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**CIVIL RIGHTS, WORKERS, WOMEN, FINANCIAL FIGURES**

**AND THE ORATOR, LANDLORD HENRY HUNT.**

**THE PETERLOO MASSACRE IN MANCHESTER**

**ON AUGUST 16, 1819**

**Christensen C.S.**

On Monday 16 August 1819 perhaps 40-50,000 men, women and children gathered for a mass rally in Manchester. The protesters had progressed to St Peter's Field from the city's working-class districts and the surrounding textile weaving regions. Monday was the traditional day off for handloom weavers and other artisan workers, and the marchers wore their best clothes and symbols to create a festive atmosphere. A couple of hours later, soldiers and police had stopped the peaceful demonstration with very harsh methods. This article examines why this incident became one of the most important events in history of democracy in Europe. The author also tries to explain the real causes of the Peterloo Massacre and the historical background of the British society in the beginning of the 1800s from the perspective of Thomas Paine (1737-1809), the English-born American philosopher and political theorist.

**Keywords:** Manchester, Battle of Waterloo, Henry Hunt, Peterloo Massacre, civil rights, workers, industrialization, Napoleonic Wars, democracy, electoral district, Thomas Paine, French Revolution.

**ГРАЖДАНСКИЕ ПРАВА, РАБОЧИЕ, ЖЕНЩИНЫ, ФИНАНСОВЫЕ**

**ДЕЯТЕЛИ И ОРАТОР, ЗЕМЛЕВЛАДЕЛЕЦ ГЕНРИ ХАНТ.**

**МАНЧЕСТЕРСКАЯ БОЙНЯ 16 АВГУСТА 1819 ГОДА**

**Христенсен К.С.**

В понедельник 16 августа 1819 года около 40-50 тысяч мужчин, женщин и детей собрались на массовый митинг в Манчестере. Протестующие из рабочих кварталов города и прилегающих к ним текстильных ткацких районов направились на Площадь святого Петра. Понедельник был традиционным

выходным днем для ткачей и других ремесленников, поэтому участники шествия, чтобы создать тожественную атмосферу, были одеты в праздничную одежду, украшенную профессиональной символикой. Через пару часов после начала акции солдаты и полиция очень жестоко разогнали мирную демонстрацию. В данной статье анализируется, почему этот инцидент стал одним из самых важных событий в истории демократии в Европе. Автор также пытается объяснить реальные причины Манчестерского побоища и исторические предпосылки развития британского общества в начале 1800-х гг. с точки зрения Томаса Пейна (1737-1809) – американского философа и политического теоретика английского происхождения.

**Ключевые слова:** Манчестер, Битва при Ватерлоо, Генри Хант, Манчестерское побоище, гражданские права, рабочие, индустриализация, Наполеоновские войны, демократия, избирательный округ, Томас Пейн, Великая французская революция.

### **The historical and political background**

On Sunday 18 June 1815, two armies, numbering around 180,000 soldiers and officers, faced each other across open field, 20 kilometres south of the present-day Belgian capital of Brussels. In the Battle of Waterloo they would decide one and for all, Europe's fate after twenty-two-years of catastrophic war. The British Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Arthur Wellesley or the 1st Duke of Wellington (1769-1852) had chosen this swamp of terrain as a battlefield. His opponent, Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821), was considered one of the greatest commanders in history, but certainly not this day. The battle marked the end of the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815). And as such historical landmark events always do, it changed the living conditions of Europeans in all countries. Furthermore, the event created new requirements for renewal of old social forms that had outlived its usefulness. Just as it heralds a new era and new general social structures in the European countries [11, p. 19-21].

Great Britain became the leading country in Europe. To achieve this military and political status, the country had to sacrifice a lot of money. Money, that came primarily from taxes in Great Britain. Taxation became the burden for many years after the Battle of Waterloo. Apart from some landowners and farmers, who profited from the war, many – and here especially workers in the industry – were brought to their knees financially. In 1798 British MP William Pitt the Younger (1759-1806) had devised income taxes. During the Napoleonic Wars other MP's revised the system and raised income tax rates dramatically. This screw of no end of income taxes ended in a catastrophe. More specifically in the assassination of the then Prime Minister Spencer Perceval (1762-1812) in the lobby of the House of Commons on May 11, 1812 by a disgruntled merchant of John Bellingham (1769-1812).

