

# HISTORY STUDENT TIMES

*Making old news big news*



Issue 3: 2013/14

*'War and Conflict'*

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Hello,

I can't believe that the academic year is already drawing to a close - it really seems to have flown by! Sadly, the end of the year also means the end of my time as editor...

I've enjoyed working with the School of History so much this year, and would like to thank everybody who has been involved in the running of the magazine - especially David Tebb for his continual support, and of course all of our writers and editors who have put so much effort and time into the *History Student Times*. I certainly couldn't have done it without you!

Although I'm sad to be leaving, I'm also very excited to be handing the reins over to Frankie Reed, who will be your editor for next year. I have every confidence she'll do a fantastic job, and wish her the best of luck!

So, for the last time from me, I hope you enjoy the issue!

Rachael Gillibrand.



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## LETTER FROM THE HISTORY SOCIETY

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What an incredibly busy term HistSoc has had (again!)

Overwhelmed is rather an understatement when I look back at everything we've done this term. We sold over 100 tickets for our social at Revolution and Warehouse (which also happened to be on my birthday so a very good present!) and collaborated with MedSoc on their '£ your socks off event, which was equally enormous and successful. We also held an end of term blow out - the HistSoc centurion - and another GIAG HistSoc Dodgeball, which was once again a ridiculously fun-filled hour.

Although what I'm really proud of this term is our collaboration with other societies. Firstly we supported Leeds Rag Bacchanalia by selling tickets for them; we worked with J-Soc in order to organise the moving talk from Holocaust survivor Hannah Lewis; and finally we organised the talk from Author Mark Dapin about his new book 'Spirit House', working with J-Soc and EnglishSoc to promote it.

On the theme of working together, HistSoc, the History Interns, and the Staff Student Committee also successfully petitioned the University to change the atrocious system of module enrolment. Needless to say, we are ecstatic about the consequent creation of a separate enrolment day for the School of History. Hopefully the days of system crashes are over!

This term we have put a lot of effort into our academic events - something which is going to remain at the top of our agenda next year. Our academic secretary Izzy has outdone herself with the creation of our fortnightly newsletter, Primary Sauce (back issues can be found on HistSoc's board in the history foyer). We also held an event with the M&S archives which was an insightful day for second years, looking at how you can physically use primary sources for your dissertation; and we have booked our trip to the Royal Armouries for after Easter, which was kindly funded by the department, so that our members can have an interactive session with some of the artefacts.

Most importantly, HistSoc won the prestigious RateMyPlacement National Society Showcase, securing their investment of £5000. It still hasn't sunk in, and I'd like to thank all of our members for their support seeing as we badgered you to help us in our sign up challenges before the final round. Out of 187 societies who applied, 11 were invited to London. The feedback from the judges was humbling, and we were declared the unanimous winners. The money will be split between funding for academic events and a careers dinner near the start of next year. This victory is credit to the hard work of the committee and I'm so proud of what we've achieved.

When this goes to print a new committee of ten will have been elected and I'll be handing over the reins. Getting involved in the History Society was the best thing I have done at university and I hope the new committee will be raring to go! There is a lot more to happen before the year is out so keep an eye out on our Facebook page and group so that you don't miss out.

Signing off the last edition of the HST this year, I'd like to say a big thanks to Rachael for her incredible work in improving this paper by such an astounding amount.

Good luck in your exams!

Cat (President)

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# INTERVIEW: DR. GUY PERRY

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Medieval Historian

## ALEX CLIFFORD CHATS TO DR. GUY PERRY ABOUT CRUSADES, TEACHING AND SIEGES.

ALEX CLIFFORD: **Let's start with an easy one, what's your favourite Crusade?**

DR. GUY PERRY: Tough one, possibly the fourth Crusade and Frederick II's Crusade simply because on paper they were so loony!

AC: **How about favourite historical figure?**

GP: I expect you think I am going to say John of Brienne (edit: Guy has written a book on him) but no not him, although he is the historical figure I would most like to interview. I don't want to sound boring, but I find Saint Francis of Assisi fascinating. However Phillip Augustus is another of my favourites. Phillip represented the victory of the thinking boy who wasn't very good at PE over Richard the Lionheart, the big and boisterous rugby lad who's universally popular. It's a victory for the nerds really!

AC: **Best siege?**

GP: Gosh, I hadn't prepared for that one - no one has ever asked me that! Maybe Rochester 1215? All the Mongol sieges as well, they were always exciting!

AC: **How did you get interested in the Crusades in the first place?**

GP: It was a complete accident. I discovered medieval history at university - I suppose that discovery is what's fun for an undergrad. Even when I went into postgraduate study I hadn't decided what to specialise in, although initially I was interested in ecclesiastical history. It was through my studies of John of Brienne that I really began to be fascinated by the Crusades... I was going to write a book about the English Pope Adrian IV but then someone else beat me to it so I had to find something else. I found John, I found crusading, and the rest is history.

AC: **What would you say you were like as an undergraduate?**

GP: Geeky! A bit unsure of myself and also of the standards expected of me. I remember on one occasion I slept in and was forty-five minutes late for a two on one seminar. When I got there the academic, who was a world expert, simply said there was no point in me being there and turned me away. Rest assured I never did it again! That should be a lesson to all the students reading this; take advantage of the fact you have top class academics at your disposal and make the

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**MEET THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT - MEET THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT**

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most of it!

**AC: And when did you decide you wanted to be an academic?**

GP: The funny thing is, people were telling me to be an historian as long as I can remember. Almost to the point, and this sounds bad, where I almost felt I had no choice! However I'm grateful I did. From an early age I showed enthusiasm for history. I recently discovered that I had annotated my history books as a child. Interestingly, the chapter on Richard I was the most scrawled over of all!

**AC: How would you describe your approach to teaching?**

GP: I always try to be laid back. Lectures need to be relevant and more importantly maintain interest. What I hope is that my enthusiasm for the subject comes across and enthuses others. If I could have it my way, seminars would consist of everyone sitting round on sofas, with coffee and a few digestives and chatting for hours about mindless religious killing!

