

Institution: University of Portsmouth
Unit of Assessment: 27 Area Studies
Title of case study: Transforming the educational delivery and public understanding of French Revolutionary Terror (UOP27TERROR)
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Through a range of publications and public engagements, the research of Professor David Andress into the French Revolution and its international and historical ramifications has achieved a notable impact on students and teachers in the educational sphere, becoming an influential interpretation in syllabi at undergraduate and postgraduate levels across the English-speaking world, as well as for A-level studies within the UK. This research impact has also been extended into the broader culture through engagement with public audiences, with a highly positive response, and participation in a major BBC factual production.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Since he began working at the University of Portsmouth in the mid-1990s, Professor Andress has published extensively on the history of the French Revolution. He has developed through his research an interpretation of the Revolution which complicates and challenges earlier historiographies at several levels, redefining an engagement with lived experience and the complexities of shifting understandings and allegiances that marked the period. While continuing to develop publications based on archival primary research (Outputs 1-3, see Section 3), he has incorporated such research into wider analyses through a series of books.</p> <p>His 2000 monograph, <i>Massacre at the Champ de Mars</i> (Output 4), was reviewed as a ‘compelling’ argument in the <i>Journal of Social History</i> (Supporting evidence 1), as a ‘nuanced, multi-layered analysis ... to be entirely welcomed’ in the <i>Journal of Modern History</i> (Supporting evidence 2), and as ‘an important departure’ for revolutionary historiography, ‘undoubtedly right’ in its methodology and thus ‘especially informative’ in the <i>Historical Journal</i> (Supporting evidence 3). His 2004 text, <i>The French Revolution and the People</i> (Output 5), was reviewed by the <i>International Review of Social History</i> (Supporting evidence 4) as ‘a truly excellent book’, offering ‘insights to specialists and a rich and clear account to general readers’. The <i>European History Quarterly</i> (Supporting evidence 5) noted it was ‘a crisply written, remarkably well-researched and informative synthesis ... a coherent, passionate and thought-provoking reinterpretation ... an excellent book, engaging, combative and well-written’.</p> <p>This body of work culminated in his most widely-read work, <i>The Terror</i>, published in the UK in 2005 and in a US edition in 2006 (Output 6). The impact achieved by this book, as representing the underlying body of research, is the subject of this case-study. Widely and positively reviewed in the UK quality press, it also received academic praise. Reviewed by the <i>Annales historiques de la Révolution française</i> (Supporting evidence 6) as ‘This laudable effort ... an excellent summation’, Prof David Bell (Princeton) noted in the <i>New Republic</i> (Supporting evidence 7) that it was ‘a remarkably good job... a sure guide through some of the most compressed and tangled political undergrowth in history’, and Prof William Doyle (Bristol) in the <i>Independent</i> (Supporting evidence 8) called it ‘The most authoritative treatment we are likely to have for many years.’</p> <p>The core argument of <i>The Terror</i> is encapsulated in its sub-title: <i>civil war in the French Revolution</i>. Andress argues that the major historiographical currents of the late twentieth century, the Jacobin-Marxist ‘social interpretation’ and the ‘revisionists’ such as Furet and Schama who place great emphasis on the power of abstract political rhetoric, are both essentially limited when attempting to engage the complexity of revolutionary processes.</p> <p>Andress’s research findings demonstrate the need for an understanding of the deep cultures of the eighteenth century when explaining the French Revolution. Groups such as Parisian radicals and ‘counter-revolutionary’ peasants, previously painted as heroes or villains of competing accounts, can now be seen as having complex perspectives of their own, meriting reconsideration. Andress</p>

also demonstrates that amongst the elites themselves the apparently delirious rhetoric of revolutionary enthusiasm was in fact firmly grounded in the culture of the period, and represented both the necessary and the virtuous way to conduct public affairs amidst epochal change.

In works both of original research and original synthesis, Andress has used insights such as these to restore agency to the many different groups involved in revolutionary events, presenting new explanations for extreme behaviour and conflict that restore the thought-provoking commonality between reader and subject, rather than, as so many past versions of the French Revolution have done, creating a playing-field for cheering on one side against the other, in the name of present politics.

