

HST

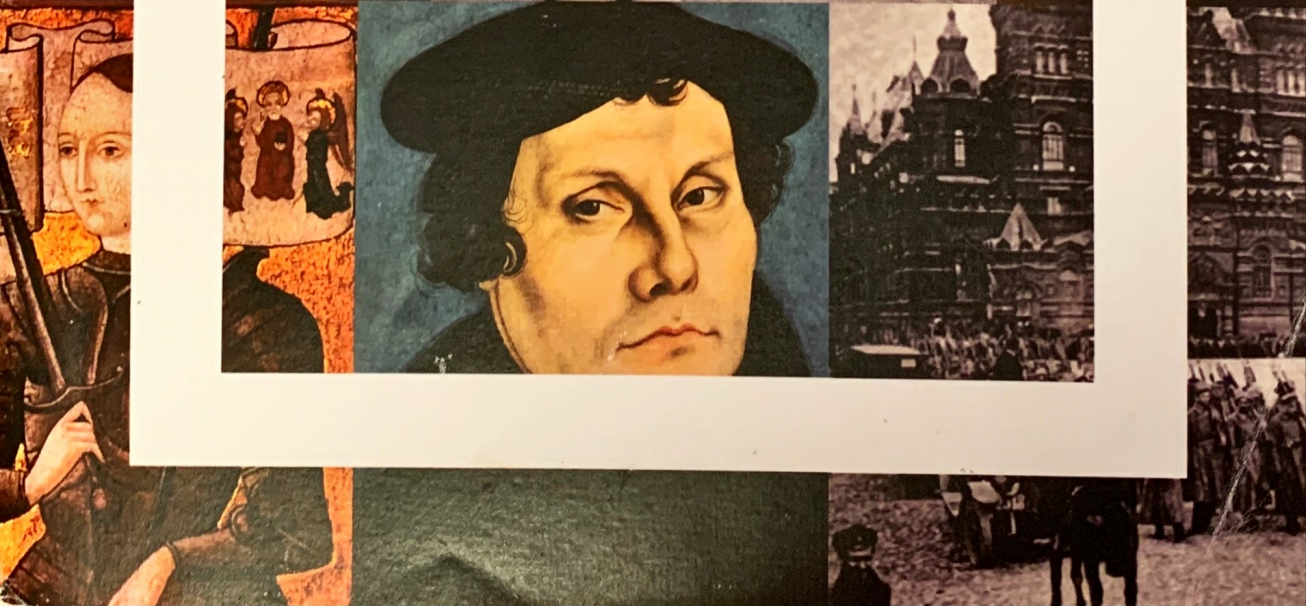
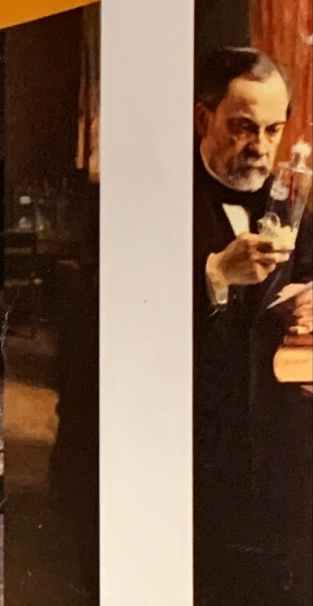
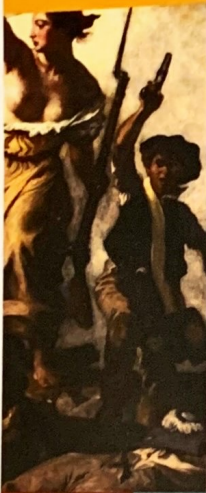


UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

HISTORY STUDENT TIMES

Issue 3 2016/17

Revolutionaries and Iconoclasts



Contents

2 Letter from the Editor

Liz Egan

3 History in the News

The Dangers and Potentials of Nationalism

Sam Woodhams

4-6 Early Modern Corner

Martin Luther and the Printing Revolution

Tobias Bernander Silseth

6-7 IHP Focus

The Unplanned and the Unable: Modern British Revolutionaries

Jack Meeson

8-9 Leymah Gbowee: Peaceful Revolutionary

Rosie Plummer

9-10 Louis Pasteur and the Germ Theory: A Scientific Revolution

Alexa Clark

10-11 Bernie Sanders: A Modern American Revolutionary

Gary Knight

11-12 Basque Nationalism in Spain

Katrina Richardson

12-13 How Gandhi Changed the World

Lauren Hunter

14-15 The Legacy of Jawaharlal Nehru

Emily Whitaker

16 Joan of Arc: Revolutionary or Scapegoat?

Stephanie Bennett

17-18 Spotlight on Postgrad

Clifford Geertz and Thick Description: Revolutionising Cultural History

Jessica Mifsud-Bonnici

18 The Easter Rising and Irish Independence

Matt Quinn

19 Feminists: The Iconoclasts of Our Generation

Gemma Bradley

20-21 A Focus on Individuals: Accessibility over Accuracy

Jake Fowler

22 My History Hero

John F Kennedy

Jack Walker

23 Letter from History Society

Ollie Martin

Letter From the Editor

Welcome to Issue 3!

This year marks one hundred years since the Russian Revolution and so, for the final issue of 2016/17, the theme "Revolutionaries and Iconoclasts" seemed like the perfect fit! Our writers have approached the topic from a variety of angles to produce some fascinating and diverse pieces, from the scientific revolutions of the printing press and germ theory, to the political revolutionaries of the modern day. The articles provide a snapshot into the passions and interests of the students here at Leeds, and I hope you find them as thought-provoking to read as I have done.

Sadly, this is my final issue, but it has been a pleasure to work with so many enthusiastic people to produce HST this year and I look forward to seeing it continue to grow in the very capable hands of next year's editor. Thank you to everyone who has written and edited over this year, it has been wonderful to work with you all.

Liz

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Sam Woodhams

The Dangers and Potentials of Nationalism

Sam Woodhams

As right-wing nationalist parties continue to gain influence throughout much of the West there has been a move to view nationalism as an inherently regressive, exclusionary and despotic political tool. From Donald Trump to Marine Le Pen, Nigel Farage and Geert Wilders, right wing politicians have adopted nationalist rhetoric to manipulate and capitalise on populist sentiments. In doing so, they have created essentialised visions of 'home' which are perceived to be at risk from powerful external threats. Namely, threats of globalisation, migration, Islamist terrorism and the racial other have dominated their rhetoric which has led to a legitimisation of xenophobic and racist sentiments in the public sphere. However, this is only one manifestation of nationalist politics. At other times, in other places, it has worked as a useful tool in progressive politics. In order to understand the current wave of right-wing populist nationalism, therefore, it's important to consider the possibilities which nationalism has offered throughout history.

From India to Algeria, China to South Africa, nationalism has provided a useful means for communities to fight against oppressive, exploitative and violent colonial rule. Nationalism galvanised the 'indigenous' communities and, in doing so, countered the harsh regimes of divide and rule which characterised colonialism. In its imagined nature, nationalism provided the means to bring together disparate groups to serve a common goal. In the process, nationalism essentialised the community to promote a strong, homogeneous force. Indeed, many have noted the breakdown of unifying nationalist attitudes in Syria as one of the causes of

the continuing Civil War.

