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*The Stasi: Tactics, Torture, Terror.*
By Jemima McDuell

*"At this distance I understand for the first time how bad it was what he did in that room".[1]*

Julia Behrend's chilling awakening to the atrocity of her interactions with the Stasi as a civilian is just one window into the collective trauma shared by the millions of former East Germans, who lived for decades with the knowledge that every inch of their lives was being observed by the secret police. Totalitarian regimes demand compliance, acceptance, conformity; they breed an all-consuming sense of insignificance and helplessness within the indoctrinated, non-dissenting majority, and are complemented by the human instinct to suppress distressing memories. These factors prevent civilians from questioning, and thereby threatening, the integrity of the state. It is unsurprising, then, that Behrend, speaking over a decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall, required 'distance' to grasp the severity of her experiences, and it is this distance- whether from a standpoint of time, ideology, or emotion- that allows us to navigate the inner workings and wider impact of the Stasi today.

The East German Ministry for State Security, generally referred to by the abbreviation 'Stasi', has long been regarded as the most effective secret police organisation that has existed, with a goal of discovering and crushing any opportunity for dissent in the GDR. Characterised by its utilisation of 'informers', ordinary citizens tasked with reporting on family, friends, and colleagues, the Stasi encroached on every aspect- both exceptional and mundane- of civilians' lives, casting permanent feelings of insecurity over a nation haunted by the lingering threat of imprisonment and psychological torture. The Stasi dominated society in the GDR; in 1985, the organisation boasted 105,000 full-time staff, comprising as much as 6% of the population, and from its foundation in 1950 to the collapse of the communist state in 1989, over half a million informers were involved in the surveillance of others.[2]

Examining the magnitude of the Stasi's influence and control raises the question why the East German government was so staunchly committed to building such a relentlessly unforgiving organisation. The perceived necessity for a high-functioning secret police agency in the GDR stemmed from totalitarian ideology itself, which deems secret police, as the administrators of terror and detectors of the 'politically dangerous', as crucial to the upkeep of the regime. Through its vast network of informers, the Stasi could ensure that even the mildest exchanges of anti-communist feeling were kept to a minimum; eventually, everyone in the GDR would become "the *agent provocateur* of everyone else", meeting the ideal condition of "mutual suspicion"[3] that was considered essential to upholding a totalitarian regime since the birth of the ideology.

Naturally, it was the influence of the Soviet Union in the GDR, which had employed various secret police organisations since the country's formation in 1917, that had the most profound effect on the establishment and development of the Stasi. For the USSR, the foundation of a secret police organisation in East Germany was not only vital for the policing of political dissent within the country, but also due to its

preventing of espionage by its Western European neighbours, more exclusive to the state of the GDR and its geographical position. Although the Stasi was virtually under the full control of the USSR in its early years, the Ministry for State Security was eventually afforded a degree of independence from its Soviet superiors. As their organisation became more powerful, Stasi officials began to esteem themselves as equals to their counterparts in the KGB- a sentiment reciprocated by the Soviets, who expressed their respect for the Stasi by allowing them to establish sites in Moscow and Leningrad to monitor visiting citizens of the GDR.

Despite its similarity to its Soviet predecessors, the Stasi's notable innovation and exceptional organisational skills enabled it to surpass all other secret police departments in terms of the inconceivable amount of information it gathered concerning the population of the GDR. Methods used by the Stasi in attempts to detect and identify potential 'enemies of the state' could be extremely creative; possibly the most peculiar was its devotion to developing a vast database of 'smell-samples' from those who were deemed threatening. The collection of these samples was based on the notion that a suspect's scent could be presented to a trained sniffer dog, who could then determine whether they had been present at a particular location while suspected illegal activity had taken place. Samples were acquired using the sneakiest and most intrusive of methods, with officers frequently breaking into homes to steal an unwashed item of clothing that would be placed in an airtight jar to preserve the odour. By 1989, it was estimated that the Stasi had accumulated several thousand smell-samples in the Leipzig region alone.[4]

However, it was the more orthodox methods of monitoring the population that had the most crushing impact on the people. In the GDR, surveillance by a Stasi officer was a lingering threat that underwrote practically all interactions. East Germans were denied privileges such as discussing personal matters over telephone calls, tens of thousands of which were intercepted daily by Stasi officers, and sending private letters, with all mail undergoing inspection which all too often resulted in the replication of letters to be used as 'evidence' in interrogations. This was a tactic used against Julia Behrend, who underwent a humiliating ordeal as a young woman which involved a Stasi officer reading out sections of her love letters and demanding an explanation.[5] This pervasive encounter demonstrates the lengths to which the Stasi were willing to go to control the population; Julia's ultimately harmless relationship was monitored for months simply because her boyfriend was from Italy, a Western country, and was thus apparently a threat to the state.

