AIM: HOW DID THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR IMPACT
SOCIALLY & ECONOMICALLY IMPACT WESTERN
EUROPEAN SOCIETY?
Is violence/war ever justified?
Can humans move beyond wars as a way to resolve conflict?
What historical evidence do we have to support/refute this?

Explain the meaning of the following quote
“Political Power comes from the barrel of a gun”
Mao Tse Dung
I. Europe 1300's

a. Europe had many economic problems.

b. 1300's: Conflict emerges between France + England over the throne of France.
In 1328, the king of France, Charles IV, died. Charles had no son to follow him as king. King Edward III of England was Charles' nephew. Edward claimed that he should be the new king of France. The French would not have Edward as their king. France and England also quarreled over land and other matters.

In 1337, the two countries went to war. The war lasted for over 100 years. For that reason, it is called the Hundred Years' War.
II. HUNDRED YEARS WAR (1337-1453)

a. King Edward III of England claimed the right to rule France.

b. War broke out over the throne in 1338.
c. **New weapons:** cannons and long bows allowed England to dominate the early years of the war.

d. **1346:** English soldiers invaded France, and by **1419**, most of France was conquered by the English.
An Account during the Hundred Years’ War

In his account of the Hundred Years’ War, the fourteenth-century French chronicler Jean Froissart described the sack of the fortified French town of Limoges by the Black Prince, Edward, the Prince of Wales.

For about a month, certainly not longer, the Prince of Wales remained before Limoges. During that time he allowed no assaults or skirmishes, but pushed on steadily with the mining. The knights inside and the townspeople, who knew what was going on, started a countermine in the hope of killing the English miners, but it was a failure. When the Prince’s miners who, as they dug, were continually shoring up their tunnel, had completed their work, they said to the Prince, “My lord, whenever you like now we can bring a big piece of the wall down into the moat, so that you can get into the city quite easily and safely.”

The Prince was very pleased to hear this. “Excellent,” he said. “At six o’clock tomorrow morning, show me what you can do.”

When they knew it was the right time for it, the miners started a fire in their mine. In the morning, just as the Prince had specified, a great section of the wall collapsed, filling the moat at the place where it fell. For the English, who were armed and ready waiting, it was a welcome sight. Those on foot could enter as they liked, and did so. They rushed to the gate, cut through the bars holding it and knocked it down. They did the same with the barriers outside, meeting with no resistance. It was all done so quickly that the people in the town were taken unawares.

Then the Prince, the Duke of Lancaster, the Earl of Cambridge, Sir Guichard d’Angle, with all the others and their men burst into the city, followed by pillagers on foot, all in a mood to wreak havoc and do murder, and killing indiscriminately, for those were their orders. These were pitiful scenes. Men, women, and children flung themselves on their knees before the Prince crying: “Have mercy on us, gentle sir!” But he was so inflamed with anger that he would not listen. Neither man nor woman was heeded, but all who could be found were put to the sword, including many who were in no way to blame. I do not understand how they could have failed to take pity on people who were too unimportant to have committed treason. Yet they paid for it, and paid more dearly than the leaders who had committed it.

There is no man so hard-hearted that, if he had been in Limoges on that day, and had remembered God, he would not have wept bitterly at the fearful slaughter which took place. More than 3,000 persons, men, women, and children, were dragged out to have their throats cut. May God receive their souls, for they were true martyrs.

Source: Jean Froissart, The Chronicles

1. What does this account say about the Hundred Years’ War?

2. What other account would be necessary to understand both sides of this event?

3. How would the other account help us understand what really happened in the town of Limoges?
In 1429, a 17-year-old peasant girl asked to see the French king. Her name was Joan of Arc. Joan claimed that voices from heaven had spoken to her. They had ordered her to save France. She convinced the king of the truth of her story. He put her at the head of an army.
III. JOAN OF ARC

a. 1420's a young woman, Joan of Arc, inspired France.

b. Joan convinced the French army that God was on their side.
c. The English captured Joan and burned her alive in 1431.

