interpretation is that the phenomena identified as negative in 2016 (political shocks, social divisions, economic turbulence) are set to continue for some time to come.

As we explore in this issue, they may in any case be part of a much longer-lasting trend. In The Big Question, starting on page 40, seven experts assess **whether the Cold War ever really ended**. Though some believe that it concluded with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, might it be more true that the tensions and rivalries it produced never really went away? Looking even further back, we consider the ways in which the **1917 Russian Revolutions** (page 30) affected the global political climate for many decades.

Continuity and change, then, is something of a theme for this issue. Returning to the idea that the kind of upheaval seen in 2016 was new to some in the US and Europe, author Pankaj Mishra notes that "what we are witnessing today is the turbulence and turmoil we used to locate in Iran or India erupting in the heart of the modern west". You can read more of his thoughts about why we may be living in the 'age of anger' in his **conversation with Tom Holland** on page 82.

This issue brings you even more commentary from leading historians and experts with a **newly expanded opinion section** tackling hot topical issues. How should we now regard Fidel Castro, following his death late last year? What are the historical precedents for the recent upsurge in US citizens heading north to Canada? You can find answers to those and other pressing questions from page 18.

There's much more to discover besides, with another thought-provoking journey across centuries and continents – from the **treachery that cost the crusaders Jerusalem** to New York during the blackouts of 1977, and from our potentially erroneous beliefs about ancient Egypt to a **new look at Korea's art history**.

I'd love to know what you think, too, about both the magazine and the wider world of history: please email your comments to me and the team at *worldhistories@historyextra.com*. For now, enjoy this issue, and look out for issue three on 29 March.

Matt Elton
Editor, *BBC World Histories*

COVER ILLUSTRATION: DAVIDE BONAZZI. INSIDE COVERS: BRIDGEMAN. THIS PAGE: STEVE SAYERS–THE SECRET STUDIO.
BACK COVER: ON LOAN FROM THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KOREA

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An anti-fascist poster from the Soviet Union, 1929. This issue, we explore Russia's relations with the rest of the world throughout the 20th century – and how they still influence politics today

GETTY IMAGES

REGULARS

THE BRIEFING

CULTURE

JOURNEYS

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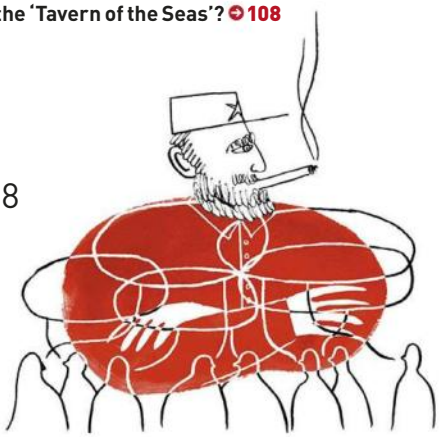
ISSUE 2 COVER ILLUSTRATION BY **DAVIDE BONAZZI**

This issue we've been asking …

18



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Expert voices from the world of history

Victor Sebestyen

Born in Budapest, feature writer Sebestyen was still a child when his family left the country as refugees. Much of his work has explored eastern Europe's tumultuous history, and on **page 24** he assesses how the personality and actions of one man – Vladimir Ilyich Lenin – shaped the course of world history.

Tanya Harmer

Associate professor in international history at the London School of Economics, Harmer offers her take on the contentious legacy of revolutionary leader Fidel Castro on **page 18**. "Castro's critiques of neoliberalism continue to resonate globally in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crash," she writes.

Pankaj Mishra

In a wide-ranging conversation with fellow author Tom Holland, starting on **page 82**, Mishra explores the origins of trends that look set to dominate the news in 2017. "In the past year or so, a lot of familiar oppositions – liberalism versus fundamentalism, Islam versus modernity – have been destroyed," he argues.

John Romer

A leader of major archaeological expeditions to Egypt, Romer believes that our view of the ancient history of that land is shrouded in myth and misconception. "The idea that pharaohs were worshipped as all-powerful gods, for instance, is just silly talk," he says. Read more of Romer's thoughts in our interview on **page 56**.

Jerry Brotton

This issue the author of *This Orient Isle: Elizabethan England and the Islamic World*, turns his attention to another meeting of civilisations: the 1571 battle of Lepanto, which pitted Christian Europe against the Ottoman empire. As he writes on **page 60**, it was a conflict that caused a major shift in the balance of power.

Hakim Adi

Adi is one of seven expert contributors to our Big Question feature starting on **page 40**, debating whether the Cold War ever really reached a conclusion. "The Anglo-American assault on the Soviet Union and communism, as well as the bipolar division of the world that ensued, had a profound and lasting global impact," he suggests.

The Briefing

The history behind today's news

BACK STORY

What does the future hold for Syria?

Since the popular protests of 2011 led to an armed uprising, Syria has been wracked by war between government forces, rebel fighters and the so-called Islamic State. **Chris Bowlby** talks to historians **Eugene Rogan** and **James Gelvin**, who share their opinions on the causes and possible outcomes of the conflict

Innocent victims
Civilians evacuated from an Islamic State-controlled district near Aleppo by fighters of the Syrian Democratic Forces in August 2016. An estimated 6.5 million Syrians have been internally displaced since the conflict began

REUTERS

"What makes the Syrian conflict so complex and difficult to resolve is that the country sits at the fault lines between rival and incompatible visions of Islamic politics"

Though the current fighting in Syria was sparked by the uprisings of the Arab Spring, is the crisis actually the continuation of an ongoing deep-rooted conflict between different strands of Islam?

Eugene Rogan: The Syrian conflict stems from the convergence of three rival and incompatible models of political Islam, each with deep historic roots.

The oldest is the Saudi Wahhabi alliance, which dates back to the 18th century and is the ideological basis of the modern Saudi state. It is a Sunni vision of an austere, iconoclastic Islam, hostile to popular forms of Islam such as Sufism and the various Shi'ite denominations.

The Muslim Brotherhood represents the second fusion of Islam and politics, emerging in Egypt in the 1920s as a conservative reaction to western challenges to Islamic values under British rule.

The most recent model of Islamic politics emerged from the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, and was rapidly perceived by its Sunni Arab neighbours as a Shi'ite threat.

These three strands coexisted uneasily for much of the following decades until the American-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 followed by the Arab Spring in 2011. With the fall of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, the majority Shi'ites swept to power and Iran was able to extend its influence through Iraq to Syria, where the government is led by an Alawite minority, and into Lebanon through the Shi'ite Hezbollah movement. Then the Arab Spring, toppling long-standing autocrats, left power vacuums and sparked civil wars – none more violent than the conflict in Syria.

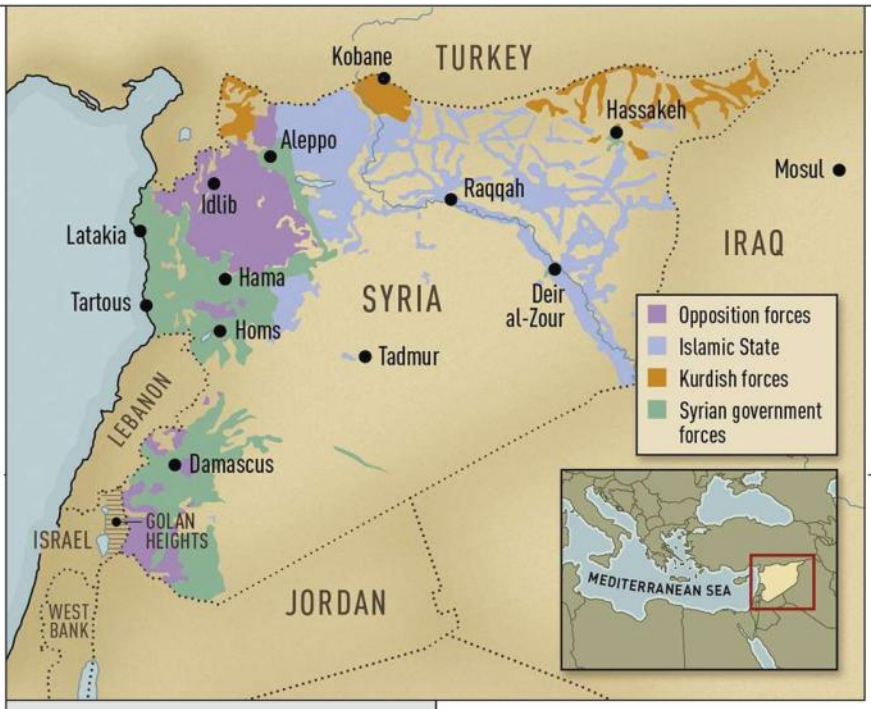
Rebel fighters pose with their weapons in Aleppo in December 2016. More than five years after the start of the conflict, government troops continue to battle both rebel forces and Islamic State insurgents

REUTERS

What makes the Syrian conflict so complex and difficult to resolve is that the country sits at the fault lines between these rival and incompatible visions of Islamic politics. Iran supports the Assad regime to preserve its influence, the Saudis intervene on the side of Sunni forces, and the Qataris and the west support what they believe to be moderate Islamist opposition groups aligned with the Muslim Brotherhood.

Does the Islamic State (IS) insurgency mark the permanent emergence of a new kind of challenge to established orders?

James Gelvin: In 2014 IS seemed unstoppable. It carved out a 'caliphate' from Syria and Iraq roughly the size of the United Kingdom. But its early battlefield success was largely a result of the collapse of the Iraqi army and the unpopularity of Iraq's prime minister, Nouri al-Maliki, among the Sunni



This map shows areas of Syria controlled by various factions, as reported in December 2016

GETTY IMAGES/MAP: PAUL HEWITT–BATTLEFILED DESIGN, BASED ON IHS CONFLICT MONITOR (12 DEC 2016)

The Syrian conflict in brief

The civil war that has claimed the lives of between 250,000 and 470,000 Syrians began in 2011 after pro-democracy protests were violently suppressed by government troops, and rebel groups took up arms against the forces of President Bashar al-Assad. Jihadist militants from the so-called Islamic State joined the fighting and in June 2014, having taken control of areas of eastern Syria and north-west Iraq, proclaimed a 'caliphate'. The president represents the Alawite sect closely linked to Shia Islam, while the majority of Syrians are Sunni; Islamic State follows a fundamentalist Wahhabi branch of Sunni Islam. More than 4.8 million people have fled the country, largely to Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey; some 6.5 million have been displaced internally.

Syria's President Bashar al-Assad has held power since 2000

population of Iraq. During 2015 and 2016 the caliphate shrank dramatically. IS lost Tikrit, Ramadi and Fallujah in Iraq and Kobanî in Syria. It is only a matter of time before it loses Mosul, Iraq's third-largest city.

But even if the days of the IS 'caliphate' are numbered, that doesn't necessarily mean that IS itself is in its death throes. There are five possible scenarios for what might happen to IS in the long term. I'll list them here, from least likely to most likely. The first scenario is that IS goes underground, only to re-emerge in the future; however, this ignores the unique circumstances that nourished IS in the past. Second, IS could simply set up shop elsewhere; this ignores the fact that IS branches outside the caliphate have mostly either failed or are on the verge of failing. Third, IS fighters could continue to wage an insurgency in Syria or Iraq, or both – but since IS's raison d'être is re-establishing a caliphate, if this scenario transpires IS will no longer be IS. Fourth, IS fighters may just give up, or move on to other criminal enterprises. Finally, former fighters and freelancers could continue their attacks globally, with or without organisational backing, until they are killed or give up on their high-risk and, ultimately, futile behaviour.

Is this war a challenge not just to the Assad regime but to the Syrian state itself?

ER: This conflict is more dangerous than any the country has faced in the past. Syrian towns were partially destroyed in the First World War, in anti-imperial revolts against the French in 1925 and again in 1945, and in the conflict between the regime of Hafez al-Assad [the current president's father] and the Muslim Brotherhood in the early 1980s, without generating a comparable level of hatred and polarisation. The current civil war has given rise to deeper and more dangerous divisions than ever before.

Western diplomats have failed to recognise that the regime of Bashar al-Assad knows it is in a battle for survival, not just for the state but for all Syrians associated with it. Those Syrians, who number in the millions, feared the worst as brutalised opposition militias took their revenge. The challenge facing the international community, now that government forces look poised to win a total victory, will be to prevent the state from doing to its enemies what they feared the opposition might do to them.

Will the US under President Trump take a new approach to Syria?

JG: It is difficult to predict exactly what Trump will do about Syria. It is highly unlikely that he will advocate intervening, either militarily or

"A case can be made that victory for Syria's government would be in America's and Europe's interest"

diplomatically, for two reasons. First, the bloodiest phase of the civil war might well be over. It will likely devolve into a protracted, low-intensity conflict pitting the Syrian government against a variety of opposition groups, IS remnants and Kurdish militias. It will also disappear from the headlines, as well as from the list of priorities of American policy makers.

Indeed, a case can be made that victory for Syria's government would be in America's and Europe's interest since it would enable all parties to the conflict to focus on the fight against IS, reduce the number of refugees, diminish the killing and put a halt to the braying of liberal interventionists and neo-cons alike who want the US to do something rash. It would also keep Syria intact – a legal fiction, of course, but one that would prevent a break-up of the country that would destabilise the region.

The second reason that Trump is unlikely to get involved is that his instinct leans toward isolationism. His stated reluctance to become involved in adventures in the Middle East makes him the polar opposite of Hillary Clinton (a liberal interventionist) – but, ironically enough, a kindred spirit with Barack Obama, who wanted to reduce the US's footprint in the region so that it might focus its attention on the far east and Pacific rim where, Obama believed, the history of the 21st century will be written. Trump's admiration for Vladimir Putin makes it likely that he will abdicate Syria policy to Russia.

British troops observe smoke billowing from burning oil wells in southern Iraq after the American-led invasion of 2003 that toppled Saddam Hussein's government

Tear gas is released among anti-government demonstrators in Cairo during the Arab Spring in January 2011. Assad's response to similar protests in Syria led to the current conflict

"Syria might become like Somalia, with a government that reigns, but does not rule, over all the territory within its borders"

Russian president Vladimir Putin. Russia has supported the Assad regime, reinforcing Syria's army and launching air strikes against rebels

45

Per cent of Syria's population has been displaced, according to a report by the Syrian Centre for Policy Research

How have other countries reacted to the conflict, and how has their historical involvement in Syria informed those actions?

ER: Only Iran and Russia have a clear idea of what their interests in Syria are, and have acted decisively and successfully to reinforce their interests. Both Iran and Russia have played a decisive role in reinforcing the exhausted Syrian army during the five-year civil war, and in preserving Bashar al-Assad in power.

Syria has been a loyal ally to Iran since the early 1980s, while the geopolitical stakes for Russia are also high. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has lost every one of its former allies in the region except Syria. The Russian fleet has use of the Syrian naval base in Tartus, and Russian intelligence relies on electronic surveillance from its base in Latakia. The Russians had everything to lose if the Assad regime fell, because they would have been turfed out by any successor government as supporters of the hated Alawite state.

Compared with these clear-sighted (if ruthless) positions, the Europeans and Americans have responded with uncertainty and half-measures, reflecting their lack of clearly defined interests and their unwillingness to get more deeply involved in Syria. The west now seems resigned to the Assad regime's victory, unwilling to take on either Russia or Iran in a renewed struggle for Syria.

How might the conflict be ended?

JG: There were always three possible end-games for the Syrian civil war: a victory for the Syrian government or the opposition, a negotiated settlement, or 'Somalisation'. This term, coined by a UN representative, suggests that Syria might become like Somalia, with a government that reigns, but does not rule, over all the territory within its internationally recognised borders. Even with the government's recent gains (made with Russian assistance) the Syrian government is unlikely to wipe out all resistance. And because there is no incentive for the government to enter into negotiations now that the momentum is on its side – except, perhaps, to secure terms of the opposition's surrender – the second option is also unlikely. Thus Somalisation is the most likely endpoint.

Chris Bowlby is a BBC journalist specialising in history. He was speaking to **Eugene Rogan**, professor of modern Middle Eastern history at the University of Oxford and author of *The Arabs: A History* (Penguin, 2012), and **James Gelvin**, professor of history at UCLA and author of *The Modern Middle East: A History* (OUP, 2015)

DISCOVER MORE

The situation in Syria remains volatile, fluctuating frequently. Keep abreast of the latest events by following BBC coverage of the conflict in Syria at **bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-17258397**

HAVE YOUR SAY

Let us know about your views on this piece by emailing *worldhistories@historyextra.com*

A woman is helped from a bus in Aleppo after being evacuated from a village under siege in north-west Syria, December 2016

GETTY IMAGES/REX FEATURES/REUTERS

History Headlines

NOV 2016
JAN 2017

❶ NORTH DAKOTA UNITED STATES

Pipes and protesters

Native American campaigners seeking to protect sacred historical sites have halted the construction of an oil pipeline spanning four states. Members of the Standing Rock Sioux say that the pipeline would desecrate ancestral burial grounds and other spiritual locations. Following months of protest, alternative routes are being considered; however, the reprieve may be short-lived – new US president Donald Trump has expressed his support for the pipeline project.

❷ BIRMINGHAM UNITED KINGDOM

Virtual vessel

A pioneering ocean crossing is set to receive a futuristic makeover. To mark the 400th anniversary of the *Mayflower*'s voyage to the New World in 1620, virtual-reality experts at the University of Birmingham, working with colleagues in Plymouth, Devon and its US namesake in Massachusetts, have announced plans to recreate the ship in augmented reality based on original plans and laser scans of a replica vessel. "We want to recreate every plank, every pulley, every rope, so that people can put on a headset and feel like they are actually on board," said Professor Bob Stone.

GETTY IMAGES/GEORGE RODGER–MAGNUM IMAGES

❸ YUCATÁN STATE MEXICO

A pyramid within a pyramid... within a pyramid

Experts investigating the temple pyramid known as Kukulkan (or El Castillo) in the ancient Mayan complex of Chichen Itza in Mexico were astonished when they found that not just one pyramid is encased within the visible structure, but two. It appears that the two outer layers of the structure were each built on top of an earlier iteration, each dating from a different era of Mayan civilisation – sitting one inside the other like Russian nesting dolls. The 30-metre-high outer structure was completed between 1050 and 1300, while the innermost and oldest pyramid is just 10 metres tall and was built between 550 and 800.

The Mayan temple of Kukulkan at Chichen Itza encases two older pyramids

❹ GERMANY

Hitler's memoir tops German charts

Is Hitler's autobiographical *Mein Kampf* really a bestseller? Since an annotated edition was controversially published by the German not-for-profit Institut für Zeitgeschichte (Institute for Contemporary History) in January 2016, it has sold some 85,000 copies, topping *Der Spiegel*'s non-fiction chart. However, commentators point out that interest in the edition may have been unusually high because it is the first annotated version of the text to be published, and that its sales don't merit declaring it a runaway hit.

❺ MOYO AREA UGANDA

Dance of time

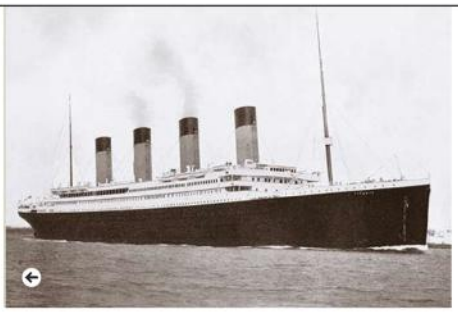
Cuban rumba dancing, Indian yoga, Belgian beer culture: these are just three of the 2016 additions to Unesco's Intangible Cultural Heritage list, which aims to recognise and protect traditions across the globe. The updated list also includes the bowl lyre music and dance of the Ma'di people around Moyo in Uganda. Considered "in need of urgent safeguarding" by Unesco, Ma'di traditions are at risk of being lost – they are considered old-fashioned by younger generations, and some involve materials from animals and plants that are now classed as endangered.

A Ma'di musician wearing leopard-skin costume. The use of such vulnerable animals is one reason for the decline of traditional music

6 SICHUAN PROVINCE CHINA

Titanic undertaking

Forget rollercoasters: a theme park in China is planning a more unusual attraction – a full-size replica of RMS *Titanic*. The ambitious project to painstakingly recreate the doomed 269 metre-long ocean liner, which sank after hitting an iceberg in 1912, is set to cost 1 billion yuan (£118m/US$145m). The replica will be permanently docked at the Romandisea resort, 70 miles east of Chengdu and about 700 miles from the open sea.



7 SOHAG PROVINCE EGYPT

Grave expectations

Tomb building was big business in ancient Egypt, finds at a rediscovered city suggest. The settlement – believed to be at least 5,000 years old – is thought to have been home to tomb builders and high-ranking officials. Archaeologists uncovered graves bigger than royal burials at nearby Abydos, one of Egypt's oldest cities. "This proves the importance of the people buried there, and their high social standing during this early era," said the country's antiquities ministry.

A tomb at a newly excavated city near Abydos in Egypt. Substantial burial sites here indicate the high status of the city's inhabitants

EGYPTIAN MINISTRY OF ANTIQUITIES/ALAMY

8 JAVA INDONESIA

Mystery of the vanishing shipwrecks

Several Second World War shipwrecks have disappeared from the seabed north of Java. The British and Dutch warships, sunk during the 1942 battle of the Java Sea, are the final resting places of hundreds of sailors. It is feared that they have been illegally salvaged for scrap metal. Dutch and British authorities have condemned the actions, and plan to work with Indonesian authorities to investigate.

WORDS **ELLIE CAWTHORNE**

Inside Story

Why we must learn to understand zig-zags

Each issue our expert correspondents provide historical insights into global issues. Reporting from the post-election US, **Adam IP Smith** suggests that Trump's victory should make us re-evaluate our expectations of continuity – and that historians must adjust their conceptions of change

Adam IP Smith is senior lecturer at University College London, specialising in American history. He is also an author and presenter of *Trump: The Presidential Precedents*, broadcast on BBC Radio 4 in January

DISCOVER MORE

From Our Own Correspondent is broadcast every Saturday at 11.30am on BBC Radio 4

"The Hillary Clinton celebration-that-wasn't was held in a convention centre with a glass ceiling: a hubristic case of the speech-writer's tail wagging the event-planner's dog, perhaps. Even before Donald Trump had given his oddly low-key victory speech, the party broke up in desolation.

Many weeks later, the palpable sense of shock at the outcome of the election has not abated. This did not feel like a normal campaign, but Democrats hoped – assumed, even – that Hillary Clinton would win and that normality would resume. The widespread presumption that Trump 'couldn't' win reflected a powerful urge not just to want continuity but to expect it, too. The shock of Trump is in part the shock of historical discontinuity: there has never been anyone like him before, so there should not be one now. Sometimes, though, the people who assure you that everything will carry on as before are wrong. Sometimes, people do not behave as you think they will, institutions collapse, and the world turns upside down.

President Obama directly confronted the challenge of discontinuity in his remarks on the White House lawn on the morning after the election. "The path that this country has taken has never been a straight line," he said. "We zig and we zag, and sometimes we move in ways that some people think is forward and others think is moving back." At which point he paused, before adding, as if to reassure a scared child: "And that's OK."

Obama's conception of American history – shared by the Clinton supporters in that vast, glass-ceilinged room – is one characterised by the gradual absorption of more people into the universal 'promise' of democracy. Theirs is a familiar and, in one form or another, hegemonic narrative of the American past. It proceeds from the idea that there is a universal claim about liberty and equality encoded in the founding documents – not as a description of reality but as an end goal.

Theirs is the America of Abraham Lincoln – the first Republican president, but one as temperamentally different from Trump as he was similar to Obama. Lincoln talked of the US as the "last, best hope of Earth" but saw it as a work in progress: an ideal "constantly looked to, constantly laboured for, and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all people, of all colours, everywhere." There may be zig-zags on the way, but the destination is clear.

Many of those who voted for Trump appear to subscribe to a less teleological version of history: America not as a work in progress but as a once-beautiful accomplishment now sadly tarnished. Hence Trump wants to make America great *again*. As one Trump supporter told me, this election was the last chance to "get our country back". Hillary Clinton, he said, was "not really American". Deeply immersed as Donald Trump is in conspiratorial thinking – not least about

CHRIS GLOAG

Clinton supporters in New York City react to news of Donald Trump's victory in Florida on 8 November. "The widespread presumption that Trump 'couldn't' win reflected a powerful urge not just to want continuity but to expect it, too," says Adam IP Smith

GETTY IMAGES

the birthplace of Obama – I don't think that supporter meant to imply that Clinton was literally born outside the US but, rather, that she was simply alien.

The Trump supporters I interviewed wanted a political counter-revolution. Surveys showed that support for Trump was strongly correlated with the opinion that America is a worse place now than it was in the past. Trump is hardly the first shake-up artist to be elected to the White House and, like many of his predecessors from Thomas Jefferson to Ronald Reagan, his promised political explosion is as much about a restoration of past purity as it is about advancement.

Historians of my generation came of age in the wake of the ending of the Cold War, of apartheid and, it seemed, of old entrenched hierarchies. Intellectually, perhaps the 1990s prepared us very badly for sudden discontinuity of this kind. True, we never swallowed the 90s conceit of the 'end of history' – Francis Fukuyama's artefact of its time – or we didn't think we had. In a post-structuralist mode, we were constitutionally sceptical of grand theories of historical change, and grew up smiling knowingly at the devastatingly witty take-down of the Whig view of inexorable progress (until America became Top Nation and history came to a full stop) in the 1930 book *1066 and All That*. Even so, it was easy to take for granted the historically unusual pace of social change we have seen in our lifetimes. It strikes me now that, at root, most historical scholarship in the past few decades has been written with a deep, unarticulated assumption that things can only get better in the end.

At root, most historical scholarship in the past few decades has been written with a deep, unarticulated assumption that things can only get better in the end

It is difficult to write history without a sense of direction, but perhaps we need a new framework for writing about these lurches from zig to zag – for example, when an uber-cool African-American is replaced in the White House by a reality TV star endorsed by the Ku Klux Klan. Maybe historians need to be more ironic, more multi-dimensional in their conception of change. Yet somehow we must do that without losing a fierce commitment to the truth – a commodity under sudden attack.

Viewpoints

Expert opinions on the historical issues behind today's news

POLITICS

Fidel's divisive legacy

Castro's global political impact and complex legacy will persist long after his death – so it may be too soon to make simplistic judgments about his life

BY TANYA HARMER

How any individual historian writes about Fidel Castro, who died in November 2016, will be determined by their whereabouts in the world. History is not uniform and it is seldom monochrome – nor should it be. At its best, history is contested, constructed and conceptualised in multiple ways across space and time. It relies on the questions we ask, the evidence that is available, and measured reflection. Simplistic binary questions that demand snap verdicts rarely produce good history. Life, as historians like to say, is more complex.

This is even more true when trying to understand the historical significance and legacy of a figure such as Fidel Castro, one of the most divisive and decisive leaders of the 20th century. To many Cubans – inside and outside Cuba – he was the devil incarnate: the cause of the island's poverty, political repression and isolation. To others he was its saviour: a man who led a revolutionary movement to victory, firmly established Cuba's independence on the world stage and brought about much needed land, healthcare and education reform.

Many more Cubans find it hard to be categorical either way. To them, Fidel was and is an enduring fact of life, a father

ILLUSTRATION BY **KATE HAZELL**

Have your say Share your thoughts on this issue's columns by emailing us at *worldhistories@historyextra.com*

With profound political and economic changes on the horizon, it is too early to tell whether Castro's ideas will remain relevant or be consigned to a previous epoch

figure who personified the character and shape of their nation. As one Cuban exile explained to me, his death sparked "intense reflection and contradictory thoughts". Seen from a distance, he defies one-dimensional labels and leaves a complicated legacy.

But perhaps the more interesting questions historians must ask are not what and *who* Castro was – good/bad, visionary/anachronistic – but *why* he achieved power and made the decisions he did, and *how* he transformed history. Addressing the question 'why' forces us to look at context, to position Castro within a longer Cuban history of rebellion that tells us more about the island than one man's life ever will.

Castro did not exist in a vacuum; nor did he create the conditions for revolution alone. The idea of the heroic guerrilla single-handedly coming down from the mountains to liberate Cuba is just that: an idea – albeit a particularly potent one, constructed and propagated by those who seized power in 1959, embraced by revolutionary hopefuls around the world and exaggeratedly feared by upholders of the status quo. But it is also an inaccurate one that ignores thousands of other Cubans across the island who also fought against US-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista in different ways.

Castro's appeal, along with the popularity of his nationalism and anti-Americanism, cannot be understood without this larger perspective. Certainly, without reference to Cuba's protracted struggle for independence and the United States' intervention in the island's affairs from 1898 onwards, it is impossible to understand why a dictatorial regime continues to exist and why Cubans still resist the idea of a US-brokered alternative.

To fully make sense of the decisions made by Castro, we will have to wait for access to Cuban archives for the post-1959 period – still mostly sealed and inaccessible to historians. Yet context, again, can help. The world Castro encountered in the 1950s was not sympathetic to ideas of radical reform, despite urgent problems and grassroots support. Those who tried to change their countries democratically had been undermined or violently overthrown, as demonstrated in the CIA-sponsored coup against Jacobo Árbenz in Guatemala in 1954. It was a powerful lesson to would-be revolutionaries: fight a different, unrelenting battle – or compromise and fail.

Castro's decision to choose the former path transformed history. It proved that small powers could act like giants on the world stage. And it inspired a revolutionary wave that swept through Latin America. Under Castro's leadership, Cuba helped bring about the end of colonialism in Africa and weakened apartheid South Africa. It also shaped a global 'Tricontinental' revolutionary organisation in the 1960s that radically transformed the idea of 'third worldism'.

All the while, Castro was a far more consistent challenger of the United States and global capitalism than the Soviet Union ever was. His methods and audacity split the political left. His enemies distorted the world in response, employing money, guns, torture, assassination, covert operations and reformist programmes to try to immunise the world from his example. The results were catastrophic and violent for millions caught in the middle.

Then, in the 1990s, amid the triumphal celebrations at the end of the Cold War, it seemed for a moment as if Castro might become irrelevant. Yet his critiques of neoliberalism continue to resonate, first in Latin America at the turn of the 21st century and then globally in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crash.

With profound political and economic changes on the horizon, it is too early to tell whether Castro's ideas will remain relevant or be consigned to a previous epoch. Histories of his global impact and his legacy are yet to be written. One hopes that, when they are, they will weigh up different perspectives and consider the broader implications, context and significance of a man who, for all his crimes, changed the world irrevocably.

Tanya Harmer is associate professor in international history at the London School of Economics. Her specialisms include the Cold War and Latin America

NORTH AMERICA

Border politics

Trump's election sparked a surge in US citizens looking north to Canada – but we've seen this situation before

BY MARGARET CONRAD

On the night of 8 November 2016, as the outcome of the US presidential election became clear, the Canadian Citizenship and Immigration website crashed. And between midnight and 5am that night, a Montreal law firm specialising in immigration received 6,000 email inquiries. Canada rarely troubles the consciousness of most Americans, but the deep, visceral fear inspired by Donald Trump's campaign rhetoric worked powerfully on many troubled voters.

Although it is unlikely that Canada will be overwhelmed by American citizens, immigration from the United States has increased in the 21st century, a trend that has largely gone unnoticed amid the much greater influx of peoples from all over the world seeking security and opportunity.