**AC: What's your favourite module that you teach, the one you most enjoy?**

GP: Probably HIST 2031, the thirteenth century Crusades, they are my thing! One element is the wide variety of sheer stuff covered, crusades in Egypt, against Constantinople, in the Baltic, in the Iberian Peninsula and against heretics in southern France. Not only that but there is such a colourful cast of characters involved, for instance the power crazy pope innocent III (that may be a little unkind). The first year primary sources module I teach on Thomas Beckett is a nice change, although I must stress, religious killings is not the only thing that interests me! And of course I cannot forget my third year special subject module on Normans in Sicily.

**AC: Away from academia, what do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

GP: A lot of music, both listening and playing. I'm currently teaching myself to play the organ, I'm actually playing at a church service this Sunday, which is slightly scary! (Edit: apparently it went ok). I like watching the rugby, particularly six nations. I'm a Tottenham Hotspur fan but don't get down to the games as much as I'd like. I also enjoy cooking, often cooking that reflects my teaching!

**AC: In what way?!**

GP: A lot of Middle Eastern food, Spanish cuisine for the Reconquista. Also, southern Italian and Sicilian food for the Normans in Sicily. In fact one of the perks of doing the Normans in Sicily module is that you will get to sample some of my home baked Sicilian cakes. I enjoy trying the food that the people I study would have eaten but don't worry, I don't dress up in period costume!

**AC: Is Kingdom of Heaven your favourite film?**

GP: No! But I do think it is better than *Gladiator*. And I do think that *Robin Hood* also by Ridley Scott has some merits, for example we see the fat and old Richard the Lionheart! But my favourite historical film is *A Knight's Tale* simply because of its complete disregard for historical detail in the cause of fun!

**AC: Talking of history and fun, one of the trademarks of your lectures is the comic medieval death. What would you say is the best comic historical death?**

GP: Now I was expecting this question! I think it has to be the Count of Soissons at the battle of La Marfée in 1641. Having just survived one of the most brutal battles of the century, he gallops up to confer with the victorious commanders and lifts his visor with his pistol and you guess what happens next, he blows his brains out. There's no doubt about it, it's a high quality comic death.

**AC: Right, now for some quick-fire questions!**

**Kingdom of Jerusalem or Principality of Antioch?**

GP: Kingdom of Jerusalem.

**AC: Richard the Lionheart or Saladin?**

GP: Phillip Augustus!

**AC: Not an acceptable answer!**

GP: Ok, no comment!

**AC: Pope Innocent III or Urban II?**

GP: Pope Innocent III.

**AC: Byzantine Empire or Latin Empire of Constantinople?**

GP: Byzantine Empire.

**AC: Strictly or X Factor? But both only under compulsion!**

GP: Strictly.

**AC: If you could say something poignant and insightful to close the interview that would be helpful.**

GP: I'll do my best. For me history is primarily borne out of my interest in personalities. I like history because it is the study of people who are much more interesting than me and their ambitions, fears, hopes and dreams. That's why I was slightly reluctant to be interviewed, why waste your time on anything else when you can think about these all amazing medieval people.

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# JACK HARRISON: WAR HERO

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With the centenary at our reach, it seems the right time to mention a husband, father, and rugby legend, but also a true war hero.

Throughout World War One, a high percentage of men were called upon to volunteer into battalions for potential service on the front. Hull provided a significant number of battalions. Four were raised in under eleven weeks by Lord Nunburnholme, and were collectively known as the Hull Pals. The Pals included groups of similar social composition, and as such consisted of the Commercials (10<sup>th</sup>), Tradesmen (11<sup>th</sup>), Sportsman and Athletes (12<sup>th</sup>) and the T'others (13<sup>th</sup>). As the *Hull Daily Mail* quoted, the men will 'be better as friends together'.

Jack Harrison was one of the most significant Rugby League players to play for Hull FC, with the 1913-14 season seeing him score the record number of tries, which still stands today. However, despite his rugby success, he would never play another professional game again. Instead Jack, along with his entire generation, undertook a deadly and difficult duty. After completing officer training, he was posted to the East Yorkshire Regiment, the Hull Pals as it is locally known.

After his placement within the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the brigade was stationed on the western front of the Somme. In February 1917, the Hull pals entered the front line: a timely reminder that this wasn't a game, but a life threatening duty to their country. After directing his men into no-mans land, Jack was awarded the military cross for his gallantry in leading his troops into the full front of the war. The *London Gazette* commented on the more extensive reasoning for such a prestigious award:

*'For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. He handled his platoon with great courage and skill, reached his objective under the most trying conditions and captured a prisoner. He set a splendid example throughout'.*

However, Jack and the Hull Pals were to face a more threatening and dangerous environment when they were ordered to attack the German front at Oppy Wood. Such an area was renowned for being heavily defended by the Germans but was considered a vital vicinity for the British advancement. On their progression into this area, the heavy German machine gun fire

pinned down Jack's battalion, leaving them vulnerable and unable to continue. The next distinctive moments in this offensive were the marks of a true hero, one willing to risk his own life in order to protect his fellow Battalion; one that was filled with friends. Armed with a single pistol and hand grenades, Jack worked his way towards the enemy machine posts. The next moments were surreal; his pals watched as he threw the grenade into the direction of the gun, to which the gun fell silent. He had not only saved the remaining men from the horrors of machine fire, but he had risked his own life in doing so. Jack was never to be seen again.

Because of such bravery and self-sacrifice, Jack Harrison was rewarded the highest military decoration, the Victoria Cross. Again, the *London Gazette* carried the illustration and description of this young man's story and subsequent end:

*'For the most conspicuous bravery and self-sacrifice in an attack. Owing to darkness and to smoke from the enemy barrage and from our own, and to the face that our objective was in a dark wood, it was impossible to see when our barrage had lifted off the enemy front line. Nevertheless, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Jack Harrison led his company against the enemy trench and under heavy rifle and machine gun fire, but was repulsed. Re-organising his command as best he could in no mans land; he again attacked in darkness, under terrific fire, but with no success. Then turning around, this gallant officer single-handed made a dash at the machine gun, hoping to knock out the gun and so save the lives of many of his company. His self-sacrifice and absolute disregard of danger was an inspiring example to all. He is reported missing; presumed dead.'*

Although such stories are very familiar within the war and throughout Britain, this story in particular is very close to home. One man. A rugby legend. A true war hero. One who will never be forgotten in the history of the war, and the history of Yorkshire.

