



Napoleon, Europe and Conquest

***An edition inspired by the Napoleon Exhibition at the Bowes Museum in the Spring of 2017
and that focuses on Europe and Conquest as broad themes of enquiry.***

Foreword—Dr Tom Stammers

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“In the beginning was Napoleon.” The opening line to Thomas Nipperdey’s 1983 history of Germany captures how hard it is to conceive of modern European history without reference to the Corsican colossus. Napoleon is not simply an inescapable reference for understanding modern France, the prototype for later authoritarian strong men, including his own wily nephew Napoleon III, the bungling General Boulanger or the twentieth-century man of destiny, Charles de Gaulle. Napoleon is also the father of many other European nationalisms. His military occupation of large swathes of the continent stirred up the very forces that would ultimately rebound against him. It was Napoleonic administrators who put the word ‘Italia’ into the mouths of Lombards, Tuscans and Romans, just as it was French occupation that dissolved old dynastic loyalties in central Europe and ignited the fires of German nationalism during the Wars of Liberation (1813-14). Subsequent diplomacy and conservative repression could not erase memories of the Napoleonic wars. This applies as much to the guerrilla fighters and constitution that emerged in Spain- the origins of our word ‘liberal’- as to the veterans of the Polish legions who dreamed of regaining a fatherland.

The old debate over whether Napoleon was the child or the Judas of the French Revolution is misleading. Even if he bought into the trappings of the old regime, with his courtly magnificence and his Hapsburg bride, Napoleon’s appropriation of the symbols and props of monarchy radically changed their meaning. He had demonstrated that royalty need not be determined by blood but by personal aptitude and political convenience. An 1806 cartoon by James Gillray



depicted Napoleon as the baker Tiddy-Doll removing a pallet of ginger-bread monarchs out of the oven. The artist scoffed at the Emperor’s crass nepotism in installing his relatives on the thrones of Europe. But the laughter was also nervous, since Napoleon had revealed how easily sovereigns could be cooked up when the situation required. While he wanted to preserve the social hierarchy, and the controlling hand of religion, Napoleon also trampled contemptuously over customs, princelings and boundaries that did not suit his vision. More than any other individual he taught by his example that everything was malleable, and hence possible of alteration, and that power was permanently up for grabs.

This lesson made him a source of fascination for contemporaries of all political persuasions. Liberator or antichrist, both friends and foes saw him as a semi-mythical figure who had wrenched the world off its axis. Napoleon’s lifetime coincided with the modern cult of celebrity, and his own improbable and picturesque story helped launch the popular obsession with Romantic heroes. While his own career ended in failure, his reputation only grew more potent in death. Speaking for many

in the younger generation, Victor Hugo wrote in 1828: "We who never had you as our master, worship you as god." People craved intimate access to a man who seemed to define and incarnate the era. The 2017 exhibition on *The Allure of Napoleon* at the Bowes Museum explored such relic-hunting even among his British enemies.

Napoleon elicits abiding fascination today not simply because he laid the foundations for European unity and disunity, nationalism and internationalism. He was also the prototype for every self-made politician whose power seems to inhere in their charisma, willpower and carefully-crafted media spectacle.

Napoleon, Hitler and Russia—

Will Wood

While there are 129 years between the French crossing of the Neman river on the 24th of June 1812 and the German thrust into the USSR on the 22nd of June 1941, there is a much larger gap between these invasions; that of why they happened. Napoleon Bonaparte's decision to head east was due to declining Franco-Russian relations and the inability of the continental system to bring Britain to its economic knees, while Hitler's was mainly due to Nazi ideology and the economic relationship between Germany and Russia.

From the 21st of November 1806, Napoleon prohibited his allies or occupied states from trading with Britain, believing this would ruin the British economy and cripple the country, due to its heavy reliance on trade as an island nation. Napoleon believed this would allow him to sweep in and conquer the country once it was in a mess. In reality, the blockade had limited effect on Britain, with sharp declines in trade with Europe mostly covered by increased trade elsewhere. Tsar Alexander I of Russia complied with the system. However, due to the continental system, customs revenue fell by over 6 million roubles from 1805-08, the paper currency's value halved from 1808-11, and exports, from 1806-12, fell by 40%. Russia's economy was simply incompatible with the continental system, and it suffered for it. Recognising this, Alexander relaxed the embargo in Russia, allowing American ships into Russian ports, and making tariffs on imports by sea, i.e. British trade, much lower than those on imports by land, i.e. French trade. This policy was designed to circumvent Napoleon's blockade. This lack of compliance with the continental system from Russia frustrated Napoleon, but a decaying of relations between the two countries also contributed to war.

Over time, Franco-Russian relations crumbled irreparably. In May 1810, Russia was worried by the adoption of one of Napoleon's marshals by the King of Sweden, whose country had just lost Finland to Russia (at the time, Finland was part of Sweden) in the Russo-Swedish war of 1808-1809, but still had control of much of the Baltic coast.

