

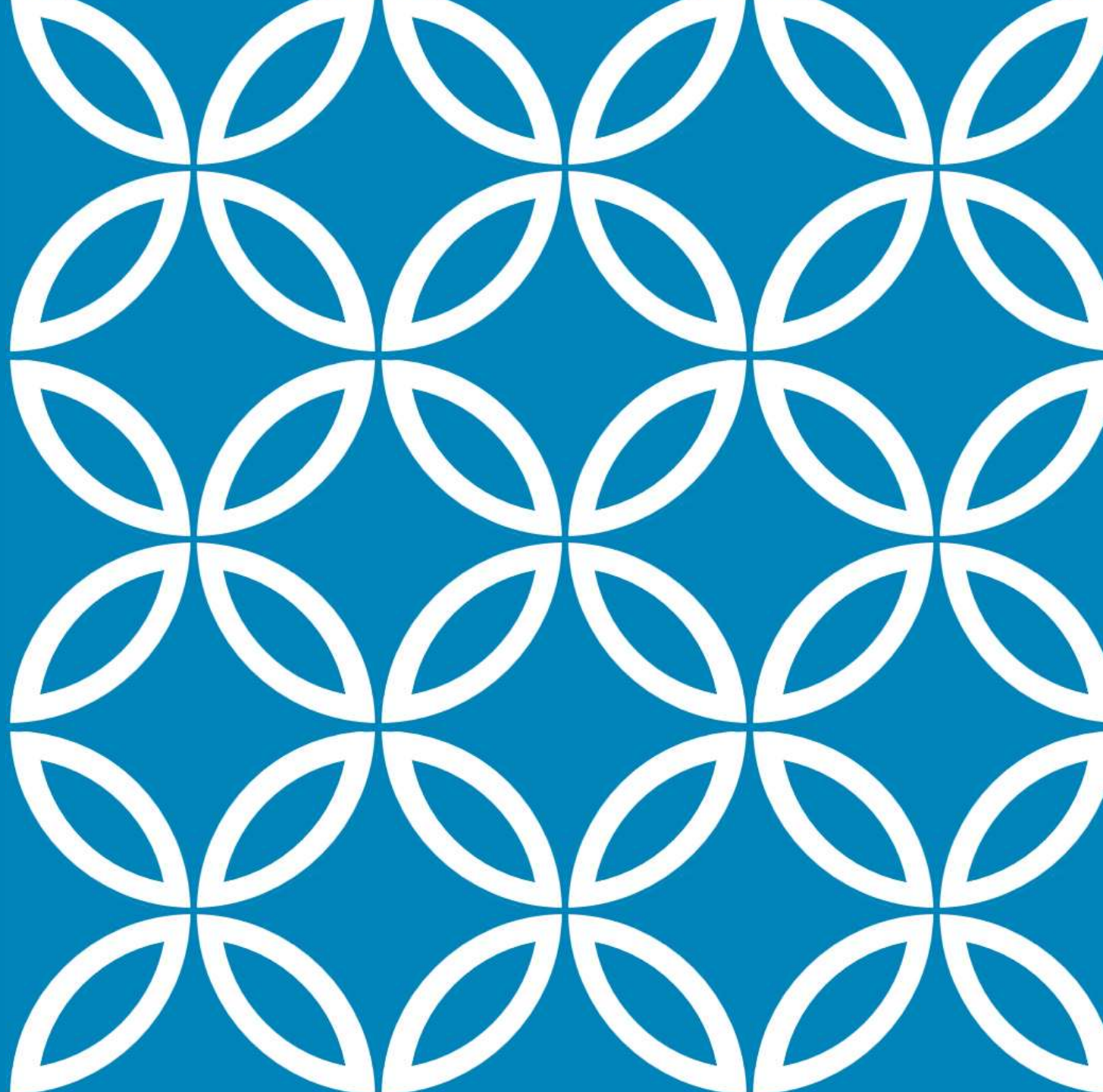


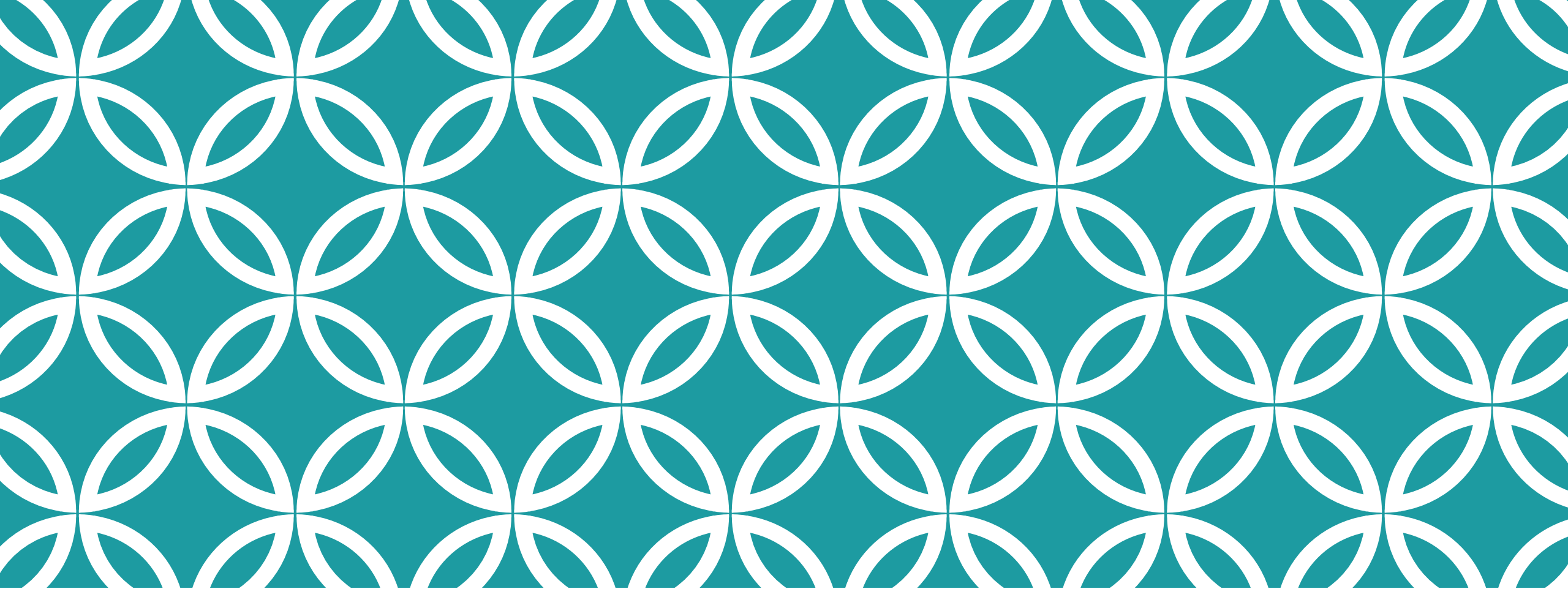
THE IMPACT OF EMPIRE 1815-1914

8. ART AGAINST EMPIRE

PLAN

1. “Free Trade”
2. Workers organisations
3. William Morris
4. Oscar Wilde





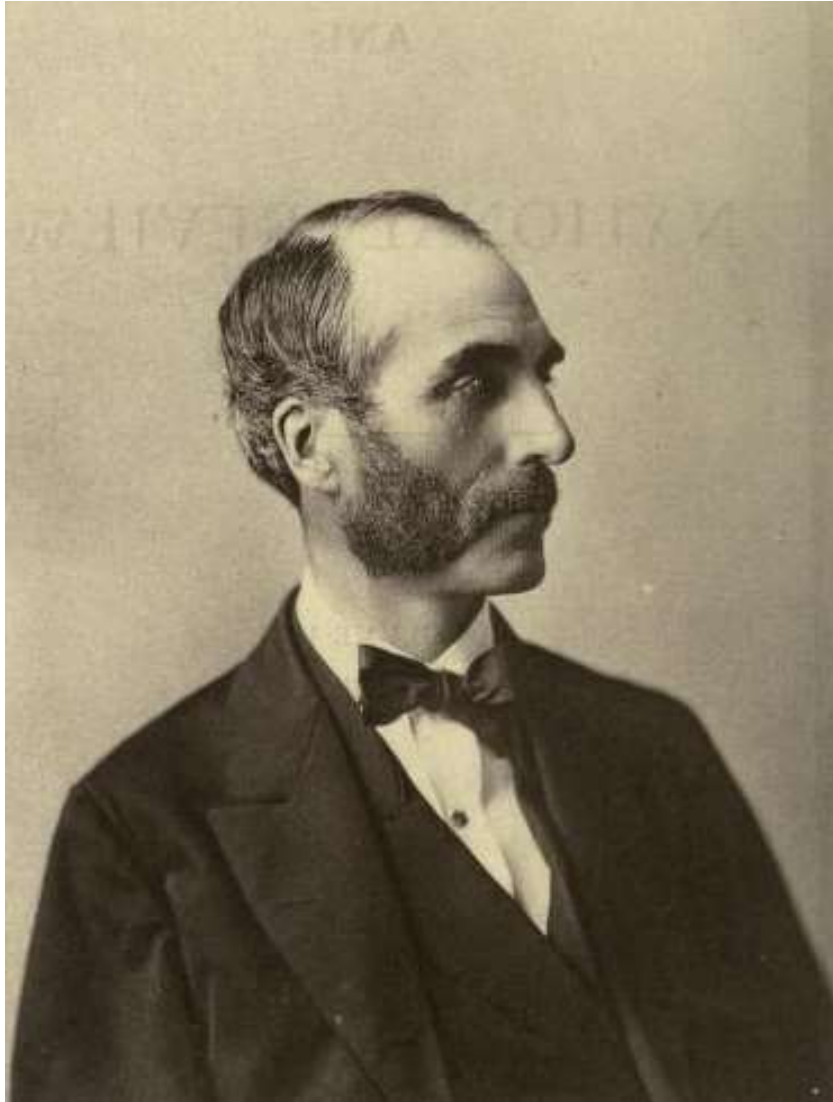
1. “FREE TRADE”

‘Under the present system of management, therefore, Great Britain derives nothing but loss from the dominion which she assumes over her colonies.

... A great empire has been established for the sole purpose of raising up a nation of customers who should be obliged to buy from the shops of our different producers all the goods with which these could supply them. For the sake of