This is not the first time that the territory we now call Canada has been seen as a safe haven for refugees from the United States. Indeed, one of the nation's founding moments occurred in the wake of the American Revolution (1775–83), when 45,000 loyalists fled to what was left of British North America to escape the triumphant Patriots, who had seized their property and subjected many of them to violence. The colonies of New Brunswick and Cape Breton were carved out of the old province of Nova Scotia in 1784 to accommodate the newcomers, who overwhelmed the indigenous peoples and the Acadians who had survived the vicious deportation by the British earlier in the century. Upper Canada, which later became the province of Ontario, also began as a loyalist settler colony.

This is not the first time that Canada has been seen as a safe haven for refugees from the United States

Included in the loyalist diaspora to British North America were 3,500 black slaves who had been promised their freedom if they escaped their masters and sought protection behind British lines. A smaller number took up the same offer during the War of 1812. With tensions over slavery continuing to wrack the United States, the British North America colonies became home to at least another 20,000 African-Americans who followed the North Star to British jurisdictions where slavery was formally abolished by an act of parliament in 1833. This migration ended with the American Civil War (1861–65).

Another major – and politically motivated – movement of Americans to Canada was prompted by the Vietnam War. By 1975, some 30,000 deserters and draft-resisters (along with an even larger number of people holding left-leaning

ILLUSTRATION BY **KATE HAZELL**

values) had slipped across the border, and the liberal government of the then prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau refused to deport them. As in earlier refugee movements, many returned to the United States when it became safe to do so, but a majority stayed, blending comfortably into Canada's ever-changing multicultural landscape.

Canadians are not averse to taking advantage of the divisive experience currently engulfing their neighbour. An enterprising radio announcer in Cape Breton, for instance, has received a surprising number of serious inquiries since he launched his tongue-in-cheek website 'Cape Breton if Trump Wins', suggesting that US citizens move to the island in the province of Nova Scotia. Meanwhile Shopify, an Ottawa-based e-commerce company that has a major presence in the United States, posted a 'moving to Canada' playlist on its website.

It remains to be seen whether Canada can sustain its liberal values in the current political climate – but an influx of progressive Americans might well serve to bolster that outcome.

JOY CUMMINGS/TOM PILSTON-GUARDIAN NEWS & MEDIA LTD

Margaret Conrad is professor emerita at the University of New Brunswick. Her books include *A Concise History of Canada* (Cambridge UP, 2012)

READING HISTORY

The distant past

By abandoning books, young people are losing touch with history – with alarming results

BY JAMES FLYNN

George Orwell thought that a manipulative state would have to rewrite history. He was mistaken. If people know no history, they are already captive minds. When, recently, I asked my university students in New Zealand to evaluate a 20th-century tyrant of their own choosing, 80% of them could not name one ("I think there may have been someone named Hitler in Russia..."). Universities educate for vocations: you can be good at brain surgery, or conveyancing, or Spanish drama, and be no more intellectually autonomous than a medieval serf.

You may pick up rough knowledge in your own time by reading popular history (such as Barbara Tuchman) or great novels that illuminate a period of history (Erich Maria Remarque). However, the new world of visual entertainment is seducing young people away from the habit of reading serious books. American data covering the period from 1984 to 2004 shows that the percentage of 17 year olds who rarely read for pleasure (hardly ever or never) rose from nine to 19; the percentage that read almost every day fell from 31 to 22.

You might think that university would provide an antidote – but instead it appears to be counterproductive. The same set of American data shows that 49% of 2001's high-school students read little (less than one hour per week) or nothing for pleasure; that figure for the university seniors of 2005 was 63%. As might be expected, their ability to read prose is declining. Those who both earned a bachelor's degree and could read with reasonable proficiency declined over one decade (1992–2003) from 40 to 31%.

I experienced this phenomenon first-hand on one occasion when I visited my local library. A young man helped me to locate a book and I asked him if he had ever read the author. He replied: "Actually, I haven't read a book since I finished my English major."

This isn't just a problem restricted to education, either. A government and a shallow media define the world for people who live only in the bubble of the present. Those without knowledge of the past can become cynics and say: "well, probably they are all lying," but they cannot live up to the ideal of a good citizen who tells them to "stop".

I know of no university that addresses this problem, apart from teaching futile 'history of western civilisation' courses or general education. None of them offer targeted courses that will give young people the tools to become autonomous human beings and will also illustrate how everything they are taught accomplishes that objective.

James R Flynn is emeritus professor in the schools of psychology and politics at the University of Otago, New Zealand

WRITING HISTORY

Past masters

Historians may sometimes question the purpose of their profession – yet, as their predecessors knew, the writer's role is vital

BY PETER FRANKOPAN

The opening lines of my favourite narrative history, *The Alexiad* of Anna Komnene, run as follows: "Time, which flies irresistibly and perpetually, sweeps up and carries away with it everything that has seen the light of day and plunges it into utter darkness – whether deeds of no significance, or those that are mighty and worthy of commemoration."

Written in the mid-12th century, that text is the work of a deeply thoughtful scholar who pondered long and hard about the purpose of writing about the past. Time is like a stream, Komnene wrote, that washes memories away. That is why history is so important: unless commemorated in writing, key events and "even the greatest exploits... vanish in silent darkness".

Historians often question the purpose of their work. Is it to record great deeds of great people? To explain how the past has shaped the present? To interpret the world around them as they see it? Or to give salutary lessons that can be impressed on contemporary leaders?

Some do not attain such lofty ideals. Nennius, a Welsh monk writing in the ninth century, apologised to those who read his *Historia Brittonum*. "I have made a heap out of all that I could find," he wrote. "I pray that every reader who shall read this book may pardon me, for having attempted, like a chattering jay, or like some feeble witness, to write these things." The past was all but lost, and had to be pieced together because "teachers had no knowledge, nor gave any information in their books about this island of Britain". Forget about having no need for experts, says Nennius – there *were* no experts.

Writing history is as important as the events that historians detail

Other historians are more ornate and flowery – literally. Lambert of Saint-Omer wrote in the early 12th century that he wanted to write down everything he knew in a single volume, which he called the *Liber Floridus* – 'Book of Flowers'. He chose this name not because of his expertise or interest in flora but because he felt that the information he collated could best be compared to flowers plucked from a "heavenly meadow". Not only that, but other scholars would swarm to his bouquet of facts like "faithful bees that may fly together to them and drink the sweetness of the heavenly nectar".

But my favourite author when it comes to taking a view of the purpose of history writing – and its achievements – is the wonderful 10th and 11th-century Persian author Ferdowsi. He is one of an elite band of historians whose name has survived for centuries; a huge statue of him stands in the centre of Tehran, in Ferdowsi Square – where else?

Writing 1,000 years ago, he composed the epic *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings), telling the story of the world from its creation until the eve of the Arab conquests in the seventh century. The history is a blend of fact and myth, told in beautiful, mournful couplets, with a glittering cast of characters. The author captures a past in which Persia was glorious and unstoppable – but also carries the implicit message that things changed irrevocably with the conquests of the followers of Muhammad.

What I love most about the text, though, is the way Ferdowsi signs off. He does so in a way that will resonate with many historians writing today – at least, those with bulletproof self-confidence:

I've reached the end of this great history
And all the land will fill with talk of me
I shall not die, these seeds I've sown will save
My name and reputation from the grave,
And men of sense and wisdom will proclaim
When I have gone, my praises and my fame.

It is easy to forget that writing history is as important as the events historians detail. Ferdowsi was aware that the act of commemorating the past was interesting in itself – and that as well as admiring protagonists and antagonists, victories and defeats, the narrator is central to the story. And in that, I suppose, Ferdowsi was saying something all historians pray for: that people will keep reading their work when they are part of the memories being washed away by the relentless flow of time. Here's hoping...

Peter Frankopan is senior research fellow at Worcester College, Oxford and author of the critically acclaimed *The Silk Roads* (Bloomsbury, 2015)

ALAMY

ILLUSTRATION BY **KATE HAZELL**

Feed-back

Readers respond to our first issue which explored – among other things – whether the west's dominance is over, India's Second World War story and Istanbul's diverse past

I think it is very important that we learn about world history rather than just the history of our own nation, which I feel helps to build barriers between 'us' and 'them'. I think the pursuit of the idea of a shared world history is one of the most important jobs for historians at the moment, so this is a valuable step in the right direction.
Mike Ashford, by email

May I congratulate you on the first issue. It offers something different in the market, and demonstrates how important the past can be in current affairs. Every article in the inaugural issue, from the feature on Istanbul to the piece on relations between east and west, was relevant to events happening now.

In today's world a publication such as this is more valuable than ever – because, as we all know, those who do not learn from the past are doomed to repeat their mistakes. I eagerly await the next issue to learn more of how the past has shaped today – and how it may shape tomorrow.
Adam Oakley, by email

It's super-cool that the global turn in history is now mainstream enough for a popular magazine. Now we need more in university curricula...
@menysnoweballes, on Twitter

Like the mix of contemporary and historical issues and reflections. Also very smart looking. Bravo!
@sjdawes73, on Twitter

First issue of *BBC World Histories*! Should be a good weekend treat.
@AshutoshM_India, on Twitter

Perfect read for long drive south, let's see if I can hide from two excitable toddler nephews long enough to finish it! Thanks, too, to Sunil Khilnani for writing about BR Ambedkar, whose deep legacy I felt in Delhi and Ratnagiri last week.
@AlexBescoby, on Twitter

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The legacy of social reformer BR Ambedkar – a statue of whom is pictured above – is still felt in India today, says reader Alex Bescoby

I suddenly realised that I've been waiting for this. Serious writing and analysis, and a Kindle-busting, beautiful object.
@broomfieldhill, on Twitter

MISSED ISSUE 1?

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Congratulations on issue one. I picked up a copy just before Christmas, and spent far too much time engrossed in it instead of paying attention to my visiting relatives. You managed to pack in plenty of good stuff, but Chris Bowlby's feature on populism and the conversation piece on Istanbul between Bettany Hughes and Peter Frankopan were particularly interesting.

The article that stood out for me, however, was the Big Question: getting seven experts to give their take on the history of the west's dominance provided a range of fascinating perspectives. Of course, the other thing that ensured I kept coming back to have another flick through the pages is the fact that they all look so classy. Hats off to all involved.
Rob Banino, by email

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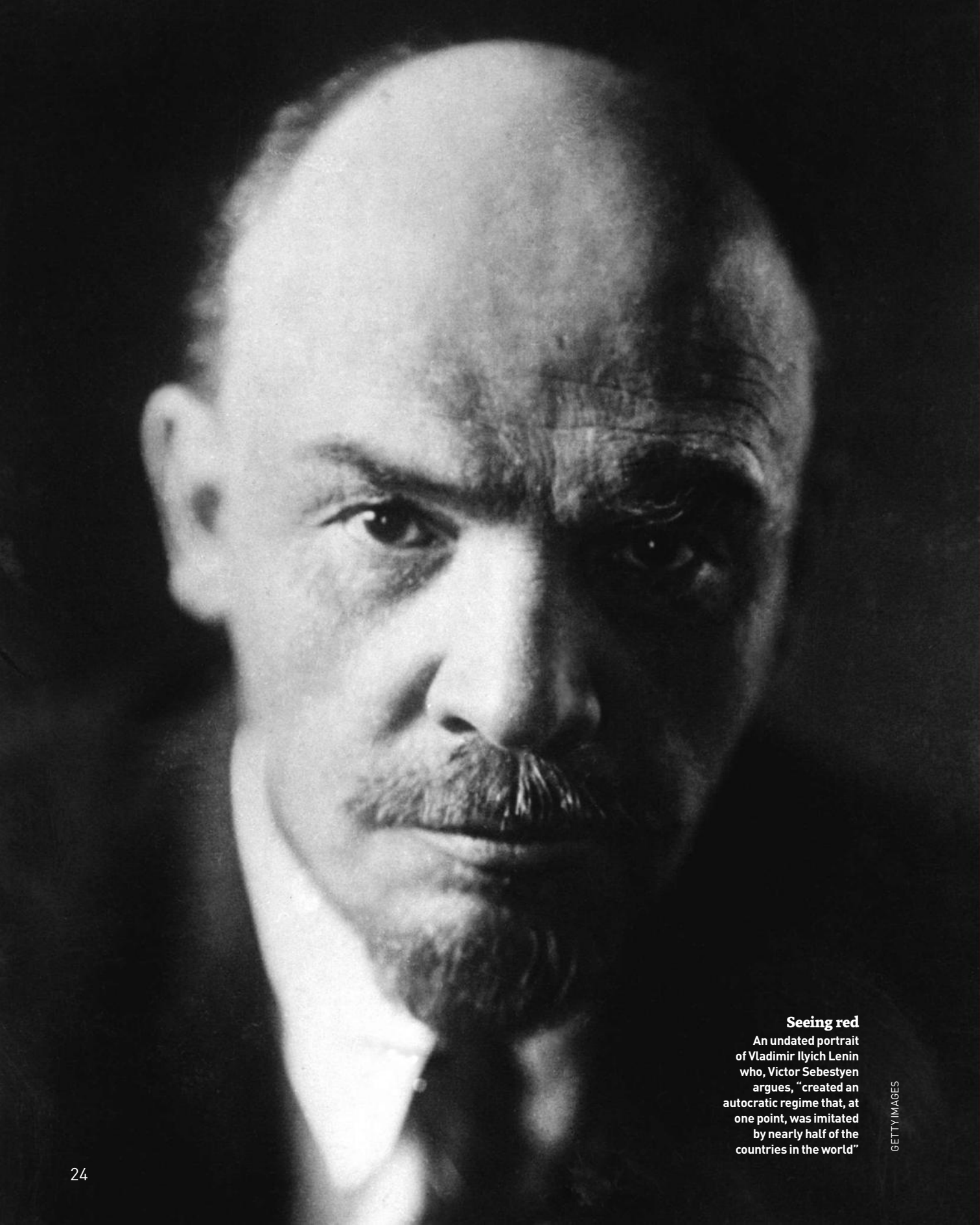

Seeing red
An undated portrait of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin who, Victor Sebestyen argues, "created an autocratic regime that, at one point, was imitated by nearly half of the countries in the world"

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LENIN'S LUST FOR POWER

The Russian Marxist led a revolution that would turn the world upside down. **Victor Sebestyen** assesses the global legacy of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin and introduces the real man behind the myth of the communist colossus

Devoted followers
Lenin (in the centre of the picture) takes a stroll in Stockholm with fellow political exiles during a break in his train journey back to revolutionary Russia in April 1917

The personal is political
Lenin's elder brother, Aleksandr Ulyanov, photographed in prison before his execution for plotting against the tsar – an event that shaped Vladimir's politics

"Without Lenin, there would likely have been no Soviet Union and no Cold War"

Marxist thinkers believe that the major events of history were driven not by the actions of individual men and women but by strong, sweeping economic, social and political forces. Nothing contradicts the theory as powerfully as the life and career of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, the man who led the first communist revolution and who created the first Marxist state.

If Lenin had not been in the city of Petrograd (now known as St Petersburg) 100 years ago, there would not have been a communist revolution in Russia, almost certainly no Soviet Union, and very likely no Cold War in the way that it developed throughout the 20th century as an ideological clash of civilisations offering completely alternative ways of looking at the world.

It is not only his later biographers who argue for the crucial importance – the irreplaceability, even – of Lenin in the revolutionary story. Leon Trotsky, his chief lieutenant in the 1917 revolution, made the point many times and in different ways. So, too, did many of the other leading Russian communists of the time.

In the 'great man' interpretation of history, held nowadays by a majority of historians in the west, a few towering figures make the weather and turn events. Among them, undoubtedly – and whether one likes him or loathes him – was Lenin, whose influence on the world since 1917 has arguably been as significant as that of anybody else.

He never fought in a battle, and commanded no armies. Instead he spent much of his life in the reading rooms of an assortment of public libraries. He held no great offices of state until his late forties, and before 1917 he had spent nearly half of his adult life as a political refugee living in humble boarding houses outside Russia. Throughout most of his wanderings as an exile in various European cities, Lenin had just a handful of followers who believed in his revolutionary message.

Yet he returned to seize power in one of the largest empires in the world, and created a kind of autocratic regime professing an idealistic socialism that was at one point imitated by nearly half of the countries in the world – from Europe to Asia, and from Africa to the Caribbean and Central America. Over many decades, millions of people would die in its name, victims of a bloody social experiment. Much of Lenin's political style lives on still, a century after the triumph of the revolution he led.

Revolutionary realist

Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov was born in 1870 into Russia's minor nobility; his father held a senior position in the tsarist civil service. Lenin was just one of the scores of aliases he used in an ef-

Inflammatory speech
Lenin addresses the throngs in Petrograd on his return from exile in Switzerland on 16 April 1917. Germany had facilitated his return – a piece of luck that contributed to Bolshevik victory

AKG IMAGES

fort to evade the censorship of the Romanovs' clumsy, brutish autocracy, but from around 1900 it was the one that stuck.

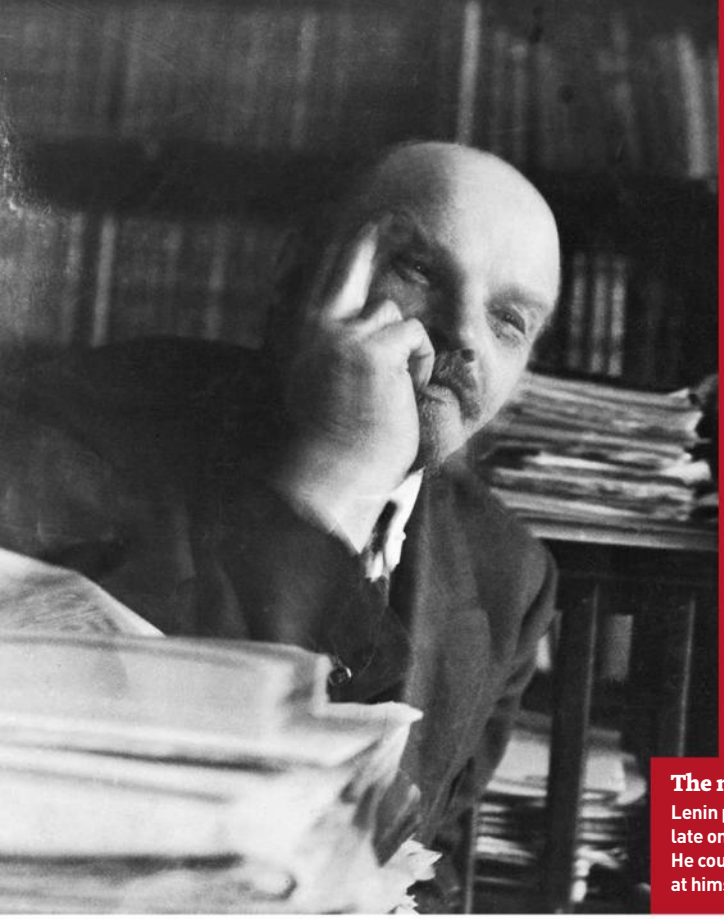
Unlike many other dictators, he enjoyed an idyllic childhood surrounded by a loving family. He wasn't at all interested in politics until his 18th year when a family tragedy – the execution of his elder brother – radicalised him almost overnight. One of the enduring myths about Lenin the man (as opposed to 'Lenin the idea', as often portrayed by historians of both the left and the right) is that he was an icy, unfeeling, one-dimensional individual, a supremely clever tactician who thought with careful deliberation – rather in the way that, famously, he played his favourite game, chess. In fact he was a highly emotional man who flew into tremendous rages that would leave him exhausted, even prostrate. His thirst for revenge after his brother was hanged (for an assassination plot against Tsar Alexander III) motivated Lenin as powerfully as did any ideology. After his brother's execution his whole family was shunned by polite liberal society in provincial Russia. This had a profound effect on Lenin, fuelling a hatred for the liberal bourgeoisie that never left him and which drove his politics.

Marxism was like a religion to Lenin, as it was to so many of the early believers. But Lenin was different. He was a practical man and an optimist, convinced that the socialist revolution could come in the here and now – not in the far-off future or some afterlife. Lenin is often depicted as a rigid ideologue, a communist fanatic, and this is true up to a point. He spouted Marxist theory constantly: "Without theory there can be no revolutionary party," he would say regularly. But the sentence that followed is often ignored: "Theory is a guide, not holy writ." When ideology clashed with opportunism, he invariably chose the tactical path above doctrinal purity. He could change his mind and his strategy completely if it advanced his goal.

Lenin founded and led the ultra-radical Bolsheviks; unlike so many other fanatics he would not allow his tiny groupuscule to remain merely a talking shop. He turned his Bolshevik Party into a disciplined, tightly knit, organised, conspiratorial, unquestioningly loyal corps of comrades. Many other revolutionaries could write as well as Lenin, though at his best he had a clarity and a compelling logic that had real force. Others were better orators and public speakers, though many people who heard him were impressed by the manifest force of his intellect. But he possessed qualities that other revolutionaries lacked: he had subtle tactical flair and a sense of timing, and he understood the nature of power, how to achieve it and what it could be used for. This is why Lenin succeeded while other revolutionaries whose names we no longer remember were discarded into the dustbin of history.

Fortunes of war

Of course, luck – or maybe some of those sweeping historical forces – played a part in Lenin's victory, not least the outbreak of the First World War, which caused chaos in Russia; it was deeply unpopular, and prompted a crisis in the tsarist regime. Having been jailed for his revolutionary activity in 1895, then exiled in Siberia and later moving to western Europe, Lenin was in →



The man behind the myth
Lenin pictured during an interview late on in his life. "He was not vain. He could laugh – even, occasionally, at himself," writes Victor Sebestyen

Lenin's lover...
Inessa Armand, pictured around 1895. The only occasion on which Lenin ever visibly cried in public was at Armand's funeral in 1920

...and his wife
Lenin with Nadezhda Krupskaya in 1922. Their three-way relationship with Armand was "a rare example of a romantic triangle in which all three protagonists appear to have behaved in a civilised fashion"

Switzerland in February 1917 when, during the first of that year's revolutions, a series of strikes, bread riots and a mass army mutiny forced the abdication of the last Romanov emperor, Nicholas II. The Germans helped Lenin and some of his supporters return to Russia, gambling that he would seize power, make a separate peace and take Russia out of the war.

Back in Russia, Lenin cleverly built on that luck. He campaigned against the war, and promised land to Russian peasants, a series of new workers' rights, and to take back control from the elite. Bankers who had profited from the war would be jailed, and the assets of the rich – "enemies of the people" – would be seized. Lenin was an adroit tactician, while the liberal Provisional Government that took over from the tsar was no match for him.

Lenin took power in a coup – not a democratic process, but then the tsar was not a democrat, and nor were several figures in the government. The test of Lenin's leadership was not as a democratic politician. He persuaded, hectored and bullied his reluctant Bolsheviks into taking over the government when many of his comrades opposed him. Eventually they came round. That is what Trotsky, originally one of his opponents, meant by his categorical claim that if Lenin had not been in Petrograd in 1917 there would have been no Bolshevik takeover.

From the first moment after his Bolshevik revolution in October 1917, Lenin and his comrades felt insecure. He thought that power could slip away at any time, which explains so much of the 74-year history of the Soviet state. Having achieved power illegitimately, Lenin's only real concern for the rest of his life was keeping it – an obsession he passed down to his successors. Lenin launched the 'Red Terror' to destroy his opponents. He established the Cheka, which morphed into the NKVD and then the KGB, imitated wherever communist regimes came to power. He allowed a freely elected parliament to sit for just 12 hours before abolishing it – perhaps a record in brevity. There would not be another elected parliament in Russia for more than 70 years.

Throughout its existence the Soviet Union identified itself with the founder of the state, both while alive and after his death. The regime that Lenin created was largely shaped by his personality: secretive, suspicious, intolerant, intemperate. Few of the more decent parts of Lenin's character found their way into the public sphere of his Soviet Union.

Mountain man

The state that Lenin founded was moulded very much in his own ascetic image – but there were other aspects to Lenin, too. He wrote reams of text about Marxist philosophy, much of it now unintelligible. But he loved mountains almost as much as he loved making revolution, and wrote lyrically about walking through the countryside. One of the reasons he remained in Switzerland for so long during his exile from Russia was to be near the Alps. He lived in London for nearly two years and grew to like it, but it wasn't close enough to a peak for him to be happy.

He loved nature, hunting, shooting and fishing. He could identify hundreds of species of plants. His 'nature notes' and

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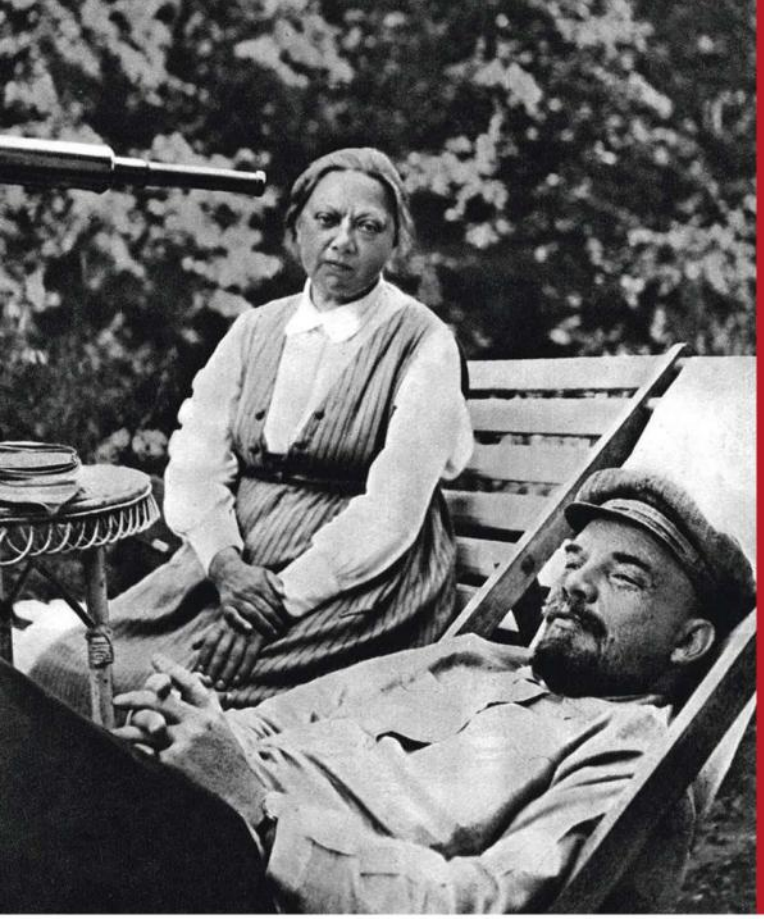

Architect of terror
Felix Dzerzhinsky (centre), head of Lenin's secret police. "Lenin had not always been a bad man, but he did terrible things," says Sebestyen

"Lenin built a system based on the idea that political terror was justified for a greater end"

letters to his family reveal aspects of Lenin that would surprise people who imagine him as a distant and unfeeling figure.

For a decade Lenin had an on-off love affair with a glamorous, intelligent and beautiful woman, Inessa Armand, who became a close friend of his wife. Their *ménage a trois* is a touching story – a rare example of a romantic triangle in which all three protagonists appear to have behaved in a civilised fashion. The only time Lenin visibly broke down in public was at Armand's funeral in 1920, three and a half years before his own. After Inessa died, Lenin's wife, herself childless, became in effect the guardian of his mistress's children (none of whom were his).

A poisonous legacy

Lenin wanted power, and he wanted to change the world. He retained power personally for just over four years before failing health rendered him physically and mentally incapable. But, as he predicted that it would, the Bolshevik revolution turned the world upside down. Russia never recovered, and nor did many of its neighbours.

Lenin was the product of his time and place: a violent, tyrannical and corrupt Russia. The revolutionary state he created was less the socialist utopia he dreamed of than a mirror image of the Romanov autocracy into which he was born. The fact that Lenin was Russian is as significant as his Marxist faith. He believed, as some supporters of Russia's current leader Vladimir Putin do today, that his country needs – indeed, has always needed – a dominant, ruthless leader: a boss or, as the Russians say, the *Vozhd*.

Lenin thought himself an idealist. He was not a monster, a sadist or personally vicious. In personal relationships he was invariably kind, and his behaviour reflected the way he was brought up – like an upper-middle-class gentleman. He was not vain. He could laugh – even, occasionally, at himself. He was not cruel; unlike Stalin, Mao Zedong or Hitler, he never asked about the details of his victims' deaths in order to savour those moments. He never donned uniforms or military-type tunics, as favoured by other dictators. But during his years of feuding with fellow revolutionaries and battling to maintain his grip on power he never showed generosity to a defeated opponent nor performed a humanitarian act unless it was politically expedient.

He built a system based on the idea that political terror against opponents was justified for a greater end. It was perfected by his successor, Josef Stalin, but the ideas were Lenin's. He had not always been a bad man, but he did terrible things. Anjelica Balabanova, one of his old comrades who grew to fear and loathe him, observed perceptively that Lenin's "tragedy was that, in Goethe's phrase, he desired the good... but created evil". It remains a suitable epitaph. The worst of Lenin's evils was to have left a man like Stalin in a position to lead Russia after him. That was a historic crime.

Victor Sebestyen is a historian and journalist whose books include *Revolution 1989: The Fall of the Soviet Empire* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2009). His latest work is *Lenin the Dictator: An Intimate Portrait*, published in February 2017 by Weidenfeld & Nicolson

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Russia's Re

March in February
Striking workers carry banners through the streets of Petrograd (St Petersburg) at the start of the February Revolution that brought the fall of the Russian monarchy the next month

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The state created by the Bolsheviks after the toppling of the Romanov monarchy in 1917 survived two world wars and beyond. **Robert Service** traces the rise and fall of communist Russia, whose mission to export socialist revolution rippled through world politics across a century

volutions

The Russian Revolution of 1917 had an enormous impact on politics on a global scale for many decades. Nothing came close to it in importance – a fact recognised at the time and which continues to prove compelling a full century later.

There were, of course, two revolutions that year. When people write about historic impact they are nearly always referring to the October Revolution, by which Lenin and the Bolsheviks seized power in Petrograd and proclaimed the start of a new era in human affairs that would, they asserted, bring communism to the entire world. But the earlier revolution in February was acclaimed at the time as an event of momentous international significance because it brought the downfall of the Romanov monarchy. The Russian political system was widely reviled as the bastion of political reaction in Europe, and Nicholas II was dismissed as a butcher of the peoples in his empire. When he abdicated in March 1917 there were joyous celebrations not only in Russia but also in Paris and London. Crowds gathered to welcome the prospect of democracy.

There had been similar presentiments in 1905, when the massacre of peaceful petitioners outside the Winter Palace was followed by public demonstrations throughout the cities of the Russian empire. Strikes, rural disturbances and mutinies came close to bringing down the monarchy, and Nicholas was compelled to issue the 'October Manifesto', in which he promised to undertake reforms encompassing civic freedoms and elective representative institutions. This concession, extracted from a reluctant tsar, was accompanied by savage repression of the revolutionary parties. By the end of 1906 Nicholas II had stabilised his authority – albeit at a price: he had to allow the creation of the State Duma (Russia's first elected parliament) and to permit broader freedom of expression and assembly. And over the next few years he tried to claw back the powers that he had inherited upon the death of his father in 1894.

The revolutionary parties, both liberals and far-left socialists such as the Bolsheviks, were disappointed that Nicholas had managed to cling on to his throne. But he had been humbled, and the Romanov monarchy was never the same again. The spectacle of Nicholas 'the Bloody' being forced to accept the existence of an elected parliament had an influence on revolutionaries and reformers around the globe. Those in Turkey and China took heart, and reinforced their effort to secure the transformation of politics in their own countries. Where Russia had led, they reasoned, surely others would quickly follow.

