





# HOW DID THE 'ROARING 20s' & 'CRASHING 30s' INFLUENCE *fashion* ?

BY SARA T.

## 1920s

The Roaring Twenties marked a revolutionary transformation in fashion. Emerging from the ashes of World War I, the iconic flapper look embodied the era's spirit of liberation and modernity.

Women embraced a radical shift from the corseted, curvaceous silhouettes of the past, pursuing a new "boyish" ideal through diet and exercise. The quintessential style featured straight, "shapeless" dresses with dropped waistlines and daringly raised hemlines that, for the first time in history, rose above the knee—a change that many viewed as a bold feminist statement.

The signature bobbed haircut, often paired with the close-fitting cloche hat, complemented this modern aesthetic, while the period saw the rise of revolutionary designers like Coco Chanel, whose "little black dress" became a timeless symbol of the decade's emphasis on practicality, versatility, and year-round wearability.



Vogue offered up "two contrasting versions of the evening mode" in 1927. This sleek, darker version came courtesy of Jean Patou. Douglas Pollard.

"No colour is smarter than black for evening," Vogue wrote in 1927. Lambarri.

## 1930s

The Wall Street Crash of 1929 marked an abrupt end to the carefree flapper era as hemlines dropped and silhouettes became more conservative. The "Crashing Thirties" saw the Great Depression's economic constraints, forcing women to prioritise versatility in their wardrobes, with garments needing to function across seasons and occasions. However, this limitation paradoxically sparked ingenious design innovations. Fashion embraced a return to femininity with raised waistlines, flatteringly draped fabrics, and exaggerated features like puffed sleeves and cinched belts that created an hourglass silhouette—a stark contrast to the boyish looks of the 1920s. The revolutionary technique of the 'bias cut', popularised by Madelaine Vionnet, created beautifully flowing, body-skimming gowns. Perhaps most significantly, Hollywood emerged as a powerful influence during this period, with women seeking escapism through cinema and drawing inspiration from the sophisticated styles of screen icons like Jean Harlow, Greta Garbo, and Joan Crawford.



Source: Blue17 Vintage Clothing



# THE FALL OF CHARLES I

BY AKWASI A.

Charles I, one of the most bemusing monarchs of all time, but not actually well known by the common Wellingtonian. The second monarch of the Stuart dynasty, he led half the country into its first 'official' civil war; established and dissolved parliament at will; and was tried by a court of his subjects, from which he was sentenced to death and executed on the 30th of January 1629, outside the banqueting house at Whitehall Palace.

The metaphorical 'beginning of the end' of the tyrannical reign of the Caroline King is a widely debated opinion among historical scholars of early modern England. Some would say his downfall began when there were mass abstentions from Charles' fiscal policy from 1629 to 1640 during his 'Personal Rule', where he attempted to direct the country without resorting to statutory law via his parliament. This partly came from his inherent belief in the Divine Right of Kings from his father James I, who wrote of such absolutist ideals in many of his writing including *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*: 'The King is God's immediate lieutenant upon earth... God's power is in the King'. A strong argument is that when Charles married Henrietta Marie of France, he began the era of scepticism by Oliver Cromwell, John Pym, and John Hampden, who had radical beliefs that Charles was overtly sympathetic to Catholic practices within Protestantism. Additionally, policies such as the introduction of the new Book of Common Prayer were attempting to make the English Church 'Romish' in its proceedings.



Source: World History Encyclopedia



Few optimists on Charles' chaotic rule would make the case that the Stuart King held a strong grip of authority over England, Scotland, and Ireland even throughout his personal rule and The First English Civil War until he surrendered to the Presbyterian Scots in 1646, who then bargained with the Parliamentarians to hand over Charles for a heavily disputed sum – this was highly significant as when he was held prisoner by both factions of the coalition against the Royalists, Charles attempted to arrange a deal with their leaders as to allow him to return to his throne without harm; but during these negotiations, Charles was said to be incredibly disrespectful, and spoke in a manner which led the commanders of the Presbyterian and Parliamentary armies to the belief that he was not to be taken seriously; a highly respected historian wrote on the actions of the King during treaty negotiations: 'it is evident that his (Charles') conduct was, from every point of view but his own as reprehensible as it was dangerous', this gives an insight to how Charles' deep-rooted belief that he wielded a power that could only be questioned by God not only made himself look disrespectful, but also ignorant and foolish as it concerned a strategy of arbitration as when arguing with people who diametrically opposed his denomination of Christianity and his leadership style.



