

# PETERLOO

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To find out about what happened at the Peterloo Massacre.
- To learn about the reform movement which the demonstrators at Peterloo were a part of, and the changes in society which had made this movement possible.
- To think about the influence that Peterloo had on people at the time, and future generations who fought for equality and the vote.
- To think about the roles of symbols such as particular clothes, flags, images, and colours, in protest movements.



# CONTEXT

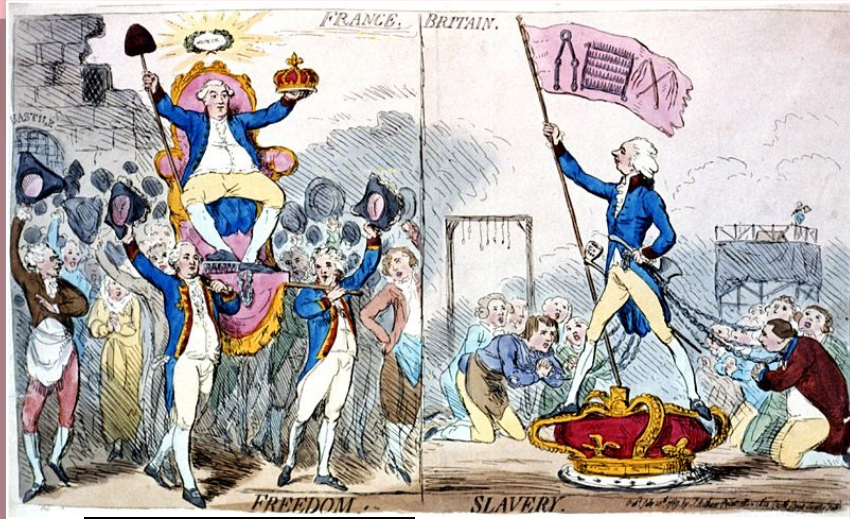
## Conditions in the Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century

- Manchester was home to a large cotton and weaving industry.
- Work was increasingly based in large factories, using advanced machinery.
- Wages fell from 21 shillings in 1802 to 14 shillings in 1809, and growing numbers of people were unemployed
- The Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) had seen a rise in public debt and a decline in trade.
- New Corn Laws were introduced in 1815, making bread more expensive



# CONTEXT

## Radicalism and Reaction



A CONTEMPORARY CARTOON SHOWS HOW BRITISH RADICALS SAW THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

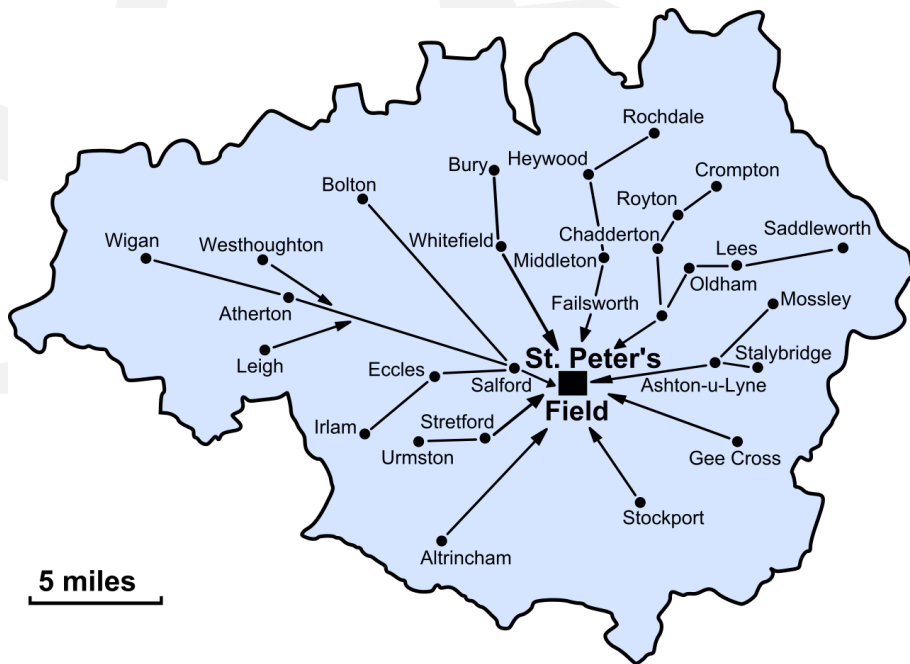
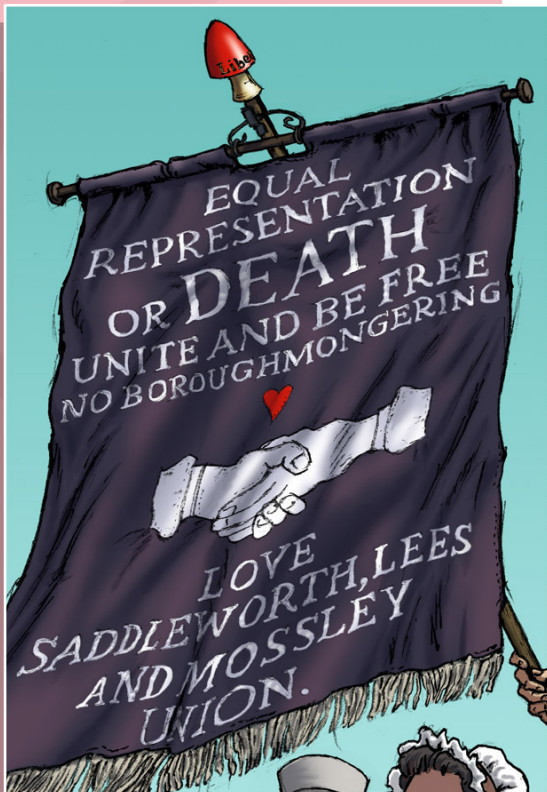
- 1789 – French Revolution
- Many in Britain wanted more democracy – millions of people had no voice in parliament
- Elites in Britain were worried it's ideas may spread. They formed the **Yeomanry**
- **Luddite** movement of 1811-1817 – groups of workers destroy the new machines.
- 1817 – a group from Oldham organises a 'hunger march'. They were named the '**Blanketeers**'.
- Both the Blanketeers and Luddites were met with violence from the yeomanry.
- 1818 saw many strikes – they were often ineffective, and many workers instead seek the vote.