When Nicholas II stepped down in the revolutionary crisis of March 1917, the situation was radically different. Russia, along with France and the United Kingdom, was involved in the First World War against Germany and Austria-Hungary. At first it was believed by pro-war politicians in Paris and London that a dynastic incubus had been excised from the Russian body politic, and that the Allied cause could only benefit. Nicholas's indulgence of the religious mystic and serial philanderer Grigory Rasputin had brought the imperial court into disrepute, and food shortages snapped the patience of Petrograd workers and garrison soldiers, who took to the streets to call for an end to the monarchy. But the Russian army on the eastern front was acquitting itself well during that long, cold winter, and many western politicians, including the Americans – who joined the war in April – were jubilant that free Russia would now be able, under a liberal-led provisional government, to fight the Germans with heightened morale and efficiency.

Foreigners who yearned for reform in their own countries were impressed by the extent of the changes that emerged following the monarchy's demise. Even Bolshevik leader Lenin acknowledged that Russia had become "the freest country in the world". Lenin, at that time living in exile in Switzerland, aimed to exploit any opportunity to overthrow the new cabinet and unfurl the flag of communist revolution.

However, conditions proved helpful. The urban economy collapsed. The administration disintegrated, and discipline broke down in the armed forces. Ultimate real authority lay not with the cabinet but with the workers' councils ('soviets') that sprang up in cities, and the Bolsheviks worked hard to get themselves elected to leading positions in these councils. By October, Lenin had convinced his party that soviets could serve as the foundations of a revolutionary administration.

Lenin deemed that only he could adequately interpret Marx's doctrines

Accessible communism

Lenin was a fanatical Marxist who deemed that only he could adequately interpret the doctrines of Marx and Engels. Short and stocky, he surprised even his own party in the way he successfully adapted to the demands of open politics in the revolution. Returning to Petrograd in April 1917, he recruited a former anti-Bolshevik Marxist leader, Leon Trotsky, to the Bolshevik party on the grounds that they agreed both about the need to stop the First World War and about the opportunity to overthrow the provisional government. Though Lenin was a rousing speaker, Trotsky was an orator of genius. Both were outstanding in their ability to simplify communist doctrines and policies to a form that was accessible to listeners who knew nothing of Marxist intellectual intricacy.

Béla Kun, the Bolshevik communist revolutionary who led Hungary for a few months in 1919

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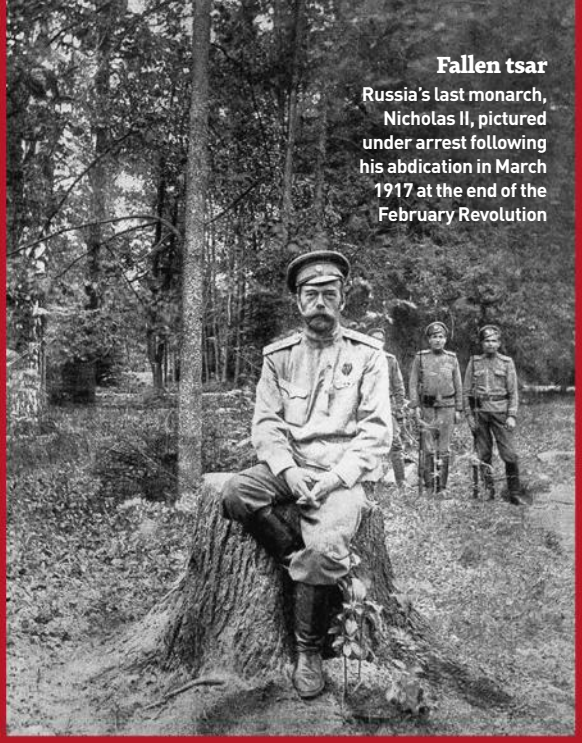

Fallen tsar
Russia's last monarch, Nicholas II, pictured under arrest following his abdication in March 1917 at the end of the February Revolution

Call to arms
A photo (possibly staged) shows Bolsheviks storming the Winter Palace in Petrograd, ejecting the cabinet of the provisional Russian government

Old Bolsheviks
Lenin and Josef Stalin in discussion in 1922. After Lenin's death two years later, Stalin rose to power and instituted rapid industrialisation and agricultural collectivisation

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The Bolshevik central leadership included other figures who bristled with political talent, among them Josef Stalin, Grigory Zinoviev and Felix Dzerzhinsky. All were committed to the objective of overthrowing the provisional government, and the party's rank and file endorsed their radicalism.

On 25 October, the Bolsheviks led the military-revolutionary committee of the Petrograd Soviet into action and threw out the old cabinet. Lenin became chairman of Sovnarkom, the new Soviet government, which proclaimed a total reversal of previous policies. A general peace was to be arranged in the world war. Land was transferred to peasant control. Large-scale industry and the banking system were nationalised.

The Bolshevik party believed that if only it could communicate its message to workers and soldiers on both sides in the war, those people, too, would rise up and throw out their governments. Soon, surely, there would be a 'European socialist revolution'. Lenin and his comrades had taken a political gamble they believed was a sure-fire bet. Rival socialists in Russia warned that the odds were heavily against them, and that civil war and dictatorship were the likeliest results; they saw the Bolsheviks as irresponsible adventurers. Few people gave Sovnarkom much chance of enduring survival. But everyone was aware that an event of huge international importance had taken place.

For Allied politicians, the danger was that Lenin, even if he were in power only briefly, would damage the war effort. Sovnarkom agreed a truce with the Germans and Austrians on the eastern front. It was obvious that, if the truce became a permanent peace, German divisions would be moved from east to west. That would decisively tip the military balance against the Allies.

Peace was signed between Sovnarkom and the Central Powers at Brest-Litovsk in March 1918, and Germany came close to breaking the back of the western front in the spring. But the French and British armies held firm, and it was the German war machine that cracked. The war was over.

Utopian dreams dashed

The Bolsheviks, meanwhile, found themselves, as their political enemies on the left had predicted, engulfed by a civil war. Most of them had expected to undertake a revolution that would move smoothly from success to success, and they had a deep suspicion of standing armies. But they learned by hard experience that for 'Soviet power' to survive, they must form a Red Army on principles of regular discipline, and use the expertise of officers who had served in Nicholas II's armed forces. They had started, too, with ideas about liberating the initiative of →

Faces of famine
A starving family in the Volga area, pictured during the famine that afflicted the area over the winter of 1921/22, caused in part by the economic and logistic effects of the Russian Revolution

ordinary factory workers. Instead they discovered that the Russian working class increasingly blamed them for failing to regenerate the economy and guarantee food supplies. Bolshevik leaders reacted by suppressing strikes and tightening their dictatorship. Bolshevism increasingly revealed and over-fed its principles of hierarchical, punitive organisation. The utopian, libertarian ideas that had inspired many party leaders and members in 1917 faded from the immediate agenda.

Nevertheless the Bolsheviks still adhered to the goal of global revolution and in March 1919 created the Communist International (Comintern), the idea being to form communist parties throughout the world. Agents and subsidies were made available to achieve this. In nearly every country it proved possible to set up organisations to challenge the governing elites. With Moscow's help, translations of the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky were made available. The word went forth

The utopian, libertarian ideas that had inspired many in 1917 faded

Revolutionary headgear
Soldiers of the Bolshevik Red Army, pictured c1920 during the Russian civil war. Red Army troops could be identified by the distinctive Budenovka cloth hat adorned with a star

that, however difficult the path, Russia's communists were advancing towards the creation of a new kind of society that would bring health, shelter, education and material well-being to all members of society, and in the first instance the benefits would be directed towards the working poor. Communists produced cartoons of bloated capitalists, cigars in their mouths and purses of gold dangling from their belts, exploiting the 'proletariat'. Vicious commanders and dyspeptic bishops were often depicted as the assistants of bankers and industrialists. In postwar Europe and even north America such ideas fell widely on fertile soil.

Exporting Bolshevism

Indeed, the Bolshevik model was quickly adopted in Bavaria and Hungary in 1919, where defeat in the war had led to political breakdown and food shortages. Far-left socialists seized their chance to take power in Munich and Budapest. The Bavarian revolutionaries were singularly incompetent, lacking the practical skills that Bolsheviks had developed in the long years during which they'd had to dodge the clutches of the tsarist secret police. Red revolution was snuffed out in Munich within a few weeks, and anti-communist demobilised officers and soldiers suppressed similar attempts in Berlin.

In Hungary, though, the communists were better prepared. Led by Béla Kun, they put themselves forward as the only party that refused to bow the knee to the Allies. State ownership was declared throughout the

Down with fascism!
A Russian propaganda illustration from 1929 shows the force of opposition to fascism. Conversely, Hitler was determined to halt the spread of communism

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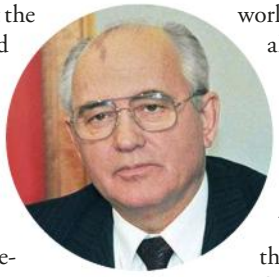
urban economy and an attempt was made to impose a collective farming system on the peasantry. However, civil war followed, and a Romanian invading force defeated Kun's army.

By 1920, by contrast, the civil war in Russia had ended in a communist triumph. Such was Lenin's confidence in the Red Army that he deployed it against Poland with a view to exporting revolution to central Europe. The idea was not only to communise the Poles but also to break through to Germany and resuscitate the will of far-left socialists and communist sympathisers to overthrow the German government. Thus would be realised the dream of 'European socialist revolution'. But Lenin had made a gross miscalculation. The Red Army met with tremendous resistance short of Warsaw as Poles, including workers, massed to repel invasion by the old national enemy. Sovnarkom, desperate at a time when it was facing peasant revolts in Russia and Ukraine, sued for peace. The humiliation was complete, and for many years afterwards the communist leadership in Moscow dropped plans to export revolution to Europe by military force.

It did, though, continue to supply guidance and subsidies to parties belonging to Comintern. As reports grew about communist atrocities in the Soviet Union, there was a predictable political reaction in the west. Governments and churches denounced the 'red menace'; they spoke out against the collectivist purposes of communism, and defended the values of faith, tradition and individual freedom. Fascist parties sprang up to counter communist influences in their countries – and these parties were organised according to a pattern of hierarchy and militancy that copied Bolshevism itself. The political far right seldom neglected to mention in its propaganda that several of the Bolshevik leaders were of Jewish origin. This idea was employed as a way of portraying communists who operated in European countries as alien conspirators who sought to bring Christian civilisation to an end.



Mikhail Gorbachev, pictured on the day of his resignation as leader of the Soviet Union, 25 December 1991

Lenin died in 1924 but the Soviet state, which designated itself the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), survived the internal battles over policy and the political success. Josef Stalin, having overcome the challenge from Leon Trotsky, initiated a comprehensive campaign to deepen the foundations of Lenin's October Revolution. From 1928 Stalin introduced a programme of forced-rate industrialisation and violent agricultural collectivisation. The Red Army was increased in size and re-equipped with advanced weaponry. At the same time Stalin spread a network of modern educational facilities ranging from primary schools to universities. The communist party, which was already in charge of every governmental agency in the USSR, received the task of leading the campaign. Dissent was mercilessly suppressed. The powerful political police was reinforced. Stalin's name was ceaselessly glorified in the media.

At last, it was boasted, the Soviet state could defend itself and realistically hope that foreign sympathisers would find ways to emulate its achievements through their own revolutions. This served to agitate those foreigners who dreaded the establishment of communism. In Germany and France the communist parties were large, vocal and active. When Hitler came to power in 1933, he portrayed himself as the only man in Europe who could prevent communism's advance, and he quickly suppressed the German communist party and arrested those of its leaders who had not fled abroad. In the Spanish Civil War, from 1936, warplanes were sent by Fascist Italy and the Third Reich to aid the revolt against a republic that was supported by, among others, communists. The struggle between communism and fascism culminated in Hitler's invasion of the USSR in 1941.

Domination and decline

At first it appeared that the end of the October Revolution was nigh. But the USSR re-grouped its defences outside Moscow and Leningrad and, using its industrial hinterland and its people's patriotic spirit, crushed the German Wehrmacht and fought its way to Berlin. The Soviet Union took a leading role in the settlement after the Second World War, forcing the world to accept its domination of eastern Europe. It also acquired nuclear weaponry to compete with American military power.

In 1949 another great country, China, underwent communist revolution. For many decades it appeared that communism's territorial expansion would be difficult to prevent. The rivalry between the two superpowers, the USSR and the USA, was at the fulcrum of the Cold War. Yet Soviet might came at an internal price that in the mid-1980s compelled the communist leadership itself to undertake comprehensive reform. From 1985, under the dynamic reforming leader Mikhail Gorbachev, the USSR was 'restructured'.

Gorbachev's efforts served mainly to destroy the foundations of state power. In December 1991 he saw that his dream was in tatters, and announced the abolition of the USSR. For Gorbachev this was a personal tragedy because he fervently believed in what he regarded as the greatness of Lenin's ideology. It was also a landmark in world history. The October Revolution was at last dead in its homeland. What Hitler had failed to achieve by deliberate means, a Russian – indeed, a Russian communist – had inadvertently brought about, and Soviet communism tumbled into the wastepaper basket of history.

Robert Service is a historian whose books include *The Penguin History of Modern Russia: From Tsarism to the Twenty-first Century* (Penguin, 2015)

DISCOVER MORE

Russia in Revolution: An Empire in Crisis, 1890–1928 by SA Smith (OUP, 2017)

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Going for Gold

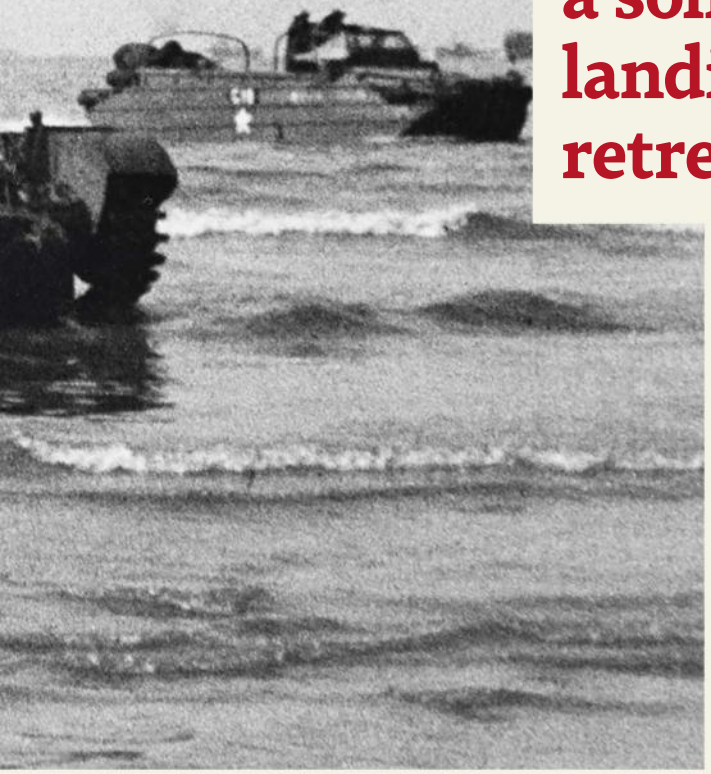
A Cromwell Mk IV tank trundles off a British LST (Landing Ship, Tank) onto the beach sector codenamed Gold on 7 June – D-Day +1. High winds, extensive beach defences and heavy German artillery fire made the initial landings in the early hours of 6 June extremely dangerous. David Render watched as one Cromwell tank, dropped too far from shore, overturned and sank, drowning both of its crewmen

EYEWITNESS

On the front line of history

Normandy landings, France, 1944

David Render was a young lieutenant during the Allied assault on Normandy – Operation Neptune, the largest seaborne invasion in history, which began on 6 June 1944: D-Day. Early that morning, infantry and armoured divisions landed at five beachheads codenamed Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword. Facing adverse weather, daunting defences and heavy gunfire, progress on the first days of the invasion was slow and losses heavy; on Omaha alone, Allied forces suffered an estimated 3,686 casualties. But over the following weeks the Allies consolidated their hold on Normandy, from where the liberation of German-occupied western Europe was launched.



"Shells screamed through the air in a solid wall of sound, landing unseen in the retreating darkness"

My passage to the D-Day beaches came about by accident. As a 19-year-old newly commissioned second lieutenant fresh out of Sandhurst, I was sent from my holding unit for young Royal Armoured Corps officers to oversee the loading of 16 Cromwell tanks onto a ship in Portsmouth harbour. Although it had begun two days previously, I knew nothing of the invasion and had no idea that the ship I was working on was bound for Normandy. Having supervised the securing of tanks in the hold, I approached one of the crew to enquire about getting off the ship – and was somewhat surprised when he told me that we had put to sea. I was even more surprised

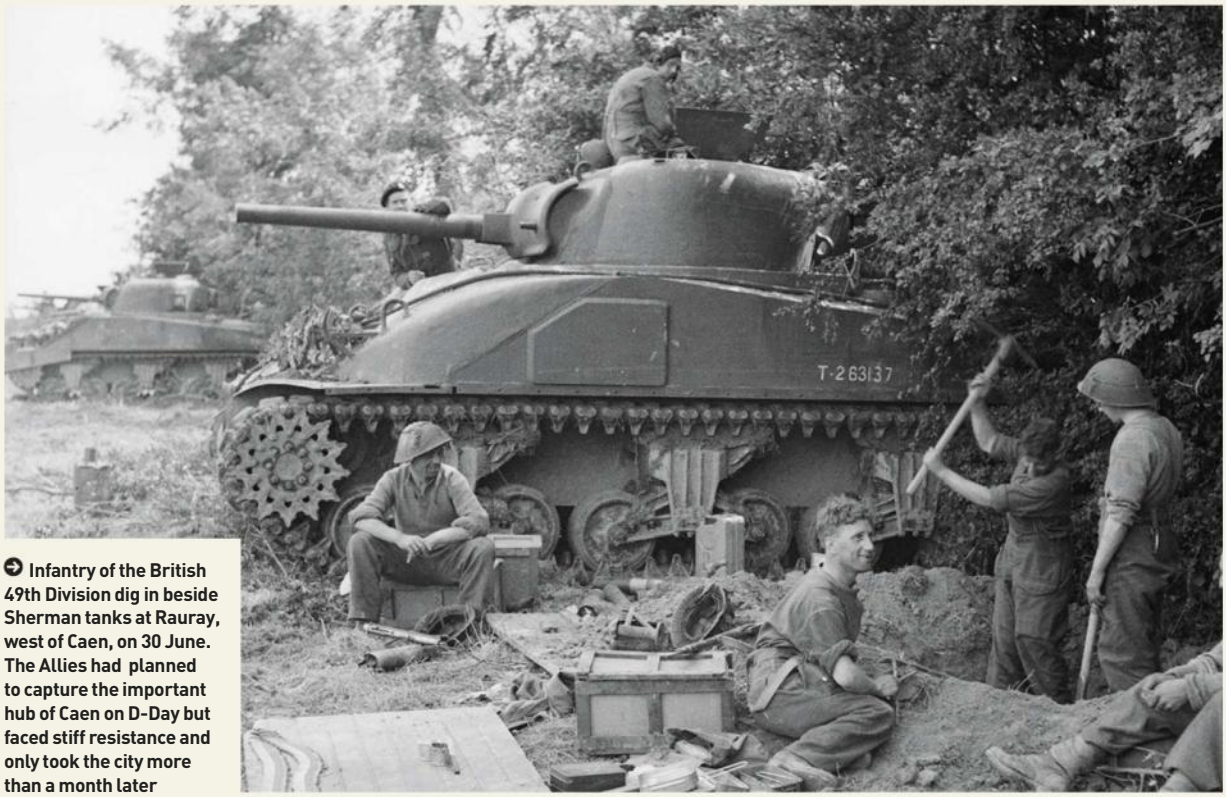
A German soldier lies dead alongside his disabled anti-aircraft gun at Fontenay-le-Pesnel south-east of Bayeux on 25 June, killed during the Allied push on Caen

David Render, pictured towards the end of his officer training

when he told me that we were heading to Normandy to take part in the invasion.

The break of dawn on D-Day +4 brought us within sight of the French coast. As we began our run into the beaches, on either side of us mighty battleships pounded the shoreline. Little attention was paid to the bodies that floated face down in the sea as we made landfall and began dispatching the tanks into the surf. The first Cromwell off the ship's ramp immediately turned turtle and sank below the waves, taking its two crewmen to a watery grave. The remaining tanks were landed without mishap, but witnessing such loss of life in those first few moments had a profound impact on me at a time when I was still wondering what an earth I was doing in Normandy.

I spent the next day and night on my own, and narrowly escaped being killed by German and RAF fighters shooting each other up over the beaches. Then I was spotted by an army dispatch rider and, unbeknown to me, became an impromptu battlefield casualty replacement. Speaking only to ask me my name, the rider ordered me on the back of his motorbike and we shot off towards the front line, where the British Second Army had already begun its advance inland. A few miles later we arrived at a tank unit based in an orchard, where its Sherman tanks had leaguered for the night. Told to report to one of the squadron commanders, it was only then I learned that



Infantry of the British 49th Division dig in beside Sherman tanks at Rauray, west of Caen, on 30 June. The Allies had planned to capture the important hub of Caen on D-Day but faced stiff resistance and only took the city more than a month later

I had arrived at the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry (A Squadron), and was to take command of a troop of three Shermans, leading them into battle the next day.

As I later found out, the original commander of A Squadron's 5 Troop had been killed by a sniper. My arrival as his replacement was not met with a welcoming response by the men he had commanded. They were all considerably older than me, tough desert veterans who had fought with the regiment through the north African campaign. They had no inclination to get to know me or support me; the average life expectancy of a new tank troop commander in Normandy was less than two weeks, and they didn't expect me to survive.

The troops had been taken by surprise by the terrain – the close-knit fields and high-banked hedgerows of the Norman *bocage*. The Germans had already used their superior tanks to inflict heavy casualties on the more lightly armoured and under-gunned Allied variants. The 88mm gun of a German Tiger or 75mm armament of a Panther panzer could slice through a Sherman tank like butter at 2,500 yards, while we had to get to almost point-blank range to have a chance of destroying one of their tanks. It was a disturbing fact that bred concern among the men. Conscious that I lacked experience, I knew I would only earn their respect if I could show that I was not afraid, and I did that by always leading from the front.

Fortunately, we had an exceptional squadron leader, Major John Semken. Though only 23, he was a deep thinker. He taught us how to use our greater numbers of tanks, and to use the *bocage* to our advantage. Semken knew that, though it was under-gunned and lacked adequate protection, the Sherman's greater mobility and faster rate of fire could give it an edge over German tanks. He intended to exploit this by using the ground as cover and smothering every enemy tank with a combined weight of fire from as many of our Shermans as possible. In Major Semken's words, the key was to "never hesitate", but to "fire first" and "keep firing". Very shortly after I arrived in the regiment we put these principles into action in my first major engagement, which included the defeat and capture of the first German Tiger tank as a well as several panzers.

This engagement, Operation Epsom, launched on 25 June and was designed to drive the Allied advance deep into German lines and force the enemy into a set-piece battle. The Sherwood Rangers' role was to capture the villages of Fontenay and Rauray, assisting British forces in their push to capture the strategically important city of Caen. We knew little of the overall operational plan, but had been told that we would face the fanatical former Hitler Youth soldiers of the German 12th SS Panzer Division.

It was still dark and raining hard as we readied our tanks after a few fitful hours of sleep. I looked at my watch: 0200 hours – time to go. The horizon was lit up by hundreds of British artillery pieces. The noise was terrific, as shells screamed through the air overhead in a solid wall of sound, landing unseen in the retreating darkness 1,000 yards ahead. As the artillery lifted, it was our turn to advance with our infantry, and the German machine guns opened up. Their bullets rattled harmlessly off our sides like jack-hammers, but wreaked havoc on the soldiers of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment, killing many and forcing the remainder to go to ground, leaving us to advance on our own. We blasted every hedgerow with our own machine guns and high-explosive rounds to clear any cover that could be used by enemy machine-gun teams and anti-tank gunners, cutting down any German soldier who tried to make a run for it as we drove deeper into their defensive positions.

The ear-splitting whine and crack of a high-velocity armour-piercing round heralded our first engagement with enemy panzers. A Panther tank broke from our right and I shouted fire-control orders to my gunner. Our first round missed and I cursed as I adjusted the shot, but shells from the other tanks were hitting it and soon we also found our mark. The enemy tank lurched to a halt under a crescendo of fire and began to belch thick black smoke. The surviving crew members began to bail out of their stricken vehicle, and we machine-gunned them before they could escape.

A Tiger tank appeared and was dealt with by a Sherman Firefly tank equipped with a heavier 17-pounder gun, which Semken had brought up for the purpose. We engaged more Panthers and the less-well-armoured German Panzer Mark IV tanks in a frenzy of firing, loading and moving. By the end of the engagement A Squadron had destroyed 13 enemy tanks with no loss of any Shermans: Semken's principles had won the day. My troop performed well and played its part, while I had earned my spurs and won the respect of my men.

I led 5 Troop for another 11 months of bloody fighting, culminating in the final drive into the heart of Germany at the end of the war. Although we won every engagement, those victories did not come without cost. Two of my tanks were destroyed and, though I survived, others did not. By the time victory in Europe was declared in May 1945, the Sherwood Rangers had lost 440 men out of an established unit strength of just over 600.

Captain David Render was a tank commander during the Second World War. He is co-author with Stuart Tootal of *Tank Action: An Armoured Troop Commander's War 1944–45* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2016)

DISCOVER MORE

Listen to original BBC reports from the Normandy campaign in the BBC Radio 4 programme *Witness: Broadcasting D-Day* at **bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0201hng** (UK only)

ILLUSTRATION BY **DAVIDE BONAZZI**

THE BIG QUESTION

Did the Cold War ever really end?

The Cold War is often thought to have died after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. But with relations between Russia and some western nations becoming increasingly frosty, and talk from both sides increasingly turning to nuclear weapons, have reports of its demise been exaggerated? Seven historians offer their opinions

Evan Mawdsley

"The Cold War was a product of the 1917 revolution and the Second World War"

Relations between the US and Russian Federation have been cool over the past 10 years, and were chilled further by the 2014 annexation of the Crimea. But those developments are part of a new era. The Cold War meant more than tension between two major states. It evolved over time, but had three essential features. One, a consequence of the Second World War, was global bipolarity. Many major states had been defeated or weakened, leaving the two 'super powers'. Washington and Moscow assembled alliance systems, especially Nato and the Warsaw Pact. The second feature was ideology, Marxism-Leninism versus liberal-capitalism (or anti-communism). These idea systems bound each bloc together and impeded good inter-bloc relations. Soviet leaders took socialism seriously: it was a buttress of their bloc, especially in eastern Europe, and it won the USSR significant support among leftist political groups, in Europe and then in the anti-colonial movement. The third feature was massive arms procurement, especially nuclear. Such weapons made military conflict on the scale of the Second World War unthinkable. The 'war' was therefore a cold one, carried out through ideology rather than fighting.

The world changed profoundly in all three areas, as a result of the collapse of the USSR. First, the blocs were no more, especially the eastern European alliance system. The Russian Federation now lacks close allies or clients. Similarly, with no serious external threat, the US receives only limited support from its own friends. Meanwhile, Marxism-Leninism ceased to be a powerful ideology. The Russian Federation from time to time puts forward an anti-liberal ideology or talks about 'Eurasianism', but neither provides the basis for an international movement. Nuclear weapons still exist; the US and the Russian Federation have far more than other states. But those play little role in their relationship, and the Russian Federation, with a population now half that of the US, can deploy only weak conventional forces. Major states will disagree and compete. But the Cold War was a product of the 1917 Russian Revolution and the Second World War. It is over, and it will not return.

Evan Mawdsley was professor of international history at the University of Glasgow. His books include *World War II: A New History* (CUP, 2009)

Kathleen Burk

"What was notable was that in the 20th century the superpowers forebore actually coming to blows"

Cold War is a term denoting the period between 1945, when the US and UK governments decided that the hostility of the USSR to 'the west' was the fundamental factor in international affairs, and 1991, when the end of the USSR signified the victory of the US and its allies.

During this period, the US government frequently saw the hand of the Soviets in any disturbance in any country on the planet, although others were sometimes less convinced, and presumably the USSR assumed the same of the US. The response by both sides was to build alliances all over the world in order to 'contain' the enemy, excepting the countries that preferred not to be a member of either, invoking the 'plague on both your houses' principle.

What stabilised this period was the atomic standoff, and the eventual acceptance by the leaders of both sides that neither could win a nuclear war, because the only possible outcome for any 'winner' was to be less damaged than the other. Public opinion supported this conclusion, and there was no support to utilise these weapons.

Yet how did this Cold War differ from the classical Balance of Power as evidenced throughout humanity's long history? There were the coalitions of the Peloponnesian War of the fifth century BC; those of virtually every European war, most famously the wars for and against the France of Louis XIV and of Napoleon; the alliance systems of the later 19th century; and those for and against Germany in the 20th century. What was notable in the second half of the 20th century was that the two superpowers forebore actually coming to blows. Those countries that endured proxy wars were apparently of less account.

The question is whether the conflict between the US-led coalition and the Soviet Union/Russia has, since 1991, merely been in abeyance. My own answer is that the Cold War never ended because it was a part of a continuum since the dawn of history. Relative power may differ, but not the diplomatic quadrille, as great and less great powers try to secure safety, and advantage, in the international jungle. Only the name expired.

Kathleen Burk is emeritus professor of modern and contemporary history at University College London, specialising in Anglo-American relations and 20th-century history

Piers Ludlow

"It was a competition between two universalist models: each claimed to represent the future"

The Cold War was always much more than just a military stand-off or armed confrontation between the western and eastern blocs. Instead it was at root the competition between two fundamentally different visions of modernity – of how the world should and would be organised in the future. It was this latter competition that came to a decisive end in the period between 1989 and 1991 when the Soviet bloc collapsed.

This does not of course mean that all that has followed has been about peace and goodwill. There is still plenty of conflict, plenty of division in today's world. Nor is it to deny that a state like Putin's Russia poses a genuine security threat to Europe, especially to neighbouring nations like the Baltic States or the Ukraine. It does. Nor even is it to deny the ongoing competition between western liberal democracy and alternative world views, whether those of Islamic extremists or that of an autocratic and still nominally communist country like China. These do represent very different ways of organising politics, society and economics. History did not come to an end in 1989, as some suggested.

But the Cold War, as I understand it, was a very specific competition between two universalist models, each of which claimed to represent the future for all mankind. I'm not at all sure by contrast that such universalism lies at the heart of Putin's thought or that of China. The Soviet Union and the US both believed the world should and would move decisively in the direction of its economic system, its society, and its political system. And each poured huge energies into the task of trying to ensure this outcome, using every tactic in the book from propaganda and bribery to outright use of military force.

It was this that drove the Cold War and turned it from a traditional great power rivalry into a defining feature of the period between around 1947 and 1991. And it was this competition that ended, decisively, with the victory of the western model. So the Cold War has ended, however divided, insecure and unpredictable our current world remains.

