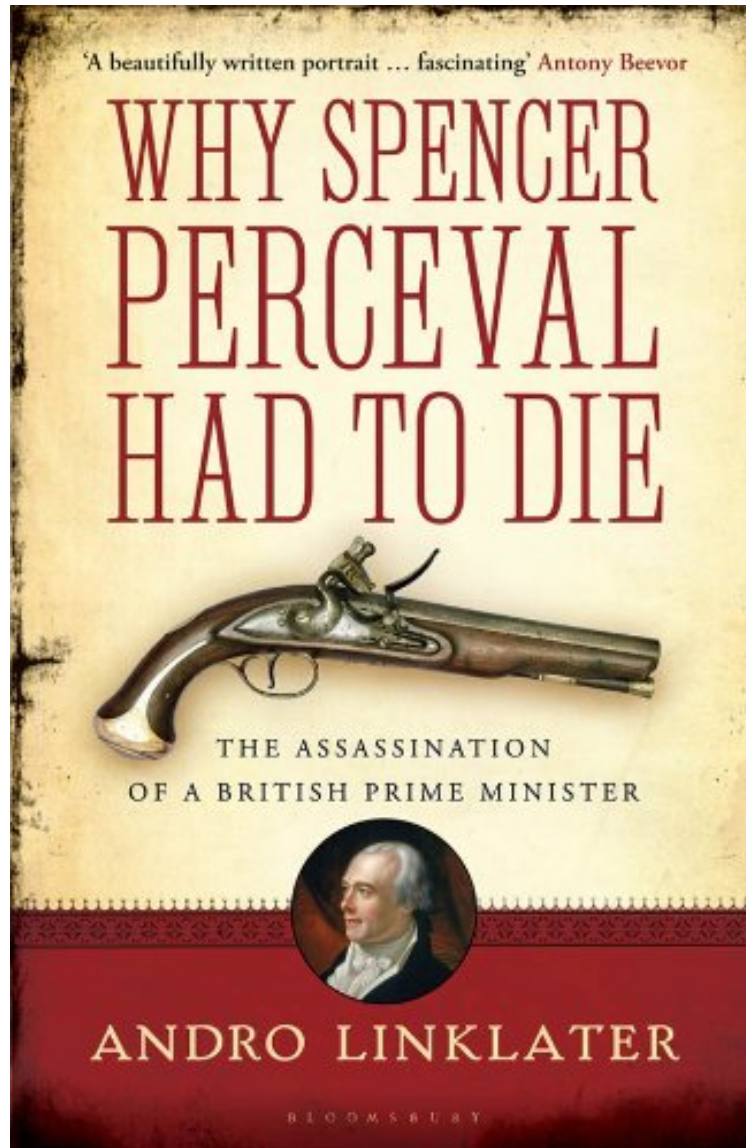


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## Why Spencer Perceval Had to Die: The Assassination of a British Prime Minister

Von Andro Linklater

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well written ... Von Husky 630A history lesson that is a pleasure to read. The research that went into this book is worth much more than its price. This book is a definite keeper.

**Kurzbeschreibung** On 11 May 1812 Spencer Perceval, the British Prime Minister, was fatally shot at close range in the lobby of the House of Commons. In the confused aftermath, his assailant, John Bellingham, made no effort to escape. A week later, before his motives could be examined, he was tried and hanged. Here, for the first time, the historian Andro Linklater looks past the conventional image of Bellingham as a 'deranged businessman' and portrays him as an individual, driven by the anxieties of his family life, by his yearning for respectability and by the raw emotions that convulsed his home town of Liverpool. But as the evidence accumulates, a wider, darker picture emerges. The wildly unpopular Perceval dominated political life as both Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer. He, above all, was responsible for oppressing Luddite protestors, for Britain's naval blockade of Napoleonic France, for risking war with the United States. And, almost single-handedly, he was crushing Liverpool's illegal slave-trade. John Bellingham was not alone in hating the prime minister. But did he act alone when he shot Spencer Perceval? And if not, who aided him? Two hundred years later, Andro Linklater examines Bellingham's personal records, his wife's letters and the reports of the Bow Street Runners, London's first detective agency, uncovering strange payments made to the murderer and an untouched historical trail. Catching the threads of conspiracy amid the fevered tone of an age of intense debate over slavery, security of the state and personal liberty, Linklater brilliantly deconstructs the assassination of Spencer Perceval - the only British Prime Minister ever to have suffered that fate - to offer a fresh perspective on Britain and the Western world at a critical moment in history.

