

POLITICIANS

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TOM MOORE

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This book is not about politics; its subtitle is *Self-Portrait as Hero, Self-Portrait as Monster*.

Someone interested me, someone who had ideas surrounding them, ideas of heroism, of lofty power, a notoriety that imbues an image, so that it becomes not a person but a power.

Images are cheap and easy to find. I found as many as I could, as cheaply as I could. I worked from one with reference to others. The subjects were chosen for their reputations but I didn't want to draw their reputations exactly. The act of drawing transforms these subjects of history into objects. Tracing some consistency over the variation in the images, you are searching for the object in them. At certain points in drawing them the ideas that circulate around the images disappear, you lose your consciousness of them. To what? To structure...

All the portraits were drawn using a Pentel GFKP Brush Pen, which is designed for Japanese calligraphy, ritualism and fluid movement. The lines are a deep black and only bleed a little. The pen is hyper-responsive. Some early sketches needed to be redone when the slightest hint of tiredness, of shakiness, destroyed the line.

The impetus for the portraits came from the vanity of self-portraiture. And in the end, if you turn your subject into an object, you are still dealing with the other subject, which is yourself - the one functioning, the one who isn't still. You want this movement to be experienced; the creation of the still image is born of movement. The pen enabled me to show the action more directly. A mechanical pencil, say, would draw lines that required an extra rigidity. The block of wood used in print-making would bare the trace of the movement more than the print itself. The pen... I love this pen.

This movement isn't entirely active, nor is the object entirely passive. There is the element of observation, of giving way

to the image and the reputation. But whilst being this observer you also have to be almost underhandedly active, you have to turn away and do something secretly behind their back. You have to be faithful but it is not to the truth of them but to the truth of your relation to them, one which is dissected and re-assembled constantly with the image of them in the creation of the portrait. Sometimes it is difficult, you can end up losing the subject and therefore your relation to them. You hear about serial killer trials and members of the jury fainting at the sight of the accused...

The picture of Rupert Murdoch, this was difficult. It looks quite chaotic but it's in fact carefully measured, the lines reproduced from the original image of the face, which is actually the chaotic thing, of the face that is also such an established thing. Despite the faithfulness, ideas of perspective and depth somehow became lost in the drawing of it. The mouth sometimes appeared to be hovering over the flesh, sometimes set deep within it. I find it hard to look at now - partly because it is disgusting but also partly because it makes no sense. The face didn't come, I stopped at a point in which it remained ambiguous and Murdoch failed to appear as an object. I could have continued drawing but if I had another failure would have become increasingly apparent - the portrait would have shown something that wasn't him. What wouldn't have been there in a completed portrait? Fear... and what would have been there is surrender, that is, relief.

The Cromwell portrait is superficially similar to Murdoch in that it has this unstable quality. The principle model was actually a photo of a death mask, already an object more than a photograph would be, already less complicated. Although the structure seems unstable the features still emerge as a whole, a gestalt. Cromwell... civil war against a thousand years of history is a tough thing. The failure, or the brevity of the success, is also a tough thing.

A few of the principle models were of dead bodies - Cromwell, Bobby Kennedy, Rasputin, Yukio Mishima. When looking for images I was always drawn to the dead. Is this morbidity? Yes, but not in a simple way. With the exception of Cromwell, these figures' reputations are intrinsically linked to their own death. Their death is their legend. By contrast, Cromwell's death is the failure of his project, of his image - there is no succession, just the restoration of what came before. The lack of life, of contortion, contraction and projection in these images of corpses reduces character and amplifies what is almost undead in their reputation, so that their death becomes an event in the ongoing march of their reputation, rather than the close of their life.