Piers Ludlow is associate professor at the London School of Economics and joint editor of *Visions of the End of the Cold War in Europe, 1945–1990* (Berghahn, 2012)

Vladislav Zubok

"Ironically, populists in the west now tend to see Russia as a potential ally against other challenges"

There have always been those who believed that the Cold War did not really end in 1991. Those people could be met in three key areas: post-Soviet elites in Moscow, in smaller countries along the borders of the Russian Federation, and in Washington, DC. In Moscow, these people were initially on the margins: the military, ex-KGB officials and ideologues of Russian nationalism. They were inspired by anti-Americanism and a belief that the US would not tolerate a strong, independent Russia.

In the countries bordering the Russian Federation, nationalists who came to power after 1991 believed that Russia would never become a stable liberal democracy. The leaders of those countries opted for a preventive strategy: to join Nato and thereby prevent a possibility of Russia's geopolitical comeback.

Finally, in Washington, Yeltsin's regime of the 1990s was seen by diehard 'Cold Warriors' as a fleeting aberration from the 'eternal Russia': authoritarian, and bent on dominance in Eurasia. Once it regained strength, they argued, it would be again an adversary of the US. These people viewed liberals who argued for the enlargement of Nato as a "zone of peace and democracy" as useful fools who served the right cause.

It was not preordained that these viewpoints would coalesce and become a self-fulfilling prophecy. After Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, commentators claimed that the 'Russian Bear' was back. Reusing mothballed Cold War slogans, they presented it as a threat to the 'free world', with Ukraine the first falling domino paving the way for Russian domination in Eurasia.

Yet it would be a travesty of history to regard Putin's Russia – a regional, authoritarian and corrupt power – as waging the same battles as the Soviet Union. In the new situation, when global liberalism in the US and Europe is checked by internal contradictions, a major realignment may be afoot. Attempts by liberal-centrist media to portray Russia as the main enemy of the international community have failed to ignite a new Cold War because they stretch reality too far. Ironically, rightwing populists in the west now tend to see Russia as a potential ally against other challenges, from radical Islamism to powerful China. This is a totally new ballgame. The Cold War did end in 1989–91 after all. We live in a new, messy world.

Vladislav Zubok is professor of international history at LSE. He is writing a book about the collapse of the Soviet Union and the 'eternal Cold War'

Hakim Adi

"The bipolar division of the world no longer exists but contention between the big powers continues"

The Cold War might be said to have commenced with Churchill's 1946 Iron Curtain speech, which referred to postwar geopolitical developments in Europe. However, the Anglo-American assault on the Soviet Union and communism, as well as the bipolar division of the world that ensued, had a profound and lasting global impact.

The Cold War had a major impact on Africa and the African diaspora, from the persecution of African-American activist WEB Du Bois to the deportation from the US of communist Claudia Jones. In Africa it was used as justification for the existence of apartheid and the banning of the ANC and other liberal organisations, as well as for Nato's support for the continuation of Portugal's colonial rule. The Cold War created not just conditions for the continued intervention of big powers in Africa but also justifications for such intervention. From the 1940s, major colonial powers demanded that formal political independence could be granted only to 'responsible' leaders – those who would be responsible to the big powers, and opposed to the Soviet Union and communism or to the empowerment of Africa's people. Leaders who didn't meet such requirements were removed: such was the fate of Prime Minister Lumumba of what's now the Democratic Republic of the Congo, replaced by one deemed more suitable – Mobutu Sese Seko.

The bipolar division of the world no longer exists but the contention between the big powers continues in new forms. In Africa a new scramble for geopolitical and economic advantage means intervention is as rife as ever, provided with new justifications. Libyan independence was ended under Nato bombardment, justified on the dubious basis of the 'right to protect'. The status quo is maintained by the diktat of the IMF/World Bank and the African Union's NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) but challenged by BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) as well as by Africa's long-suffering people. Perhaps the most damaging impact has been ideological, the attempt to deny that there is any alternative. Fortunately history and experience show otherwise – that change is inevitable, and that the people are their own liberators.

Hakim Adi is a professor of history at the University of Chichester and author of *Pan-Africanism and Communism: The Communist International, Africa and the Diaspora, 1919–1939* (Africa World Press, 2013)

Robert Service

"The US and Russia are some way short of being locked in a struggle for world supremacy"

The Cold War that lasted from the late 1940s until the late 1980s is dead and gone. At several moments, such as the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, a single misjudged step taken by one side or the other could have resulted in nuclear armageddon. For four decades, while the Third World War was avoided, America and the Soviet Union competed in offering a model of the way in which a 'good society' should be organised. Capitalism and individual civil rights were contrasted with communism and collective welfare. Each superpower strove to bind 'third world' countries into an alliance with it.

When the USSR fell apart in 1991, Russian president Boris Yeltsin strove for his country to become accepted as embracing the values of democracy, economic liberalism and social pluralism. No longer did it offer itself as a model for emulation. Through most of the 1990s Yeltsin battled with the problems of a severe economic depression and a plummeting standard of living for most Russian citizens.

The situation changed when Vladimir Putin succeeded to the presidency in 2000. He announced the launch of a campaign for a strong state and an orderly society. At first he chose friendship with US president George W Bush and helped to enable the America-led invasion of Afghanistan, but when he failed to secure endorsement of his military severity in Chechnya he became sharply hostile to the west. The boost in world market oil and gas prices gave Putin the revenues he needed. He opposed US policy in the Middle East, annexed Crimea and militarily intervened elsewhere in Ukraine. He modernised Russian armaments and thumbed his nose at American presidents.

At this point, there are concerns about the possible renewal of a Cold War. Although Russia is wedded to the capitalist system, it claims to have a better idea than America about how to organise a democracy. Yet Russia and America are some way short of being locked in a comprehensive struggle for world supremacy, and the recent dip in prices for oil and gas makes Russia a less than impressive contender. Not yet a Cold War, then, but a situation of acute danger. Fingers crossed...

Robert Service is the author of several major books on Russian history, including *The Last of the Tsars* (Macmillan, 2017). He writes about the Russian Revolutions on page 30 of this issue

Russian president Vladimir Putin orders military drills in March 2014, shortly after parliament approved the use of Russian troops in Ukraine

French troops during a Nato exercise in Germany in 1961. Nato forces were deemed necessary to deter a perceived communist threat

FRANK MONKS/GETTY IMAGES/TOPFOTO

Catherine Merridale

"From military over-flights to the snatching of Crimea, Russia once again shows no respect at all for global rules"

The Cold War ended finally in December 1991. As the Soviet flag was lowered forever, Mikhail Gorbachev closed the door on his Kremlin office, ceding power to Boris Yeltsin. What Ronald Reagan had once called the "evil empire" was dead.

Shorn of its loyal satellites, Russia was to face a decade of political and economic strife, at times relying on the goodwill of the IMF. Life was almost impossibly difficult for most citizens, but the leaders and the rich did well. A new class of global Russians emerged, acquiring a taste for luxury and turning up in Cyprus, Paris, Kensington and Brooklyn. They stuck together, but their talk was all about interior design and private schools; spies were for fiction and the cinema. Even the Berlin Wall was soon to disappear. That master of the Cold War spy plot, John le Carré, began to set his novels in Kenya and Panama.

More than two decades on, the atmosphere has clearly changed again. From cyber-attacks to polonium poisoning, from military over-flights to the snatching of Crimea, Russia once again shows no respect at all for global rules. Echoes of the past grow louder all the time.

Vladimir Putin was a product of the Cold War KGB, the main security agency for the Soviet Union from 1954 until its break-up in 1991. He remains an advocate of its successor, whose specialities include a range of secret foreign operations (blatant ones are also fine). Meanwhile, like the old Soviet military, Putin's generals are moving troops around in massive numbers, building bases in the Middle East and arming the old Prussian fortress at Kaliningrad.

It is hard to avoid the terminology of the Cold War, for here is yet another confrontation that includes a direct challenge to democracy. But history is full of examples of doomed generals who could only ever fight the campaigns of their previous wars. We have to see that this is not a rerun of some conflict from the recent past. Politics is not that simple or predictable. Instead, we need to recognise exactly what is going on in our own time. It is the only hope we have of working out what to do next.

Catherine Merridale is a historian specialising in Russia and has held a series of posts at British universities. Her books include *Lenin on the Train* (Allen Lane, 2016)

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New York is looted
Just before 9.30 on the night of 13 July 1977, the lights started to go out across New York City – and mayhem ensued. The atmosphere in the city was already tense, fuelled by economic woes, soaring crime rates and fear of the serial killer dubbed the 'Son of Sam'. And after a series of lightning strikes and technical errors caused a city-wide blackout, widespread looting broke out. By the time power was restored over 25 hours later, more than 1,600 stores had been looted, hundreds of fires started and thousands of people arrested. In this photo, men survey the wreckage of a shop on Grand Concourse in the Bronx.

A YEAR IN PICTURES

1977

Conflict and conciliation, soccer and space

The 1970s were marked by tensions in the Middle East and the cities of the west, but also by scientific and architectural firsts and musical and sporting lasts. **Richard Overy** details the key events and personalities of 1977

The 1970s were

difficult years around the world. This problematic age was scarred by conflict in the Middle East, terror campaigns that have become the hallmark of the past four decades, the oil crisis and high inflation, the war in Vietnam, crisis in the Horn of Africa, and more.

In 1977 the far-left militant Red Army Faction, at the peak of their campaign against West German capitalism, kidnapped and shot the businessman Hanns-Martin Schleyer. This was also the year when the anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko was murdered in custody by the South African police, and the radical Marxist Khmer Rouge reached a crescendo of murderous elimination of their enemies in Cambodia.

From Lebanon to Ulster, 1977 was a year of persistent and violent crises. Yet there were some brighter points. The Egyptian president Anwar Al-Sadat met Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin to try to end years of antagonism between the two states. After decades of dictatorship, Spain and Portugal were feeling their way towards a new, democratic future.

There were technical and cultural milestones to celebrate, too – as well as some to regret. The aggressively modernist Pompidou Centre opened in Paris, and has since become a fixture on the tourist route. The prototype space shuttle took its first test flight, marking a new stage in the scientific revolution of communication. The legendary Brazilian footballer Pelé played his last competitive game in New York. And on 16 August Elvis Presley, the king of rock and roll, died – his passing mourned by millions.

Catalan pride

Huge crowds throng the streets and squares of Barcelona on 23 October to welcome the homecoming of Catalonian politician Josep Tarradellas, who in 1977 returned to assume the presidency of the Catalan Generalitat – newly restored government of the autonomous region – with the simple message: "I am back."

Handshake of hope

Israel's prime minister Menachem Begin and Egypt's president Anwar Al-Sadat meet in Jerusalem in November 1977 – a historic encounter marking the start of a peace process following decades of territorial wars between the nations. Ten months later peace is cemented with the signing of the Camp David Accords brokered by US president Jimmy Carter.

Extremist danger

The radical leftwing Red Army Faction took this photo of Hanns-Martin Schleyer on 6 October 1977, 31 days after they kidnapped the West German industrialist. Less than two weeks later his body was found in the boot of a car in France – his murder marking the climax of the 'German Autumn' of terrorist attacks that shook the nation that year.

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Farewell Biko
An estimated 15–20,000 mourners attend the funeral of Black Consciousness leader Stephen Biko on 25 September 1977 in King William's Town, South Africa. He had died on 12 September, as a result of being beaten in police custody. Biko's murder became a flashpoint in the struggle of black South Africans against oppression by the white regime, but it wasn't till over a decade later that the apartheid system was finally dismantled.

Pelé bows out

Brazilian football star Pelé (real name Edson Arantes do Nascimento) waves to the crowd before New York Cosmos's play-off game against Fort Lauderdale Strikers in 1977 – his final year in competitive football. Pelé had become a household name around the globe after starring in the spectacularly successful Brazil teams of the 1950s and 1960s, winning an unequalled three FIFA World Cups in 1958, 1962 and 1970 and scoring 77 international goals. He is widely regarded as the greatest player of all time.

GEORGE TIEDEMANN–SPORTS ILLUSTRATED–GETTY IMAGES

Desert war

Somali women train with wooden guns in an exercise during the Ogaden War between Somalia and Ethiopia. The conflict was sparked when Somali troops invaded the disputed Ogaden border region in July 1977, and continued until the following March. It marked the start of decades of instability in the Horn of Africa, with periodic conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and within Somalia, continuing for the following 40 years.

Final preparations at the Pompidou

Finishing touches are made to the controversial Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris before its inauguration on 31 January 1977. The cultural complex, designed by architects Richard Rogers, Renzo Piano and Gianfranco Franchini, and named in honour of former French president Georges Pompidou, sparked a lively debate about modernist architecture and its place in the heart of old Paris.

Aftermath of the cyclone

A woman and her children survey the ruins of a building in Kankipadu, Andhra Pradesh, following the huge cyclone that devastated swathes of south-east India in November 1977. During the severe storm that lasted nearly a week, floods and landslides destroyed some 100 villages and killed more than 10,000 people.

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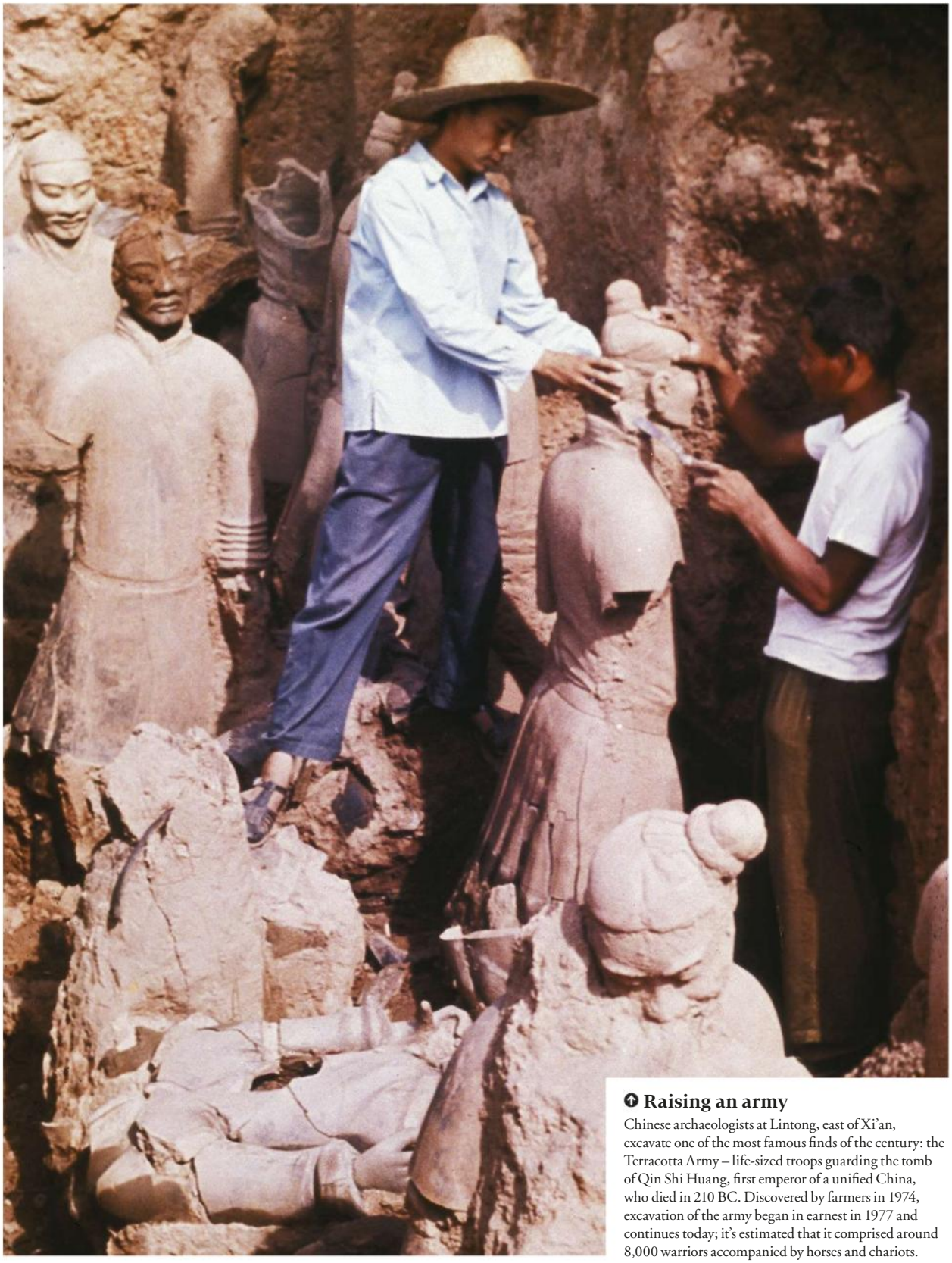


AKG IMAGES

Raising an army

Chinese archaeologists at Lintong, east of Xi'an, excavate one of the most famous finds of the century: the Terracotta Army – life-sized troops guarding the tomb of Qin Shi Huang, first emperor of a unified China, who died in 210 BC. Discovered by farmers in 1974, excavation of the army began in earnest in 1977 and continues today; it's estimated that it comprised around 8,000 warriors accompanied by horses and chariots.

Shuttle run

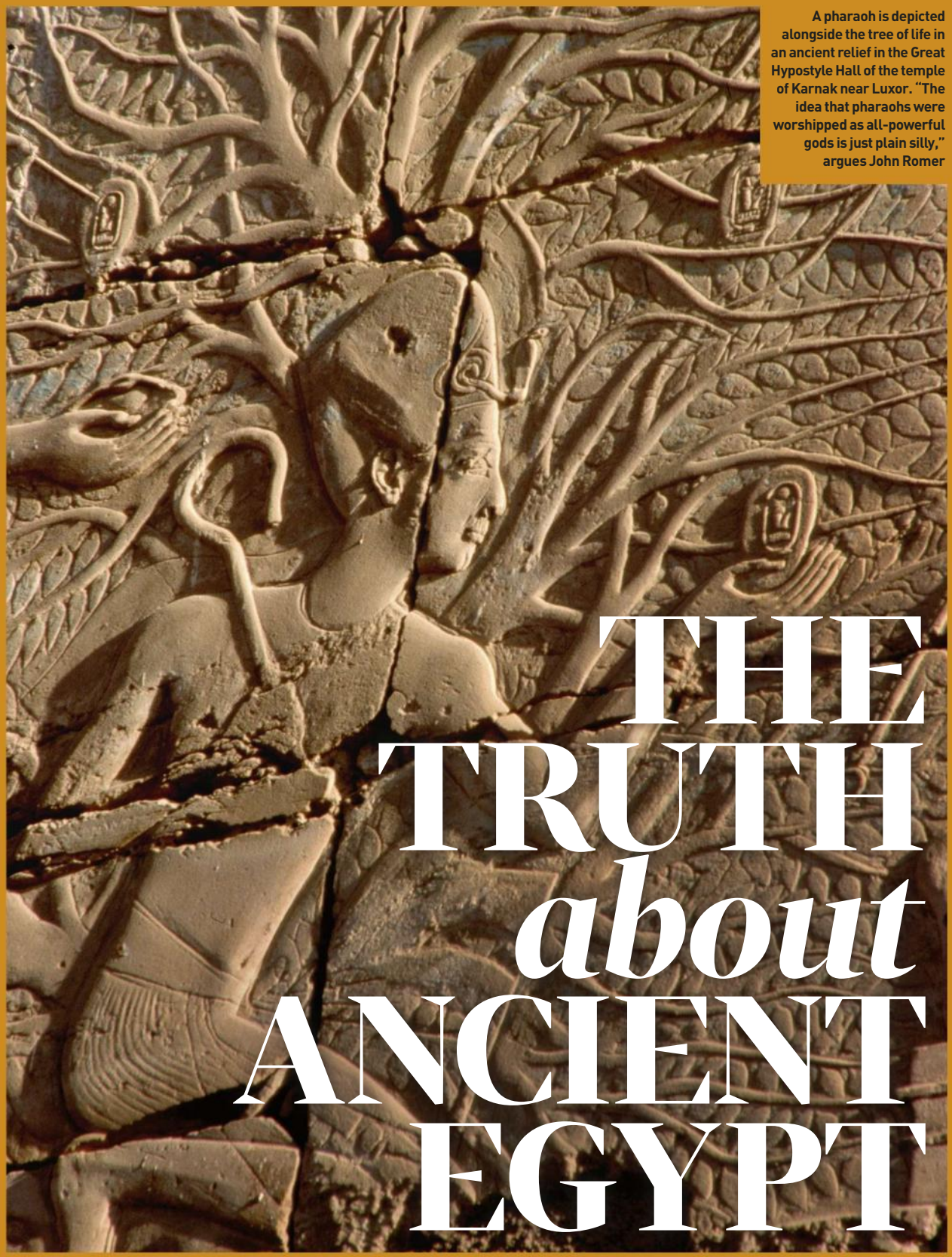
The prototype Space Shuttle *Enterprise* lifts from the Boeing 747 carrier that launched it over southern California on 12 August 1977 – the first free flight of a US space shuttle. Following extensive further testing, the first space flight of the NASA shuttle programme launched on 12 April 1981, when *Columbia* orbited the Earth 57 times. The programme continued for 30 years, despite two fatal accidents; the last of 135 missions was flown by *Atlantis* in July 2011.

GETTY IMAGES

Elvis near the end

Elvis Presley performs in Lincoln, Nebraska on 20 June 1977 – six days before what was to be his final show in Indianapolis, and just a few weeks before his death from cardiovascular disease and respiratory complications on 16 August, aged 42. Overweight and addicted to prescription drugs, by the time of his last shows Elvis was a pale shadow of his youthful pomp.

Richard Overy is professor of history at the University of Exeter, and editor of *The Times Complete History of the World* (William Collins, 2015)



A pharaoh is depicted alongside the tree of life in an ancient relief in the Great Hypostyle Hall of the temple of Karnak near Luxor. "The idea that pharaohs were worshipped as all-powerful gods is just plain silly," argues John Romer

THE TRUTH *about* ANCIENT EGYPT

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Tyrannical god-kings, feudal divisions, poisonings, treason – many of our long-held beliefs about ancient Egypt are based on misunderstandings and skewed interpretations. **John Romer**, author of a new book exploring 1,000 years of Egyptian history from the construction of the Great Pyramid to the collapse of the Middle Kingdom, explains why we need to rethink how we view the world's first nation state

INTERVIEW BY **MATT ELTON**

How have we misunderstood this period of Egyptian history?

I think virtually *all* of ancient Egypt has been misunderstood. Fundamentally, our understanding has been based on four key influences: the Bible; the ancient Greeks; the work of 19th-century French scholar Jean-François Champollion; and then, into the 20th century, German historians.

Champollion laid down the terms with which we discuss ancient Egypt – kings, country, courtiers, nobles, peasants, priests and soldiers – at a time when Europeans had a very strong idea about what those terms meant. It was a time of revolution in Europe, when 'nation' was a hot topic in France, but the fact that Champollion and some of his contemporaries translated it back to ancient Egypt was barking mad. After all, ancient Egypt wasn't a place but, instead, a culture – in the same way that tribal peoples don't have a dotted line around the edge of their land.

Worse than Champollion were the 'great geniuses' that interpreted the grammar and logic of the Egyptian language. They were a bunch of what we would call hard-rightwingers: not all of them were Nazis, but many were very active in that movement. They thought history was a science and, therefore, pure – but anyone who thinks history writing is a science is crazy. Those researchers wrote many of the books still used in modern western universities, which are full of their prejudices.

How are those prejudices manifested?

The idea that pharaohs were worshipped as all-powerful gods, for instance, is just plain silly. Translated ancient Egyptian letters show us that the relationship between a pharaoh and his courtiers was very far from that between a god and his worshippers. But the idea of an all-powerful god was very common at the time that these books were written in the early 20th century, so it became an important concept when this history was being laid down.

The problems extend beyond that, too, to ideas of conflict inside ancient Egypt between priests, farmers and soldiers – the three divisions of classical European society. It's yet to be established that such a feudal division actually existed in pharaoh-land, and there was no military cult in ancient Egypt at all. The whole thing is very wrong, and gave politicians an easy exemplar of society for their own horrid purposes.

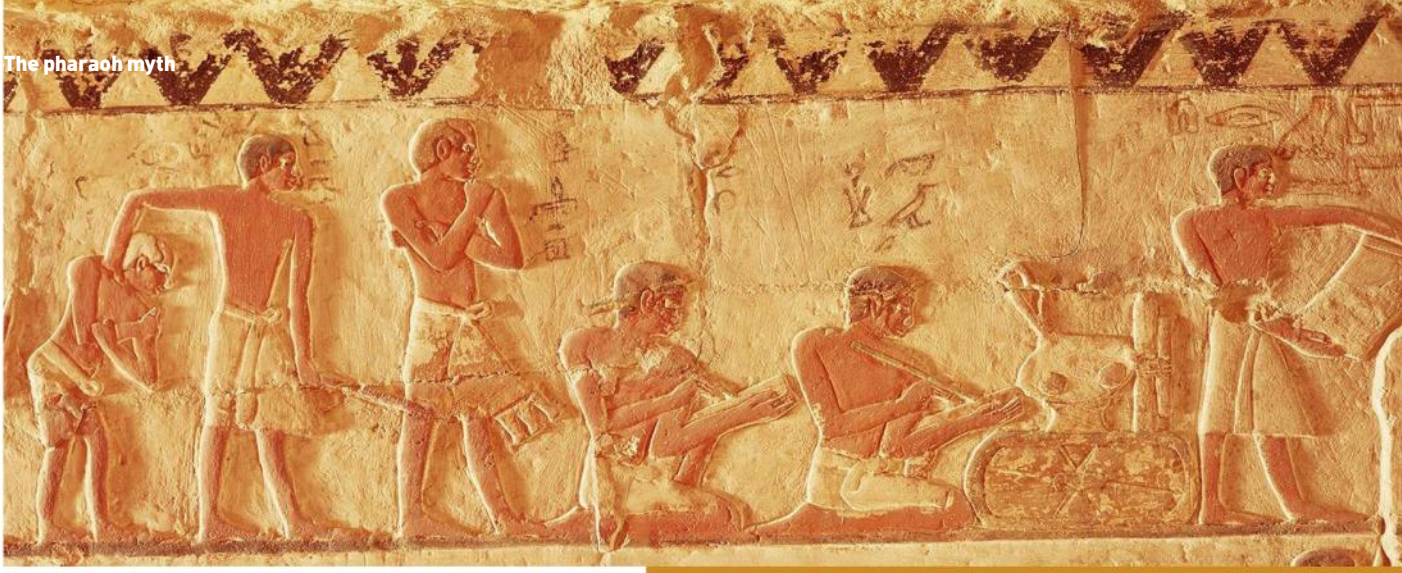
Most histories of the Old Kingdom [in the third millennium BC] assume that the ancient Egyptians never changed. They took parallels from one period and dumped it back to another 1,000 years earlier or later. And we know virtually nothing at all about the personalities of ancient Egyptians. The only way we understand their personalities is as seen through the eyes of the ancient Greeks, a bunch of old Nazis, and a lot of dreadful popular television in which people run around with blazing torches setting fire to each other.

There was a gap in the construction of monuments in the period between the building of the pyramids and temples at Thebes (now Luxor), wasn't there?

There was indeed a remarkable period, a kind of hiatus, during which the ancient Egyptians stopped building monuments. It's been described as a time of murder and starvation, but we know that wasn't the case because the graveyards of the period show a people who were just as fit and well as at any other time. Graves had actually become richer, because people no longer had to build monuments for their king.

So what caused that hiatus?

Most other histories extract information from largely irrelevant things, such as bits of literature or poetry, and pretend that



A tomb relief from Egypt's 5th dynasty depicts the collection of tithes. "Most other histories extract information from largely irrelevant things, such as bits of literature or poetry, and pretend that they are history. I don't: I go for facts on the ground," says John Romer

they're history. I don't: I go for facts on the ground. What those show is that, during the Old Kingdom, around 2,500 BC, after the four great pyramids had been built, the kings laid back a bit. All of the resources that had previously gone into building truly colossal pyramids at Giza and Dahshur were used instead to build more modest royal pyramids, along with hundreds of splendid tombs for governors and courtiers with mortuary cults of their own. So, about 300 years after the Great Pyramids were finished, not only were pyramids still being built by the court but it also had centuries of funerary cults to support. A large number of families were connected to each of these monuments, so the court had become very big.

At the same time, the level of the Nile was gradually dropping. It happened so slowly that it wouldn't have been noticeable in a single lifespan, but modern archaeology shows the river level fell by several metres over the course of centuries. That meant the amount of crops grown also decreased.

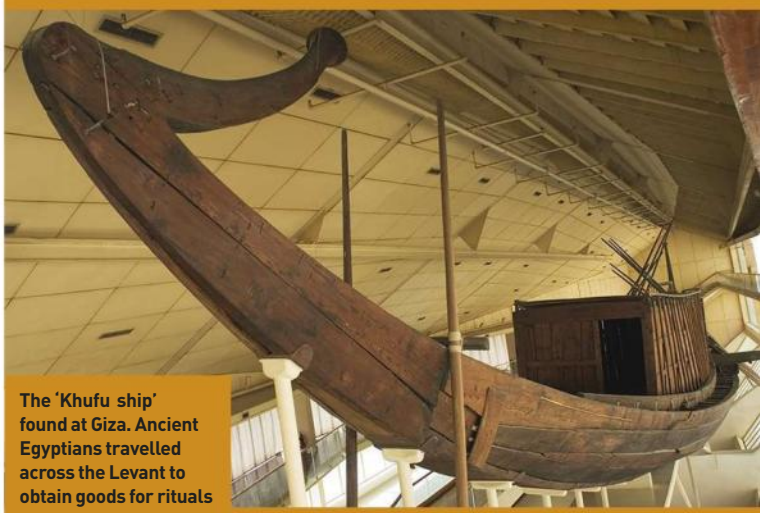
Those factors combined and a tipping point was reached: ancient Egyptian society no longer had the resources to make such great monuments. That doesn't mean that people were starving, or poor, or fighting – simply that they didn't have the resources to build huge pyramids.

This inscribed papyrus, found near the Red Sea and the oldest known example of its kind, details the building of Khufu's Great Pyramid

What happened next?

From around 2150 BC, the kingdom was gradually reborn – and it really was a renaissance. A group of local governors from Thebes took control of Egypt; we don't know how or why, but they remade the pharaonic state in a new way. It was the most beautiful period in all of Egyptian history, and the first time the ancient Egyptians looked back at what they'd done, picked the elements they wanted, and used them to rebuild the state.

One of the most touching and remarkable things that has been uncovered during recent research is the tremendous effort to which the ancient Egyptians went to do this, sending expeditions across the Sahara and boats down to Ethiopia. These forays often weren't ordered for practical purposes, but instead for things wanted for the rituals of the court. That was what the state was essentially all about – ritual and ceremony, and it shows us the character of ancient Egypt.



The 'Khufu ship' found at Giza. Ancient Egyptians travelled across the Levant to obtain goods for rituals

"One site provides the only example of how blocks were moved by the people who made the Great Pyramid"

Why has there been such a wealth of discoveries about the periods of the Old and Middle Kingdom recently, and what have we learned?

An important factor is that, in the past 30 years, Egyptologists have been able to leave the Nile valley and work in other parts of Egypt where they couldn't before due to security concerns.

Wonderful sites have been found on or near the Red Sea coast. One, at Wadi al-Jarf, dates from the time of Khufu, builder of the Great Pyramid. It may be the oldest port in the world, with a harbour and anchors and who knows what else. Before its discovery nobody even knew that ancient Egyptians of the time had sea-going boats. And when researchers started to look into the hills behind the port, they found caves that had been excavated for use as chandleries by the ancient Egyptians.