Of course, the use of informants was another extremely effective method of monitoring the public. With friends spying on friends, colleagues spying on colleagues, and those working in the public sector spying on customers, the Stasi managed to keep a close eye on virtually everyone. On the surface, the Stasi's 173,000 civilian informers are inexplicable; with very low pay and a threat of ostracisation, why would such an immense number of individuals agree to monitor friends and colleagues, often condemning them to torment or imprisonment? Often, this was a result of blackmail or bribery- but the structure of East Germany itself also played a part. One Herr Bock, a former Stasi officer himself, hypothesised that informers accepted the position because they "got the feeling that, doing it, they were somebody…they felt they had it over other people".[6]

Indeed, it could be difficult to maintain individuality and find fulfilment in the aggressively uniform society of the GDR. In a society where all civilians are viewed identically as little but potential threats and are held to impossible standards of dedication to the communist ideology, it is understandable that many would relish even the smallest amount of power that came with the role of informer. Many also felt flattered by the offer, which meant they were worthy enough to take on such a responsibility. The sense of adventure offered by the position in an otherwise monotonous society could be thrilling and overtly attractive.

It was not only the act of surveillance itself that the Stasi were well-accustomed with. In the GDR, any hint of a dissenting voice was crushed as quickly as it appeared. The Stasi developed a method of psychological warfare known as 'Zersetzung', translating to 'decomposition', to destroy the morale of civilians until they were too emotionally drained to partake in any illegal activity.[7] Following an individual's categorisation as 'dangerous', the possibility of living a normal life vanished. Those targeted by the Stasi reported being unable to find employment for extended periods of time; alternatively, others experienced various forms of career sabotage. Zersetzung encroached on people's personal lives and relationships, with Stasi officers producing falsified documents or photographs, designed to condemn a victim into disrepute, and sending them to their relatives. Through its informants and intense surveillance, the Stasi could locate each victims' most vulnerable trait- be it mental illness, homosexuality, phobia, ambition, or addiction- and exploit it to achieve maximum effect.

The reason why Zersetzung was so preferential to the Stasi was due to the anonymity that it ensured. The subtlety of the psychological attacks meant they were not always interpreted as the result of human interference; unlike more confrontational methods, Zersetzung enabled the Stasi to control the population without admitting responsibility. This further protected the welfare of the state, with the public's unawareness of the extent of its interference lessening the probability of active resistance movements emerging.

The Stasi's psychological warfare was not only rife in the general society of the GDR, but also in its prison and interrogation systems. Prisoners were kept in strict isolation, confined to their oppressive cells for the majority of the day, and- perhaps most horrifyingly- denied the right to sleep. Miriam Weber, who was made a political prisoner of the Stasi in 1969 at the age of just sixteen, recounted how she was permitted only four hours in total of sleep per night and was monitored throughout the day to ensure that she remained awake.[8] When enforced for extended periods of time, lack of sleep leaves a mental and physical impact on victims, who experience memory loss and hallucinations. They become disorientated, weak, and, in Weber's words, "kaput"- the ideal conditions for successfully 'decomposing' a victim's morale and self-assurance during interrogations. The effect of sleep deprivation coupled with the countless other techniques employed by interrogators, such as threats of execution and torture via being made to stand for hours in a tiny cell filled almost to the brim with water, was hugely instrumental to the Stasi's success in extracting confessions.[9]

In its four decades, the Stasi completely dominated life in East Germany. For years, freedom from the overbearing secret police and totalitarian regime was unforeseeable. This changed overnight. On 15th January 1990, over two months after the fall of the Berlin Wall and while Stasi officers were frantically working to destroy masses of files, demonstrators stormed the Stasi headquarters in East Berlin, marking the end of Stasi repression forever. After the right to open one's file was granted in 1992, the identity of informants and intricacies of Stasi methods were exposed, and countless civilians became enlightened to how they were unknowingly monitored for years.

Decades after the end of the GDR regime, the dark cloud of the Stasi's legacy still lingers over the people of what was once East Germany. Many of those affected by Stasi brutality continue to battle with their trauma, and the conditioning by the communist regime has left some individuals reluctant to openly embrace their individuality and express their opinions publicly.[10] However, since the early 1990s, significant efforts have been made to preserve the experiences of victims; the Hohenschönhausen prison in Berlin has been converted into a museum that employs former inmates as tour guides, and various projects focused on the reconstruction of destroyed files have taken place, aiming to give closure to those targeted by the Stasi.

Freedom in name does not equate to freedom in reality- freedom from the past, freedom to express oneself, freedom from one's trauma and memories. Continuing to discuss the atrocities committed by the Stasi and the experiences of those affected by its torture and torment is vital for the social development of modern Germany. As the surveillance of individuals was so ingrained in everyday life, the harsh reality is that millions of former East Germans are still coming to terms with their history. The combination of the distance that allows us to reflect on the past and the all-important ongoing conversation will guide us through the relatively new feat of life after totalitarianism, permitting us, eventually, to move on from the past and achieve a new, true freedom. In the former East Germany, there are millions of Julia Behrends, waiting to share their stories; it is our responsibility to listen.

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Why was the world connected in 1000AD?

