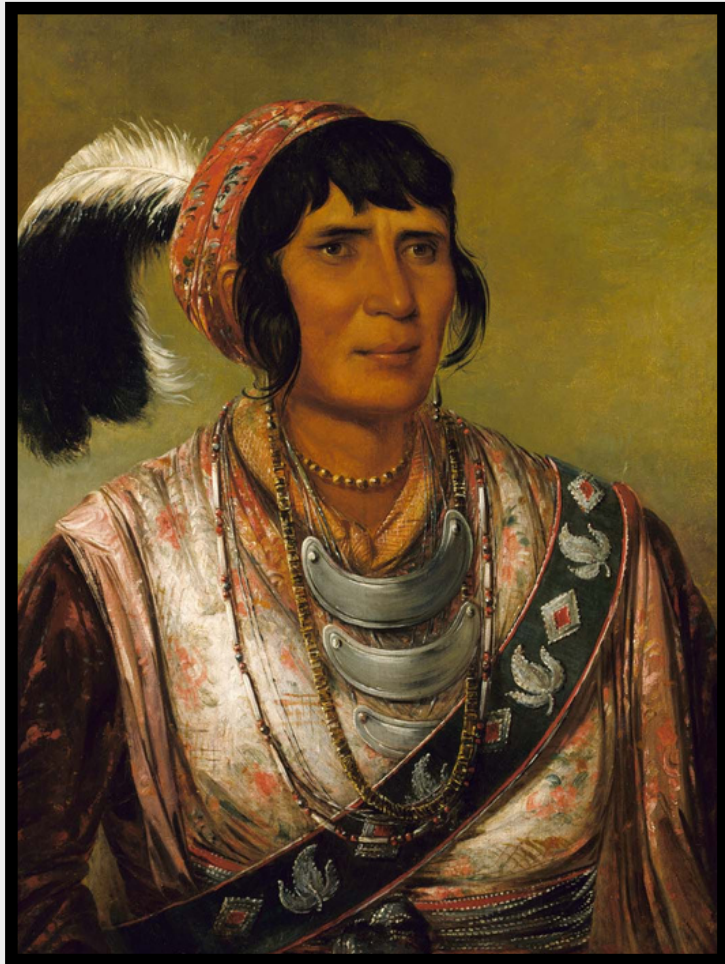# ENVIRONMENT AND CRISIS

PREFACE

It is evident that the problem of the twenty-first century will be that of the political and socioenvironmental injustices that goes by the name 'climate change.' The problems of race, class, gender, and nationality that were fought for the causes of humanism a century before are now articulated in the language of environmentalism, sustainability, and climate justice.

However, the incorporation of non-human agents such as animals, plants, pathogens, fungi, and landscapes present a challenge to history, which has traditionally been practised as a humanist discipline. As people turn to history for an answer to problems that the Western world has never faced before, the need to rethink the role of history in society is ever more pressing. As historians, we must learn to rethink and adapt our craft to the new challenges presented to us, as did the Black activists, feminists, and other activist scholars of the 1960's did to shape our discipline.

The portrait of this issue's cover depicts North American indigenous chief Osceola, who led a resistance group to rebel against their forced removal by the U.S. government from Florida in 1836. Like in Osceola's case, the 'pristine wilderness' the environment is often portrayed to be has often been more human than we think, intertwined with a history of forced removal and genocide. As environment historians began writing about these histories, the field of environmental history has seen a flourishing wave of scholarship that blurs the boundary of their discipline with the rest of human history. Now in 2023, historians are on the verge of rethinking what environmental history and the age of climate change (more commonly referred to in academia as the 'Anthropocene') means for humans as historical agents. As scholars move away from humanist topics to write about fungi (Anna Tsing, 2021), pangolins (Sujit Sivasundaram, 2020), or cows (Thomas Rath, 2022), historical academia been confronted with the fact that our traditionally humanist tools of conception in the West are simply not adequate to describe the history and politics of non-humans. In response, this issue presents how student historians at UCL have come to terms with the current crisis through their academic and personal inquiries. Coming from a cohort of historians that spent the bulk of their undergraduate years in a time of disruption during COVID-19 and a cost of living crisis, this issue deals with topics of political crisis, food systems, indigenous removal, and, ultimately, what they think history should do to combat the climate crisis.

A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

DEAR READER,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the fifth issue of the UCL History Journal. In this issue, our articles are broadly centered around themes concerning the environment and the history of human interactions with it.

The first half of the journal is dedicated to 'Environment and Crisis.' To begin with, Jonas Lim discusses the sustainability of the modern globalized food system and the historical context of environmental degradation by the agricultural industry. Next, Kitty O'Hara provides an analysis of the history of indigenous nations in the so-called 'Indian territory' in the United States. Jonas Lim also provides an overview of the political implications of the concept of 'crisis', examining the extent to which 'revolution' acted as an organising principle to combat crisis in the early years of the Soviet Union. Lastly, Yi Jie Teng wraps up the first part of the journal with a intricate review of the history of guerillas in the Andean cocaine trade.

Part 2 of the journal is a 'Writing Room' dedicated to voices from various writers of all years in UCL History. First, Jonas Lim introduces a primary source that is often commemorated in popular movements today - the Adams Letters. Bringing rigorous source analysis with useful background information about women in the American revolutionary period, Lim contends that we should always be careful of misrepresentation when associating past intellectuals with modern day social movements. Moreover, Anastasia Rabin provides a detailed history of class in the First World War, complicating popular portrayals of the war in public memory. Lan Yao, continuing her regular series of chess history from our previous issues, provides an interesting insight on how chess prodigies enjoyed smoking, alcohol, and sports altogether. Lastly, Andy Liu introduces the Climate App, a platform that is dedicated to invoking positive climate action, as part of his personal collaboration with the app.

From alarming calls for awareness about our current crisis to personal stories that weave the history of non-human agents with human ones, this issue ultimately aims to show the diversity of stories that can be told under the name of 'environmental history,' Whether you're the type to enjoy a rigorously academic analysis of histories of the past or whether you prefer a keener engagement with present issues through a historical lens, or whether you're just stumbling upon this issue to find what our finest historians have got to say, we hope that this issue has given you the opportunity to challenge what you thought about what you can do as a historian to combat our current crisis.

Anouska Jha &Jonas Lim, Editors in Chief

PART 1 - ENVIRONMENT AND CRISIS

HOW SUSTAINABLE IS OUR FREEDOM TO EAT?

Jonas Lim (Third year)

Egg shortages (BBC, 2022)

As historians, we are familiar with the narrative of modern progress. Throughout our undergraduate studies, we are taught about the liberties enabled by modern development: the freedom to speak, to commerce, and to eat. According to this narrative, the colourful array of goods we see in a supermarket is a glorious product of modernity.

However, at what cost? As historians, we know freedom always comes with a cost and, consequently, a responsibility. Isaiah Berlin distinguishes these two sides of freedom as positive liberty and negative liberty (1958). To put it succinctly, positive liberty is the ' freedom to' control one's actions, while negative freedom is the ' freedom from' the control of others. While we always focus on our' freedom to' when discussing modern progress, we rarely talk about our' freedom from'.

What did we lose in exchange for our freedom to eat? What exactly have modern humans gained our freedom from?

It is from nature that modern humans have gained our freedom to eat. Hannah Arendt described modern history as a story of humanity gaining an ' increasing mastery over nature' (1961). Our modern freedom to eat is also the freedom from the constraints of nature. As we no longer plough our own fields to eat, we imagine that modern progress has liberated us from nature.

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However, recent events have made us question this narrative. Amid a cost-of-living crisis and a nation-wide shortage of eggs, we find it harder to believe that modern progress led us to ' the best of all possible worlds' (Leibniz, 1710). Can we be assured that modern progress will take care of our dietary needs? In other words, how sustainable is our freedom to eat?

Are we eating in the best of all possible worlds?

Snow removal in Hoengseong so that trucks may come in (Joseph Kim, 2018)

I spent my pre-adult years in a place classified as a ' food desert.' A food desert is a region too distant from food supply chains that it is impossible to buy anything but ultra-processed food. Living in a school in the mountainous regions of Korea, my schoolmates and I would walk over an hour to visit the nearest supermarket, a highway rest stop in the middle of nowhere. Our only regular food source was the truck that brought food to be served in the cafeteria. On days with severe snowfall, there would be none.

It was not that my region was an absolute ' desert.' The surrounding mountains were full of greenery. And strangely enough, our region was the nation's foremost producer of cows. An hour's walk away from my school was a cow factory or, what experts call, an ' intensive livestock farm.'

But something didn't add up. Why were we fed factory-produced Australian beef from across oceans when there was a cow farm in our region?

Beef in Korean society has a curious politics intertwined with a history of nationalism and, to a lesser extent, anti-imperialism. When news of the zoonotic disease Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, more commonly known as the Mad Cow Disease (MCD) hit the beef industry in the early 2000's, Koreans were quick to respond to the import of American beef with hostility, reading it as a sign of U.S. imperialism (Choe, 2008).

Cow factory (Hoengseong News, 2020)

Protests against the import of US beef in Seoul (KyungHyang, 2008)

Although the uproar against anti-U.S. imperialism gradually faded away during the 2010's, nationalist sentiments about the superiority of Korean agriculture over others remained. Responding to such sentiments, my region Hoengseong quickly branded its beef as gourmet and, more importantly, ' Hanwoo', meaning ' Korean beef (See image on left-hand side). Since then, my region has maintained its reputation as the nation's supplier of high-quality beef from its free-range pastures.

The cow factories that I witnessed were thus a rather recent installation. As rural pastures were gradually reforested since the 1990's,

cows were moved into intensive livestock farms. Although no longer entirely free-range, the beef's prestige as the Korean beef remained. As the 'gourmet' Hanwoo was exported to the cities for high-end consumption, it was only affordable for our school to feed us processed meat from overseas exports.

Hence, modern progress had not freed me from nature. Although surrounded by forests, we had no choice but to relegate our diets to the hands of corporations. To think that the result of all that progress was only the freedom to be fed factory-produced processed meat from depressed cows in a food desert was underwhelming, if not disheartening.

Cow statue at the entrance to Hoengseong
(KP News, 2020)

Did modern progress make our diet freer?

Modern agricultural progress did not exactly make us 'freer.' Intensive agriculture has decreased food diversity by 75% in the last century (Hauter, 2014). Intensive agriculture, the most widely practised form of agriculture today, is the practice of farming to maximise the production of agricultural goods. Chemical fertilisers, soil depletion, and zoonotic diseases usually accompany this practice.

So, what's the problem? We may have less freedom than we think, but that doesn't mean you would want to exchange your liberty to make a late-night Tesco run with the burden of having to farm your own food, right?