d. The French continued to win the war.
e. 1453 - the England gave up the claim to rule France, and France was again ruled by a French king.
ACT OF ACCUSATION: Article 13
Jeanne attributes to God, His Angels and His Saints, orders which are against the modesty of her sex, and which are prohibited by the Divine Law, things abominable to God and man, interdicted on pain of anathema by ecclesiastical censure, such as dressing herself in the garments of a man, short, tight, dissolute, those underneath as well as above. It is in virtue of these pretended orders that she had attired herself in sumptuous and slaty raiment, cloth-of-gold and furs; and not only did she wear short tunics, but she dressed herself in tabards, and garments open at both sides; and it is notorious that she was taken prisoner in a loose cloak of cloth-of-gold. She was always seen with a cap on her head, her hair cut short and a-round in the style of a man. In one word, putting aside the modesty of her sex, she acted not only against all feminine decency, but even against the reserve which men of good morals, wearing ornaments and garments which only profligate men are accustomed to use, and going so far as to carry arms of offense. To attribute all this to the order of God, to the order which had been transmitted to her by the Angels and even by Virgin Saints, is to blaspheme God and His Saints, to destroy the Divine Law and violate the Canonical Rules; it is to libel the sex and its virtue, to overturn all decency, to justify all examples of dissolute living, and to drive others thereto.

“What have you to say to this Article?”

“I have not blasphemed God nor His Saints.”(11)....(The two following questions and answers appear in the Minutes only.) “But, Jeanne, the Holy Canons and Holy Writ declare that women who take men’s dress or men who take women’s dress, do a thing abominable to God. How then can you say that you took this dress at God’s command?”

“You have been answered. If you wish that I should answer you further, grant me delay, and I will answer you.”

“Will you not take the dress of a woman to receive your Savior on Easter Day?”

“Neither for that nor for anything else will I yet put off my dress. I make no difference between man’s dress and woman’s dress for receiving my Savior. I ought not to be refused for this question of dress.” (12)....(Cf. 4th Public Examination, February 27th, and 6th Public Examination, March 3rd.)

What follows is one of the 70 charges laid against Joan of Arc at her trial. This charge is especially significant because it accuses her of wearing men’s clothes. This became the main reason her accusers gave in demanding her execution.

1) Write the accusation in your own words. (It can be much shorter than the original.)

2) Write a short statement on what this passage tells you about justice in the Middle Ages. (What seems to be of most concern to the authorities and why would they be so bothered by this? From our modern perspective on fairness what is there about this accusation that would not be considered fair or reasonable today?)
IV. THE IMPACT OF THE HUNDRED YEARS.
A. 1453: THE WAR ENDED INTRODUCING MAJOR CHANGES.
1. A feeling of nationalism emerged in England and France.
2. People perceived the monarch as a national leader, fighting for the glory of the country, not simply a feudal lord.
3. The power and prestige of the French monarch increased.
A hundred years seems like a very long time to wage war. What could possibly be the problem that would cause two nations to be at war for so long? How could the countries involved in the war possibly carry on the conflict for so long? Wars are expensive in terms of costs of supplies like weapons, ships, salaries of soldiers and how disruptive they can be to the economies of the nations involved. The fact that England and France remained at war with each other for a hundred years (1337-1453) is difficult to understand especially when looking at it from the perspective of the 21st century. It is difficult for us to imagine what could cause such a war and why it went on for so long.

Understanding the causes of this war and how it was fought gives us some insight into the life and times of Joan of Arc for it was in the last stages of the Hundred Years War that she played an important role.

14th century Europe, when the Hundred Years War started, was dominated by royal families and competition over which family had claim to the lands of Europe. This was especially true in France and England. The Hundred Years War was a conflict over who the rightful king of France was and which family should hold that title. The war was really one hundred years of attempts by English kings to dominate France. Joan of Arc became involved in the war because she supported, and believed God also supported, the claim of Charles VII to the throne of France. She believed that Charles was the true “French” king and not Henry V who was the king of England but also claimed to be the king of France. But in the 14th and 15th centuries people didn’t solve disagreements through elections. Kings weren’t chosen by any sort of popular vote. More often than not whoever became a king and established their family or “line” as the royal family did so through war and they held onto their power by force. That made it much more possible for a war or conflict to last a hundred years.