*Although the timing of the symbolic end of Charles' reign can be disputed from many viewpoints, it is not to be argued that his impertinence was the ultimate factor that was to be the cause of his execution.*

*After consequent gerrymandering during the negotiations with the New Model Army, Charles was able to sign a secret treaty with the Scots called The Engagement (possibly a foreshadowing of the Scottish relations of Charles' namesake Charles II) in December of 1647, which would have inclined the king to incorporate Presbyterianism into England for 3 years if he was able to get back into power. This marked the beginning of the Second English Civil War where the Scots invaded England and attempted to overthrow the Parliamentary forces, at the same time Royalist militias across England and Wales attempted to do the same. Despite the collective effort, the pragmatic parliamentarians put down the rebellion within months and Charles was once again forced to negotiate with the opposing force. Fed up with the demeanour of Charles during the first negotiations in 1646, Oliver Cromwell and the leaders of the Parliamentarians were determined to forgo the recommendation of The House of Commons, which had mandated that the New Model Army should continue to negotiate with the imprisoned King, in a vote which heavily favoured the king 128 to 93. To avoid negotiating with what they believed was an authoritarian despot, an ejection of all MPs who supported restoring the king to power (many Royalists, Presbyterians, and moderate Protestants were still in parliament at the time, even if they did not fight in favour of the Parliamentary cause) was led by Oliver Cromwell, called Pride's Purge, where such members of parliament were arrested or excluded from voting (highly ironic considering what was believed to be the main cause of the Parliamentarians). The remaining members went on to form what was called the 'Rump Parliament', which went on to indict Charles for treason against his subjects.*

*The House of Lords rejected the charge of treason which was set by the Rump Parliament on the grounds that the idea of charging the monarch with treason was novel. The parliament disregarded this claim by the Lords and passed statute law which allowed for the trial to commence without the blessing of both houses. The trial of King Charles I of England, Scotland, and Ireland began on the 20th of January 1649, at Westminster Hall. The commission which tried Charles was a collection of 68 radical parliamentarians, headed by John Bradshaw as Chief Commissioner, they charged the king with tyrannical rule and treason against his subjects. When the charge was read out in front of Charles at court,*

*Bradshaw prompted him to answer with a plea; but the King in his belief in his divine power refused to answer, saying: 'I would (like to) know by what power I am called hither ... I would know by what authority, I mean lawful... Remember, I am your King, your lawful King', by this he questioned the jurisdiction of the court, going further to say, 'I have a trust committed to me by God, by old and lawful descent', a clear designation of his emblematic faith in his divine right, that God had entrusted him with a power to rule with absolute power over his subjects. But this only antagonised the commission and they took the King's failure to plead as an admission of guilt. Therefore, after only 7 days the King was sentenced to death by 'the severing of his head from his body'. It is said that upon hearing his sentence, Charles broke out of his stoic nature in a bid to save himself, but the Court refused to hear him, his fate was sealed. The warrant for his execution was signed by 59 commissioners. Charles was then beheaded on the scaffold outside the banqueting hall at Whitehall Palace on the 30th of January 1649.*



Source: Wikipedia



# WAS Marie Antoinette TO BLAME FOR THE FRENCH REVOLUTION?

BY ARIEL G.

Marie Antoinette is one of the most controversial, yet fascinating, queens in history. All sections of French society were often critical and negative towards this queen— from the nobility to the poor. Most people in the first and second estates supported the queen initially, but the third estate perceived her as rather corrupt. By the 1780s, the public came to despise her — they viewed her as a corruptive force within the French monarchy, and she became a hated figure of the French Revolution. This article will seek to understand why she was so despised by her subjects and whether she really was to blame for the French Revolution.