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Well, the trade-offs are harsher than that. Intensive agriculture is not only harmful to livestock but for the resilience of our food supply. Currently, only twelve crops supply 80% of the global plant-based dietary energy (Hauter, 2014). What happens to our food supply if, for instance, a disease wipes out even one of these crops? The abundance enabled by intensive agriculture may look liberating, but, in reality, we are paying the price in other ways.
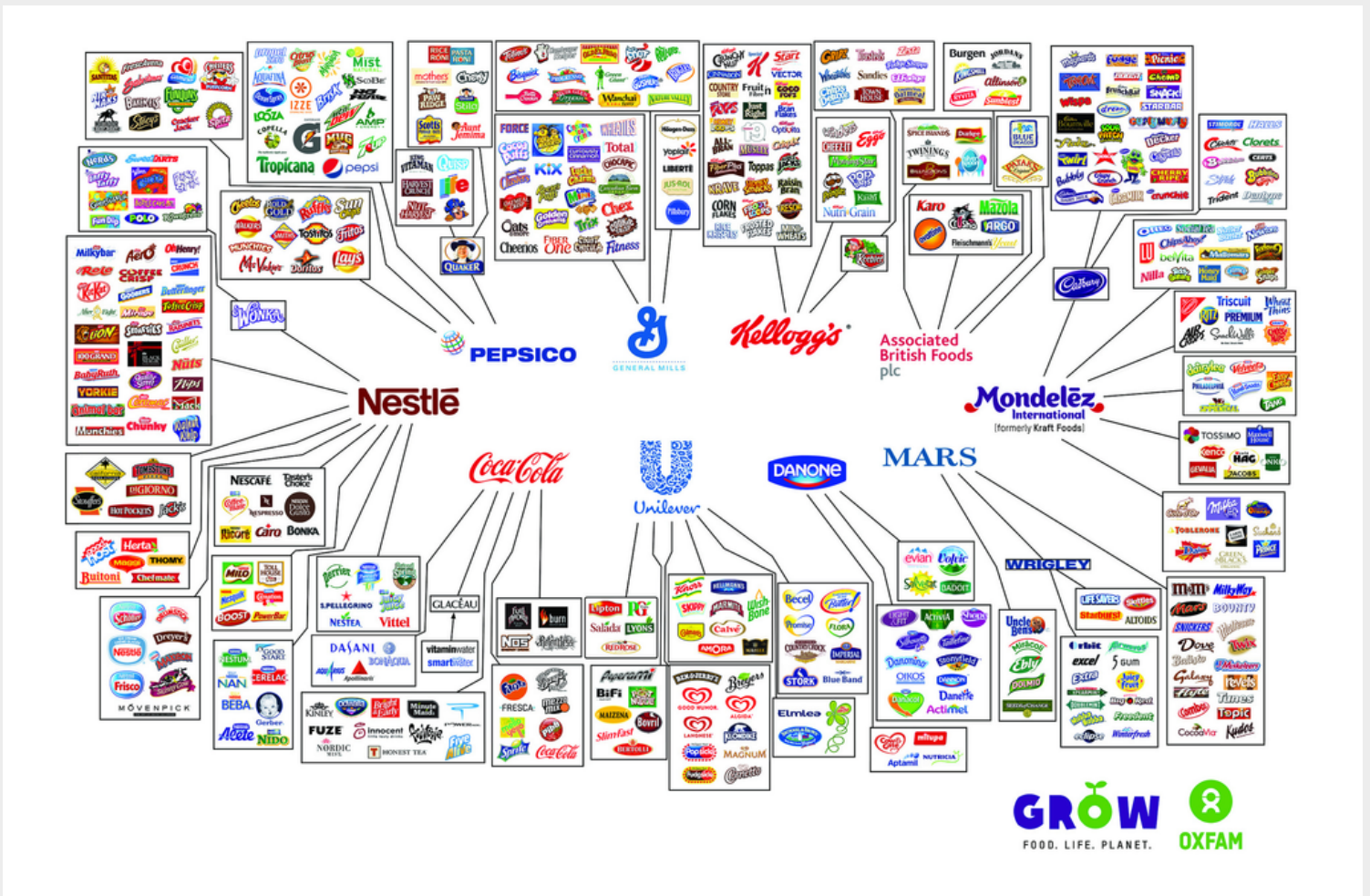
The Ten Companies that We Choose From (Oxfam America, 2014)

Most problematic of all is that most of us living in cities do not base our diet on foodstuffs gathered directly from the farm. Instead, we depend on processed food manufactured by corporations whose primary interest is to maximise profit, rather than public health. Nearly all processed foods currently sold in the market come from 10 giant food companies that dominate the market (Oxfam, 2014). Whatever "free choices" we think we are making when we are at our local supermarket, we are probably buying food from these ten firms. This is the result of our progress – the freedom to relegate our dietary needs to the hands of 10 companies.

The narrative of modernity as a 'liberation' from nature is delusive. We have not necessarily become free from the constraints of nature: far from it. As corporate-led intensive agriculture decimates our environment, we are slowly paying the price of our freedom to destroy the planet.

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The Quest for a Solution

Then, if our freedom to eat is not sustainable, how can we history students contribute to finding a solution?

Luckily, there is an ongoing debate on possible alternatives to intensive agriculture (Swade, 2021). One side argues that we should save nature by removing humans from it, while intensively farming from only limited amounts of farmland. The other argues that we should farm by sharing land with our non-human neighbours.

Eco-modernism

George Monbiot (Guardian, 2022)

The former is the 'Eco-modernist' approach. Eco-modernism is the belief that modern technology holds the key to our environmental problems. In 2022, George Monbiot famously proclaimed his eco-modernism to declare that human agriculture is destroying the planet. As a solution, Monbiot proposes that we should only consume factory produced foodstuff, while returning 75% of our farmland back to nature. The remaining 25% would be used for intensive agriculture to feed humans.

What does Monbiot's eco-modernism mean for humans and their relationship with nature?

Eco-modernism assumes that human agriculture is parasitic to the land, and the only way to protect nature is to rid humans of it. In essence, for Monbiot, humans are separate beings from nature.

Monbiot's dichotomy between nature and humans echoes the logic of modern industrialists. Concretely, his solution to 'preserve' nature by ridding it of humans echoes the logic of late nineteenth century progressivists of the United States.

From the 1890s, progressive U.S. politicians advocated to 'preserve' nature in national parks (Roosevelt, 1908). This led to the establishment of five national parks in Theodore Roosevelt's presidency. The purpose of this act, however, was not to ensure biodiversity or sustainability, but to ensure that the 'American Spirit' was preserved in nature while the U.S. could grow as an industrial power. Consequently, in Roosevelt's period, the U.S. experienced the highest rates of urban industrial development and a severe degradation of nature. Ironically, 'preserving' nature justified the logic that humans could do anything outside of the fences of national parks.

Humans are, and always have been, part of the natural environment. Monbiot's argument that humans need be kept separate to protect the 'environment' sounds good in theory. Yet, in practice, it gives a moral leeway for people to think that we can do anything with the 'human' parts of our land.
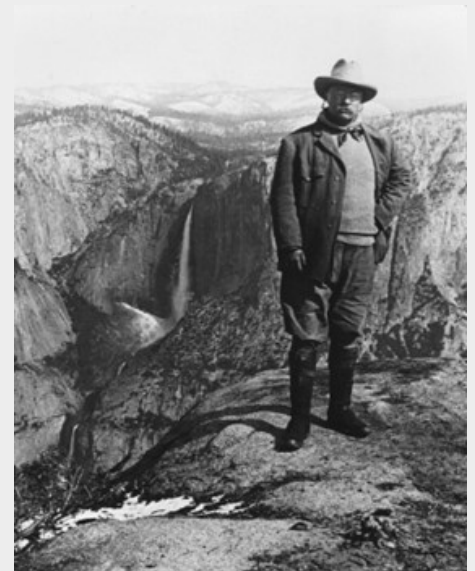
Roosevelt at Yosemite
(Sagamore Hill, 1903)

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Regenerative Farming

The latter solution, ' regenerative agriculture', focuses on ' sharing' nature with our non-human neighbours. Regenerative agriculture rejects the use of chemical fertilisers, weed killers, and insecticides in favour of natural processes that do the same job, albeit on smaller scales (Langford, 2022). Isabella Tree aptly proposes that farming is only a by-product of a natural process, and the farmer's role is to create conditions for nature to carry out this process at its best (2018). Ultimately, regenerative farming aims to produce food in a sustainable way that does not damage the ecosystem for human benefit.

Isabella Tree (IEMA, 2022)

Eco-modernists like Monbiot remain sceptical of regenerative agriculture, as it yields lower output than modern intensive farming. Still, it is not like we do not have enough food in the planet. Hauter shows that 30% of the food we produce goes to waste. Meanwhile, nations with the highest starvation and malnutrition rates are also the ones that export large amounts of food to the Global North (Hauter, 2014). The problem is not that we are not producing enough, but that we do not give it to those who need it the most.

How can historians help?

The uncritical faith in modern progress is, in this sense, misleading and dangerous. Modern progress did not promise the freedom to eat for all, nor did it ' free' humans from nature. The debate between eco-modernist and regenerative solutions shows us that people, even environmentalists like Monbiot who seek to improve the status quo left by modern development, still uncritically accept ' modernity' to a positive concept, when it assumes a strict divide between humans and nature.

This is where a historian's perspective can be useful. History is a powerful discipline because it teaches us how to be critical of power structures that enable societal oppression. Histories of environmental injustices, indigenous land appropriation and violence can help us think critically about our food systems today. As historians, we must critically engage in these debates on the potential solutions to the food crisis, while dissuading people from the myth that modern growth is a process of gaining freedom from nature.

Only then will our freedom to eat become truly be sustainable.

NEW LIVES AFTER REMOVAL: NATIVE NATIONS IN INDIAN TERRITORY

## Kitty O'Hara (Third Year)

Apache women and children prisoners seated with two American soldiers
(National Anthropological Archives, 1881)

The 1830 Indian Removal Act forced Native Americans living in the Eastern United States to relocate west of the Mississippi – what we now know as modern-day Oklahoma – to lands deemed undesirable for white settlement. It is a common conception in the wider historiography that after their arrival here, in Indian Territory, Native Nations faced widespread disease, violence, and overall dilapidation. This essay will focus onremoved Eastern Nations such as the Creeks, Cherokees, and Choctaws. However, what exactly 'Native Nations' refers to here, requires clarity, and the varied nature of Native experiences in the aftermath of removal demands greater attention.

Lives in Indian Territory can be characterised by resilience, which is displayed in the growing historiographical focus on their efforts to rebuild after removal. Christopher Haveman, for example, has studied how Creeks and Cherokees sought legislation to protect their Nations from the infiltration of alcohol into Native societies in Indian Territory. Clara Kidwell, on the other hand, analyses methods that were used to rebuild Native economies and farming practices. We can also refer to Jeffrey Ostler's study of the collaboration between removed Eastern Nations and Native Western Nations, and their efforts to peacefully co-exist. There are many other ways that Nations sought to build new lives, such as through education, and seeking to establish new trade networks.

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Yet, this essay will consider the resistance to alcohol, the impact of class on economic prosperity, and the strategies implemented to peacefully co-exist with Caddo and Comanche Nations. By doing so, it aims to highlight the varying, and adaptive nature of removed Eastern Nations' lives in Indian Territory, in order to challenge the notion of a monolithic ' Native Nations' experience in the aftermath of removal. Crucially, what may have been successful in rebuilding one Nation, may not have been for another.
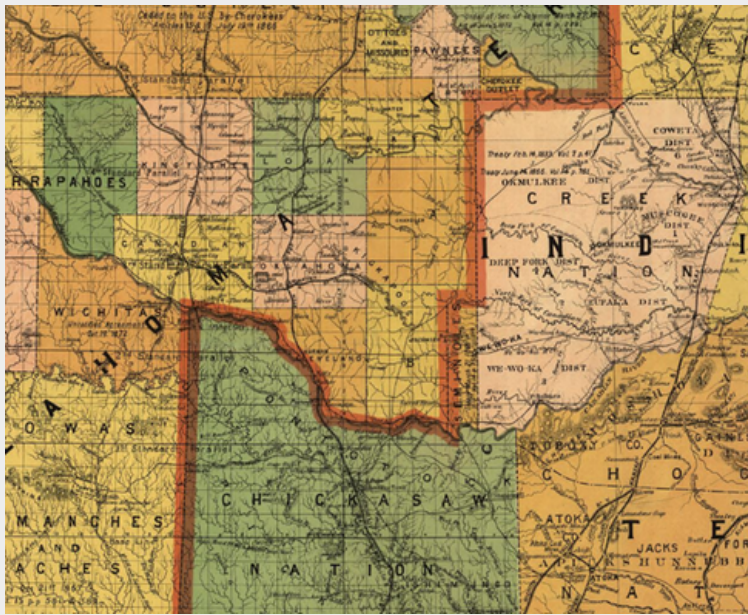
Map of the Indian and Oklahoma territories
(Library of Congress, 1892)

Once in Indian Territory, during the 1830s, removed Eastern Native Nations worked in a variety of ways to rebuild familiar lives from their pre-removal homes in the east, while also forging new lives in the west. Removed Nations faced disorientation after the loss of many members of their communities. This resulted in a disjointed cultural understanding for many, especially as vulnerable members such as children and elders died during their journey west. For many of these people, their identities became lost in mourning the lives they cherished before the devastation of removal. In an attempt to reinforce these identities, communities needed to restore cultural distinctions and distinguish what that would now look like. And recognising this would be paramount in ensuring their survival.