These caves are full of extraordinary things, but even more amazing is that the ancient Egyptians had sealed the doors with big blocks of stone – similar to those used in the Great Pyramid. This site provides the only example of how such blocks were moved to make that pyramid: they were slid along using beams of wood on slick mud. That is a remarkable thing in itself.

More than that, when the researchers moved two of these blocks apart, a great wad of papyrus fell out from between them – nothing less than the oldest inscribed papyrus in the world, bearing the name of Khufu. It's perfectly written: the guy who wrote it had obviously composed thousands of such documents. It's a list of stone deliveries made to the Great Pyramid at Giza by a boat captain named Merer, who was delivering stone from one side of the Nile to the other. They were at the Red Sea because it was part of the same supply system. The port was used to ship copper from Sinai across the Red Sea and then on across the desert to the Nile valley.

Not only does this document give an exact list of how many stones this captain supplied, but it also tells us that quite a famous man, Ankh-haf, whose tomb is at Giza, was in charge at this harbour. This is amazing because it's the first time he's been identified as being in charge of aspects of the Great Pyramid's construction. Suddenly, we know something about how it was made that we never knew before. It's all real stuff – not just fairy tales from slightly dubious history books.

How did ancient Egypt influence the wider world?

The entire western world is touched by ancient Egypt. It was what we would now call a religious state, although they wouldn't have understood that definition. And it continues to be influential to this day – in the way in which taxes in the United Kingdom are collected in the name of the queen, for instance, or in how, when Donald Trump was elected president of the United States, he was honoured with tradition and ceremony to show that a different aura had descended upon him. The idea of sacredness in the ceremony of leaders is essentially what was happening in the Middle Kingdom.

How did these influences continue into later centuries?

A few years ago I was investigating the Byzantine civilisation, reading about the elaborate rituals with which its emperors were put on the throne. The ceremonies sounded just like those of the pharaohs of Egypt, which I thought was weird – until I realised that the obvious connection was the Bible.

What you read there about Moses and the pharaoh, or the idea of the court and the sacredness of God, is what connects ancient Egypt to the Bible, and then to the modern west.

Take the coronation ceremony in the UK, for instance: the new monarch is wrapped in a cloak and anointed with oil. This is basically what the princes of the Lebanon did to show their fealty to the pharaohs. Indeed, at a dig in Lebanon, researchers found a little cask that had held some oil from the pharaohs and a sceptre with which the leaders were invested. So the aura of sacredness is the same – although of course, the ritual was reinvented in the 19th century to include references to an area of land and a flag, and relabelled 'patriotism'.

How should your book change people's views of ancient Egyptian culture?

I'd like it to act as a bridge between the fascination that people have for ancient Egypt and the rubbish histories of war and poisonings and treason that we read and watch so often today. I'd like to open readers' eyes to the real stories behind the beautiful things made by the people of that culture. People look into the eyes of Tutankhamun's golden mask, for instance, and have this idea of a people cowering under the lash of wicked pharaohs. I would like those people to have more of an understanding of what ancient Egyptian art actually tells us: that on the whole they were peaceable, highly talented people who were well satisfied with their lot.

GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY/ELIZABETH ROMER

John Romer is an Egyptologist, broadcaster and writer. His latest book is *A History of Ancient Egypt, Volume 2: From the Great Pyramid to the Fall of the Middle Kingdom* (Allen Lane, 2016)

Ottomans battle Christians at Lepanto

On 7 October 1571, Ottoman forces clashed with the Holy League's fleet in a huge naval battle in the Mediterranean. **Jerry Brotton** looks at both sides of an encounter that shifted the balance of sea power in the region

The battle of Lepanto was one of the greatest conflicts in pre-modern history, pitting Ottoman naval forces against the ships of the Christian Holy League in the Gulf of Patras off western Greece. The clash, involving an estimated 500 ships and 100,000 combatants, was the largest such battle since ancient times and the last great naval conflict dominated by armed rowing vessels.

The background to the battle was a region becoming increasingly dominated by the Ottomans. That empire was engaged in a relentless programme of expansion across the Mediterranean, in stark contrast to the disunity that characterised their papal, Spanish and Venetian adversaries. With the accession of Sultan Selim II in 1566, Ottoman designs on north Africa and Christian strongholds such as Malta and Cyprus threatened to transform the Mediterranean basin into one vast Turkish naval port.

When in the summer of 1570 the Ottomans declared war on Venice and invaded Cyprus, Pope Pius V, Philip II of Spain and the Venetians agreed to put aside their differences and combine forces in the form of a Holy League. They hastily assembled a vast Christian armada of more than 200 ships, 40,000 sailors and 20,000 troops led by Philip II's half-brother Don John of Austria. In the summer of 1571, the fleet set sail to lift the siege of Cyprus. When Don John learned of the fall of Famagusta on that island he headed for Lepanto, where the Ottoman fleet of 300 ships lay at anchor.

Savage combat

On the morning of 7 October the two sides engaged each other in an epic battle that quickly descended into savage hand-to-hand combat as both sides boarded each other's galleys. Around 4pm, as the smoke of war began to lift, it became clear that the Ottomans had been outgunned and defeated, losing by some estimates nearly 200 of their ships, along with 15,000 soldiers and sailors.

For a brief moment, Christendom forgot its divisions and united in celebration of its victory over the seemingly invincible Turks. Across Europe the news was greeted with an extraordinary outpouring of delight, relief and what one commentator, the Venetian Pietro Buccio, described as a "marvellous and glorious Christian victory against the infidels". In contrast, Selim II quoted a verse from the Qur'an: "But it may happen that you hate a thing which is good for you," and swore to avenge the defeat by rebuilding his fleet and intensifying his attacks on Christian forces across the Mediterranean basin.

For the Christians – and for subsequent western historians – defeating the Ottomans represented the first great victory over an apparently invincible navy, and marked the beginning of the decline of Muslim influence in the Mediterranean. The French historian Fernand Braudel described it as "the end of a genuine inferiority complex on the part of Christendom and a no less real Turkish supremacy". For the Ottomans it was an act of God – a significant but not insurmountable defeat in a wider and largely successful geopolitical strategy of dominating the eastern Mediterranean and north Africa.

On the following pages we explore the context of the battle from both Ottoman and Christian viewpoints...

MARY EVANS/MAP: BATTLEFIELD DESIGN

A detail from Andrea Vicentino's expansive c1600 painting of the battle of Lepanto vividly captures the chaotic melee as armoured Holy League soldiers rout Ottoman troops

THE OTTOMAN EXPERIENCE

"A battle can be won or lost. It was destined to happen this way"

In 1499 the Greek port of Naf-paktos, better known by its Venetian name of Lepanto, fell to the Ottomans. From that point they effectively controlled the eastern Mediterranean, part of a larger geopolitical strategy that saw them conquer most of the region as well as north Africa, including Egypt (1517), Algiers (1529) and Tripoli (1551). Lepanto became part of the multi-confessional, polyglot empire, a *liva* (district) in the Ottoman administrative system. *Beys* and *kadis* (chieftains and legal authorities) recruited local Greek sailors, oarsmen and soldiers conscripted into the *timariot* cavalry in return for tax exemptions.

In early 1571 Bosnian spies informed Sultan Selim II that a Christian fleet was being assembled to break the Ottoman siege of Famagusta in Cyprus. An imperial decree set the religious tone for Selim's response: "When news about the infidels' intention to attack became known by everybody, here the *ulema* (religious scholars) and all the Muslim community found it most proper and necessary to find and immediately attack the infidels' fleet in order to save the honour of our religion and state, and to protect the land of the Caliphate, and when the Muslims submitted their petition to the feet of my throne I found it good and incontestable."

The armada sets sail

Selim ordered his fleet to sail from Istanbul in April 1571, appointing Müezzinzade Ali Pasha, a former janissary (elite warrior) as its admiral. Ottoman chroniclers gave divergent estimates of the fleet's size, ranging from 170 to 300 vessels, powered by up to 35,000 oarsmen – many of them captured Christians – and carrying more than 40,000 sailors and soldiers.

The fleet headed towards Crete, where they believed the Christian navy lay, and were joined by Uluç Ali Pasha, the *beylerbey* (duke-governor) of Algiers. But, as autumn drew in, provisions ran low, and many of the Albanian, Bosnian and Greek soldiers deserted the Ottoman fleet. One chronicler wrote that the "fleet cruised for a long time on the sea. No one appeared. The Ottomans believed that the Christians lacked the courage to meet them. The winter approached. The corsairs and *beys* of the coastal provinces asked the Porte [government] for permission to return home. Thus the army disintegrated."

When the Christian navy was finally sighted off Lepanto in early October, the Ottoman force was not only unprepared but severely depleted in manpower and resources. That was crucial: the Ottomans relied for victory on vastly superior troop numbers and the accuracy of the composite bow fired from their galleys by experienced archers. They also had arquebuses and the heavier musket – but they discovered to their cost at Lepanto that their Christian enemies possessed more than twice as many guns.

Almost immediately dissension broke out among the Ottoman commanders. Uluç Ali Pasha advised an engagement in open sea away from the coast. Fearful for his life if he disobeyed the sultan's command to engage the enemy, Müezzinzade Ali Pasha ignored the advice, believing that the Christian fleet was much smaller than it really was. Shortly after noon on 7 October, he ordered his fleet to attack. As the first Ottoman galleys crashed into the Christian ships, up to 40 others ran aground – perhaps accidentally, or in a deliberate act to escape fighting.

The superior Christian firepower prevailed. Ottoman accounts described how "men succumbed to a hail of bullets" and "the noble fleet was surrounded by a thick smoke which covered the sky". After hours of hand-to-hand combat, Müezzinzade Ali Pasha was struck by a bullet and fell; his head was cut off (reputedly by a Spanish soldier) and displayed to the dismayed Ottoman troops. The Ottoman rout was complete, and of their high command only Uluç Ali Pasha escaped.

Ottoman analysis

Unsurprisingly, Ottoman sources were muted in their reactions to the battle. Most blamed the unnecessarily long campaign, exhaustion and desertion, as well as the disastrous leadership of Müezzinzade Ali Pasha (which, as he was appointed by Selim, was the nearest anyone came to criticising the sultan). Selim's response, a terse imperial decree dated 28 October 1571, attributed the defeat to God: "Now a battle can be won or lost. It was destined to happen this way according to God's will."

The defeat was a military setback, but by the summer of 1573 Turkish shipyards had rebuilt the fleet, and the following summer the Ottomans retook Tunis, which had been seized by Don Jon in 1573. When asked about the battle by the Venetian ambassador, Grand Vizier Sokullu Mehmed Pasha responded: "Our courage has not faded away after the battle of Lepanto; there is a discrepancy between your losses and ours. We ceded from you a land [Cyprus] … [and] thus cut off one of your arms. You defeated our fleet, which meant nothing more than shaving our beard. A missing arm cannot be replaced but a shaved beard grows thicker."

GETTY IMAGES

Sultan's decree

A contemporary portrait of the Ottoman sultan Selim II. Before the battle of Lepanto, the sultan declared that "all the Muslim community found it most proper and necessary to find and immediately attack the infidels' fleet in order to save the honour of our religion and state"

THE HOLY LEAGUE EXPERIENCE

"They all became one body, one will, one desire with no heed of death"

On 20 May 1571 Pope Pius V met with representatives of Venice and Spain in Rome. The result was the formation of a Holy League – an alliance of Catholic states aiming to break Ottoman dominance in the eastern Mediterranean.

Agreeing the alliance had been a lengthy and tortuous process. Since the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Christian countries had failed to unite against their common enemy. Venice was keen to protect its commercial relations with the sultans, the Spanish were eager to protect their north African interests, and the papacy was preoccupied with the more immediate threat of Lutheranism. Though the Ottoman invasion of Cyprus proved the need for unity, squabbles continued: the Spanish insisted that the Habsburg Don John of Austria – "a young man who desired glory" – must command the league's fleet, and that its main objective should be Tunis (held by Uluç Ali Pasha since 1569), not Cyprus.

But by cajoling and threatening, the pope's "assertiveness overcame all difficulties", and in July 1571 the papal fleet set sail for Sicily. There they were joined by the rest of the league, amassing "208 galleys, 6 galleases [large oared warships] and 23 ships besides the small vessels carrying a good many troops" estimated at 20,000, a remarkable and somewhat unlikely coalition of Italians, Spaniards and even Germans.

Internal squabbles

National rivalries threatened to scupper the league almost before the fleet sailed towards Corfu. Fights broke out between the Spanish and the Italians, while both looked down on the 'barbaric' Germans. Don John favoured an offensive campaign while his cautious lieutenants advised a more defensive approach, grumbling that they were operating "without any order, nay in utter confusion". Intelligence was also conflicted. One of Don John's advisers told him that his own soldiers were largely inexperienced, though "I do not think the enemy's men can be very good, or better than ours". However, "as for the number and quality of the ships in the Ottoman fleet, the reports are so various that I cannot judge very well if it is smaller or greater than ours".

When the two fleets finally met on the morning of 7 October, the Holy League possessed two decisive advantages. It outgunned the Ottomans by more than two to one, and in its vanguard were six great Venetian galleases – floating fortresses too high to be boarded, bristling with artillery. As they rowed towards the Ottoman galleys and opened fire, "even the Turks began to fear", reported Don John's advisor. Their opening salvos sank several galleys and scattered the Ottoman formation. Priests evoked Christ and urged the Christian soldiers "to fight against the enemies of his most holy name, and inflamed and moved by these exhortations they all became one body, one will, one desire with no heed nor thought of death".

Under fire from the galleases "the sea was wholly covered with men, yard-arms, oars, casks, barrels and various kinds of armaments, an incredible thing that only six galleases should have caused such great destruction, for they had not [previously] been tried in the forefront of a naval battle". Both sides quickly became "constrained to do battle with short arms in hand-to-hand combat", all "fighting in the cruellest fashion", wrote the advisor.

Finally Don John's galley rammed Müezzinzade Ali Pasha's flagship and, after intense fighting, the admiral fell. When Uluç Ali Pasha's squadron fled, the battle was at an end, "and with God's own resolution", wrote one Venetian, by mid-afternoon the enemy had been completely shattered, subdued and conquered, in "the greatest and most famous naval battle which has ever taken place from the time of Caesar Augustus until now".

Aftermath of the battle

News of the victory quickly spread across Europe. Festivities, church masses, pamphlets, paintings and poems celebrated the event. While the Ottomans had ignored the rise of printing, European presses were able to circulate news of the victory at a hitherto unimaginable speed and scale.

Nevertheless, Christian reports of the Ottomans' demise after their defeat at Lepanto were greatly exaggerated, and the Holy League rapidly disintegrated. First Pius died in May 1572, then Venice, eager to re-establish commercial relations with the Ottomans, signed a peace treaty in March 1573 acknowledging Selim's sovereignty over Cyprus. Others also sought alliances with the Ottomans. In 1579 Elizabeth I established formal diplomatic relations with Selim's successor, Sultan Murad III. Both English and Ottoman rulers were keen to exploit divisions among an increasingly fractured Christendom that found little unity in the aftermath of Lepanto.

Jerry Brotton is professor of renaissance studies at Queen Mary University of London, and author of *This Orient Isle: Elizabethan England and the Islamic World* (Allen Lane, 2016)

ALAMY

In a league of their own

The Holy League fleet gathers at Messina on the east coast of Sicily before sailing for Lepanto, as imagined in a painting shortly after the battle. Allegorical figures in the foreground represent the papacy, Spain and Venice, the three key Christian combatants in "the greatest and most famous naval battle which has ever taken place from the time of Caesar Augustus until now"

Ruth Williams Khama (1923–2002)

FIRST LADY OF BOTSWANA

How did an ordinary Englishwoman overcome powerful opposition to help transform an African nation? **Susan Williams** tells the story of Botswana's 'mother'

Raised in a south London suburb, Ruth Williams had an ordinary childhood but showed unusual courage from an early age. When the Luftwaffe bombed London in 1940, the teenage Ruth undertook fire-watching duties. In 1942 she joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force, driving a crash ambulance at RAF Friston.

After the war, Ruth became a confidential clerk in an insurance firm. One evening in 1947 her sister invited her to a dance for students from Africa, organised by a missionary society. Ruth was reluctant but went along – a decision that transformed her life. There she met Seretse Khama, a law student and heir to the kingship of the Bangwato people in the British protectorate of Bechuanaland (now Botswana). Ruth and Seretse fell in love – but their relationship was met with hostility from her father and Seretse's uncle, Tshekedi Khama, the tribe's regent.

The British government also weighed in, under pressure from white-ruled South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, which opposed a prominent inter-racial marriage on their borders. To Ruth's disappointment British officials, backed by the London Missionary Society and the Church of England, blocked a church wedding. However, the marriage went ahead, albeit in a register office.

Seretse and Ruth settled in Serowe in Bechuanaland, where the Bangwato took Ruth to their hearts as their *Mohumagadi* – 'mother' or 'queen'. Most of the white women in Africa pitied her, "Yet in many ways," observed journalist Margaret Bourke-White, "her life is fuller than theirs, with a much closer degree of companionship with her husband, identification of herself with his interests, and intelligent understanding of the broader problems he has to face."
A British official complained that Ruth was "a tougher proposition than we had hoped – she will never be bought off".

In 1950 Seretse was brought under false pretences to London where he was told he was to be exiled for five years. Ruth, by that time pregnant, had remained in Bechuanaland because the Bangwato were (rightly) suspicious of Britain's intentions. She gave birth to baby Jacqueline in the Serowe hospital.

Winston Churchill had condemned the treatment of the Khamas as "a very disreputable transaction", yet made the exile permanent after he became prime minister in 1951. Despite denials by the British government, South Africa – whose supplies of uranium Britain hoped to access – had influenced the decision.

By then Seretse and Ruth were both living in exile in Britain, where she gave birth to their second child, Ian, in 1953. They were encouraged by a vigorous campaign by supporters including Tony Benn, and by others at home in Bechuanaland. "We still grieve that our mother is being kept away from us," lamented a women's association in Serowe.

In 1956 the exile was ended – on condition that Seretse was not installed as king. Once home, he and his uncle put aside their differences to work together for their people. Ruth had two more sons, twins Tshekedi and Anthony, and threw herself into voluntary work helping women and children, saying: "There is a big part for me, as a woman, to play."

In 1961 Seretse Khama launched the Bechuanaland Democratic Party, and Ruth encouraged women to get involved. Eighteen months after the BDP won the nation's first democratic elections in 1965, Botswana gained independence and Seretse became president; soon afterwards he was knighted and Ruth became Lady Khama. Never bitter about the past, their focus was the future of Botswana, then one of the world's 10 poorest nations, having been badly neglected under colonial rule. As first lady, Ruth became president of the Botswana Red Cross, which assisted with relief programmes in the region, as well as the Girl Guides, the Botswana Council of Women, and the Child to Child Foundation.

Seretse died in 1980, but it never crossed Ruth's mind to return to Britain. "I am completely happy here," she said. "I travel to Britain and Switzerland as part of my charity work for the Red Cross, but I have no desire to go anywhere else... My home is here... When I came to this country I became a Motswana."

Lady Khama died in 2002 at the age of 78, and was buried next to Seretse. Their legacy extends well beyond the borders of Botswana, in a model of harmony that exposed the evil of apartheid and the injustices of colonial rule.

Susan Williams is the author of *Colour Bar: The Triumph of Seretse Khama and His Nation* (Penguin, 2006). *A United Kingdom,* a film based on the book, was released in the UK late in 2016

DISCOVER MORE

Hear more of this story in the BBC World Service documentary **Against The Tide – Seretse Khama**, at *bbc.co.uk/programmes/p034s4hm*

GETTY IMAGES/TOPHAM PICTUREPOINT/ALAMY/DREAMSTIME

Mother of the people

Ruth Williams' marriage to Seretse Khama, who later became the first president of Botswana, faced opposition at the highest level, but they shunned rancour and dedicated their lives to the people of Botswana. "Bitterness does not pay," Seretse noted. "Certain things have happened to all of us in the past, and it is for us to forget those and look to the future"

GLITTERING KOREA

For over four millennia the Korean peninsula has cultivated unique ideas about art and architecture, as well as sharing concepts with China and Japan. **Soyoung Lee**, curator at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, reveals what treasures from the exhibition Splendors of Korean Art tell us about the region's cultural evolution

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH **PAUL BLOOMFIELD**

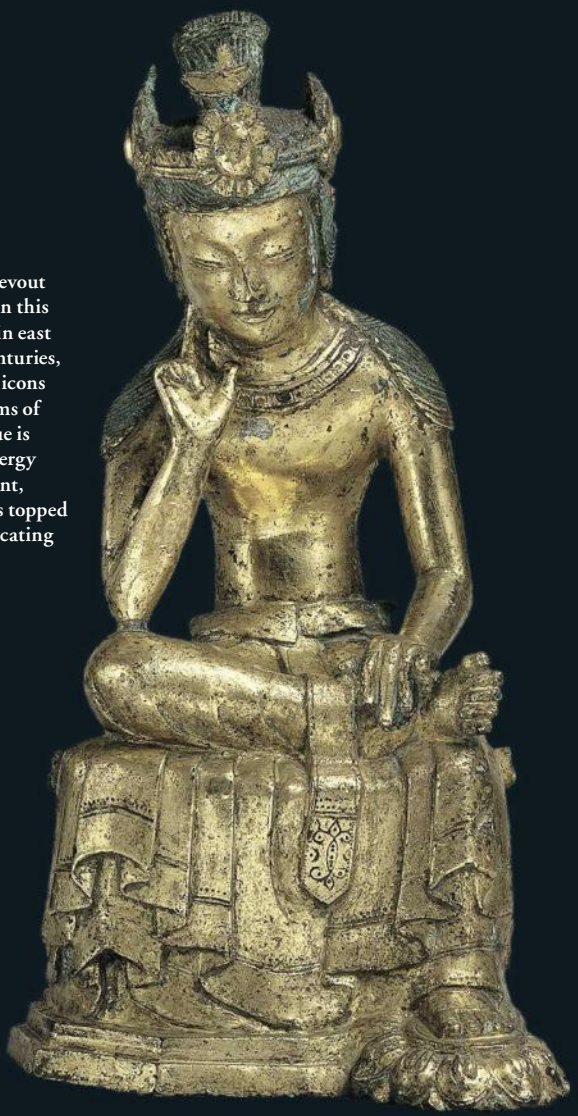
Gilt bronze Amitabha triad, 1333

The Buddha Amitabha, who represents the promise of salvation in his Western Paradise, became especially popular in Korea during the Goryeo dynasty (918–1392); here he is shown flanked by his two attendant *bodhisattvas* in a triptych created nearly 1,000 years after Buddhism arrived in Korea via China around AD 372. The names of those who commissioned and managed the project were inscribed on the bases of the statues, which were consecrated and their hollow insides filled with textiles and printed Buddhist texts. By the time these pieces were made, the Goryeo dynasty controlled most of the peninsula; its name is the root of the international term 'Korea'.

ON LOAN FROM THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KOREA

Bird-shaped earthenware vessel, third century AD

Clay vessels such as this have been found primarily at burial sites in the south-east Korean peninsula, near the Nakdong river. This was the heartland of the Gaya confederacy wedged between the larger Baekje and Silla states, two of the three kingdoms that dominated the peninsula from the first century BC (the other being Goguryeo). Birds may have been considered auspicious, travelling between earth and heaven. Usually found in pairs, these objects probably served as funereal ritual vessels; liquid was poured in through an opening at the back and flowed out through the tail.



Pensive Bodhisattva, mid-seventh century AD

Images of the pensive *bodhisattva* (devout Buddhist adherent) – always seated in this distinctive pose – became prevalent in east Asia between the fifth and eighth centuries, and emerged as important Buddhist icons in Korea, particularly in the kingdoms of Baekje and Silla. This exquisite statue is infused with a subtle yet palpable energy articulated in details such as the pliant, lifelike fingers and toes. His crown is topped with an orb-and-crescent motif, indicating influences from central Asia.

Gold earrings, sixth century AD

Gold earrings were worn by elite men and women of the kingdom of Silla (c57 BC–AD 935), and are the most prevalent type of jewellery found in tombs of that period; indeed, the burial mounds of Silla are famous for the extraordinary gold accessories they contained. Goldsmiths' techniques ranged from simple hammering to the more complex method of granulation, in which tiny gold beads were adhered to the surface to create intricate designs – a technique sometimes mimicked by incising granule-like patterns, as in this example.

COURTESY THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART [EARRINGS ON LOAN FROM THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KOREA]

Maebyeong decorated with cranes and clouds, 13th century

This is a superb example of Goryeo celadon, a type of ceramic defined by its elegant green glaze, adopted from Chinese precedents. This quintessentially Korean-style *maebyeong* (plum bottle), produced at the famous celadon kiln site at Buan Yucheon-ri in the south-west of the peninsula, carries an eye-catching design of large cranes and clouds, motifs that appear frequently on Goryeo celadon; cranes were symbols of nobility, spirituality and long life. The decoration was not painted but inlaid: the designs were individually carved and filled with white and black water-mixed clays. This bottle was once a treasured piece in a Japanese collection. Many aspects of Japanese art and architecture reflect Korean influences.

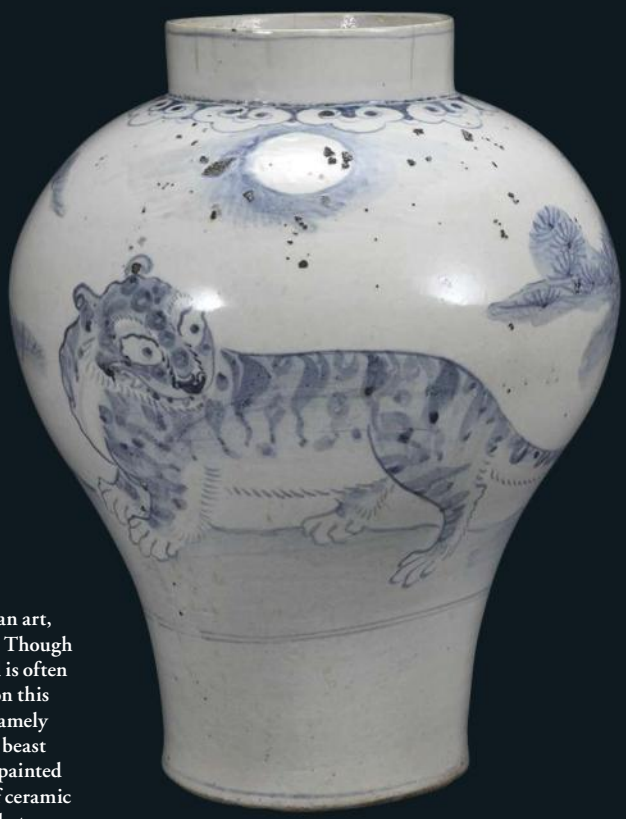
Stationery box decorated with peony scrolls, 15th–16th century

This rare lacquer box is inlaid with mother-of-pearl from abalone shells, the primary material of ornamentation on Korean lacquer from at least the 12th century. Artificial cracks on the shells create attractive patterns within the larger decorative scheme – an intricate design of peonies, considered auspicious flowers linked with wealth, happiness, fertility, marital bliss and spring. The era in which this box was created is also notable for the creation of the native alphabet (today known as Hangeul), commissioned by King Sejong in 1443. Until that date classical Chinese had been the shared written language.

COURTESY THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Scenes from the cycle of life, 19th century

Painted screens illustrating major milestones in the lives of elite men, often high-ranking civil officials, were popular during the late Joseon period. From right to left, each panel of this screen shows one celebratory event, beginning with the protagonist's first birthday, moving through various illustrious government appointments and including his 60th wedding anniversary. Each scene is portrayed in lively detail, with a bird's-eye view affording an expansive perspective on the subject's life. The Joseon kingdom was founded in 1392 with the overthrow of the Goryeo dynasty. The civil bureaucracy, adopted from China before the 15th century, was a hallmark of Joseon politics and society.



Jar with tiger decoration, 19th century

Tigers appear frequently in 19th-century Korean art, including ceramics, lacquerwork and painting. Though symbolic of strength and fierceness, the animal is often rendered with a humorous, expressive face, as on this blue-and-white jar on which a single tiger sits tamely against a spare backdrop with a pine tree; both beast and plant are considered auspicious. Porcelain painted with cobalt blue pigment was the major type of ceramic in Korea during this period, contrasting with that produced in contemporaneous China, Japan and Europe, where porcelain with flamboyant, polychromatic decoration was favoured.

ON LOAN FROM THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KOREA

Gilt bronze rafter finial and wind chime, 10th century

This impressive dragon's head would have been attached to a corner rafter of a royal hall or a Buddhist temple building. The bell, which functioned as a wind chime suspended from the dragon's mouth, is decorated with a lotus flower encircling a swastika – an ancient Indian symbol that was associated with the Buddha. Both bell and dragon were cast in bronze and gilded. Bulging eyes, flaring nostrils and elaborate scales convey the fierceness of this creature linked with power, good luck and water. This mythical beast, which originated in China, also became popular in the art and architecture of Korea and Japan.

Portrait of a scholar by Chae Yongsin (1850–1941), dated by inscription to 1924

The black-trimmed robe and double-tiered, three-peaked hat identify this man as a scholar in informal garb. The artist, Chae Yongsin, was a famed portraitist of the late 19th and early 20th century; among the marks of his nimble hand are the sitter's sensitively modelled face and the finely rendered hairs of his beard. Chae's works incorporate the conventions of centuries-old ancestral portraiture and modern photography, such as heightened realism and a studio-set background including a painted folding screen. By the time this portrait was painted Korea was under Japanese colonial rule, which lasted till the end of the Second World War.