Theoretically, nationalism is inherently problematic as any community, imagined or real, will be characterised by heterogeneity and differences. Nonetheless, in the specific landscape of imperial oppression and totalitarian oppression, the grouping together of communities through nationalist sentiments offered an important means of organising, proliferating and strengthening opposition. This political development, something Gayathri Spivak, the postcolonial critic, labelled 'strategic essentialism', is an important process which offers a means for minorities and oppressed groups to pursue their goals in a more effective manner. What happens, however, when there is no tangible oppressive force?

The limits of imagined communities will always remain a contentious point. There is no doubt that nationalist sentiments after decolonisation became problematic as it split the nation into those who belonged and who didn't, something which led to the oppression of minority groups, civil wars, and tyrannical governance within the newly independent states. Moreover, in the West, where there is no manifest oppressor, the threats have had to be created. In defining the nation along latently ethnic lines, current Western right-wing nationalism imagines itself at the risk of hidden market forces, mass migration and an existential threat from Islamic terrorism. Whereas anti-imperialist nationalisms had real threats, therefore, much of the current right-wing nationalisms are creating threats which, ironically, their nation has helped create. In doing so, we are moving further away from the progressive, civic nationalism and deeper into regressive, racialized and oppressive forms of nationalism.

Martin Luther and the Printing Revolution

Tobias Bernander Silseth

In the basement of the School of English at Leeds, there is a print workshop where you can get an understanding of the painstaking work of setting small metal pieces of type into a 'composing stick', building a page line by line, then locking your finished pages in a metal form, painting over the form with ink and finally pressing it onto the page—in short, how people used to print books. The wooden frames and the small metal pieces are not at all advanced technology in the twenty-first century, but after Johannes Gutenberg invented these tools circa 1440, the movable type printing press would come to have revolutionary potential. Before the printing revolution, a page had to be printed from a wooden form, making it little better or quicker than copying a book by hand. With Gutenberg's creation of the movable metal pieces of type, the efficiency and variation possible in the process increased greatly. None explored the potential of the new technology more radically than Martin Luther.

Luther lived much of his life as a scholar, and his method of teaching revealed familiarity with print and with humanist thought. He was born in Eisleben, Saxony, in 1483 and began teaching at the new university in Wittenberg in 1511. Luther began to use

print in an original way when he asked Johann Rhau-Grunenberg, who had set up a printing press to accommodate the new university, to print the Psalms of the Vulgate with wide margins for students to jot down notes and emendations. In Luther's inventive method, the influence of the humanist ideal of going back to the sources of religious knowledge instead of trusting religious authorities is apparent. At the time of Luther's experimentation, the source texts of Christianity were more available than ever, and the idea of *sola scriptura*—that scripture alone as the source of salvation—must be understood partly as a response to the possibilities of print.



Martin Luther by Lucas Cranach the Elder (1528)

Although a certain openness to the ideas of humanism and to the new technology of the printing press was emerging in Wittenberg, the centre of Luther's revolution was, to put it mildly, no Paris. How could this town of little more than 2000 inhabitants become the heart of a movement that challenged the Catholic Church? When Luther in 1517 nailed (or glued) his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg, there was no reason to think he had done something extraordinary. Superficially, he had merely proposed the grounds for an academic debate. Lyndal Roper emphasises in her 2016 biography of Luther the significance of print for the dissemination of the theses. Of equal importance at this early stage were the correspondence networks between religious authorities, as well as the word of mouth and the rumours

Lucas Cranach the Elder (Portrait of Martin Luther by Lucas Cranach the Elder, 1528)

that helped establish Luther as a popular figure in only a few weeks' time. Many factors made it possible for a small town like Wittenberg to become a centre of a popular movement, but the spreading Protestant ideas would have looked much different were it not for Gutenberg's invention of movable type. It did not take long before Wittenberg became, in Roper's words, 'a leading publishing centre' and Luther a popular icon.



Johannes Gutenberg

Arguably, the Reformation was most radical, not in its denunciation of the Catholic Church and the Papacy, but in the reach and speed of its popularisation. Elizabeth Eisenstein argues that Protestantism was 'the first movement of any kind, religious or secular, to use the new presses for overt propaganda and agitation against an established institution.' Luther was central to this use of print. As Roper has noted, between 1500 and 1530, Luther was responsible for 20 per cent of all books published in German presses. The new technology was also available to supporters of the Papacy, like Johann Eck who opposed Luther by printing works in German rather than Latin, thus appealing to a wider and less academic audience. However, anti-establishment works sold more copies. Luther's ideas were provocative to many, but his position as a historical figure is more dependent upon his use of different forms of propaganda than upon his theology.

The combination of words and image was an especially important aspect of Protestant propaganda. In her talk at Leeds in February 2017, Roper concentrated on the development of such techniques for influencing as many people as possible. Although she spoke of Luther, she also mentioned other important reformers. Lucas Cranach the Elder, the chief painter for Luther and his companions, was much more than an artist according to Roper. He was his own publisher, reproducing and spreading

his works in an entrepreneurial fashion. He not only owned and ran his own workshop, where he and his employees produced the engravings for Luther's translation of the Bible, but he also owned a

printing press. Luther is sometimes presented as, in the words of Ulinka Rublack, 'an early modern "media-man"'. But Roper stressed Cranach's deep involvement in forming and spreading Protestantism through the development of effective and easily reproducible propaganda. Cranach promoted the marriage of word and image that became responsible for the popularity of Protestantism.

Luther had not intended his ideas to be so provocative, but it did not take long before his views and language became more radical. Print brought diverse people together in opposition to the Catholic Church (and to local authorities), something that stoked antagonism between different groups throughout Europe. The Protestant reformers advocated iconoclasm; the German Peasants' War of 1524-25 was the greatest uprising until the French Revolution, while the Thirty Years' War, the culmination of the religious conflicts inspired by the Reformation, was one of the bloodiest wars in European history. Protestantism's destructive potential was obvious. Luther was one of the most prolific and popular writers of the sixteenth century, and he incarnated both the constructive and the destructive forces unleashed by the new technology of print. His antipapalism became obsessive and he used his inimitable and influential German prose to denounce Jews and women. Technological advances are rarely either good or bad. Print changed the world, even if its impact was coloured by the all too human figures of the era.

The Unplanned and the Unable: Modern British Revolutionaries

Jack Meeson

Britain is in the midst of its largest political revolution in modern times.

The June 2017 General Election will shape the course of European history for decades to come. Most likely, the unwitting champion of Brexit will emerge victorious. Despite Theresa May having campaigned, albeit very quietly, for the UK to remain in the European Union, a Conservative victory will provide a huge mandate for what is often called 'hard Brexit'. This would be nothing short of revolutionary. However, should every poll and pundit prove to be wrong, and on the 9th of June Jeremy Corbyn enters Downing Street as the Prime Minister, the shock to the British establishment would be unparalleled. A Corbyn government would be a complete upheaval in political norms. Never would there have been such a left wing British ruler. His policies, such as the abolition of the monarchy, the dismantling of Britain's nuclear arsenal and huge tax increases, go completely against the grain of Britain's conventional political discourses. Comparing these potential Prime Ministers, both May and Corbyn come from very different backgrounds, but the election of either into Number 10 will evoke incredible political change in Britain.

Theresa May has never wanted to lead a revolution. At first glance she appears to be the embodiment of



traditional establishment Conservatism. The daughter of a Church of England Vicar, May graduated from the University of Oxford before working at the Bank of England and finally becoming the Member of Parliament for Maidenhead, a position she has held since 1992. It is hard to deny that May is a career politician, but it's also true that she's very good at playing the political game. Holding the notoriously fickle position of Home Secretary for six years under David Cameron, May turned herself into Cameron's heir ap-

parent by staying quiet over Brexit while retaining the ideals 'One Nation Conservatism' that had proven popular amongst the public. Rarely defying her party's whip, at any other moment in recent history she would have not been a controversial figure.