There was a growing fear that France was against them. Furthermore, Napoleon wasn't keen on Marshal Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte, finding him incompetent on the battlefield, while the marshal himself was jealous of the Emperor's accomplishments. A further strain to relations was due to Napoleon's search for a new wife. After failing to have children with Empress Josephine, the ageing wife was promptly divorced in favour of someone a bit younger. Napoleon's primary target was Alexander's young sister, Grand Duchess Anna. Her mother and many prominent figures in Russian high society opposed the move, unenthusiastic about stronger ties between France and Russia. The Tsar shared this view and, due to Anna being just a teenager, asked for a postponement of two years. Eager to marry and ensure an heir quickly, he instantly went for the daughter of the Austrian Emperor instead. Both countries were insulted; Russia by Napoleon's unwanted advances and sudden change of target, and Austria by the rapidity and lack of manners with which Archduchess Marie-Louise was pursued. Emperor Napoleon married her on the April 1st 1812, nearly three months before France invaded Russia. Collapsed relations and the failing of the continental system to cripple Britain encouraged Napoleon to attain fresh glory. These reasons were very different to those behind the German invasion of Russia 129 years later.

A trade deal signed in February 1940 provided 700-800 million Reichsmarks worth of food and raw materials like oil, chrome and scrap metal for Germany from the Soviet Union, which was extremely helpful for the Third Reich during wartime when trade in such resources was non-existent due to the British blockade. Quite quickly, Germany struggled to pay the Russians punctually in coal, currency or manufactured goods in return for the Soviet's resources. Six weeks before the invasion of France in May 1940, grain and oil deliveries to Germany had been suspended. This prompted Hermann Goering (who was head of the Luftwaffe and heavily involved in the economy at this time) to mention that Hitler advised that "where reciprocal deliveries to the Russians are endangered, even German Wehrmacht (army) deliveries must be held back so as to ensure punctual delivery to the Russians", suggesting that the bilateral trading was of great importance to the war effort. Nazi commanders were increasingly aware of their reliance on the USSR, and that scared them. Pressures lessened as successes over the next year in France and Africa gave them access to raw materials. However, many senior Nazi figures were concerned with the continued reliance on Soviet food imports, such as animal feed, which by 1941 was nearly totally supplied by the Russians. The inability to create a more one-sided deal for Germany and the realisation that they were at the mercy of the Soviets began to worry the Nazi government more and more. The USSR also increased the pressure on Germany to uphold their end of the bargain. This heavy reliance on Russia to help the war effort cultivated the idea among the Nazi high command that elimination

of the Soviets was the way to solve the problem. However, the key reason behind the invasion was Nazi ideology.

Most people know that the Nazis were vehemently Anti-Semitic and strongly anti-communist, but their ideology concerning the Soviet Union was quite complex. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler had declared that he would invade Russia to secure Lebensraum ("living space") for the German people. Why he saw Russia as prime living space material and not a Western European country was due to how he viewed the inhabitants of Eastern Europe. Hitler believed the area was populated by non-Aryan subhumans such as Jews and Slavs (Eastern and Central Europeans). Hitler also believed that these inferiors were ruled over by Jewish Bolshevism, i.e. communism with Jews holding primary power. This intense racism and sense of ethnic superiority from the Nazis was exemplified by the *Generalplan Ost*, a plan for the ethnic cleansing and genocide of the Slavic people in Eastern and Central Europe during and after the war. The fact that Wehrmacht officers told their soldiers on the Eastern front to target the "Red beast", as well as "Jewish Bolshevik subhumans" and the "Mongol hordes", emphasises that the conflict was both racial and political in nature - Jews, Slavs and Communists needed to be removed from the German people's living space in a "war of annihilation". It is clear to see that the primary cause behind the invasion was the Nazi's view on the racial and political make-up of Eastern Europe, as well as the economic relationship between Germany and the USSR to a lesser extent.

The reasons why these invasions occurred are clearly very different. Although one could argue that both were affected by economic factors, these economic elements were very different. In 1812, Napoleon was annoyed by Russia's lack of compliance with the continental system, while in 1941 Germany was worried by Russia's control over their supply of war materials. The other factors behind the invasions, that of declining Franco-Russian relations and Nazi ideology, were also very different. German-Russian relations never deviated much from lukewarm, compared to Franco-Russian relations which slowly slid into collapse. Additionally Napoleon didn't see the French people as racially superior to Russian people. Although both Napoleon Bonaparte and Adolf Hitler, those two behemoths of the last 250 years of European history, went East in a belief of furthering their own country, in the end they brought about their own demise.

Catharism, Religious War and the Relative Liberalism of Napoleon —

Nina Holguin

Religion has always been a prevalent feature of our society since our evolution as homo sapiens, with evidence of religious activity dating back to the Palaeolithic time period. The true reason why religion and humanity are synonymous, whether it's a side effect of beneficial mental traits or innate characteristic of a human, is still thoroughly debated today. But nonetheless, when 84% of the world's population identifies with a religious group, it shows that religion still has a place in our ever more scientific society. Religion can promote inclusivity and good morals, however it is also one of the biggest causes of violence. No religion escapes judgement; all can be linked to a war or suffering. We all know about the crusades and Christians attempt to 'take back' the Holy Lands, however the religious violence of this period also happened internally.