Born in Vienna in 1755, Marie Antoinette was a young queen of 18 years old when she came to the throne in France in 1774. She was only 14 when she married King Louis, a political marriage that had been intended to help unite the two countries of Austria and France. The two countries had previously been at war, so this marriage instantly evoked suspicion in the French public—they now had a queen who not only married a foreigner, but one from a former enemy nation. This instantly created distrust for the young queen. The young queen also suffered distrust because of her religion. She was a Catholic, just like her husband. However, by 1794, France's churches had been closed down. During the French Revolution, Catholics were seen as enemies of the state. The revolutionaries and new government quickly brought the French Church under their control, gaining full authority over its property and incomes.

She was also the subject of much gossip and rumor, which did nothing to improve her reputation with the French public. She was accused of being a spy for Austria, and there were countless tales of how she would spend excessively whilst French people had to endure hard times. Many liked to paint a picture of her being cold and uncaring towards the plight of the common people. Stories started to circulate that, upon hearing about her subjects starving due to the cost of bread rising, she heartlessly said "Let them eat cake," which ultimately led to the uprising of the peasants.



The frivolous 14-year-old Austrian princess who came to France to marry the future king, Louis XVI, developed strength and character over the years.

Source: Smithsonian Magazine

The media liked to portray the queen as mean and uncaring, though there is no solid historical evidence to prove that she did utter the iconic phrase. However, rumours often held more weight than truth, so people liked to vilify this monarch.

Marie Antoinette attracted public attention as rumours about her spread further, fuelled by people who wanted to gain power and overthrow the Royal family— particularly the people supporting the French revolution. An example of this is the Duke of Orleans (Louis Philippe), Louis XVI's cousin and one of the wealthiest men in France, who actively supported the French Revolution by secretly distributing libelles (small pamphlets or leaflets). Some of the libelles accused Marie Antoinette of having illegitimate children, sympathizing with France's perceived enemies, and other criticisms, which further turned the public against her as their queen.



However, rumours often held more weight than truth, so people liked to vilify this monarch.

The Queen's bad reputation, already tarnished by the gossip, worsened when she committed a crime, obtaining an extremely expensive diamond necklace and refusing to pay the price. This was hammered out by a noblewoman, Jeanne de la Motte-Valois, after Queen Marie Antoinette only gave them her signature for the necklace, but Jeanne was later declared guilty of this criminal offence. Even though the Queen was no longer guilty, the public was still disappointed in her actions.

Contemporary historians are starting to paint the Queen in a slightly different light. Rather than uncaring, there are details of her being compassionate and caring towards her subjects. Historians acknowledge that she made several mistakes likely due to her young age; however, she did not deserve to become one of the most despised figures in French history. Historians have also discovered that many stories were wildly exaggerated and unfair. She became a scapegoat during a time of social unrest, when people were demanding change. As Marie Antoinette grew older and more mature, her behaviour improved, and she showed better judgment, especially in relations to her lavish spending. However, by then, her reputation had already been severely damaged. She ultimately died a hated figure after having spent 14 months in prison.



Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, by Jean-Baptiste Isabey, 1783,  
Source: The Metropolitan Museum



Marie Antoinette with her two eldest children, Marie-Thérèse-Charlotte and dauphin Louis-Joseph  
Source: Getty Images

## Discussion questions

- Do you think Marie Antoinette deserved the level of blame she received for France's problems? Why or why not?
- Was it fair to hold Marie Antoinette accountable for France's problems when King Louis XVI held the ultimate power? Why or why not?



# *Botticelli's Fortezza:* **THE ENIGMATIC WOMAN OF THE RENAISSANCE**

*Botticelli's Fortezza is not just a painting; it is a pivotal piece in the context of Renaissance art, marking a significant moment in the portrayal of women and the competition among artists of the time. Commissioned alongside works by other renowned artists, including Pollaiuolo, Fortezza was initially intended to be part of a larger exhibition celebrating the ideal of femininity through art. However, it quickly became apparent that Botticelli's work surpassed the rest, propelling him into the artistic spotlight.*

*During the late 15th century, Florence was a vibrant hub for artistic expression, with numerous commissions aimed at depicting women in various forms. Many artists, influenced by the prevailing humanist ideals, sought to create representations that highlighted the virtues and strengths of women. Pollaiuolo, known for his dynamic and muscular figures, was one of the leading artists commissioned to create pieces for this exhibition. His works often celebrated physical beauty and vigor, presenting women in powerful poses that reflected the Renaissance's fascination with the human body.*