However, context changes everything. Rising to power on the simple premise that 'Brexit means Brexit', whatever happens in June, May's tenure and legacy will centre on Britain's departure from the European Union. To label her reluctant to take the mantle of leading Britain in this crucial period is to disregard her personal ambition, but it would be safe to say that May never envisioned herself as the champion of a cause she once condemned. Yet, this is the price that she has to pay to lead the UK. The Conservative Party, and much of the country, de-

mands a leader that will see out the results of last year's referendum. As such, May has embraced the task at hand. With prominent Brexiteers such as Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson dominating the Cabinet, it is clear that a vote for the Conservatives is a vote for a revolution of Britain's place in the world.

Jeremy Corbyn, contrastingly and perhaps unsurprisingly, is not so traditional a character. Corbyn did not graduate from University, dropping out from a course in Trade Union Studies at London Polytechnic because of an argument over the content of the curriculum. One similarity, and perhaps the only similarity, is that Corbyn too is a career politician. Elected as a Councillor when he was just 24, in 1983 he became the MP for Islington North.

Unlike May, however, Corbyn has always been a revolutionary. A backbencher throughout his decades' long Parliamentary career, he frequently challenged the Labour Party's leadership. This was particularly true during the government of Tony Blair, with whom he has an extremely cold relationship. For example, he was extremely vocal in his opposition to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, a conflict for which he would later apologise for on behalf of the Labour Party. In contrast to May, who was elected by the upper echelons of the Conservative Party on a platform of unity, Corbyn's leader-

ship has been divisive from the very beginning of his election campaign. He has continuously struggled to gain the support of the party's MPs, with his key base of support instead lying amongst grassroots Labour members.

Corbyn thus, has always positioned himself far from the mainstream of British political discourse. At the height of the Cold War, he was a member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Today, at a time of austerity, his 'People's Quantitative Easing' see huge investments into national infrastructure. It is therefore not an intellectual stretch to say that a Corbyn government would be revolutionary.



However, it seems apparent that, for the time being, Corbyn's ideals will remain those of the opposition. Every poll would indicate that the Labour Party is on track to suffer a crippling defeat at the hands of the Conservatives. Therefore, despite having been an ardent iconoclast his entire life, Corbyn will almost certainly find himself unable to achieve the political upheaval that he so deep-

ly desires. Most likely, Theresa May will be our modern revolutionary. If this is the case, Britain will find itself in the peculiar position of being in the midst of a revolution led by the establishment. Ultimately, whoever wins this election, the United Kingdom will change irreversibly.



Don't forget to visit the blog for more articles, study abroad posts, and HistSoc's Primary Source!

This month, Natascha Allen-Smith has written a set of blog posts on Wartime Revolutionaries—make sure to check them out!

historystudenttimes.wordpress.com

Leymah Gbowee: Peaceful Revolutionary

Rosie Plummer

In 2003, the women of Liberia, largely led by Leymah Gbowee, created a revolutionary peace movement which ended the Second Liberian Civil War and forced warlord Charles Taylor to resign.

Although other factors, such as international pressure, also contributed to peace in Liberia, I believe that the spirit of these women was truly revolutionary. Risking their own lives, they not only brought about peace but also overcame stereotypes of African women as passive victims, and instead became heroes.

Charles Taylor was elected President in an atmosphere of fear in 1997. Two years later, a rebellion against Taylor began, which developed into Second Liberian Civil War. This rebellion was largely led by LURD (Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy) whose main aim was to remove Taylor from power, due to his human rights abuses and failure to tackle domestic issues. Taylor infamously used atrocious tactics during this conflict, including the use of child soldiers, and was officially accused of war crimes in 2003. This same year, a group of women led by Gbowee ended his rule.

Leymah Gbowee's early life was humble in comparison to Taylor's. While Taylor had a judge as a father and an American college education, Gbowee was single mother who had recently escaped an abusive relationship and trained with UNICEF as social worker. She briefly lived in Ghana as a penniless refugee, before returning to her home country, where she became increasingly involved in peace activism, in an attempt to combat the horrors that she witnessed on a regular basis.

In 2001 Gbowee helped to establish WIPNET's (Women In Peace-building Network's) 'Women of

Liberia Mass Action for Peace' campaign, which became enormously popular. This group used simple methods, such as singing, sex strikes and curses, which grabbed media

attention. WIPNET addressed the women of Liberia directly, using simple statements, such as: 'we are tired of our children being killed' and 'we are tired of being abused'. This campaign was wonderfully straightforward and able to connect with illiterate audiences through emotive images and speech. Through this campaign, Gbowee united Muslim and Christian women in prayer and protest, overcoming religious divisions to champion peace and promote equality.

In 2003, a diverse group of over one thousand women occupied a soccer-field that Taylor passed daily. After nine days, Taylor granted them an audience and Gbowee spoke directly to Taylor himself. Pleading that the women of Liberia were tired of violence and rape, Gbowee secured Taylor's promise that he would attend peace talks. The women did not stop at this promise however, and to ensure that the peace talks were successful, over two thousand of them occupied the hotel where the negotiations were held, refusing to move until an agreement was reached. As a result of these women's courageous actions, Liberia was totally transformed; peace was finally achieved, followed by the election of the country's first female head of state-



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Eleanor Johnson Sirleaf.

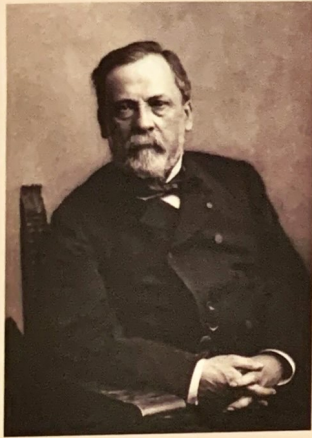
Gbowee and the women of Liberia refused to let their lack of status prevent them from bringing down an elite warlord. Taylor is currently in prison

for war crimes and human rights atrocities; meanwhile Gbowee won the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize and currently runs a foundation for girl's education in Liberia. The women of Liberia dared to challenge Charles Taylor, and this defiance changed Liberian history forever.

Louis Pasteur and the Germ Theory: A Scientific Revolution

Alexa Clark

Louis Pasteur is perhaps one of the most celebrated figures in the history of medicine. Born in France in 1822, his ground-breaking discovery that airborne microbes were the cause of disease proved to be a scientific revolution that greatly improved medical progress and which lies at the root of many modern medical practices that are commonplace today.



Pasteur's infamous 'germ theory of disease' was discovered when, in 1856, he was contacted by a local wine manufacturer in Lille to investigate the causes of souring wine during the process of alcoholic fermentation.

Using a microscope to examine the alcohol samples, Pasteur discovered that thousands of micro-organisms were responsible for it turning sour. He found that the same microbes were responsible for the souring of other liquids such as milk, in the process developing a method of sterilisation which made the milk safe for consumption. This innovative method was aptly named Pasteurisation, and is still used in the sterilisation of milk to this day.

Pasteur's discovery was indeed revolutionary for modern science. It eventually enabled him to prove

that the prevailing theory of spontaneous generation as the cause of disease was wrong; rather disease was caused by micro-organisms (or germs) in the air. Although initially met with some resistance from contemporary scientists, the Germ Theory quickly proved to be a truly cutting-edge discovery in the understanding of disease. It enabled Pasteur, in later years, to apply this knowledge to the development of numerous vaccines to ensure immunity to some of the most notorious diseases of the day.