Hundreds of years before Napoleon's rule, the French religious scene was conflicted. The North and majority of France were Catholics, and followed the Roman Church and the Pope. But in Southern France, particularly the Languedoc region, a new movement developed. Catharism, with origins suggested to be in Persia or the Byzantine Empire, appeared and thrived between the 12th and 14th centuries. While they considered themselves Christians, they had fundamental differences to their Catholic counterparts. They believed in two gods: one evil, which created the Old testament and one good, which created the new testament. Humans were tainted by sin, as the evil God created them, but also believed to be genderless angels trapped in mortal forms that would reincarnate until they were pure. But many other crucial features of the religion directly opposed the Catholic Church, such as practising birth control and abortions, due to the belief that procreating would only mean more sufferers in the world. But the main belief was that the Catholic Church was corrupted morally, spiritually and politically. This went down poorly with the Church, especially because of its popularity, which developed further when the Church tried to embarrass the Cathars intellectually. During public debates with leading Catholic theologians, instead of showing how flawed the Cathar faith was, the Perfects (Cathar priests) simply were more able orators and won over the popular opinion of the locals as they displayed how out of touch the Catholic hierarchy was.

Catharism was also seen to be particularly liberal at the time, especially in relation to gender equality. Male and females could both become Perfects, and for the first time, women were given greater opportunities for

independence. As your 'spirit' was completely sexless, it made reincarnation as a man or a woman completely meaningless. While misogyny did occur in the Cathar faith, its comparatively progressive beliefs contrasted with Catholicism. This ideology helped reinforce the idea to the Catholics that Catharism was sinful.

The tolerance of Cathars continued until Pope Innocent III came to power. He tried to persuade local authorities to act against them. Eventually, after several unsuccessful attempts, the Pope started the Albigensian Crusade, which then turned into a massacre. Town after town were destroyed and Cathar heretics burned at stakes. When one army came across a town surrounded by a small ravine, the Catholic army lit a fire in the pit and pushed the whole population into fire one by one from the top. However, it would be untrue to say that this was simply a battle between the two faiths. The town of Béziers was held under siege in 1209. The Catholic inhabitants of the city were granted freedom to leave unharmed, but many refused and opted to stay and fight alongside their Cathar friends and neighbours. Unfortunately, the Béziers army was defeated, and when the crusaders entered the city, the Abbot-commander was asked how to tell the difference between Cathars and Catholics. His reply, recalled years later by a fellow Cistercian, was "Caedite eos. Novit enim Dominus qui sunt eius"—"Kill them all, the Lord will recognise His own." It was reported that the Catholic forces killed at least 7000 innocent men, women and children.

It was a war that showed no mercy. Even when the official conflict was ended by the Treaty of Paris in 1229, persecution continued. In 1244 a symbolically important massacre took place, where 200 Cathar Perfects were burnt on an enormous pyre. Few Cathars recanted, but those who did had to wear a yellow cross on their clothing as well as the 'heretical sympathisers'. After decades of harassment, recanting, and the systematic destruction of their religious texts, the Cathars were exhausted. The leader of the Cathar revival was executed in 1310, and the last known Cathar perfectus in Languedoc region was executed in 1321. It is estimated that one million died during the Albigensian crusade in the twenty years it lasted. This does not include the additional deaths before and after the crusade. Hundreds of years later, the region still celebrates their Cathar history and recognises the atrocities committed on the land they live on.

Religious wars have been a feature of human society throughout time. But we are so used to the violence of this massacre committed close to our shores it is not widely known. The Holy Land Crusades are recognised, but with nothing more than a whisper of acceptance, and instead glamorised in fiction. We tolerate religious wars like they are inevitable and understandable.

However, how can that be?

Religious wars have happened frequently but that doesn't mean they should not all be acknowledged with the same abhorrence and lessons drawn from them. But what really surprises me, is the difference in attitudes between political and religious battles. When I was young I knew of Napoleon. Yet, my impression was exceedingly negative; I believed him to be a tyrant. However, as I've grown older, I've realised how wrong I was. While he was brutal, and had plenty of dark within him, his opinions were often liberal and progressive. In fact, though he was far from perfect, he made important beneficial changes to society such as the Code Civil (protecting the rights of the individual, a fundamental factor in modern day French law), encouraging science and improving the French education system. But still the fact remains the same- we often perceive political wars with much less acceptance and more hostility than religious ones. Which, in turn begs the question, why? Religious ideas could be discussed and debated avoiding war just like political ones. To further society, we must be open to new ideas about the way we run our world, but no ideas should lead to violence, because when you fight fire with fire it just leaves you with barren ashes of what you once had.

Europe and Conquest—

Bethany Windle

When Napoleon embarked on his effort to conquer large swathes of Europe for France he did so as a ruler at the centre of a continent that dominated global trade and power. This preeminent position for Europe in the world, one that would grow as the pace of the industrial revolution quickened, was established centuries earlier. The European conquest of the Americas was a crucial turning point in the establishment of the wealth and economic prosperity of European powers. It was critical in the founding of the international slave trade on which a large majority of Europe's wealth was built, as well as proving a fruitful source of raw materials such as silver and gold, that enabled countries such as Spain to become a central European force.

There were several motives behind the decision to pursue the exploration of previously uncharted waters; one of them being the pursuit of wealth and riches that many hoped their journeys would yield. Christopher Columbus was the first to set foot in what we now know as the Americas in 1492. It would be his initial conquest that lay the foundations for further exploration of both North and South America by the Portuguese, Spanish and later the English and French.

Initially, Spanish cohorts exploited the presence of precious minerals and metals such as silver and gold, as well as effectively using natives for forced labour. Indigenous Americans were vastly inferior in their technologies, as well as being highly susceptible to a number of potentially fatal diseases, such as bubonic plague and cholera, as they had not been provided with the same opportunity to build up a resistance to these western illnesses. Consequently, this resulted in the severe and rapid depopulation of native communities, who were wiped out via both superior warfare and disease.