Frankie Reed



# BEYOND CONFLICT

## Visiting Israel

War and conflict is an inevitable element of historical study that very few can avoid. Whether you are a medieval historian or an IHP student, wars and conflicts have plagued the history of mankind for thousands of years and are bound to form the focus of a large portion of your studies.

*'For a historian, Israel is a fascinating country with roots in ancient and even biblical history, as well as the obvious modern developments which take the form of the conflict.'*

Perhaps few conflicts have proved as divisive and long-lasting as the Arab-Israeli conflict, which since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 after the end of the British Mandate in Palestine has caused huge tension in the Middle Eastern region. For anyone unfamiliar with the conflict, it primarily focusses on the right to exist-

ence of both the State of Israel and the potential creation of a Palestinian state. The politicised and controversial nature of this intractable question has wide-reaching repercussions for international relations, which have transformed the conflict from a primarily Israeli-Palestinian situation to one in which both Arab and Western nations seek intervention. The longstanding support of the United States for Israel and strength of the Israeli military capabilities is well known, and the seemingly "underdog" status of Palestine in relation to this military powerhouse has led to widespread Arab interest in supporting the Palestinian claim to Israeli territory.

In much the same way as the word Vietnam incurs an immediate association with war as opposed to a country, there is a tendency to portray Israel as dominated by this highly political and controversial conflict. It is easy to forget that there are many other aspects to this diverse and complex nation, both in terms of a rich



history, religious significance and social and cultural importance.

For a historian, Israel is a fascinating country with roots in ancient and even biblical history, as well as the obvious modern developments which take the form of the conflict. When I was offered the chance to visit this rich and diverse country, the opportunity was too good to miss. The reaction I received upon telling people of our trip was indicative of the pervasive misunderstanding of the country and the often divisive quality the region can incite. Many asked me how I planned to make it out of the country alive. Some immediately pointed to the religious significance of Jerusalem, and their envy that I would be able to visit such iconic religious sites. I was even asked if Israel was part of the European Union.

Throughout the five days I spent in Israel, I encountered some of the most fascinating history I have seen from travelling.

The dichotomy of East and West and the way in which Jerusalem sits as a city on the edge of both categories of civilisation is amazing to experience first-hand, and is testament to the historical diversification of the city that has developed through its constant siege moulding of influence. The old city itself, still sitting within original Roman walls, is divided into four quarters, each with its own distinct character and personality. The division of the city between the three major Abrahamic religions has led to a unique feel developing in each quarter, with bustling markets and a blend of Arabic and Mediterranean food on offer. The secretive and often overlooked Armenian quarter makes up the remainder of the city, where Orthodox Christians live out their calm and peaceful existence in a form of bubble which sits diplomatically between the warring political dimensions of the conflict.

*'In modern terms, the historical importance of the country is just one facet of society but does not dominate for the majority of people. It is often easy to forget that life continues, and day to day concerns become the focus despite wider implications of conflict.'*

Perhaps the most iconic history associated with Israel and Jerusalem in particular are the religious buildings which serve as central worshipping points for huge religious populations from all over the world. The Dome of the Rock, a magnificent Ottoman-looking building with a

gold dome dominates the landscape of the city, sitting high upon the mountain and serving as the third holiest site of Islam, second only to the central pilgrimages of Mecca and Medina. Sitting below the Dome and forming one of the foundation walls of the Temple Mount is the Jewish Wailing Wall, one of the holiest places for Judaism and former Western Wall of the original Jewish temple which existed before the building of the Islamic Mosque.

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Here the difficulties and tensions inherent in the existence of Jerusalem are clear to see as two peoples and cultures converge on one area. For the Christians, the Mount of Olives sitting just outside the wall of Jerusalem form the central elements of the final days of Jesus; the Garden of Gethsemane where Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss is open to walk around and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, nestled quietly between the many buildings in the Old City is a place of pilgrimage for many Christian factions believing it was here that Jesus was crucified and buried.

The often complex and overlapping history of Jerusalem is obviously not devoid of political significance, and each historical event is frequently "high-jacked" to serve political ends in the ongoing conflict. Outside of Jerusalem, roads are sporadically interrupted by border checkpoints, ensuring that access between Israel-proper and the Palestinian West Bank is reserved only for those on the right side of the conflict. The concrete barrier dividing the two populations is clearly visible from the main road, and serves as a poignant reminder of the divisions and difficulties still being faced by the country.

There is however much more to Israel than the Arab-Israeli conflict. The historical importance of the area is significant within itself, and despite the potential for politicisation the history of Israel stands alone in its interest to outsiders and locals alike. In modern terms, the historical importance of the country is just one facet of society but does not dominate for the majority of people. It is often easy to forget that life continues, and day to day concerns become the focus despite wider implications

of conflict.

Many observers overlook the economic importance of Israel, which in recent years has become a crucial player in global scientific development and technological advancement. The Research and Development Industry and prevalence of start-up companies and venture capitalists in Tel Aviv is second only to the Silicon Valley in California in terms of development and investment. The cultural element of Tel Aviv is also markedly different from the outsider perceptions of Israel, the feeling of the city is one of modernity and cosmopolitanism and the café-culture lifestyle so often associated with European cities is highly prevalent.

It is easy with the media representation of Israel being dominated by images of the Israeli-Palestinian war and with the focus on political conflict that is so prevalent in academic textbooks to forget that there is more to Israel than conflict.

'Many observers overlook the economic importance of Israel, which in recent years has become a crucial player in global scientific development and technological advancement.'

True, the history of Israel can be controversial and even the studying of its ancient history can have political repercussions for the present day. It is also true that visiting the Palestinian and Occupied Territories may present a different reality. But it is important to look beyond the conflict marring the country and experience the cultural and sociological elements of this fascinating country, and above all to remember that whatever you may have read about the country, taking the time to visit and come to your own conclusions can provide you with a whole new insight and outlook over and above the traditional narrative of conflict.

Becky Stead

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## REVOLUTION

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Do not give to dogs what is sacred,  
Do not throw your pearls to pigs,  
Matthew delivered the revelation,  
Full clips can't silence the stones and the sticks.