*However, as these various artists crafted their interpretations of femininity, Botticelli took a different approach with Fortezza. His depiction of the ideal woman transcended mere physicality; she embodied moral strength and resilience, qualities that resonated deeply with the societal struggles of the time. This approach set Fortezza apart from its contemporaries, as Botticelli infused his work with a deeper philosophical meaning.*

*When the exhibition opened at the Palazzo della Signoria, a buzz of excitement filled the air. The audience was eager to see how each artist had interpreted the theme of womanhood. As they moved from piece to piece, Pollaiuolo's vibrant, muscular depictions of women elicited admiration.*



Source: Wikipedia

*But when viewers turned to Botticelli's Fortezza, there was an immediate shift in atmosphere. The graceful lines, serene expression, and ethereal quality of Botticelli's figure captivated the crowd. Critics and patrons alike were taken aback by the*

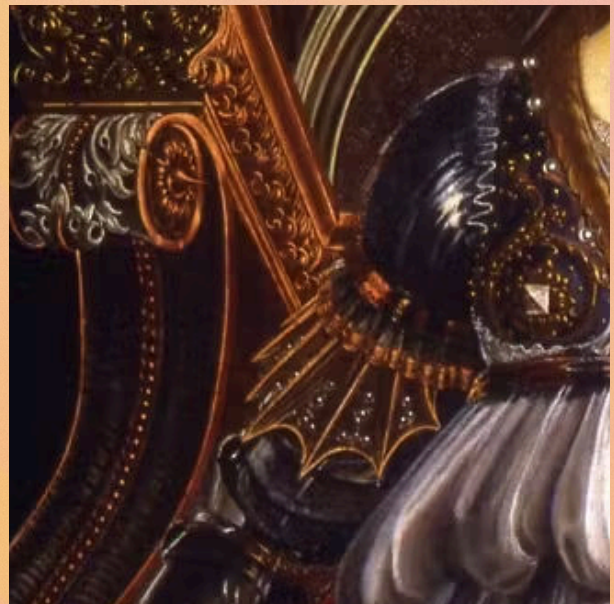


emotional depth and spiritual presence of Fortezza. While Pollaiuolo's works showcased the physical strength of women, Botticelli's painting revealed an inner strength that transcended the aesthetic. The confident posture and flowing garments of Fortezza communicated not just beauty but a sense of purpose and resilience, prompting viewers to reflect on the nature of womanhood during a time of political instability in Florence.

The juxtaposition between Botticelli's work and those of his contemporaries became a focal point of discussion. Many began to argue that Botticelli's portrayal was not only superior but also more relevant, resonating with the new cultural ideas of the Renaissance. As patrons began to favor Fortezza over the other works, Botticelli found himself thrust into the limelight, his reputation skyrocketing as the definitive artist of his time.

The impact of Fortezza extended beyond its immediate success. It challenged the traditional roles ascribed to women in art, suggesting that they could embody both beauty and virtue, grace and strength. Botticelli's innovative portrayal contributed to a shift in how women were represented in art, influencing future generations of artists who sought to balance aesthetic appeal with deeper narratives.

In engaging with Fortezza today, we recognize not only its artistic brilliance but also the rich story behind its creation—a story of competition, innovation, and the evolving portrayal of women in art. Botticelli's ability to surpass his contemporaries like Pollaiuolo solidified his legacy, making Fortezza a timeless symbol of resilience and virtue that continues to resonate in discussions of art and femininity. Ultimately, Fortezza serves as a powerful reminder of art's capacity to provoke thought, inspire change, and reflect the complexities of the human experience.



## Extend your knowledge

'Botticelli: A touch of the divine'  
| Royal Academy of Arts

'Sandro Botticelli' (1925, 3 vols)  
| By Yukio Yashiro



# SHOULD THE UK HAVE GONE TO WAR WITH IRAQ IN 2003?

BY CASPAR R.