This trade of precious resources, new foods and free labour from the natives, with disease and death from the Spanish initially became known as 'the Columbian exchange' due to the part played by Spanish explorer Columbus: a transfer of wealth that came at a huge cost to the indigenous people of the new world. One of the potentially most important elements of this exchange was the new found trade of human trafficking. Europeans soon found that great economic value existed in the enslavement and selling of native Africans to places such as the Caribbean where millions were forced to work on sugar plantations that grew crops to be sold to colonial North America in vast amounts.

The conquest and gradual colonisation of America facilitated this first attempt at slavery which set the precedent for further human trafficking - a practice that became well established across Europe as a key feature of global trade and thus helped bring many of Europe's countries a large portion of their wealth and power. Both English and French colonies participated in this brutal trade as well as the Spanish and Portuguese. This was the spark that ignited a global investment in slavery leading to the proliferation of human trafficking which went on for another four centuries and potentially contributed to the accelerated development of European countries involved in this awful exchange. The effects of the slave trade can still be noted in modern day society as evidenced by the prolonged existence of racism that continues to define our modern world.

The constant exchange of enslaved Africans to Brazil and the Caribbean, sugar from the Caribbean and Brazil to Northern America and products such as liquor from Northern America to Africa became known as the 'triangular trade'. Consequently, the success of this newly established global exchange led to a moderation in the preferential slope towards the Asian market in global trading. It gradually expanded and flourished, providing the world with products such as sugar, tobacco, cacao, corn, vanilla, tomatoes, silver and gold. This gave Europe a wealth and power to rival other global forces.

The conquest of the Americas acted as a crucial turning point in the ascension of European economic and imperial power through the provision of new goods, free labour and the establishment of greater global trade. The remnants of the impact of the discovery of the New World can be observed in our modern day society and have undeniably helped shape modern Europe, as well as the rest of the global community of the 21st century. This product of global exploration also helped Europe offer competition to the previous unrivalled dominance of Asia in the global market, as well as instigate important trade networks that remained prevalent for years to come. Thus, this conquest illustrates the historical importance of changeable power, and the way in which it helps to shape our modern world.

The Impact of Conquest on the Conquered—

Grace Tarpey

Throughout history, most conquest has ultimately resulted, in part, in the spread of political systems, ideologies, and culture. Much of modern civilization was brought about by various forms of conquest. Yet time and time again, more negative effects of conquest can be seen. Is it really a good thing for developed countries to forcibly mould less developed countries into certain cultural, social, and political ideologies? Or does it do more harm than good?

Take Mexico, for example. The fall of the Aztec empire in the early 16th century, brought about by the Spanish Conquistadors, saw the dawn of modern Mexico only after most of the natives died of smallpox. The impact that Spanish rule had on Mexico was great: most of modern Mexican culture was born during the time it was part of the Spanish empire. And yet over 3 million Aztecs died, and native culture and civilization was never allowed to evolve. The Spanish did not accelerate the rate at which the nation grew and progressed, but rather they made an extension of Spain – placing it under Spanish rule, using the fear the Aztecs had of the disease that was killing them to convert them to Catholicism, as well as various other parts of Spanish culture. While we will never know what Mexico would be like now if it had never been touched by European conquest, it is likely that it would be very different than it is today.

But, in the long term, it seems that countries such as Mexico that emerged as a more highly developed western civilization while they were colonies have overall been affected somewhat 'positively' by conquest. Despite the deaths of millions of natives, as a nation these countries are well established and democratic, the lasting legacy, perhaps, of the empires they were once part of. So, would it be best if all developing countries were influenced in such a way by highly developed countries to be a

more modern, democratic country with western ideas and politics?

Some would certainly think so. But looking at the legacy of European colonialism in most of Africa, the inclination would be to think not. This example of conquest is different than what happened in Mexico, primarily due to the smaller number of European settlers that came with the conquest. In the late 1800s, various European powers (Great Britain, France, and Germany, among others) scrambled to take control of territories in Africa, and split it up into the countries we know today, disregarding existing borders. The legacy of this is not one of European culture, values, and politics, but rather of instability, violence, and corruption. Few previous colonies have been able to keep a stable government, and several have ended up as military dictatorships.

If we look at the example of Napoleon, many of his ideas remained in countries he had conquered, even after he had been defeated. Despite the negative connotations associated with him as an emperor who tried to take over most of Europe, many of the ideas in the Napoleonic Code were adopted by the countries occupied by France in the Napoleonic wars. It has formed the basis of law systems in Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, and Poland. However, while it helped spread a firm legal system throughout Europe, and indeed worldwide, and therefore helped countries to develop in that sense, it is entirely possible that the influence of the code would have spread independently, if it worked well in France, and the conquest and occupation of European countries may not have actually helped the countries at all. Alternatively, different codes of law may have been developed anyway, as ideas of liberalism and reform spread throughout Europe.

But, on the whole, it seems that European conquest and colonialism has had a fairly negative impact on the countries it has effected. Despite the fact that the UK as a nation seems to be inexplicably proud of the British Empire, the countries in the empire were subject to theft, pillaging, rape, unreasonable taxation, and, to some extent, genocide. While it may seem as if some of these countries have ultimately become better off, it is unlikely that this is because of European occupation, rather because of the hard work of citizens and remaining natural resources that weren't stolen by Europeans. In most cases, civil war, political unrest, the deaths of thousands, and a loss of resources, knowledge, and traditions are the actual outcome of colonialism.