By Rose Cherapanath Yr7

One reason the world was connected in 1000 was because of religion. The Roman Empire was split into two, the western half ruled from Rome and the Eastern half ruled from Constantinople. These two were the hearts of the Christian world at that time. Constantinople contained the great church of Hagia Sofia, which was in possession of many holy relics, such as a piece of wood from Noah's Ark. Many pilgrims arrived from all over the world to see these relics, which shows that the world was connected because they were able to come from many parts of the world for their religion. When Al-Mansur wanted to build Baghdad and the mosques it contained, he sent word all over his empire calling for skilled workers to construct it, revealing that the Islamic Empire was very well connected with its various parts due to religion.

A second reason the world was connected in 1000 was because of trade. The city of Constantinople was by the sea, which opened more water routes for boats to arrive in its harbour than if it were landlocked, which meant it could only be reached by land routes. Constantinople was also on a land trade route known as the Silk Roads which connected places as far off as China. Constantinople also traded with the Mediterranean via sea trade routes. The city of Baghdad was between the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates. This meant that Baghdad could be accessed through the rivers as well as land routes. Baghdad, like Constantinople, was on the land route called the Silk Roads, proving that the world was connected very well due to trade because one of the most important land trade routes, the Silk Roads, connected lands from China to Constantinople to Baghdad.

A final way that the world was connected in 1000 was through knowledge. A fire in the great Library of Alexandria had destroyed much of the ancient knowledge but some of the surviving writings were preserved in the Byzantine Empire. When Baghdad was built,

since it was meant to be perfectly circular, the Islamic Empire was lent some books about geometry, which were very precious, by the Byzantine Empire. When merchants arrived in Baghdad, they brought not only goods but also knowledge and sometimes even books, which were rare. These books were stored in the House of Wisdom where people could learn, teach and where scholars were paid to translate Greek, Persian and Indian texts into Arabic. New knowledge was also developed. Due to this exchange in knowledge, by the tenth century there were over 100 book sellers and many libraries in Baghdad. This shows that the world was connected because both the Byzantine and Islamic empires obtained knowledge from other empires.

In conclusion, the most important reason the world was connected in 1000 was trade because it connected many parts of the world that were far from each other. The Silk Roads connected lands across Europe and Asia, proving that the world was connected the most due to trade.

To what extent was the historical demonisation of witchcraft rooted in misogyny? (EPQ)
By Ellie Banyard

Witchcraft, in this context, is defined as the practice of magic or any supernatural powers, typically associated with evil intent. It has existed in many cultures throughout history all over the world, from Ancient Greek mythology[1] to precolonial Ghanian society[2]. Belief in witchcraft has varied within these communities; some have used it as a way to explain their misfortunes, believing that witches worked with the Devil and intended to harm humanity, whereas others have viewed witchcraft as a method used for healing or protecting others with regenerative potions or spells. So why did the former belief become the prominent conception of witches? Why was witch hunting so frequent in the Early Modern Period? And furthermore, why are the practitioners of witchcraft so often portrayed as female? In this essay I intend to explore how far misogyny was the main motivation behind the historical demonisation of witchcraft, specifically in Early Modern Europe and whether it was the leading cause behind the sudden influx of witch trials during this period. To do this I will start by looking at the origins of witchcraft and how witches were initially viewed, before moving on to how witch hunts began to be used to attack women. I will also explore how other factors influenced the persecution of witches, such as competition for religious and political power, using them as scapegoats for economic problems and as a way to attack other vulnerable groups such as the elderly and people of colour. I also wish to examine the way in which women have reclaimed the identity of witches as powerful and desirable instead of being an embodiment of ugliness and a way to repress powerful women.

The belief that witchcraft was closely related to Satanic practices properly emerged in Europe in the 1400s, creating a popular image of 'diabolic' witches that convened in cults, committed atrocities and worshipped the Devil. In Ronald Hutton's 'The Witch', he writes that "Europeans alone turned witches into practitioners of an evil anti-religion"[3] due to the dramatic growth of religious hysteria and persecution against witches at the time, turning witches into demonic creatures, an image that has been accepted ever since. This contrasted with previous beliefs that witches were sorcerers who could heal people with their magic remedies and were not innately evil. Ancient Greek and Roman approaches to witchcraft demonstrate this, as witches were only persecuted if they intended to cause harm, whilst those who intended to do good could receive official approval[4]. There were also many goddesses worshipped in their culture who could perform magic and were perceived as witches, such as Hecate, the Greek goddess of witchcraft, who was capable of good and evil[5]. However, as time progressed perceptions of witches as benevolent figures became increasingly rare; instead, they were seen as harbingers of evil. Along with this idea of diabolic witches, witch trials became much more common in the 1400s. Witch trials had existed in England previously, although rarely, and can be traced back to the late seventh century when witchcraft was punishable by a period of fasting. This punishment worsened in the tenth century when King Athelstan, an Anglo-Saxon king, introduced the death penalty for guilty witches, but this was changed to mere banishment under William the Conqueror.[6] However, none of these instances compared to the mass hysteria surrounding witchcraft that grew in the mid-1400s. The first systematic European witch hunt occurred in 1428, in Valais,