that little enhancement of price which this monopoly might afford our producers, the home-consumers have been burdened with the whole expence of maintaining and defending that empire.’

- *Wealth of Nations*, 1776

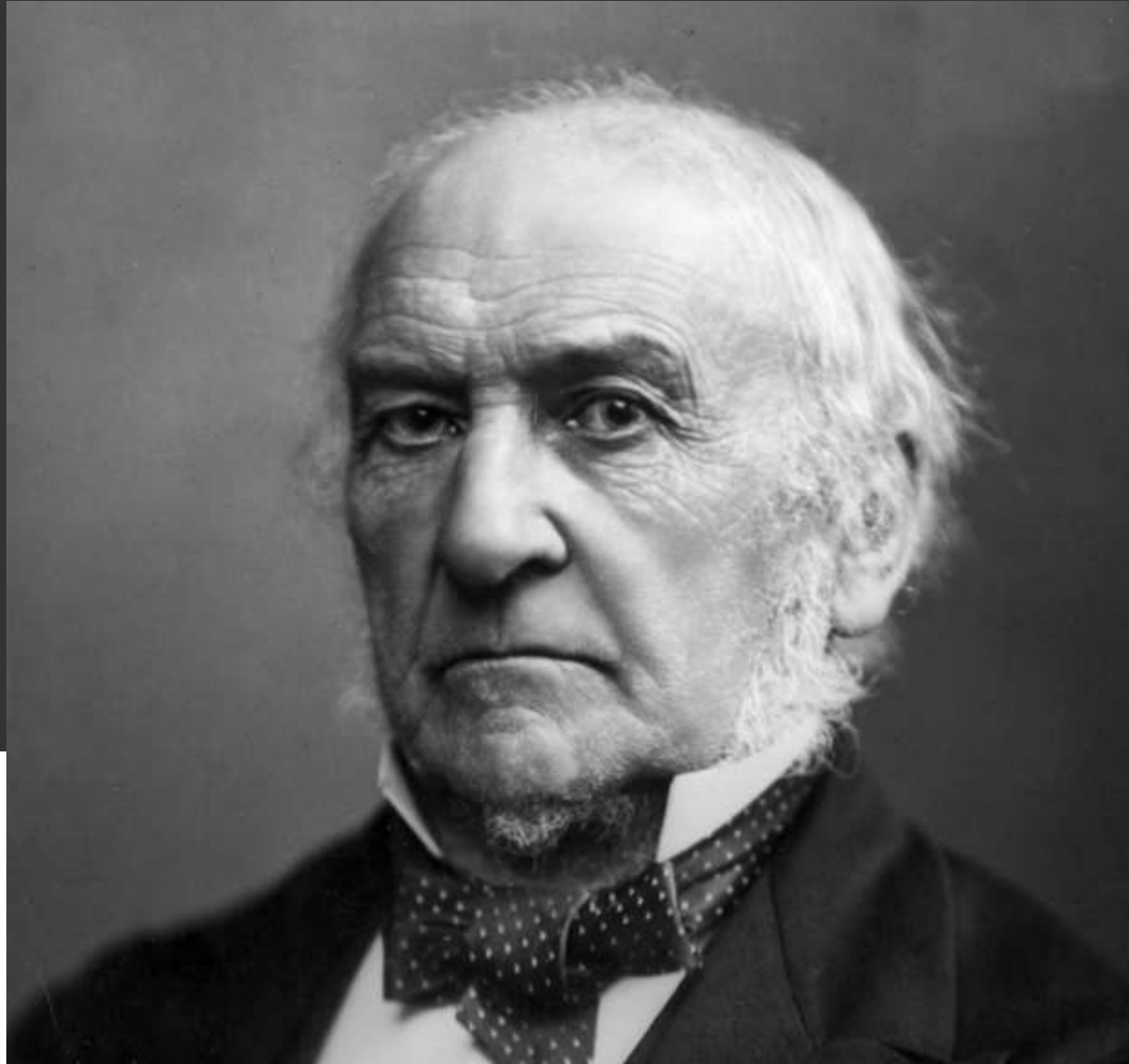




‘The time was when the universal prevalence of commercial monopoly made it well worth our while to hold colonies in dependence for the sake of commanding their trade. But that time has gone. Trade is everywhere free, or becoming free; and this expensive and perilous connection has entirely survived its sole legitimate cause. It is time that we should recognize the change that has come over the world.’