In conclusion, it seems that conquest has a negative effect on developing countries. It doesn't allow the natural development of a civilization and leads ultimately to damaging the country's economy and stability in the long run.

Slobodan Milosevic and the Kosovan War – Dictatorship, Nationalism, and Crimes Against Humanity—

Jake Knight

The New York Times called him 'Europe's last communist tyrant'. When Slobodan Milosevic stood trial at the International Court of Justice he was also the first former head of state to be indicted for war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity. As president of Yugoslavia, Milosevic had ruled over a regime which allegedly murdered at least 600 civilians in Kosovo, and deported 800,000 ethnic Albanians from the province. The trial at The Hague was never completed, due to Milosevic's death in his cell in 2006. However, the story of the acts carried out in Kosovo under his regime are all too familiar, in modern European history and the present day.

The causes of the Kosovan War of Independence (1998-99) date back far before the actual conflict. Yugoslavia was created at the end of WW1 as a 'land of the southern Slavs'. It contained the six republics of: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, Macedonia and Montenegro; there were also two provinces within Serbia – Kosovo and Vojvodina. After WW2 Yugoslavia came under the rule of General Tito and the communists. This led to a one-party state in Yugoslavia which Tito controlled through the military and secret police. However, although united under one political party, Yugoslavia was a 'multi-ethnic state' formed from Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. This led to tensions and conflict between ethnic groups, and in the early 1990s Croatia and Bosnia left Yugoslavia.

Kosovo was particularly ethnically divided. Because of Ottoman occupation until the 1800s, ninety percent of the population were (Muslim) Albanian Kosovars. However, as a province of Serbia, Kosovo was ruled by a minority Serb population that claimed the land as the birthplace of Serbian Orthodox Christianity. This caused many tensions between the majority Kosovars, and those in authority.

In 1974 Kosovo became an 'autonomous' province of Serbia, giving it equal voting power to the other republics in Yugoslavia; Kosovan Serbs deeply resented this. Upon becoming president of Serbia in 1989, one of Milosevic's first acts was to remove autonomy from Kosovo and make it part of a 'Greater Serbia'. Supported by Serb nationalists in Kosovo and Serbia, and riding on the wave of increasing populist nationalism, he began to tighten Serbian grip on the Kosovan media. The school curriculum was 'Serbianised' and there was increased military presence in key cities such as Peć, the cultural capital of the province.

This led to resistance from the Kosovars: in 1996, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) formed, and by 1998 their repeated attacks, including the murders of Serbian politicians, caused Milosevic (now President of Yugoslavia) to initiate an 'ethnic cleansing' of the Kosovo Albanians as retribution.

Secret police and armed forces entered Kosovo and, according to evidence from witnesses and survivors, committed numerous atrocities. Serb paramilitaries massacred entire villages, such as Izbica, where about 93 Albanian civilians were discovered in mass graves. In Meja, armed forces allegedly killed at least 300 civilians and KLA fighters. Elsewhere, mass forced deportations of ethnic Albanians took place. Reports of the conflict reached the western world, prompting NATO involvement. Following a heavy bombing campaign, the war ended with Serbian forces retreating. An ensuing cover-up of evidence occurred in which civilian bodies were disposed of back in Serbia and later re-discovered in mass graves.

Sadly, this kind of brutality was not new. Such atrocities were seen in WW2, when Hitler's Nazi regime invaded Poland. Designed to provide 'lebensraum' for the population of a 'Greater Germany' – a phrase mirrored in Milosevic's 'Greater Serbia' – what followed was the systematic slaughter of Jewish people in the country and a horrific genocide. Millions of civilians were killed and the mass deportations, the executions, and the burning of towns and villages throughout Poland seem eerily like the events in Kosovo.

Worryingly, we now see a similar situation in Vladimir Putin's Russia – Bosnian journalist Nenad Pejić asked 'What is the difference between Putin and Milosevic?', his answer: '22 years'. Both the Russian and Serbian leaders are viewed as dictators of 'pseudo-democracies'. Putin, like Milosevic, is a head of state using control of the military and secret police to cement his authority despite the country's apparently democratic elections. There is state controlled media through censorship and restricted freedom of speech, and both have allegedly removed opposition leaders. With Milosevic, there were political purges in 1987 of rival candidates and Putin has been linked to a number of cases where people critical of his authority – such as Alexander Litvinenko or Boris Nemtsov – have been killed.

Also, the actions of Russian forces in Chechnya mirror very closely the situation in Kosovo. This formerly autonomous province of Russia saw two bloody wars over independence, in 1994 and 2000. Amnesty International and other independent bodies have reported that atrocities occurred, such as Russian troops executing hundreds of civilians. In Grozny, the capital of the province, one of many mass graves was discovered containing 800 bodies.

Both Putin and Milosevic have endorsed nationalism and expansionism to increase their popularity: for Milosevic, it was the idea of a 'Greater Serbia', for Putin an 'Imperial Russia'. At home, Milosevic was the saviour of Serbian nationalism, through key speeches such as one made in Kosovo in 1987 where he famously said to Serbs 'no one will ever dare beat you again'. Both have invaded disputed territory; Putin used his state controlled media to portray the annexation of Crimea as the greatest event in Russian history since they beat the Nazis.