The tax amount eventually became a considerable size. Something that Parliament and the government should manage. All the above politicians were MPs for the Tory Party. This was the only political party in the Parliament with power since 1783. They represented the old nobility and the kings of Great Britain. The new financial men, the factory owners or the new bourgeoisie had no influence and there was no future prospect that they would. In addition, the constituencies were divided in a way that favoured the landowner elite. An electoral district Old Sarum had been uninhabited since the 1600s, but the landowner, the family Pitt, had the right to choose 13 voters to elect two MPs to Parliament, whereas an electoral district like Manchester with 130,000 voters could not elect one MP. Furthermore, none of the 130,000 had the right to vote. This, of course, created tensions in British society. Only around seven per cent of the adult male population had the vote [11, p. 33-35].

One should also not forget another important historical event in the history of the Great Britain: Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658). He was an English general and statesman who led the Parliament of England's armies against King Charles I (1600-1649) during the English Civil War and ruled the British Isles as Lord Protector from 1653 until his death in 1658. He acted simultaneously as head of state and head of government of the new republican commonwealth. Manchester supported Oliver Cromwell. Only in the early 1700s many of the Manchester citizens

and the rest of Lancashire felt a loyalty to the deposed and exiled legitimate Catholic Stuart monarch James II (1633-1701) and his heirs [2, p. 23].

However, the political elite, the so-called Loyalists, in Britain has other problems. Especially a man named Thomas Paine (1737-1809). An English-born American revolutionary, political theorist and philosopher, Thomas Paine was born in Thetford in the county of Norfolk. With the help of Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine immigrated to the British American colonies on the east coast of America. There he authored the two most influential pamphlets: “Common Sense” (1776), “The American Crisis” series (1776-1783), at the start of the American Revolution and inspired George Washington and the American patriots in 1776 to declare independence from Great Britain. His ideas reflected Enlightenment-era ideals of transnational human rights. Thomas Paine’s message of liberty, equality and the potential of a government based on a genuine and true representation of the people, rather than the old European systems founded on hereditary privilege and monarchical rule, as the political theorist himself put it “to begin the world over again” – seemed to be moving from theory to reality as well in United States as in Great Britain [3].

Of his American opponents, however, Thomas Paine was referred to as a corset maker by trade, a journalist by profession and a propagandist by inclination. Therefore, he was back in London at the end of the 1780s. In 1789 and 1790 he was inspired by the French Revolution. How the French people overthrew the system, abolished the monarchy and demanded co-influence throughout the community. But as we know today, the French Revolution of the mid-1790s evolved into one of the most totalitarian systems the world has ever seen. In 1791, however everything was revolutionary, and, in this year, Thomas Paine published his book, a two-volume work “Rights of Man”, which interpreted the potential of democracy in Britain in the 1800s. The first book appeared on March 13, 1791 and sold nearly a million copies. It was eagerly read by reformers, Protestant dissenters, democrats, London craftsmen and the skilled factory-hands of the new industrial north. Paine’s work inspired the first working class movement for parliamentary reform. Local societies sprang up

across the manufacturing towns and villages to debate, draw up petitions to Parliament and organize mass meetings.

### **The economic and social background**

However, it was not only the missing influence in the Parliament and the archaic community system that was a problem in Great Britain in the 1810s. The chaos of the Napoleonic Wars and the costs incurred by the war on the people of Britain, not only threw the English but also the rest of Europe into a difficult economic crisis. Consumption fell and the lack of demand not least affected England's textile production in the northern parts of the country. The result was that wages in industry fell sharply. A textile worker who previously earned about 15 shillings in a six-day work week now had to settle for five shillings for the same effort. Adding to this, that the large factories in the industrial areas were staffed with unskilled textile workers and that this made many skilled craftsmen unemployed, one must conclude that the mood of the large industrial cities was very tense. This tense situation led to decided riots and fighting in the streets, where the skilled textile workers simply destroyed and burned down the factories.

In addition, rising prices became a bigger and bigger problem for the British government. To protect domestic agriculture, the government imposed high tariffs on imported grain. The so-called Corn Laws introduced by the Prime Minister Lord Liverpool in 1815 benefited the large landlords and the nobility but became a disaster not only for the bourgeoisie and but also for the industrial workers. As the result the inflation of prices for cereals sent the bread prices up and made it difficult for a regular worker to feed his family [1, p. 9-11].