The first such vaccine was developed during Pasteur's infamous experiments on the prevention of chicken cholera in 1879. Chance played an important role: Pasteur's assistant had been instructed to inoculate a batch of chickens with a sample of the disease, but forgot to do so before going on holiday. Upon his return, he immediately inoculated the chickens with the sample, which had since weakened with exposure to the air. Instead of dying, the chickens were simply unwell for a short period. Pasteur then inoculated the chickens with a fresh sample of the bacteria, and found that they survived. He was thus able to conclude that this had made them immune to the disease.

This was among one of Pasteur's most significant discoveries: thereafter he was able to develop a whole range of vaccines for diseases such as anthrax and rabies. Pasteur was thus among one of the few early pioneers of vaccination as an effective method to prevent disease; a method which is now routinely

(Continued from page 9)

used for the prevention of innumerable human diseases today. This serves to highlight the lasting impact of Pasteur's work.

Pasteur's germ theory of disease the mid-nineteenth century was a revolutionary discovery which sparked an unprecedented wave of medical progress and formed the roots of our modern-day understanding of disease. Without it, many common diseases would still have fatal consequences, and we would not have made the medical advances that allow us to save thousands of lives every year. Pasteur's unique contribution to the Bacteriological Revolution de-

serves to be celebrated, not just for the speed and scale of the medical changes he brought about, but also his lasting impact in the medical world today.



Louis Pasteur injecting rabies virus into a rabbit's brain (1885)

Bernie Sanders: A Modern American Revolutionary

Gary Knight

Few could have estimated that Bernie Sanders, the independent junior senator from the small state of Vermont, would leave such a lasting and permanent impact on US politics since his campaign to win the 2015-16 Democratic primary.

Sanders ran on an unprecedented social democratic platform, arguing in favour of free college education and challenged the persistent sexism, racism and homophobia that is still prevalent in American society. His policies were revolutionary; he was the only candidate focused on campaign finance reform which would end the influence of Super Political Action Committees (Super-PACS). Moreover, he was also the only candidate to staunchly advocate a universal single-payer system of healthcare, seen as impractical to Democrats and anathema to Republicans. These two cornerstone issues - solution to wealth inequality and universal healthcare - were revolutionary as Sanders gave them a voice at the national level, rather than being state-level fantastical ideas.

Leading by example, Sanders' campaign broke the orthodoxy of fundraising in American political campaigning. Unlike the clear majority of presidential campaigns (apart from Trump), Sanders resolutely did not accept donations from Super-PACS, instead relying on small individual donations instead. With an average donation of just \$27, overall Sanders' campaign managed to raise \$227 million, in contrast to his Democratic rival Hillary Clinton who took \$20 million less from individual donations but almost \$85 million from Super-PACS.

Uniquely, Sanders actively encouraged and even participated in demonstrations like anti-Trump rallies, and minimum wage protests. Grassroots activism was central to his campaign as he sought to create a new kind of engagement with politics which resulted in a huge influx of young people into the democratic process. Following the increased despondency and cynicism established by Bush and Obama's terms, Sanders revived youth activism and engagement, gaining more votes from the 18-29 age bracket than Clinton and Trump combined during the primaries.

Basque Nationalism

Katrina Richardson

Today, the Basque Country is a province situated in Northern Spain. Originally the Basque population was spread over seven regions in both France and Spain and possessed an element of autonomy by being allowed to follow separate laws from the rest of Spain. However during the late nineteenth century these Basque regions were fully integrated into Spain. This integration disrupted the semi-autonomy that the Basque people had enjoyed prior to this time and consequently, in conjunction with a few other factors, such as rapid Basque industrialisation, sparked a backlash of nationalism. In the views of some, this wave of nationalism actually manufactured much of the history of the Basque country.

The exact origin of the Basque people is somewhat

a mystery. Mark Kurlansky, despite not being Basque himself, is one of the greatest advocates of the Basque nationalist movement in terms of historiography, claiming to trace their origins back to 218 BC. Much of Kurlansky's research echoes the policies promoted by the Basque Nationalist movement. Specifically he adamantly builds on the argument that the Basque people are a completely different race of people from the Spanish. He focuses particularly on identifying the existence of unique "Basque" features, which it is claimed include a long, straight nose, thick eyebrows, strong chin and long earlobes. In his view the Basques actually pre-date their Spanish and French overlords.

The main figurehead of Basque nationalism was Sabino Arana y Goiri. It was Arana who established the first Basque nationalist organisation – the PNV

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Although Sanders won 13 million votes and 23 states, an impressive feat for an unknown independent, the defining feature of his nomination campaign is the lasting influence he has had on the left. Similar populist Ross Perot, for example, failed to capitalise on his impressive performance in the 1992 election into any discernible legacy. Ron and Rand Paul are paleo-conservatives on the right who supported the Tea Party movement, and Ralph Nader's legacy was confined to the Green Party after increasing acrimony over his apparent role in spoiling the 2000 election and denying Al Gore victory.



Bernie Sanders speaking at an event in Phoenix, Arizona

Sanders, however, has energised the American left through perusal of social democratic policies and grassroots activism. Liberal states like California have passed \$15 minimum wage and anti-corporate policies as remnants of the Sanders campaign have begun planning for the 2018 mid-term elections against both Republicans and moderate Democrats. Sanders has been integral in fomenting a grassroots movement on the left that sets him apart from similar politicians. Although he was ultimately unsuccessful, Sanders' campaign and platform led to an energising and galvanising force which has infected American politics with some much-needed enthusiasm in the divisive and demagogic age of Donald Trump.

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[Partido Nacionalista Vasco] in 1895. Essentially the PNV did not aim for full scale independence like other nationalist movements, but for the reinstatement of self-government. They were adamant that the Basque people deserved this right and often used their productive economy and rapid industrialisation as proof of the Basque superiority.

Arana himself is often described as the father and master of Basque nationalism. His form of nationalism was extremely xenophobic, and he was careful to emphasize the essential differences between the Basque and Spanish people. He also had a well-publicized hatred towards the Spanish people that moved to the Basque country in search of jobs; he claimed that the influx of Spanish people would completely corrupt the Basque race. In his view the Spanish were a "mass of degenerate, immoral and

godless subversive socialists".

In order to emphasize these differences further Arana embarked on a campaign to re-ignite the previous lack-luster Basque culture. In his attempt to create a more profound Basque identity Arana



A young Sabino Arana y Goiri
(1883-88)

created a Basque flag and tried to re-ignite the study of the Basque language.

What makes this an unusual story of nationalism however is that Arana is often actually accused of falsifying Basque history. Despite what Arana claimed, the Basque culture was not developed at all. The language was in disrepair and disuse, with many of the great writers of Spain refusing to use it, despite their Basque heritage. In fact Arana, whilst regenerating the Basque language, actually created new grammatical rules which it should follow, therefore creating Basque heritage rather than reinvigorating it. Arana's plans to renew the Basque culture had limited long term effects. Whilst the Basque language is still spoken today, in reality less than a third of the Basque population speak it fluently.

The PNV as a political movement gained much of its influence after the death of Arana, during the quasi-dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera in the 1920s. However this popularity was not to last in the turbulent Spanish political economy. The outbreak of the Spanish civil war effectively ended the PNV's bid for political power. Despite this set back during the civil war and the ensuing dictatorship of Franco, the PNV is still a political entity today and the Basque country has now achieved its aim of autonomy within Spain.