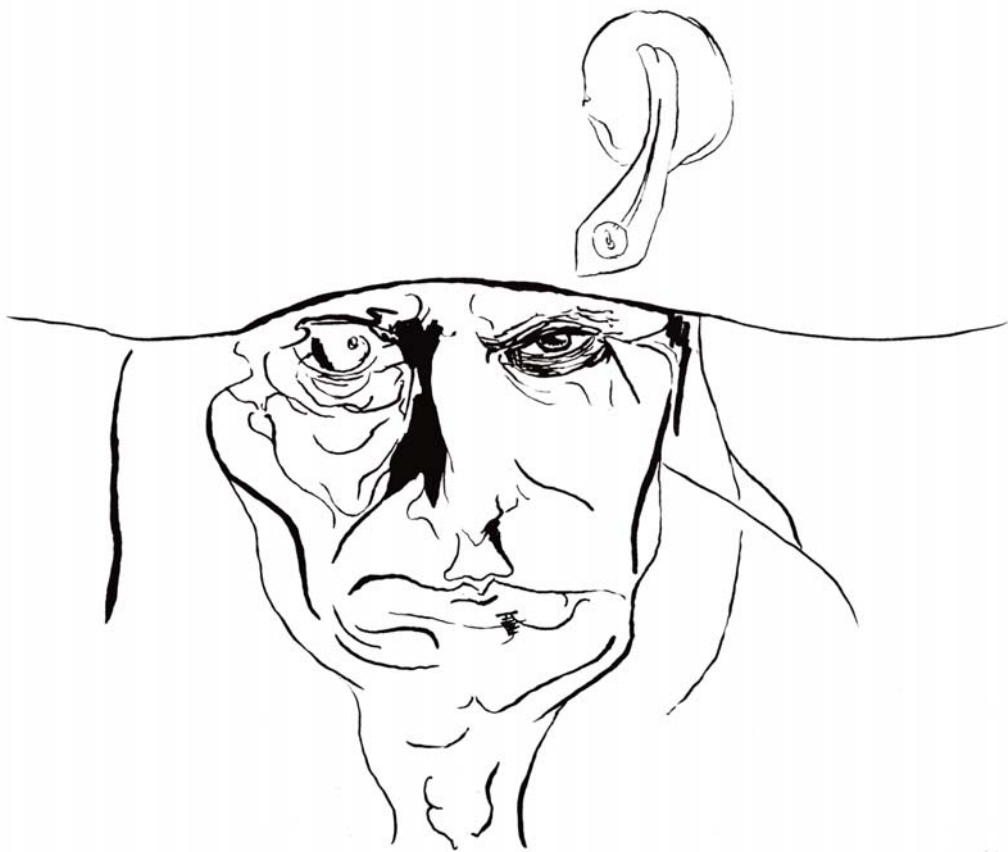
At the end I'd like to talk about the portrait of Ho Chi Minh. He looks so happy! In all the photos I found he looked so glad to be alive. In the film *Hearts and Minds*, clearly made by leftists, there is a segment where an American politician says that the Vietnamese people don't have the same respect for life that the Americans do, that their death at the hands of the Americans is not to be pitied as their life is not precious to them. In the pictures of Ho Chi Minh I found, I saw a present vibrancy, I saw him engaged in moments of living. He seems like a genuine hero, not to me but to a unified body of people. Unusually, he appears both strong and benevolent, proud in the face of years of turmoil.