Switzerland, and continued over a period of eight years.[7] Interestingly, a large majority of those accused and executed were male, with two-thirds of the victims being men and only one-third being women[8], unlike many of the following trials where women were predominantly targeted, implying that witch trials were not initially rooted in misogyny. This change was in part influenced by the book *Malleus Maleficarum*, published in 1486 by Heinrich Cramer and Joseph Sprenger, which was very influential during the outbreak of witch trials.[9] The book was a deeply misogynistic witch hunting manual that connected witchcraft with women through the concept that women were more susceptible to the Devil's temptations due to their inferior intellect,[10] stating 'Just as through the first defect in their [women's] intelligence they are more prone to abjure the faith; so, through their second defect of inordinate passions … they inflict various vengeances through witchcraft. Wherefore it is no wonder that so great a number of witches exist in this sex.'[11] This book also caused 'diabolism', worship of the Devil, to be a central charge in witch trials, which previously had not been the case. As its release coincided with the invention of the printing press, this book spread widely and rapidly through Europe and was widely accepted, giving us a good indication of what the general public believed about witches. Over time, *Malleus Maleficarum* became a legal manual for witch hunting, detailing methods for the capture and torture of witches, describing techniques such as sleep deprivation and water dunking[12] which were continued under King Henry VIII's reign from 1509. Following this, Henry VIII was the first monarch to proclaim witchcraft as a felony, defining it as a crime punishable by death under the 1541 Witchcraft Act.[13] During Henry's reign, he had massively encouraged the paranoia in England surrounding witchcraft, blaming his failures and misfortunes as King on larger, supernatural powers. Many people at this time were even led to believe that Henry's second wife, Anne Boleyn, was a witch for being unfaithful to him as a sexually free, open woman. To provide grounds for Anne's beheading, Henry then convinced himself that she was a sorceress who had seduced him into a marriage, in order to avoid a divorce.[14] This instance is a clear, publicised example of misogyny influencing the attack on 'witches', using such accusations to justify punishing women for trivial offences, or for deviating from the accepted societal view on women.

When looking at witchcraft accusations throughout the Early Modern Period, particularly from the 1600s onwards, it becomes abundantly clear that women were the main targets. According to Carol F. Karlsen's *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*,[15] 78% of the 344 alleged witches in New England between the years 1620–1725 were women. This raises the question – why exactly were women being targeted at this time, when two hundred years earlier men had made up the majority of those accused? To answer this, we need to look at the fact that during the seventeenth century, European society was increasingly Puritanical. Puritans were extreme Protestants who believed that the only role deemed suitable for a woman was that of a loyal and devoted Christian housewife who was reserved and looked after her children and her husband. A Puritan woman had to wear modest clothing that covered up her skin, and punishment for wearing immodest dress could result in public whippings[16]. The idea of a woman having any confidence or independence was unheard of, whereas for men it was accepted and often embraced. Women were accused of witchcraft if they were not meek, mild and subservient, and any woman who spoke her mind or was outwardly confident was viewed with suspicion.

An example of this is Mary Bliss Parsons, the wife of a wealthy man with whom she had nine children in the seventeenth century. Although she fitted into the typical housewife role, she was seen as 'domineering' with 'forcible speech' in a time when women were meant to be seen and not heard. Men felt threatened by this kind of behaviour as the long reigning patriarchal system in place meant that men had complete power over women, and so any challenge to this concept had to be stamped out. Therefore, Mary was charged with witchcraft, clearly portraying the misogynistic motivations behind such accusations of witchcraft.[17]Another main reason for accusing women of witchcraft was that women were seen as possessing a carnal lust that could only be explained through the worshipping of the Devil. In a prominently conservative Christian society, any women seen as possessing a sex drive or not being pure and innocent like the Virgin Mary were seen as corrupt and working for the Devil. Such ideas took roots from the Bible, such as in Leviticus 21:14; 'A widow, or a divorced woman, or a woman who has been defiled, or a prostitute, these he shall not marry. But he shall take as his wife a virgin of his own people'[18]. This belief of 'defiled' women not being worthy of marriage exemplifies the harsh requirements that women had to live up to. A perfect Christian woman had to be a virgin, free from sin and not having succumbed to temptation, and a woman who had sex before marriage defied this. Witches were often presumed to be easily seduced by the Devil, stemming from the Puritanical idea that women had an inherent moral weakness and were more susceptible to such temptations due to Eve's consumption of the apple, the original sin. Many people believed witches had sexual relations with the Devil, and would line up to have sex with him, or had orgies with fellow witches at the sabbath. Such beliefs were clearly rooted in misogyny, building on the assumption that women were the weaker sex and that women who were sexually open were sinners.