How Gandhi Changed the World

Lauren Hunter

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi came from an unremarkable background and rose to great renown as a figure of inspiration for the oppressed. He achieved this via his famed technique of civil disobedience; the act of peacefully refusing to obey legislation which he deemed unjust

or discriminatory.

Born in India in 1869, Gandhi later travelled to England to train as a lawyer. He then went to South Africa, where he witnessed discrimination practiced against the minority community of Indians. All Indian people in South Africa were obliged to provide

fingerprints to the authorities, and Gandhi argued that this legislation treated Indians as criminals. He decided to champion their cause. Developing his famous technique of civil disobedience whilst engaged upon this issue, he aimed to demonstrate to the authorities, through patient endurance of punishment, that his will could not be broken. He was jailed for his part in civil disobediences and spent this time reading and formulating new terminology to describe his activities. He used the term *swaraj* to describe freedom and self-rule, and *satyagraha* to denote the power of love and truth in the face of difficulty. He therefore used his experiences in South Africa as a testing ground for some of his methods later employed in India.

Gandhi was away from India for a total of 21 years and returned in 1915. He began to fight for the rights of Indian

people under British rule, and organised large scale protests and civil disobediences. For example, he organised a large protest against the Rowlatt Act, which allowed the British to detain anyone they mistrusted. However, the violent response from the British resulted in many deaths, and Gandhi began to think about ridding India of the British for good, and started to campaign for self-rule.

Gandhi became the main voice of the Indian National Congress, a traditionally elite political organisation, and began to transform it into one with mass appeal to the working classes of India. This surge in popularity propelled him to the forefront of Indian politics. He went on to organise the 1930

Salt March, in which he and several thousand others marched to the coast to boil sea-water to make salt. Salt-making was only permitted to the British, and this was therefore a public act of non-compliance with British-made regulations. Gandhi was subsequently jailed for his part in this and other civil disobediences. He also campaigned for tolerance of all religions in Indian society, and argued that members of all faiths must unite in the common cause of ridding India of the British.

The British were undecided what to do about Gandhi and the methods he used, and held a conference in London. Gandhi tried to persuade them to free India immediately, but failed and subsequently quit the



Gandhi during the Salt March, March 1930

Congress leadership, handing over to his friend and protégé Jawaharlal Nehru. However, the British did hand power back to the Indian people in August 1947, and violent clashes then erupted between the newly-partitioned states of India and Pakistan. Gandhi was appalled by this violence and campaigned

to restore peace.

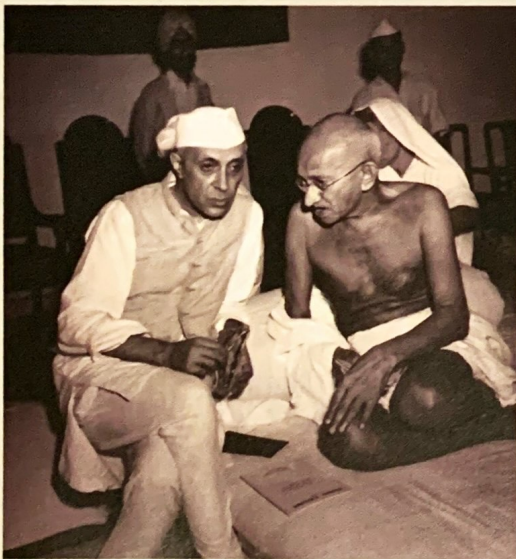
In January 1948 Gandhi was assassinated by a Hindu extremist who did not share his belief in religious tolerance. Despite his death amid violence, Gandhi left an enduring legacy behind: one which highlights the strength of civil disobedience and non-violent protest. His methods were subsequently used by the leaders of other movements, such as Martin Luther King in the USA, to channel the anger of the oppressed into a constructive method to attain their rights, with non-violence as a key concept. Gandhi is now an icon representing peace and unity, and modern Indian politicians are commonly measured by their adherence to the ideals he promoted.

The Legacy of Jawaharlal Nehru

Emily Whitaker

The granting of Indian Independence in 1947 was one of the most significant revolutions within twentieth-century history. During such diversity, it was Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister, that managed to unite the Indian nation and should be credited for this accomplishment. Gaining Independence was a foundation for the Indian nation and its formation only occurred due to the work of Jawaharlal Nehru. He is considered the architect of the modern Indian nation state; an independent, socialist, secular and democratic republic. The Indian writer Nirad Chaudhuri even suggested that Nehru was 'the most important moral force behind the unity of India'.

Nehru was idealistic and optimistic and he gained inspiration as a Prime Minister through both his western education and the work of Mohandas Gandhi. Gandhi had proven that the Indian nation had the capability to unite, despite the diversity of its population and its various cultures as they fought for



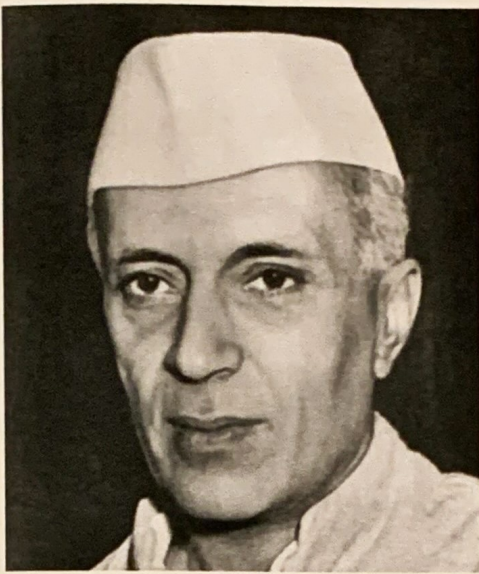
Gandhi with Nehru, during a meeting of the All India Congress, Bombay, India (6 July 1946)

independence. Nehru developed his enthusiasm for Indian democracy as Gandhi's protégé, becoming the leader of the Indian National Congress and a major driving force for independence.

Within a speech to the Constituent Assembly on the 13th December 1946, Nehru stated his intention to form a democratic state. He highlighted that governments are 'the expression of the will of the people'. After nearly one hundred years of the British Raj, this was a revolutionary idea for Indians who for the first time gained the power of the vote. This vote was especially significant because while the West initially reserved the right to vote to men of property, India immediately established Universal Suffrage for all adults over the age of twenty.

The first Indian general election occurred in 1951-1952. Nehru needed this election to occur in the early days of Independence to ensure that democracy was immediately established. The organisation of the election was difficult because the electorate spanned across 175 million citizens, of which 85% were illiterate. Multiple ballot boxes were used, each with a pictorial symbol to represent a different party, and each voter would vote by placing their vote in the chosen party box. The Indian faith in Nehru was illustrated by the fact that he was re-elected to power - the Congress party secured 364 out of 489 seats.

In line with his vein of democracy, Nehru prioritised the importance of equality across Indian communities. In particular, he intended to aid the minority groups of both Muslims and the lower castes across India. Religion had always been a cause of fragmentation within India as the birthplace of four of the world's major religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jain-



Nehru (1947)

ism and Sikhism. Therefore, Nehru was keenly aware of the effects of removing all religious divide from his new independent state.