**Pressestimmen** Andro Linklater's *Why Spencer Perceval Had to Die* is a beautifully written portrait of an overlooked prime minister and a fascinating account of his assassination during the Napoleonic Wars. Antony Beevor: Enjoyable if ultimately eccentric survey ... He is entertaining on the temper of the times. Andrew Holgate, *The Sunday Times Ireland*: Written with novelistic pace and the literary devices of a potboiler, the book is really two in one. The first, an overview of Perceval's neglected career, is sure-footed and worthy. The second, a breathlessly conspiratorial account of his death, is compulsively readable and wildly implausible. *The Wall Street Journal*: Deftly sniffing out political machinations and murderous conspiracies, Linklater has written a richly atmospheric, engrossing and authoritative account of an assassination that, Linklater notes, shook the world 200 years ago as forcefully as JFK's assassination did in our time. *Publishers Weekly*: Andro Linklater makes good use of the excellent copy that this story affords. *Literary Fascinating* ... as a popular account of a unique event in British history ... it stands up well. *London of Books*: Linklater skilfully unpeels the onion of this enigma to identify the forces that led to the assassination ... an entertaining and deftly structured piece of historical detective work. *Times Literary Supplement*: The facts revealed by letters, diaries and court records are fascinating enough. Linklater's book has more value than a historical whodunit. It helps us to understand the turbulent times and series of events that the author believes, inevitably, led to Perceval's assassination. It gives us a genuine understanding of the two key figures: the prime minister and his murderer. *Sunday Express Fascinating Tribune*: Andro Linklater's *Why Spencer Perceval Had to Die* is a beautifully written portrait of an overlooked prime minister and a fascinating account of his assassination during the Napoleonic Wars. Antony Beevor: Enjoyable if ultimately eccentric survey ... He is entertaining on the temper of the times. Andrew Holgate, *The Sunday Times Ireland*: Written with novelistic pace and the literary devices of a potboiler, the book is really two in one. The first, an overview of Perceval's neglected career, is sure-footed and worthy. The second, a breathlessly conspiratorial account of his death, is compulsively readable and wildly implausible. *The Wall Street Journal*: Deftly sniffing out political machinations and murderous conspiracies, Linklater has written a richly atmospheric, engrossing and authoritative account of an assassination that, Linklater notes, shook the world 200 years ago as forcefully as JFK's assassination did in our time. *Publishers Weekly*: Andro Linklater makes good use of the excellent copy that this story affords. *Literary*: The facts revealed by letters, diaries and court records are fascinating enough. Linklater's book has more value than a historical whodunit. It helps us to understand the turbulent times and series of events that the author believes, inevitably, led to Perceval's assassination. It gives us a genuine understanding of the two key figures: the prime minister and his murderer. *Sunday Express*: Wonderful and fascinating ... It deserves to be a classic, plunged into the American reader's consciousness as firmly as the iron spikes or the witness trees at the edges of the maps it so splendidly describes. Simon Winchester, *Boston Globe on Measuring America*: Andro Linklater has the talent not just to let us know how things work, but to make us want to know. He encloses his specifics inside generalities inside universals, as if they were nested Russian dolls ... a magical mystery tour that leaves the reader exhilarated by unexpected connections ... Throughout the book, Mr Linklater has allowed his humans wonderfully to subvert his measurements. *New York Times*: In *Measuring America*, Linklater traces with unusual elegance and a keen wit the epic story of measuring our nation, charting the process by which, with each length of the surveyor's chain, new states were literally bought into being ... remarkable. *Los Angeles Times*