Women without children were also often targeted as witches. If they wanted them but couldn't conceive, they resorted to witchcraft out of bitterness. If they did not want children at all, they were rebelling against the Christian model of housewives, and were therefore witches. An example of this was Mary Webster of Hadley, Massachusetts, who was a married women who had no children of her own. A woman's main role in life was to provide her husband with children, so when Mary reached 60 years old in 1683 with still no children and an unpleasant attitude, suspicions arose. Her neighbours began to accuse her of cursing local livestock, but she was declared not guilty, until one of her neighbours fell ill and she was blamed, causing a village wide attempt to hang her for her 'crimes'[19]. Since Mary did not act as society believed a woman should, she was seen as unnatural and evil, showing how societal misogyny played such a huge role in the persecution of witches. Female beauty standards also played a role in the targeting of women. A typical witch in Early Modern Europe had a wart on her nose, a hunchback, bad teeth and a hairy lip, all normal features of a womanly body that didn't fit into societal beauty standards. This stereotypical image was presented in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* with the three evil witches having skinny lips, chapped fingers and beards, described as people 'That look not like th' inhabitants o' th' Earth'[20], emphasising their unnaturalness as women were supposed to be petite, feminine and conventionally attractive[21]. Additionally, Shakespeare wrote Macbeth in 1606 during the height of the war on witches in order to appease the incredibly superstitious King James I, so this interpretation of witches would have been based on the beliefs of the King and

Shakespeare's audience[22]. Witches were portrayed mainly as old women, contributing to the harmful view that feminine beauty only existed in their youth. Using such attributes as proof of witchcraft made it incredibly easy for men to dispose of women that they didn't find attractive, and simply calling a mole a 'Devil's Mark' could result in a woman being burnt at the stake. Therefore, it can be concluded that in a time when society wanted to control women and force them to conform with the impossible standards expected of them in order to benefit men, an easy way to do so was to demonise women and capitalise on their vulnerability. By using witches to portray characteristics in women such as being educated, assertive, sexually progressive and independent as evil and anti-Christian, women were greatly deterred from possessing such qualities, especially when the punishment for doing so was being burnt at the stake or drowned, proving that misogyny strongly influenced the demonisation of witchcraft.

Aside from using witch trials as a means for men to control women, different strands of Christianity used them to exert power over the other strands, most notably in the competing Catholic and Protestant churches. Roman Catholicism can be traced back to the time of Jesus Christ, who is believed to have founded the Catholic Church, whereas Protestantism only came into prominence in the sixteenth century, with the Protestant Reformation beginning on 31 October 1517[23], at approximately the same time as the hysteria surrounding witchcraft began. Prior to this, the vast majority of Christians had been Catholic, with Protestantism being the first ever viable challenge to their dominance. The main differences between these two churches lay in their differing interpretations of the Christian faith. In Catholicism, the Pope is seen as the direct successor of Saint Peter, leader of the apostles, and is the head of their Church, whereas Protestants believe that the Bible is the only source that has authority over Christian beliefs[24], and that the Pope's authority stemmed from a misunderstanding of Jesus' teaching in the Gospels.[25] When Protestantism emerged and directly challenged Catholicism, including Henry VIII's rejection of the Pope's authority, the Catholic Church felt threatened. In this competition for power, they turned to demonstrating their superiority by appeasing the masses in the best way they could – through witch trials. By defeating the Satan-following threat that Christians were growing more and more wary of, they showed that they were the more reliable Church in fighting evil, in much the same way that modern political parties attract loyalty today[26]. Christianity had always condemned witchcraft, shown in the Old Testament of the Bible where multiple passages caution against sorcery such as Exodus 22:18, which says, 'thou shalt not suffer a witch to live'[27] and Leviticus 20:27, which states, 'A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.'"[28] This demonstrates how religion created the demonic view of witchcraft as a practice of evil, linking it to worship of the Devil and perpetrating the idea that a good Christian would attempt to cleanse and purify the world of such sin, formulating the very idea of witch hunts. This proves that the demonisation of witchcraft was in part rooted in religion, not solely in misogyny. Although Christianity had always condemned witchcraft, witch trials had never been a prominent part of their religion, until such trials could be utilised to gain power. This concept helps explain why witch trials spread more widely in certain European countries than they did in others in the sixteenth century. The countries in which Protestantism had a bigger influence saw most of the witch trials, with 40% of the

persecutions against witchcraft occurring in Germany where Protestantism began, and 35% occurring in the other more Protestant countries including Switzerland, England, France and the Netherlands. Compared to the solely Catholic countries of Spain, Italy, Portugal and Ireland, where only 6% of the trials occurred,[29] it is clear that there was a large majority of these hunts occurring in places where Protestantism and Catholicism were vying for control. Furthermore, it was reported that more than two-thirds of the witch trials took place during the Counter-Reformation[30], which was the Catholics' attempt to suppress the Protestant Reformation and re-establish Roman Catholicism as the main religion in Europe between 1550 and 1650. All this evidence shows that the motivations for demonising and persecuting witches in Early Modern Europe were a lot more complex than just to establish power over women. Although many citizens did just that, it is important to look at the wider scope of events. The war between Catholicism and Protestantism caused the sudden growth of witch hunting via their competition to be the group that defeated the most witches, therefore attracting the most conflicted Christians, who were all becoming increasingly terrified of the threat of witches due to teachings from the Church, and therefore establishing themselves as the main religion of these European countries. This then allowed men to use the rising hysteria to capitalise on people's fears and to persecute women and other vulnerable members of society. Therefore, it can be argued that without the religious conflict that framed the sixteenth century, the persecution of witches and more specifically females would have been much less extreme. Additionally, without the pre-existing condemnation of witchcraft from the Church, the demonisation of witchcraft that was cultivated in the Early Modern Period would have been much less likely to occur, and so misogyny may not have been the sole leading cause of persecution against witches.