3. References to the research

- (Output 1) Andress, David. (1995). Social Prejudice and Political Fears in the Policing of Paris, January-June 1791. *French History* 9(2), pp.202-226. DOI: [10.1093/fh/9.2.202](https://doi.org/10.1093/fh/9.2.202)
 - International peer-reviewed journal
- (Output 2) Andress, David. (1998). Press and Public in the French Revolution: A Parisian Case-Study from 1791. *European History Quarterly*, 28(1), pp. 51-80. DOI: [10.1177/026569149802800102](https://doi.org/10.1177/026569149802800102)
 - International peer-reviewed journal
- (Output 3) Andress, David (2006) The Micro-physics of Öffentlichkeit? Habermas, Foucault and the Administration of Democratic Space in the Palais-Royal, 1789-1790. *Cultural and Social History*, 3(1), pp.1-22. DOI: [10.1191/1478003806cs056oa](https://doi.org/10.1191/1478003806cs056oa)
 - International peer-reviewed journal
- (Output 4) Andress, David (2000) *Massacre at the Champ de Mars: popular dissent and political culture in the French Revolution*, Royal Historical Society studies in history: new series. Boydell Press for the Royal Historical Society, Woodbridge. ISBN 0861932471. Available on request.
 - (Supporting evidence 1) Review, *Journal of Social History*, 36.1, 2002, p. 200.
 - (Supporting evidence 2) Review, *Journal of Modern History*, 75.1, 2003, p. 169.
 - (Supporting evidence 3) Review, *Historical Journal*, 46.3, 2003, p. 770.
- (Output 5) Andress, David (2004) *The French Revolution and the People*, Hambledon and London, London, xviii + 301 pp. ISBN 18528 5295X. Available on request.
 - (Supporting evidence 4) Review, *International Review of Social History*, 50.3, 2005, pp. 503-5.
 - (Supporting evidence 5) Review, *European History Quarterly*, 36.1, 2006, pp. 117-9.
- (Output 6) Andress, David (2005) *The Terror: Civil War in the French Revolution*, Little, Brown, London. vi + 424 pp. ISBN 03168 61812. Available on request. US edition, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2006 (As *The Terror; the merciless war for freedom in revolutionary France*, ISBN 03742 73413).
 - (Supporting evidence 6) Review, *Annales historiques de la Révolution française*, no. 344, 2006, pp. 263-5.
 - (Supporting evidence 7) Review by Prof David A. Bell, Princeton University, in *The New Republic*, 17 April 2006, p. 30.
 - (Supporting evidence 8) Review by Prof William Doyle, University of Bristol, in *The Independent*, 10 June 2005, p. 28.

4. Details of the impact

Educational Impact

In the fields of undergraduate and postgraduate education, the research findings embodied in *The Terror* have had a global impact. Information in this area is necessarily diffuse, but an informal survey through the H-France online community (conducted January 2012) produced over 30 responses indicating that the text had become a key presence on syllabi for teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Institutions included: (UK) Birkbeck College, Reading, and Keele; (Australia) Deakin, Melbourne, and the Australian National University; (Canada) Universities of Ottawa and Regina, and Wilfrid Laurier University; (United States) Northwestern University, the University of Arkansas, Reed College, SUNY Albany, California State University, Los Angeles, Fullerton and North Ridge, the University of Mississippi, SUNY Oneonta, the University of South

Alabama, Washington and Lee University (Corroborative Source, hereafter CS, 1).

Individual feedback comments from respondents include: 'your book, judging from the response of my students, has been one of the most stimulating and rewarding among those I assign in this course.' (Erik Goldner, California State University, Northridge); 'the book helps grad students and upper level history majors tackle questions of historiography in their long writing assignment... thanks for this powerful contribution to the field.' (John Savage, Lehigh University, Pennsylvania); 'your book is and will be on the doctoral exam book list of every student I have who does any reading on the French Revolution.' (Richard S. Fogarty, University at Albany, SUNY) (CS1).

Given that the field of French Revolution studies is a highly congested one, with new high-level surveys and analytical syntheses appearing every year, these results, seven years after initial publication, are testimony to the lasting and significant impact of Andress's work on the teaching-practices of university teachers and the understanding of their students across the Anglophone world.

This research has also had impact on UK A-level teaching. For the past five years Andress has lectured regularly on the themes of his work to sixth-form students (a cumulative audience of several thousands) at events organised by Premier Student Conferences and Sovereign Education, the most significant bodies offering direct experience of academic history to UK school students. The Director of Premier Student Conferences has noted that Andress receives 'much praise from teachers' in feedback on these events, with the clarity and quality of Andress's interpretations consistently acknowledged, along with their positive impact on student understanding (CS2).