- The Empire: A Series of Letters, 1863

In the debate that followed, the Times dismissed the ideas as akin to ‘projects for general disarmament or for equalizing the political rights of the sexes’



GLADSTONE AND DISRAELI

Political leaders since 1868: Gladstone a Liberal, Disraeli a Conservative

Different backgrounds: Gladstone upper class; Disraeli Italian Jewish, radical novelist

1867 Reform Act: electorate doubled

Gladstone elected 1868: legalises trade unions (1871)

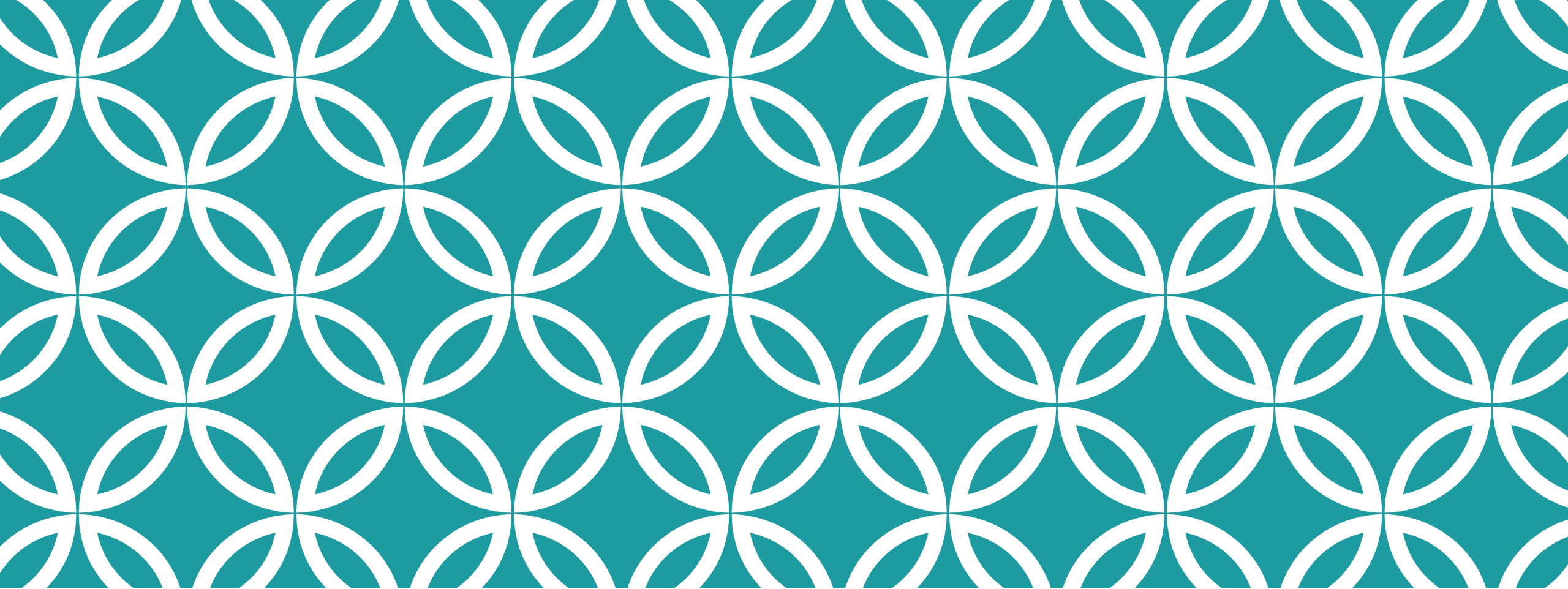
Disraeli 1875: trade union powers, Public Health Act (1875), 56-hour week (1878)

Imperialism: Victoria “Empress of India”, Suez Canal buyout, Afghanistan and Transvaal campaigns (1877-80)

Jingoism: 1876-8 anxieties around Turkish power and massacre of Bulgarians

1880: Gladstone reelected. Opposes the Scramble for Africa, but seizes Egypt. Ends Disraeli’s wars. Allows Sudan to fall to the Mahdists, with outrage from the public and Queen Victoria...





2. WORKERS ORGANISATIONS





The Six Points OF THE PEOPLE'S CHARTER.

1. A VOTE for every man twenty-one years of age, of sound mind, and not undergoing punishment for crime.
2. THE BALLOT.—To protect the elector in the exercise of his vote.
3. NO PROPERTY QUALIFICATION for Members of Parliament—thus enabling the constituencies to return the man of their choice, be he rich or poor.
4. PAYMENT OF MEMBERS, thus enabling an honest tradesman, working man, or other person, to serve a constituency, when taken from his business to attend to the interests of the country.
5. EQUAL CONSTITUENCIES, securing the same amount of representation for the same number of electors, instead of allowing small constituencies to swamp the votes of large ones.
6. ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS, thus presenting the most effectual check to bribery and intimidation, since though a constituency might be bought once in seven years (even with the ballot), no purse could buy a constituency (under a system of universal suffrage) in each ensuing twelve-month; and since members, when elected for a year only, would not be able to defy and betray their constituents as now.

CHARTISM

National working class movement for universal suffrage and political reform

1832 Reform Act only extends vote to men with property

Poor Law Amendment (1834) = unpopular workhouses

1838: People's Charter

Petitions signed by 1.3m (1838), 3m (1842), and reportedly 5.7m (1848) – all ignored by Parliament