The muted uprooted and cast off their chains,  
The scared-to-breathe now dared to dream,  
Over them swept waves of realisation,  
The people want to bring down the regime.

The cry of few became the roar of many,  
The hurt of one a pain to all,  
Masses drawn to achieve recognition  
Began to march, to walk, to war.

Though the road is miles and wild,  
Know at the end lies restitution,  
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
For they will be the ones to lead the revolution.

Charlie Jones

# RACIAL HATRED

## A Persisting Conflict In The US

The story of the racial conflict between African Americans and the southern white population in the US is well known, but why did this conflict escalate into a violent battle of oppression? What have often not been highlighted are the many origins of hatred that led to such an extremist attitude of intolerance. Though African American men enjoyed twenty



Ku Klux Klan marches down Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, 1929.

years of enfranchisement with the 14th and 15th Amendments, white men of the south sought illegal action to end this.

The origins of racial hatred have often been explained as the mere want to maintain white supremacy in the South after the end of slavery. While this is true, there were a number of other reasons that led to the disenfranchisement of African Americans through use of illegal brutality.

For a while in the American South it seemed possible that African Americans and the poor lower classes of white men may form an alliance and support each other economically. Fearing the cooperation between any white man and the African American race, upper-middle class men took it

upon themselves to make sure that race was always more important than class. African Americans were again brought to oppression by elevating the poor white man and all white women above all classes of black men and women. Thus racial hatred and a sense of superiority spread across Southern whites.

Not only did upper class white men disperse a mass belief of white superiority, white Democrats made up false rape scares across the south which worked to spread racial hatred at a dramatic rate. The thought of pure, chaste white women being hunted by the bestial black man created extreme racial hatred that can explain why the suppression of African Americans turned in to the brutal attacks launched by such organisations as the KKK.

Though the Ku Klux Klan is only one of the white supremacy organisations that inflicted horrific violence upon the African American race, it is arguably the most famous. The organisation has in fact come to optimise the vicious conflict of the early Twentieth Century. The second KKK grew rapidly from 1915 with the help of D W Griffiths' film *The Birth of a Nation* which glorified the Klan's brutal actions.

Perhaps the best known act of violence carried out by the KKK was the lynching of African Americans. Between 1919 and 1922 239 blacks were lynched by white mobs and many more were murdered by individuals and unrecorded lynchings. Not one white person was punished for this brutality which demonstrates the depth of racial hatred from Reconstruction to the early twentieth century.

The racial conflict between African Americans and White Americans in the US has a long history. Ruthlessness towards African Americans at the hands of white supremacists has shaped US history from the beginnings of slavery, through Reconstruction and the Civil Rights movement up to the present. Though severely diminished the Ku Klux Klan survives to this day and continues to act against African Americans. In 2003 five members burnt a cross at the residence of three African American families.



## FREIKORPS: WHO WERE *THEY*?

A Brief Introduction to the German Volunteer Movement of 1918-20

November 9, 1918 had been a momentous day for Germany. As the Kaiser abdicated, Prince Max of Baden handed over supreme political power to Friedrich Ebert and the leader of the moderate Social Democratic Party (SDP) became the tenuous head of the newly proclaimed German Republic. The first German revolution was under way. Parallel developments were taking place in the military sphere. Central to the Armistice 'dictates', was the requirement to get all German troops behind the Rhine one month after its signing. Incredible as it now seems and almost without exception, upon arrival, the bulk of these men simply went home. On December 14 following the dismal reception of the Army's march past in Berlin and their subsequent desertion upon returning to barracks, a general demobilisation order was issued. Gustave Noske, SDP Defence Minister, quickly realised that he had no army of any sort to call upon in the service of the Government. The once great Imperial German Army had simply evaporated.

In this volatile political atmosphere, compulsion to military service was unthinkable. No call to arms could be made other than in the context of the *Freiwilliger* or volunteer. Armed groupings had already started to appear

from the start of the mutiny at Kiel, some within a vaguely coherent political context such as the *Volksmarine* Division or *People's Naval Division* (PND). Some were ordered into existence without effect such as the failed *Volkswehr* or *People's Militia* experiment of December 12. This was an attempt by the Government to raise a force independent of the Army which it felt was hostile to the Republic.

**"November 9, 1918 had been a momentous day for Germany. As the Kaiser abdicated, Prince Max of Baden handed over supreme political power to Friedrich Ebert and the leader of the moderate Social Democratic Party (SDP) became the tenuous head of the newly proclaimed German Republic."**

However, it was Noske's early mission to Kiel on November 4 to quell the mutiny that was to begin the career of the now famous *Freikorps* or *Free Corps*, a highly

evocative name in nationalist circles for the mythologised exploits of the original Corps during the Napoleonic period. The link was always tenuous but for the Left the name became synonymous with Government counter revolution. Noske, realising that without reliable troops no progress could be made in containing the radical elements of the mutiny, sanctioned the creation of the so called *Iron Brigade*. A unit already in its formative state and crucially under the control of the military, which he was later to call his *Kerntruppe* or Nuclear Troop, it consisted of 1500 volunteers. With that, the Free Corps concept had been rubber stamped. Wildly successful and often forming spontaneously, it was to be left to the Army to create a workable template for a force that was to be recruited through-out Germany and reach around 250,000. Controlled, equipped, fed and paid for by the Army, Ebert, the SDP and the Republic were henceforth to find themselves in a Mephistophelean relationship with the military that they were never quite able to escape from.

With the crisis in Kiel largely contained, Noske returned to Berlin which had now become the centre for the radical Independent Social Democratic Party (USDP) in their push for Government. As the *Iron Brigade* had been left behind in Kiel, Noske essentially faced the same problem in Berlin, with nothing to counter a second revolution. Reluctantly and with the collapse of the People's Militia, the SDP were forced to ask for the Army's help. General Maercker is usually credited with establishing the first of the Army's Free Corps just outside Berlin at Camp Zossen, from an order dated December 14. His 'terms of employment' were remarkably egalitarian but bore all the hallmarks of professional regular Army service. As such they defined, as they were intended to, the conditions of service in the future *Reichswehr* or New Army. This was to become the accepted model for the largest most conservative Free Corps units within Germany and in many ways helped separate prospective *Reichswehr* units from the other categories of Free Corps units. If the Free Corps were to work, the Army would have a ready pool of recruits to draw upon.