To conclude, we must not forget what happened in Kosovo in 1999. Milosevic used nationalism to create ethnic conflict in a region which suffered terribly as a result. These memories have largely been replaced by more modern struggles, such as the wars in the middle east. However, it remains that events in Kosovo have many parallels to the modern day and the situation in Russia. Putin is, in effect, a Russian version of Milosevic, and currently seeks to stoke the fire of nationalism within his country. Milosevic did just the same and it resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians. Though his trial never reached a conclusion, many still refer to Milosevic, because of his crimes against humanity, as the 'Butcher of the Balkans'

European Revolutions—

Evie Scott

Political systems in Europe changed with the abolition of feudalism and the development of industry. Revolutions like these came in the form of peasant revolts, civil wars and more long-term, and less violent, cultural and social changes. Most ended, however, with a monarch being replaced by democracy or an alternative authoritarian regime or the formation of a working class.

The industrial revolution marked the beginning of the modern world and saw the shift from farming to machinery in Britain. Eventually spreading throughout the world, it seemed a natural economic development. Production was faster, more efficient and cheaper as machines required fewer workers than traditional methods. However, the industrial revolution brought about large social change as well: cramped cities were built to house the large industry and public health deteriorated because workers were being paid less to increase profit, meaning they couldn't afford food and housing. The worker's response to the industrial revolution was to form workers guilds and organise strikes against the business owners.

Although Britain had seen the decline in feudalism towards the end of the Middle Ages, France was only just removing it and Russia did not do so until much later. The reason why the industrial revolution was so important for Europe was not only because it increased global economic power but because it was the beginning of a working class and the decline of the bourgeoisie.

Before industry took off in Europe, more 'traditional' revolts were happening. These were the French and Russian revolutions and both aimed to abolish unfair class systems by removing nobility in favour of a left-wing political system through violent uprisings, arguably, to varying degrees of success. The French failed to form the representative government- or the constitutional monarchy- that it wanted and effectively just exchanged a monarch for a dictator. The two were similar because of their intentions, but differ because of their long-term effects. The French, although successfully establishing a global presence under Napoleon, developed a democratic system and strong bonds with other countries. For Russia, however, it wasn't as simple because of the longevity of feudalism. Russian peasants were greatly in need of liberation but when it came, although many were slightly better off they also suffered. It is hard to rationalise the atrocities that followed Stalin's rise to power and therefore see the Russian revolution as a success.

Because Christianity is Europe's largest religion, the church played a large part in shaping modern politics. The church used to have a lot more power because of the lack of religious freedom, especially in Britain where it was sometimes punishable to follow the 'wrong' type of Christianity. A lot of inter-European conflicts arose from religious disputes between Catholics, Protestants and hostility between the Spanish and the English arose from clashing religious views, as well. The main way religion shaped modern Europe, however, was actually with its decline. When European philosophers such as Emanuel Kant began questioning the church, some began doubting their ruler's right to rule, especially if they were incompetent. It was perhaps radical thinking like this that sparked the French Revolution when thousands were starving whilst their monarch had more than enough to feed them all.

Modern Europe was influenced, it seems, by the working class rising against the rich when they felt unfairly treated. A lot of the main 'revolutions' seem like almost textbook examples of conflict theory with the unhappy majority wanting to change society to fit them. Each change may have had different intentions and outcomes, but all had similar themes of food, money and unhappy majorities.

Viking Conquest of Anglo-Saxon Britain and the Formation of England—

Sam Nixon

In the early Medieval Period, Britain was plagued by invasions from Norse settlers. The Scandinavian populations travelled to Britain to either trade, raid or simply make a new life. However it became clear some of the settlers wanted to make Britain their new home, these were referred to as Vikings. The following is a brief explanation of how the Vikings come to take control the whole of the British Isles and what impact they made on the country's values and culture.

In 793 AD the first raid took place on Lindisfarne, a monastery on the north east coast of Britain. This was followed by numerous raids on monasteries as they were easy to attack and held a lot of material and riches that the Vikings could then sell on or keep as trophies. It gave the Vikings a feel for the surroundings and they noticed how easily they could take this land for their own. The problem was in northern and coastal areas there were not big armies like those surrounding the king in the south of England, there were just farmers and monks who could do nothing to protect themselves against the raiders. England was open to attack and the Danes took advantage of this.

Throughout the remainder of 8th century and the early 9th century Dane armies poured into Britain and in 866 the Norse men captured York. One of the two major cities in Anglo-Saxon Britain. Many Anglo-Saxon kings began to capitulate to the Norse invaders' demands giving the Vikings control over most large English settlements. King Æthelred who had been leading the fight against the Danes died, and was succeeded by his brother Alfred. He continued the fight for his brother but was pushed back into Somerset and had to reside in the marshes of Athelney. However, he managed to regroup and defeat the Norse Monarch Guthrum, who controlled East-Anglia at the time, at the battle of Edington. The Wessex and East-Anglian governments set up a treaty that established a boundary between the two settlements known as the Danelaw. King Alfred began rebuilding the army and defence system for his England and in 896 it proved a success as the invaders dispersed all the way back to Normandy. Alfred for his efforts gained the title Alfred the Great, solidified in history for the rest of his reign and beyond.