At the age of 15 John Lee, a son of a cotton factory owner, had enlisted into the British army that fought at Waterloo at Manchester as a waggon driver, on September 23, 1812. Nobody knows the true reason why he had enlisted. In the county of Lancashire the weavers and textile workers were experiencing a mass unemployment and terrible deprivation. So perhaps desperation had driven John Lee to enlist, like so many others of his comrades-in-arms. Or perhaps he just yearned for new adventures nobody knows. However, on June 18, 1815, he fought as soldier and after the battle

he, like other soldiers of low ranks, walked all the way home to his hometown Manchester from Brussels. John Lee simply helped to make Great Britain one of the world's strongest powers [8, p. 6-7].

What was Manchester, John Lee's hometown, in 1819? And what was the importance of the industrial city in United Kingdom? Since the Roman Empire, Mancunium, a Roman fort in the Castlefield area in North West England, in Middle Ages expanded to the city of Manchester, was an important trade centre not only in Lancashire but in all Great Britain. In 1819 Manchester was the second most important city in England. In Greater Manchester around 140,000 inhabitants constituted one of the most important industrial cities in Europe. In the beginning of the 1800s almost 3,000 gas lamps were turned on every night in the streets in the winter, while the street was swept and “the soiled carried off” twice a week. Some areas were modern industrial areas with lots of factories. The growth in population can be explained by the expansion of the textile industry and the factory industry into cotton spinning. In other words, Manchester was well ahead of its time [8, p. 20-22].

This industrial development had a very high price. Visitors in Manchester in the 1810s observed that it could be seen the sun and blue sky in the city. A dense cloud of smoke was always hanging over Manchester and could be seen many kilometres away. The light rain turned the dust into a fine paste which made it unnecessary to polish one's shoes. The houses in the inner city were all black and the river Irwell always resembles the contents of a dye vat. The effect of the pollution created by the textile industry was immense. There was something that obviously had an impact on the working class living inside the centre. The average age was not high and the state of health was very low.

Finally, there were the changes in the religious aspect. Important new social groups of master and operative spinners sprang up, and this led to important changes in the religious condition of Manchester. Many of new cotton and textile manufacturers and many of their cotton and textile workers, especially the large numbers of immigrants from Ireland and Scotland were dissenters or Roman Catholics. In other words, in less than twenty years a predominantly Anglian

congregation was transformed into a predominantly Nonconformist one. In the eyes of many local British citizens and staunch Anglicans dissent from the Church of England automatically implied dissent also from loyalty to the established Constitution. Church and Constitution were regarded as inextricably bound together.

Rivalry between the local establishment and Nonconformity was thus the leading feature in the religious life of Manchester in the early nineteenth century. In 1819, in the year of the Peterloo Massacre, this rivalry was prominent especially in two connections, over the question of new Anglian church building and in connection with an upcoming Sunday school movement. Furthermore, the Anglican clergy took determined action, therefore, to combat this, in their eyes, radical “sedition”. From 1814 until 1819 the Anglican religious counterattack, which had been initiated after 1800 as a means of combatting the progress of Nonconformity, began to take on a political as well as religious colour. In this anti-radical campaign, the new churches announced in Manchester in 1818 had an important part to play. Put another way, Greater Manchester wasn't up to date with the rest of the United Kingdom. And here too, the city was ahead of its time. And the loyalty to the central power in London was not quite as great as in other parts of the country [6, p. 25-29].

Therefore, although industry had brought riches and employment, there were obvious winners and losers and in the years around 1819, in the years following the Battle of Waterloo, this disparity would become more extreme, feeding an already volatile political and social environment. Furthermore, the pre-industrial revolution had brought new trends, ways of thinking and a new view of life to the county of Lancashire.

### **The Peterloo Massacre**

Who were the men organized the Peterloo meeting on August 16, 1819? Nobody really knows and up to present time this important question has never been answered by historians. However, some names appear in the different documents and reports after the event that summer day. Some of these men were supporters of the so-called working-class radicals, a very well organized and structure working class movement. Thomas Paine's book “Rights of Man” [4] also inspired the so-called

working-class radicals. During the 19th century in the United Kingdom, continental Europe and Latin America, the term “radical” came to denote a progressive liberal ideology inspired by the French Revolution. Historically, radicalism emerged in an early form with the French Revolution and the similar movements it inspired in other countries.