**“Controlled, equipped, fed and paid for by the Army, Ebert, the SDP and the Republic were henceforth to find themselves in a Mephistophelean relationship with the military that they were never quite able to escape from.”**

In light of a lack of solid empirical evidence, no definition of the Free Corps will ever be absolute, but a working definition would have to include not only the units created in the mould of Maercker's, it would also include largely territorial units formed for protection of their district. There also emerged a new phenomenon of a near politically independent volunteer group that can only be properly understood within a revolutionary context, the Free Corps of myth and legend. These were emerging where ever their members felt that they were

required and they were prepared to travel. Independence of thought and action marked them out.

*Freikorps Rossbach* offers a fine example. The army, in an attempt to exert some semblance of control, reluctantly brought these units under the Free Corps umbrella. But be that as it may, service to any form of authority, outside their own leaders, was not a popular concept amongst these ad hoc units and they remained at their most enthusiastic when following their own virulently anti-Bolshevik, anti-democratic agenda. Run more often than not by younger officers with frontline experience and filled out with listless hardened veterans and idealistic youths, many were to become little more than anarchic armed bands.

**“In light of a lack of solid empirical evidence, no definition of the Free Corps will ever be absolute, but a working definition would have to include not only the units created in the mould of Maercker's, it would also include largely territorial units formed for protection of their district.”**

Their motivation is an interesting question and perhaps best analysed in light of their actions. Certainly every war produces a percentage of veterans who struggle to reintegrate into society. The closest they came to a centralising philosophy was through retrospective readings of Ernst Junger's *In Stalגעwittern* (1920), who espoused during this period (amongst other things) the cult of the 'New Man' forged in battle. Later historical write-ups give few serious clues, with much of it following predetermined agendas.

Of one thing it is certain, few if any found their way into the 'Free Corps Movement' as it was to become known, by accident. When the time came, in 1919-20, for the selection for the *Reichswehr* proper, the Army had no qualms; those units that leaned toward traditional military values were much more likely to be incorporated, whilst the revolutionaries, their units disbanded, were left out in the cold, bidding their time.

John Anderson

**For further reading see:**

- Hagen Schulze, *Freikorps und Republik 1918-20* (Boppard: Boldt, 1969).
- James M. Diehl, *Paramilitary Politics in Weimar Germany* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1977).
- Richard M. Watt, *The Kings Depart* (London: Literary Guild, 1968).
- Robert G.L. Waite, *Vanguard of Nazism: The Free Corps Movement in Post-war Germany 1918-1923* (New York: Norton 1969).
- Gustav Noske, *Von Kiel bis Kapp: Zur Geschichte der deutschen Revolution* (Berlin: 1920).
- Nigel Jones, *The Birth of the Nazis* (London: Constable and Robinson, 2004).



# AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM

## and the war in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a country with a long history of invasion. Since its initial establishment in the early 18th century the Afghans have fought the British in three major conflicts, have suffered a near decade invasion from Soviet Russia, endured a protracted civil war, and finally in 2001 were occupied by US and NATO forces. Although such a long trend of warfare has wrecked the country both economically and politically, Afghanistan has yet to be fully conquered and continues to escape defeat in its most current war. What hope could the US and NATO have if Soviet Russia, one of the world's former super powers, could not gain victory in the 1980s? If this war-torn nation could repel the Russian onslaught, then the outlook for an American led invasion was never promising. Bear in mind it was the CIA who installed Osama Bin Laden and armed the Mujahedeen. The training these militants were given, in guerrilla tactics and subversion, are the very tactics now in use against the US; much to the same effect as against the Russians. The US have only themselves to blame.

As George Santayana famously declared so many years ago, 'those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.' It seems the Americans, and those who support them, do not delve into their recent histories as often as they should. The Vietnam War of 1956-75 provided a stark lesson in the difficulties of attacking less-developed nations. Power, money, and military supremacy do not rule the day, despite what the propaganda of all-powerful Western democracies would have the world believe. Where Communist containment failed before, so too has

terrorist containment. If anything, Western intervention has only hardened anti-Western resolve and further spread terrorism rather than curb it. According to the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism, terrorist attacks in the decade since 2001 have quadrupled.

The key to winning Afghanistan has always been to win the hearts of the people; to show the US and NATO as allies, rather than as wealthy belligerents with no regard for the civil population. Again, just as in Vietnam this reality has been realised too late and the damage cannot be corrected. With Obama planning on a December 31 withdrawal, many observers fear the future of Afghanistan will be wrought in civil war and continued bloodshed. They are to be left without proper infrastructure, strong government, or a reliable army. Upon reflection then it seems as though this war was always fated to end in this manner. The US has blindly stumbled through the same mistakes time and time again with no impulse for change. Is it the country's resources, power, and global status that is continually condemning them to such hubristic idiocy? Arguably the answer is yes, and unfortunately the rest of the Western world has tended to follow. Until America re-evaluates itself in the face of global politics, it will forever be condemned to pyrrhic victories and failed campaigns; all the while adding to its repertoire of enemies. With China, Russia, and North Korea all on the rise, how long will this exceptionalism be allowed to last before it is forcibly corrected?

Andrew Jackson

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# REVIEW

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## 'The Last of the Mohicans'

Based on the book by James Fenimore Cooper and drawing inspiration from the 1936 film of the same name, Micheal Mann's 1992 historical epic quickly became a classic. The film takes place during the Seven Years War which saw France and Britain fight over their colonial possessions in the New World, dragging their colonial militias and allied Native Americans into the conflict.

Daniel Day-Lewis plays Hawkeye; a European adopted by the last members of the Mohican tribe when he was a child. Hawkeye and his adopted tribe save the daughters of Colonel Munro (a British officer) from a Huron (Native American tribe allied to the French) attack and proceed to escort them to Fort William Henry.

**'The film is interesting in that it shows the period in American history when the Native Americans were more powerful than the European settlers.'**

From there he is forced to decide whether he will help the British fight the French in order to win the heart of Cora (Madeleine Stowe), the eldest

daughter of Munro. Also conflicting our hero is the early revolutionary fervour of the American colonists and his reluctance as an adopted Mohican to ally with the Europeans.