In 1947, the Partition between India and Pakistan formed separate Hindu and Muslim states which devastated Nehru. With fifteen million people displaced, and a further two million killed, the India's potential to unite alongside their religious differences appeared unrealistic. Yet, Nehru's optimism endured. In a speech in March 1949, Nehru stated that Partition had caused 'hurt and injury to the soul of India.' However, he further declared that 'we are getting over it, as people get over almost any type of injury'. Significantly, Nehru warned his Chief Ministers that the protection of the Muslim minority now living in India must take place. In a letter to his ministers on the 15th October 1947 he warned that: 'we must give them security and the rights of citizens in a democratic state'. Whilst Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, another prominent Indian politician, desired that all Muslims prove their allegiance to the Indian nation, Nehru specified in a letter on 1st March 1950 that: 'Loyalty is not produced to order or by fear'. Nehru demonstrated his hope for Muslim equality and allowed their allegiance to develop naturally through a feeling of protection and equality.

Further, Nehru protected India from religious divide through the formation of a secular state. In a speech

in July 1961, he stated that: 'As soon as you speak of Hindu, Sikh or Muslim, you do not speak for India.' Nehru desired all religions to be accepted as equal, yet he also wanted to ensure that religion was no longer divisive. Nehru also wanted to create equality within India by removing caste discrimination. It had survived for 3,000 years and was a cause of India's social stratification. Alongside advocate for the lower caste, Bhimrao Ambedkar, Nehru made the practice of untouchability (discrimination to the lower Dalit caste) a criminal offence in 1955. Additionally, Nehru established 'Scheduled Castes' within the Indian Congress. These groups held reserved seats within Congress in an attempt to reinforce their equality within the democratic state.

Nehru's revolutionary leadership also extended to the world stage. He introduced the policy of non-alignment and refused to ally with the Cold War power blocs. In the 1955 Asian-Africa Conference in Bandung, Nehru emphasised the importance of non-alignment to the newly independent countries, ensuring that Western powers did not dominate the decision making of other countries. Judith Brown suggests that: 'it is perhaps difficult to recognise the innovative and visionary stance India took under Nehru'. This highlights the independence of the African and Asian states because they didn't fall under the powerful umbrella of a Western power. Nehru became an advocate for world peace, and India was even described as 'fast coming to be recognized as the biggest moral power in the civilized world'. This was incredibly significant for India, because it was finally becoming a powerful independent state relied upon for decisions within foreign policy.

Jawaharlal Nehru was a revolutionary of his time. Despite India's division, he created a democratic state that remains intact even today. Nehru placed India on the world map and proved that India was a powerful force in establishing world peace. As Escott Reid stated: 'there is no one since Napoleon who has played both so large a role in the history of his country and has held such a place in the hearts and minds of his countrymen'.

Joan of Arc: Revolutionary or Scapegoat?

Stephanie Bennett

Joan of Arc is now renowned as a martyr, a saint, and a revolutionary hero of France; however, this wasn't always the case. Born in obscurity to later rise in the ranks of the French troops after the siege of Orléans, she attempted to persuade the uncrowned Dauphin of France to defeat the English and reclaim his throne during the Hundred Years' War. Soon after the nine-day siege she was captured and sold to the English where the Church, who had initially proclaimed that she could indeed hear the voice of God, proceeded to condemn her as a heretic and had her burned alive. Was Joan of Arc a revolutionary who defied fifteenth century societal convention to restore the rightful king, or was she an unfortunate scapegoat used by the Church to mask the humiliating English defeat?

From an early age, Joan believed she heard voices and witnessed visions encouraging her to lead a life of extreme piety. She alleged that she felt the presence of St Michael and St Catherine and that their whispers urged her to seek out Charles VII, heir to the throne, and oust the English forces from France. After much doubt and dispute, Charles awarded Joan armour and horse and allowed her to accompany his army to the siege at Orléans. However, this was only after foremost theologians had inspected Joan to certify that her claims were true. They confirmed that there was no deception or pretence, only the chastity and modesty one would expect from a servant of God.

The French army assumed a reputation of invincibility after a series of battles in May 1429 where the French recovered multiple fortifications from English control. While it remains uncertain as to whether Joan participated in these skirmishes, it is evident that her presence alone increased morale and she

became a symbol of victory. After her capture, the English and their allies, the Burgundians, endeavoured to

discredit the newly-crowned Charles VII by accusing Joan of over seventy charges including witchcraft, heresy and dressing like a man. Joan had escorted the Dauphin to Reims to be crowned as King in 1429 and he therefore owed his coronation to her loyalty and dedicated service. In a pitiful attempt to distance himself from such heinous accusations, however spurious, Charles never negotiated her release. After a year in captivity and repeated torture and interrogation, Joan succumbed and signed a confession that confirmed that she had never accepted divine guidance. It wasn't long before her death sentence was announced and she was burned at the stake in Rouen in May 1431.

Joan of Arc is therefore both revolutionary and scapegoat. She undermined both stereotype and law and her assistance directly led to many French victories. Under divine guidance or not, the fact remains that she was a young girl who profoundly altered the course of the Hundred Years' War. From their initial support to their later condemnation, the Church's hypocrisy is evident. Joan was sentenced as a heretic for a crime they had earlier supported. Now a patron saint of France, Joan of Arc is remembered as the revolutionary she was, but that doesn't mean her deflected responsibility should be forgotten either.



Clifford Geertz and Thick Description: Revolutionising Cultural History

Jessica Mifsud-Bonnici

By undermining the commonly held misconception that cultural history is merely a 'history of the arts' and of 'high culture', this article will illuminate, and definitely promote, the cultural approach to history.

Granted, it found its roots in such ideas, with the likes of Jacob Burckhardt endeavouring to understand art and culture by putting it into a historical context. However, modern cultural history is more closely related to social history, as both ultimately aim to understand the history of the people.

Nevertheless, cultural history differs from its parent social history through its approach. Social history is generally more quantitative, focusing predominantly on evidence such as economic and demographic trends, which can be charted and quantified. The issue with this approach, cultural historians believe, is that social historians are too normative, concentrating on the categories of class, gender and race rather than on individual experience. In response to these criticisms, cultural historians have aimed to draw deeper meanings from a wide range of new and often untouched sources, such as artwork, diaries and objects. They aim to understand not only how people lived in the past, but also *who* they thought they were and *how* they, to quote the historian Robert Darnton, 'constructed the world, invested it with meaning, and infused it with emotion'. To achieve this, cultural historians have had to develop a cross disciplinary approach to their reading of primary material. This is where Clifford Geertz has been incredibly influential.

For many history students, the name Clifford Geertz will be largely unknown—he is not even a historian!

However, within cultural history, the impact of this anthropologist's work is immeasurable. In his seminal series of essays *The Interpretation of Cultures*, first published in 1973, Geertz explained culture as 'a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life'.

Most significantly, Geertz outlined and further contextualised the theory of 'thick description', making it more accessible and usable for social scientists and historians alike. In essence, thick description describes the communicative value of an action or gesture which gives it symbolic value. A notable example would be the twitch of the eye and the act of winking. If photographed, they would look the same, but in the case of a wink there is a socially established code attached to the action which allows onlookers to understand the message which it is conveying. This gesture is a conveyance of an understood culture which exists between the two; the winker and the person being winked at. Geertz asserts that the physical status of the gesture is irrelevant, the gesture can exist in writing, in art or even in music if it communicates a specific socially understood message to the observer.

Cultural historians have used thick description as a method of analysing primary sources, examining the language used by writers or the placing of subjects by painters to read their communicated symbolic value. For instance, historians of rituals have used thick description heavily to understand what people were purveying to the audience and themselves when performing ritualistic activity.

The Easter Rising and Irish Independence

Matt Quinn

The Irish Easter Rising of April 1916 in Dublin was a failed rebellion. The leaders were all executed and Irish independence was not achieved for another six years. It lacked unanimous support from Dublin and it was denounced by the Irish Parliamentary Party; it even lacked popular support within Ireland until the execution of fifteen of its leaders began to turn opinion in favour of the protesters.