Money and the economy had a large influence on the demonisation of witchcraft alongside these aforementioned factors. Many powerful figures in the sixteenth century had motivations for persecuting witches separate to religious and misogynistic beliefs, the most prominent being wealth. For inquisitors, judges, notaries, constables and executioners, witch trials meant an increase in their income. With the ability to accuse anybody of witchcraft without the need for evidence, people that profited from criminal trials were never out of a job. This concept was identified in the 1590s following the large-scale witch trials in the archbishopric of Treves, or Trier, in Germany.[31] The canon of Treves Cathedral wrote in the *History of Treves* of how large businesses and powerful people benefitted from the witch hunts, stating that they 'looked for wealth in the ashes of victims'. Along with the income that came from the trials and executions, people in such positions also gained wealth through seizing the belongings of those who had been executed, who were often among the poor working classes. An example of an executioner who became particularly wealthy was Jörg Abriel, a German public executioner who led the 1589 witch trials in Schöngau.[32] He would charge the impoverished citizens two florins to simply examine a woman's body for the Devil's Mark, whether or not he found one, and for every execution he charged eight florins. This would be the equivalent of hundreds of pounds in modern day currency. From this, it can be concluded that people in such positions as Abriel, who would receive such monetary rewards for the execution of witches, would go out of their way to ensure as many innocent people were persecuted as possible for their own personal gain. On this basis, the continuation of witch trials over so many years can be explained, as those in

influential positions would not want their steady stream of income to come to an end, so they proceeded to come up with an increasing number of ways to identify 'witches'. In the Middle Ages, most people were part of the poor working class who could not afford education and were consequently more likely to believe in witchcraft as they did not have access to any evidence that disproved it, and the hysteria around such a concept created fear, further contributing to the demonisation of witches. The working class were vulnerable and incredibly easy to take advantage of by those in power, meaning that the rich got richer, and the poor got poorer. Furthermore, many historians have established a link between factors that negatively affected the economy and the growth of witch trials. For example, during droughts, when there were poor harvests, or during extended periods of fluctuation in the climate, the number of witch trials would increase. This is mainly thought to have occurred because witches were easy scapegoats for citizens to blame their economic misfortunes on. Witches had long been believed to have powers such as controlling weather, an idea laid out in *Malleus Malificarum* within a chapter detailing such powers entitled 'How they Raise and Stir up Hailstorms and Tempests, and Cause Lightning to Blast both Men and Beasts'[33]. This made them the easiest target for blame. King James VI of Scotland certainly held this belief, being one of the most superstitious monarchs when it came to witchcraft. In 1590, he led the North Berwick witch trials,[34] believing that witches had targeted him by conjuring dangerous storms whilst he sailed to Denmark over the North Sea.[35] This is a clear example of witches being unjustly blamed and persecuted in order to provide an explanation for natural disasters or economic difficulties, showing that the motivations behind witch trials extended beyond misogyny.

With the knowledge that the King of England used witches as scapegoats for his problems, it can be assumed that most ordinary citizens did the same. In Early Modern Europe, there were many natural disasters that led to economic downfall, such as the 'Little Ice Age' which spanned the years of 1303 to 1850, an epoch in which temperatures dropped dramatically[36]. This period consisted of a series of bitter winters that caused crop failures and made the seas too cold for the usual fish to live in, resulting in a lack of food and a drop in many people's income. The Little Ice Age reached its most extreme point between 1560 and 1650, which coincided with the most extreme surge in witch hunts.[37] Knowledge about science was limited during this time, meaning people had no explanation for the sudden drop in temperature. Therefore, the prominently Christian society came up with their own theories for the sudden misfortunes they faced, believing that it was the work of the Devil being carried out through witches. People were scared and angry due to declining living standards and increasing poverty, and in the ensuing hysteria they wanted to find and punish the culprits, thus providing a driving motivation to create an evil perception of witches so that they had an enemy to fight against, increasing the number of witch trials. This again links back to the idea of those with authority capitalising on witch trials to make more money, because in this time of uncertainty a steady income was desired more than ever. Consequently, this shows that the forces behind the witch trials in Early Modern Europe extended beyond sexism as they had become more than just a way to control women and were instead being utilised for monetary gain. Whether or not the economy was a more influential factor than misogyny, however, is up for debate, since economic problems had been occurring long before this time period with no such drastic conclusions. Additionally, when

studying how rich and powerful figures exploited the weaker classes, it is important to note that at this time only men were in such positions and that women would mainly make up the weaker classes. Women's opportunities in society were extremely limited, as they received much lower pay than men, could not own their own property, and tended to take up jobs such as housekeeping and childcare. Overall, the connection between some economic factors and misogyny can be clearly stated, implying that throughout the persecution against witches, misogyny consistently plays a role.