Mass gathering at Kennington Common, 1848: Royal Family evacuated

Leaders transported to New World; public meetings banned, wages cut

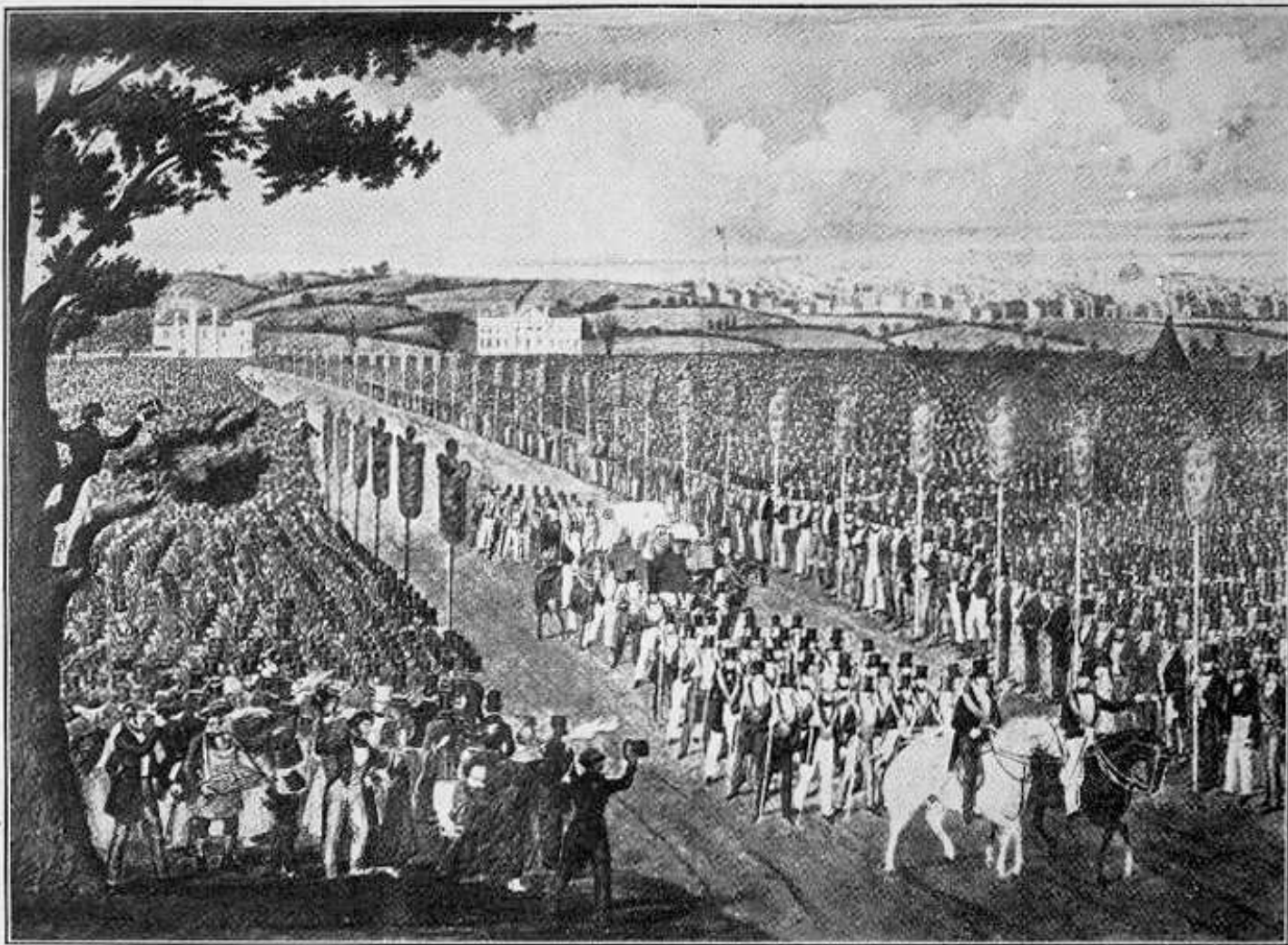


Left: William Cuffay

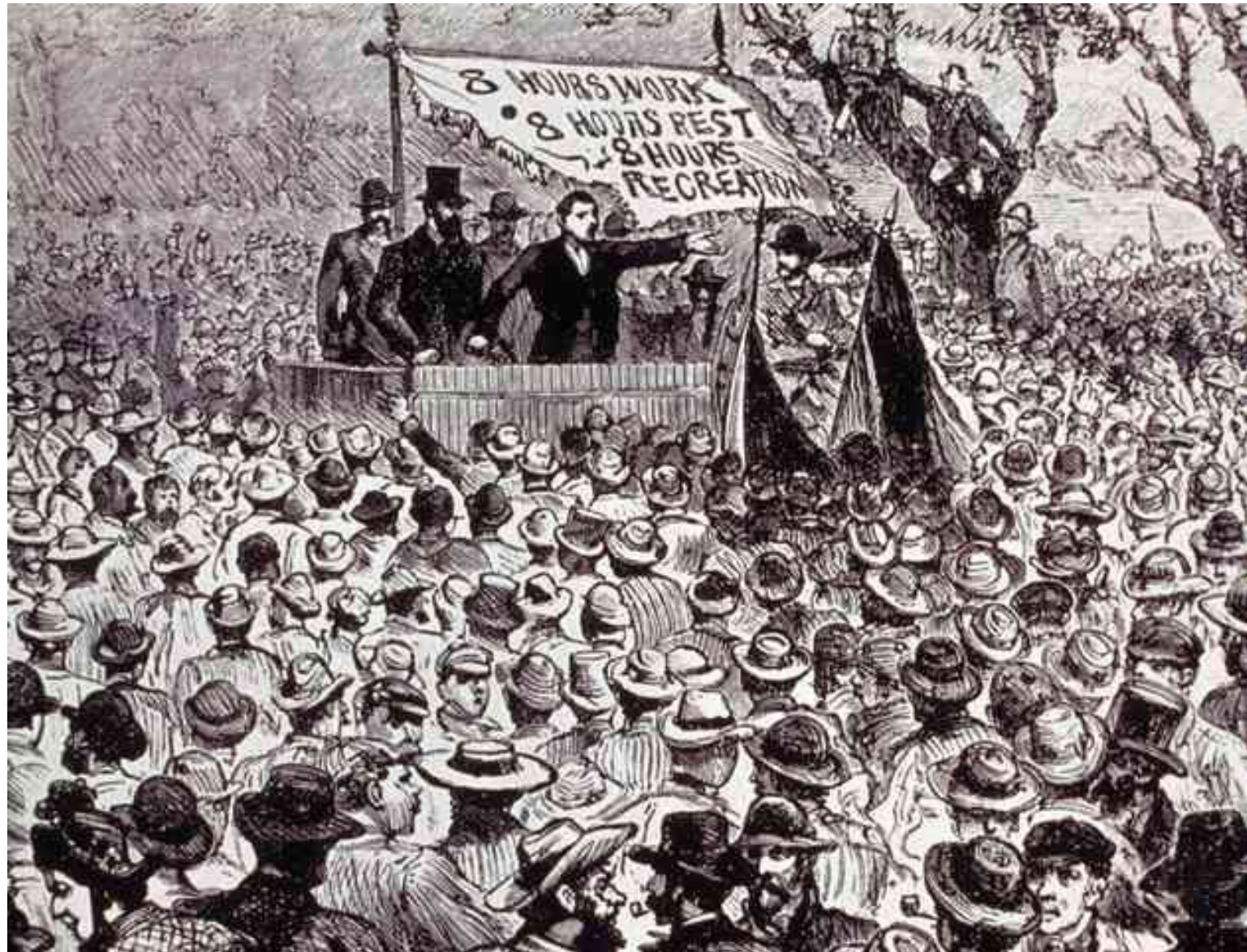
‘Three and half millions have quietly, orderly, soberly, peaceably but firmly asked of their rulers to do justice; and their rulers have turned a deaf ear to that protest ... Three and a half millions of the slave-class have holden out the olive branch of peace to the enfranchised and privileged classes and sought for a firm and compact union, on the principle of EQUALITY BEFORE THE LAW; and the enfranchised and privileged have refused to enter into a treaty! The same class is to be a slave class still...

The assumption of inferiority is still to be maintained. The people are not to be free’

- The Northern Star, 1842



MEETING OF THE TRADE UNIONISTS IN COPENHAGEN FIELDS, APRIL 21, 1834, FOR THE PURPOSE OF CARRYING A PETITION TO THE KING FOR A REMISSION OF THE SENTENCE PASSED ON THE DORCHESTER LABOURERS



WORKERS MOVEMENTS



Combination Acts repealed in 1824; early trade unions emerge

London Working Men's Association 1836; Grand National Consolidated Trades Union – 1834 arrests at Tolpuddle stir outrage