TOM

Written by Michael Reid



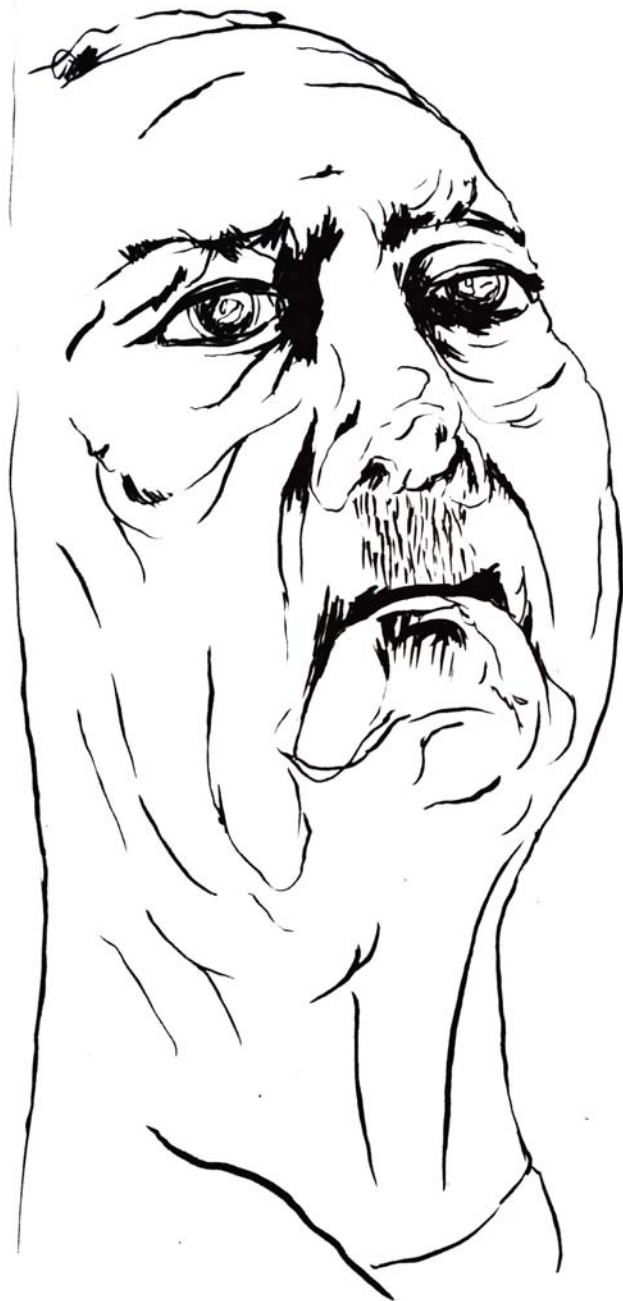
Jimmy Carter



Napoleon Bonaparte



Benito Mussolini



سید قطب

Sayyid Qutb



Григорій Ефімович
Grigori Rasputin