“ We go to liberate, not to conquer. We will not fly our flags in their country. We are entering Iraq to free a people and the only flag which will be flown in that ancient land is their own. Show respect for them. ”

That was an excerpt from a speech made by Colonel Tim Collins a few days before the invasion began. It captures an interesting perspective on the war and encapsulates some of the feelings surrounding the event.

The 2003 Iraq war was not only dangerous conflict that spanned 9 years, finishing in 2011, but was also rooted with controversy and discussion that is still talked about to this day. This article will focus on the UK reasoning behind going to war, discussing their connection to the USA and it's 'war on terror', the idea that Iraq had Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD's) and the opposition to Saddam Hussein's oppression in Iraq. By the end of this article I would simply hope that you know more about this topic than you did before, and that you can make a decision yourself on whether the UK should have invaded Iraq.

## Prelude to the Iraq war

Back in 1991 there had been another war with Iraq, often known as the Gulf War or operation Desert Storm, where a US led 42 country coalition engaged in conflict to stop Saddam Hussein's Iraqi forces after they invaded Kuwait. After this conflict, the United Nations told Saddam Hussein to remove his program for Weapons of mass destruction, consisting of Chemical, Biological and planned Nuclear weapons, some of which were used in the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980's – with a recorded 341 uses of chemical weapons from 1980-1988 – resulting in a thousands of deaths and injuries. Here lies the debate; after 1991, the UN security council ordered Hussein to abolish his WMD program, one of the key reasons for the

US/UK invasion was the belief that Hussein's program was still active – so was it? Or was this another excuse to invade Iraq for other reasons?

## The WMD program

Despite it being a major factor in the persuasion by Tony Blair for the UK to join in with the invasion in Iraq, no WMD's were ever actually found in Iraq. This was concluded after a thorough and intensive 15 month search by 1200 inspectors from the CIA's Iraq Survey Group, where they discovered no WMD's. However, the intention to restart chemical and nuclear weapons programmes was present for if the UN sanctions were lifted. To this day, Tony Blair – prime minister at the time, justifies his decision based on the fact that he was being fed information and needed to act on it. In a BBC interview he said; 'it's really important to understand the intelligence I was getting is what I was relying on, and I think I was entitled to rely on it'. Tony Blair made his actions based on the intelligence he was being given, having been told there were WMD's in Iraq, and that the threat if Saddam Hussein used them again would be immeasurable – do you think this was enough for him to make his decision?



Soldiers dig in during the journey north into Iraq, March 2003  
Source: National Army Museum





A Royal Irish Regiment vehicle passes a burning oil well during the invasion of Iraq, March 2003

Source: National Army Museum



Source: Britannica

### The UK involvement

Some of you may be wondering why an issue largely pursued by the USA was joined by the UK, and this is largely down to the relationship between Tony Blair and President Bush, as part of the “special relationship” shared between the UK and USA (a term coined by Churchill in 1944). The key idea here is that for the UK to abandon the US in a military operation wouldn’t make sense. Tony Blair may not have wanted to go to war, but if it came to that he was willing to support the USA – “When I was prime minister, there was no doubt either under President Clinton or Bush who the American President picked up the phone to first; it was the British Prime minister” – Tony Blair speaking on a Podcast in 2023 about the Iraq war. This clearly depicts the idea of the necessity of a strong relationship between the two allies at the time; to be seen to not support each other simply wouldn’t work if they wanted to keep a strong relationship.

### The War On Terror

Following the horrendous attacks on the world trade centre on 9/11, the Bush administration began what they labelled as a ‘War on terror’ – this was essentially a vow to try and wipe out terrorism, specifically looking at Al Qaeda (the group responsible for 9/11) while also pinning part of the Iraq war as part of the war on terror, based upon the WMD claims and that Iraq had links to Al Qaeda. As a result of this, one of the justifications for the Iraq invasion in 2003, is as part of the Global War On Terror started by the USA.

So all of these reasons led to the coalition invasion of Iraq, an event that caused over 150,000 deaths and that lasted until 2011. It lasted much longer than expected and had a lot more consequences than expected by those who made the decision to intervene. Do you think there should have been an invasion of Iraq?

## Discussion questions

- How do you think the war affected the people of Iraq?
- Do you think there were other ways to handle the situation with Iraq without going to war?