However, the infiltration of alcohol from white settlers seeking to exploit vulnerable removed Natives through trade, posed a threat to their ability for restoration. Indeed, Haveman presents how ' alcohol was brought to Indian Territory in large quantities by whites…and arrived by steamboat from as far as Cincinnati' (Haveman, 2016). Consequentially, alcohol acted as a contributing factor to the ' high mortality rate found in the western Creek Nation', alongside disease and other non-fatal injuries from its misuse. Building new lives required the community to work together and focus on reinstating their livelihoods. Therefore, Natives worked to remove the threat that alcohol posed. We can see evidence to remove alcohol within the Cherokee society, as Ostler's study reflects that in ' 1844, as political hatred and violence threatened to rip apart their nation, Cherokees organized a temperance society, and strengthened legislation prohibiting alcohol' where they ' petitioned authorities to abandon Fort Gibson' (Ostler, 2019). This provides an apt example of the efforts that removed Eastern Nations were taking to ensure they could build new lives. Overall, despite this resistance not being particularly successful, it is emblematic of how they sought to establish new lives by protesting the effects of alcohol and the exploitation they were subject to. On the other hand, removed Native elites from the ' Five Tribes', such as the Creeks and Cherokees, continued their efforts to assert cultural adaptation to U.S. ' civilization' standards. It must be remembered that the elites' dedication to the ideologies of the republic that sought to dispossess them, stemmed from a belief that their portrayal of ' civilization' would result in more favourable treatment from the U.S. government and white settler population. David LaVere has suggested that ' removed Indians conceived of themselves superior and had intentions to ' civilize' the groups Native to Indian Territory' – known as the Plains Indians (LaVere, 2000). Lauren Brand contends with what LaVere overlooks here – that these ' conceptions were much more complicated' (Brand, 2016). Indeed, this is corroborated by Daniel Richter's assessment of Native ' self-perceptions' as complex (Richter, 2001).

Although some Native elites did believe they were superior to Western Nations, it was a complicated strategy intended to gain favourable treatment from the white American's to secure greater autonomy to rebuild lives in Indian Territory, free from white encroachment (Roberts, 2021). While, in theory, there was a vision for the entire population of the Five Tribes to present these signposts of 'civilization', in practice, there was a further class distinction that needs to be acknowledged. Namely, that this 'civilised' notion was only attainable for Native elites. This is displayed, as seen above, by the fact that elites were integral to perpetuating these visions. Attitudes to these 'civilization' policies also differed between Nations. Considering, then, the complex nature behind the intentions of emulating white society, it is perhaps unsurprising that, as Donna Akers asserts, Nations such as the Choctaws during the 1830s, were eager to reject everything 'they perceived to be from white origins' (Akers). While Native elites from Creek and Cherokee Nations were attempting to build new lives in Indian Territory, the Choctaws were seeking to rebuild their old lives. The Choctaws also focused on educating their children to rebuild lives, and whilst this was an effective method that helped to maintain cultural traditions, this is not within the scope of this essay. The aforementioned discussion on class provides a more compelling study. This, considering the struggles with alcohol – which would have predominantly exploited the vulnerable lower-class traders – is indicative of how distinct individual experiences were in building new lives in the aftermath of removal. Ultimately, there was no single way that removed Eastern Native Nations worked to rebuild their lives.

Other ways that removed Eastern Native Nations worked to build new lives in Indian Territory included a focus on financial reconstruction. The structure of Native economies for several centuries had adapted to particular geographical locations, both agriculturally and logistically. They were reliant on the familiarity of eastern lands for trading and moving west had a profound impact on this. By again reflecting on this element of class, I intend to analyse how Native elites experienced the swiftest transition to economic success in Indian Territory – although this will be explored in further depth later. Although most notably, poor land quality in Indian Territory hindered crop cultivation, and caused economic repercussions for all members of removed Eastern Native Nations, irrespective of their class.

Delegates from 34 Native tribes at the Creek Council House
(National Archives, 1880)

As Haveman conveys, the inadequate lands and climate in the west, 'continued to be a hindrance to prosperity' (Haverman, 2016). Specifically, the hardships that were 'hindering prosperity' are evidenced in an 'Extract from the Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the President' in 1838 (Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1838). This report details the suffering of the "destitute Osages...who wandered into the lands of other tribes", and conveys the financial problems they were facing in Indian Territory from a U.S. perspective. In terms of functionality, the newly appointed Commissioner was eager to impress President Van Buren with how generous U.S. 'liberal provisions' were towards Native Nations.

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Therefore, focusing on primary accounts from U.S. federal agents can be reductive to our understanding of how Natives built new lives. It fails to recognise the work Natives were undertaking to rebuild their economies and perpetuates a narrative that removed Nations were reliant on U.S. benevolence for survival.

Despite the deconstruction of familiar agricultural practices, many elites owned slaves who went with them to Indian Territory. This set the foundations for elites to build new lives, compared to non-elite members of the community who were not able to capitalise from slave labour. David Chang evidences this strategy to build new lives whereby elites exploited the benefits of slave labour. He recognises that, ' Creek elites soon began to establish farms and plantations' upon their arrival, highlighting how quickly they were able to rebuild (Chang, 2010). This is corroborated by Haveman, who provides a compelling example of elite economic success in Opothle Yohola, a wealthy Creek, who ' had a net worth of $80,000 by 1854.', largely accumulated from his plantation run by black slaves. In contrast, Ostler provides insight into how elites in Ohio Valley and Great Lakes Nations ' did not use enslaved labour' (Ostler, 2019).

The federal plot to erase Native countries continued well into the 1900s (Newberry Library, Uprooted)

Again, this reflects on the wider argument that this essay seeks to convey here, that no Native experience was the same. While Native Nations differed in their experiences – as evidenced by Ostler's assertion of the North-eastern Nations not using slave labour to build new lives – so were experiences within individual Nations. Overall, Native elites were able to use their financial advantages to build new economies and establish reformed lives in Indian Territory as a result.

As with alcohol, which threatened the stability of removed Eastern Nations and hindered efforts to build new lives, conflict with other Native Nations in Indian Territory also posed a threat. Therefore, Nations sought to minimise this threat by seeking peace with the other Nations living in this space. Initially, there was conflict among Native Nations in Indian Territory. Both eastern and western Nations now had to share land, and increasingly compete over resources. Wendy St. Jean, for example, speaks of a ' forced merger of the Delawares with the Cherokees' which is exemplary of the territorial disputes that were fuelling tensions. Lauren Brand contrasts this by highlighting the efforts of Native Nations to be strategic in their communication with each other. By considering Brand's thesis here – emphasising the impact of removed Nations on Comancheria – we can argue that efforts to cooperate with fellow Nations would be fundamental for constructing new lives. Evidently, these efforts were undertaken almost exclusively by Native elites, for example, the ' Quapaw chief He-Ka-too openly expressed his desire for peace'. It can also be evidenced in Ostler's study of inter-tribal relations, when, in 1834., ' Choctaw leader Peter Pitchlynn embarked on a three-month trip to make peace with the Comanches and Kiowas'. During these cooperative efforts, gift giving was practised by removed Native Nations to symbolise the peace that they desired to secure a stable future for their respective Nations.

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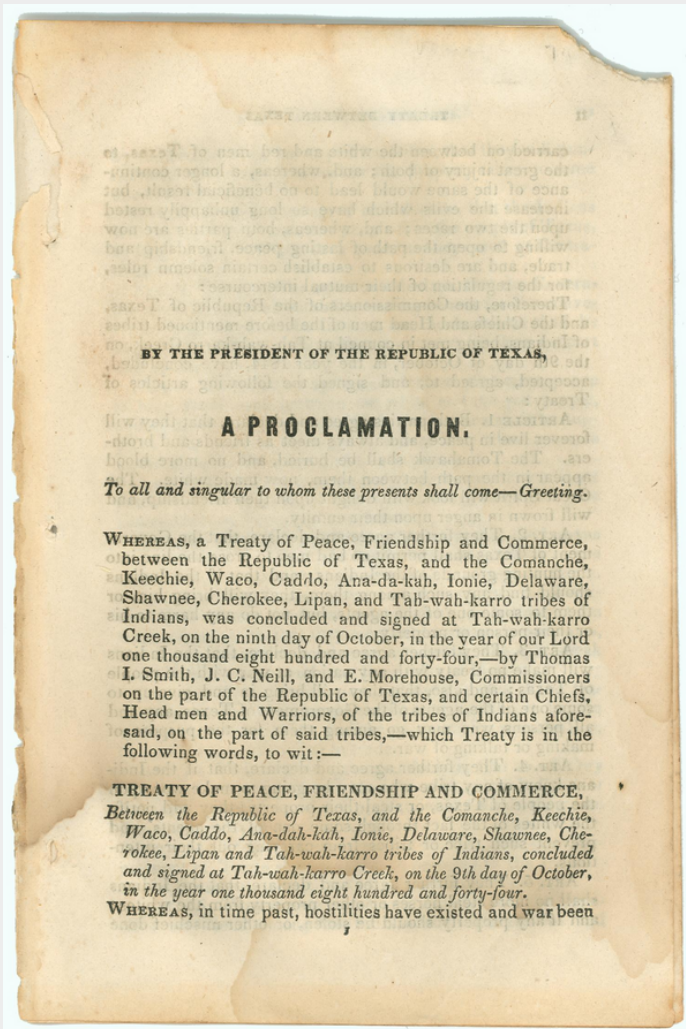
Proclamation by Pres. Anson Jones containing
text of Treaty with Indians. (c.1840)

One particularly insightful example of this includes ' Creeks prevailing upon Caddos to carry tobacco and white beads to the Comanches'. These efforts are encompassed in the Treaty of Tehuacana Creek in 1844, where it was agreed to cease hostility and establish commercial ties between Nations. The treaty established that Nations will " forever live in peace" , which solidified these efforts Nations took to build new lives in Indian Territory (Treaty of Tehuacana Creek, 1844). It is significant to recognise, however, the role of the Native elites in these decisions.

In particular, political strategizing, treaties, and trade agreements, were sought by the elite – the same people who would benefit from such advancements. Although, these did not always reflect the wishes of the entire Native population.

While an agreement for peace meant the wider Native population would not have to focus their energy on concerns over conflict, they were not instrumental in constructing what this new life would look like in Indian Territory. Ultimately, this reflects, and reiterates, how no single Native experience in Indian Territory was the same.

To conclude, there were numerous ways that removed Native Nations sought to build new lives in Indian Territory. Often, this could mean resisting white interference, such as resisting alcohol; adapting to white ideas of ' civilization' and harnessing the slave trade to build economies; and pursuing cooperation with fellow Native Nations. However, the motivations behind each method used to build new lives must be considered in order to understand how these experiences differed on an individual basis. This individuality pinpoints how there was no singular Native experience, and it would be a mistake to assume this was the case. There was a plethora of ways that Natives set the foundations for their future in Indian Territory. More significantly, federally recognised Nations remain in what was known as Indian Territory to this day. Ultimately, this is crucial in understanding the success that Native's had in building new lives in the west, and indicative of the resilience that subsequently characterises this history.

TIMES OF CRISIS: REVOLUTION AS AN IDÉE FIXE IN THE EARLY SOVIET UNION

Jonas Jungwoo Lim (Third Year)

Time is factored into our institutions in various levels. In 1975, intellectual historian Jonathan Pocock coined the term ' Machiavellian moment' to account for the moment in which sovereigns become conscious of the temporality of their principality. In a Pocockian lens, modern politics only truly began when time became one of the chief concerns of the sovereign. Likewise, many of our modern political systems position themselves within time by assuming the timelessness of their institutions. In his book Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time (1979), German historian Reinhart Koselleck argued that the emergence of modernity during the late-eighteenth century Enlightenment altered how people imagined their political institutions in the future. In other words, the question on the validity of institutions over the flow of time was the keystone upon which modern politics was founded.

For this reason, ' crisis' - or the idea of an impending emergency that warrants an exception to usual political norms in a political institution - has recently been brought to the interest of historians and political theorists. Particularly after the 9/11 attack in the United States, Anglo-American academia has seen a renewed interest on what happens to the rule of law when liberal regimes face crises that demand a suspension of normal political practices to defend its republican values. Nevertheless, the idea of an ' emergency state' that protects the constitution of its sovereign state is not unique to liberal regimes of the West. The early history of the Soviet Union, from 1917 to the early period of Stalin's rule, is an outstanding example of a non-liberal regime that had to justify its suspension of political norms in response to crisis, primarily through the idea of ' revolution' as an organising principle.

The idea of 'revolution' as an organising principle acted as a cause to which Soviet citizens were expected to adjust their personal lives throughout the history of the Soviet Union. Oscillations between moments in which the state promoted ideas of revolution to urge its subjects to engage in a 'warfare' against a class enemy or external threats or provided 'welfare' in moments of peacetime consolidation for its revolutionised subjects stand out during different periods of Soviet history. However, taking a diachronic approach by characterising each period of history with only one of these aspects inadvertently oversimplifies the interplay between welfare and warfare, as 'revolution' exited continuously throughout Soviet history as a symbiotic process and never entirely faded away. 'Revolution' as an idea has always shaped Soviet politics and society between 1917 and 1941, but to different extents and ways according to changes in the role of the state in times of warfare and peacetime consolidation.