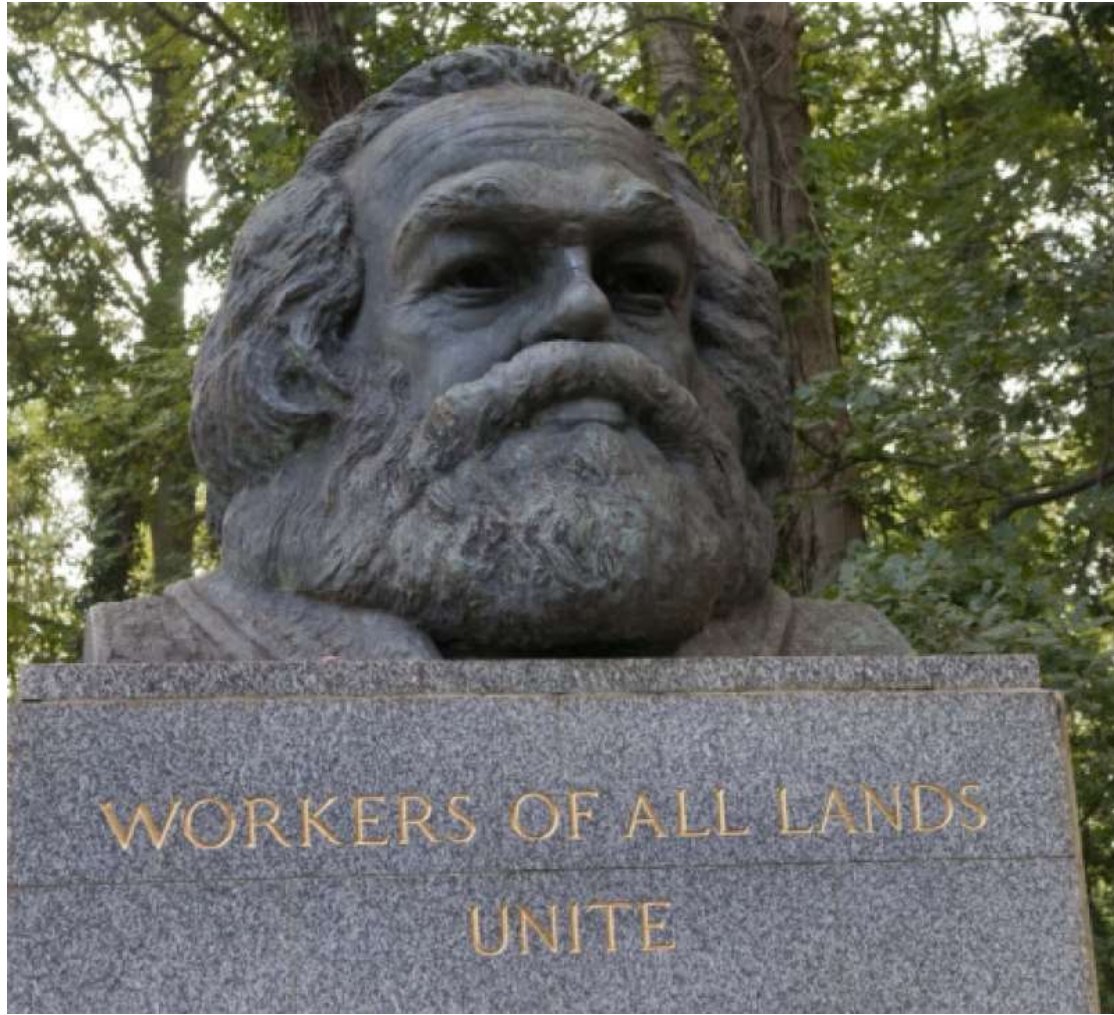
Robert Owen: eight hour day movement from 1810

Factory Act 1833: children under 9 in school, 9-13 8 hours day max

1847: Women and Children granted 10-hour day

1880 onwards: economic depression and growing militancy

Membership increases from 750k (1888) to 6.5m (1918)



MARXISM

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels promote a new, more radical form of worker-power: Communism

‘From each according to his ability, to each according to his need’

Communist Manifesto (1847); Capital (1867)

Revolutions across Europe in 1848 fail to deliver lasting progress. Exile in London

While capitalism is the most advanced form of human society, it necessarily produces unemployment, poverty and widespread suffering in prioritising the right to profit of the very few, against the rights of the actual producers

‘If money ... “comes into the world with a congenital blood-stain on one cheek”, capital comes dripping from head to toe, from every pore, with blood and dirt’



View Over Ancoats, 1895





STRIKE OF BRYANT AND MAY'S MATCH GIRLS.

The girls employed in the match-making works of Bryant and May, Fairfield-road, Bow, to the number of 1,500 ceased work on Thursday, and marched out of the factory in two batches. A variety of explanations has been given for the strike. One version is that the girls were arbitrarily fined for trivial offences. Another that it was a protest against the dismissal of two girls who were said to have given information to Mrs. Besant about the firm's method of conducting their business. The manager of the works now states that the strike was brought about by the summary dismissal of one girl. She had been instructed by the overseer to fill boxes of matches in a particular way, according as the machine cut them. He says there is nothing unusual in the order, and that it is rendered necessary whenever the atmosphere is "charged with electricity." The girl refused to obey, and she was dismissed. Shortly afterwards the whole of her comrades in the wood match-making department, to the number of about twelve hundred, walked out of the factory. In the afternoon about three hundred more girls who are engaged in the wax match factory, altogether independent of the other "shop," also left their employment and joined the rest. The girls say that this order to fill the boxes in a particular manner has nothing to do with the "elements," but is, in fact, an attempt on the part of their employers to extract more work out of them by requiring two boxes to be filled instead of one at each stroke of the cutting machine. The firm attributes it to outside influence. Nearly all are paid by the piece. The Social Democratic Federal Association have taken up the women's cause warmly.

On Friday the girls on strike assembled early in the morning outside the gates, picketed those who went in, and attempted to hold a series of meetings, but were dispersed by about twenty policemen. Two men attempted to deliver addresses, but were prevented by the police, and one was arrested and taken to Worship-street. Attempts were also made to hold meetings on Mile-end-waste, but the crowds were dispersed by the downpour of rain. In the evening a meeting convened by the Social Democratic Federation was held.

1888: WORKERS FIGHT BACK

Social Democratic Federation – Britain's first socialist party, 1881:

48 hour week, end child labour, compulsory free secular education, equality for women, nationalisation of all private industry into public ownership...

Unions traditionally represented an 'aristocracy of labour', protecting skilled workers

Bryant and May, East London: Match-girls go on strike in 1888 after their low pay for 14-hour shifts was cut. Complaints around 'phossy jaw' cancer and terrible conditions.

London Dock Strike 1889: 100k go on strike for better wages and conditions...



SOUTH SIDE CENTRAL STRIKE COMMITTEE, SAYES COURT, DEPTFORD.

SEPTEMBER 10, 1889.

GENERAL MANIFESTO.

Owing to the fact that the demands of the Corn Porters, Deal Porters, Granary Men, General Steam Navigation Men, Permanent Men and General Labourers on the South Side have been misrepresented, the above Committee have decided to issue this Manifesto, stating the demands of the various sections now on Strike, and pledge themselves to support each section in obtaining their demands.

DEAL PORTERS of the Surrey Commercial Docks have already placed their demands before the Directors.

LUMPERS (Outside) demand the following Rates, viz: 1. 10d. per standard for Deals. 2. 11d. per stand. for all Goods rating from 2 x 4 to 2 1/2 x 7, or for rough boards. 3. 1s. per std. for plain boards. Working day from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., and that no man leave the "Red Lion" corner before 6.45 a.m. Overtime at the rate of 6d. per hour extra from 5 p.m. including meal times.

STEVEDORES (Inside) demand 8d. per hour from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. 1s. per hour overtime. Overtime to commence from 5 p.m. to 7 a.m. Pay to commence from leaving "Red Lion" corner. Meal times to be paid for. Holidays & Meal times double pay, and that the Rules of the United Stevedores Protection League be accepted in every particular. *Enacted*

OVERSIDE CORN PORTERS (S.C.D.) demand 15s.3d. per 100 qrs. for Oats. Heavy labour 17s.4d. per 100 qrs. manual, or with use of Steam 16s.1d. All overtime after 6 p.m. to be paid at the rate of 1d. per qr. extra.

QUAY CORN PORTERS (S. C. D.) demand the return of Standard prices previous to March 1880, which had been in operation for 17 years.

TRIMMERS AND GENERAL LABOURERS demand 6d. per hour from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and 8d. per hour Overtime; Meal times as usual; and not to be taken on for less than 4 hours.

WEIGHERS & WAREHOUSEMEN demand to be reinstated in their former positions without distinction.

BERMONDSEY AND ROTHERHITHE WALL CORN PORTERS demand:
1. Permanent Men 30s. per week. 2. Casual Men 5s. 10d. per day and 3d. per hour Overtime; Overtime to commence at 6 p.m. Meal times as usual.

GENERAL STEAM NAVIGATION MEN demand:—1. Wharf Men, 6d. per hour from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and 8d. per hour Overtime. 2. In the Stream, 7d. per hour ordinary time, 9d. per hour Overtime. 3. In the Dock, 8d. per hour ordinary time, 1s. per hour Overtime.