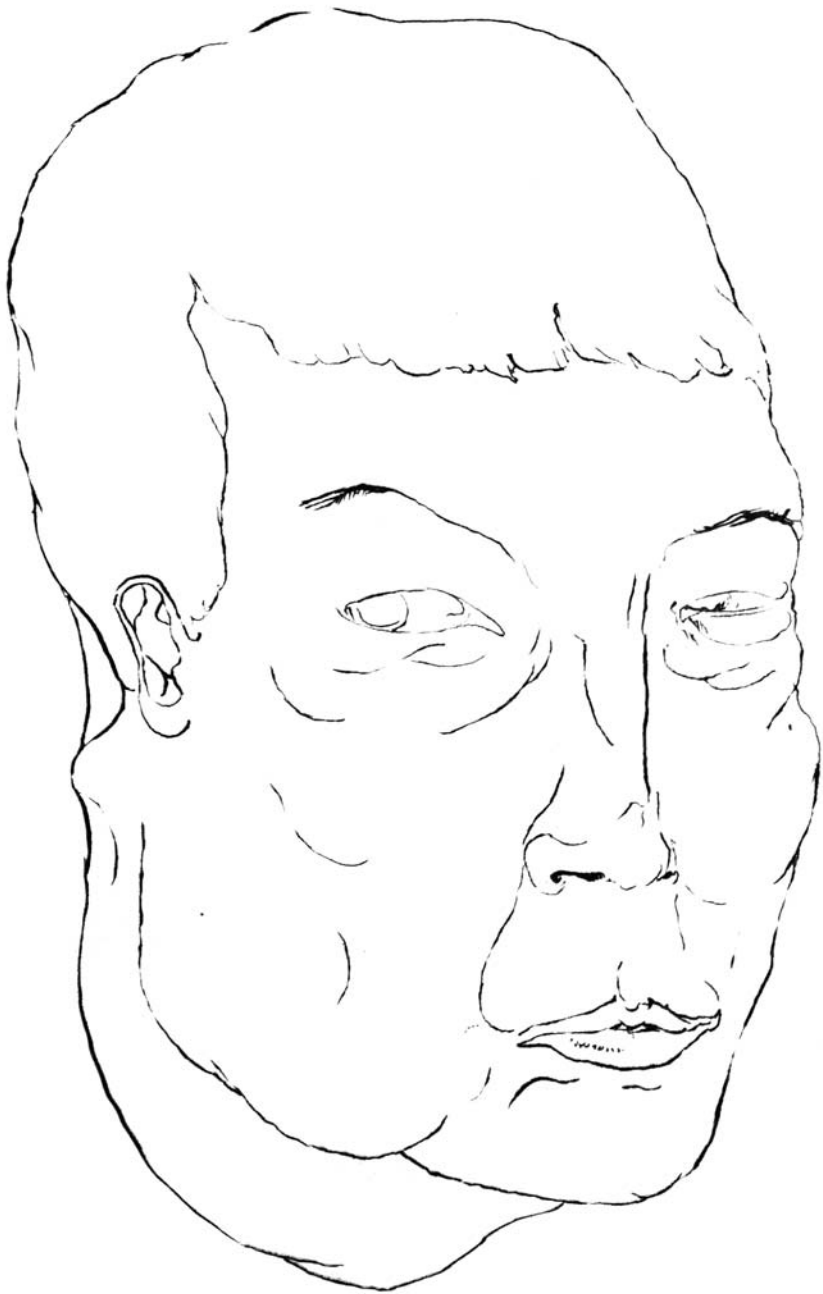
Joseph McCarthy



Oliver Cromwell



Robert F. Kennedy



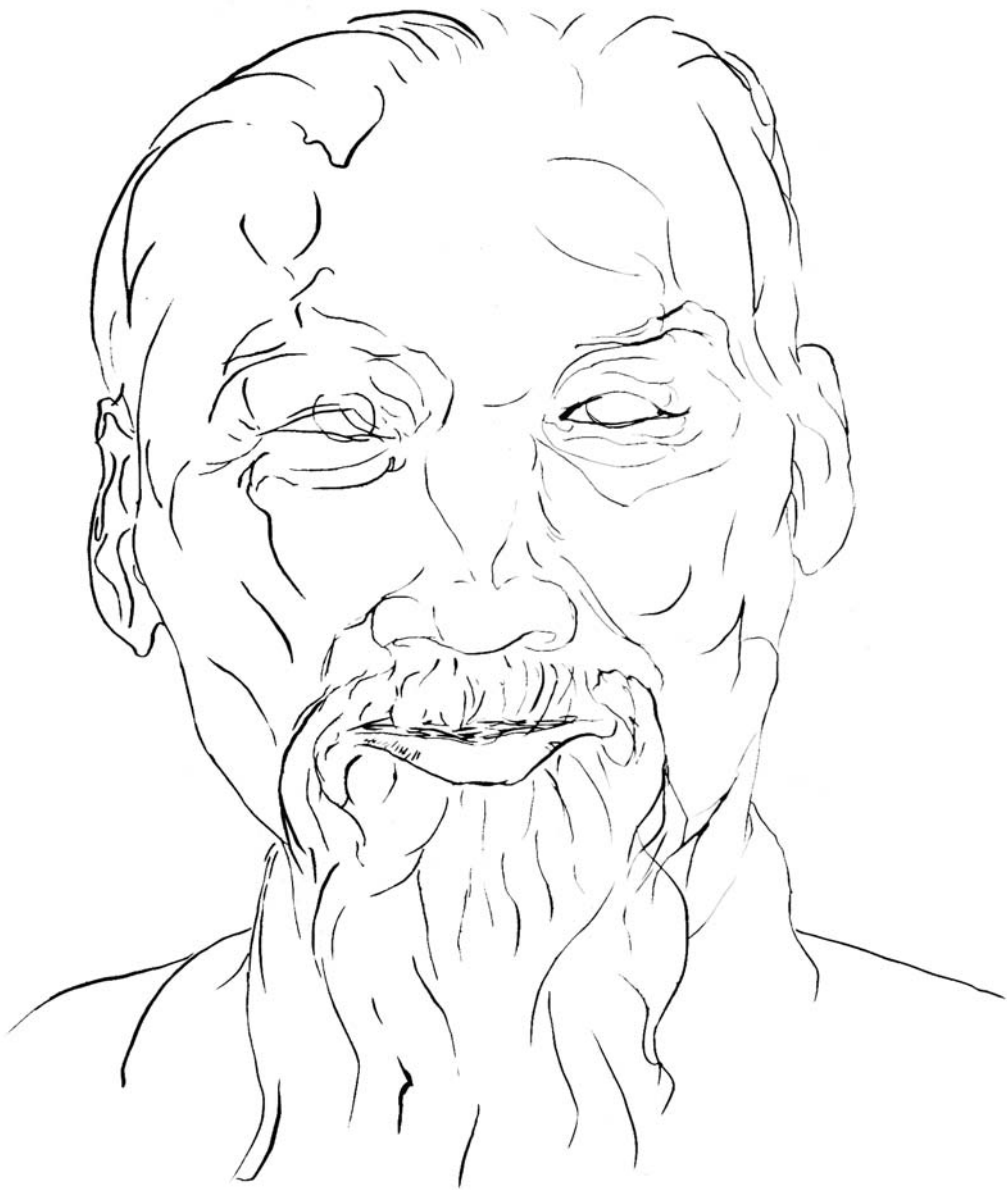
Marcus Junius Brutus



Margaret Thatcher



Harold Holt



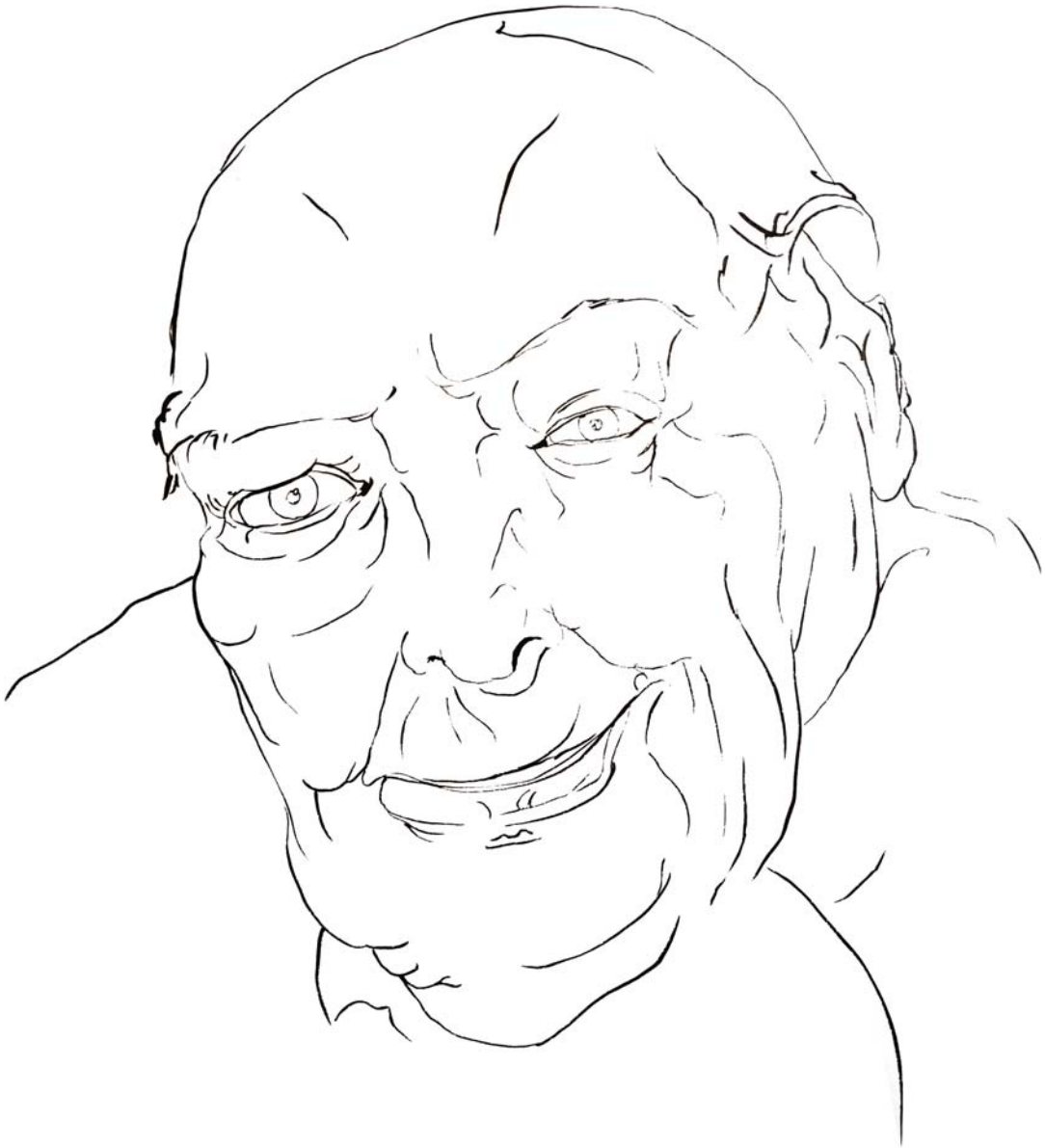
胡志明
Hồ Chí Minh





ليلى خالد

Leila Khaled



Winston Churchill



אברהם שטרן

Avraham Stern



ياسر عرفات

Yasser Arafat



Angela Davis



三島 由紀夫
Mishima Yukio



Rupert Murdoch



Tom Moore