The historical basis for this film is the 1757 siege of Fort William Henry, tenaciously defended by the outnumbered Colonel Munro against an army of 7,000 French troops and allied Native Americans under the Marquis de Montcalm. Munro urgently requested reinforcements from the nearby Fort Edward under the command of General Daniel Webb but was refused. Surrender was then negotiated between Munro and Montcalm on the condition that the troops from the fort returned to Britain.

On return to Fort Edward the British garrison were ambushed by the French-allied Huron war party against the orders of Montcalm. Historians are divided as to the number killed in the ensuing massacre but it provides a climactic battle scene in the film. Manning presents Montcalm as encouraging the Huron war leader Magua (Wes Studi) to attack the surrendered English, this historical inaccuracy is incongruous given the attention to detail of the rest of

the film.

The film is interesting in that it shows the period in American history when the Native Americans were more powerful than the European settlers.

Day-Lewis is reported to have spent several months living in the wilderness in order to prepare for his part and it is this dedication as well as Manning's historical meticulousness which make the film so re-watchable despite being produced over 20 years ago.

**'Hollywood has transformed a tale about the extinction of a Native American tribe into an all-white love story...'**

However, the book gives more attention to the members of soon to be extinct Mohican tribe and the main love story in the original version was not between Cora and Hawkeye but between Cora and Hawkeye's adoptive Mohican brother. As a result Hollywood has transformed a tale about the extinction of a Native American tribe into an all-white love story.

Robert Tidball

# LESSONS IGNORED?

## The Malayan and Vietnam Wars

Sometimes, technicalities can be important. Most people in the street have never heard of the Malayan Emergency, a long, exhausting conflict between the British Empire and a band of undoubtedly brave but equally brutal communist guerrillas from 1948-1960. Even those who have, perhaps from hearing of communist leader Chin Peng's death in the news last September, or from the sensationalist accounts of British ethnic cleansing and atrocities equal to the My Lai massacre in Vietnam, would be unlikely to think of the struggle as a proper war. But a war it was: a war that, at its height from 1949-54, was on comparable scale to the Boer War.

The term 'Emergency' was in fact a legal scam. When violence broke out in June 1948, the so-called Malayan National Liberation Army initially targeted the rubber plantations and tin mines owned by Europeans; a state of Emergency was declared in no small part because the planters' and mine-owners' insurance companies would not pay out for war damage whilst they would do so for losses incurred in a civil emergency. Thus began Britain's most forgotten war.

During the 1960s, whilst America was waging war against the Viet Cong communist guerrillas in Vietnam, the idea of an inherent comparison between the two conflicts was popular in both military and academic circles. Indeed, there was a physical continuity: in 1961, Robert Thompson, former staff officer to Harold Briggs and Gerald Templer (the two British military leaders most often credited with winning the shooting war in Malaya), was assigned to Saigon as head of the British Advisory Mission.

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Thompson styled himself as something of a counterinsurgency expert, drawing on the lessons of his Malayan experience to advise the Americans, and later publishing an

influential book on the application of his theories of warfare, emphasising the need to focus on the people as the base of military victory: not battles won or territory conquered. British experts also played a role in training South Vietnamese and American special forces in the techniques of jungle warfare learned during Malaya.

**“The plan was a form of rural pacification to counter the influence of the Min Yuen movement... amongst ethnically Chinese ‘squatter’ populations living in makeshift settlements of poor conditions.”**

When examining the military history of the two wars, the comparison does appear striking. Two of the key features of the earlier Malayan Emergency were the Briggs Plan and hearts-and-minds doctrine of General Templer, which were both, at Thompson's advice, replicated by the Americans in Vietnam.

Harold Briggs, a veteran of the Second World War campaigns in the Mediterranean and Burma, was recalled from a comfortable retirement in Cyprus to be Director of Operations in Malaya where he pioneered his famous plan from April 1950. The plan was a form of rural pacification to counter the influence of the Min Yuen movement (the communists' civilian helpers) amongst ethnically Chinese 'squatter' populations living in makeshift settlements of poor conditions. Briggs directed the resettlement of these squatters into New Villages, well-fortified and protected from communist influence. Initially, conditions were not much better than the squatter camps, but soon programmes of social improvement began to take effect and the standard of living was much improved (contrary to sensationalist journalism, the Briggs Plan was not akin to Stalinist resettlement). In addition, Briggs changed operational tactics in favour of a focus on smaller penetration units, rather than big battalions, able to infiltrate the jungle and fight against the communists on a more equal footing, and began a systematic south-north clearing of the country.



His successor, Gerald Templer, who served as both military and civilian supremo 1952-54, developed these ideas further, emphasising the importance of winning hearts-and-minds, and vastly improving the system of intelligence. Templer ensured Surrendered Enemy Personnel (SEPs in military jargon) were treated fairly, and sent to rehabilitation centres to be given an education and reintegrated into the multi-ethnic society of Malaya: a soft approach to balance his simultaneous tough policy on the military front. This toughness extended to what American jargon would term 'psyops' – using intelligence for psychological warfare. From information gained through SEP interrogations and espionage sources, Templer recorded unnerving messages, speaking directly to named individuals in the communist guerrilla bands, which were played from loudspeakers attached to low-flying aircraft, hoping to undermine enemy morale.

The influence of these concepts upon the American war in Vietnam is clear. Initially, before the heavy insertion of ground troops under President Johnson, US forces implemented a Strategic Hamlets programme in South Vietnam designed to isolate the Viet Cong insurgency from potential allies and sources of food: but this was largely abandoned by the time of the Tonkin Gulf incident, having been pursued only half-heartedly and achieved little success.

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Essentially Strategic Hamlets was the Briggs Plan renamed, although much less successful, in no small part because it was not taken to completion, unlike the vigorous British implementation of their strategy, when the new administration from 1964 adopted a more conventional warfare programme. Similarly, particularly under Johnson, the term hearts-and-minds became common usage, referring to efforts to win over the goodwill of populations through aid distribution and assistance in training local self-defence forces. But arguably the Americans failed to understand the multi-ethnic make-up of Vietnam in the way the British did in Malaya, failing to resolve tensions in particular between tribalist populations. In many respects, Washington was trying to fight both a conventional war and a Malayan-style counterinsurgency struggle,

designed to meet the dual threats of the North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong guerrillas, but ultimately failing to do either.