Among the supposed leaders of the working-class radicals the most active local and national figures behind the Peterloo meeting were the orator Henry Hunt (1773-1835), the small-scale brush maker Joseph Johnson (1791-1872), the celebrated weaver-poet Samuel Bamford (1788-1872), the small-scale manufacturer John Knight (1763-1838), the Nonconformist reverend (self-appointed chaplain to the poor and needy) Joseph Harrison (1779-1848) and Charles Wolseley (1769-1846), the Legislatorial Attorney of Birmingham. They came from different social classes and none of them held any very substantial position in society. Furthermore, there was a lack of so-called liberal education which the Tory party and the loyalists claimed as necessary for participation in politics. One could argue that this lack of social standing and political education was one reason for their ultimate failure of a splendid organized meeting [6, p. 35-39; 7, p. 103-107].

In summer 1819 despite their above-mentioned deficiencies, they did contrive to develop for a time their movement as a coherent and organized movement, a movement with clubs, meetings and a programme of its own. In summer 1819 the radical programme of reform also was published in its most comprehensive form in the declaration and in the remonstrance passed at the Manchester radical meeting a cold day January 18, 1819 and some months later on June 7 by the Union Society delegate meeting held at Oldham. From these programmes it becomes quite clear that the radical sources in 1819 rested on two basic and logically connected points. First, it was a protest distress, against low wages, high prices and unemployment. Second it was the assertion of a theory of fundamental political rights [7, p. 113-115].

In addition to the working-class radicals and their radicalism, you would also find the so-called middle-class radical reformers or liberalists in Manchester and Lancashire. Unlike the working-class radicals, the liberalists controlled no extensive



network of agitation or organization. They remained only a group of like-minded friends of manufacturers, merchants and factory owners, as a group who often worked together for the reform of abuses. In 1819, furthermore, even as a pressure group they were only at the beginning of their influence. Most of them were dissenters, associated with the cotton trade, few of them had been born in Manchester and all were in opposition to the Church of England. Everyone supported directly or indirectly the working-class radicals in August 1819 [7, p. 132-135].

Four men were the leaders of the middle-class radical reformers in the Manchester area and Lancashire county. John Edward Taylor (1791-1844), a cotton merchant, who had showed a keen interest in the Lancastrian school movement and became secretary to the local committee in 1810 and later writing frequently in “The Manchester Gazette”. Richard Potter (1778-1842), a cotton merchant, who was the leader of a vigorous middle-class radical attack in the field of Peterloo Massacre after the event on August 16. John Shuttleworth (1786-1864), a cotton dealer in Manchester, who spoke at the Manchester Anti-Corn Law meeting of 1815 and later served on the committee appointed to prepare petition protest to the Tory government in London. The last leader was Archibald Prentice (1792-1857), who oversaw a muslin warehouse and a writer in “The Manchester Gazette” and later in “The Manchester Guardian”, his own Newspaper [6, p. 58-60].

Unlike the working-class radicals, the middle-class radical reformers were not well organized. Although all four men took an interest in virtually every aspect of affairs, not only political, but also literary and scientific, they did not have the political experience to “win” an event like the Peterloo meeting. In the years before Peterloo this interest had been cultivated in several small clubs, and it was there the radical reform leaders received their early training in public expression. When the opponent is one of world’s best organized societies, what police depend on and military trained adversaries, it could only be a failure [10, p. 126-130].

Another fundamental problem that meant a possible failure for the Peterloo meeting was the missing “cooperation” between the working-class radicals and the middle-class radical reformers. The last-mentioned group was characterized by a

“high seriousness”. It arose especially from a feeling among the group’s members of importance of their social mission. As the intelligentsia of the local society, they were the missionaries of the enlightenment philosophies. They alone, they believed, understood the problems of the time and understood the remedies for them. This weight of this self-imposed burden necessarily predisposed them to seriousness. A big problem, when the partner was one of the first and one of the best organized working-class movements in human history. Middle-class reform radicals saw only a little good in the characters and methods of the leaders of the working-class radicals movement. The middle-class leaders, therefore, “officially” opposed the Peterloo meeting, but they could find no excuse for the fashion in which the meeting was dispersed [5, p. 84-86].