Over 100 years later under the rule of Edgar the Peaceful, England became even more unified, and all settlements regarded Edgar as a ruler of all colonies, Norse and Anglo-Saxon alike. However, when Edgar's son was murdered as king in 978, he was succeeded by Æthelred and the political strength disintegrated. Raiders from Scandinavia once again began attacks on England. Æthelred and the English government decided the best way to fend off the Danish invaders was by paying them, which consisted of them offering 10,000 English pounds. However this did not satisfy the Danes and they carried on raiding. This led to King Æthelred stating on St. Brice's day in 1002 that all Danes living in England were to be executed. This did not sit well with the Danish king Sweyn Forkbeard, and it is believed the King's sister Gunhilde was among the victims in the Massacre. The following year Sweyn led a raid on England that attacked Hampshire, Wiltshire, Wilton and Salisbury, with Exeter being burned down. Between the years 1004 and 1012 there were many further raids carried out until 1013 when Sweyn Forkbeard led a final attack that caused Æthelred to retreat to Normandy. However, Sweyn died within a year, so Æthelred returned but in 1016 another invasion was led by Sweyn's son Cnut, which resulted in Cnut being crowned King of England.

So the question asked about these persistent invasions of England from Scandinavian raiders and the eventual crowning of a Danish king of England is what effect did this have on England and Britain and its culture? Though the general consensus is that any invasion weakens a country's culture, stunts its growth and sets it back, the Vikings made a great deal of impact for the better in the life of the British Isles. Vikings were very prominent in the field of trade and set up many trade points across the country. They were also masters of weaponry and marine technology building some of the fastest boats in the world at the time and making the finest swords, spears and bows and arrows of the day. They also contributed to the English language we have today. Words such as Husband, Happy and Window all originate from the Danish words *Húsbóndi*, *Happ* and *Vindauga*. So although the Vikings slaughtered many and proved to be a danger to the Britons of the 10th and 11th century they did contribute hugely to society today. Without their input into trade throughout Europe and the British Isles as well as the handcraft they brought to the British Isles it is hard to imagine how our culture may have developed differently. Not all conquests in Europe were beneficial to the countries involved. However, if the invading forces contributed and developed the culture and society in the ways the Danes did in Britain then the country could prosper. This therefore shows how not all conquests should be considered destructive to a country.

On revolutionary thinking and contrarianism—

Cal Baker

If, as the title of this journal suggests, the history of Europe and indeed the World has been so rich with conquest and with ranging forms of government, it is easy to establish a starting point for this essay. This is namely that the true constant throughout European history is revolution and change, and that episodes of conquest are demonstrably part of a larger canvas of revolution through society, be this political, economic or social. In this essay I shall outline how revolutionary thinking 'conquered' Europe, starting with the work of Diogenes and the Cynics in Athens and tying into the Napoleonic theme to close, also touching on the ideas of Huxley and Orwell and what they could mean for the future.

In 413 BCE, Diogenes, the son of a banker who counterfeited money, was born in Athens. (Let me just say now that I choose to begin here for my sheer love for Diogenes, not necessarily because he was the founder of the Cynic school, though he was an early member, for he himself followed Antisthenes, who was in turn a pupil of Socrates). He ran away from home at an early age and pursued a life of connection with nature while also striving to do the opposite to whatever he was told to do. Many readers will have heard the tale of Diogenes living in a barrel, but that is just the least of it. He defecated in public thoroughfares and often proclaimed himself to be a dog. In fact, he is recorded as saying 'I lick those who feed me and bite the ones who misbehave.' His good friend Plato once said, 'he is Socrates gone mad.' Diogenes was extremely radical on many social issues. The relevance the Cynic school of thought, originally led by Diogenes, has to the birth of revolutionary thinking is that it was the first time that philosophy had been used to try and answer questions and provide a way of life as opposed to suggest problems with the human condition. Some of Diogenes' principles, such as homosexuality being completely natural and the idea that humans are just animals that will rot like any other are accepted now, but, like all those fighting for radical change, he was abused by those in power. However, it could be argued that it was he, one mad old Athenian, who first gave the abused classes a voice and a motivation to take contrary political beliefs to others, to question basic accepted moral 'codes' of the time and to inspire a less corrupt, greener and more accepting world millennia later.

Of more recently celebrated 'revolutions', like the 1789 French Revolution or the Russian Revolution of October 1917, a certain amount of irony can clearly be detected. With regards to the October revolution, Orwell wrote

poignantly that ‘the creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which’ to expose the hypocrisy of the post 1917 Soviet government and the Stalin regime for becoming what they had sworn to destroy and to an extent there were similarities post 1796. With Robespierre gone in a blaze of red, sticky glory General Napoleon Bonaparte led the country more militarily than ever before, thus requiring more, not less, reverence for individual political leaders, leading to a more authoritarian, hierarchical state. The difference between these revolutions which led to more outright, obvious incidences of conquest and the philosophical, ideological work of the cynics is that the lack of any coup style work involved in contrarianism does not invite an authoritarian or militaristic government to replace that with which it so clearly disagrees. However, the ideal that humans should live in closer harmony and make profound changes to our social norms has clearly stuck. It is ironic again that the means of achieving these ideals in the twentieth century often shifted from philosophical critical thinking and a change in the life of the individual to a coup, replacing one form of government with a similar style of authoritarianism.