On the military front, the Americans quickly learned of the futility of a big battalion approach to jungle fighting, adopting similar tactics and reliance on air mobility as featured in the later stages of the British campaign. Perhaps the weapon most famous of the Vietnam conflict, the napalm bomb, was in fact tested by the British in Malaya for destroying the insurgents' crop supplies, but after a few trials was deemed to be inefficient. America struggled to achieve much better results on a greatly larger scale, and perhaps should have followed the British example.

**“Perhaps the weapon most famous of the Vietnam conflict, the napalm bomb, was in fact tested by the British in Malaya.”**

More recent historians have questioned the validity of this analogy, arguing that the situation faced by Britain in Malaya was fundamentally different to that in Vietnam, rendering the transposition of tactics and strategy invalid. Ultimately, it can be argued, the conflict in Vietnam was much more multi-faceted than that in Malaya, due to the conventional-unconventional duality of the war. Unlike Britain, America had only a short history of involvement in South-East Asia, so hearts-and-minds approaches were unlikely to be as effective; in essence, Templer had 'simply' to convince the Chinese minority that the British were benign masters, not malignant exploiters, whereas the US had to struggle to justify its presence in support of an unpopular, misunderstood, and imposed South Vietnamese 'democratic' regime. But perhaps the similarities are more striking: complex, multi-ethnic populations, the ghost of colonialism and alien nature of this new kind of war. The British made a lot of mistakes in the first two years of the Malayan struggle, but they were quick to adapt and formulate new strategy.

The fundamental failure of the Americans can be said to be not their inability to successfully replicate these precise doctrines, but their seeming unwillingness to follow the British examples of strategic re-evaluation and pursuing a course of action to its completion. The Briggs Plan may not have worked for Vietnam, but with personalities like Curtis LeMay directing America's war effort, did it really have a chance?

Alex Shaw

# THE DEBATE

## FREEDOM FIGHTER?

Long has the dichotomy of terrorism versus freedom fighter been debated, and long has a definitive conclusion been elusive. With no legal consensus or consolidated academic synthesis of its meaning, most observers would agree that the issue often falls prey to the political agenda. Of course 'terrorism' is a highly politically charged term, pejorative in its nature. Use of the term immediately dictates the enemy. It is highly understandable then that governments would resist the creation of definitions in order to keep themselves free of this label, as many would certainly be guilty; but what does this mean for the so-called freedom fighters of the world? Where do they lay in this web of violence and politics? And how are they internally defined as men fighting for liberation, yet often externally as tyrants?

The key is on which side of the government they lay. It was not long ago that the now universally revered Nelson Mandela was labelled a terrorist by international regimes for his contribution to South Africa's liberation struggle. Despite the institutionalised forms of racial oppression conducted by a now despised political party, it was Mandela and the African National Congress that became vilified. The ANC may have used violence in their campaign, but this was merely reactionary to the harsh repression and extreme violence of the National Party. For almost 50 years in fact the ANC struggled with peaceful methods before finally relenting. Yet because of South Africa's business links with primarily the US and UK, and because of the ANC's socialist visions, it was the liberation movement who were condemned. Only since 1994 with an ANC victory and apartheid considered a modern disgrace, has redemption found the ANC's label drastically altered and Mandela gaining hero status.

**'Until the term 'terrorist' itself becomes concretely defined, it will only be a term with propaganda value and nothing else.'**

Similarly, events in Kashmir are also tainted by political agendas. Since 1947 the Kashmir region has come under attack by the governments of India and Pakistan, both of whom have been attempting to assert control over the area. The Kashmiri population has consequently found themselves in a constant state of struggle, and as a result Kashmiri insurgents have emerged to combat current Indian domination. Essentially these insurgents are fighting for independence and fighting for freedom, and yet despite this valid justification for rebellion they are unremittingly oppressed as enemies of the state and disregarded as terrorists.

Whilst violence is seen on both sides of the conflict, it is the Indian government who is being accused by amnesty international for abuse of human rights and for committing mass murder; though of course they deny these claims. Again, if anything, insurgency violence is merely reactionary to the Indian government onslaught. By India labelling these groups as terrorists they merely seek to justify their own oppressive actions. Whilst most insurgencies often condone the use of violence, this is often because there are no alternatives. Certainly in the case of the examples given, violence and repression began with the government, and the motivations for these two groups lay entirely in freedom and liberation.

Until the term 'terrorist' itself becomes concretely defined, it will only be a term with propaganda value and nothing else. The liberation fighters of the ANC, of Kashmir, and of the many other groups around the world who fight in the name of freedom do not deserve, because of mere politics, to be denied their cause.

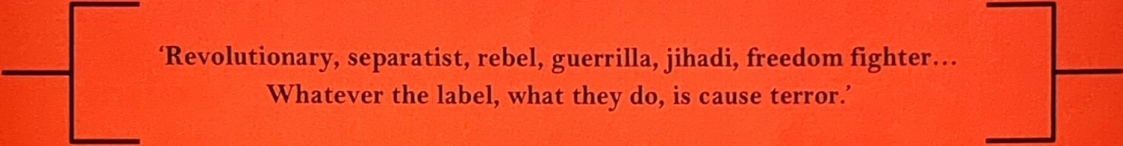
Andrew Jackson

## TERRORIST?

It is well known that governments like to make use of the inevitable negative connotations that come with the word 'terrorist' to justify their own violent actions against a state-opposing group. No doubt, 'War on Terror' sounds like a much more justifiable action than a 'War on Freedom Fighters'.

The same way, however, violent insurrection groups tend to brand themselves with inspiring names that are meant to elevate their own actions to the status of a noble cause that is worth not only to die, but also to kill for. It is the same old Machiavellian idea, only turned on its head; the idea that the end justifies the means. Instead of a prince who may be a tyrant and suppress his people in order to create stability and peace, it is the people that may use terror in order to rid themselves of the tyrant and gain—well, whatever it is that they are trying to gain.