Together with liberalism, which found supporters among the new financial men, radicalism was one of the new enlightenment philosophies. The two enlightenment philosophies of liberalism and radicalism both shared the goal of liberating humanity from traditionalism. But liberals regarded it as enough to establish individual rights that would protect the individual. Radicals, however, sought institutional, social/economic, and especially cultural and educational reforms to allow every citizen to put those rights into practice. For this reason, we could say that radicalism went beyond the demand for liberty, by seeking also equality, that is, universality.

However, neither hearings nor charges of treason could stop the working-class radicals, and in summer 1819 they planned a meeting, that was to be a milestone in the history of the movement. The Manchester Patriotic Union Society special group would gather people not just from Greater Manchester but from all over Lancashire county. Election laws were the subject of the demonstration. The event was to be launched with such good behaviour that the government could not reject the assembly at St Peter’s Field, one of the city’s main squares. The organizers set the date for August 9, but the magistrate cancelled the event after they intercepted a letter from the orator, Landlord Henry Hunt, a well-known supporter of the working-class radicals. In the letter, Henry Hunt concluded that in district of Manchester and

surroundings the conditions were so poor that a social revolution was inevitable. However, a week after, on August 16, the demonstration should take place [5, p. 143-145].

With the above historical, political, economic, social and religious aspects in mind, it was therefore obvious and not a coincidence that there was probably ground for probably the world's first organized labour demonstration took place in Manchester. As in other contexts, the city and the hinterland were far ahead of its time. In fact only almost after 70 years later trade unions started playing a role in British society.

The day of the meeting started with high sunshine. From early morning people from all over Lancashire were on their feet. The attendees, among which were many women, poured into Manchester all morning. All were overseen by the city magistrate with William Hulton (1787-1864) in the lead. He was responsible for the fact that the meeting did not end up in a decided revolt. The magistrate feared what the crowd might think and do. Around noon, therefore, he issued an arrest warrant for Henry Hunt and his closest supporters. He then dispatched the local police officers to take up two columns across the crowd. They had to keep a corridor open to the podium so that William Hulton could come up with the arrest warrant. Furthermore, he summoned the local yeomanry to deal with a large crowd in St Peter's Square in Manchester, which had gathered to hear the political agitator Henry Hunt [10, p. 147-150].

The yeomanry, on horseback with sabres drawn, forced its way through the crowd to break up the rally and allow Hunt to be arrested. From his vantage point William Hulton perceived the unfolding events as an assault on the yeomanry, and on hussars arrival at 13:50 pm, he ordered them into the field to disperse the crowd. Fifteen people died from sabre and musket wounds or trampling, with 400 to 500 injured and the event became known as the Peterloo Massacre. William Hulton was vilified by the local population and was obliged to decline a safe parliamentary seat offered to him in 1820 [9, p. 55-61].

One of the 15 victims of the massacre, the abovementioned John Lees, was officially listed as being “sabred” to death. Brown found this intriguing as he knew Lees had fought at Waterloo and wanted to find out whether he had been killed by the soldiers he had fought alongside four years earlier. John Lees was battered black and blue and died from his injuries three weeks later. When his body was lifted into his coffin, blood poured from his mouth. John Lees was the only victim to have an inquest and it was curtailed by the authorities to stop a verdict of unlawful killing being returned [8, p. 275-276].

### **The aftermath of the Peterloo Massacre**

Did the events, on this sunny Monday in August 1819, have any lasting impact and effect on the British society in the 1800s, beyond the collective outpouring of shock and disgust immediately following that terribly day? One is for sure, the meeting draws national attention to the conditions of the working man, woman and child in the manufacturing districts of Great Britain. In the short run, the event shook the government and the British elite. On November 23, 1819 just over three months after the Peterloo Massacre the British Parliament met to adopt new legislative austerity measures to prevent and completely ban future unrest such as in Manchester. Among other things, the laws banned assemblies of more than 50 people without special permission from the authorities, restricted the freedom of the press and tightened the penalties for socially critical statements.

On a local plan by the end of 1819 the abovementioned reformers of the working-class radicals had lost all support and influence. The principal cause was a growth of internal dissension within the ranks. This had a very damaging effect on the movement in Lancashire. The quick dissolution of the Peterloo meeting and the chaotic end of the meeting were the cause of disagreements and divisions in the movement. Also in London throughout the autumn of 1819 the various factions of the radical reformers was quarrelling among themselves as to what the response to the massacre in Manchester should be. For years the movement were distracted by these internal divisions [8, p. 324].