The Revolutions of 1917

Ideas of the revolution prevalently featured in most aspects of the citizen's life in the early years of the Soviet Union, characterised by a rhetoric of imminent change and upheaval. 'Revolution' was especially predominant in the minds of three historical actors to varying extents: Bolshevik politicians, the urban working-class, and the soldiers. The idea of 'revolution' especially drove politically minded elites adhering to Marxist-Leninist ideology, namely the Bolsheviks. In the Marxist-Leninist definition, 'revolution' was the transition from a capitalist society to a socialist state. Shared in the writings of many Bolshevik party is the idea of revolution as a part of the inevitable progress of history in the Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism, as workers around the world would form a revolution with the lead of the 'vanguard party' (Lenin, 1918). Though how each party member envisaged and understood the word 'revolution' varied, the need for

change through an upheaval of the old Tsarist regime was commonly shared among the Bolsheviks and other political factions as well. As the Provisional Government struggled to reform Russia's economic problems, it was evident that reform was not an option for Russia at the dawn of 1917 (Peter Kenez, 2017). Thus, in the sphere of high-politics, the idea of revolution predominantly shaped Russian politics as the imminent need for change was put forth by the Bolsheviks and their working-class supporters.

However, the extent to which 'revolution' affected the people at a grassroots level is debatable. It would be wrong to assume that all the grassroots supporters of the Bolshevik party shared the same understanding of the word 'revolution' with the politically-minded elite. Ronald Suny rejected the top-down approach that Bolshevik agency regarding ideology simply 'trickled down' to those at the grassroots level (1983). Examining archival sources containing letters from soldiers on the Western front with urban working-class backgrounds, William Rosenberg has also argued that what fueled the workers and soldiers during the October revolution was a 'language of extreme need', rather than a support for the Marxist-Leninist idea of dialectic change and revolution (2018). Hence, from a grassroots perspective, revolution meant a change in the harsh economic and social conditions that they had suffered since the years of late Imperial Russia, rather than in the political rhetoric of Marxist-Leninism.

Uprisings against the Bolsheviks after 1917, such as the Kronstadt rebellion and anarchist tendencies among the peasantry during the Civil war, demonstrate that support for the Bolsheviks' idea of 'revolution' was not unconditional among the Russian people. Rather, the people were driven by their own political interests and economic needs that were manifested in support for the Bolsheviks during 1917 but then faltered during the Civil War due to economic unrest and the

de-urbanisation of the working-class (Diane Koenker, 1985). Hence the idea of revolution shaped the course of events in Soviet society between 1917 and 1921, but to varying extents depending on different meanings of 'revolution' between Bolshevik politicians and grassroots organisations.

The New Economic Policy

The New Economic Policy (NEP) period is often characterised as an ideological concession towards the peasantry as the Bolshevik regime adopted a mixed-market approach to enrich the peasants (Stephen Cohen, 1973). However, the ideas of 'revolution' were still prominent amid such concessions. Though party politics became less ideological and more power-grabbing moves as party members disagreed on the extent to which the NEP should persist, the Bolsheviks generally understood the NEP as a part of Marxist-Leninist ideology that there needed to be sufficient levels of economic development for a capitalist society to proceed to a socialist state (Moshe Levin, 1969). Such ideological motives behind the NEP can be seen in how Bolshevik propaganda treated the NEPmen, intermediaries who made a surplus through retailing. Even though the NEPmen were crucial to the success of the NEP, they were targeted against as affluent, haughty, and at odds with revolutionary ideals (see image).

Moreover, 'revolution' was still existent in the Bolshevik regime's cultural policies. Though the NEP period saw fewer articulations of revolutionary rhetoric in terms of the economy, policies such as the literacy campaign and the Latinisation of indigenous peoples still put forth an idea of cultural revolution to liberate oppressed peoples in Russia. The idea of how 'new Soviet (wo)man' should behave was shaped by such an articulation of 'revolution' in the cultural sphere. In 1922, Lenin, criticising Stalin for his

Valdimir Kozlinskii, Sympathy, 1926

oppressive nationality policies, advocates a 'proletarian attitude' towards the national question that celebrated national identity ethnic minorities that had been oppressed during the Tsarist regime ('On the Question of the Nationalities'). In terms of gender, women were also promised to be liberated from the household and were expected to fulfil their role as workers as a part of the 'cultural revolution,' although in practice women were still unfree from the burden of domestic labour as unemployment during the scissors crisis hit them more severely than men (Barbara Engel, 2006). Nevertheless, in ideological terms, 'revolution' continued to shape cultural policies in the NEP period as it promoted the idea of the new Soviet (wo)man as a worker – even though it eventually became a double burden for women.

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Ideas of revolution are also prominent in the fight against ' backwardness' in the cultural policies of the 1920s. ' Backwardness' was a term that the Bolsheviks associated with Russia's late industrial development compared to Western Europe, meaning that Russia was behind in the dialectical progress from a capitalist state to a socialist society (Leon Trotsky, The Peculiarities of Russia's Development, 1934). This ' backwardness' was also associated with Russian culture, as the Bolshevik regime also regarded cultural remnants of the old Tsarist social order to be behind in the Marxist-Leninist idea of historical progress. Literary works in this period, such as The Heart of a Dog (Bulgakov, 1925), demonstrate how education was promoted as a means to achieve worker class-consciousness as the illiterate was considered to be ' standing outside of politics'. Peasants and non-Russian ethnic minorities in the countryside were regarded as major subjects of this cultural revolution as many of them were illiterate, religious, and not aligned with Bolshevik ideology – all of which the Bolshevik regime considered to be ' backward. Latinisation campaigns were enacted upon these populations to secularise them of pre-revolutionary religious ideals and better incorporate them into the new ' Soviet identity' by unifying their systems of literacy (Terry Martin, 2017). Hence, the idea of ' revolution' persisted in the NEP period in the form of cultural policies attempting to liberalise ethnic minorities and women, implying the need to overcome the ' backwardness' of Russian society.

Cultural Revolution and Terror

In the early Stalinist period, the rhetoric of militant revolution was re-strengthened as the state engaged in class warfare against the remnants of the old social order that remained after the NEP period. As Stalin felt the need to raise its industrial levels beyond pre-war standards, what the party considered to be ' backward' aspects of Soviet society were revolutionized in industrial, agricultural, and cultural

Yakov Guminer, "2 + 2 + Enthusiasm of workers = 5" (1931)

terms. The mixed-market approach adopted during the NEP was entirely replaced by central state planning by the party, and intermediaries, engineers, and military officials of the Tsarist regime that had been allowed to keep their positions during the 1920s were now considered to be enemies of the revolution (Peter Kenez, 2017). Sheila Fitzpatrick identified a ' cultural revolution' as rebuilding the economic structure of Soviet society required consideration as to how culture should operate in relation to revolutionary ideology in the new socialist state (1974). As new industrial cities such as Magnitogorsk were built according to socialist ideas of productivity and culture, ideas of ' revolution' in the early Stalinist period melded into how people identified themselves as members of a socialist state.

Simultaneously in this period, ideas of revolution started to change in a way that regarded ' revolution' and the Soviet state in the same light. Such a change can be identified in the process of collectivisation, in which loose definitions of ' revolution' and warfare against ' class enemies' allowed the state to wield more power. As a part of overcoming the supposed ' backward' aspects of Soviet agriculture, the state initiated ' dekulakization' to introduce collective agriculture to Soviet farms. However, the term ' kulak' was never precisely defined (Sheila Fitzpatrick, 1994). The ' kulak,' vaguely referring to a peasant who owned surplus by hiding foodstuffs, were immediately confiscated of everything they owned even as the term was abused arbitrarily against anyone who resisted state power. What constituted a ' wealthy peasant' could be arbitrarily read by local administrates, as innocent people were sent to the Gulag. This ambiguity granted the state power to control its populations, while Stalin avoided responsibility by simply blaming local administrates as accountable for the atrocities during dekulakization in his 'Dizzy with Success' speech (1930). Moreover, the terror during the 1930s and Stalin's Cult of Personality enabled the state to appropriate ideas of revolution to equate the revolution as the state and Stalin himself. Thus, such ambiguities in defining the ' revolution' and its enemies gave Stalin absolute authority, until the Nazi invasion in 1941 necessitated a renewed definition of ' revolution' and its enemies.

Uzbek, " Strengthen working discipline in collective farms" (1933)

Overall, 'revolution' was a prevalent idée fixe throughout the history of the Soviet Union, shaping politics and society according to changes in the role of the state in each era. Moments of revolutionary ' warfare' and those of peacetime consolidation coexisted to different extents between 1917 and 1941, and oscillations between the two ideas of ' revolution' in invariably shaped how the state affected its citizens in terms of economics, gender, and nationality.

GUERRILLAS IN THE ANDEAN COCAINE TRADE

Yi Jie Teng (Second Year)

Cocaine, the psychoactive chemical derived from the coca leaf, has long been valued for its stimulant properties, consumed for millennia by communities that resided along the Andean mountain range, it was later chemically isolated in the 19th century, seeing a wide variety of applications before public attitudes, particularly in the United States, began hardening against the drug, leading to its eventual criminalisation in the 1900s. As the two largest producers and exporters of cocaine, Peru and Colombia have been invariably tied to the Latin American cocaine trade. While the demand for cocaine boomed in the United States following the end of the Vietnam War in the 1970s and 1980s, Leftist guerrilla groups such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the Peruvian Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) concurrently rose to prominence, responding to social grievances amongst the peasant campesinos of their respective nations while emerging as serious contenders within the cocaine trade. Their involvement has inadvertently given form to a sensationalized image of the ' narco-guerrilla', which Vanda Felbab-Brown describes it as the conflation of politically motivated insurgent movements with the criminal underworld, doing away with the distinction between ideological and profit-driven motives.

Founded by Huamanga University lecturer Abimael Guzman, Sendero Luminoso originated as a Maoist splinter faction of the Peruvian Communist Party, beginning political organizing and recruitment amongst student organizations at the university in the 1970s before going underground and re-emerging in 1980 to declare an armed struggle to overthrow the Peruvian government. Dietz characterizes the organisation as inimically opposed to participation in the Peruvian electoral system, disregarding gains made by mainstream leftist political parties such as the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (APRA) in the 1980s in favour of forceful deposing of Peru's social, political, and economic system. Manwaring illustrates a similar picture, explaining the platform of Sendero Luminoso as a Maoist insurgency committed to the destruction of the foreign political and economic system of Peru in favour of a nationalist, indigenous ' popular democracy.[3] Dietz further elaborates on the socio-economic conditions which led to the rise of Sendero Luminoso, identifying the failure of land reform policies enacted under the leadership of General Juan Velasco Alvarado to equitably distribute resources amongst the rural poor, alongside the social and economic displacement of indigenous populations by the urbanisation of Ayacucho and its surrounding areas as key to producing the grievances which created a fertile breeding ground for the expansion of a guerrilla movement that opposed the political and economic establishment of Peru. By 1980, Peru's economy had been ravaged by the Latin American debt crises of the 1970s, with inflation reaching 61% per annum, half the labour force was underemployed or unemployed, real wages had plummeted by one-third from 1973. These conditions were significant as the same factors which had facilitated the creation of leftist guerrillas such as the Sendero Luminoso were simultaneously responsible for the rise in the underground coca economy; impoverished peasants turned to the only means of remaining afloat. Morales observes that the persistence of the illicit cocaine trade in the Upper Huallaga may be attributed to structural economic issues, such as the inability for colonists to survive on a mode of subsistence farming solely reliant on low value crops such as tea, coffee, and tobacco.