MAUDSLEY'S ENGINEER'S MEN. Those receiving 21s. per week now demand 24s., and those receiving 24s. per week demand 28s.

ASHBY'S, LTD., CEMENT WORKS demand 6d. per ton landing Coals and Chalk. General Labourers 10% rise of wages all round, this making up for a reduction made 3 years ago.

GENERAL LABOURERS, TELEGRAPH CONSTRUCTION demand 4s. per day from 6 a.m. to 5 p.m., time and a quarter for first 2 hours Overtime, and if later, time and a half for all Overtime. No work to be done in Meal Hours.

Signed on behalf of the Central Committee, **Wade Arms, BEN. TILLET, JOHN BURNS.**

1889 DOCK STRIKE

‘The poor fellows are miserably clad, scarcely with a boot on their foot, in a most miserable state ... These are men who come to work in our docks who come on without having a bit of food in their stomachs, perhaps since the previous day; they have worked for an hour and have earned 5d.; their hunger will not allow them to continue: they take the 5d. in order that they may get food, perhaps the first food they have had for twenty-four hours.’ – Colonel Birt on his workers at Millwall Dock

‘Still more important perhaps, is the fact that labour of the humbler kind has shown its capacity to organize itself; its solidarity; its ability. The labourer has learned that combination can lead him to anything and everything.’

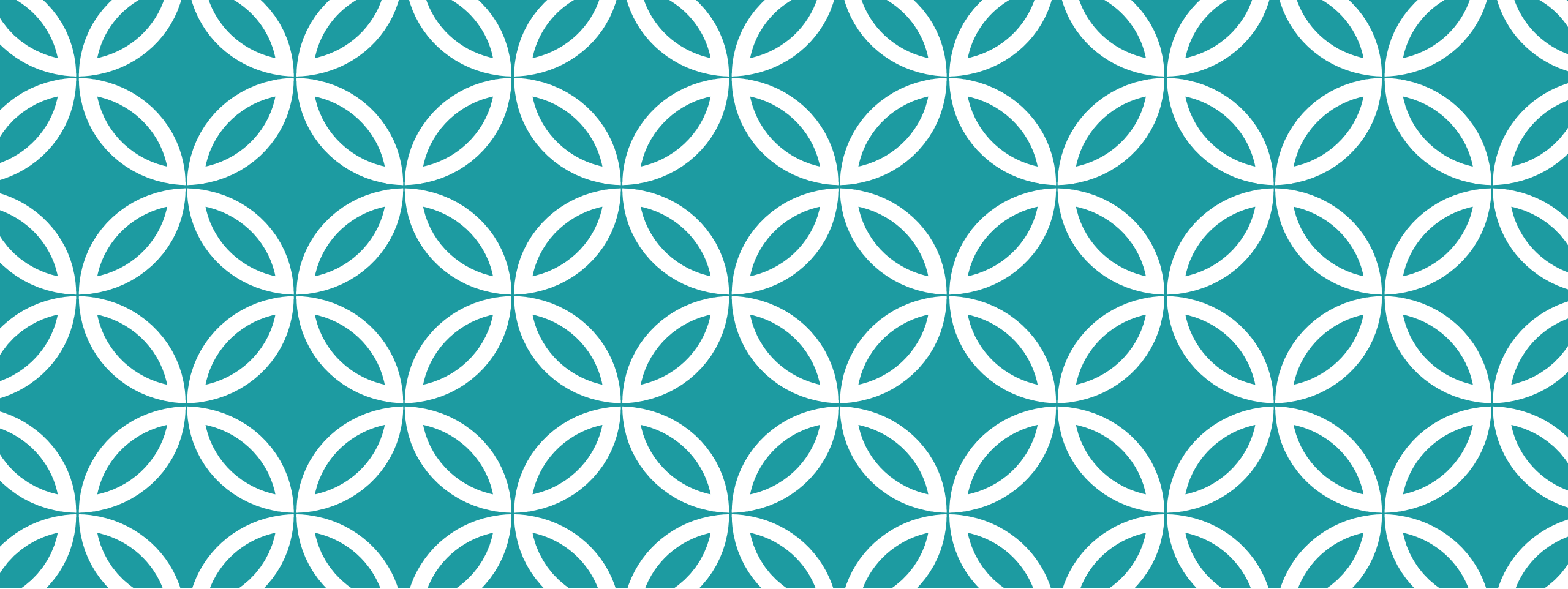
– John Burns, 1889 Dock strike leader

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS, Nov. 19, 1865, No. 21, 1865.

THE RIOTS IN LONDON ON SUNDAY, NOV. 11: DEFEUCE OF TRAFALGAR-SQUARE.



THE LION AND UNICORN KNOWS THE SQUARE.



3. WILLIAM MORRIS



WILLIAM MORRIS (1834-1896)

Textile designer, architect, illustrator, poet, novelist and radical

Walthamstow, privileged background

Arts and Crafts movement

Influences include Walter Scott medievalism, Marxism, and John Ruskin on beauty

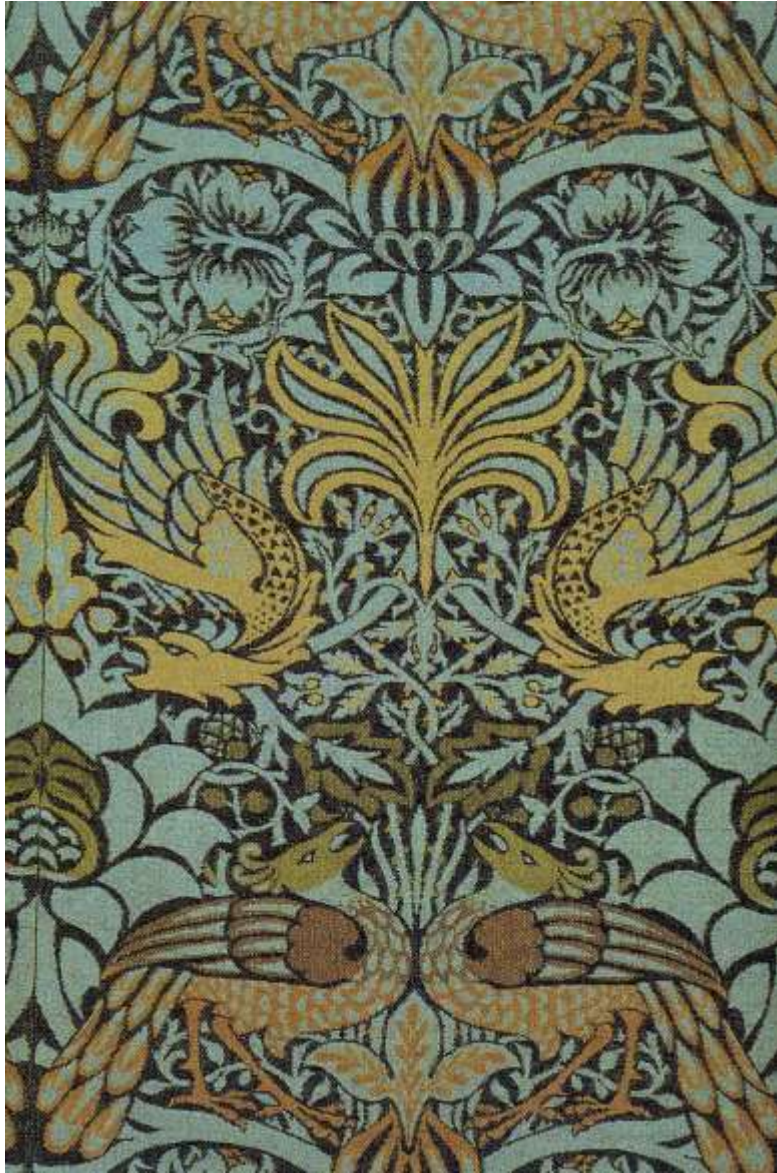
A Dream of John Ball (1888), *News from Nowhere* (1890)

