

# Weaving Discontent

He

Who

Believes

## God Sides with Us: Faith and revolution in ages of disorder

Disruption. Power Struggles. Visionaries. Leaders.

Revolutions are interrelated through a number of factors. What do revolutions have in common? Piecing together our primary materials, we found an overwhelming theme: faith as a **driver** and **framer** of revolution.

- Facing the status quo, faith **drives** revolution. Not just a faith that God is on the side of 'the people' or 'the cause', but faith in the revolution itself: faith in radical change; faith in success; faith in the leader.
- In framing new ideologies, faith **frames** revolution. Violence is justified through newly forged belief systems. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, these beliefs were porous: piety framed new states, from their constitutions to their actions.

### The Glorious Revolution

After removing James II, the English state spent over two decades defending its revolution against the Stuarts' French sponsor, Louis XIV. In so doing, English people broke with centuries of practice: a new dynasty, a sophisticated fiscal state, and an expansive empire.

Faith wove through the subtext of the revolution: leaders prayed before every battle; natural disasters were attributed to God's wrath.

On a deeper level, faith provided reassurance and understanding to the seismic changes. Every move to modernity in the English constitution was justified in terms of faith.

### The Iranian Revolution

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 overthrew the Pahlavi dynasty of Iran, ending 2,500 years of monarchical rule. The Islamic Republic that was subsequently formed marked the birth of a new state: one which claimed to challenge western imperialism and social injustice.

Belief and faith was weaved into the revolution: a myriad of leftist, Marxist, and Islamist actors were central to the onset of the revolution.

While the nature of the revolution itself was not necessarily religious, the outcome certainly was: the revolution was framed through faith, justifying a new state and its revolutionary leader.

How might we think about the global history of revolutions in innovative ways?