Soyoung Lee is curator for Korean art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

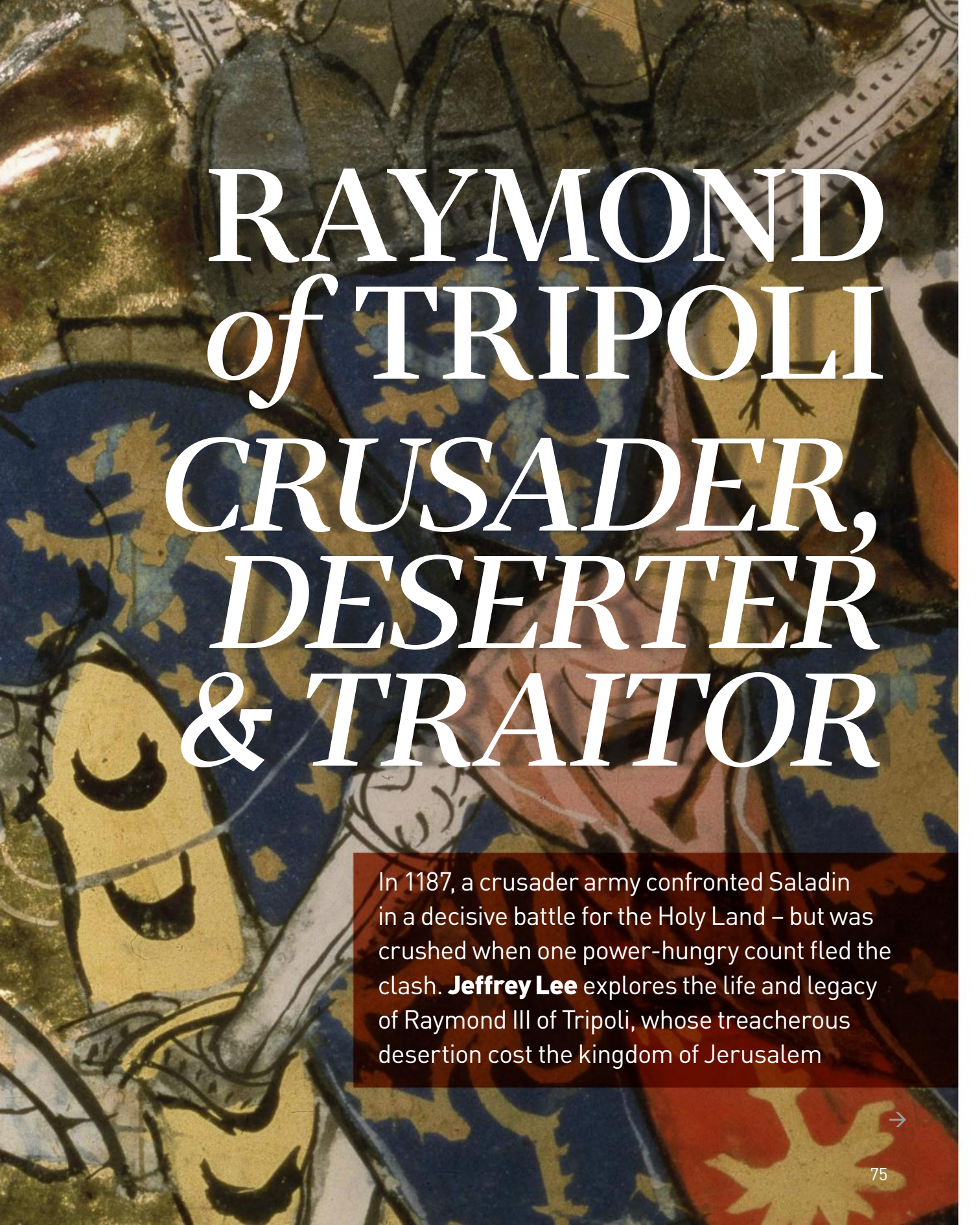
DISCOVER MORE

Splendors of Korean Art, presented in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea and the National Museum of Korea, runs until 17 September 2017. *+1 212 535 7710, metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2016/splendors-of-korean-art*

COURTESY THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

A kingdom falls
Muslim forces clash with crusaders in a miniature from a 14th-century French manuscript. Raymond's desertion at the battle of Hattin in 1187 played a key role in the crusaders' defeat and the end of the first kingdom of Jerusalem

BRIDGEMAN



RAYMOND *of* TRIPOLI

CRUSADER, DESERTER & TRAITOR

In 1187, a crusader army confronted Saladin in a decisive battle for the Holy Land – but was crushed when one power-hungry count fled the clash. **Jeffrey Lee** explores the life and legacy of Raymond III of Tripoli, whose treacherous desertion cost the kingdom of Jerusalem

Around nine o'clock in the morning on 4 July 1187, Count Raymond III of Tripoli took a fateful decision. Around him an apocalyptic battle raged. From his position as commander of the vanguard, Raymond could see that the great army of the kingdom of Jerusalem (the crusader state established after the First Crusade) was crumbling, suffering from heat and thirst. Beset from all sides by arrows and the swirling attacks of Saladin's cavalry, crusader resolve was wavering. At this crucial moment, after years of scheming, rebellion and treachery, Raymond could have chosen to fight and prove his loyalty to the Christian cause. Instead, he and his faction turned and fled.

After Raymond deserted the battle at the Horns of Hattin, the Muslim forces inflicted the greatest defeat ever suffered by a crusader army. Knights and infantry were annihilated, the king captured. Saladin, the Muslim leader, then swept through the kingdom of Jerusalem, taking cities and strongholds at will. In October, 88 years after its capture during the First Crusade, the holy city of Jerusalem surrendered to the jihad.

Many other factors contributed to this catastrophic reversal for the crusaders – their endemic shortage of fighting men, the superior wealth and manpower of their Muslim enemies, the loss of Byzantine support in the early 1180s, and the emergence of the ambitious Saladin as a leader in Egypt – but the single most damaging factor for the kingdom of Jerusalem in the decade leading up to 1187 was Raymond's lust for power.

Fiendish ambition

Raymond was born in 1140, and became Count of Tripoli after assassins murdered his father in 1152. He was dark-complexioned, with a hooked nose. Renowned for his intelligence and inquiring mind, friends and enemies alike thought him a shrewd and accomplished leader. He was related to the ruling family in Jerusalem; for a man so fiendishly ambitious, Tripoli, a coastal crusader state spanning what's now northern Lebanon and western Syria, was to prove too small a pond.

In 1164 Raymond was taken prisoner by Turkish warlord Nur al-Din. During nine years in captivity he broadened his mind, learning to read and write. Ransomed for the huge sum of 80,000 dinars, he showed he had broadened his ambitions, too. Almost immediately, he began interfering in the kingdom of Jerusalem, bordering his county of Tripoli to the south.

In 1174 he demanded to be made regent to his distant cousin, 13-year-old King Baldwin IV. State affairs were under the control of the powerful noble Miles de Plancy, but that did not deter him. Miles was murdered in that same year, possibly assassinated as the result of a feud with a noble family, and Raymond became regent. He enhanced his status by marrying Lady Eschiva of Tiberias, becoming Prince of Galilee and Lord of Tiberias – the greatest feudal magnate in the kingdom.

RAYMOND COULD HAVE CHOSEN TO FIGHT AND PROVE HIS LOYALTY… INSTEAD, HE TURNED AND FLED

The barons of the kingdom worked loyally with Raymond, but he proved a weak and selfish leader. He still owed most of his exorbitant ransom, and when the up-and-coming Muslim leader Saladin cleverly forgave the debt, Raymond allowed him a free hand to unite his power base of Egypt with Syria, hemming in the crusader lands. Even staunch partisans of Raymond criticised this short-sighted deal.

Raymond's next round of machinations almost delivered the entire kingdom to Saladin. Raymond's regency ended when Baldwin came of age in 1177, but the youthful king suffered from leprosy and periodically needed someone to take charge when he was too ill to rule. Given Raymond's poor record as regent, the king turned instead to the loyal Reynald de Châtillon. Later that year, still smarting from his demotion, Raymond stymied a joint offensive against Saladin's Egypt by Baldwin and the Byzantine imperial fleet. This soured relations with Byzantium and snuffed out the last real chance to crush Saladin's growing power.

Raymond and his ally Bohemond of Antioch then went campaigning in their own territories to the north, allowing Saladin to attack across the unprotected southern frontier. The Muslims pillaged across the coastal plain to Mont Gisard in the very heart of the kingdom. Jerusalem was saved only when Reynald de Châtillon's generalship, and the inspiration of the brave young leper king, delivered a stunning victory against overwhelming odds.

Raymond's first attempt to supplant Baldwin came in 1180. It appears he planned to make his ally Baldwin of Ibelin heir to the throne by marrying him to the king's sister Sybilla. The king neutered the conspiracy by marrying Sybilla to a handsome knight from Poitou, Guy de Lusignan. The traditional crusading story tells that Guy was resented as a poor leader and

BATTLE OF HATTIN IN CONTEXT

The First Crusade, launched in 1095 by Pope Urban II, was a campaign by Christian forces from Europe to wrest what they considered the Holy Land, and particularly the sacred city of Jerusalem, from Muslim rule. In 1099 the crusaders achieved that goal, capturing the city in July. Over the following decades a series of crusader states were established across the eastern Mediterranean, but came under attack from surrounding Islamic sultanates – most notably by Saladin (Salah ad-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub), sultan of Egypt and Syria, who finally reconquered Palestine from the crusaders after the battle of Hattin in 1187.

Dissent among the crusaders in the months leading up to Hattin ensured Saladin was victorious in the battle, depicted in a 14th-century manuscript

Guy de Lusignan, shown being crowned, inherited the throne of Jerusalem – dashing Raymond's hopes in the process

BRIDGEMAN/BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE

Regent to the king

Raymond of Tripoli, who had ambitions on the kingdom of Jerusalem, is appointed regent to his distant cousin, the young King Baldwin IV. Raymond benefited from the assassination of the noble Miles de Plancy who had been in charge of state affairs

BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE

bumptious newcomer. But it was frustrated ambition, rather than incompetence or outsider status, that lay behind Raymond's loathing of Guy.

In 1182 Raymond threatened an armed coup, but Baldwin turned him back at the border with Tripoli. Raymond was not with the royal host when, later that year, Saladin invaded the kingdom with a vast force but was obliged to withdraw after a sharp encounter at Le Forbelet. Tellingly, with Raymond absent, the crusader army acted decisively, without discord and prevarication.

Raymond's nefarious influence was back at work the following year when Saladin attacked again. The king was too sick to ride so the largest crusader army for years, funded by a dubious innovation – an income tax – was led by the new regent, Guy de Lusignan. While Saladin's soldiers sacked and burned, Raymond and his cronies arranged for the crusaders' campaign to fizzle out in an embarrassing fiasco of inactivity. In hindsight, the results were positive – Saladin retired without significant gains – but Guy had failed to exploit a mighty host, and his reputation was ruined. Baldwin relieved Guy of the regency and in November 1183 sought to cut him out of the succession altogether by crowning a co-ruler: five-year-old Baldwin V.

Hunger for power

By now Raymond's hunger for power was common knowledge. Ibn Jubayr, a Muslim traveller from Andalucia who passed through the crusader lands in 1184, recorded that the most prominent crusader was "the accursed count, the lord of Tripoli and Tiberias. He has authority and position among them. He is qualified to be king and indeed is a candidate for the office."

By early 1185 Baldwin IV was clearly dying, and he turned again to Raymond as regent. The barons, though, so distrusted Raymond and his regal ambitions that they imposed stringent conditions. First, the boy-king Baldwin V was to be protected from Raymond by placing him in the care of his great-uncle Joscelin. Second, all royal castles were to be put beyond the regent's control, instead entrusted to the military orders of the Templars and Hospitallers. As regent, Raymond resumed his perniciously passive foreign policy. He made a four-year truce with Saladin, enabling the crusaders' most dangerous enemy to complete his subjugation of all neighbouring Muslim territories, untroubled by Frankish interference.

Then, in 1186, Baldwin V died (poisoned by Raymond, if you believe William of Newburgh, the 12th-century English historian). Raymond moved to seize power, convoking a council in Nablus, the stronghold of his Ibelin allies. But the supporters of the royal house, led by Reynald de Châtillon, crowned Sybilla and her husband Guy instead. Decisively outmanoeuvred, Raymond refused allegiance to the new king, and retreated to Tiberias in flagrant rebellion. The crusaders' foes watched this political meltdown with glee. "Thus was their unity disrupted and their cohesion broken," wrote the great Muslim historian Ibn Al-Athir. "This was one of the most important factors that brought about the conquest of their territories and the liberation of Jerusalem."

SALADIN WAS ENDEAVOURING TO UNDERMINE CHRISTIAN POWER BY FOMENTING DISCORD AMONG THE PARTIES

Things soon got even better for the Muslims. Not satisfied with dividing the kingdom, Raymond defected to the enemy. He "solicited and easily obtained the assistance of Saladin, who was endeavouring to undermine the Christian power by craftily fomenting discord among the parties". Raymond even welcomed Muslim cavalry and archers into Tiberias.

In siding with Saladin, Raymond's aim was simple: to seize the throne. Ibn Al-Athir confirmed that Saladin accepted Raymond's allegiance and, in return: "He guaranteed that he would make him independent leader of all the Franks."

Raymond III's treason had devastating military consequences for the crusaders. He allowed Saladin to send a powerful raiding party through Galilee, confronted only by a scratch squadron of Templar and Hospitaller knights who were massacred. With another Muslim invasion looming, the kingdom had just lost one-tenth of its elite soldiery. Raymond's vassals were enraged, and pressured him to renounce his alliance with Saladin.

A grudging reconciliation was arranged with Guy, but it barely papered over the cracks in the crusader leadership. Raymond's presence added a strong military contingent, but it also introduced his trademark dithering and dissension. As Saladin swept across the Jordan with force large enough to surround much of the Sea of Galilee, Raymond's arguments for restraint paralysed the army. His more bellicose rivals protested, plausibly, that Raymond was trying to undermine Guy – as he had in 1183 – by ensuring another wasted campaign.

Raymond's treachery

Historians still believe Guy was wrong to leave his well-watered base at Sephora and take the fight to Saladin, but his real mistake might have been listening to Raymond and waiting too long →

DESPITE THE EVIDENCE, RAYMOND IS NORMALLY PERCEIVED AS A CRUSADER HERO

After the battle of Hattin, Christian defenders at Tyre held out against Saladin's army, as depicted in this 15th-century miniature. Raymond failed in his bid to seize the castle and was forced to flee

BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE

before attacking. The crusaders delayed until Saladin stormed Tiberias and forced Guy's hand. Saladin chose the battlefield.

Raymond's role in the ensuing battle of Hattin is murky, to say the least. The chronicler of the *Estoire d'Eracles* wrote that it was Raymond's suggestion to camp halfway to Tiberias on the night of 3 July, adding that: "The king accepted this advice, but it was bad advice. If the Christians had pressed home the attack, they would have defeated the Turks." That night, both armies were exhausted but Muslim morale was boosted by the defection of five crusader knights. Significantly, they were followers of Raymond of Tripoli. Early next morning, 4 July, battle was rejoined in deadly earnest. Not long into the fight, Raymond performed his destructive disappearing act. "He saw that the signs of defeat were already upon his co-religionists and no notion of aiding his fellows stopped him thinking about himself, so he fled at the beginning of the engagement before it grew fierce."

Most sources say that Raymond and his knights charged at the Muslims, who simply opened their ranks and allowed them through. He "fled from the battle with his accomplices, while the Turks (as it is said) took no care to follow them." Another source describes how, in their desperation to escape, "The speed of their horses in this confined space trampled down the Christians and made a kind of bridge… In this manner they got out of that narrow place by fleeing over their own men, over the Turks, and over the cross. Thus it was that they escaped with only their lives."

To many, Raymond's desertion was rank treachery. According to the *Chronicle of the Third Crusade*, Raymond "intended to betray his people, as he had agreed with Saladin… right at the moment of engagement, the aforesaid Count of Tripoli fell back and feigned flight. It was rumoured that he did this in order to break up our formation and that he had agreed to abandon his own people, to strike fear into those whom he should have assisted, while arousing the enemy's courage."

This desertion of perhaps 300 knights, a quarter of the crusaders' most potent fighting strength, was the decisive moment. Historian Ibn al-Athir wrote that: "When the count fled, their spirits collapsed and they were near to surrendering." According to the chronicler Michael the Syrian, "after the departure of the Count the Franks were like unto men who had lost all hope". The *Old French Continuation of William of Tyre* agrees that, after Raymond's troops left, "Saladin vanquished them quickly. Between the hours of *terce* and *nones* [9am and 3pm] he won the entire field."

Astonishingly, despite all the evidence, Raymond is normally perceived as a crusader hero. His divisive quest for power is interpreted as a worthy struggle against villainous warmongers such as Reynald de Châtillon. Even his flight from Hattin is seen as a result of the defeat, rather than a principal cause of it. Seduced by the pro-Raymond chroniclers, William of Tyre and Ernoul, 20th-century historians feted the count as a wise statesman whose dealings with Saladin represented a rapprochement between Christian and Muslims. Recent scholarship has gone some way to re-balancing this view, but not far enough – nor has it penetrated the general consciousness.

Raymond's reputation

After the battle of Hattin, the only city in the kingdom to resist Saladin's armies was Tyre, led by the defiant Conrad of Montferrat. Tripoli was not besieged – thanks, some believed, to Raymond's pact with Saladin. Even as the crusader enterprise disintegrated, the count persisted in his pursuit of power.

According to William of Newburgh, Raymond secretly made his way to Tyre to "corrupt the populace and seize the citadel". His aim was to oust Conrad, his new rival for supremacy over the last dregs of the crusader polity. Conrad foiled the attempt and Raymond fled, leaving some of his men behind "whom the zealous marquis condemned to be hanged, as manifest traitors to the name of Christ".

Raymond died soon afterwards – of grief and shame, chroniclers wrote. Count Raymond had ardently wished to rule the crusaders, but, in contrast with common depictions of his life, no man had done more to bring about their defeat.

Jeffrey Lee is the author of *God's Wolf: The Life of the Most Notorious of All Crusaders, Reynald de Châtillon* (Atlantic Books, 2016)

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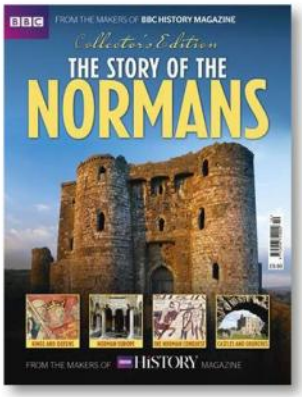

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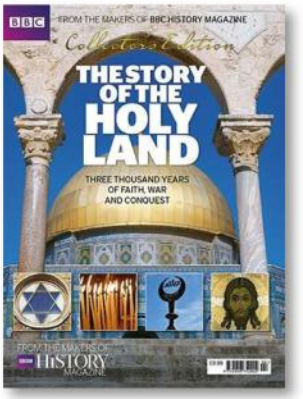

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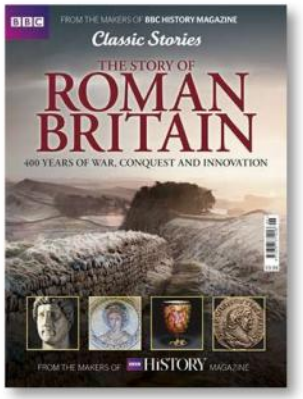

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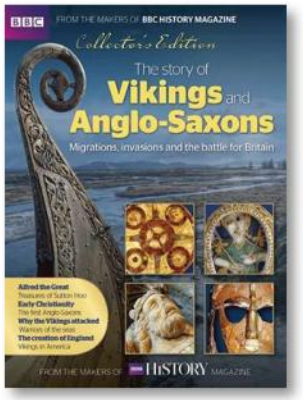

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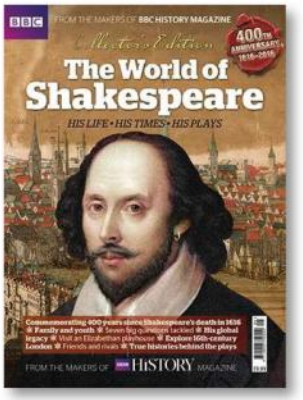

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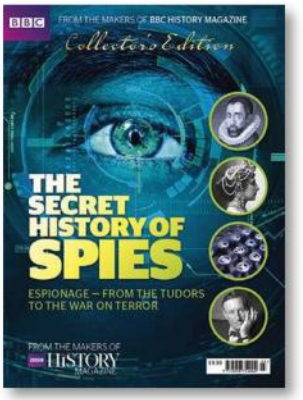

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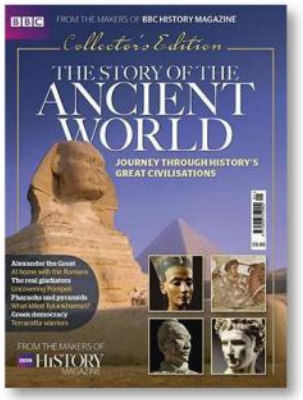

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THE CONVERSATION
Pankaj Mishra & Tom Holland

"One thing that the present shares with the late 18th century is a distrust of elites"

Pankaj Mishra talks about his new book, *Age of Anger*, with historian and broadcaster Tom Holland

PORTRAITS BY **HELEN ATKINSON**

Tom Holland and Pankaj Mishra discuss the rise of 21st-century enmities. "To understand the experiences of Indians or Russians today, we have to go back to the first people who felt excluded from modernity," says Mishra

"Phenomena such as Trump or Brexit have local causes, but one aspect common to them is a sense of anger"

In his new book, *Age of Anger: A History of the Present*, Pankaj Mishra explores the historical forces behind the 21st-century rise in populist nationalist politics and disillusionment with 'western' culture around the world – including in the heart of the west itself. Tracing their roots back to the Enlightenment of the 18th century, he argues that we need to look deeper into history to fully understand a diverse set of present-day global crises.

Born in northern India, Mishra graduated with an MA in English literature from Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi. During the 1990s he contributed literary essays and reviews to publications including *The India Magazine*. His first book, *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana: Travels in Small Town India* (Penguin, 1995), combines travelogue with an exploration of the social changes wrought in India by the process of globalisation. This concern with the impact of global forces on peoples around the world animates much of Mishra's work, including *From the Ruins of Empire: The Revolt Against the West and the Remaking of Asia* (Allen Lane, 2012), which was shortlisted for several major international literary prizes.

Pankaj met the author and broadcaster Tom Holland to discuss the major arguments of his new book. Holland has written extensively on historical subjects as diverse as the ancient world and global Islam, and presents the BBC Radio 4 series *Making History*.

Tom Holland: When did the 'age of anger' start?
Pankaj Mishra: In a way, it began in 2014 with the election of Narendra Modi as prime minister of India: a man accused of mass murder becoming leader of the largest democracy in the world [see 'Modi and the BJP' box on opposite page].

That's when I began to think that we had entered – or perhaps that we had always been living in – an age of anger, in which all kinds of irrational events began to erupt.

You're Indian yourself, though you now live in Britain. What links do you see between Modi's India and Britain?
Modi's election was the first sign that things were going wrong with politics and economies, and that we were in for a pretty difficult time. Watching him emerge out of disgrace, I had a sense that – as has subsequently been the case with the result of the Brexit referendum and the election of Donald Trump – so many of our certainties and ideas about democracy and the will of the people were going to be overturned.

These phenomena are manifested differently, and have very local causes, but one aspect common to them all is anger: a sense of frustration and resentment evident in practically every political culture in the world today.

There may be causes specific to the past decade – economic turbulence, increases in immigration and so on – but your book is a study of the past 200 years. In what way do you see the current 'age of anger' as having its roots in something much older?
As I started to read and think about it, I quickly realised that I would have to consider a much longer span of history. So I went back to the beginning of the modern world, when its value systems, technologies and ideologies first emerged in western Europe and then spread to practically every corner of the globe.

If one was to pinpoint a particular moment when the modern world began, one has to go back to the late 18th century and start with the figures who first formulated the ideas and the ideals that we cherish today – even if they are very problematic ideals. These are ideas associated with what we'd now call the Enlightenment, which were institutionalised in the ideals of the French Revolution. Many different countries then attempted to 'catch up' with the ideals and systems of western Europe – a process now manifest almost universally.

You structure your analysis of the Enlightenment around two key figures: Voltaire and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. What is emblematic about them and their rivalry?
That was the genesis of the book. We think about modern history so much in terms of class conflict, east versus west,

Narendra Modi, prime minister of India, gives a speech in 2016. "Modi's election is the point at which I began to think we had entered – or perhaps had always been living in – an age of anger," says Pankaj Mishra

imperialism and racism – but one thing the present shares with the late 18th century is a distrust of elites. There's an idea that there is a well-educated minority of people who are imposing their value systems on us, and who want us all to follow their prescriptions for society.

The difference between Rousseau and Voltaire is that the former was an outsider in Paris, someone who challenged the prescriptions that were being handed down by the Enlightenment philosophers. He, quite rightly, saw Voltaire as being the embodiment of this particular kind of arrogant reason.

Normally Voltaire is cast as a gadfly who took on the elites, who challenged the Catholic church, who *was* the outsider. But you cast him as sycophantic towards despots such as Frederick the Great and Catherine the Great. Are you saying that Voltaire is the prototype for what angry people might now describe as the 'metropolitan elite'?

He's certainly one of the first embodiments of that kind of confidence and serenity. He was hostile towards tradition, and thought that religion was a huge source of oppression.

We now think of a lot of his attitudes as classically modern: his belief in commerce, for instance, and his own enrichment through trade. It's not surprising that he's an iconic figure for modernity and the modern world. In that sense, I felt that the conflict between Rousseau and Voltaire was much more meaningful than we often assume.

So Rousseau was kicking back against enlightened superiority – but what did he believe mattered instead?

His invocation of 'the people' as, essentially, victims is very important. He practically invented the idea that 'we, the people' are being victimised by this metropolitan elite.

The birth of the modern world was marked by exhortations to change and urbanise, and what Rousseau was saying was: "Well, what about us – the people? Here we are, living our simple lives, being religious in a kind of naive way. Why are you coming in and forcing this process of change upon us?"

Rousseau was very much opposed to the idea of change, seeing it as very disruptive, as forcing people to be something that they could not properly be. He summed up very early on many of the themes with which we are still struggling today.

We tend to think of this form of modernity as being unsettling for people in non-European civilisations, but you describe the German reaction to Napoleon's invasion as "the first jihad".

Yes – and this was a really important point for me. When you come from somewhere such as India – and I experienced this with my previous books – whatever you say is identified too complacently with 'the east', or with Asia, and people start thinking of this whole question in terms of east versus west.

What I was trying to say here, by invoking Germany, is that there was, once upon a time, a 'west' from which Germany was excluded, a 'west' by which Germans felt humiliated. So if you want to understand the experiences of the Russians or the Indians or the Chinese today, let's go back to the first people who felt excluded from modernity.

And it's the Germans, in the wake of their humiliation at the hands of Napoleon, who really developed ideas of nationalism that would also be fed into the mix.

Absolutely. Napoleon, in a way, initiated a process – of a kind of mimetic politics – of

MODI & THE BJP: A BRIEF HISTORY

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which leads India's ruling National Democratic Alliance coalition government, is a rightwing party formed in 1980 with policies informed by Hindu nationalism (around 80% of India's population is Hindu). Narendra Modi, leader of the BJP, was elected prime minister in May 2014. Formerly chief minister for Gujarat state, Modi has been accused of complicity in widespread anti-Muslim violence that flared across Gujarat after 59 people, mostly Hindu pilgrims, died in a train fire alleged to be a result of arson committed by a Muslim mob.

GETTY IMAGES

A contemporary etching showing the triumphal entry of French forces into Berlin during the Napoleonic wars. The experiences of the Germans at the hands of Napoleon led to ideas of nationalism that remain potent today, Mishra suggests

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"We have seen the pattern of educated young men turning to radical causes in one country after another"

which we still haven't seen the end. The French invented the nation state with a strong military and a sense of patriotism, and everyone – even those opposing Napoleon – wanted to be like him and to adopt his methods.

What's crucial, particularly in light of what we've been saying about Modi, is the German, Romantic idea that the key to being authentic lies in the deep past. German poets and philosophers looked back past the Enlightenment to the primal origins of the Germans, for instance.
Absolutely – and it was at least partly a response to the assertion that the past is of no consequence, or something to be outgrown. In the German-speaking provinces, people were actually quite close to their pasts.

At the same time, they started inventing genealogies for those pasts – which in a way was the beginning of modern nationalism. Practically every nationality in the world emerged from some sort of fraudulent claim of that kind, and it became a great existential necessity for people who came late to the modern world. Practically everyone wants to be seen as a teacher for the rest of humanity, and you can see, in almost comic terms, that every people thinks *they* are the chosen ones.

Russia is a nation that did not become an organic part of what we might call the modern west. You cast it as the paradigm of a society that has confronted this turbulent process – that it blazed a course for other civilisations.
I think that Russia is hugely important in that respect. In a way it was an early example of the tormented process of becoming more like the west with which countries in Asia and Africa are still struggling. It's a process that inflicts psychic injuries: you start to essentially dislike the people that you want to be more like. So you can never quite escape this oscillation between self-hatred and a hatred projected towards the west, towards the people who are your models.

You can see this manifested in the unresolved identity of Russia's people today: do they belong to Asia or Europe? Do they want to be more like the west, or refer to a particular past and religion that entitles them to a very distinctive identity?

This also manifests itself in political terms. Russia was a largely peasant country trying to become modern. That unleashes the particular pathology of the educated young man, outside of the power elite and disconnected from the peasant masses by virtue of education, who becomes a revolutionary. We have seen this pattern – of educated young men turning to radical causes – in one country after another in Asia and Africa, most prominently in Muslim countries.

Do you think, then, there is a response to the pressures of modernity that generates terror as a kind of escape?
There are obviously many factors at work, but essentially the pressure to be something other than what you are, a pressure to conform to a different mode of life, always leads to a reaction and a backlash.

It can take many different forms: people declaring holy war, as in 19th-century Germany, or engaging in what we now call jihad – a war for freedom, as we see with the Chechens in mid-19th century Russia. It can also take a much more insidious form: that of self-hatred, finding various agents of modernity around you – whether Jewish people or rootless cosmopolitans – and unloading your hatred on them.

And, of course, despite the differences it felt, at least Russia shared its religion – Christianity – in common with 'western' powers. Presumably, the implication of all of this is that psychic tensions are much greater in non-Christian civilisations.
Muslims in the 19th century were aware of the fact that, wherever they travelled in a large swathe of territory, they'd find mosques and Muslim rulers, and saw themselves as part of the larger cultural world. For those people, the experience of modern forms of imperialism was even more humiliating.

Something I really wanted to point out was that even the Germans, who share so much with their neighbours, came up with the most vicious response to French imperialism and Napoleon. They worked up the most vicious forms of hatred, and some of their best writers and thinkers dealt in the language of hatred. So it's important to understand – though

Mishra and Holland met in London in late 2016. "This history feels very intimate, because it's a way of understanding the strands of my own identity," says Mishra

not condone – some of the pathological reactions that emerge from non-Christian, non-western parts of the world because of the external pressures caused by changes of lifestyle, language and politics.

What we've been seeing is a kind of pushback to that, which cannot be neatly mapped along east–west lines.

Yet, having said that, there is obviously a cultural division between the western world and the Muslim world – even though to talk about it in monolithic terms is, of course, ridiculous. How has the Muslim world experienced being absorbed into European colonial empires, and the cultural influences brought by western dominance?

The processes are more or less simultaneous: the loss of political sovereignty is accompanied by a loss of intellectual confidence. Germany might have been a very different place, for instance, if it had been occupied for more than a few years. Countries in the Muslim world have, in some cases, been occupied for decades. To have had a kind of cultural colonialism at work all that time is bound to have had an impact.

"The turmoil that we used to locate in Iran or India is now erupting within the heart of the modern west"

Does this mean that, for non-western civilisations, the ambition to return to a pre-modern form is hopeless?
It's a total fantasy. Too much has changed for us to plausibly imagine ourselves as becoming, for instance, less modern, more Muslim or more Hindu. One reason why so many nationalisms and religious fundamentalisms are so violent today is because there's an awareness that the project is hopeless. There has been too big a break in the way in which we think about the world: the sense that our horizons are defined in terms of a presence of a God – and that everything surrounding us is his creation – is gone. We are all irredeemably secularised, no matter how hard we try to be religious.

A charge that might be levelled against you – ironically, because you're from India – is that yours is a very Eurocentric perspective. Essentially, you're saying that it's almost impossible for people to escape western European influences.
I don't find the charge of Eurocentricism that offensive. My argument is that, actually, we've not been Eurocentric enough – that we have not explored enough the way in which Eurocentricism has pervaded practically every religion and ideology in the past 200 years. So I'd say: thank you – I'd actually like to be *more* Eurocentric.

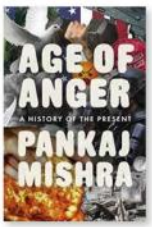
At the start of the book you describe yourself as a "stepchild of the west". Presumably, then, this book is personal for you – not just a study of the past 200 years, but also a study of tensions that exist within you?
That's very insightful. In many respects this history feels very intimate, because it's a way of understanding the strands of my own identity, of recognising the tensions and contradictions within my own being. This history has made me who I am, and worked upon people I love, including my parents: it both made them a bit lost and gave them chances that their parents did not have.