The case of Colombia's leftist insurgency differs in several ways from Peru's, providing additional perspectives on guerrilla involvement in the illicit drug trade. Firstly, the FARC's founding had pre-dated the establishment of a pervasive national drug economy, thus the groups ideological origins may be more neatly delineated from allegations of financial opportunism. Secondly, the FARC's most formidable opposition came not from the national government but powerful cartel-backed paramilitary groups working in concert with the state's armed forces to effectively suppress its revolutionary activities. Peeny and Durnan single out the problematic nature of conflating the two spheres of drug trafficking and leftist insurgency for generalizing the fragile power balance between various actors within the drug trade under an excessively broad categorization. For instance, Collier and Hoeffler argue that the positive statistical relationship between natural resource exploitation or primary commodity exports as a proportion of GDP and the frequency of civil war, as well as the inability of armed rebellions to extract legitimate income, support the notion that armed rebellions such as the Colombian FARC merely constitute a category of organized crime. James J. Brittain disputes this approach, observing that the early days of FARC's insurgency against the Colombian government saw it oppose the 'coca-bourgeoisie' of the Medellin and Cali cartels, which itself frequently cooperated with the Colombian government. Rather, Brittain argues that the narcotic industry in Colombia was an independent outgrowth of the region's political economy; consequently, the FARC's transition from initial opposition to large-scale drug traffickers to an eventual co-opting of coca cultivation constituted a pragmatic policy adjustment to an intractable socio-economic circumstance. For example, the FARC's early opposition to drug-trafficking rings primarily revolved around criticism of the concentration of wealth generated from the industry, likening narco-kingpins to a bourgeoisie exploiting the profits generated by the drug trade to accumulate land and resources.When early attempts to suppress the coca cultivation within FARC controlled territory led to popular backlash, FARC policy quickly adjusted to accommodate the illicit economy by 1982, causing the group to become embroiled in conflict with the Medellin cartel due to its tendency to leverage its control over coca-producing areas to push for higher wages for coca-growers. This contradicts the narrative put forth by the ' narco-guerrilla' theory by repudiating the notion that the FARC had somehow become ideologically compromised by entering the drug trade, or that it had been subsumed by the interests of the criminal underground; rather, in choosing to interpret the coca-trade through the lens of class relations and intervening on behalf of the exploited underclass of cocaleros, the FARC had demonstrated its ideological dedication by pursuing a distinctly Marxist course of action by adjusting its practices to the material conditions of rural Colombian society.

Colombian Army in the Department of Cundinamarca, 2012 (Creative Commons)

US President George W. Bush and Colombian President Alvaro Uribe, 2007 (US State Dept Archive)

These two case studies are significant in demonstrating the convoluted nature of guerrilla involvement in the drug trade. Rather than simply existing as another category of organised crime abetting the transnational drug supply chain, Peru's Sendero Luminoso and Colombia's FARC exist as products of longstanding social, economic, and political issues. Consequently, the rise of FARC in the 1990s and the escalation of its insurgency did not simply originate from its increased involvement in the drug trade; an increase in drug revenue did indeed permit the expansion of its military forces and the acquisition of more sophisticated weaponry, but neither the FARC nor the Colombian drug trade existed in a vacuum. Similarly, the declining the fortunes of Peru's Sendero Luminoso during the 1990s resulted from the complex interdependence of various actors along the Latin American drug supply chain. The FARC would oversee its most rapid period of expansion in the 1990s following the combined efforts of the US and Colombian governments to crush the Medellin and Cali cartels, resulting in the removal of the FARC's staunchest and most formidable opponents. The subsequent decade would see the Colombian insurgency movement rush to fill the void left behind by the cartels in the cocaine trade, attesting to the fact that where guerilla groups and criminal organizations intersected in the drug trade, they often existed in a state of conflict and deadly competition; by contrast, the most reliable forces which held the FARC at bay and stymied their goals of challenging the government in Bogotá were often provided by the very criminal elements that the guerrillas were alleged to be collaborating with. The incongruous nature of both the narcoguerrilla theory and broader anti-drug policy of the international prohibition regime stems from a failure to approach the Latin American drug trade from a historical perspective and account for the root causes of both coca cultivation and violent political upheaval, namely deeply entrenched material inequality and the absence of functional institutions to represent the interests of various alienated segments of the populace.

FARC Insurgents, 1998 (INSS)

Guerrilla groups in Peru and Colombia have played significant roles in both facilitating and profiteering from the transnational drug trade. However, the narcoguerrilla theory of insurgent participation in the drug trade is insufficient to explain the complex dynamic which exists between various actors in the drug economy. Rather than being interchangeable with or supported by underground trafficking organisations, both the Sendero Luminoso and the FARC have often come to blows with other participants in the drug trade as they sought to expand their control over the drug economy in order to amass the necessary financial and political capital to enact their ideological goals. Additionally, the image of the narcoguerrilla implies a dichotomous relationship between the state and the criminal underground; the historical reality is that criminal groups have often cooperated with the state in opposition to leftist guerrillas, dispelling the notion that guerrilla and criminal interests must necessarily intersect whilst those of the state and the criminal underworld are inherently contradictory. The perpetuation of such narratives by Latin American elites and foreign-policy decisionmakers in the United States simultaneously undermines efforts to seek resolutions to the decades-long insurgencies which have wracked the nations of the Andean region as well as alternative solutions to bring the violent cocaine trade under control through government oversight and regulation.

Humans of UCL History

#3 Jonas Jungwoo Lim

One thing that I really appreciated from my time at UCL's history department was that it gave me the freedom to challenge things as an undergraduate student. I was rarely expected to regurgitate specific sets of knowledge that was spoon-fed to me. If you want to focus on a very niche topic that hasn't really been researched or if you want to do something that challenges the way that people have been traditionally viewing certain issues in the past, lecturers and dissertation supervisors are generally quite open to you doing that, and that's something I feel is quite enabling as an undergrad.

Of course, you begin as an undergraduate by learning how to produce known knowledge; you're not conducting as professional or groundbreaking research as a PhD student would, but you still get to participate in adding on to existing debates and learning about what kinds of debates are occurring in academic circles. In general, I really appreciated the open-ness of the department in this regard, and I found it very beneficial to my research and dissertation.

For instance, my dissertation was about federal science in the 19th century American West, so I explored how science played a role in constructing the environment as a conceptual space. Mainly, I looked at what kinds of political implications this held for the ways that the US viewed itself as a limitless land of abundance and freedom, as well as the ramifications it held for the indigenous peoples living in those regions. I think this poses challenges on several levels, such as how the environment is a conceptual space rather than a material space, which even within environmental history has only really been accepted since the late 1990s. Moreover, even within the history of science, it's been quite controversial to state that science is often a human construct, but my research has revealed that science did often have concrete purposes beyond being an ' objective' body of knowledge. These issues are relatively novel to historiographical debates, but my supervisor and the academic environment at UCL were nonetheless forthcoming in aiding me in my research into the field of environmental history.

Q: Sounds like you've been making full use of your degree at UCL History. What made you decide to specialise in the field of environmental history?
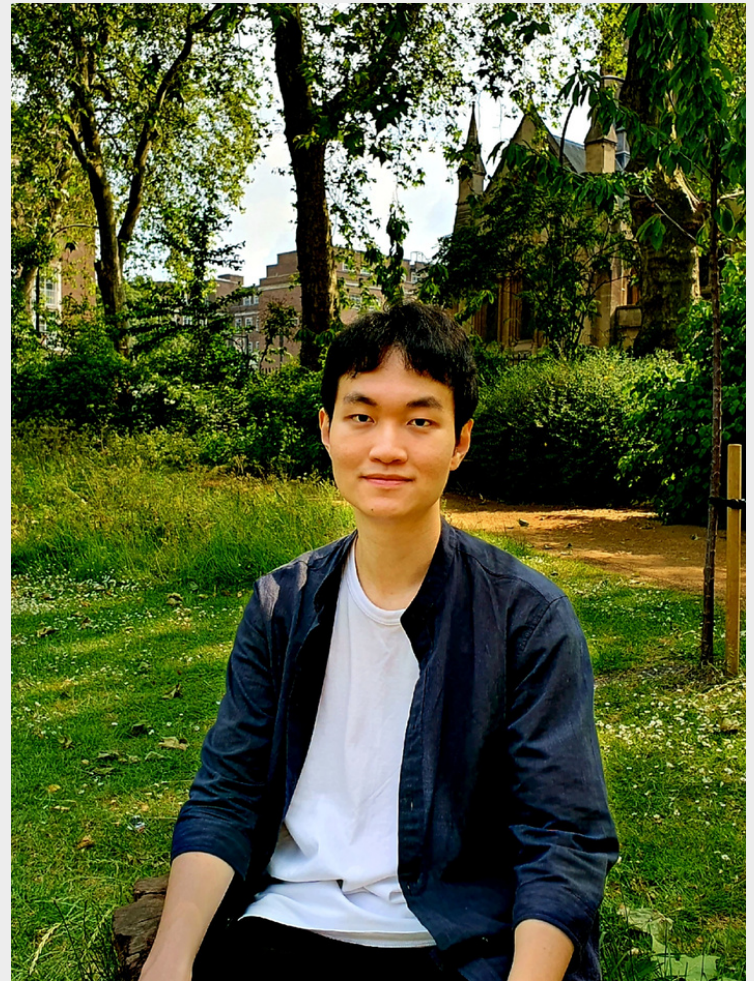
For me, it wasn't a clear decision from the beginning.

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On a personal note, some things were just more evident to me. I know that some people may find it disturbing to even consider animals or fungi as central to historical change, but I was quicker to accept the notion that humans were not the only being with agency, partially because of my background, I guess. Having spent my pre-adult years in a school up in the rural mountains, I was accustomed to listening to how the surrounding forestry not only provided fresh air and cool hiking trails, but also actively shaped the history of our school. My first-ever research essay written in high school was actually on ecology rather than history, which was about how an artificial pond in my school influenced the survival of a certain frog species after rainfall. My history teachers were also big ecology-enthusiasts and bird watchers, which undoubtedly influenced me during my formative years as an intellectual. In hindsight, I think that mindset made it rather obvious to me that humans were not really the chosen agents of history that they're commonly portrayed to be.

My first year at university consisted mostly of rethinking the things that I thought I knew about history. At the time I was reading about post-modern philosophy and how that affected modern historiography after the cultural turn. Accordingly, in ' Approaching History,' I was exposed to how historians have been deconstructing categories such as gender, race, or class since the 1970s.

What came to hand was the issue of the climate crisis, which prompted me to decide that what required rethinking the most in history was how historians thought about the environment, how historians viewed human beings as agents that shaped the course of history as they pleased. Just looking at our current state with COVID-19, we all know that history didn't really happen in that manner, but I thought that it was absurd we weren't looking at plants, insects, or pathogens as historical agents in their own right. Consequently, I felt that there was much rethinking and rewriting to do about what human agency means in terms of the climate crisis, and that was what drew me into environmental history in an academic sense.

Q: What kind of role do you think environmental historians can play in helping to resolve current issues surrounding the climate crisis and environmental destruction?

I think that there is a lot that historians can and should do for our current crisis. I've never been completely content with the classic portrayal of the humanities being disconnected from the real world and broader society.

ignoring the diversity of various agents acting within that category of ʿhumanity'. From a historical perspective we need to deconstruct different agents and groups throughout the history of climate change, accounting for other categories such as gender, race, or class in order to properly identify the different accountabilities and responsibilities behind the climate crisis. In terms of helping to understand the human element of climate change, I think historians can play a large role in combatting the climate crisis. Rather than shying away from participating in these sorts of debates out of fear that they don't possess the necessary academic or scientific expertise, I believe history students can and should employ the methods used for studying the past in dealing with present phenomena.

Q: That's great to hear, and it's quite consistent with what you've been writing in the UCL History Journal as well. Now that you're stepping down from Editor-In-Chief, is there anything you would like to say to next year's team of editors and writers at the History Journal?

Coming from one of the so-called "Covid cohorts," one thing I thought UCL History could benefit from was a sense of community. Studying in London obviously comes with numerous quirks and benefits, but it's hard to form a community within your department without a shared space like a common room or a college.

What I hoped to have achieved with the journal was precisely to provide a forum for history students could feel welcomed to share their thoughts and write about things that they find meaningful. For this reason, I tried to avoid making it excessively focused on academic rigour, because I knew that would alienate some people who wanted to have their voice in the journal but didn't feel confident in the academic value of what they wished to share.

Particularly in terms of the climate crisis, we already know the science behind climate change; we know that the climate crisis is happening and that we need to do something before we cross the 4°C threshold. The biggest problem we face now is the politics and the human institutions that are responsible for conveying that information to the broader public. There are people who won't believe in the science just because of the way that knowledge is disseminated from academia to the public.

There are also many political issues behind discussions surrounding climate change. For example, the populations who are often most affected by the climate crisis are usually also the people least responsible for causing it. Consequently, when people try to say things like 'humanity is at fault' or 'humans are parasites to the Earth', they unfairly collectivize humanity while

I hope the journal can continue to develop into a platform where history students can feel a sense of belonging and freedom to express their ideas and themselves. Even though the structure of the degree doesn't naturally facilitate socialization between history students, and we might always feel in a rush to get to the next seminar room instead of talking to our classmates, it's important to foster a sense of belonging that we're all part of a community here at UCL History.

If even one of our writers ever felt welcomed that there were other people in the department willing to listen to their ideas and passions, I guess I could say that I've fulfilled my job as an editor. And that's something I think next year's editors can continue to work on.