A recurring theme I have mentioned throughout this essay is the idea of witch trials being used to exert power over others. Although this manifested itself through religious and gender persecution, it was also used in politics, mainly to take down enemies or competition. A prime example of this being used as a political weapon was in the death of Joan of Arc in 1431. Joan of Arc was a French girl born into a peasant family who claimed to have seen visions of the archangel Michael, Saint Margaret and Saint Catherine who guided her to help Charles VII of France to save France from English domination.[38] Dressed in men's clothes, she became a military leader and helped liberate Orleans from English control. However, she was captured in 1430 and accused of witchcraft and heresy. This accusation was not based on a true belief that she was in league with the Devil, but on a desire to destroy the confidence of the French troops fighting against the English and delegitimise their victory. The man in charge of her trial was Pierre Cauchon, a pro-English Bishop who was more interested in politics than religion.[39] He was therefore greatly biased against Joan, the leading figure fighting against the English who had humiliated them greatly as she was only a teenage girl. During the trial he faked and manipulated evidence, misquoted Joan to make her appear guilty, threatened those who had different views to him and refused her request to be tried by an unbiased Catholic council.[40] It was necessary for the English to have Joan convicted of witchcraft so that they had grounds to execute her and could claim that Charles' coronation, which the English allies disapproved of, was the work of the Devil. This was a clear portrayal of how politicised witchcraft accusations had become – most of them did not stem from the assumption that witchcraft was real but were political weapons. This was incredibly apparent in Hungary in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, especially between different social classes. A common theme was 'accusations from above', in which those with greater status accused those of lower standing of witchcraft. In the 1600s, Transylvanian witch trials exemplified this theme with princes such as Sigismund Báthory accusing the families of his defeated enemies of witchcraft[41]. This was an easy way for people to get rid of potential threats to their control, as the weakness of those below them meant that they couldn't fight back. Those who fell victim to accusations from those in power were usually the most vulnerable in society, not only women but other groups such as the elderly, people with disabilities and people from foreign countries. The association between immigrants and sorcery can be evidenced in the Salem Witch trials in America in 1692, which strongly paralleled the trials in Europe, where the South American house slave Tituba was blamed for guiding the 'innocent' white girls in the town towards the Devil and witchcraft.

However, those with less power also tended to accuse those above them: 'accusations from below'. This largely occurred in instances of servants, mainly child servants, accusing their masters in an attempt to escape their situation or obtain revenge for their poor treatment. There were also many witchcraft accusations

thrown around within social classes.[42] These were often influenced by personal competition or dislike – if a citizen's neighbour was producing better crops, an argument between residents became too intense or a love affair turned sour,[43] the solution to their conflict was often to accuse those troubling them of witchcraft as this was the easiest way to dispose of them. For example, the last person to be executed for witchcraft in Switzerland was Anna Goldi, who broke off an affair she was having with a married man who then accused her of using black magic and speaking to the Devil out of a desire for revenge. Furthermore, the sporadic outburst of witch trials in Early Modern Europe came at a time of great political turmoil, coinciding with wars such as the Thirty Years War and the French Wars of Religion,[44] the aftermath of the Black Plague and the emergence of new laws and states. This unrest meant that citizens were afraid and uncertain, and thus more susceptible to hysteria, and that countries needed to control their population. In relation to whether or not politics was a more influential reason for the increase in witch trials than misogyny, it is again important to note the links that can be found between the two factors. For instance, in the case of Joan of Arc we must note that alongside her being a political military leader who fought against English control, she was also a young woman and therefore it was extremely easy to undermine her and accredit her success to the powers of the Devil as nobody believed young women could achieve such greatness.[45] As political and misogynistic motivations were so intertwined, it further proves how deeply sexism was ingrained into the demonisation of witchcraft.