There's a sense that Modi represents a kickback against what the British and previous Islamic rulers brought – an attempt to revert to a primal form of Hindu civilisation. That desire to cast off foreign influences and claim back indigenous control is a response to western supremacy that we see a lot across the world, but the irony is that, in a sense, it is also what Brexit is about. Perhaps the processes unleashed by the west in other civilisations are now unleashing similar processes in the very heart of the west.
That's absolutely true. What that process has done, in the past year or so, is destroy a lot of our old categories of thought and familiar oppositions: liberalism versus fundamentalism, secularism versus religion, Islam versus modernity.

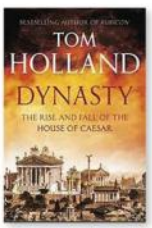
What we are witnessing today is the turbulence and turmoil that we used to locate in Iran or Iraq, India or Egypt, erupting within the heart of the modern west. We've seen people making essentially fundamentalist claims of needing to 'take back' their country: essentially, a fantasy of a sovereign people who have their own well-defined culture and to which outsiders can never belong. Now that we've seen those fantasies emerge volcanically in Europe, I'd argue that we need to be more Eurocentric – while recognising what we mean by Eurocentricism is changing profoundly.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Pankaj Mishra is an essayist, historian and author. His latest book is *Age of Anger: A History of the Present* (Allen Lane, 2017). For more, see *pankajmishra.com*



Tom Holland is a critically acclaimed historian and presenter of BBC Radio 4's *Making History*. His books include *Dynasty: The Rise and Fall of the House of Caesar* (Little, Brown, 2015)



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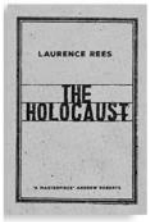
Book Reviews

Charting the horrors

Roger Moorhouse *praises an admirable attempt to chronicle the cruelties and complexities of the Holocaust in a single, accessible volume*



The Holocaust
by Laurence Rees
Penguin, 512 pages, £25

Surprisingly, perhaps, the Holocaust is still a subject wreathed in misconceptions and confusion. For proof, one need only read the work of journalists who habitually preface every story on the topic by mentioning the six million killed "in the gas chambers", seemingly unaware that only around half of that total were actually gassed. Accuracy is important for its own sake, of course, but in this case it is all the more critical because the Holocaust's very existence is persistently denied by a bovine, sinister few. So, for that reason at least, an accessible, reliable, single-volume history – such as this from Laurence Rees – is very welcome.

Rees is well suited to his task. As well as his acclaimed volumes on Auschwitz and Second World War diplomacy, he is known primarily for his stewardship of the BBC's history programming, in which capacity he has amassed an enviable archive of interview material with veterans, survivors and perpetrators. Those accounts provide the leaven and the novelty to his account.

In a briskly written, engaging narrative, Rees traces the progress of the Holocaust from the biological racism that permeated the smoke-filled beer halls of the city of Munich to its murderous denouement. His account is punctuated throughout with eyewitness testimony that is moving and terrifying in equal measure.

We read, for instance, of Israel Abelesz, a 14-year-old Hungarian Jewish boy, who was wished a happy birthday by a smiling SS man upon his arrival at Birkenau just as his mother and younger brother were sent to their deaths. Or of Thomas 'Toivi' Blatt, who was forced to sort through the belongings of the dead at Sobibór death camp in occupied Poland. After the murder of 3,000 Dutch Jews in one night, Blatt looked up at the sky in incomprehension: "Three thousand people died," he recalled, "and nothing happened. The stars are in the same place."

The perpetrators are also represented. Rees tells us, for instance, of the sadistic SS guards who tortured their victims by shooting children in front of their mothers or, for sport, tried to kill three

Rees's account is punctuated with eyewitness testimony that is moving and terrifying in equal measure

Personal property taken by the Nazis from prisoners held at Auschwitz concentration camp. Laurence Rees's study of the Holocaust "is extremely welcome", says Roger Moorhouse

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prisoners with a single shot. He writes of the death camp commandant, also a doctor, who was perversely "proud" of his "achievements". SS chief Himmler, of course, would not have been repulsed by such depravity. To his mind, Germany was living in an "iron time" and had "to sweep with iron brooms".

Though Rees does not dwell on the Holocaust's often-contested historiography, he nonetheless has a clear-eyed, no-nonsense approach to the issue. He declares the intentionalist school of thought – which subscribes to the idea that the Holocaust progressed to a deliberate programme orchestrated by Hitler – to be unconvincing, preferring (quite plausibly) to portray the development of the Holocaust as an organic process driven more by gradual escalations and local initiatives than central directives. This approach, although scarcely new, has the benefit of helping to explain the often bizarrely disorganised nature of events, with various methods of extermination overlapping and sometimes being used simultaneously, even at the same site.

Shortcomings within the book are few. The first-hand material is very strong, but it might have been used with a lighter touch and a dash more context. Sometimes less really is more. In addition, it would have been interesting to read a little more than the couple of pages presented on the thorny issue of what the German people knew of the grim events being described. Rees has done well to cover the myriad strands of a complex subject, but it seems that this aspect has escaped scrutiny somewhat.

The only real caveat with the book is that it seems to come to a rather abrupt end. After pacing his account well for more than 400 pages, Rees almost appears to run out of steam, covering the final six months of the war – including the horror of the death marches and the chaos of liberation, as well as his own conclusions – in barely 20 pages.

So, Laurence Rees's *Holocaust* certainly has its small flaws and, for this reason, is perhaps not the final word on the subject. Nonetheless, it contains a wealth of new eyewitness material and is an admirable and largely successful attempt at an accessible synthesis of a huge subject.

Roger Moorhouse is a historian and author whose books include *The Devils' Alliance: Hitler's Pact with Stalin, 1939–1941* (The Bodley Head, 2014)

Five minutes with... Laurence Rees

What led you to write this book?
Over the past 25 years I have read many astonishing Holocaust memoirs and a number of insightful academic histories of the crime, but I had not found a general work that combined the emotional power of first-hand interview testimony with an analysis of the machinations of the Nazi state in quite the way that I intended. Thus I hope I have written a new history of the Holocaust that is both accessible and authoritative. Whether I have succeeded, of course, is up to the reader to decide!

Your book features a great deal of previously unpublished testimony. Do any stories particularly stand out?
The great privilege of my working life has been to meet extraordinary people who were part of this history. For example, I recently met a man called Tadeusz Smreczyński in Kraków. He was imprisoned during the war, first in Auschwitz and then in a concentration camp in Austria, and he had a revelation when he was in Nazi hands: he decided that the only purpose of life had to be to try to "do good". So after the war he became a revered doctor. He is a man of incredible principle. Postwar, he refused to join the Communist party in Poland and, although his career suffered as a result, he stood firm. He is an amazing man. I admire him hugely.

What new view of the Holocaust would you like your book to give?
I hope readers take a lot from the book, of course. Not just the powerful and often inspirational stories of people such as Smreczyński, but also an understanding of the twists and turns of Nazi policy that led to the Holocaust. This immense crime was not decided in a straightforward way but via an interaction between a vision from above – from Adolf Hitler – and initiatives from below. Hitler was the man most responsible, but many others were guilty as well. This was the most appalling crime in the history of the world, and I think that we all need to understand how it could happen.

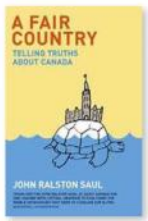
What the world is reading right now

GERMANY

As a group, historians move slowly and the German branch is no exception. Though the recent public controversy over immigration in Europe has sparked a number of books by novelists, politicians and sociologists, historians figure less prominently. Yet the continuing popularity of global history still resonates with the current debate. Ever since 2014's *The Transformation of the World* by Jürgen Osterhammel, new titles have sprung up that echo that magisterial account of 19th-century history. Among them is **Die Unterwerfung der Welt**, Wolfgang Reinhardt's attempt to cover no fewer than six centuries of European expansion.

Kim Christian Priemel is the author of *The Betrayal: The Nuremberg Trials and German Divergence* (OUP, 2016)

CANADA



Scores of writers have tried to summarise the essence of the sprawling nation of Canada, their titles featuring phrases such as "the peaceable kingdom' and 'a cautious country". No work has generated more comment, both positive and negative, than John Ralston Saul's **A Fair Country: Telling Truths about Canada** (Viking Canada, 2008). "We are a Métis civilisation," he declared at the outset of his book, arguing that negotiation and a sense of fairness are essential Canadian values based on the integration of indigenous and settler societies. While this generalisation is a stretch for those who recognise the darker side of Canada's past, the 1867 constitutional injunction of "peace, order, and good government" remains a goal for many Canadians as they celebrate 2017's sesquicentennial of their nation.

Margaret Conrad is a historian and professor emerita at the University of New Brunswick, Canada

Building blocks

***Benjamin Houston** is swept along by a spirited history of New York City during one of its most pivotal decades*

Gotham Rising: New York in the 1930s
by Jules Stewart
IB Tauris, 288 pages, £20

In this breezy, readable frolic of a book, Jules Stewart explores the central contradiction inherent in the decade pivotal to the making of modern New York City. How is it, he wonders, that in the 1930s – the same years that the Great Depression bit hardest in terms of economic suffering – the city's physical brawn and cultural prowess flourished as never before? Although never quite providing a single definitive answer, he celebrates the range of examples that animate the question.

Dizzyingly embodied by the newly built Chrysler Building and Rockefeller Center, and with a similarly breathtaking array of cultural flowering embodied in swing bands, art scenes and literary outputs, the decade established the city we think of today. From breathlessly listing the Mafia mobsters who gunned their way to the top of the city's underworld to cataloguing the tonnages of steel that made up the various skyscrapers popping up all over the city, the book has a similar pace to New York City itself: frenetic, but nonetheless more energising than exhausting.

Stewart covers varied topics, from the tumultuous relationship between post-depression mayor Fiorello LaGuardia and Robert Moses, the powerful urban planner who reshaped the city on an epic scale, to the progressive politics debated in Greenwich Village. A diverse cast of characters features along the way: jazz artists, architects, essayists, financiers, patrons and businessmen. Stewart is equally comfortable describing the art decorating the Waldorf Astoria hotel lobbies as he is detailing the construction of the Empire State Building. While the emphasis remains firmly on 'the great and the good', the book also touches briefly on ethnic settlement patterns as immigrants flooded into the city, leading to both assimilation and occasional tension.

Overall, Stewart's book reads as an open love letter to the city. Big Apple aficionados and fans of well-written history alike will enjoy both this book's wide-ranging scope and its easy accessibility – and start planning their next trip to the city.

The Empire State Building nears completion in late 1930/ early 1931. Jules Stewart's look at New York's history is an "open love letter to the city"

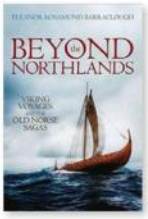
GETTY IMAGES

Benjamin Houston is senior lecturer in modern US history at Newcastle University

An Icelandic illumination showing the Norwegian king Harald Fairhair cutting the chains between himself and a giant. Eleanor Rosamund Barraclough's book explores what such tall tales tell us about the Viking perception of the world

From the Norse's mouth

***Philip Parker** enjoys an evocatively written exploration of the Viking sagas – and what these reveal about how they saw the world*



Beyond the Northlands: Viking Voyages and the Old Norse Sagas
by Eleanor Rosamund Barraclough
OUP, 352 pages, £25

In a sense, the Vikings invented popular history. Fierce warriors who erupted from their Scandinavian homelands in the eighth century to inflict a 150-year reign of terror on the coastlines of north-west Europe, they have long endured a reputation as thuggish and uncultured barbarians.

Yet, in the shape of the sagas, they also left one of medieval Europe's richest surviving literatures: epic accounts of the heroic (and on occasion decidedly unheroic) deeds of Viking kings, warriors and womenfolk. Eleanor Rosamund Barraclough's new book explores Viking history through the medium of these tales, which bear all the hallmarks of the oral storyteller's zest for exaggeration, boastfulness and bravado at the expense of small-minded regard for the facts.

Similarly disregarding the dry-as-dust approach to history, Barraclough does not try to provide us with a consistent narrative or chronicle of raids, campaigns and exploration. Instead she asks a simple question of the Vikings: "What did *they* think of the world, the people, and the civilisations that they encountered?"

The answers take readers on a exhilarating ride through some of the more unusual corners of Norse history. These range from (in Barraclough's words) the "handful of malevolent zombies" who were said to have chased a shipwrecked Viking crew through the frozen wastes of eastern Greenland, to the "apple-throwing man sporting a bird-beak, and a mysterious beast with a tower strapped in his back" encountered by the war-band leader Yngvar while on a raiding expedition to the east of Russia (what had probably been seen was an elephant and its riding-seat).

All these episodes are, however, firmly anchored to historically verifiable events. The Vikings *did* colonise Greenland, though their settlements mysteriously faded away at some point in the 15th century, and Yngvar's expedition is attested to by numerous runestones in Scandinavia set up in memory of those who perished during it.

Yet what makes *Beyond the Northlands* so effective is Barraclough's clear relish for the retelling of the sagas, and her lightness of touch in producing a real sense of the vastness and diversity of the world that the Vikings inhabited. The resulting book is a vibrant account that evokes the spirit of the Viking age in a thoroughly entertaining, yet historically sound, fashion.

Philip Parker is the author of *The Northmen's Fury: A History of the Viking World* (Jonathan Cape, 2014)

GETTY IMAGES

Socialist women at a rally in New York City in 1908; many were politically active at that time. Sheila Rowbotham believes that "socialist-feminism is a practical mission, not a utopian dream", says Joanna Bourke

Free radicals

Joanna Bourke *rates a look at the idealists who spread their hopes for a new society across the Atlantic at the dawn of the 20th century*

Rebel Crossings. New Women, Free Lovers, and Radicals in Britain and the United States
by Sheila Rowbotham
Verso, 512 pages, £25

The morning after Donald Trump won the US election, this book appeared in my pigeon hole – and rarely has a book been so welcome. Sheila Rowbotham is a writer for a post-2016 world: she has dedicated her life to grassroots activism aimed at creating more equitable societies. For Rowbotham, history is both political and personal: socialist-feminism is a practical mission, not a utopian dream, and she uses her writings to promote this vision.

Rebel Crossings tells the story of six leftwing British and American idealists as they worked for personal and societal betterment at the turn of the 20th century. Rowbotham follows them as they move around the UK and criss-cross the Atlantic: Bristol, Belfast, California, Dunfermline, Edinburgh, London, Manchester and Massachusetts all feature prominently. These are the 'rebel crossings' in her title.

The six individuals of the book will probably not be well known to most readers. They include labour organiser Helena Born, socialist Miriam Daniell, militant unionist Robert Allan Nicol, radical journalist William Bailie, social reformer and 'new woman' Helen Tufts, and socialist-feminist novelist Gertrude Dix. These brief descriptions, of course, fail to do justice to the complexity of these extraordinary individuals' political lives. They were ideologically eclectic, engaging in passions as diverse as socialism, feminism, Fabianism, theosophy, spiritualism, free love and anarchism – to name just a few. They pursued freedom and individuality.

Of course, there were casualties: rifts developed between lovers; mistakes were made. But the book celebrates their achievements. Readers are encouraged to listen as radical men and women lustily sing along to *Equal Rights Forever*; join with workers at the British Workman Coffee House to discuss labour strikes; engage with debates about how radical mysticism can win against 'mechanistic materialism', and much else besides.

It is a lively read. Rowbotham confesses that she is a "nosy person", which means that readers are sometimes overwhelmed by an excess of inconsequential information. But the story is a heartening one. Today we are probably not going to join Rowbotham's individuals in discussing such matters as 'Is socialism inevitable?', but the debate about 'Why women should organise' is more relevant than ever. Though she wrote the book before the Brexit referendum and the election of Trump, Rowbotham admits that she finds it "ineffably baffling" that radical struggles have not materialised. However, this is an optimistic book that attests to the strength of solidarity. It is a celebration of wild courage and personal passion.

Joanna Bourke is professor of history at Birkbeck, University of London, and the author of *The Story of Pain* (OUP, 2014)

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Agenda

EXHIBITIONS, TV, FILMS AND MORE

THOMAS ANDREW– MUSEUM OF NEW ZEALAND TE PAPA TONGAREWA

ALTERED IMAGES

The portrayal of Maori and Pacific peoples in art since the 18th century is the subject of an exhibition at the Museum of New Zealand (Te Papa Tongarewa) in Wellington. Paintings, prints and artefacts reveal how artists would often deliberately exaggerate the exoticism of their subjects by adding adornments to their works – from Samoan customary *tatau*, or tattoos, to the use of *taonga* – highly treasured objects – as props. Works on display include headdresses, tattooing equipment and photos such as this studio portrait of an unknown Samoan woman from c1896, who has been dressed in customary garb to satisfy a growing market for 'exotic' imagery.

Adorned, until 26 February at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington
tepapa.govt.nz/visit/whats-on/exhibitions/nga-toi-arts-te-papa/adorned

This 18th-century Torah crown, ornately decorated with musical instruments, features in an exhibition of Venice's Jewish history

THE FIRST GHETTO

In 1516, the world's first institutionalised ghetto was created in Venice, allowing the Jewish minority to settle permanently in the city for the first time (indeed, that district's name became used for all such areas in other cities). Marking five centuries since the creation of the Venetian ghetto, a new exhibition in Jerusalem features some of the lavish ceremonial objects that once graced the synagogues of that neighbourhood.

Venetian Splendor: Marking 500 Years of the Venice Ghetto, until 30 June at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem *imj.org.il/exhibitions*

The Dutch trade in tulips, here depicted in a 19th-century painting, is at the heart of a new historical drama

A BLOSSOMING ROMANCE

During the 'tulip mania' of the 17th century, the value of that flower's bulbs soared beyond reason. The tulip's status as a luxury item, and the introduction of ever-more exotic species, saw prices skyrocket; by 1636, the tulip bulb had become the Dutch Republic's fourth-leading export. At the peak of the frenzy in March 1637, a single bulb could cost more than 10 times the annual salary of a skilled craftsman. But later that year the tulip bubble burst, crippling the finances of many Dutch businessmen.

A new film, *Tulip Fever*, is set against the highly charged backdrop of Amsterdam's tulip boom. Unhappily married noblewoman Sophia Sandvoort (Alicia Vikander), who has recently married into money made from the tulip trade, falls in love with artist Jan Van Loos (Dane DeHaan), who is painting a portrait of Sophia and her husband. The two embark on a heated affair and formulate an elaborate plan in which Sophia will switch identities with her maid to escape her ageing husband. Their hearts set on a future together, the pair decide to invest in the risky tulip market to raise funds for their escapade – with dramatic consequences.

Based on the bestselling novel by Deborah Moggach and directed by Justin Chadwick (known for 2008's *The Other Boleyn Girl*), the film looks to capture the luxury and decadence of 17th-century Amsterdam.

Tulip Fever, from 24 February (US and Canada), 30 March (Germany)

COURTESY OF THE ISRAEL MUSEUM/BRIDGEMAN/ROBERT HARDING

Japan's ancient Kasuga Taisha shrine is the focus of an exhibition in Tokyo

TEMPLE TREASURES

Now a Unesco World Heritage site, the eighth-century Kasuga Taisha shrine in Nara, in Japan's Kansai region, was originally built to secure the protection and prosperity of the nation's people, and remains a prominent and revered site. A new exhibition at the Tokyo National Museum features treasures from and relating to the shrine, including paintings and sculptures, as well as swords, arms and armour from Japan's medieval period.

Eternal Treasures from Kasuga Taisha Shrine, until 12 March at the Tokyo National Museum, Japan *tnm.jp*

The PBS drama *Mercy Street*, executive-produced by film director Ridley Scott, has been praised for its handling of issues of ethnicity and slavery

NORTH VERSUS SOUTH

Television period drama *Mercy Street* has returned to US channel PBS for a second season. The series follows the lives of abolitionist Mary Phinney and Confederate supporter Emma Green, both volunteer nurses working at the Union-run Mansion House Hospital in Alexandria, Virginia, during the American Civil War of 1861–65.

Picking up directly from the dramatic events of the first-season finale, the new run takes viewers even closer to the battlefield, covering some of the conflict's key confrontations including the Seven Days' Battle and Antietam. In the war-torn, Union-occupied city of Alexandria, Virginia – on the border between North and South – residents struggle to adapt to a new way of life. Meanwhile, formerly enslaved African-American people find that freedom isn't quite what they imagined it to be, as they are forced to experience the terrible living conditions and disease prevalent in a Union contraband camp.

Inspired by real memoirs and letters written by wartime doctors and nurses at Mansion House Hospital, many of the series' characters are also based on real people from the period. With critics and historians praising the show's attention to detail – down to hairstyles and costumes – as well as its historical and medical accuracy and handling of social issues, the second season looks set to be just as popular as the first.

The second series of **Mercy Street** is currently showing on PBS in the United States. Season one is now available on DVD and via download and streaming services (depending on country)

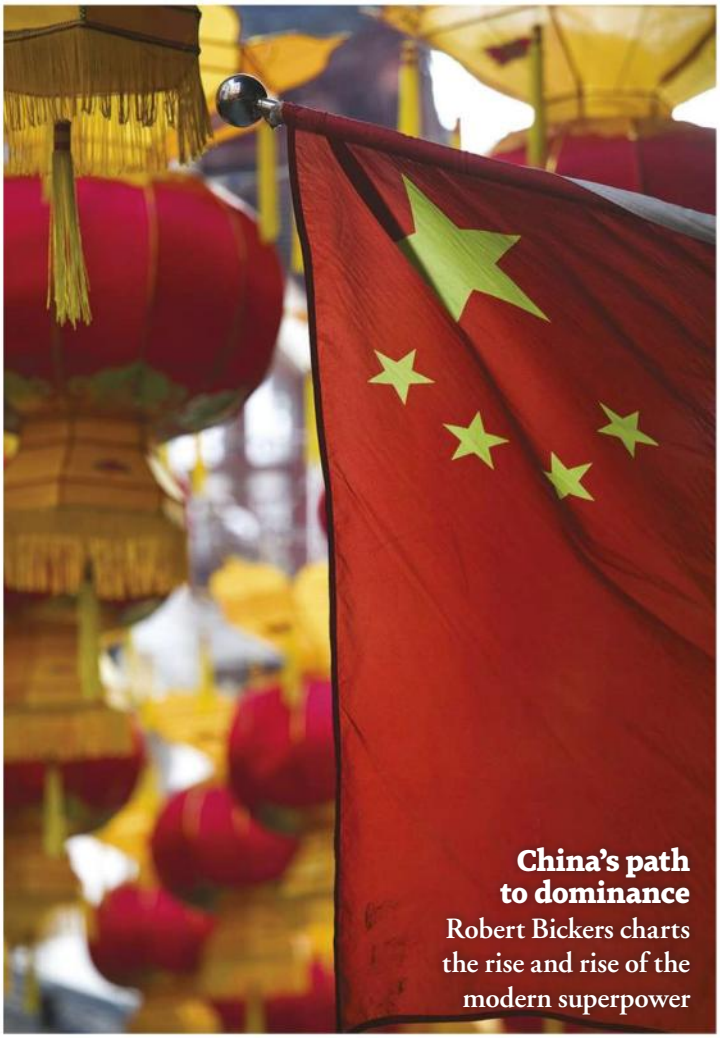
REFORMS AND REVOLUTION

The 19th-century Ksar Saïd Palace, a former residence of Tunisia's Husainid dynasty in the Tunis suburb of Bardo, is now open to the public for the first time. A new exhibition here explores the period of major reforms that led to the creation of the modern Tunisian state in 1861. Almost 300 works are on display, including paintings, medals and manuscripts.

The Rise of a Nation: Art at the Dawn of Modern Tunisia, until 27 February at Ksar Saïd Palace, Tunis, Tunisia

Visitors admire artefacts at Ksar Saïd Palace, which has recently opened to the public for the first time

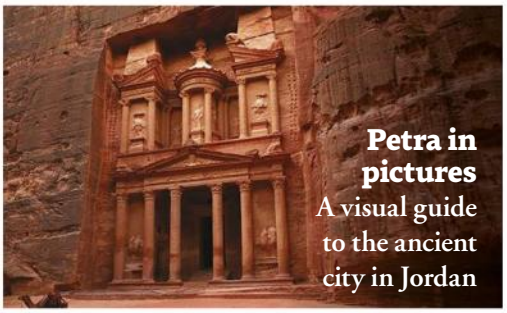
Our third issue explores more vital stories, key issues and major players from throughout our global past



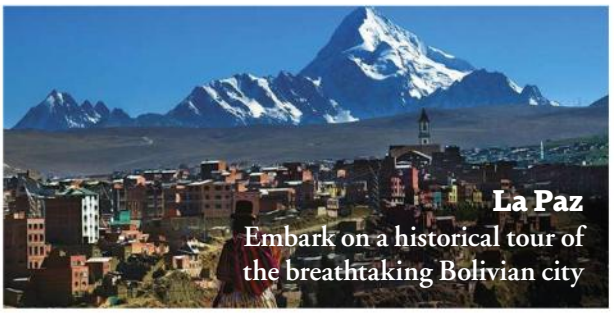
China's path to dominance
Robert Bickers charts the rise and rise of the modern superpower

The 1986 Reykjavík Summit
Behind the scenes with both sides at the talks that aimed to reduce nuclear weapons

Have empires been a force for good?
Seven experts tackle another of history's biggest questions



Petra in pictures
A visual guide to the ancient city in Jordan



La Paz
Embark on a historical tour of the breathtaking Bolivian city

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DON'T MISS OUT

Journeys

Stories and sights from global history

In the footsteps of…

The British invasion of Tibet

In 1903, a British military expedition crossed into the long-isolated and inhospitable land of Tibet – but the pseudo-diplomatic mission became a bloody assault. **Robert Twigger** describes the story of Sir Francis Younghusband's invasion

"Almost all foreigners were forbidden. Only Buddhists were permitted to visit this isolated land"

GETTY IMAGES

The Tibetan plateau lies at an altitude averaging over 4,500 metres above sea level. Younghusband's expedition among these lofty peaks faced bitter cold and altitude sickness, as well as defiant Tibetans →

Late in 1903, a handful of Nepalese yak herders strayed across the (unmarked) northern border. Unfortunately that incursion was into Tibet. They were met by a party of armed men who promptly dispersed their yaks. Not very friendly – but hardly a just precursor to what followed: the invasion of Tibet by a British force.

Tibet was – and still is – a land famed for its remote location and harsh terrain. Much of it occupies a high plateau from 3,000 to 5,000 metres above sea level; travellers arriving across the high passes of the Himalaya are liable to suffer altitude sickness, and for centuries could expect a welcome as chilly as the climate. At the start of the 20th century Tibet was a theocratic state ruled by lamas (highly venerated religious leaders), and almost all foreigners were forbidden. Only Buddhists could expect to be permitted to visit this isolated land.

For decades Britain and Russia had been involved in the political tussle in central Asia known as the Great Game. Tibet acted as a buffer between India and Russia, but Britain had become concerned that the Chinese – who had considerable influence in Tibet, and considered it part of their empire – might allow Russia to gain control there. Despite British requests, it had become clear that China was unable to make Tibet comply with demands for negotiations.

By 1903 the viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, had determined that only an armed invasion would make Tibet bow to British imperialism. The euphemistically named Tibet Frontier Commission was formed with the aim of forcing the Tibetans to sign an accord. De facto leader of the mission was the political officer, Colonel Francis Younghusband, who arrived in the state of Sikkim, in north-east India, in July and formed an expedition force with Brigadier-General James Macdonald as military commander. But they needed a casus belli – and the aggression met by those Nepalese yak herders was enough.

In December 1903, Younghusband and Macdonald mustered a force of around 1,000 fighting troops – European officers plus Gurkhas, Punjabis and Pathans as well as Sikh Pioneers and Indian Army engineers – along with 2,000 support soldiers, 7,000 'coolies', or porters, and 2,953 yaks and 7,000 mules to carry baggage (Younghusband alone took 67 shirts and 18 pairs of boots and shoes). Crossing the border, the expedition ascended to the Tibetan Plateau en route to the capital, Lhasa.

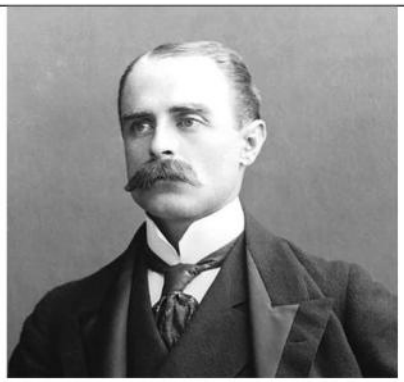
Brutal conditions

The invasion force continued unopposed for some 50 miles to the Tuna plain, where they decided to overwinter. Unsurprisingly, conditions were tough: at night, temperatures plummeted so low that oil froze in rifle bolts. Some soldiers had 'Gilgit' boots – quilted, wool-lined affairs – but many, under the arcane rules of the army, 'did not qualify'. Some suffered severe frostbite, and 11 died of pneumonia. The men slept in tents and hastily constructed huts, and food was cooked on fires made of yak dung. Food supplies were transported from Darjeeling or bought locally – salted meat, flour and ghee (clarified butter) being staples.

Tibetan delegates visited and repeatedly delivered the same message: before any negotiations could take place, Younghusband's mission must retreat to Yatung at the Sikkim border.

The viceroy, of course, refused. So the Tibetans built a 1.5-metre-high wall →

At night, temperatures plummeted so low that oil froze in rifle bolts, and 11 men died of pneumonia



GETTY IMAGES

Sir Francis Edward Younghusband: Soldier, spy, explorer and mystic

Francis Younghusband (1863–1942) was born in Murree, British India, **son of a general in the Indian army**. Taken to England at a very young age, he was schooled at Clifton College, Bristol.