Humans of UCL History is a platform organised by the History Journal so that faculty, researchers, and students can tell their personal journeys that led them to UCL History.

We aim to bring lively stories behind the words and numbers on students' module selections while giving faculty the chance to promote their modules and to share their passion.

If there is a person whose story you would like to hear, please email us at historysociety.ucl@gmail.com!

Featured: Jonas Lim
Editor in Chief of the History Society Journal,
2022-20233
Interviewed and Edited by Yi Jie Teng

WOMEN'S RIGHTS BEFORE FEMINISM: REVISITING THE ADAMS' LETTERS

Jonas Jungwoo Lim (Third Year)

With the rise of Women's history and Social history in the 1960's, history since then has often reflected the interests of activist agendas. One such document that presented present-day activists with much resonance is Abigail Adams' series of letters to John Adams, more commonly referred to as 'The Adams' Letters.' On 31st March 1776, Abigail Adams wrote a letter to her husband, John Adams, in an attempt to persuade John of the need for women's protection by law. As John was making his way to draft what would later be called the U.S. Declaration of Independence, Abigail's words to one of the nation's so-called 'Founding Fathers' bares particular weight on how we view the constitution in relation to the cause of women's rights in today's context, not to mention her own.

Abigail's words echo an ongoing political discourse of her time: a discourse on individual liberty and autonomy with which her audience, John, was directly involved. Although her logic was too far from that of the mainstream to be endorsed by John, Abigail makes several significant points that extend the revolutionary

Abigail's Window
(Massachusetts Historical Society, c.1800)

cause to women, drawing upon multiple intellectual traditions that strengthen the authority of her non-traditional reasoning. Primarily, metaphorical allusions to two political concepts allow Abigail to link the cause of women to that of the founding fathers: independence and slavery.

Abigail opens her letter with an appeal to the revolutionary cause of independence. A direct response to the news that a declaration of independence was soon to come, Abigail's letter unfolds with a sympathetic gesture (that she longs ' to hear that you have declared an independency) towards a cause for which John is striving. In doing so, Abigail succinctly casts metaphors that associate the image of the patriarch with an absolute monarch. For instance, Abigail predicates that ' all men would be tyrants if they could', advising that John should not endow ' unlimited power' to men. Using metaphorical language that equates the state of women to that of the American colonies in relation to the monarch, Abigail makes a subtle yet compelling case to extend the revolutionary cause to women. Hence, Abigail implicitly suggests that it would be contradictory for John to support the revolutionary cause while not addressing women's legal protection.

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Abigail Adams, "Letter to John Adams" (31 March 1776)

"I wish you would ever write me a Letter half as long as I write you; and tell me if you may where your Fleet are gone? What sort of Defence Virginia can make against our common Enemy?
Whether it is so situated as to make an able Defence?
Are not the Gentery Lords and the common people vassals, are they not like the uncivilized Natives Brittain represents us to be?
I hope their Riffel Men who have shewen themselves very savage and even Blood thirsty;
are not a specimen of the Generality of the people.

I am willing to allow the Colony great merrit for having produced a Washington but they have been shamefully duped by a Dunmore.

I have sometimes been ready to think that the passion for Liberty cannot be Eaquelly Strong in the Breasts of those who have been accustomed to deprive their fellow Creatures of theirs.
Of this I am certain that it is not founded upon that generous and christian principal of doing to others as we would that others should do unto us. . . .
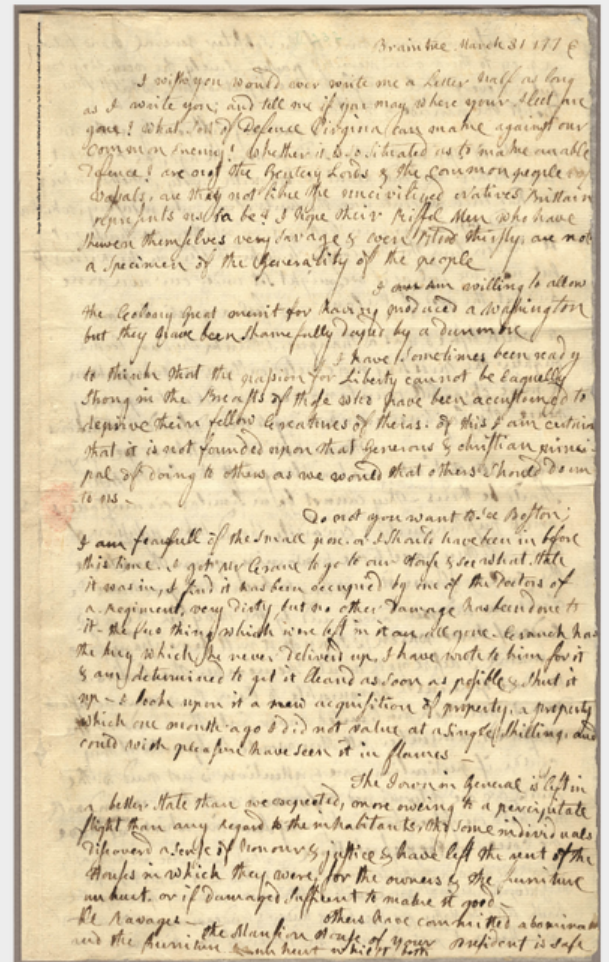
Abigail's Letter to John
(Massachusetts Historical Society, 1776)

I long to hear that you have declared an independancy— and by the way in the new Code of Laws which I suppose it will be necessary for you to make I desire you would Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors.
Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the Husbands.
Remember all Men would be tyrants if they could.
If perticuliar care and attention is not paid to the Laidies we are determined to foment a Rebelion, and will not hold ourselves bound by any Laws in which we have no voice, or Representation.

That your Sex are Naturally Tyrannical is a Truth so thoroughly established as to admit of no dispute, but such of you as wish to be happy willingly give up the harsh title of Master for the more tender and endearing one of Friend.
Why then, not put it out of the power of the vicious and the Lawless to use us with cruelty and indignity with impunity.
Men of Sense in all Ages abhor those customs which treat us only as the vassals of your Sex.
Regard us then as Beings placed by providence under your protection
and in immitation of the Supreem Being make use of that power only for our happiness."

The Language of Women's Protection

Another concept that Abigail invokes to argue her case is slavery. Repeatedly utilising metaphorical language, this time between the patriarch and the enslaver, Abigail portrays harsh husbands as 'Masters' and those sympathetic to the cause as 'friends'. This linkage between the state of slaves and women is cleverly designed to touch upon ongoing political tensions among Abigail's contemporaries, including John's own views on slavery and the conflict of interests among the Northern and Southern colonies. During the creation of the Declaration, the founding fathers avoided directly mentioning the issue of slavery for fear of alienating the slave owners in the Southern colonies. John Adams, for one, was opposed to the use of slaves in favour of freemen labourers. Abigail, knowing John's position on slavery, also exploits this fact to argue that the revolutionary cause should be extended to women. Abigail then expounds on how women would be determined to 'foment a rebellion' under laws that do not cater to the unequal state of women.
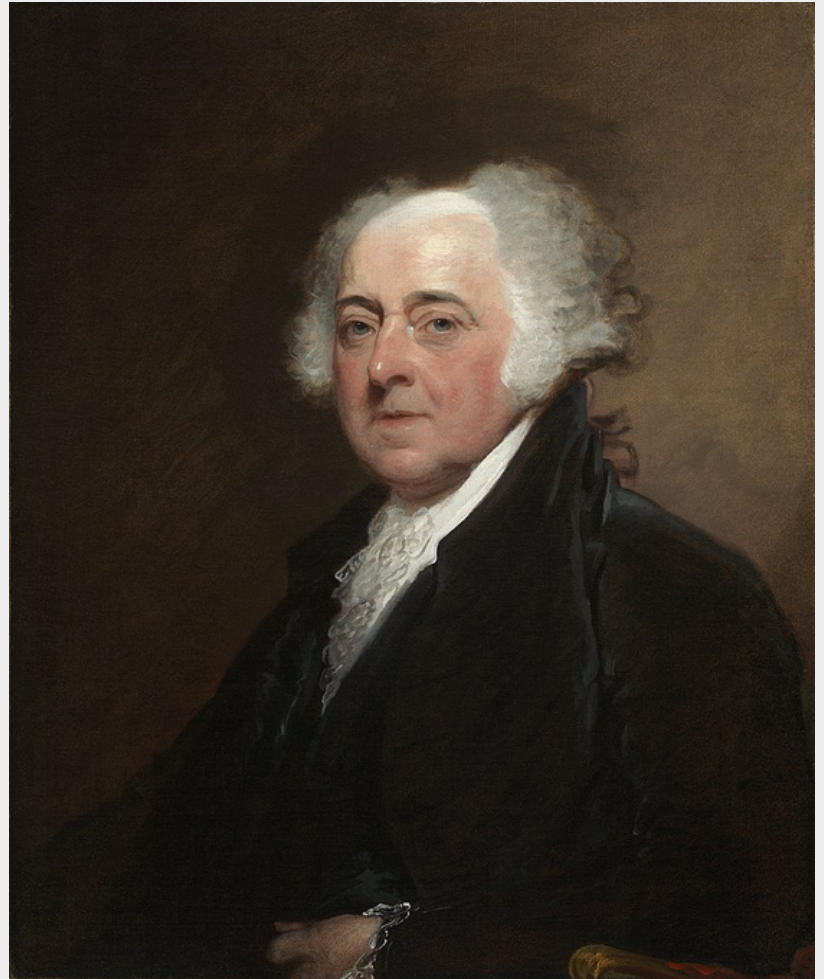
John Adams (Gilbert Stuart, c. 1800-1815)

Appealing to the same concerns that confronted her husband regarding the possibility of factions over the issue of slavery, Abigail uses John's logic against himself to persuade him that women's legal protection was, in fact, 'rational' under his logic. For Abigail, it is essential to include a clause that reflects women's interest in the new code of laws, as much as it is essential for John to concede to the interests of the Southern slave owners to prevent a rebellion.

It is worth discussing the extent to which Abigail is advocating for a sort of "women's rebellion" when she mentions its possibility. As radical as Abigail's suggestion for women's legal protection was, a manifesto for a social movement against patriarchal governance in Abigail's time would be unthinkable. However, the private character of the document, designed for the readership of a single John Adams, demonstrates that Abigail's purpose could not have been to deliver a public manifesto. Without additional sources to clarify her motives, Abigail's true intentions about a women's rebellion remain obscure. Nevertheless, it is certain that, as far as this document is concerned, her intentions were never to foment thousands but to persuade a single audience, her husband. Abigail's true purpose of mentioning a women's rebellion here is to argue that women be recognised 'voice, or Representation' in the new code of laws.

Molly Pitcher Firing a Canon at the Battle of Monmouth (Library of Congress, c.1911)

Abigail's argument for legal recognition takes on a religious language towards her proposed solution. Towards her final remarks, Abigail asks John to think of women as beings that are to be protected by men under ' providence' and to use the power of men for women's happiness, as does God, or ' the Supreem Being'. Abigail does not concern her solution with voting rights nor equality between the sexes; she accepts that women are subjects to be protected by men and argues for this ' protection' to be legally stipulated in the new nation. According to Abigail, laws were to protect women as subjects of God from unrestricted masculine power. Hence, Abigail concludes that men, as the ruling sex, must legally recognise women's need for protection.

Abigail's letter has attained much social and scholarly attention in posterity, especially by activists who read Abigail as a feminist thinker. However, from her Letter to John Adams, we see that Abigail herself did not intend to advocate for a change in inequality through social action. Even the very nature of the document (a private letter) tells us that Abigail could not have foreseen her writing gaining the social significance it did over the centuries. As historians of political thought, we must treat ideas as articulations against their respective historical contexts, not as disembodied beings independent from time and space. In this sense, Abigail is addressing the cause for women in a distinctly different way from the feminist thinkers of the twentieth century. In the present, her resolution for the legal recognition of women as subjects to be ' protected' is no longer radical nor deemed necessarily appropriate. To meaningfully place Abigail's ideas into our present debates would require a critical interrogation into the late-eighteenth-century political environment, not a unilateral ' application' of her words into our own.