But who are 'they' exactly? And who are they fighting for? It is hardly ever a whole people that is engaged in insurrection activities, and it is hardly ever a whole people that unanimously wants what some of them are fighting for. Next to the mostly innocent casualties of terror attacks, it is precisely those that are part of the same people as the terrorists, but that are not engaged in violent actions, that have to suffer the most.



**'Revolutionary, separatist, rebel, guerrilla, jihadi, freedom fighter...  
Whatever the label, what they do, is cause terror.'**

The long lasting conflict over the Kashmir province, north of India and east of Pakistan, provides an apt example. It was a lack of democracy that first caused uprisings of Kashmiri natives in 1986 against the Indian government that controls them. The uprisings were violently put down and security was tightened via the locally stationed Indian Army. Due to those uprisings the Indian government had turned from being a passive oppressive force to an active oppressive one. Because that is the trouble with violent insurrection: it not only provokes violent government action, it also justifies it. All of a sudden the Kashmiri population was squeezed between those who were claiming to fight for their rights, and those who tried to stop them from doing so.

The 'freedom fighters' were attacking their supposed enemy, and the rest of their people had to feel the answering blows. To add to this, the native rebels soon got support from Afghan Taliban. Again, it was the ordinary Kashmiri population that had to tremble the most under the terror that was created. In 1990 about 150,000 Hindus had to flee from their homes, whilst the traditionally rather secular Muslim population of Kashmir was suddenly faced with the strict rules of religious fundamentalism. Is this the way to freedom?

In the case of South Africa and its violent struggle for freedom, the answer seems to be 'yes'. Whether the violence was necessary or not, it was the insurrection groups that have won, and therefore we call those that we have once called 'terrorists' now 'freedom fighters'; because it is freedom that they gained. What this name obscures, though, is how they gained it.

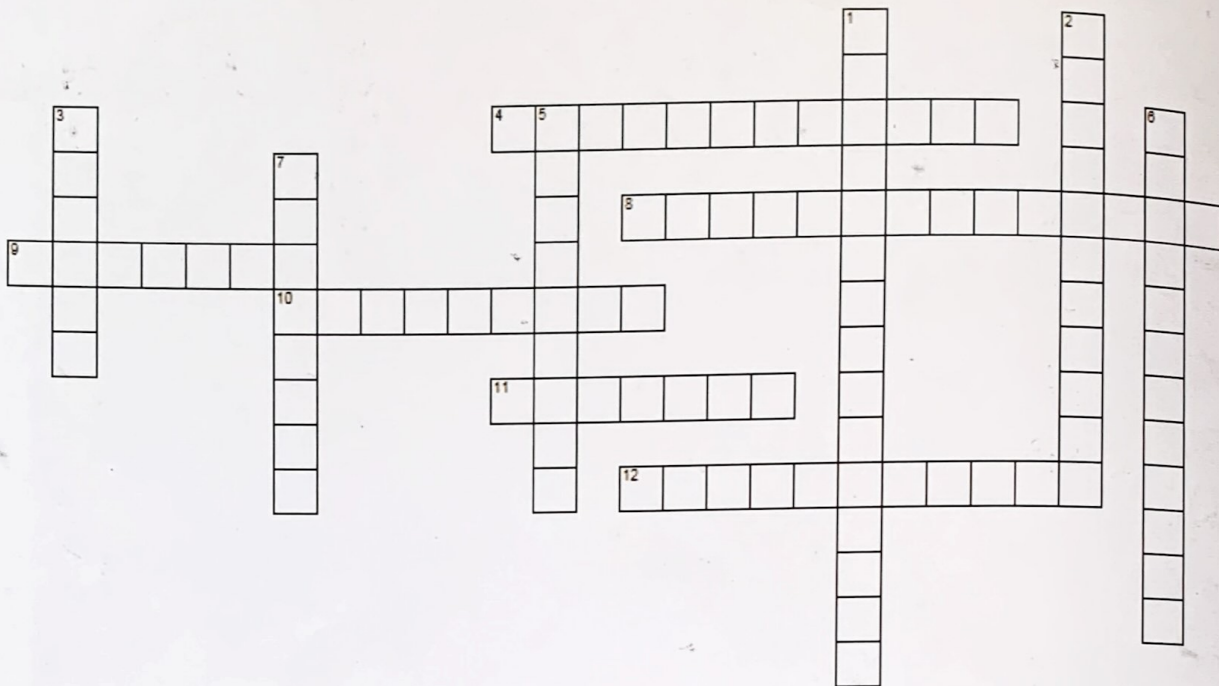
Revolutionary, separatist, rebel, guerrilla, jihadi, freedom fighter... Whatever the label, what they do, is cause terror.

Sonja Grassmugg

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## TERRORIST OR FREEDOM FIGHTER?

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**Across**

- 4. Who was commander in chief of the Luftwaffe during World War Two? (6/6)
- 8. Which Apollo 11 astronaut did not set foot on the moon? (7/7)
- 9. The Dickin Medal is awarded to which members of the armed forces in the UK? (7)
- 10. Which British fashion designer is credited with the invention of the mini skirt and hot pants? (4/5)
- 11. Which country's flag allegedly fell out of the heavens during the battle of Lyndanisse in 1219? (7)
- 12. On which street was the Great Fire of London believed to have begun? (7/4)

**Down**

- 1. Who did Louis XIV give the Hope Diamond to? (5/10)
- 2. Who was crowned by Pope Leo III as the first Holy Roman emperor? (11)
- 3. Of which country was Idi Amin the president from 1971 to 1979? (6)
- 5. What has been the most common first name for an American First Lady? (8)
- 6. Henry VIII acknowledged one illegitimate child during his lifetime – what was his name? (5/7)
- 7. What was Germany's largest battleship during World War II? (8)

**Find the answers in the next edition of the History Student Times!**

Answers to 'Breaking the Rules' crossword:  
 Across: 1. Prague Spring, 3. Austria, 6. Hannibal, 7. Twigg, 10. Christopher Wren, 11. Rosetta Stone, 12. Mary Rose.  
 Down: 2. George Orwell, 4. Svetlana, 5. Catherine Parr, 8. John, 9. Benito.

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