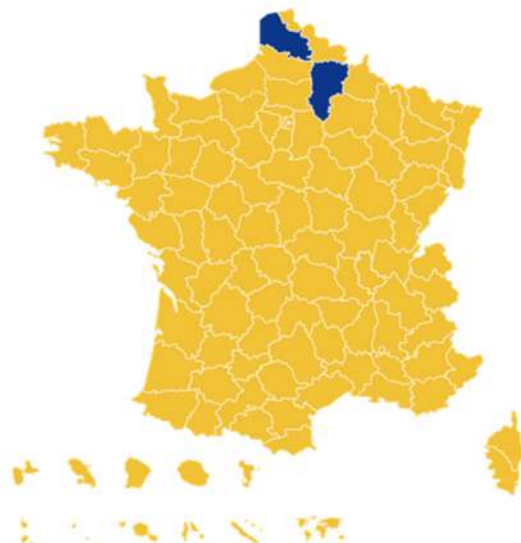
To conclude I would like to look to any cases in the future where the constancy of revolution could be defeated. In my opinion, no totalitarian, fascist government could utterly prevent revolution because any radical wing has more critics than affiliates, but the real threat to our ability to revolt and be contrary is the threat of capitalism. I side with Aldous Huxley over Orwell on this subject. What Orwell feared were those who banned books. What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one. Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be received to passivity and egoism. Huxley feared that the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture.

In a world where the internet is clogged by more articles about the spelling of Donald Trump’s tweets rather than the fact that he is removing 23 million Americans from health insurance, I fear Huxley was right to be worried, for it is only in a trivial culture where the philosophy of contrarianism and revolution can be lost.

Wonder Boys—Napoleon and Macron—

Ella Blackburn

In April 2017, no independent had ever won the French election. It would be impossible, surely, for a party set up barely a year before the presidential election, to actually win, let alone win by a landslide. And yet, Emmanuel Macron, the political wonder boy (France’s youngest leader since Napoleon) stands absolutely victorious. One need only look at a map to see the extent of Macron’s conquest. This was no ordinary election. Exceptional circumstances gave way to an exceptional leader, a pattern that can be seen with other era defining French leaders that Macron likes to compare himself to, such as Napoleon Bonaparte and Charles De Gaulle. The neo-Napoleon narrative suits Macron and in many ways, is accurate. Had the French Revolution not happened, Bonaparte would have remained an artillery officer in the French Royal Army. Likewise, but in a far less dramatic sense, Macron would not have become president had France’s main two long established political parties not collapsed just in time for the 2017 election. Napoleon and Macron share an ability to exploit opportunity, and this is where their capacity for conquering lies. Macron capitalised on the Socialists’ lack of a modernised agenda and the Republicans’ campaign tainted by the Fillon scandal, forging an “alliance of the willing” comprising of different but compatible political sensitivities, leaving the left/right political lines apparently anachronistic. Napoleon seized the opportunities presented by the Revolution, steadily rising through the military ranks, and in his coup d’état of 1799 overthrew the Directory with an alliance with director Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, his brother Lucien, speaker of the Council of Five Hundred Roger Ducos, director Joseph Fouché, and Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, preserving the appearance of a republic, when in reality establishing a dictatorship.



Map shows candidate with most votes second round by department, yellow is Macron, blue is Le Pen.

However, it is important to reflect, especially considering his propensity to grandiosity, that the parallels between Macron and Napoleon only serve to propagate the idea that Macron is exceptional. He has said himself that ever since the execution of King Louis XVI, France has been searching, and failing to find, a true leader figure who could personify France, with perhaps only De Gaulle as an exception. Macron sees himself as the antidote to the “ordinary” previous presidents who have left an “empty seat at the heart of political life,” even likening himself to France’s 15th-century saint and saviour Joan of Arc. Macron’s skill in modernising French politics to displace the established political parties capitalised on the artificial, image and sound bite driven politics of the new generation. Take his response to Trump’s withdrawal from the Paris climate change agreement: the social media ready “Make Our Planet Great Again” that is already attracting much praise online. However, despite the appointment of Nicolas Hulot as the new Environment Minister suggesting a far more progressive environmental policy than previous presidencies, Macron’s own ecological policy is somewhat shaky and vague. Perhaps Macron recognises the power of rhetoric over substance, and the success this brings: during his time as an investment banker, Macron told the Wall Street Journal that “seduction is the job.”

In the parliamentary election, La République en Marche swept 351 of the 577 seats of the lower house national assembly, with the Socialist party losing more than 200 seats. The absolute majority of his fledgling movement, centred entirely around the marketability of its leader, shows the extent to which Macron’s power will not be challenged in the next five years. Whilst this illustrates an infinitely more positive France than one that would have elected Marine Le Pen, preferring hope to anger, considering Macron’s sense of destiny and elevated importance, we can only hope that he does not become tempted by Bonapartism.

Macron must exercise power effectively, whilst avoiding the authoritarian tendencies that can emerge following extraordinary circumstances. With a turn out of just 43%, French abstention signals a disillusionment with the system that although gives Macron a political majority, does not give him a blank cheque. Just as a young Napoleon was spurred on by his ambition and public approval to crown himself Emperor of the French in 1804, giving himself more power than any other French leader, including the previous monarchy, the danger with Macron’s apparently unstoppable rise is that France’s now primary political party is entirely built around the individual rather than an ideology. It is crucial to note that it is not the right that has suffered most from this election, but the left. Macron has conquered not only his challengers, but crafted a position for himself that only he can fulfil. This parallel between Macron and Napoleon, this single-minded pursuit of glory, has changed French politics for good.



Cartoon is by Steve Bell