HOW THE LONG COLD WAR RECAST JEWISH HISTORY

Anastasia Rabin (Second Year)

The ' otherness' of the Jews, living in Christian nations with cultures and identities separate to their own, has caused much of Jewish history in Europe to be one of the Jews as an object of suspicion, and the scapegoat for the issues of the time. Despite the ' modernity' of the Cold War, constituting a contest for supremacy between two superpowers of unprecedented cultural reach and nuclear power, the primitive human tendency to fear the ' other', particularly the Jewish ' other', was not forgotten. Instead, the sharpened fear of foreign influence – whether communist or capitalist – meant a return to the suspicion of the ' traitorous' Jew, now cast with a new face. Yet simultaneous to Jewish targeting was the utilisation of Jewish history abroad to assert greatness, representing the duality of both Soviet and American policy, in which Jews were seen as a liability, and an opportunity. Similarly, Jewish experiences were also used and re-worked by Jews themselves, to inform their own understandings and alignments with either side, demonstrating how the Cold War and the Jews were continually connected by a core idea – that of the ' other', whether it was belief in it, or experience of it. Therefore, the long Cold War, with its origins reaching decades prior to the traditional starting date of 1945 and its consequences far after the ' end' in 1989, has had a similarly ' long' impact on Jewish history, in which the experiences and identity of Jews, recast by the conflict, can be traced from the rise of communism, and years past its demise.

 From the beginning of the 20th century, many Jews identified with communism, lending favour to the exaggerated image of the ' Judeo-Bolshevik' in later years. When communism spread in Eastern Europe, it fed off feelings of social repression and discontent, but as Gornick (1977) emphasises, few people in Eastern Europe were as oppressed and excluded as the Jew, brought up as outsiders in their own countries. Therefore, when the Russian Revolution promised a better future, thousands of Jews met the revolution with excitement and hope. Significantly, Gornick ties Jewish oppression in Eastern Europe with the 1919 emergence of the American Communist Party, arguing that although the party consisted of many non-Jews, its origins still lay in the Jewish experience. Many Jews migrated from Eastern Europe, particularly Russians following the failed revolution of 1905, believing there was greater opportunity for change in the United States. Consequently, many Jews arrived with communist ideals, and if they did not already, the feeling of possibility in the US, with laws that did not explicitly discriminate against them, often brought out underlying Socialist sentiment. Importantly, Gornick also highlights how the experience of poverty in the Bronx, where many Jewish migrants settled, developed a strong communist culture among New York Jewish communities, by providing images of a better future and a powerful sense of purpose and belonging. Therefore, Gornick demonstrates how the Jewish experience of oppression caused many Jews, both in Eastern Europe and the US, to align themselves with communism at the beginning of the century.

However, Jews also joined the Communist Party during the interwar period and the Second World War due to the USSR's role in presenting itself as an enemy of fascism. Between 1936 and 1939, and again from June 1941 onwards, Judt (2007) has argued the Soviet Union positioned itself as a 'friend' to the Jews, as part of its attempt to be seen internationally as a leading 'anti-Fascist' power against the rise of Nazi Germany. The Soviets formed a Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee to secure international and domestic Jewish support, and following the war, were seen as the 'liberators' of the Jews for freeing large populations from Nazi-occupied lands, and for marching on Auschwitz. Therefore, the Soviets utilised the plight of the Jews for political gain, establishing moral supremacy and power on the world stage and gaining more support, which Judt links to the growing prominence of Jewish leaders in Soviet communist parties, particularly in the satellite states. Matyas Rakosi became the party leader in Hungary from 1947, whereas Jews constituted much of the core leadership of the parties in Romania, Czechoslovakia and Poland. This demonstrates the significant role of Jews in Eastern communism, likely furthered by the Soviet use of Jewish persecution in Germany to assert its own power, greatness and morality.

Yet, soon after the Soviet Union positioned itself as the Saviour of the Jews, Stalin began his second wave of arrests, purges and show trials, targeting Jews in particular. This second terror, lasting from 1948 to Stalin's death in 1954, was fuelled by increasing concern of traitors passing information to the West. Naturally, as Judt stresses, this immediately implicated the 'cosmopolitan' Jew, known for their foreign associations. From January 1949, the Pravda condemned 'cosmopolitans without a fatherland' and 'passportless wanderers', presenting the Jewish people as homeless and foreign outsiders. Ironically, the establishment of Israel in 1948 furthered this issue by reinforcing Jewish 'foreignness', especially following Israel's alignment as an American ally. These fears of international associations often brought Jews to trial, such as in the Slanksy Trial of 1952, where fourteen communists, many of them Jewish, were accused of favouring Israel against Russia, and were described as 'representatives of international Zionism', as if their treachery was part of a global Israeli plot. The 'Doctor's Plot' of 1953 was similar, in which the Pravda accused nine doctors, six of them Jews, for conspiring with the 'Anglo-American bourgeoisie' to poison Soviet leaders. Consequently, Judt's description of the Soviet Union, first aligning itself with the Jews against the Nazis, and then similarly submitting itself to fear of the Jewish 'other', demonstrates a significant Cold War strategy in which Jews were used for gain abroad, yet targeted at home.

Cartoon depicting the 'Doctor's Plot', Krokodil Magazine, 1953 (Creative Commons)

Stalinist propaganda poster, 1938 (Creative Commons

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But this strategy was not unique to the East. The American government and public similarly treated Jews with heightened suspicion due to their ' foreign' nature, while also using their history to assert moral supremacy. Imhoff (2017) identifies a contradiction between the government's desire to emphasise their ' Judeo-Christian' values abroad, to demonstrate their democratic values and freedom of religion, with their distrust of Jews at home. Frightened of Soviet infiltration, the FBI and other government agencies encouraged Americans to root out communists living among them, and often this suspicion was placed on Jewish Americans. A 1948 survey found that 21% of Americans believed that ' most Jews are Communists', and this sentiment was reinforced by the media, who disproportionately blacklisted Jewish entertainers as enemies of the state, such as in the 1950 pamphlet Red Channels. The government's investigations reflected this suspicion, closely watching many Jewish organisations and questioning very high numbers of Jews. Importantly, the distrust of Jews within the US lay in the fusion of the deep-set fear of Soviet infiltration with existing anti-Semitism, in which Jews were already seen as distinctly different to Americans. This can explain why African-Americans were also disproportionately targeted. Undoubtedly, however, this concern was furthered by significant Jewish involvement in communism, as Gornick (1977) has shown – but even so, the extent of Jewish communist participation in the American mind was highly exaggerated. Yet, simultaneous to the targeting of Jews was the FBI's desire to cover any anti-Semitism up, with Imhoff arguing that the FBI avoided documenting direct anti-Semitic content, in the concern this could fuel anti-American sentiment abroad, risk association with Nazism and compromise assertions of a free, democratic America based on ' Judeo-Christian' values, that was unlike the religious intolerance of the USSR. Therefore, the Cold War effects of a sharpened need to assert supremacy and to fear the foreign held similar consequences for Jews on both American and communist soil; at home, they were persecuted as traitors, and abroad, used to establish moral supremacy, based on stories of persecution elsewhere.

The image of the ' Judeo-Bolshevik' was not confined to the West or to the peak years of the Cold War. Instead, Hanebrink (2018) has stressed that the fear of the Jewish communist swept across Eastern and Central Europe as early as the 1917 Russian Revolution. Neighbouring countries were anxious of the spread of Bolshevism and its threat to European civilisation, and this, paired with the perceived Jewish involvement in Russian communism, played into pre-existing anti-Semitic fears of the Jewish conspirator set on subverting the Christian order, that had lingered in Europe for centuries. As Volkov (1978) has noted, anti-Semitic language and tropes have been used across hundreds of years to assert cultural identity and cultural belonging against the distinct ' other', but have altered slightly as the historical context changes, to meet the concerns of the time. Therefore, with the rise of nationalism and communism, the image of the Jewish conspirator was recast with the face of the Jewish communist, in which communism itself was a Jewish plot for power, designed to take over nations and strip them of their sovereignty. This became a powerful myth in Hungarian, Romanian and Polish politics following the First World War, and, as Hanebrink argues, had a significant effect on the Nazis, used from 1933 to position themselves as an anti-communist front, and even informed decisions to implement the Holocaust. Significantly, this myth continues to be used far-right extremists today, such as to understand the traumas of their own communist past, and to deride international liberal norms for being too accepting of the ' other'. Consequently, the fear of communism was critical in providing a new face to the Jewish enemy in both the East and West, which still lingers in far-right ideologies today.

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Nonetheless, Jews were also key players in the writing of anti-communist discourse, making the Cold War crucial to Jewish intellectual history. Despite beliefs in Jews as communists, or even the makers of communism, many notable anti-communist public intellectuals were of a Jewish background, such as Isaiah Berlin, Sydney Hook, Raymond Aron, Daniel Bell and Manes Sperber. These intellectuals promoted liberal democracy and the welfare state, while condemning communism and totalitarianism. Jews were therefore significant on both sides of the Cold War, in Soviet leadership positions but also as anti-communist intellectuals. Yet, despite Gornick and Judt's explanations of Jewish experience inclining Jews to communism, Hacohen (2020) has argued that the anti-communism of these intellectuals was also rooted in Jewish identity. This is expressed in the writings of Berlin and Sperber, and of New York intellectuals, such as Dawidowicz, in which the fear of the totalitarianism of Nazism and Stalinism was heightened by their own Jewish associations. For example, Sperber wrote of his anti-communism being intensified by the Soviet destruction of Yiddish culture and execution of Yiddish writers. Importantly, the majority of these intellectuals were involved in the Congress for Cultural Freedom, a major anti-communist organisation funded by the CIA. Consequently, this consolidates how not only was experience of 'otherness' significant for the motivations of both Jewish communists and anti-communists, it was also indirectly utilised by the American government abroad to undermine the Soviet regime, this time in the form of intellectual discourse.

The use of Jewish history to further American interests was far more direct in the David Rousset Affair. In 1949, Rousset, a French Holocaust survivor, published a manifesto denouncing Soviet gulags for constituting a 'hallucinatory repetition' of Nazi concentration camps. This manifesto functioned as a significant anti-communist weapon, fuelling international attention and controversy through aligning the Soviet regime with the inhumanity of the Nazis. It also motivated fellow survivors to unite to form the Commission against the Concentration Camp Regime, which worked to end the continuation of 'concentration camps', particularly within the USSR. Consequently, Rousset's work, funded by the US, and its consequences, demonstrates how Holocaust history was utilised to undermine Stalinism, forming what James Burnham called 'the best anti-Communist job he had yet seen.' Yet, Novick (1999) has argued that immediately following the war, American Jews were quiet about their victimhood in the Holocaust, so not to reinforce understandings of their otherness.
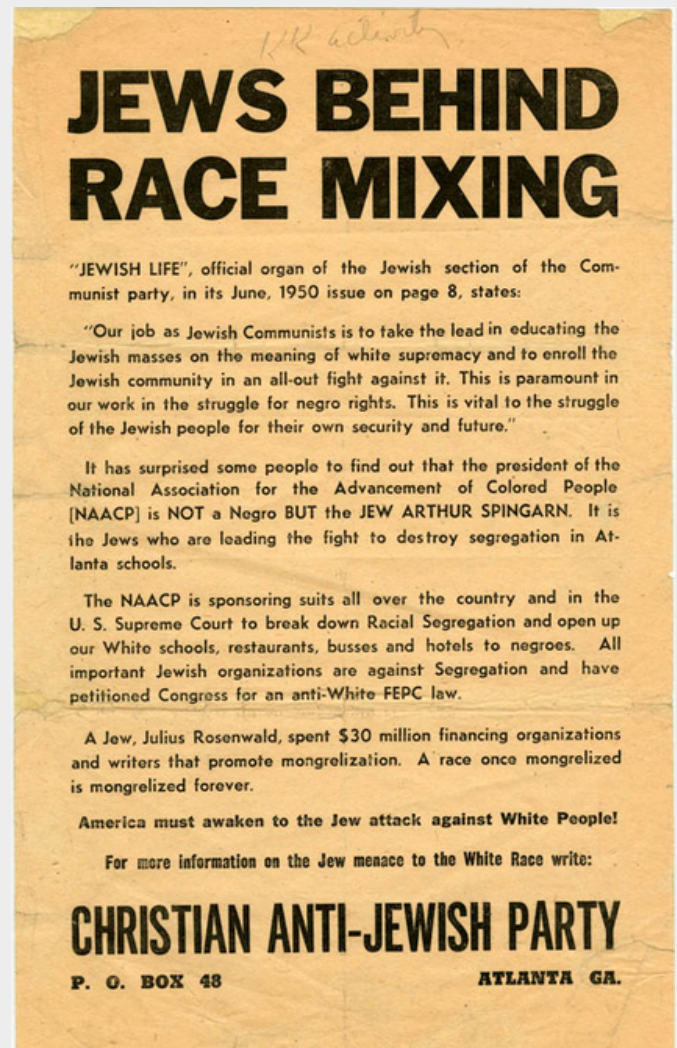
Antisemitic and anti-miscegenation propaganda poster in the US, unknown author, 1950s (Creative Commons)

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In conclusion, the long Cold War continued and recast the age-old trend in Jewish history of the Jewish scapegoat. But it also politicised this history to assert supremacy on the world stage, in which stories of Jewish persecution and acceptance were mobilised for political gain abroad. Combining this with Gornick and Hacohen's portrayal of Jewish involvement in communism and anti-communism originating from experiences of oppression, and therefore constituting two sides of the same coin, the relationship between the long Cold War and the history of Jews appears repeatedly rooted in the Jewish experience of discrimination. The fundamental ways in which the Cold War affected the Jewish people are all connected to having been viewed as the ' other' – whether this was experience or retelling of past otherness, or ongoing otherness. Importantly, just as the Cold War remains powerful in public memory, so does the impact it has left on ideas of Jewish identity and history, such as leaving the modernised version of the Jewish conspirator behind, now cast with a communist face.