“The Firm” – transforms interior design: wallpaper, furniture, windows, e.g. V&A

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (1877); Socialist League (1884)

Red House (Bexleyheath), Kelmscott Manor (Oxfordshire) and Kelmscott House

Kelmscott Press revolutionises type, e.g. Kelmscott Chaucer





WILLIAM MORRIS

I do not want art for a few, any more than education for a few or freedom for a few

I will now let my claims for decent life stand as I have made them. To sum them up in brief, they are: first, a healthy body; second, an active mind in sympathy with the past, the present and the future; thirdly, occupation fit enough for a healthy body and an active mind; and fourthly, a beautiful world to live in



WHEN ADAM DELVED
AND EVE SPAN,
WHO WAS THEN THE
GENTLEMAN.

A DREAM OF JOHN BALL.
CHAPTER I. THE MEN OF
KENT



SOMETIMES I
am rewarded for
fretting myself so
much about pre-
sent matters by a
quite unasked-for
pleasant dream.
I mean when I
am asleep. This
dream is as it were

a present of an architectural peep-show. I see some beautiful and noble building new made, as it were for the occasion, as clearly as if I were awake; not vaguely or absurdly, as often happens in dreams, but with all the detail clear and reasonable. Some Elizabethan house with its scrap of earlier fourteenth-century building, and its late degradations of Queen Anne and William IV. and Victoria, marring but not destroying it, in an old village, once a clearing amid the sandy woodlands of Sussex. Or an old and

‘if men still abide men as I have known them, and unless these folk of England change as the land changeth ... there should be all plenty in the land, and not one poor man therein, unless of his own free will he choose to lack and be poor, as a man in religion or such like;

for there would then be such abundance of all good things ... that these should labour far less than now, and they would have time to learn knowledge’

... ‘I said: Hast thou forgotten already what I told thee, hat in those latter days a man who hath nought save his own body (and such men shall be far the most of men) must needs pawn his labour for leave to labour? Can such a man be wealthy? Hast thou not called him a thrall?’

... ‘Now I am sorrier than thou hast yet made me,’ said he; ‘for when this is established, how then can it changed?’

– From William Morris, *A Dream of John Ball* (1888)



NEWS FROM NOWHERE OR
AN EPOCH OF REST.
CHAPTER I. DISCUSSION AND
BED.

AT the League, says a friend, there had been one night a brisk conversational discussion, as to what would happen on the Morrow of the Revolution, finally shading off into a vigorous statement by various friends, of their views on the future of the fully-developed new society.

SAYS our friend: Considering the subject, the discussion was good-tempered; for those present, being used to public meetings & after-lecture debates, if they did not listen to each other's opinions, which could scarcely be expected of them, at all events did not always attempt to speak all together, as is the custom of people in ordinary polite society when conversing

NEWS FROM NOWHERE (1890)

William Guest falls asleep after returning from a political meeting. He awakes sometime in the 21st century...

Private property, industries, money, schools and prisons have been abolished...

A carefree world defined by simplicity, rural life, pleasure in crafts and male-female equality

In groups, take a look at excerpts 1 or 2 and discuss:

How does Morris criticise the society of the time in his vision of the future?



He forced wares on the natives which they did not want, and took their natural products in 'exchange,' as this form of robbery was called, and thereby he 'created new wants,' to supply which (that is, to be allowed to live by their new masters) the hapless, helpless people had to sell themselves into the slavery of hopeless toil so that they might have something wherewith to purchase the nullities of 'civilisation.'

"Ah," said the old man, pointing to the Museum, "I have read books and papers in there, telling strange stories indeed of the dealings of civilisation (or organised misery) with 'non-civilisation'; from the time when the British Government deliberately sent blankets infected with small-pox as choice gifts to inconvenient tribes of Red-skins, to the time when Africa was infested by a man named Stanley..."

Skim through Excerpt 3. Again, how does Morris challenge the underlying fundamentals of British power over this period?

‘This is true; and we may admit that the pretensions of the government to defend the poor (i.e., the useful) people against other countries come to nothing. But that is but natural; for we have seen already that it was the function of government to protect the rich against the poor. But did not the government defend its rich men against other nations? ... In short, it comes to this, that whereas the so-called government of protection of property by means of the law-courts meant destruction of wealth, this defence of the citizens of one country against those of another country by means of war or the threat of war meant pretty much the same thing.’

The guest
left to hear a
little more

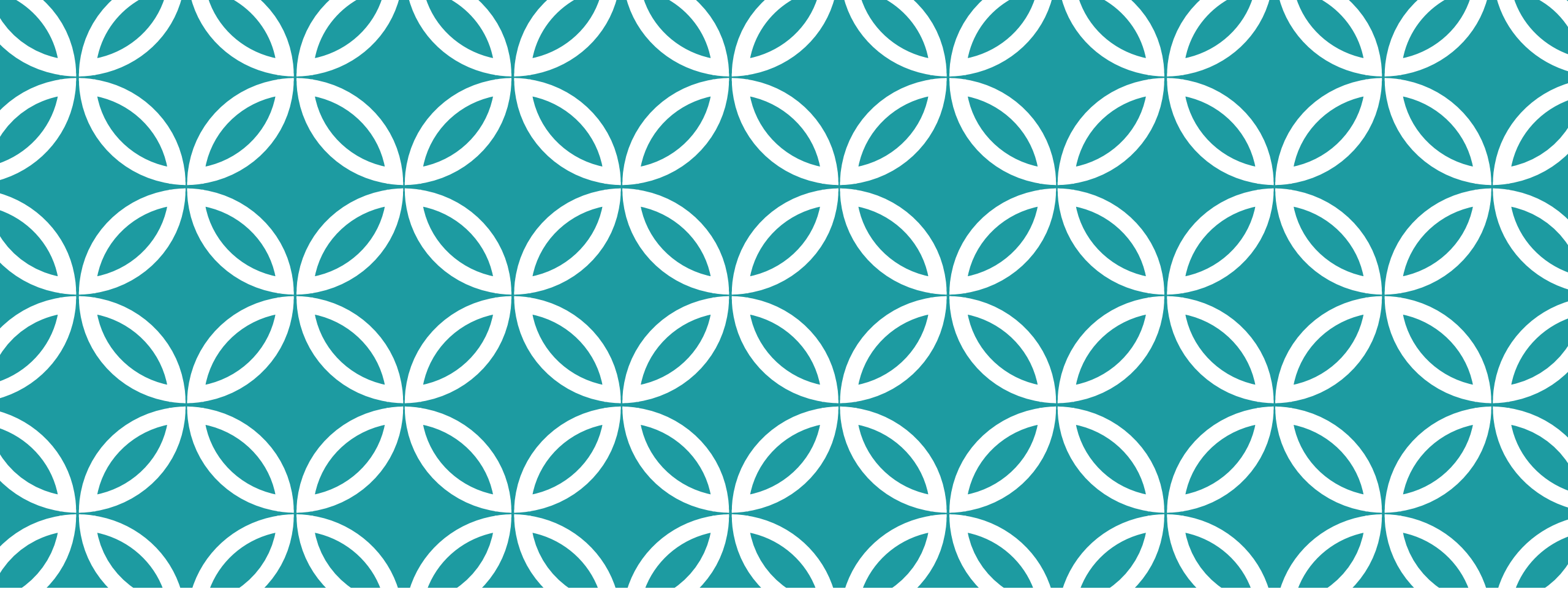
some really fine building? or... what shall it be?" ¶ "Well," said I, "as I am a stranger, I must let you choose for me." In point of fact, I did not by any means want to be 'amused' just then; and also I rather felt as if the old man, with his knowledge of past times, & even a kind of inverted sympathy for them caused by his active hatred of them, was as it were a blanket for me against the cold of this very new world, where I was, so to say, stripped bare of every habitual thought and way of acting; and I did not want to leave him too soon. He came to my rescue at once, and said ¶ "Wait a bit, Dick; there is someone else to be consulted besides you and the guest here, myself to wit. I am not going to lose the pleasure of his company just now, especially as I know he has something else to ask me. So go to your Welshmen, by all means; but first of all bring us another bottle of wine to this nook, and then be off as soon as you like; and come again and fetch our friend to go westward, but not too soon." ¶ Dick nodded smilingly, and the old man and I were soon alone in the great hall, the afternoon sun gleaming on the red wine in our tall quaint-shaped glasses. Then said Hammond:



DOES anything especially puzzle you about our way of living, now you have heard a good deal & seen a little of it?" ¶ Said I: "I think what puzzles me most is how it all came about." ¶ "It well may," said

he, "so great as the change is. It would be difficult indeed to tell you the whole story, perhaps impossible: knowledge, discontent, treachery, disappointment, ruin, misery, despair... those who worked for the change because they could see further than other people went through all these phases of suffering; & doubtless all the time the most of men looked on, not knowing what was doing, thinking it all a matter of course, like the rising & setting of the sun, and indeed it was so." ¶ "Tell me one thing, if you can," said I. "Did the change, the 'revolution' it used to be called, come peacefully?" ¶ "Peacefully?" said he; "what peace was there amongst those poor confused wretches of the nineteenth century? It was war from beginning to end: bitter war, till hope and pleasure put an end to it." ¶ "Do you mean actual fighting with weapons?" said I, "or the strikes and lock-outs & starvation of which we have heard?" ¶ "Both, both," he said. "As a matter of fact, the history of the terrible period of transition from commercial slavery to freedom may thus be summarised. When the hope of realising a communal condition of life for all men arose, quite late in the nineteenth century, the power of the middle classes, the then tyrants of society, was so enormous and crushing, that to almost all men, even those who had, you may say despite themselves, despite their reason and judgment, conceived such hopes, it seemed a dream. So much was this the case that some of those more en-

How did
the change
come



4. OSCAR WILDE



OSCAR WILDE (1854-1900)

Anglo-Irish novelist and playwright

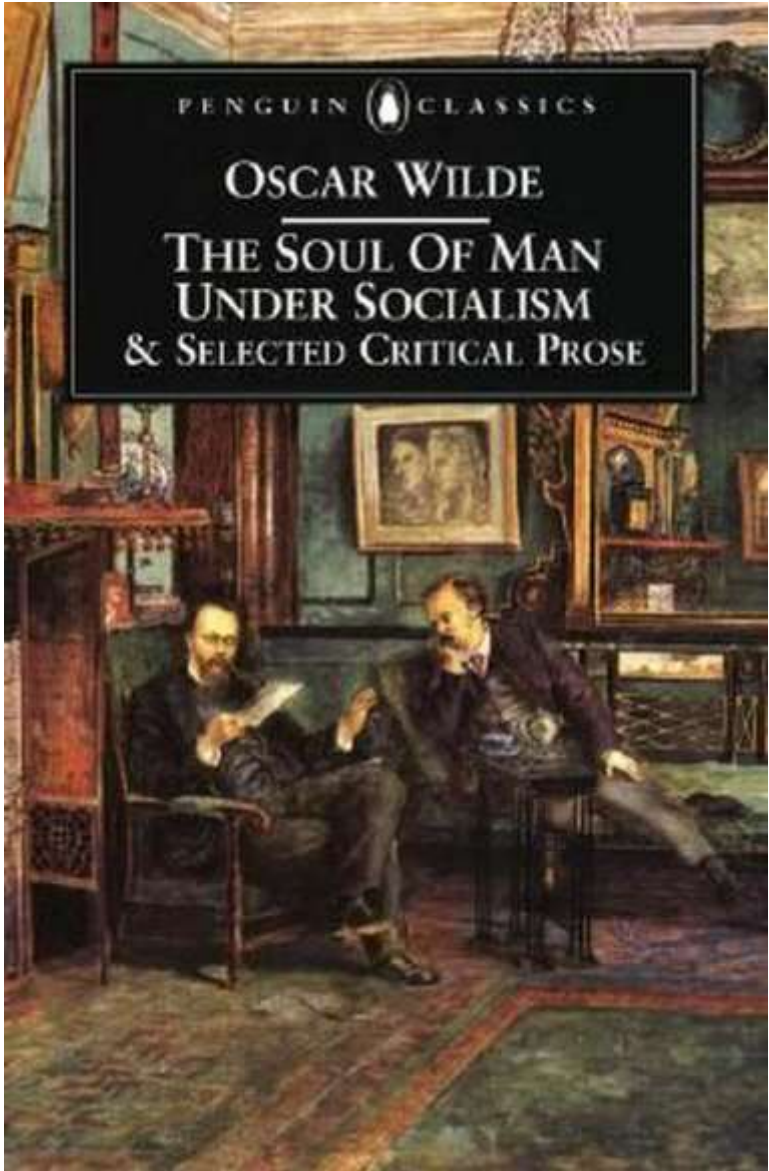
Proponent of Aestheticism; brilliant conversationalist and personality

Picture of Dorian Gray (1891); *Importance of Being Earnest* (1895)

Very public prosecution for homosexuality, 1895-97

“Ballad of Reading Gaol” (1898)

“The Soul of Man Under Socialism” (1891)



Capitalism causes not just poverty, but stifles people's souls, their self-understanding

Socialism will trade competition for cooperation, establish well-being for all

'individualism' over dependency on charity

Focus on either excerpt 1 or 2

What kind of vision of Socialism does Oscar Wilde put forward?

How might it represent a challenge to British society and empire over this period?



OVER TO YOU

'It is clear, then, that no Authoritarian Socialism will do. For while under the present system a very large number of people can lead lives of a certain amount of freedom and expression and happiness, under an industrial-barrack system, or a system of economic tyranny, nobody would be able to have any such freedom at all. It is to be regretted that a portion of our community should be practically in slavery, but to propose to solve the problem by enslaving the entire community is childish. Every man must be left quite free to choose his own work. No form of compulsion must be exercised over him. If there is, his work will not be good for him, will not be good in itself, and will not be good for others. And by work I simply mean activity of any kind.

... With the abolition of private property, then, we shall have true, beautiful, healthy Individualism. Nobody will waste his life in accumulating things, and the symbols for things. One will live. To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all.' (1891)

The
GLARION

MAY DAY NUMBER.

PRICE ONE PENNY.



PRICE ONE SHILLING



MERRIE
ENGLAND
BY
NUNQUAM



ASSIGNMENT 5: PAPER

5. Paper (25%) – research and write a 1000 word investigation into another impact of empire on British life of your choice, based on the material and sources covered in past classes and field trips. Focus your answer on a specific area e.g. politics, culture, consumption.

Due: Weds 13th November



TRIP: WILLIAM MORRIS GALLERY
MEET: WALTHAMSTOW CENTRAL, 2.15

Meet at the ticket barriers of
Walthamstow Central
Underground Station
(Victoria line) at 2.15

Any delays: 07784 084754