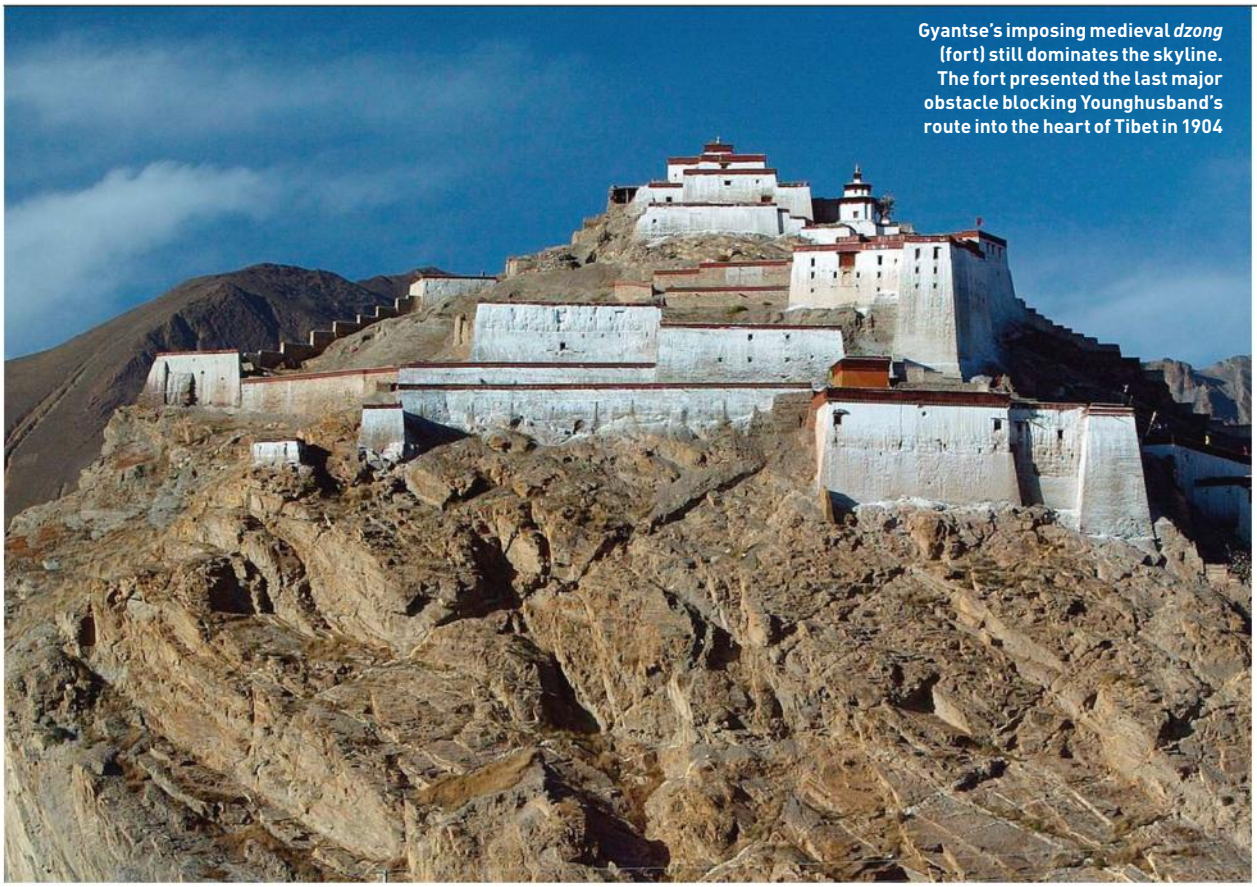
By nature inclined towards cavalry patrol work – ahead of the main force, on reconnaissance – in 1882 he **joined the King's Dragoon Guards** in Meerut. In 1886 he received six months' leave to **travel to Manchuria**, making his remarkable return **journey alone through Inner Mongolia and Sinkiang** (now Xinjiang) in western China, crossing the Mustagh Pass to reach Kashmir. After news of his journey spread, he became famous, aged just 25.

In the 1890s Younghusband travelled widely in Chinese Turkestan, pursuing **the 'Great Game' – spying on Russia** to thwart its ambitions of securing a warm-water port south of Afghanistan. In 1903 he was **appointed head of the Tibet Frontier Commission** by Lord Curzon.

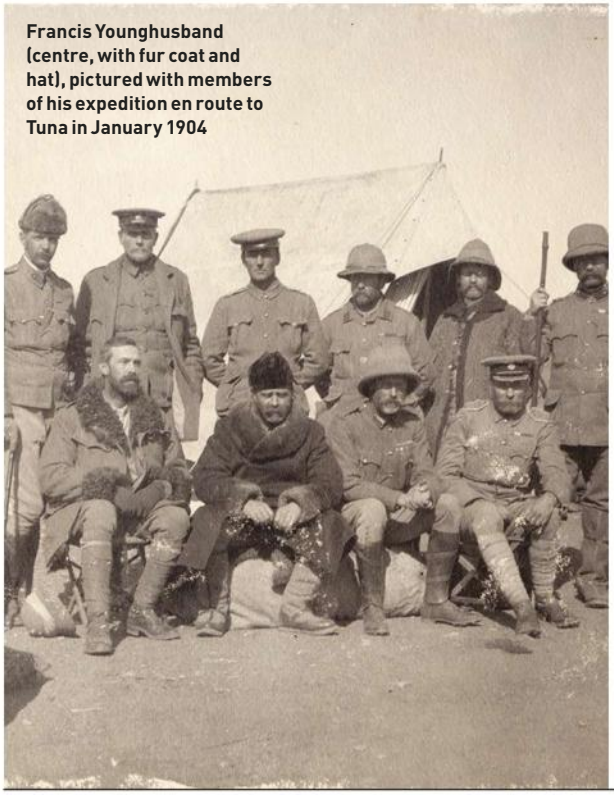
Leading the invasion of Tibet in 1903–4 was the highpoint of his career; after that he was largely sidelined, serving in Kashmir and running the First World War 'Fight for Right' campaign (which **commissioned the song 'Jerusalem'** in 1916). In 1919 he was made president of the Royal Geographical Society and **founded the Mount Everest Committee**. His interest in the Himalayas was the key force behind the 1924 Mallory and Irvine summit attempt.

A committed mystic who had several spiritual experiences in the Himalayas, in 1936 Younghusband **founded the World Congress of Faiths**, dedicated to quelling antagonism between religions. He died in Dorset in 1942 after suffering a stroke.

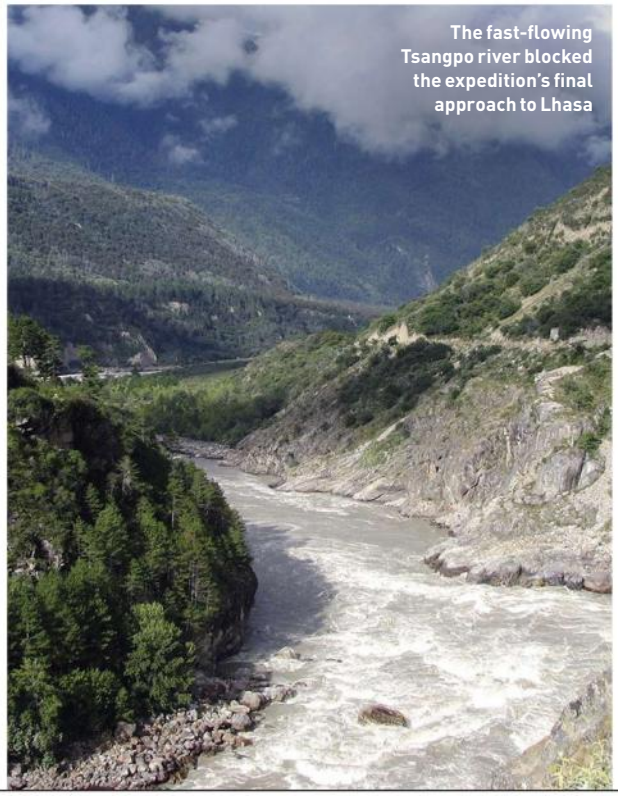
ILLUSTRATION BY **THERESA GRIEBEN**



Gyantse's imposing medieval *dzong* (fort) still dominates the skyline. The fort presented the last major obstacle blocking Younghusband's route into the heart of Tibet in 1904



Francis Younghusband (centre, with fur coat and hat), pictured with members of his expedition en route to Tuna in January 1904



The fast-flowing Tsangpo river blocked the expedition's final approach to Lhasa

ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES/ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY (WITH IBG)

at Guru pass, some 10 miles beyond Tuna, and waited for their enemy to arrive. The road to Lhasa was effectively blocked.

In March, Younghusband ordered an advance, but stipulated that the troops should hold their fire unless fired upon. The morning of 31 March 1904 was cold and grey, and the mounted infantry were breathless from the effects of altitude, Tuna being 4,400 metres above sea level. But the British troops marched forward towards the wall behind which the massed Tibetan troops were ready to fan out and overwhelm the British.

Massacre at Guru pass

Inch by inch the troops marched closer. Flanking movements by the British positioned Maxim guns and infantry, which bore down on the Tibetans. On the escarpments to either side, grey-clad Tibetan musketeers hiding in hastily built sangars (stone-built fortifications) were hustled out in silence by the 8th Gurkhas and 23rd Sikh Pioneers.

The British began disarming Tibetans "with the good humoured severity that London policemen display on Boat Race night", as a later commentator noted. But disarming men without some kind of prior agreement is always difficult. And Younghusband, for all his experience, missed a vital point: the Tibetans' weapons were not army issue but individually owned broadswords that had been in the same families for generations. One general, about to be relieved of his ancestral sword, reached inside his voluminous belted overcoat, pulled out a revolver and shot a Sikh soldier through the jaw.

In an instant, firing broke out everywhere. Maxims were lazily emptied into the crowd. It was a massacre. Of the Tibetan army – around 1,500 men – possibly 700 lay dead. The British, in contrast, suffered no fatalities and just 12 casualties in total. That pattern was repeated during further skirmishes as the expedition marched towards Lhasa; hundreds of Tibetans were killed in encounters, with few British losses.

The men attempted to cross the Tsangpo river in supposedly unsinkable boats – which capsized, drowning three

On 11 April the expedition reached Gyantse, some 75 miles north of Guru, where the fort presented the last major barrier before Lhasa. After numerous official meetings no progress was made towards an agreement, and the decision was made to move on to Lhasa. In July Younghusband sent an ultimatum to the Tibetans in Gyantse fort: surrender, or suffer a siege. There was no reply.

At 4 o'clock on the morning of 6 July, three columns of infantry crawled through the dark and, under sporadic fire, set charges below the bastion's walls. 'Bubble', an elderly seven-pounder gun, was fired but the fort still stood inviolate.

At 3pm, 10-pounders armed with exploding shells breached the stonework, revealing a tiny black hole. A Gurkha commander, Lieutenant Grant, was first at the breach, closely followed by his havildar (sergeant). Both were hit by bullets and fell 9 metres back down the slope but, despite their wounds, climbed straight back up – and this time made it through the hole, followed by a stream of riflemen. The game was up. Ropes unfurled from the fort as Tibetans sought to escape, and resistance evaporated.

The road was now open to the heart of Tibet. There was, however, one last obstacle: the Tsangpo river at Chaksam, dashing along at 7 knots, wide and deep. At first the expedition attempted to cross in collapsible boats claimed to be unsinkable – but that didn't stop them capsizing, drowning an officer and two Gurkhas. After negotiation, the local system of leather coracles was co-opted, carrying 3,500 men, 3,500 animals and 350 tons of equipment across the torrent in five days.

By now the Tibetans realised that their hand had been forced. When the expedition arrived in Lhasa on 3 August, they discovered that Tibet's leader, the 13th Dalai Lama, had fled to Mongolia. Under pressure, remaining officials reluctantly agreed to sign a convention in his absence in the great audience hall of the Potala Palace – symbolic heart of Lhasa and home of the Dalai Lama.

The hobnailed boots of the British officers found no purchase on the steps to the Audience Hall, worn smooth by centuries of bare human feet. They reportedly had to climb crabwise up the steep steps, as if "negotiating some device at a funfair". But climb they did, and the convention was signed, permitting the British to trade in Yatung, Gyantse and Gartok, and to lodge a permanent British resident in Gyantse. The Tibetans were required to pay a 7,500,000-rupee indemnity, and the Chumbi valley on the Sikkim border was ceded to British India until payment had been received. Younghusband had achieved his goal – though the results were not as he'd hoped.

In fact, no real evidence of a Tibetan-Russian pact was uncovered. After the British left Lhasa, Chinese influence soared, planting the seeds of the 1950 invasion. The diplomat Sir Charles Bell said at the time: "The Tibetans were abandoned to Chinese aggression, an aggression for which the British Military Expedition to Lhasa and subsequent retreat were primarily responsible."

Unlike the tough trek to Lhasa, the march back to Sikkim was a straightforward affair. The British installed a telegraph line, allowing faster communication with Lhasa. The last forbidden country had been stormed and found to be… still a mystery, but not quite the kind they had been expecting.

Robert Twigger is the author of *White Mountain: Real and Imagined Journeys in the Himalayas* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2016)

Global City **Cape Town** South Africa

Africa's 'Mother City'

The kaleidoscopic streets of the Bo-Kaap district are the historic home of Cape Town's Muslim population

The first European settlement in South Africa is an intriguing blend of colonial architecture and apartheid-era heritage. **Tom Hall** explores the history of Cape Town, from the 'Tavern of the Seas' to Mandela's jail

Tom Hall
is a travel writer and editorial director of Lonely Planet publications

There's only really one place to start exploring the dramatically situated 'Mother City' – from the top of Table Mountain ❶. From here, visitors can gaze down on the safe harbour that made this spot the perfect toehold on the continent, and look beyond to see Africa spread before them.

The Cape Peninsula, stretching south towards the Cape of Good Hope, may not truly be the southernmost point on the continent – that honour goes to Cape Agulhas – but for centuries it has symbolised the uttermost end of Africa in the minds of travellers. For now, whether you've taken the cable car or walked up, breathe in the fresh mountain air and savour a world-class panorama charged with stories. To reach the summit mountain, follow the signs to Maclear's Beacon, 5km from the cable-car station.

With your bearings established, it's time to hit the streets of Cape Town, which tell the story of the city's development. The settlement that would become Kaapstad (Cape Town) was established in 1652 as a refuelling point, providing water and food for ships travelling to Asia, by the Dutch East India Company (abbreviated as VOC) – the world's first multinational corporation, and the first to issue shares. The star fort called the Castle of Good Hope ❷, built between 1666 and 1679, is the oldest building in South Africa and is still the headquarters of the army in the Western Cape. Clamber up onto the bastions for the perfect view of the fort's interior and surroundings.

It's a short walk from the castle to Company's Garden ❸, planted as the VOC's vegetable patch in 1652 and now fragrant with the scents of the city's finest rose garden. You'll also find here the Delville Wood Memorial, honouring South African soldiers who fought in the First World War. As a British Dominion, South Africa stood alongside Britain in the conflict, and nearly 150,000 of its troops served in the Middle East, in east Africa and on the western front. This memorial specifically commemorates the 1916 battle of Delville Wood, part of the Somme offensive, in which some 2,500 South African soldiers were killed.

Stroll north-east to Strand Street, one of the oldest in the city, where many townhouses of Cape Colony merchants were built during the centuries of Dutch and British rule, including Koopmans-de Wet House ❹, constructed for a wealthy

AWL IMAGES

Capetonian family in the late 18th century. Now a museum, it showcases the wealth of the city in an era when it was known as the 'Tavern of the Seas' – a party town for sailors revictualling, trading and carousing here.

The city's story isn't all big houses and barracks, though; for centuries, ordinary people arrived as traders, refugees, slaves and soldiers. To discover one facet of this, amble along Strand Street and turn onto Chiappini, Rose and Wale Streets to explore the most picturesque parts of the Bo-Kaap suburb ❺ on the lower slopes of Signal Hill. These colourful low-rise buildings and cobblestone streets have long been home to the city's Cape Malay (often also referred to as Cape Muslim) population, originally freed slaves from south-east Asia, Madagascar and elsewhere. On Wale Street you'll find the Bo-Kaap Museum, an interesting stop where you'll learn more about this area's heritage. The Auwal Mosque is nearby; South Africa's first, it dates from 1794.

Cecil Rhodes dominated the final years of British rule in South Africa; his memorial ❻, standing at his favourite viewpoint on the east side of Table Mountain, is viewed by some as bombastic and grandiose. The simple wooden bench nearby was his own, and is the perfect place to ponder his controversial legacy.

For centuries, ordinary people arrived in Cape Town as traders, refugees, slaves and soldiers

The darkest stain on South Africa's history is, though, the segregation of the apartheid era (1948–91). For a deeper understanding of the issues and events of that time, join the crowds at the site of Nelson Mandela's incarceration on Robben Island ❼, and visit the District Six Museum ❽ in East City, which explains how this multicultural area was dismantled and sets the scene for the many township tours that stop here.

CAPE TOWN IN EIGHT SITES

❶ **Table Mountain**
Panoramic views across old Cape Town
tablemountain.net

❷ **Castle of Good Hope**
17th-century fort, oldest in South Africa
castleofgoodhope.co.za

❸ **Company's Garden**
The VOC's vegetable patch
Queen Victoria Street

❹ **Koopmans-de Wet House**
Beautifully preserved 18th-century home
35 Strand Street
iziko.org.za/museums

❺ **Bo-Kaap district and museum**
Colourful houses of Malay settlers, and museum showcasing Islamic heritage
iziko.org.za/museums

❻ **Rhodes Memorial**
Monument on Table Mountain

❼ **Robben Island**
Infamous apartheid-era jail
robben-island.org.za

❽ **District Six Museum**
More apartheid history
25A Buitenkant Street
districtsix.co.za

ILLUSTRATION BY **TONWEN JONES**

Wonders of the World

Angkor Cambodia

SHUTTERSTOCK/MAP: BATTLEFIELD DESIGN

Towering achievement
The five intricately carved towers of Angkor Wat, the tallest rising to 65 metres high, dominate the skyline of Angkor. Consecrated around 1150 as a temple to the Hindu god Vishnu and mausoleum of Khmer King Suryavarman II, the world's largest religious monument is adorned with bas reliefs depicting scenes from Hindu epics and more than 3,000 *apsaras* (holy nymphs). But this magnificent temple, now a Buddhist shrine, is merely one of dozens in the city originally known as Yaśodharapura, centrepiece of the civilisation of northern Cambodia that, at its medieval peak, ruled much of what's now Thailand, Laos and southern Vietnam. Though never 'lost' to locals, Angkor was revealed to the western world only through the writings and drawings of botanist and explorer Henri Mouhot, published posthumously in 1864.

Cambodia's epic empire

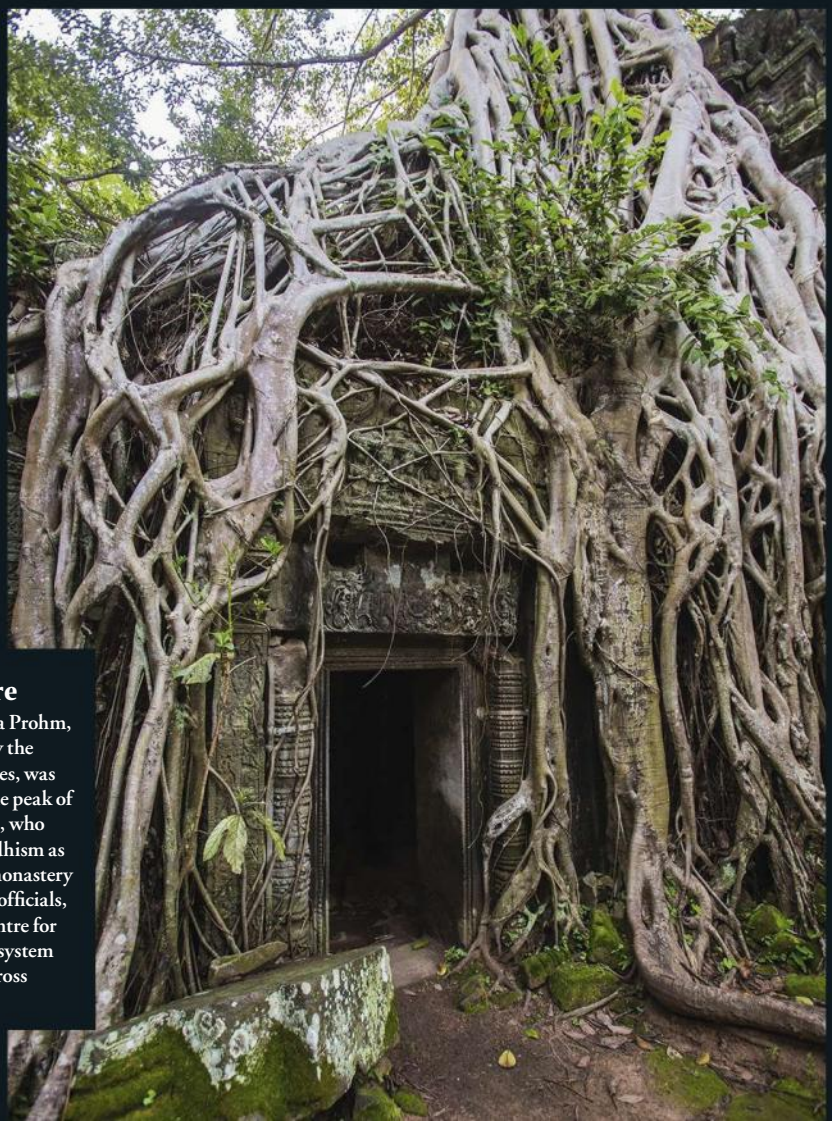
At its medieval peak, a Khmer kingdom dominated swathes of south-east Asia – creating heroic monuments including the largest religious structure ever built – yet mysteriously dissolved in the 15th century. **Paul Bloomfield** explores the temples and cities of Angkor →

Life imitates art

In c889 King Yaśovarman I moved his capital to Yaśodharapura, today's Angkor, on the fertile plain of the Tonle Sap ('great lake'). Extraordinary bas-relief carvings at various temples here offer insights into everyday life in the empire. Those on the Bayon (see 'Face value', below right) depict scenes of gambling, medicine, childbirth and commerce. This particular one depicts a fish market.

Establishing an empire

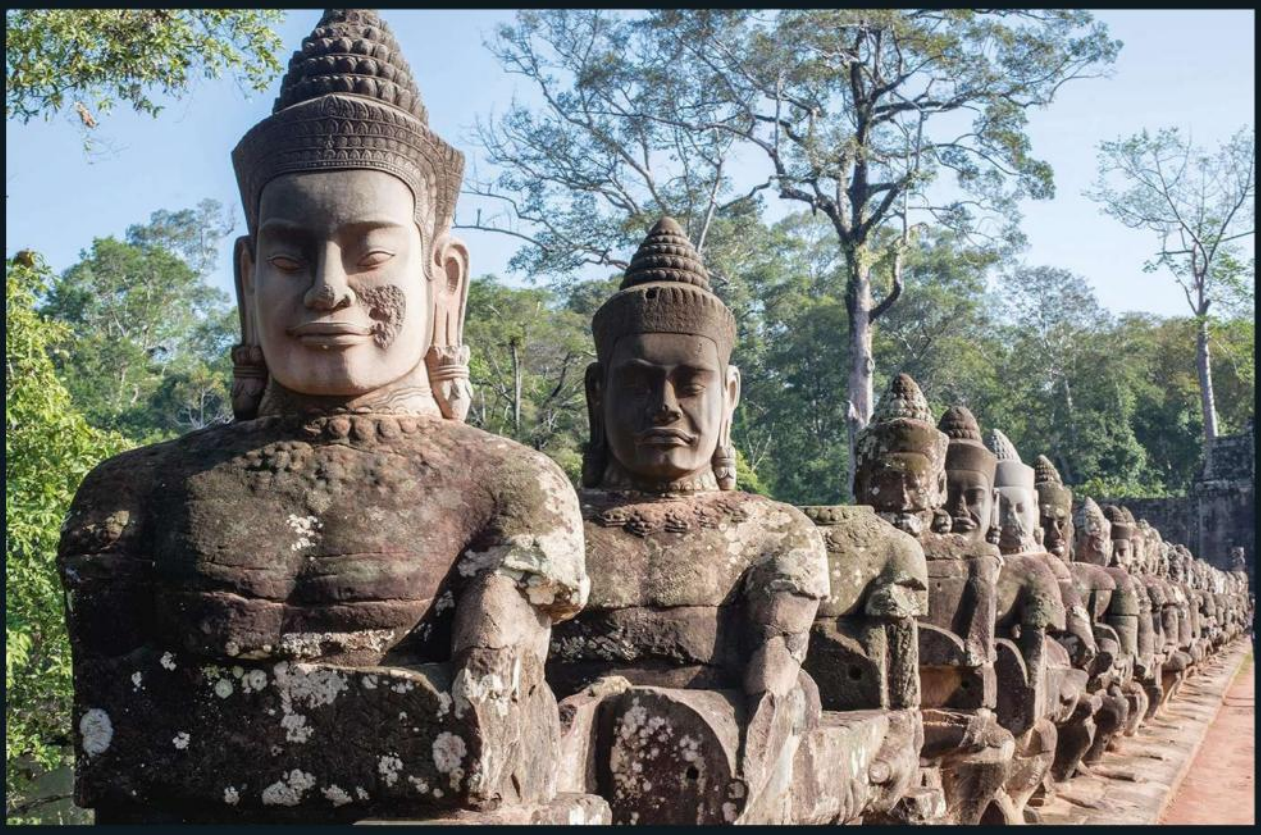
These time-worn stone animals at Srah Damrei ('elephant pond') are among the treasures of Phnom Kulen, 25 miles north-east of Angkor Wat. On this hill in AD 802 Jayavarman II declared himself first *devaraja* ('god king') of a united Khmer state and founded Mahendraparvata, capital of what would become the Angkor empire – the enormous extent of which is only now being revealed.



Engulfed by nature

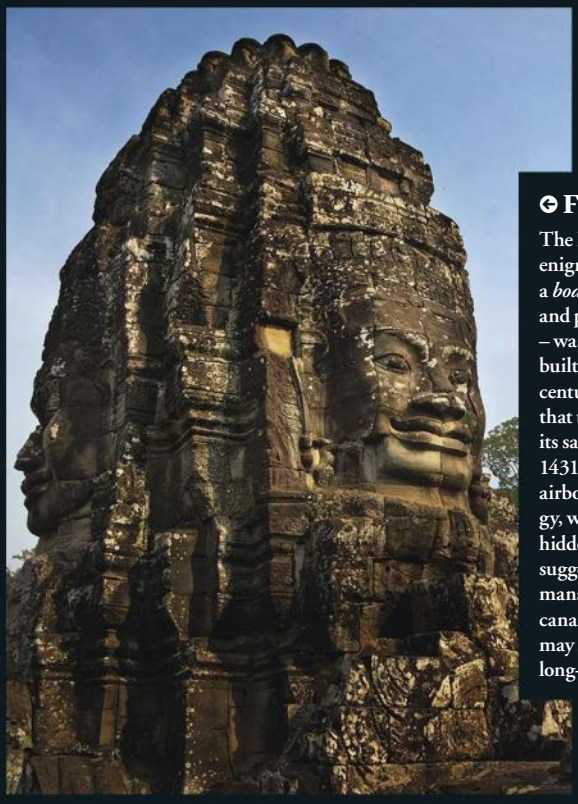
The Buddhist monastery of Ta Prohm, picturesquely overwhelmed by the roots and tendrils of kapok trees, was constructed around 1186 at the peak of the empire by Jayavarman VII, who replaced Hinduism with Buddhism as the state religion. This huge monastery had 18 high priests and 2,740 officials, and was the administrative centre for a highly organised healthcare system that included 102 hospitals across the kingdom.

GETTY IMAGES



Guarded by gods

Jayavarman VII's grandiose walled city Angkor Thom, built in the late 12th century, covered 9 square kilometres and was protected by 8-metre-high stone walls. A 100-metre-long causeway to the south gate is guarded by these 54 stone gods and 54 demons. The Portuguese Capuchin friar Antonio da Magdalena gave a detailed account of his visit to the (by then, ruined) city in 1586, as recounted by Diogo do Couto: "The city is surrounded by a moat, crossed by five bridges. These have on each side a cordon held by giants. Their ears are all pierced and are very long… There are written lines which record that this city, these temples and other things were built by the order of 20 kings over a period of 700 years."



ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES

Face value

The Bayon, adorned with 216 enigmatic faces – each representing a *bodhisattva* (enlightened being) and possibly also Jayavarman VII – was Angkor's last major temple, built in the late 12th and early 13th centuries. Historians long believed that the empire collapsed following its sacking by Siamese forces in 1431. But new research using airborne laser scanning technology, which also revealed vast cities hidden beneath fields and forests, suggests Angkor's complex water management system, involving canals and huge *barays* (reservoirs), may have been unable to cope with long-term climatic variations.

Paul Bloomfield is a travel and heritage writer and photographer, co-author of several Lonely Planet books about adventure travel

DISCOVER MORE

The Civilization of Angkor by Charles Higham (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003)
Angkor and the Khmer Civilization by Michael D Coe (Thames and Hudson, 2004)
Jungle Atlantis, a BBC TV series on Angkor, is available to buy at *store.bbc.com* (UK only)

Michael Scott's **Global Connections**

"The emergence of the nation state left little room for a global perspective that prioritised connections between nations"

It can easily feel as if the globalisation that has defined the 20th and now 21st centuries is irreversible. And with it has come a thirst for a more global view of history – providing, of course, the impetus to create this new magazine. But at times like these it's worth remembering that we have been here before – and that back then our hunger for the global dried up, thanks to changing world perceptions and events.

The 15th and particularly 16th centuries was an age of great exploration and discovery. And for a new and much bigger world, a new and much bigger approach to history was required. Sir Walter Ralegh – one of those exploring new parts of the planet, when not defending England from the Spanish Armada – spent the years between 1603 and 1616 imprisoned in the Tower of London. During this time, his interest turned to writing history – to be specific, the first volume of his *History of the World*.

Ralegh's historical approach linked independent but near-simultaneous events from different geographical areas to help weave together his narrative: for instance, he observed that Prometheus lived in the same age as Moses. This was a universal project that sought to highlight connections between different strands of history, in order to prepare future leaders for an age in which the boundaries of the world would be – as they were being at the time – rapidly expanded: global history for global times.

The remaining four volumes of Ralegh's history were never completed, but the published volume was extremely popular: 10 editions were printed between 1614 and 1687, and even Oliver Cromwell recommended it to his son – precisely because of its global outlook.

Crucially, however, almost as quickly as Ralegh's universal history project had gained popularity, it once again lost it. Tastes in history changed, largely because of the industrial revolution and the emergence of the modern nation state. Such a new entity as the modern nation required a historical focus bounded by that state's nascent borders to help construct a sense of national identity. In turn, the nation state became the dominant lens for all (but particularly western) historical writing, and the main frame for knowledge acquisition. There was now little room for a global perspective that prioritised the connections between nations and the similarities that bonded together humanity.

It was not long, of course, before the imperial ventures of the 19th century provided a new impetus for global learning. And soon after that, the catastrophic world wars of the 20th century prompted many to look for ways to remind people just how much humanity had always owed to peaceful interaction with one another, rather than conflict – efforts that also underpin our current interest in global history.

But stories such as that of Ralegh's *History of the World* do beg the question: if we lost our interest in the global before, could we do so again – and what kind of politics and sense of self could provoke it? *The Guardian* newspaper called the UK Brexit vote "a rejection of globalisation", and many European politicians worry for the future of the EU project following Britain's exit. The US 2016 presidential election was, in many ways, about very different visions for America's future role in the world – one much more isolationist, another more connected. And the 2015–16 migration movement into Europe – the biggest since the Second World War – has prompted calls in numerous countries for stricter border control and more isolationist politics. Could these be early symptoms of another decline in the human desire for a global outlook?

Sir Walter Ralegh wrote that the purpose of his *History of the World* was "to teach by example of times past such wisdom as may guide our desires and actions". In essence, his message was: forewarned is forearmed. And the lesson of the oscillating popularity of his own work of history is simple: if we want to keep our global perspective, we are going to have to fight for it.

Michael Scott is an author, broadcaster and associate professor at the University of Warwick. See details of his books and TV work: *michaelscottweb.com*

DISCOVER MORE

Michael Scott's new series **Italy's Invisible Cities** (BBC One) and **Michael Scott's Sicily** (BBC Two) are due to air early in 2017 in the UK

ILLUSTRATION BY **ELEANOR SHAKESPEARE**

"By the time these pieces were made, the Goryeo dynasty controlled most of the peninsula; its name is the root of the term 'Korea'"

A statue of the Buddha Amitabha flanked by two attendants, from a major exhibition of art from the Korean peninsula. Find out more in our feature starting on page 68

BBC World Histories

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