Yet the Easter Rising continues to hold extreme significance for the Republic of Ireland. During its centenary in 2016, the General Post Office in Dublin, a key site during the rising, added a museum to teach younger generations about the events whilst thousands celebrated on the streets of Dublin. The resentment that followed the execution of the leaders helped to fuel anger at the British and led to the success of the pro-independence Sinn Fein party in the 1918 elections.

The executions were significant for more than this change in opinion however. Although the seven signatories of the Irish proclamation of independence and eight other significant members of the rising were executed, one of the most prominent figures survived; Eamon de Valera. A battalion commander during the rising, de Valera was an American-born son of a Spanish father and an Irish mother. As an American citizen, he was sentenced to death in 1916 but was given a reprieve and only served one year of his sentence. Why he was reprieved remains a mystery. Some, including de Valera himself in his later years, highlighted his American citizenship. Yet it looks more likely that it was the aforementioned

swing in opinion that saved him. As one of the later members of the rising to be court-martialled, the British had seen the anger at the murder of the rebellion leaders and did not execute de Valera accordingly. This is supported by the fact that Thomas Ashe, an Irish citizen court-martialled at the same time, also saw his sentence commuted. Regardless of why de Valera escaped death, his survival would change Ireland forever.

After de Valera left prison, he assumed the presidency of the *Dail Eireann*, the Irish parliament set up by Sinn Fein following their resounding victory in the 1918 election. He played a crucial role, after a further British crackdown, in the guerrilla attacks by the Irish Republican Army against the British state. Having fundraised for one year in America, de Valera provided over £1 million in funds to the IRA at this time. The end of the Irish War of Independence saw the partition of Northern Ireland and a truce with the British, although de Valera played no role in this negotiation. Unhappy with the agreement, he led the anti-treaty forces in a year-long civil war, although this proved ultimately unsuccessful. Already one of the prominent figures in Irish politics, he went on to be *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister) for fourteen years, President for another fourteen years, and helped to redefine the constitution and culture of Ireland.

The decision to release Eamon de Valera may have been just a creation of circumstance, but the former rebel would go on to dictate the shape of Ireland in the sixty and more years following the Easter Rising.

(Continued from page 17)

Whilst this article may sit uncomfortably amongst history's greats, we have to consider that the writing of history is a history in itself. How the past is depict-

ed and the morals historians draw from past event reveal as much about the social context of the person writing it as it reveals about the time period they are writing about.

Feminists: The Iconoclasts of Our Generation

Gemma Bradley

The feminist movement is commonly associated with the courageous actions of the suffragettes and suffragists from the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. The movements are most acclaimed for gaining a woman's right to vote. However, there were many branches of this movement, focusing on many different aspects of patriarchy such as male domination within religion, and this continues to be particularly true today. While there are many secular patriarchal hierarchies, many feminist movements have historically focused on disputing the questionable religious practises because religion was, and still is, a major moral compass within Western life.

One of the main feminist-led movements relating to religion is the pro-choice movement, which challenges the pro-life movement. The core beliefs of the pro-choice supporters are that the decision on whether to abort a foetus should be made by the pregnant woman herself. Despite there being some differences of opinion on specific cases within the movement, this main belief remains the same. This example relates to religion because a large faction of the pro-life movement is supported by a range of religions who all believe that it is a sin to take a life, whether inside or outside of the womb.

This debate is a prime example of the clash between religion and feminism. This clash is demonstrated by Carol J. C. Maxwell in her 2002 study which, 'drawing on decades of survey and interview data of direct-action activists within the anti-abortion movement found that 60% of the sample was female'. Historically, the moral compass for the Western world has largely been determined by the Church. As secularisation increased however, the amount of

churches increased in numbers but arguably decreased in monopolised power. Instead, this power was diluted, providing room for movements such as feminism to openly dispute core beliefs that they believed to be sexist.

Feminists have challenged religious doctrines to demand control over their own bodies, but they have also worked within the Church to contest patriarchal structures. Thus, feminists helped to pass a vote in 1992 in the General Synod that allowed women to become priests within the Church of England, and in 1993 the first two female priests were ordained. However, this was a controversial vote, and only one year later, acts were passed to allow parishes to reject female priests.

Feminism has had an undeniably significant impact on the dynamics and living standards for women in the West. Many movements are now also expanding to areas of the world such as the Middle East. Today in Egypt, women account for over half the people at university - a dramatic increase from only a few decades earlier. There are also many movements by Muslim women to remove the requirement to wear the hijab, as well as many movements to ensure women have the right to choose to wear it. Once again, this is an example of the feminist ideals of choice and freedom being put into action.

Many religious organisations are more commonly operating hand-in-hand with women. A more common ground has been found across the West. There are still, and always will be some disagreements, but that is the beauty of free speech and freedom of choice. It seems clear that feminism played an extremely important role in ensuring the prevalence of both.

A FOCUS ON INDIVIDUALS:

Jake Fowler

History is, in many ways, defined by actions of individuals, leaders and bringers of great socio-political change. When one thinks of 'revolutionaries and iconoclasts', certain people spring to mind; Robespierre at the helm of the French Revolution, Stalin and his Great Terror. But history is also so much more. Revolutions in particular are often the culmination of numerous factors – changing attitudes, uncontrollable trends, and accidents. Why then do we decide to fixate on individuals? Does it make history more accessible and perhaps relatable at the expense of historical accuracy?

When analysing events, historians have tended to converge around certain questions, and while recent revisionist historiography takes a more varied and dynamic approach it is difficult to break away from the established orthodoxy. There is of course the question of causation. Intrinsicly tied to this is also the question of inevitability; but this is fundamentally flawed.

While it is often unavoidable that some kind of change will happen, the outcome is never certain. One can look at the French Revolution for an example of this – while there was an appetite for change no one could have predicted that the calling of the Estates-General in 1789 would have led to infamous terror and what Reynald Secher terms 'the first modern genocide' less than 5 years later.

Was it the actions of people such as Maximilien Robespierre and Louis XVI which propelled events in this unpredictable direction? The French Revolution started relatively conservatively. The goal was essentially a constitutional monarchy, similar to that

of Britain, where the king still enjoyed a veto against legislation. Indeed, by 1790 a constitutional monarchy had been established. The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen had been passed by a National Assembly in 1789, with the monarchy preserved and universal male suffrage from the age of 25, something unprecedented at the time. Here then was a bold yet well thought-out system for the future of France, ambition alongside preservation.

Yet only two years later the state was engaged in a programme of terror against its own citizens and war with the rest of Europe. Louis XVI believed that he was God's messenger on Earth, and that taking any power from him was nothing less than sacrilegious. His repeated blocking of new legislation and attempted escape to Prussian allies meant that he was increasingly seen as a problem by the Assembly. It was then the actions of Robespierre, a leading figure in the radical Jacobin club, which resulted in Louis' execution.



Maximilien Robespierre (c.1790)

By the start of 1793, the king was dead and the country was in turmoil, losing a war on all sides and plagued by internal enemies. It was this which caused Robespierre, now the most influential figure in the National Convention, to turn to terror as a means of saving the revolution, with the infamous massacre in the Vendée. Undoubtedly then, these two individuals had a huge impact. But the unpredictable escalation of the French Revolution also has its roots in other causes, most notably the attitudes of European powers which isolated France and fed the sense of paranoia. These two individuals were very much a product of their environment – Louis XVI was raised to believe that he had abso-

ACCESSIBILITY OVER ACCURACY

lute authority and the unpredictable escalation of events propelled both him and Robespierre in directions they could not have foreseen years earlier. Here, revolutionaries and iconoclasts were products rather than creators of socio-political change, and an easy target for people to fixate on.