However, the English community changed at a speed from an agricultural society to an industrial society, where, among other things, powerful forces in the new powerful class of industrial magnates wanted power and influence. In the decades following the Peterloo Massacre, the working-class radicals supported the new industrial magnates with the hope of gaining the right to vote and later influence in Parliament. In 1832 a turning point came when Parliament passed reforms that extended the right to vote and settled the electoral districts that favoured landowners. [8, p. 323].

At the same time, it is in its meaning and symbolism, and in the concept of social and political, rather religious martyrdom, that Peterloo has continued to resonate down through generations.

Political activists and historians have debated the causes and consequences of Peterloo ever since the evening of 16 August 1819. For conservative politicians, Peterloo represented an uncivil radical fervor that was rightly crushed by the forces of law and order. Most of the ruling elite in Britain associated democracy with revolutionary France and “mob” rule well into the 19th century and worried about it accordingly. The moderate Reform Acts, that eventually passed through Parliament in 1832, 1867 and 1884 redistributed seats but only extended the franchise gradually. It was not until the 1918 Representation of the People Act that the link between ownership of property and the vote was finally broken for men, although not for women over 30, who were also enfranchised. With conservatives downplaying or ignoring Peterloo, democratic and trade union movements took up the cause of commemoration.

In the 1830s and 1840s the Chartist democratic reform movement and the liberals each claimed to be the true successors of the Peterloo radicals. Both political groups emphasized the heroic role of individual radical leaders, especially Henry Hunt, who had entered the field to the refrain of “see the conquering hero comes”. The Anti-Corn Law League was able to cement its connection with Peterloo, physically and symbolically, by erecting the Free Trade Hall on St Peter’s Field in 1853 as a monument to economic liberalism. The Reform League claimed connection

with its reformist predecessors at Peterloo during its campaign for the second Reform Act of 1867. Political interest in the massacre then waned, although it did appear in “The Manchester Man”, a widely read novel of 1876 by Isabella Banks, “The Masque of Anarchy”, a poem written by Percy Bysshe Shelley in 1819 (published in 1832) and “The Autumn” a poem written by John Keats in September 1819 (published in 1820).

### **Conclusion**

As for the British, often characterized as a nation of reactionaries and nostalgists, yearning for an imagined past, where everything was better, the Peterloo Massacre story offers a potent and inspiring example of progressive men and women from across the social spectrum, honouring their country and their ancestors. Even in 2020, more than 200 years after the event, when a social injustice on a mass scale occurs, when national or local government is judged to have run roughshod over the rights of citizens, human as well as constitutional, to have abrogated their duty of care resulting in physical harm, Peterloo is evoked. However, there is a question why this significant regional and national event remains so little known among the broader British public in 2020?

The fact, that the Peterloo Massacre took place in Manchester, Lancashire and in the most developed industrial region of Northern England seemed to be no coincidence. As shown in the above analysis of the event, there was already a historical basis for the location of the meeting. Furthermore, because of the population composition and the emerging new social classes, it was obvious, that new ideologies such as liberalism and radicalism were rooted in the population. And here the leaders of both the working-class radicals and the middle-class radical reformers should not forget the very relaxed relationship of the official Church of England, which was not usual at that time in English history.

The most important thing in this context is probably the economic and social aspects in the background of this event. Exceptionally poor living conditions and living conditions have characterized the working-class life of the local worker for decades. Rising prices, limited purchasing power and social dumping, i.e. the

employment of cheaper unskilled workers in factories and warehouses. However, worst of all was the living and working conditions of the working-class. Low average age, illness and poor housing and sanitation could be the seed of any revolution in the Greater Manchester area.

Looking at the effect of the Peterloo Massacre in English society after the event in Manchester in the late summer of 1819, one must admit that on the short-term path it is very negative. The introduction of almost totalitarian conditions with restrictions on freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and the right to organize must have caused irritation in the population. As is the case today, it is not always the population in a country realize the rationality of an organized action that at first glance gives setbacks, but in the long run the Peterloo Massacre was inspiration for as well the revolutions in Europe during the 1800s. For instance, Berlin (1848), Wien (1848), the Paris Commune (1871) and Copenhagen (1872) as for the organization and structuring of trade unions and labour movements in the second half of the 1800s.

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