

History's appeal to me lies in the complexity of the relationships between people and ideas that have driven society's development. These relationships are seen not only in history but also historiography: the origins and effects of an event can lead to a substantial amount of unique interpretations. Considering how a historian's research may have been affected by their own views, and lately reading works on historiography, has made my fascination with the subject deeper than just intellectual curiosity on historical events. In this way history has made me more aware of my own views and biases as they affect the way I interpret the past as well as the way I see the world.

One of my historical interests is single-party states and dictatorships. I have broadened my knowledge of this topic by reading not only works on individual nations but also fictional dystopian novels. "The Third Reich: A New History", by Michael Burleigh, is a very fascinating moral history of Nazi Germany. Burleigh's comparison between religion and political ideology was especially interesting considering the centrality of religion as an instrument of earlier political control. This cult hypothesis also seemed to partly answer the question of why the opposition to Nazi rule was fairly limited. In addition, I enjoyed Hannah Arendt's sharp analysis on the emergence and functions of totalitarian states in "Origins of Totalitarianism". Although in some ways a work of political science, I found the book as a whole extremely thought-provoking and helpful for my studies in history as it provided a comparative framework for the discussion of several totalitarian nations.

My IB coursework, a historical investigation on the motives for Caesar's assassination, allowed me to consider dictatorships in a rather different, unfamiliar context. A more extensive project was my Extended Essay work. Due to my particular interest in the Cold War years in Finland and the continuous Russian influence on the nation's history, I chose to research how the country's foreign policy of Finlandisation affected Finnish history textbooks in years 1970-79. Both of these works improved my skills in research and individual study, and I greatly enjoyed the research process of my Extended Essay which required in-depth study of the contemporary Finnish political climate and heavy reliance on primary sources.

My interest in political history has led me to take part in European Youth Parliament sessions, and I was given the opportunity to attend an International Session in October 2010. Working effectively with ten young people from differing backgrounds to consider political issues such as multiculturalism has developed my teamwork skills and clear argumentation. My positions of responsibility include the vice chairmanship of the nationwide Finnish International Baccalaureate Organization, as well as of one of the ten regional branches of The Union for Finnish Upper Secondary School Students. These positions, along with academic commitments, have required responsibility and time management, but I have also enjoyed them greatly. I have organised events such as an annual seminar cruise with 400 attendees and been able to defend students' rights such as equal treatment in university admissions for IB students. I am planning to continue similar activities in university.

In my spare time I play classical piano and keep up on current affairs from both domestic and foreign news sources. I am also an avid reader: besides works related to history I like authors such as Gustav Flaubert and Emily Bronte. One of my main characteristics is my affection for learning, and I strive to become a lifelong learner. A degree in history, a discipline that I love, is the best possible foundation for that.