Shockingly, witch hunts are still present in the modern world, especially in impoverished countries with 'witches' being blamed for their misfortunes. A prominent example of this is shown in Tanzania, a country in East Africa with one of the world's poorest economies. The residents of Tanzania have long been superstitious of witchcraft and saw it as the main cause of their misfortunes such as poor harvests, infertility or short life expectancies. They have been hunting witches for decades, mainly targeting elderly women and going to such extremes as knifing them to death. As recently as 2016, 394 witchcraft related killings were recorded in just the first six months of the year alone.[46] The reasons behind these witch hunts largely mirror those behind the witch hunts in Early Modern Europe, exemplified through the state of the economy. Poverty stricken countries like Tanzania in modern times have very similar average incomes to countries in the early seventeenth century in which witch hunts were very common, specifically Germany.[47] To put it into context, the per capita income in Tanzania is $2,760 compared to $47,620 in the UK. This means that the residents of Tanzania have much less access to education and so are more likely to believe in witchcraft. Furthermore, in a study by Edward Miguel[48], it was identified that in Tanzania in years when unusual patterns of rainfall ruin crops, there are around twice as many 'witch' killings than years without, with poor families being the most likely to kill alleged witches.[49] The persecution of women is also very clearly seen in these modern-day witch hunts, with the elderly women making up the overwhelming majority of victims. A main reason for this lies in the Tanzanian tradition that although widows cannot inherit their husband's land when they die, they can live out the rest of their days there before it passes on to male heirs.[50] The longer these women live, the longer the male heirs must wait to acquire this land, creating a growing resentment that can lead to murder. Furthermore, these older women have financial independence, something unheard of for females, and are no longer the property of their husbands so are therefore a

threat.[51] Tanzanian society is male-dominated and patriarchal, with women treated as a lower class[52] and expected to be the homemakers. As women are such a vulnerable social group, they are the easiest scapegoats to blame for the ongoing economic instability and an easy way to extort unpaid domestic labour. This concept directly parallels the witch trials in Early Modern Europe, as in both instances women were exploited by those in power through the attacks on witches, further proving that the demonisation of witchcraft has always been rooted in misogyny.

Sexism regarding witchcraft is not just limited to these few examples of actual modern witch hunts, but instead expands to figurative witch hunts in modern media. There are many examples of men using the term 'witch' as an insult to denigrate women in power, further emphasising the ingrained misogyny in the demonisation of witchcraft as strong female characteristics are still being associated with evil. This can be observed in the treatment of many powerful women throughout history, from Cleopatra who was said to have brainwashed Mark Anthony with sorcery, up to modern day women such as Julia Gillard, the first female prime minister of Australia, who was faced with sexist abuse during her rise to power with protestors holding up placards saying, 'ditch the witch'.[53] Despite this, many females in modern times have begun to reclaim the word 'witch' and use it as an empowering term, changing the typical image of witches from evil, ugly, old hags to strong, independent women. Through media and pop culture the public's view on witches has changed, with people associating the word with feminist characters such Hermione Granger, Sabrina the Teenage Witch and Wanda Maximoff.[54] The concept of witches is now beginning to transition into an image of an empowered, smart, confident woman. With witchcraft and womanhood still being so closely interlinked, it is clearly shown that the demonisation of witchcraft has strong misogynistic roots.

I would like to conclude this essay by coming to a decision regarding the main reason why I believe the idea of witchcraft has been demonised throughout history and why there was such a sudden increase in the number of witch trials in Early Modern Europe. The main theme of this essay that I have consistently referred to is the idea of misogyny being interlinked with the developed negative perception of witchcraft, and I believe that all my research throughout this project has further proven how many of the hunts against 'witches' were actually hunts against women, and how witch trials were used to persecute women as vulnerable figures in society. This concept was explored during the suffragette movement in the nineteenth century by suffragette Matilda Joslyn Gage,[55] who stood up to the patriarchy with this revolutionary idea. She claimed that 'The persecution of witches had nothing to do with fighting evil or resisting the devil. It was simply entrenched social misogyny, the goal of which was to repress the intellect of women. A witch wasn't wicked. She didn't fly on a broomstick naked in the dark, or consort with demons. She was, instead, likely to be a woman "of superior knowledge". For "witches" we should read instead "women". Their histories run hand in hand.'[56] I think this perfectly encapsulates how women were treated during the era of witch trials, as inferior beings who should not be intelligent or confident or sexual, and as creatures who could be easily disposed of if they made one wrong move. However, even though I strongly agree that the demonisation of witchcraft is rooted in misogyny, when considering the growth of witch trials and the image of the diabolic witch in Early Modern Europe, I believe that without the influence of religious beliefs and

competition the persecution of witches would have been much less extreme and widespread. Although the oppression of women has been a constant issue throughout history, the phenomenon of the witch trials that took place in the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries had never been seen before and I think that this was due to the Protestant reformation and the vying for power between the Protestants and Catholics at the time. When considering the creation of diabolic witches, I believe that religion and misogyny worked hand in hand. The idea of witches being evil and working for the Devil had stemmed from the Bible and Christian beliefs, as did the misogynistic ideas that women should be housewives and be sexually modest, and as the Church had such great power over the citizens of Europe in this period, it easily manipulated a vulnerable population into a state of hysteria around these two interconnected beliefs that is now widely known as the Early Modern European witch trials. Therefore, it can be seen that the ways in which religion demonised witchcraft during this time were based firmly in misogynistic beliefs, further proving my conclusion that misogyny was heavily ingrained in the persecution of witches. Overall, although the political and economic landscape of the Early Modern period helped exacerbate the effects of the witch trials, I believe that the demonisation of witchcraft was escalated by religious factors but was rooted in misogyny.

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