In 2010, the exam board EdExcel chose an excerpt from *The Terror* as one of only three historiographical extracts for commentary on their A2 History paper on the Revolution. Building on this significant impact, in 2011/12 Andress was commissioned by the Society for the Study of French History to produce a revision-guide and series of audio podcasts for free distribution to A-level students nationwide (CS3). The launch of this resource was accompanied with a further contribution to the Historical Association magazine *Teaching History*. Both the written and audio materials encapsulate the key findings of the underpinning research and make it accessible to new educational audiences. This work has been accessed by students and teachers not merely in the UK, but as far afield as Islamabad, Pakistan. Recent feedback on the podcasts from teachers includes: 'I have found them very helpful, not only for myself but for my exceptionally bright group of Year 13 students'; 'your podcast has proved especially useful ... along with the accompanying essay, very helpful particularly for revision' (CS4).

Through this work, and its basis in his research, Andress has a significant claim to have a leading active impact on the educational understanding of the French Revolution, structuring syllabi and influencing both the construction of examinations and the pedagogical response to them, with a reach extending from UK school students and teachers to postgraduate students across the Anglophone world.

Cultural Impact

The Terror has had global sales of some 17,000 copies (CS5). One indicator of direct impact on individuals is their engagement through ratings on the goodreads.com website, where the US edition of the work has an average score of 4.01 out of 5. It continues to attract individual 4- and 5-star ratings in 2013. This compares, for example, to a rating of 3.97 for Schama's *Citizens*, and 3.71 for Doyle's *Oxford History of the French Revolution*, and is the highest rating of any recently-published history text on the Revolution (figures here and below accurate as of 10 October 2013). Comments include 'This is History at its best', 'an author who understands the relevance of their lessons for today's world', 'Fascinating and very informative... It will make you hunger for more' (CS6).

The impact of this research on other non-academic bodies is demonstrated by a series of engagements explicitly arising from the public profile of *The Terror*. Oxford Analytica, a consulting

company, commissioned Address to write a guide to the French Revolution for a major client, and the *Wall Street Journal* commissioned a blog piece on the contemporary resonance of French revolutionary experiences (CS7). Orion Publishers invited him to act as historical consultant on Sally Gardner's children's fiction books set in the Revolution, *The Red Necklace* and *The Silver Blade*. As the author noted, Address's contribution 'was significant, contributing to my ability to set a stimulating story in a realistic historical context, and assisting through this additional dimension of the work with the achievement of the very positive critical and reader response that it received' (CS8). In a review, the leading magazine *Publisher's Weekly* specifically noted that *The Red Necklace* 'paints vivid, convincing pictures of the Revolution' (CS9), and the book is rated at 3.81 out of 5 by a large sample of readers on [goodreads.com](http://www.goodreads.com). *The Silver Blade* is at 3.93.

The conclusions of *The Terror* were further articulated in a TV drama-documentary, 'Terror! Robespierre and the French Revolution', produced in 2008/09. The programme was broadcast on 11 July 2009 on BBC2, and repeated on BBC4 on 24 October 2009. Well-received on first broadcast, the programme is currently rated at 7.8 out of 10 on the Internet Movie Database, a global monitor of broadcast output. As well as providing initial background information and perspective, Address was interviewed extensively for the programme itself, and appeared as one of the major on-screen contributors. This programme, thanks to the input of Address and his work, was able to counterpoint a continued left-right oppositional engagement with more subtle debate about the contexts of revolutionary actors and the constraints on their behaviour (CS10).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

The following items available for audit from University of Portsmouth on request:

CS1. Email survey replies on using *The Terror* in Higher Education globally.

CS2. Supporting statement on lectures to 6th-forms by Director of Premier Student Conferences

CS4. Teachers' feedback on French Revolution A-level podcasts.

CS8. Supporting statement from the author concerning contribution to the quality and reception of fictional works.

Contact information provided:

CS5. Publishing Director for Non-Fiction at Little, Brown. Can corroborate global sales figures for *The Terror*, and confirm the highly positive critical reaction to the text and its continuing interest for readers.

Openly accessible information:

CS3. Podcasts hosted at http://www.frenchhistorysociety.ac.uk/french_revolution.htm

CS6. Goodreads.com entry for *The Terror*:

http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/216275.The_Terror

CS7. *Wall Street Journal* blog entry: <http://blogs.wsj.com/speakeasy/2011/10/18/is-occupy-wall-street-similar-to-the-french-revolution/>

CS9. *Publishers' Weekly* entry for *The Red Necklace*: <http://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-8037-3100-4>

CS10. IMDB entry for 'Terror!': <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1468876/>