Antisemitic propaganda posters from Germany and Hungary alleging connection between Jews and Bolshevism. (Creative Commons)

SMOKE, ALCOHOL, SPORT AND CHESS

Lan Yao (MA History Education)

Tal Smoking (Dutch National Archives, 1988)

You may have never imagined that some elements which seem to be irrelevant to chess can significantly influence players' performance by affecting their health.

Smoking

The 8th World Champion Mikhail Tal was reproached for his addiction to smoking. Boris Spassky recollected that Tal once almost lost his life because of smoking. At the midnight when the Soviet team won the world championship, Spassky went to Tal's room. The door was half-open, and Spassky saw Tal sleeping on a smoldering pillow. There were a lot of cigarette butts, and one was still burning. Startled, Spassky quickly picked up a flagon, got some water and put out the burning cigarette.

Because of long-term smoking, plus his addiction to alcohol, Tal's health was devastated severely.

His chronic kidney problems were aggravated, which contributed to his defeat in his rematch against Botvinnik in 1961. Botvinnik had thoroughly studied Tal's style before the rematch, and he commented that if Tal learned to program his life properly, he would become invincible. Tal's poor health habits caused a slump in his play in the following years. In 1992, Tal was terminally ill, but he fled from the hospital and played the Moscow blitz tournament. His passion for chess propped up his weak body, and he miraculously defeated the contemporary World Champion Kasparov. But this was the last time Tal performed his artistic tactics on chessboard. One month later, unable to withstand the torture of illness, 56-year-old Tal passed away.

Spassky himself had also been a chain smoker, which resulted in his poor health condition. He had a decisive game against Yasser Seirawan and the game was adjourned. On the way to his room, Spassky collapsed, because his body could not stand so much nicotine.

*WARNING: This article does not commend or romanticise the smoking of tobacco, cigarettes, or e-cigarettes. Smoking causes lung cancer and heart disease to you and the people around you.

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Tal on his Sickbed (1962)

He analyzed the adjourned position on the bed, and on the next day he won the game with his last reserves of strength. But he did not quit smoking until 1975, when he found that his weak body could no longer sustain his mind. He lost to the Austrian grandmaster Andreas Duekstein despite having a good position. After that, he decided to give up smoking. The process was painful, and he often dreamed about smoking. But he had never smoked a single cigarette after he decided to quit smoking.

Alcohol

Alcohol is a perfect companion for chess. Advertisements for alcohol used to involve the element of chess.

However, immoderate consuming of alcohol is detrimental to players' performance. As I have mentioned, that Tal suffered from kidney disease largely because of his excessive consumption of alcohol. Another example is the 4th World Champion Alexander Alekhine, who began to be addicted to alcohol since 1930, which aggravated his respiratory disease. He felt that he was not able to think clearly and plan as normal in the World Championship match against Euwe in 1935, and he lost his World Champion title.

This defeat brought Alekhine endless pain, and made him realize that he had to improve his health in order to maximize his strength in chess. He decided to abstain from alcohol for years. His efforts proved to be worthwhile, as he finally retook his World Champion title in the rematch against Euwe two years later. Unfortunately, soon after regaining the title, Alekhine gave up on healthy habits and started drinking again.

Hunter Whiskey Advertisement
(Kentucky Whiskey Collectible, 1951)

Sports

Top chess players often lay great emphasis on sports, as doing some sports every day is the best way to release players' pressure, keep clear minds, and improve their health. The founder of Soviet chess school, World Champion Mikhail Botvinnik also included regular sports inthe disciplines for his students.

Botvinnik's student, the 12th World Champion Anatoly Karpov was short, thin, and feeble and often got sick when he was young. It was even tough for him to sit in front of chessboard for hours. Botvinnik once commented that there was nothing special in Karpov and he could not see his talents in chess. Karpov realized the importance of a strong physique to his thoughts and endurance during his games. He actively engaged in various sports such as skating, swimming and tennis in order to improve his fitness. In addition, he participated in astronaut training courses every time before important tournaments. By exercising consistently, his mind became sharper and his endurance was improved, which contributed to his excellent performance in many tournaments.

Garry Kasparov believed that chess should be considered as a sport, because it requires considerable endurance and strength. Professional players usually sit in front of the chessboard for hours, and their tournaments can last for weeks, which is a severe test of stamina. Kasparov recollected that he had experienced fevers and allergic reactions during long tournaments due to being too exhausted, but by working out in the gym, swimming, rowing, and playing football on a regular basis, he was able to keep himself energetic and possess enough physical strength to handle long tournaments. He believed that his successes in his late thirties against much younger players partly depended on his physical superiority.

Health is Key to Success in Chess

Now it is clear that health is crucial for chess players and can be decisive to their performance in tournaments. If you want to become a brilliant chess player, it is not enough just to study chess multiple hours a day, but also to add this extra edge – health; healthy lifestyle with plenty of exercise is definitely one of the greatest advantages that top players possess over players with poor health habits.
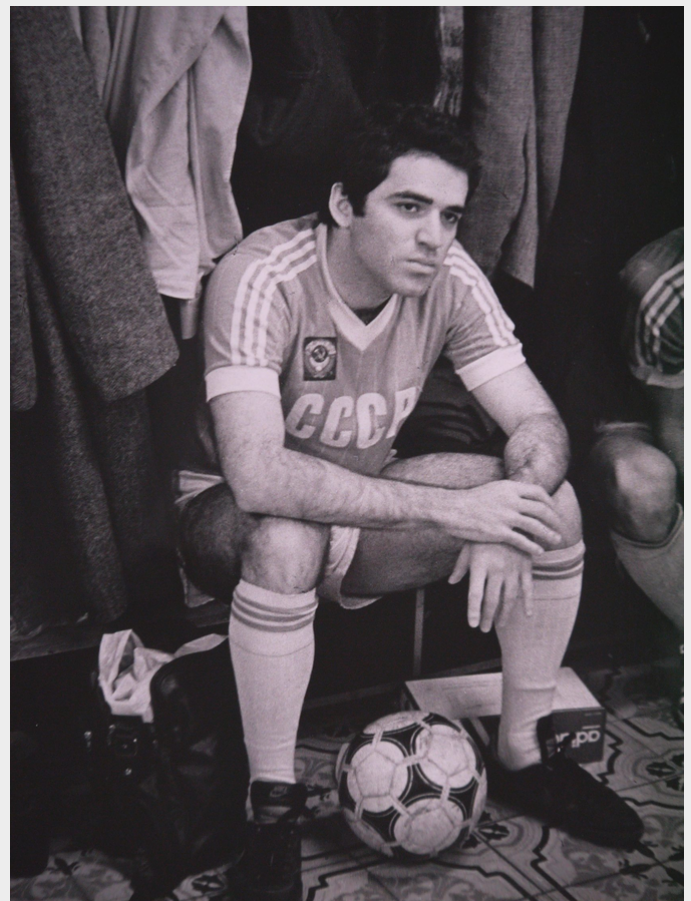
Kasparov playing football (Sputnik, 1985)

THE CLIMATE APP: CLIMATE ACTION MADE EASY, FUN AND SOCIAL

Andy Liu (Third Year)

Tackling the climate emergency takes many forms. World leaders look dapper at conferences as stellar scientists innovate on CCS and renewable energy. Protestors rally for more governmental action via marches and civil disobedience.

Climate action has hitherto been many things: rhetorical, serious, lofty, and sometimes even fearful. A recent exemplar of the last would be the tactics used by Just Stop Oil activists, who threw tomato soup at Van Gogh's Sunflowers (which emerged unscathed from the operation thanks to its protective glass cover) at the London National Gallery. There is nothing wrong with invoking fear to inspire lawful climate action. However, we should recognize the potential to juxtapose other emotions that can complement that climate ambition: mainly, playfulness and positivity.

From September 2023, you can help tackle the climate crisis by toying software with your mates. The Climate App, founded by NASA physicist Samuel Naef, is a social-sharing app to be launched later this year; it importantly harnesses the soft power of peer pressure to encourage users to reduce individual carbon footprints. The App enables people to track their carbon levels, upload their personal progress, and see how their friends are doing. It teaches what is the most impactful actions

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to make, allowing users to live more eco-friendly over time and rewarding behaviour with badges and awards, like those in running apps. Users will compete with their peers in a virtuous circle of environmental mindfulness.

The Climate App has been endorsed by reputable sports figures such as Guinness WR holder Fiona Oakes and British Olympian Max Litchfield. The Olympic swimmer remarks:

" The App will hopefully inspire more people on how they can create change, making it less daunting to take the little actions that can help. If we get millions of people doing one thing, this can then lead to change from so many others in their lifestyle, which is awesome."

Leaping Forward

Activists make positive changes. However, a systematic way to record their deeds, or for others to consistently engage with their actions has yet to be included. Samuel Naef founded the App with this in mind. He explains: " We know that people are starting to promote and speak about climate change, but we know that it is sometimes also difficult and lonely to change your own behaviour. It is much easier to do when you feel everyone else around you are doing it too, and how it all contributes to a larger end goal."

Max Litchfield (British Olympic Association)

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The eventual goal of the App, however, lies beyond encouraging a greener lifestyle. Crucially, it aims to show our governments that we are willing to personally be part of the change, and we demand concrete and extensive action from those with wealth and power. Indeed, movements of masses taking action have the potential to foster a new public consensus, nudging the decision-makers to implement necessary ambitious change.

The Waves of History

The Great Wave off Kanagawa (Katsushika Hokusai, 1831)

Embracing change can be difficult, for it involves exiting comfort zones, losing stakes, and taking risks. Climate activists have faced slurs and slander, like the black British activists of the 1960s, like the suffragettes of the 1900s. Professor Helen Pankhurst has argued that those activists are on the right side of history, as the great-granddaughter of Emmeline Pankhurst draws strategic similarities between disruptive climate protestors and her exemplar suffragette family line. tonnes annually by 2025.

Of course, as historians, we should always carefully question the historicity of such periodic comparisons. We can always foster healthy, constructive debate on the methods of disruptive protests, but there is no doubt that the cause is righteous as the momentum for climate action continues to grow regionally and globally. Even the world's largest emitter, characterised as ' the villain' at the 2009 Copenhagen Accord, has since embraced energy transition. PRC's cumulatively installed wind capacity accounted for 39% of the global share and its solar capacity for 36% in 2020, according to LSE's Grantham Research Institute, as the giant aims to reduce its carbon emissions by an estimated 2.6 billion

This is merely a part of ongoing global awareness to go green. A recent Oxford Economics report estimates that new green industries could be worth $10.3T to the global economy by 2050, equivalent to 5.2% of global GDP that year. There is also a growing market for consumer activism, coinciding with an increase in green consumers. Out of a pool of 18,850 people in advanced economies, Pew Research Center finds 80% are willing to change how they live to reduce the effects of global climate change. So yes, change is coming, macroscopic and microscopic. Lifestyle updates are about adapting to beneficial new habits whilst maintaining a fine quality, whether it is climate-friendly packaging, means of travel, food or energy solutions. Now, with The Climate App, it is unprecedentedly easier to contribute positively to the environment and reduce our carbon footprint. So, let's start with you and me; let's turn awareness into action, and stay tuned for the App's official launch and future content.

Join Us as an Editor!

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The UCL History Journal is receiving applications for editor roles.

Editors will assist the Editor in Chief to proofread and edit pieces, and will have the opportunity to take charge of some new features the journal will launch in 2023/24.

To join, contact our new Editor in Chief, Yi Jie (ig: yijie.teng)