## BUILD - UP

- Young leader John Bagguley in prison
- Manchester radicals invited Henry Hunt to come and speak
- Plans to hold a mock election
- Many attendees practiced 'drilling'- making infantry formations
- However, Hunt was strongly opposed to any hint of violence from the protestors' side.



# EVENTS OF THE DAY



- Processions of thousands of people, wearing their Sunday best, arrived from the satellite towns around Manchester. Many carried colourful banners, flags and symbols of the French Revolution. Some 60-80,000 people were present.





# EVENTS OF THE DAY

- William Hulton ordered the Yeomanry to arrest the leaders of the demonstration.
- The Yeomanry charged on horseback into the crowd and became stuck. They then began to use their sabres against the protestors. The Fifteenth Hussars were sent in to assist them.
- The protest leaders were arrested, and those carrying flags and banners were targeted. After 15 minutes, the protest is abandoned.
- 18 people died from their injuries, and over 650 were injured.



# AFTERMATH



British Museum Collection

[www.bl.uk/collection-items/beaker-depicting-radical-speaker-henry-orator-hunt](http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/beaker-depicting-radical-speaker-henry-orator-hunt)

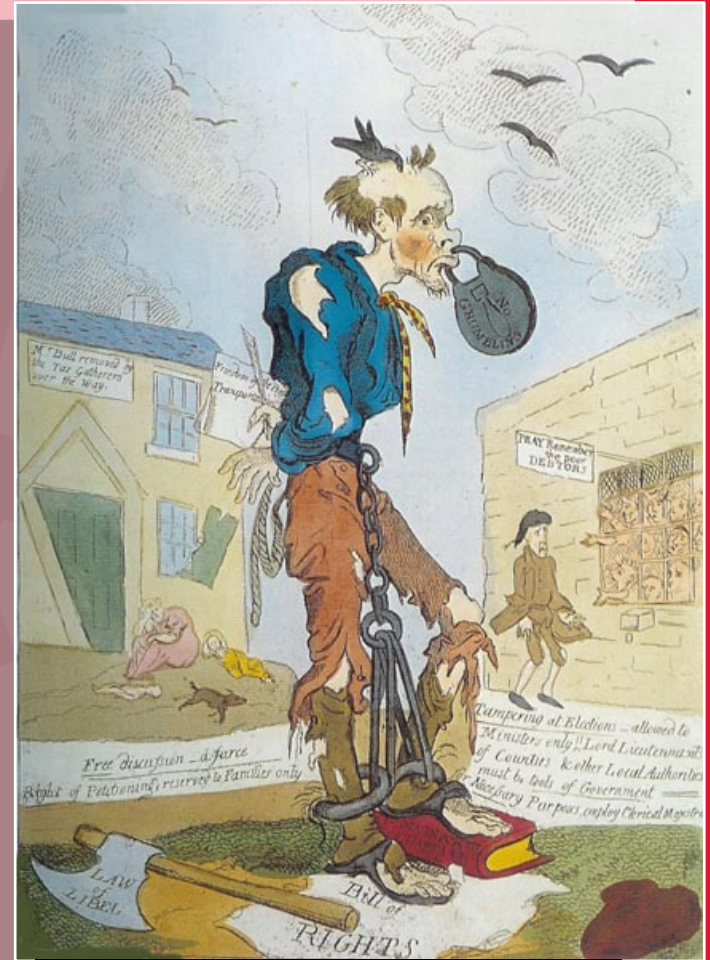
- People wrote poems, drew pictures, and sang songs about the massacre across the country. Even pro-government newspapers were critical of the yeomanry.
- Over 100,000 demonstrated in London, and 40,000 demonstrated in Newcastle against the government.





# AFTERMATH

- The **Six Acts** were passed, banning radical meetings, increasing the price of newspapers, and allowing the government to crack down on freedom of speech.
- Protest leaders are imprisoned.
- Many future protest movements would refer to the Peterloo massacre to inspire their supporters, including the Chartists and the Suffragettes.



A contemporary cartoon from *The Annual Register* depicting the impact of the Six Acts

# AFTERMATH

'The Mask of Anarchy' was a poem written by Percy Shelley about Peterloo and his hopes for democratic reform. Although it was written shortly after the massacre, in 1819, it was not published until after his death in 1832.

*And if then the tyrants dare,  
Let them ride among you there;  
Slash, and stab, and maim and hew;  
What they like, that let them do.*

*With folded arms and steady eyes,  
And little fear, and less surprise,  
Look upon them as they slay,  
Till their rage has died away:*

*Then they will return with shame,  
To the place from which they came,  
And the blood thus shed will speak  
In hot blushes on their cheek:*

*Rise, like lions after slumber  
In unvanquishable number!  
Shake your chains to earth like dew  
Which in sleep had fallen on you:  
Ye are many—they are few!*



# THANKS TO FUNDERS AND PARTNERS:



MANCHESTER  
CITY COUNCIL



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
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