There was one other way that families claimed or held onto their royal titles and their “rights” to be kings and that was through marriage. It was typical for a family of royals to attempt to get control of other territories by marrying into the families that controlled those territories. Indeed the main value of a daughter in these royal families was that she could be offered as a bride and this was a way to gain a claim to another territory. The reason Henry V of England claimed to be the King of France as well as England was because his family was married into the same family as Charles VII and had been for over a hundred years. In fact the English kings had blood relations in France going back to 1066 when an army from the French province of Normandy invaded and conquered England. (This has been known in history as the “Norman” invasion of England.) Since The Norman French were the victors in 1066 the throne of England had been held by the descendants of the first Norman French ruler William I. For that reason the English kings always had relations in France and controlled parts of what is now France because of their connections through their family lines.

By 1400 however many people in France no longer believed in the right of English kings to also be kings of France simply because of their family connections. Joan of Arc is a good example. She wanted Charles VII as the French king because she saw him as completely French with no ties to England. One of the reasons Joan of Arc is seen as a hero in France to this day is because she was one of the first to defend and fight for “France” and not just for a particular individual like a king.
(A reasonable question would be to ask, how could an illiterate peasant girl such as Joan have such a well-developed understanding of the political affairs of the day? In part it could be because her family and her village had been terrorized by the English armies over many years. Also it is clear from the records of Joan’s trial that while she was illiterate she was also very intelligent.)

Despite the fact that the Hundred Years War was mainly about the royal families of England trying to control France and become rulers of France as well as England, it is also important to understand what the war itself was like. Warfare in the 14th and 15th centuries was quite different than how we might think about wars in modern history. The main difference is that the Hundred Years War was not a total war so much as a series of battles. These battles were often fought after long periods of calm. In the Hundred Years War the periods of actual warfare often depended on the feelings of the English king and how badly he wanted to control France. Some English kings like Henry V were very keen, others not so much, often because they had too much debt from paying for earlier battles.

Another important feature of the Hundred Years War and one that is significant to the role of Joan of Arc is how it was fought. The principle weapon in battle was the bow and arrows. The English armies used a long bow which could be loaded and the arrow released very quickly. The French used a cross bow which was quite deadly but took a long time to load. This meant the English had an advantage in their weapon technology and because of this were able to win most of the battles. In the last years of the war, after 1400, when Joan of Arc became involved, the French were becoming demoralized because of their frequent losses.

It seems that Joan of Arc was able to turn the tide and make the French armies more successful not because of her expertise with weapons like the bow and arrow but rather because she had a natural ability to lead and to inspire. After all she was the daughter of a peasant family and would have had no training in using any sort of weapon. She carried a sword and rode into battles on a white horse. She was frequently wounded. All the accounts of the battles she was involved in refer to her bravery rather than how well she used a weapon. She most likely was so successful because the sight of a very young girl (she was in her late teens at the time) being so courageous encouraged the French soldiers to fight on.

After one hundred years of English attacks on France it seems it took the unusual bravery of a teen age girl to give the soldiers the inspiration they needed to force the English out once and for all.

Focus questions for the “Hundred Years War and Joan of Arc” expert group:

1. From the information you have here, what would you say was the main reason for the Hundred Years War? How is this different from, and similar to what you know about modern day war and conflict?
2. The Middle Ages could be described as a time when there were two groups of citizens, the powerful and the powerless and yet people in the Middle Ages resisted power in important ways. How is the story of Joan of Arc an example of resisting power?
3. The Hundred Years War could be described as the war that created the nation of France. How would you explain this statement?
4. Understanding that Joan of Arc was a teen aged girl, not at all trained to use weapons of war, explain the role she seems to have played in this war. Do you think this could happen today? Why or why not?
5. What do you think would be the feeling of the English towards this “girl warrior” especially since she kept defeating them?

Concluding statement:
Joan of Arc played a crucial role in the Hundred Years War because she....