Another question which historians converge on is that of legacy and impact. 2017 sees the centenary of the Russian Revolution, and so it seems appropriate to look at the legacy this may have left behind in the development of the Soviet Union. In 1917, the Bolsheviks seized power, proclaiming the first ever socialist state. Vladimir

Lenin was the undisputed leader of the party; as both an intellectual and a practical politician he defined Bolshevism and the state they wanted to build. His legacy was huge, something Stalin understood perfectly well when consolidating his power in the 1930s. Joseph Stalin's governance has even been

referred to as a 'Leninist system' – powerful factory bosses were created, with the intention that leaders should be both respected and feared. Stalin constantly evoked the idea of Lenin's vision in speeches, and in many ways used this to justify the Great Terror of 1936. This serves as a reminder that it is not just in history that the idea of the heroic individual can be evoked, it can also be used as a way of achieving political aims.

Stalin himself has been the subject of many histories. His rise to power was never inevitable; he was fundamentally a practical politician and at one point it seemed the more ideologically-driven Leon Trotsky would take over Lenin's mantle. Up until the

1980s the view that he consolidated his power through the 1930s to unleash the Great Terror remained largely unchallenged; even now this is the accepted version of events. There are many counter-arguments, but one which stands out is the Civil War, 1917-1922. A necessity in consolidating Bolshevik authority, much like the French Revolution, the Civil War saw countless brutalities, with as many as 12 million mostly civilian casualties. A war of such scale left a lasting impact on the population. More than anything it legitimised violence as a way of solving problems. It is hardly surprising that twenty

years later, Stalin turned to such a destructive campaign to consolidate his personal power.

The role of the individual is very potent in history. The history of 'great men' is an angle which has remained dominant for hundreds of years, for historians and contemporaries alike.

People like to have a bogey-man to blame atrocities on – Hitler and the Holocaust, Stalin and the Great Terror. Equally, people look up to heroes. The romanticised story of an individual scheming a grand plan, or a great general winning against all the odds, will always be more appealing to the casual observer than an analytical approach. Stalin understood this and used it to achieve his political ambitions, and it is incredibly important to bare this in mind when producing histories. Individuals are influential and may constitute a valuable reference point, but are often given too much attention. History is incredibly complex and we need to recognise people instead as products of wider socio-political trends.



Soviet Poster: 'The spirit of the great Lenin and his victorious banner encourage us now to the Patriotic War'

My History Hero

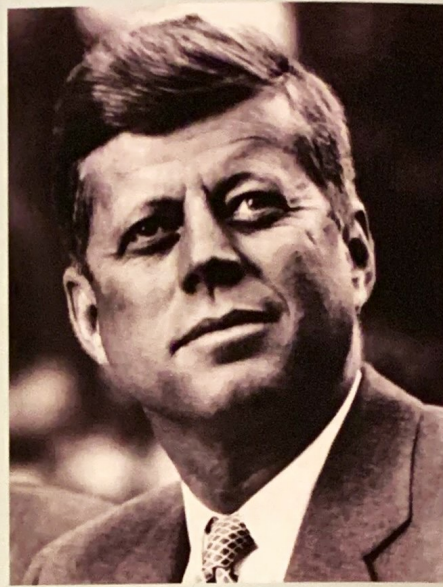
JOHN F KENNEDY

Jack Walker

It is a little-known fact that there were no televised presidential debates in the United States until 1960. Indeed, the eventual victor of that set of landmark debates, President John F. Kennedy, understood better than almost anyone at the time the power that television offered the man in charge at the White House.

Perhaps what is so interesting, especially regarding the very first debate of 1960, is that the public were almost evenly split on whom they thought won. A majority of those who were listening on radio believed the Republican candidate, and future president himself, Richard Nixon had performed better. Those who watched the debates believed Kennedy won. This is perhaps unsurprising. During the 1960 election campaign, Nixon made a pledge to visit all fifty states, even those that both he and Kennedy knew he was guaranteed to win. As a result, when it came down to the debates, Nixon was said to be looking tired and almost ill. It was also evident how the lighting on the set was far too powerful for Nixon's liking; he was seen to be sweating a lot on stage. In comparison, a youthful-looking Kennedy took advantage of the make-up offered prior to the debate and appeared calm and collected. This ultimately shone through in his ratings after the debate.

Since 1960, every election campaign has had televised debates, some more memorable than others. Highlights include the 1988 debates, where President Reagan's Vice-President, George H. W. Bush ran against Democratic nominee Michael Dukakis. Dukakis was known for having a less-than-inspiring persona, so much so that his campaign team decid-



ed that, to boost his ratings, it would be wise to get Dukakis to ride in a tank to show that he could be fun! At the debates, to try and extract some emotion

and passion out of Dukakis, he was asked a question about the death penalty, and whether, if his wife had been raped, he would change his anti-death penalty stance. This could have been a turning point in a campaign dominated by Bush. However, Dukakis reeled off the same answer he had given to similar types of questions previously – that he believed in no circumstances should the death penalty be permitted. In interviews after the election, Dukakis conceded that it was this missed opportunity that cost him the presidency.

Perhaps the most controversial election of all time came in 2000, when the Supreme Court ultimately decided the outcome of the election in favour of George W. Bush. However, the debates also proved highly charged and controversial. Al Gore, the Democratic nominee, and Bill Clinton's Vice President, was often seen 'stalking' Bush around the stage when the debates were in a meeting-style format, and could often be heard laughing under his breath when Bush made a point with which he disagreed.

President Kennedy will forever be my History hero, for many reasons, but his politically-savvy decision to harness television for the purpose of political debates set a trend that continues to exist right up to the present day.

History Society Letter



Hello historians,

As I write this, exam season is in full swing and nobody needs anymore distraction so this letter is just a quick sign-off from this year's committee to highlight and celebrate the jam-packed year that we've hosted.

This past year has been record breaking for HistSoc in almost every way possible! We've entertained the largest membership levels to date, smashing last year's 567 with 581 this year! Not only this, we've put on the biggest Christmas ball to date and longest international trip abroad in HistSoc history. On top of making the fixed events bigger and better, we had our first ever Secret Social to another UK city, where we took 58

students to Manchester for a night out. And finally, we have changed the structure of HistSoc by making all constitutional positions gender-neutral and splitting the 'Media and Communications Secretary' role into two – Publicity Secretary and Social Media Secretary. All in all, I think we can say this has been the society's biggest and best year yet (trust me, as Treasurer I've seen how much we spent!!) so it's time to say goodbye to this past year and the committee for 2016/2017.



me as your President I can tell you that I intend to hit the ground running and make 2017/2018 an even bigger year for Leeds History Society. Not only do I think that the incoming committee are more than capable of making this year happen, I know that we have got the plans in place to take HistSoc to even greater heights. You've already caught a glimpse of this at Week 11's Otley Run – the society's biggest and best/messiest yet! The plans, at their premature stage, stand as bigger socials, collaboration with other brilliant societies and the introduction of Welfare Weeks in Week 7 to help with the essay stress.

Be sure to keep up to date with all things HistSoc-related by following us on our social media channels and be sure to get excited for a new year – see you in September for another year of madness. And good luck with all of your exams!

From Ollie, HistSoc's new President

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